

PRESCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES:  
A COMPARISON OF RECOMMENDED AND ACTUAL  
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION PRACTICES

A Dissertation

by

CORINNA VILLAR COLE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2009

Major Subject: Educational Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

Preschool English Language Learners with Disabilities: A Comparison of  
Recommended and Actual Language of Instruction Practices.

(May 2009)

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This study investigated, through survey methodology, the instructional practices of teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) with disabilities in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD). These practices were compared to best-practice recommendations made by a group of evaluators in the field of bilingual special education. Results indicated that teacher practices differed considerably from recommendations made by expert evaluators in the field. Specifically, teachers preferred English as the exclusive language of instruction while expert evaluators strongly recommended bilingual instruction. Also, teachers reported strong administrator support while expert evaluators did not. Furthermore, most teachers reported satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs in their schools while most expert evaluators reported dissatisfaction. Results also showed that when administrators at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings encouraged discussion about language of instruction, the likelihood of parent participation in these discussions increased. Language

dominance and language proficiency testing of preschool aged ELLs, and representation of LPAC members at IEP meetings were major predictors of whether or not these children would receive referral to the bilingual or ESL programs in the future. Most of the results found in this study supported results found by Mueller, Singer, and Carranza in 2006. This study highlights research favoring the development of the primary language of ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K settings while underscoring the disconnect among teachers' beliefs, training, and instructional practices.

A mis nietecitos, Tyler y Zacarías, los “corazones de mi corazón”

To my grandchildren Tyler and Zachary, the “hearts of my heart”

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Census data figures released in 2000 revealed that the Latino population in the United States surpassed the 35 million mark while current estimates surmount 44 million. Latinos are the largest minority group in the U.S. and their growth has far exceeded that of the rest of the population (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2006; García & Cuellar, 2006). In Texas, the number of Latinos increased to 6,669,666 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000), thus ranking the state as having the second highest Latino population after California (Chun, 2007). In addition, predictions have indicated that this group will reach majority status among the ethnic groups in Texas (Goldenberg, 1996). As the numbers of new immigrants increase, so does the need for bilingual professionals and bilingual education programs in public schools. However, current demands are not being met due to shortages of bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) professionals across every area in the educational arena in Texas. These shortages negatively affect the educational outcomes of children who need specialized instruction in the areas of second language acquisition and special education.

#### **Language of Instruction Decisions**

Professionals who work with students with disabilities who are also English language learners (ELLs) face dilemmas when considering the language of instruction options for these students. The factors that influence these decisions may be

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *The Journal of Special Education*

programmatic or political in nature (Figueroa, 2005). These factors may include teacher shortages and limited professional development opportunities for teachers (Yates & Ortiz, 1991) while others may be tied to political or socioeconomic influences (Pérez, 2004). Nevertheless, when considering appropriate instructional alternatives for ELLs, most researchers in the area of bilingual education (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Cummins, 2001, 2002; Ruiz, Vargas, & Beltran, 2002) support the incorporation of the native language of ELLs in their daily instruction for appropriate transition to English. Not only is native language support reported as a significant predictor for future success in the native language, but it appears to benefit the acquisition of the second language and the combined growth of the native language and English (Freedson, 2005).

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which serve as the blueprint for the educational goals and objectives for students with special needs, often overlook the second language needs of ELLs. IEPs frequently lack documentation of the strategies that will be used to help students learn English, preferably through the development of their native language (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Cummins, 1986; Krashen, 1985; Thomas & Collier, 1996). Decisions to not include the students' native language as part of daily instruction are often influenced by erroneous beliefs that permeate the educational arena. For example, Díaz (1985) reported that many educators assume that only very bright students were capable of becoming fluent bilingual individuals.

The issue of language of instruction for ELLs presents a significant dilemma for educators across the nation. Politically, bilingualism in public schools can be a polarizing issue. Some, like Ron Unz, a California businessman who spearheaded the

*English for the Children* (Unz, 1997) movement, actively advocate against bilingual education. This movement resulted in the passage of Proposition 227 in 1998, which outlawed the use of languages other than English for the education of ELLs in public schools. Other states like Arizona and Massachusetts are following California's example in their efforts to change state laws and to establish English as the official language in public schools.

Several ideologies favor full English immersion for children with disabilities. One view clarifies that when children are very young it does not matter what language is used as they adapt to new cultures and situations and learn new languages quickly (Unz, 1997). However, opposing views argue for the integration of the children's language, culture, and family in early childhood programs (Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001, Freedson, 2005, Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999; Nissani, 1993). Interestingly, parents of ELLs with disabilities are often overlooked as important sources of information in the decision-making process involving language of instruction choices for their children (Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006; Harry, 1992). A study by Cheatham (2008) investigated the interactions between parents of children with disabilities and their teachers. The author determined that native Spanish speaking as well as bilingual parents generally accepted the established hierarchy in which their role was treated secondary to that of the teachers. Hence, decisions regarding the education of ELLs with disabilities often were absent of parental input.

## **Research on Language Decisions for ELLs with Disabilities**

In contrast with the wide availability of position papers and literature reviews related to language of instruction of ELLs, few empirical studies investigate these issues. Available studies encompass the themes of support for native language instruction (Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés, 2001; Kovelman, Baker, & Petitto, 2008; Lanza, 1992; Perozzi & Sanchez, 1992; Sebastian-Gallés, Echeverría, & Bosch, 2005), parent and school communication (Cheatham, 2008; King & Fogle, 2006; Menard-Warwick, 2007), effective teaching practices (Dickinson, McCabe, Clark-Chiarelli, & Wolf, 2004; Duran & Heiry, 1986; Milian & Pearson, 2005; Rohena, Jitendra, & Browder, 2002), and the impact of educational professionals on the ELL population with disabilities (Mueller et al., 2006; Paneque & Barbeta, 2006 ; Roache, Shore, Gouleta, & de Obaldia Butkevich, 2003). In general, the studies (a) support the use of the native language as the language of intervention for children with language delays; (b) highlight major misconceptions- including the belief that bilingual children experience delayed development and language confusion; (c) strongly support the use of the home language; (d) underscore the lack of understanding among professionals concerning their roles when working with ELLs with disabilities; (e) suggest that professionals face time constraints, language limitations in second language knowledge, lack of administrative support, and lack of professional training opportunities; (f) indicate that teachers need further training and additional resources; (g) point out that assessment practices and teachers' beliefs do not

match students' native language needs; and (h) propose that parent participation and administrative encouragement at IEP meetings were limited (Mueller et al., 2006).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to report the educational practices of early childhood teachers in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) and Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) inclusion settings who instructed ELLs with disabilities and to compare those teaching techniques with recommendations and practices from an expert group of evaluators in the field of bilingual special education.

This study used two surveys. The teacher survey included original and modified questions extracted from the survey developed by Mueller et al. (2006) as well as questions developed by the author. A similar survey was developed for special education evaluators in the field of bilingual special education to determine their recommended best practices for this student population.

Educational decisions made at the beginning of children's learning experience are crucial, especially for children with disabilities whose native language is not English. This study furthers previous investigations on how educational decisions are made for young ELLs with disabilities. Specifically, this study determines if there is a gap between recommended best practices and current teaching practices in preschool programs for children with disabilities classrooms and targeted a large sample of teachers of 3- to 5-year-old students in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion classes.

This study expands the understanding of instructional approaches used with young ELLs with disabilities and sheds light on the current evaluation and teaching

practices for this population of students. Also, this study reports on the satisfaction of the education professionals with their current practice. Furthermore, this study reports on parent participation in the programmatic decisions of their children. Finally, this study focuses on language decisions made between the time these children enter PPCD programs and when they are age-appropriate to qualify for the bilingual/ESL program.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a framework for understanding the issues surrounding the language of instruction decisions made on behalf of young ELLs with disabilities in Texas. A significant shortage of empirical studies exists in the area of language of instruction for young ELLs with disabilities in the school setting. In contrast, ample literature prevails, including position papers and comprehensive reviews of literature, that examine bilingual education, first and second language acquisition, bilingual and special education laws, instructional practices, parental involvement, or teacher issues. In this chapter, the related literature will be organized and discussed as follows: First, the theme of second language acquisition in young children with disabilities will be discussed including the windows of opportunity in language learning and developmental delays and communication in children. Second, state and federal education laws will be highlighted including (a) special education laws, (b) IDEA and developmental delays, (c) IDEA's 2004 reauthorization, (d) bilingual education laws, (e) No Child Left Behind of 2001, and (f) Texas laws. Third, language programs will be discussed including bilingual and ESL programs, and the types of programs and approaches to teaching available. Fourth, the factors that influence the decision-making process will be discussed including beliefs and attitudes, professional preparation and satisfaction, and parent involvement in the language of instruction decisions for their children. Fifth, empirical studies that influenced this research will be described including studies focusing on the importance of the native language, parental issues, effective teaching

practices, and the impact of educational professionals in the educational outcomes of their students. Additionally, a summary of this section will be offered and the research questions driving this study will be enumerated.

### **Research on Second Language Acquisition in**

#### **Young Children with Disabilities**

There is limited research concerning the most appropriate age at which to introduce a second language to children with disabilities. However, extensive research exists related to native and second language acquisition by children without disabilities. Bilingual children are called sequential bilinguals if they acquire their second language starting in early childhood and simultaneous bilinguals when they acquire both languages from birth (Jones & Yandian, 2002; Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés, 2001; Tabors, 1997). Even though simultaneous and sequential bilingual children progress through their language learning at different rates and take different developmental paths, simultaneous bilinguals are believed to develop a “dominant language” (Sebastián-Gallés, Echeverría, & Bosch, 2005) and, at a very early age, they appear to understand that the two languages are separate and used with different people at different times (Fantini, 1985; Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983). Sequential bilinguals can reach higher levels of proficiency in their first language as compared to simultaneous bilinguals. Consequently, children with disabilities who are sequential bilinguals could make an easier transition to their second language in spite of the longer time needed for them to acquire language.

Rodríguez and Higgins (2005) assert that children with disabilities require a longer time to transition from their native language to English; however, this delay could be the result of the second language learning process rather than being “confused” due to acquiring more than one language (García, 1983). This belief in “language confusion” is refuted by research supporting that young bilinguals not only differentiate between two languages (Meisel, 1989) but also “code-switch,” that is, mix two languages appropriately following family and community conventions (Lanza, 1992). Furthermore, Hakuta (1986) highlights the cognitive advantages gained when children acquire two languages from an early age.

#### *Windows of Opportunity*

Tokuhama-Espinosa (2001) explains that individuals have three windows of opportunity for learning new languages. The first window typically includes birth to nine months of age, although this period could extend to two years of age. During this window, children “acquire” language instead of learning the language. Additional contact with caregivers, siblings, and other family members enhances the opportunity of children to develop language. The second window continues from four to seven years of age. During this time, Tokuhama-Espinosa explains that children are flexible and language learning is sometimes viewed as a game as they do not appear to have the same inhibitions adults have regarding new language learning. The third window covers from eight years until old age. Even though Tokuhama-Espinosa addresses the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, she advocates for the early introduction of

languages for all children and delineates strategies that may be used to develop multiple languages.

*Developmental Delays and Communication*

Wong-Fillmore (1991) highlighted that the cognitive demands placed on children when learning how to communicate includes making “use of memory, pattern recognition, induction, categorization, generalization, [and] inference” (p. 57). Other research (Beirne-Smith, Patton, & Kim, 2005; Kohnert, 2004; McLaughlin & Wehman, 1996) has suggested that a connection exists between a low IQ and language development difficulties. Furthermore, Fazio, Johnston, and Brandl (1993) stated that children who are categorized as having a developmental delay also often exhibit difficulties in the area of communication, supporting the notion that limited intellectual ability may also result in specific deficits in the area of language. Studies by Abbeduto and Nuccio (1991) highlighted the differences between the receptive language abilities of individuals with mental retardation and those of their nondisabled peers. They concluded that the individuals with disabilities focused more upon the superficial aspects of language such as its form, while the nondisabled individuals focused more upon the meaning of language. Also, Lightbown and Spada (2006) corroborate the notion that learners spend the major part of their early efforts learning the less sophisticated aspects of language. However, in spite of the evidence that supports a link between intellectual abilities and ease of language acquisition, there is no substantiation that children with lower IQ cannot learn more than one language.

## **State and Federal Laws**

The American educational experience is closely tied to the Civil Rights movement. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were ripe for an educational movement to provide all children, both with and without disabilities, equal educational opportunities. Educational litigation gave way to federal and state laws that established the rights of all children to receive free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Supreme Court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) not only ensured that all minority children receive a public education, but also paved the way for other litigation that supported the rights of students to receive native language instruction (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974) and the right to attend school without consideration of immigration status (*Diana v. California State Board of Education*, 1970).

### *Special Education Laws*

In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act) to ensure states developed and implemented policies that assure a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities. States with plans consistent to federal statutes would then be eligible for federal monies. The Law ratified the special education movement and provided free public education to all children with disabilities. This Law, now codified as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 1990, 1997, and 2004 to ensure that all children with disabilities receive appropriate public education and gives specific guidelines to follow in the identification and placement of children with disabilities. At the time of the initial IEP meeting, committee members consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, assessment

personnel, and related service providers establish eligibility for special education and make program recommendations. These recommendations include appropriate placement options and decisions about language of instruction. For limited English proficient (LEP) students, a representative of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) must be present at the IEP meetings in order to advocate for and safeguard the language needs of the students. However, for children between 3 and 5, who are the focus in this study, guidelines do not expressly target bilingual or ESL program placement.

Although public education law refers only to statutes, US Department of Education develops policy criteria and makes recommendations for an IEP for ELLs. Researchers such as Rhodes, Ochoa, and Ortiz (2005) elaborated upon the Department recommendations with specific factors to consider during the IEP process for these students. The researchers asserted that the IEP team should consider the students' level of English proficiency to ensure that they receive FAPE. In addition, Rhodes et al. (2005) recommended that the development of the English language must be addressed in the students' education program and that the IEP should clarify when special education and related services will be provided in a language other than English.

#### *IDEA and Developmental Delays*

In the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, the term, "developmental delay" (DD), was added as a category for children 3 to 9 years of age experiencing developmental delays and stated that they were eligible for special education services after appropriate evaluation and diagnosis. As a result, the generic DD label is frequently used by states as

a disability category for young children suspected of having a disability. In general, these children may appear behind in their physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, or adaptive development as compared to their same-aged peers. Beginning at 3 years of age, children with a DD may enter the school system and are often placed in PPCD programs. In Texas, the label of “noncategorical early childhood” (NCEC) disability is used in place of “developmental delay” for children between 3 and 5 years when the evaluation indicates mental retardation, emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, or autism. These children’s assessment process may be affected by their young age; therefore, the noncategorical DD label can result in the provision of special education services that might be denied to them if the more rigorous “categorical” labeling had been required (Mallory & Kerns, 1988; Hume & Dannenbring, 1989).

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Congress (2005) states that since 1992, an 89% reduction exists in the percentage of students ages 6 through 11 receiving special education services under “specific learning disabilities” (SLD). OSERS also reports that starting in 1998 the new DD label appears to have *de facto* replaced the SLD label for children 3 through 9. As a result, the numbers of children identified with SLD have decreased as the numbers of children assigned under the DD label have significantly increased.

### *Bilingual Education Laws*

Bilingual education is often viewed as a “special program” but is actually part of regular education. The significant difference between bilingual and regular education, is

that bilingual education uses the students' native language to deliver instruction. Bilingual education was initially conceived through the Bilingual Education Act (1968) which is part of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1968) to provide school districts with federal funds to establish educational programs for students with limited English speaking ability (Menchaca-Ochoa, 2006). This law changed the traditional practice of using English as the exclusive language of instruction in American public schools. After its initial enactment in 1968, the BEA has been reauthorized five times (in 1974, 1978, 1984, 1988, and 1994). The 1974 amendment Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 influenced the implementation of the Bilingual Education Act in order for language barriers to be overcome by instructional programming. Also this change was impacted by *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision (1974) which stated that school districts take affirmative steps to remedy English language deficiencies.

#### *No Child Left Behind Act*

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) reauthorized some of the federal programs that aimed to improve the performance of all schools in the United States. This law increased the standards of accountability for schools and gave parents the opportunity to choose optional schools for their children. This law superseded the Bilingual Education Act. Titles I and III of the NCLB stated that LEP children would attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same academic achievement standards as non-LEP children. Title I, entitled *Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged* mandated the reduction of achievement gaps between the rich and the poor among

students of all races. Title III, entitled *Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students* focused on the accountability of state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) concerning the increases in English proficiency of their ELL population. This new law required SEAs and LEAs to verify this improvement or “adequate yearly progress” through the yearly measurement of the students’ progress in the areas of comprehension, speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. The law also specified that the yearly progress would be based on valid and reliable academic measures. Together, each of these titles ensures that students with disadvantages and with limited English proficiency will be treated with the same high standards that all children are treated under the law.

#### *Texas Laws*

The Texas Bilingual Education Act (S.B. 121) specified that school districts use students’ native language to promote learning and to facilitate a smooth transition to the English language. Also, this law indicated that students’ English skills should be taught through ESL instruction. Subchapter BB under Chapter 89 of the Texas Administrative Code (19 TAC) entitled *Adaptations for Special Populations*, provided guidelines for bilingual and ESL education in Texas. This subchapter included the steps to follow in the identification, testing, and placement of ELLs in bilingual and ESL programs. The TAC specified that the intent of special language programs and bilingual education was to help students, whose primary language was not English, with the opportunity to “become competent in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending the English language (19 TAC).”

The LPAC implements the evaluation, identification, and placement process and recommends students who meet the qualifying criteria for special language programs. Special language programs, including bilingual education and ESL programs, offer LEP students two choices for language of instruction: (a) English only or (b) native language and English. English-only instruction is referred to as “English as a Second Language” (ESL) instruction. Native language instruction that is integrated with English instruction is referred to as “bilingual” education. ESL programs are designed to teach the English language and provide academic instruction in English using methodologies designed for second language learners. Bilingual programs provide academic instruction in the students’ native language and in English. The design of bilingual and ESL programs and how they differ is explained in the following sections.

### **Language Programs**

#### *Bilingual and ESL Programs*

Bilingual programs are designed to instruct students in their native language while they acquire the literacy and academic skills necessary to add a second language. However, Texas policy (TAC 19) does not describe the “optimal” bilingual program; it is up to each district to decide which approach they will use. Typically, in the early years of a bilingual program, students learn to read and write in the native language while acquiring oral language skills in English. Once students have the necessary cognitive academic language proficiency in the native language, the transition to English is assumed to become smoother and more natural (Cummins, 1981). ESL programs, however, *only* use English as the means for instruction. The native language is not

intended to be used to facilitate instruction. Longitudinal studies conducted by Collier and Thomas (2004) and Thomas and Collier (1996) strongly favor bilingual instruction over ESL instruction as the best approach to teach LEP students English while not overlooking their native language and their academic needs. Different bilingual education program models use varying amounts of instructional time in both languages. Also, as highlighted by Baca and Cervantes (2004), all bilingual programs must focus on the following decisive factors: (a) the needs of the students, (c) the linguistic aptitude of teachers, and (c) the philosophy of the program to be followed.

#### *Approaches and Types of Language Programs*

Bilingual education programs in the U.S. vary greatly depending on geographical location and educational ideology of individual school districts. The different approaches and types of bilingual program models range from full immersion programs in English-only classrooms without native language support, to transitional programs that offer bilingual instruction for a few years, to dual language programs that foster both native language and second language development throughout all years of the students' educational experience (Peregoy, Boyle, & Cadiero-Kaplan (2008). An alternative to full immersion is "sheltered English immersion" where course content is adjusted to the specific second language needs of students by making instruction meaningful and comprehensible (Genesee & Nicoladis, 2007). A trend now favors "two-way language immersion" programs (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Gómez, 2004) that foster both the students' native and second language. In contrast, English-only immersion programs have been shown to provide students with less successful long-term benefits than do programs that

support the native language (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Ramírez, Pasta, Ramey, & Yuen, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1996).

Bilingual programs are also classified according to time of exit of the student from the program. Early exit programs give students the barebones in the native language and promote an early transition to English-only instruction while late exit programs typically provide native language support through the elementary grades (Ramírez et al., 1991). In some cases, early exit programs only provide native language instruction in Pre-K and Kindergarten in spite of recommendations that favor substantial native language instruction across several years (Ramírez et al., 1991) to enhance students' ability to learn English.

In contrast to the special education movement in the United States, the bilingual education movement has not produced legislation and “has not evolved as language policy” (Wiese & García, 1998). Rather, the field of bilingual education simply provides guidance for educating language minority students in this country. California's legislative stance exemplifies how bilingual education law has transitioned from a federal mandate to what now appears to be a mere suggestion. However, studies conducted by Gandara, Rumberger, Maxell-Jolly, and Callahan (2003); Grissom (2004); and Thompson, DiCerbo, Mahoney, and MacSwan (2002) indicated that there was no evidence that Proposition 227 enabled children to acquire English faster or to reach higher levels of academic achievement. Support by the research community for the use and development of the native language of the student as part of the educational process remains very strong (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Cummins,

1984, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1999; Krashen, 1985, 1999; Ortiz, 1990, 1997, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 1996, 1997, 2001).

## **Factors that Influence Language of Instruction**

### **Decision-Making Process**

#### *Beliefs and Attitudes*

The beliefs and attitudes of professionals who work with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds play an important role in these children's educational outcomes. Cultural differences influence how professionals who belong to the mainstream culture view parenting roles and attitudes from individuals of other cultures. Educator perceptions occasionally can be negative and result in the exclusion of parents from participation in the educational decision-making process for their children with disabilities (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). Kalyanpur and Harry (1999) also explain that education professionals who belong to the mainstream American culture view the needs of ELLs through their cultural lens. Rather than adjusting their own perceptions to the cultural values and traditions of the newcomers, education professionals expect parents to acculturate rapidly to the new culture. Furthermore, Harry, Klinger, Sturges and Moore (2002) assert that the decisions concerning the identification of disabilities and what treatments are most appropriate are negotiated based on "official and unofficial beliefs and practices" (p. 71).

The belief that young children with developmental delays will have difficulty learning two languages may, in turn, influence educational placement decisions for these students. Consequently, IEP team members may consider language decisions (i.e.,

selecting the native language versus English as the language of instruction) to be of secondary importance or even unimportant when making instructional recommendations. However, almost two decades ago, Hakuta and García (1989) concluded that children's mental resources or cognitive development would not be compromised by learning two languages. Furthermore, researchers such as Bernhard, Cummins, Campoy, Ada, Winsler, and Bleiker (2006); Brice and Roseberry-McKibbin (2001); Mueller et al. (2006); and Pérez (2004) have highlighted research that supports bilingualism and its cognitive advantages over monolingualism. These researchers support the appropriateness of educating young ELLs with disabilities in two languages. Specifically, some identified benefits of integrating the native language of students with disabilities in their school instruction include: (a) higher native and second language comprehension, (b) transferability to the second language, (c) higher self-confidence and motivation, (d) facilitation of family support, and (e) preservation of the home language (Gutierrez-Clellen, 1999).

#### *Professional Preparation and Satisfaction*

Professionals who work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students with disabilities usually have limited preparation in the evaluation and instruction of these children. In their study, Mueller et al. (2006) reported that a significant deficit exists in the professional preparation of teachers of ELLs with moderate to significant disabilities at all grade levels. They also note that professionals who work with ELLs often feel dissatisfied with their lack of resources and training opportunities needed to work with this population of students. Other researchers (García, Pérez, & Ortiz, 2000;

Ortiz & Yates, 2002) have noted that teachers' have limited preparation and understanding about the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors that affect ELLs. Similarly, Figueroa (2002) noted that higher referral rates and inappropriate assessment practices for ELLs contribute to their disproportionate representation in special education.

National and local organizations such as the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), the Texas Psychological Association, and the Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group (BALG) advocate that professionals expand their knowledge. For example, ASHA provides its membership with documents that delineate best practice guidelines for working with clients of other cultures and diverse linguistic backgrounds (ASHA, 2007). The Texas Psychological Association has proposed to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) that 3 hours of diversity training be required as a part of the annual required continuing education units (CEUs) (K. Arredondo, personal communication, December 3, 2007). At the local level, BALG meets regularly to receive training and discuss best practices and legal mandates related to ELLs in special education.

#### *Parent Involvement in Language of Instruction Decisions*

A salient feature in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) addresses the emphasis on parent participation throughout the special education process. IDEA views parents as a vital component of this process beginning with the assessment of their children's needs and continuing with the development and progress monitoring of their IEP (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2001). For parents of other cultures and languages

who are not yet accustomed to the educational culture in the United States, involvement with the schools may prove difficult. Cultural differences and false assumptions may place parents at a disadvantage. For example, parents' apparent passivity and reluctance to "interfere" with the education professionals may be construed as lack of involvement in the formal schooling of their children (García & Malkin, 1993; Menard-Warwick, 2007; Cheatham, 2008). Lack of acculturation, limited English ability, low socioeconomic status, limited education, and limited understanding of the laws that guide the educational process (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2006) are factors that may partly explain the position of parents of diverse cultures. Other factors such as positive or negative personal orientation toward one's own culture may also influence assimilation to the mainstream culture and stimulate perceptions of equality or inferiority (Cummins, 1989) and impact parent participation in their children's educational planning.

### **Empirical Studies**

Scarce research explores instructional practices, including language of instruction decisions, for young ELLs with disabilities. First, however limited, empirical and qualitative studies exist that not only support bilingualism for young children, but view positively the use of the native language in ELLs' learning environments. Second, other studies focus on parents of ELLs whose concerns, communication styles, and expectations differ greatly from the mainstream American culture. These studies help elucidate the disadvantageous position of parents who have children with disabilities educated in a language and system that is foreign to them. Third, research exists that describes effective teaching practices for ELLs with disabilities. Finally, other research

investigates the impact of professionals on the educational outcomes for ELLs with disabilities.

### *Importance of the Native Language*

Some studies make a case for the importance of the native language for children with disabilities. These studies assert that even young simultaneous bilinguals can discriminate between the native and the second languages at a very early age, can change from one language to the other (code-switch) according to the circumstances, and exhibit a dominant native language in spite of being simultaneous bilinguals. Perozzi and Sanchez (1992) conducted a study with 19 bilingual children with language delays whose mean age was 6 years 8 months. The students were divided into two groups with the first group receiving native language instruction before the English instruction was presented and the second group receiving instruction only in English. The study focused on the students' ability to acquire English prepositions and pronouns. Results indicated that the learning rate of the English-only group was half as efficient as the learning rate of the group that had initial native language support. The researchers concluded that the native language should be preferred as the language of intervention for children with language delays.

Many professionals believe that teaching children with disabilities more than one language will impede the learning process. However, contrary to the common belief that young children will be "confused" when they learn two languages simultaneously, Lanza (1992) found that young children could switch languages, depending on the context, in a meaningful way. Lanza's study investigated a young 2-year-old girl and her ability to

mix the two languages that she was learning—English and Norwegian. The child was able to communicate with her parents in a meaningful way even though her language alternation did not mirror the highly sophisticated process described by other researchers who have studied the language phenomenon known as “code-switching” (Aguirre, 1988; Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001; Miller, 1984; Roseberry-McKibbin & Hedge, 2000). Results from this study suggest that, if a young two-year-old child is able to code-switch, children with disabilities may also reach this skill, even if in a rudimentary way.

Another study by Bosch and Sebastián-Gallés (2001) supports the notion that very young bilingual children are able to distinguish between the two languages they are learning, Bosch and Sebastián-Gallés (2001) studied the responses of 28 four-month old infants to utterances in Catalan and Spanish. The researchers compared the results from two groups of bilingual-to-be infants and two groups of infants from monolingual environments and found no differences between the two groups. The researchers concluded that simultaneous bilingual exposure did not negatively affect the ability of children to discriminate between two languages. These findings refute earlier assumptions that bilingual children cannot distinguish one language from the other at a young age.

An additional feature found among simultaneous bilinguals is that, despite learning two languages at the same time, there is evidence of a “native” language which appears to have a stronger influence in the individual. Sebastián-Gallés et al. (2005) conducted three experiments on 80 children born in the Catalonia province of Spain. These children were early bilinguals who were raised speaking Spanish and Catalan.

Half of the children lived in homes where Spanish was the primary language and half lived in homes where Catalán was the primary language. Children were tested on their ability to discriminate words and non-words in Catalán. Results from this study indicated that children who came from homes where Spanish was the native language made more mistakes when attempting to discriminate between words and non-words in Catalan. The study supported the researcher's hypothesis that, in spite of having two languages since birth, simultaneous bilingual children exhibit a higher proficiency in the primary language of the home.

Finally, bilingual exposure at an early age may be advantageous for children in their later educational experience. For example, a study by Kovelman et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between the age of initial bilingual experience to how children later performed in bilingual reading. The study included 150 normally developing children in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades grouped by home language (English and Spanish). The students were presented with phonological awareness, reading, and language tasks. The tasks were administered uniformly across subjects and included the following: (a) initial and final deletions; (b) phoneme segmentation; (c) pseudo, regular, and irregular words; (d) passage comprehension; and (e) language competence/expressive proficiency. The researchers found that children who learned two languages before the age of three achieved the best results and had excellent reading skills that mirrored the abilities of their monolingual peers.

In spite of the limited number of studies found in the area of language of instruction practices for ELLs with disabilities, the above mentioned studies help frame

this issue for young children in the school setting. Support for early acquisition of two languages is evidenced by research dispelling misconceptions that young children become confused when a second language is added to their repertoire. Furthermore, language acquisition can happen simultaneously and young children can exhibit the necessary skills for mixing the languages in order to enhance their communication attempts. Moreover, the use of the home language of children with and without disabilities should be an integral part of their school instruction. In conclusion, the introduction of two languages to young children appears to be supported by research as well as favoring the primary language for instruction of children with language delays.

#### *Parental Issues*

Parents of ELLs with disabilities face difficulties understanding legal and procedural matters involved in the education of their children. Some obstacles include cultural and language differences which may lead to misconceptions from parents, limited home-school communication, and reduced parental involvement in the educational experience of their children. An example of educators' influence over parents is the research conducted by King and Fogle (2006) which highlighted early childhood teachers' impact on parents' beliefs and behaviors. The researchers conducted individual in-depth interviews with 24 families of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds who were raising English-Spanish bilingual children. Results from their study highlighted major language misconceptions of parents. For example, parents believed that (a) their children would not reach language developmental milestones at the same time as monolingual speakers, (b) the use of two languages would confuse their

children, (c) their children would learn English by watching television, and (d) the brains of bilingual individuals were bigger and better. This study underscores the need for well-informed professionals to help dispel, rather than reinforce, erroneous beliefs held by parents concerning the benefits of bilingual environments.

Another difficulty faced by parents of ELLs involves the disparity between parent and teacher roles. Cheatham (2008) conducted a study that investigated the communication styles of educators and parents during parent-teacher conferences between English speaking teachers in Head Start programs and parents who were native English and native Spanish speakers. The researcher conducted qualitative analysis through interviews, and conversational analysis and utterance counts of parent and teacher interactions. The research concluded that, in general, parents and teachers alike expected the teachers to take control of the meetings and act as the experts. Also, both groups anticipated that bilingual and Spanish-speaking parents would agree with the teachers and defer to their expertise.

In contrast with the previous investigation, Menard-Warwick (2007) conducted a case study with two new immigrant mothers from Nicaragua and who lived in an extended family home in California where their children attended school. The two mothers shared many cultural characteristics and familiar experiences; however, they each brought different perspectives in the upbringing and educational experience of their children. This case study highlighted the differences that exist within people of the same culture and background when dealing with similar circumstances. This research highlights the reality of many parents of other cultures and languages; however, as

Menard-Warwick (2007) concluded, parent involvement may also be highly dependent on individual parents' ability to draw on their own resources even when circumstances and background appear to be homogeneous.

### *Effective Teaching Practices*

Other research has focused on effective teaching practices and programming options for children with disabilities including those who are linguistically and culturally diverse. Duran and Heiry (1986) conducted a study with 38 students with moderate to severe disabilities who came from homes where Spanish was the native language. In their study, students with moderate to severe disabilities were randomly presented with verbal cues in Spanish only, English only, or in Spanish immediately followed by English. These verbal instructions helped students to complete random tasks. The researchers concluded that verbal language cues presented in the home language were more effective than verbal cues in English only or when the two languages were combined. Results from this study support the native language as the best option for students who have moderate to severe disabilities and who have a language other than English in their repertoire.

Another study that focused on teaching practices for ELLs with disabilities was conducted by Rohena et al. (2002). The researchers investigated how effectively and efficiently four Puerto Rican students with moderate mental retardation learned sight words in English using a 4-second time delay instructional package. Results indicated that the instructional language and task demands appeared to match the students' language abilities in English; therefore, they were able to learn to read the sight words

efficiently. However, Rohena et al. emphasized that their study did not focus on the development of literacy skills or on the importance of reading to derive meaning. Rather, the study focused on a time delay procedure that required visual prompts and modeling to teach sight word reading. In conclusion, this study supports teaching ELLs with mental retardation in English when the tasks match the language abilities of the students.

Research supporting the importance of phonological awareness as a prerequisite skill for reading includes a study by Dickinson et al. (2004). They investigated, through an experimental design, the phonological awareness skills of 123 low-income, Spanish-English bilingual children. The children were assessed in the fall and spring during two 30 minutes sessions. Areas assessed included phonological awareness in English and Spanish, emergent literacy, and receptive vocabulary. Results of the study supported the transfer of phonological awareness, oral, and written skills from L1 to L2. Based on their results, the researchers concluded that (a) young children from Spanish speaking homes transfer awareness from one language to the other, (b) parents who are non-English speakers should be encouraged to work on developing phonological skills with their children in the primary language, (c) instructional programs should incorporate the two languages in order to enhance the phonological awareness of young children, and (d) even in English classrooms, Spanish speaking children should be given the opportunity to develop phonological awareness in their native language.

Finally, programming options for ELLs with a range of disabilities have been the focus of research. For example, Milian and Pearson (2005) conducted a case study of two students ages 10 and 11 who were visually impaired to determine if they could be

successfully placed in a dual language program. They suggested that the success of programs for students with visual impairments depended on the extent of collaborative efforts between everyone involved. Though the researchers concluded that it was possible, they described the vast demands placed on the teachers, parents, students, specialized teachers, and school personnel.

In summary, research supports native language instruction for young ELLs who are developing phonological awareness skills. Also, research maintains that ELLs with moderate to severe disabilities can and do perform better in tasks that are presented to them in their native language. However, research also supports the introduction of English and teaching in English as long as the language demands match the L2 language skills of the students. Furthermore, research indicates that it is feasible to mainstream students with significant disabilities such as visual impairments in dual language bilingual classrooms.

#### *Impact of Educational Professionals*

Teachers have a strong influence on the educational outcomes for their students. Additionally, there are many important factors that affect teachers who educate linguistically and culturally diverse students with disabilities. In one study, Roache et al. (2003) sampled 125 educational professionals who worked with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities (CLDE). The investigation focused on the teachers' perceptions, practices, and needs in relation to delivery of services for CLDE students. Participants of the study reported a mutual lack of knowledge between colleagues of the roles each professional played when working with CLDE students.

They also reported time limitations and a lack of administrative support. In conclusion, the study highlighted the need for additional training and extra time to collaborate between professionals who work with ELLs with disabilities.

Cultural and language differences between teachers and ELLs with disabilities also affect the perceptions of educators in relation to their effectiveness. In their study, Paneque and Barbetta (2006) examined the reported self-efficacy of special education teachers of ELLs. They surveyed 202 elementary special education teachers who taught ELLs. The researchers indicated that the overall teacher efficacy scores obtained by teachers were high. They also found that levels of teacher preparation, years of experience teaching, and socioeconomic status of the students were not factors that affected the reported self-efficacy of the teachers. However, they found that a significant factor that affected self-efficacy scores included teachers' concerns that they did not speak the language of the children in their classroom.

In a particularly relevant study, Mueller et al. (2006) surveyed a sample of 337 special education teachers working with ELLs with moderate to severe disabilities about assessment and instructional practices, availability of second language resources, personal satisfaction, and procedures for language of instruction decisions. A high percentage of participants reported that they were ill prepared to work with ELLs with disabilities and that they used English as their primary instructional language. The study also found that parents were included in the decision making process only 57% of the time and that administrative encouragement for parent participation in the language of instruction decision during the IEP meeting occurred only 38% of the time.

In conclusion, there appear to be a variety of important factors that affect professionals who work with ELLs with disabilities including mutual role understanding, self-efficacy issues, availability of resources, time constraints, limited second language knowledge, and limited administrative support.

### **Summary**

#### *The Case for Native Language Instruction*

For young children with disabilities who come from homes where English is not the native language, there is no specific law or guideline that mandates that they be identified as LEP nor is there a law that ensures that they will be offered services in their native language. Chapter 89 (19 TAC) states only that students must be “school aged” in order to qualify for bilingual or ESL services. In Texas, children entering pre-Kindergarten programs must be four years old; therefore, the question as to whether these guidelines apply to three-year-old children in PPCD programs is left up to the independent school districts to determine if these children are considered “school aged” or not, and, as an extension of this question, whether or not they qualify for the bilingual or ESL pre-Kindergarten programs or not.

#### *A Nebulous Decision*

The determination of whether to offer bilingual or ESL services to young ELLs with disabilities in PPCD or Pre-K inclusion settings is presently nebulous in the state of Texas. Furthermore, there is no mechanism by which districts reconsider the language status of children when they turn four or five years of age. Hence, these children may transition to special education programs at the age of four or five without the opportunity

for a reexamination of their language status. Others of these children may exit PPCD programs directly into general education regardless of whether or not they are identified as LEP. In the latter case, children may face difficulties mainstreaming into regular education programs if their language abilities in English have not been adequately developed.

#### *Need for Native Language Instruction*

Children who meet eligibility criteria for special education services at a very young age often exhibit difficulties in the areas of speech and communication. Those children who have heard and interacted in a language other than English for the first three years of their life may not be prepared to receive instruction in English. Without careful attention, the language of instruction in their classroom may not match their specific educational needs.

This study holds as its premise that native language instruction and support should be part of the individualized education program for young ELLs. However, several factors may interfere in the decision-making process including the personal beliefs and professional preparation of educators, the level of decision-making participation of the parents, and the availability of bilingual and ESL programs for these children.

#### **Research Questions**

The overarching question guiding this research is whether the native language of young ELLs with disabilities is considered as part of assessment and instructional

practices in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion programs. Specifically, five research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What were the existing and recommended practices concerning language of instruction for young ELLs in PPCD programs?
2. What were the beliefs and attitudes of professionals (early childhood teachers and special education evaluators) concerning the type of instruction available for young ELLs in PPCD programs?
3. To what extent were early childhood teachers and special education evaluators prepared to work with young ELLs in PPCD programs?
4. Which variables best predicted future referral of young ELLs in PPCD programs to Bilingual and ESL programs?
5. Were the responses from the early childhood teacher group significantly different from those reported by the group of special education evaluators?

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This chapter includes a description of the participants, the survey instrument, the data collection, and the data analysis conducted in this study.

#### **Participants**

The two groups of participants in this study represented a purposive sample (Huck, 2008) of education and evaluation professionals who worked with young ELLs with disabilities. The first group was composed of early childhood teachers in PPCD and Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) inclusion settings. The second group comprised special education evaluators trained and knowledgeable in the field of bilingual special education.

##### *Teacher Group*

The teacher group included early childhood teachers teaching in PPCD classrooms and Pre-K inclusion settings in the Texas Region 4 Education Service Center (ESC) area. Twenty regional ESCs in Texas provide assistance to school districts. Region 4 ESC encompasses 54 school districts that range in size and location including school districts in the Houston Metropolitan area and its neighboring counties (see Appendix A). Region 4 ESC is comprised of different divisions such as the Special Education Early Childhood Division (SEECD) which collaborated in the training and information distribution for teachers of young children with disabilities. As part of this effort, the SEECD coordinated meetings for the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) which was comprised of coordinators for PPCD programs, ECI directors,

representatives from community organizations such as “Collaborative for Children,” as well as other organizations such as Head Start throughout Region 4 ESC. The ECAC meetings included discussion and training on laws and other topics that affect early childhood special education. ECAC members oversee all of the early childhood special education teachers in the Region 4 ESC area.

The Region 4 ESC Special Education Early Childhood Specialist distributed the teacher survey in a sequenced approach. First, the Education Specialist sent a link to the survey, via email, to the ECAC requesting that they forward it to all PPCD teachers and Pre-K inclusion teachers under their supervision. Second, the Education Specialist contacted, via email, all PPCD and Pre-K inclusion teachers who had attended trainings at Region 4 ESC in the past three years. Third, all participants were asked to forward the link to the survey to other PPCD and Pre-K inclusion teachers in their school districts. All PPCD and Pre-K inclusion teachers in Region 4 ESC were emailed about this study by the Region 4 ESC Special Education Specialist. Initial contact with this group was made via an email which included a description of the study, an electronic link to the survey, and an explanation of the importance of including the PPCD and Pre-K inclusion teachers in the study (see Appendix B).

#### *Evaluator Expert Group*

The expert group of evaluators was drawn from the Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group (BALG) and the Bilingual Special Education Evaluation (BSEE) group. BALG is composed of professionals in the area of bilingual special education evaluation from the Houston Metropolitan area. This group was spearheaded by Dr.

Criselda Guajardo Alvarado and met regularly at the Harris County Department of Education to discuss issues related to the evaluation and placement of ELLs in special education. The Bilingual Special Education Evaluation (BSEE) group was spearheaded by Drs. Criselda Guajardo Alvarado and Kim Arredondo and maintains communication through an Internet Yahoo Group called the “Bilingual Special Education Evaluation” group. Professionals who participated in the discussions presented in this forum included Educational Diagnosticians, Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSP), and Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) who worked with ELLs. These professionals worked in school districts ranging from small, rural districts to large, metropolitan districts across Texas.

This research surveyed the special education evaluators from BALG and those who participated in the BSEE group. Participation to BALG was open to all evaluation professionals working with ELLs with disabilities in the great Houston Metropolitan area. Members of BSEE communicated via the Internet and participation to this group was granted and supervised by the moderator. These participants represented the different facets of special education evaluation including academic, psychological, and speech and language assessment. Discussions in both groups included, but were not limited to, best practices and legal mandates in the field of assessment and instruction of ELLs in special education.

All participants of the evaluation group were contacted by Drs. Criselda Alvarado (BALG) and Dr. Kim Arredondo (BSEE). Initial contact with the evaluators in both groups was made via email and included a description of the study, an electronic

link to the survey, and an explanation of the importance of including the evaluators in the study (see Appendix C). At the time of the survey distribution, the BSEE group membership encompassed 279 participants and the BALG active membership totaled 75 evaluators—a total of 354 possible participants. However, it was possible for BALG members to also be part of the BSEE group. A conservative assumption was made that, at most, all 75 BALG members also belonged to the BSEE group. Therefore, the number used to estimate the total potential participants from both of these groups was 279.

Ten screening questions were included in the survey in order to select an “expert group” of evaluators (see Table 1). These questions were developed through examination of articles and professional papers that listed the characteristics of competent evaluators of ELLs (Alvarado, 2006; ASHA, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2005) including cultural, linguistic, and educational competence.

PPCD programs were defined as those that included, but were not limited to children with speech impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism, pervasive developmental disorders, or developmental disabilities. Also, Pre-K inclusion programs were defined as regular education Pre-K programs that included children with disabilities. It should be noted that the children described in this study were not truly “balanced bilingual” children who would have equal proficiency in their primary language and English (Langdon, Wiig, & Nielsen, 2005); they were children who were sequential learners of English or who came from homes where the native language was other than English. For the majority of the children included in this study, English instruction was concomitant with their initial placement in public school.

Table 1

*Screening Questions for Expert Evaluator Group*

Research Question	Required Answer
14. In your university/college program, did you ever receive any training for working with English Language learner students?	Yes
15. Do you speak a second language in addition to English?	Choice “d”
16. In the past two years, have you received training related to ELL/Special Education issues?	Yes
17. Are you familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the roles of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities?	Yes
18. Do you have a Bilingual endorsement?	Yes
19. Do you have an ESL endorsement?	Yes
29. Have you received training in bilingual special education assessment?	Yes
30. Have you received training in cultural competence?	Yes
31. Are you a member of the Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group in your area?	Yes
32. Have you had at least 5 years of experience assessing ELL special education students?	Yes

## Survey Instrument

This study used an online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire had two forms; the *Teacher Form* (see Appendix D) and the *Evaluator Form* (see Appendix E). See Appendix F for a side-by-side view of the two forms. See Appendix G for a list of terms and definitions.

### *Teacher Survey*

The teacher form of the questionnaire used for this study included a total of 29 questions. Twelve questions were developed by the researcher. Seventeen questions were from the Mueller et al. (2006) study with slight modifications to three of the questions to fit the demands of the current study. The survey questions in the study were divided into the following categories which correspond to the first five research questions previously introduced: (a) existing and recommended language of instruction practices, (b) beliefs and attitudes of professionals concerning instructional practices, (c) extent of professional preparation, (d) variables that best predict future referral to Bilingual and ESL programs, and (e) demographic information (see Table 2).

The first eight questions in the survey inquired about instructional practices for young ELLs in PPCD classrooms including language proficiency, language dominance testing and approaches for teaching students expressive and receptive language. One question inquired about parent preferences.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of professionals (early childhood teachers and special education evaluators) about native instruction were covered by five questions on

Table 2

*Research Questions, Categories, and Survey Questions*

Research Question	Category/Variable	Survey Questions
What are the existing and recommended practices concerning language of instruction for young ELLs in PPCD programs?	Instructional practices	1 - 8
What are the beliefs and attitudes of professionals (early childhood teachers and special education evaluators) concerning the type of instruction available for young ELLs in PPCD programs?	Beliefs and attitudes	9 - 13
To what extent are early childhood teachers and special education evaluators prepared to work with young ELLs in PPCD programs?	Professional preparation	14 - 19
Which variables best predict future referral of young ELLs in PPCD programs to the Bilingual/ESL program?	LPAC Representative Early flagging Bilingual Program ESL Program	20 - 23
Demographic Information	Demographics	24 – 28

the survey. One question was added to an earlier draft of the survey to determine the relative weight that participants gave to students' language needs as compared to their special education needs. Another question asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the overall instruction of their ELLs on a four point Likert-scale. The last two questions inquired about the attitude of the administrator usually present at the IEP meeting for ELLs with disabilities.

There were six questions regarding the professional preparation of early childhood teachers and special education evaluators who worked with young ELLs in PPCD classrooms. These questions asked about professionals' knowledge of a second language, college and university training and endorsement on ELL matters, as well as their familiarity with recommendations from the Texas Education Agency regarding the language of instruction for students.

Four questions inquired about the existence of Bilingual or ESL programs in the teacher's school districts, the participation of LPAC representatives at the IEP meetings of young ELLs, and early identification procedures of children for future referral and placement in the Bilingual/ESL programs.

Six questions obtained demographic information. Questions under this category included educational attainment, years of experience, description of educational setting, professional title, and the primary languages of young ELLs.

#### *Expert Evaluator Survey*

A similar questionnaire to that used with the teachers was used with the sample of special education evaluators. This evaluator version of the questionnaire included a

total of 32 questions. The majority of the questions modified wording used in the teacher form. For example, questions regarding “teaching practices” were modified to focus on “recommended practice.” and a question on the early childhood teacher form, “In what language do you teach students?” was changed on the evaluators version to, “In what language do you recommend teaching students?” Questions that did not apply to the evaluators, such as a question on the teacher form about the educational setting, were omitted. In addition, questions 1 through 5 of the questionnaires asked evaluators what they would recommend as best practice. These five questions inquired about language proficiency and language dominance testing for ELLs and teaching approaches in expressive and receptive language. The remainder of the questionnaire asked both evaluators and teachers the questions from the practice perspective. The objective for posing some of the questions for evaluators from a practitioner’s point of view was to establish possible differences between the two groups and highlight “best practices” or shortcomings for the teacher group.

#### *Design of Items for Both Surveys*

The researcher defined terms used in the questionnaires for the survey participants as follows: (a) *ELL*-English Language Learner, (b) *LEP*-Limited English Proficient, (c) *LPAC*- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee in the Bilingual/ESL program that is responsible for the identification of children who require the services from that program, (d) *ESL*-English as a Second Language, (e) *Primary Language*-the native language of the student and the language that is primarily spoken in the home, and (f) *IEP*-Individualized Education Plan.

Questions differed in their presentation. Some were multiple choice questions that required only one answer (*select one that applies*), while others allowed multiple answers (*select all that apply*). There were forced choice questions that required *yes/no* answers. Some of these forced choice questions had a drop box that respondents completed if their answers required clarification. Other questions included Likert-scale items based on a range from 1 (*highly dissatisfied*) to 4 (*highly satisfied*). Additional questions included a matrix of choices that required one answer per row.

Questions 14 to 19 and 29 to 32 were used to determine if evaluator respondents would be included in the best practice expert group (see Table 1). Question 15 required respondents to specify if they were fluent speakers of more than one language and the remaining nine questions in this section required an answer of “yes” if the respondent was to be selected as a member of the expert group. Respondents met the criteria of “experts” by answering at least seven questions as specified above.

Recommendations made in the Mueller et al. (2006) study were taken into consideration in the modification of the survey questions. Mueller et al. indicated that descriptions of educational settings in which their participants taught was not asked and suggested that this information would have been helpful to them in the interpretation phase. Therefore, a question was added to the survey that inquired about the teachers’ educational settings. Mueller et al. (2006) also suggested the inclusion of more information related to the ethnic background, classroom placements, and language experiences of the students. In the current study, if respondents answered “yes” to: “Do you currently teach students who come from homes where another language is spoken?”

they were asked to list the languages in the drop box next to the answer choice. Another question was added that asked “How would you describe your position?” Each survey provided choices for participants; however, they were given the opportunity to check “other” and fill in their own response.

#### *Questionnaire Review for Reliability and Validity*

The Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) consisted of coordinators for PPCD programs, ECI directors, representatives from community organizations such as “Collaborative for Children,” as well as other organizations such as Head Start throughout the Region 4 ESC area. ECAC meetings included discussion and training on laws and other topics that affect early childhood special education. ECAC members supervised all of the early childhood special education teachers in the Region 4 ESC area. The ECAC was selected to review the questionnaire due to their supervisory role with PPCD teachers and their overall knowledge and influence over programming decisions related to the children studied in this research. The questionnaire was reviewed during a network meeting held by the ECAC hosted by Region 4 ESC during the 2006-2007 school year. The researcher presented a pilot form of the questionnaire after giving a short description of the study to coordinators. The presentation lasted 1 hour and 30 coordinators participated in critiquing the instrument for clarity and understandability.

*Reliability.* The reliability and internal consistency of the instruments was assessed with Cronbach’s alpha. This technique was appropriate for the surveys used in this study because the two surveys incorporated questions that could be answered in different ways (Huck, 2008). The teacher survey yielded an alpha of .672 and the

evaluator survey yielded an alpha of .567. Items related to demographic questions were not included in this analysis. Other analyses were conducted on subsets of the questionnaires. The first subset included the following six variables: (a) language proficiency testing, (b) language dominance testing, (c) evaluation of students in the primary language, (d) LPAC representation at the IEP meetings, (e) flagging of students for future referral, and (f) knowledge of TEA recommendations concerning roles of IEP and LPAC committees. This subset of questions yielded an alpha of .586 for the teacher survey and .586 for the evaluator survey. The second subset included 11 variables: (a) approaches used in teaching receptive language, (b) language used to teach expressive language, and (c) teaching of expressive language depending on what stage students are in their language expression (pragmatics, vocalizations, 1 word in PL, 2 words in PL, 3-5 words in PL, 1 word in English, 2-3 words in English, 3-5 words in English, and alternative communication). This subset of questions yielded an alpha of .774 for the teacher survey and .747 for the evaluator survey. The third subset included the following three variables: (a) administrator encouragement, (b) attitude of administrator, and (c) professional satisfaction. This subset of questions yielded an alpha of .623 for the evaluator survey and .363 for the teacher survey.

Reliability and internal consistency were also determined through an additional review by 6 representatives of the fields of bilingual education, special education, as well as by statistical measures. This determination encompassed the extent to which the questionnaire yielded consistent measures which allowed the researcher to draw

conclusions and make generalizations about the study. The internal consistency was analyzed by comparing survey items with the specific themes addressed in the study.

*Validity.* The content validity of the instrument was established through the review of the questionnaire by representatives of the fields of bilingual education, special education, and statistical measures. Establishing content validity included checking for content clarity, bias, relevance, appropriateness, and conciseness. Results from this review determined that the instrument accurately reflected the concept of the study.

### **Data Collection**

After approval of the study and questionnaire from the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the data were collected. The collection of data was done through email survey methodology following current methodological suggestions (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Sue & Ritter, 2007; Shaefer & Dillman, 1998; Schonlau, Fricker Jr. & Elliott, 2002; Rea & Parker, 2005). Electronic questionnaires are becoming widely accepted by academia (Rea & Parker, 2005) and are a current alternative to more traditional telephone and mail surveys. Predictions are that they will eventually replace all other methods of survey administration (Schonlau et al., 2002). Web-based surveys provide many benefits to researchers including appeal, low cost, speedy responses, and easy fielding (Schonlau et al., 2002; Sue & Ritter, 2007). Sue and Ritter (2007) indicate that the literature on response rates for emailed questionnaires reports ranges from 24% to 76%. However, rate of return of email-distributed surveys can prove to be even higher as described in a study by Herzberg and Stough (2007) in which 82% of participants

completed and returned the electronic surveys mentioned in their study. A similarly high rate of return was expected for this research given the widespread accessibility to the Internet and the simple steps required by the participants. Also, the researcher was a member of the Houston area BALG and the BSEEG groups which was expected to favorably influence the participation of evaluators.

In order to make the questionnaire accessible in the Internet, the two forms of the instrument were electronically formatted. The electronic forms of the instrument were placed on the server of SurveyMonkey.com, at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). SurveyMonkey.com is a service from a private corporation that specializes in the creation of secure on-line questionnaires. The company allows researchers to post the questionnaire on-line as well as tabulate results of the survey.

The survey data were collected as follows: Initial contact with participants was made via email by the BALG and BSEEG moderators and the early childhood special education specialist from Region 4 ESC. The participants were provided with a description of the study, confidentiality and anonymity assurances, and a description of additional safeguards. The survey was accessed when participants clicked a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that led them directly to the survey.

The SurveyMonkey.com website prevented the automatic recording of the respondents' email addresses. As a result, the data collected did not provide any information that revealed the respondents' identity and all responses were anonymous. However, the researcher monitored the number of respondents who had completed the questionnaire through a counting system built in the SurveyMonkey.com website.

Determining the number of respondents was important as, according to Sue and Ritter (2007), it is not possible to estimate the adequate sample size when using nonprobability samples. Sue and Ritter explain that, when using samples where the researcher cannot “estimate the variability in the underlying population” (p. 34), no formula exists for estimating the size of the sample.

Sue and Ritter also suggest several rules for research using nonprobability samples in multivariate research which include using samples larger than 30 and smaller than 500 and obtaining an “adequate” number by multiplying the number of variables times ten. The authors also suggest selecting the largest sample possible. For the teacher sample in this study, the total number of possible participants was not known. However, given that the survey targeted all early childhood educators in schools across Region 4 ESC, and that the number of school districts belonging to that ESC is substantial (54), the researcher concluded that the number of possible respondents feasibly fell within the 30 to 500 number suggested by Sue and Ritter (2007). Additionally, this researcher used the statistics calculator available in the Internet at [www.DanielSoper.com](http://www.DanielSoper.com) in order to determine the minimum required sample size to conduct multiple regression analyses. The researcher set the Alpha level to 0.05 which was the minimum used to claim statistical significance. Also, the anticipated effect size ( $f^2$ ) was set at 0.15 and the desired statistical power level was set at 0.8. Results from this procedure indicated that the minimum required sample size was that of 178 participants.

Participants were notified by the BALG and BSEE moderators and the Region 4 ESC early childhood special education specialist, via email, of the upcoming

questionnaire in February, 2008. Two weeks later, the initial email was sent to the participants requesting their involvement in the study along with a direct link to the questionnaire at the SurveyMonkey.com website. One week later, a follow-up email was sent to nonrespondents. Two weeks later, the final request for participants was sent to the rest of the nonrespondents.

In the initial email, participants were invited to complete the questionnaire and that fifty \$25.00 gift certificates to [www.target.com](http://www.target.com) would be randomly awarded to participants. Upon completion of the survey, respondents who wanted to participate in the drawing were asked to email the researcher to a dedicated email address that was created for the drawing. Every fifth participant was awarded a \$25.00 gift certificate, which was claimed electronically.

## **Data Analysis**

### *Descriptive Statistics*

The number of surveys distributed and the rate of return were tabulated along with a description of the respondents' demographic information. Table 3 indicates the number of respondents to each survey and the number of respondents included in the analysis. The characteristics of the participants are reported through frequency distributions, percentages, and means. Calculations were made using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0.0) software program.

### *Sequential Logistic Regression*

Logistic regression is a type of multiple regression analysis involving the use of two or more measured variables that yield continuous or categorical scores to predict a

Table 3

*Demographic Information*

Number of Surveys	Percentage	Count
Total Teacher Surveys Received	100	381
Total Teacher Surveys Included in the Analysis	78	297
Total Evaluator Surveys Received	100	98
Total Expert Evaluator Surveys Included in the Analysis	70	69

criterion variable that is categorical in nature (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This type of analysis is “well suited for studying the relationship between a categorical or qualitative outcome variable and one or more predictor variables” (Peng & So, 2002). The SPSS LOGISTIC REGRESSION was used by this researcher as it offers the flexibility in that the predictors can include continuous, discrete, and dichotomous variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The prediction tested through sequential logistic regression analysis used SPSS to assess whether parents were included in the language of instruction decision-making process for of their children. This prediction yielded a dichotomous answer of *yes* or *no*. The independent or predictor variables (see Table 4) included: (a) twelve instructional practice variables (assessment of students in their primary language, approaches to teaching in the expressive language, and approaches to teaching in the receptive language), (b) eight available resources (written materials in other languages, respondents’ second language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, primary language materials for parents, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters, and augmentative communication devices in other languages), and (c) two administrative variables (administrative encouragement and administrative attitude regarding language of instruction decisions).

In the Mueller et al. (2006) study, the order used to enter the predictor variables was selected based on their pilot study. As highlighted by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), there are several ways to enter the variable data before conducting the logistic regression analysis in SPSS. For example, researchers can specify the order in which they enter the

Table 4

*Sequential Logistic Regression Analysis for Parent Inclusion*


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Dependent Variable	Independent (Predictor) Variables
Parent inclusion in the language decision	<p>a) Instructional practices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. assessment of students in their primary language</li> <li>2. approaches to teaching in the expressive language</li> <li>3. approaches to teaching in the receptive language</li> </ol> <p>b) Availability of resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. written materials in other languages</li> <li>2. respondents' second language abilities</li> <li>3. bilingual related service professionals</li> <li>4. bilingual instructional assistants</li> <li>5. primary language materials for parents</li> <li>6. formally trained interpreters</li> <li>7. informal interpreters</li> <li>8. Augmentative Communication Devices in other Languages</li> </ol> <p>c) Administrative position</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. encouragement</li> <li>2. attitude toward native language v. English</li> </ol>

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data and they also can run one or multiple runs for each step of the sequence. For the present study, the researcher entered all the predictor variables (assessment, teaching expressive language, teaching receptive language, and administrator) and chose the forward step model option which determined the order in which the variables would be included in the equation according to their weight. The output generated by SPSS allowed the researcher to identify and determine the strength of each step of the model generated by the addition of selected predictors. Finally, each step of the model was compared to the previous one and it was determined whether the addition of the variable strengthened the model.

#### *Cross Tabulation*

Cross Tabulation analysis was used to find out if there was a relationship between predictor variables such as language dominance and proficiency testing, LPAC representation at the IEP meetings of young ELLs with disabilities, and the existence of bilingual and ESL programs and the outcome or dependent variable that specified whether students were flagged for future referral to the bilingual or ESL program (see Table 5).

#### *Standard Sequential Regression*

Following the Mueller et al. (2006) example, standard sequential regression was conducted using SPSS to examine respondents' satisfaction with current instruction of ELLs (see Table 6). A forced dichotomy was created for the dependent or criterion variable "respondent satisfaction" in order to satisfy the requirements of the logistic regression analysis. The four choices offered in the questionnaire (highly dissatisfied,

Table 5

*Cross Tabulation Analysis**Flagging of Students for Future Referral to the Bilingual or ESL Program*


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Dependent Variable	Independent (Predictor) Variables
Flagging of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Language dominance testing</li> <li>b) Language proficiency testing</li> <li>c) LPAC representation at IEP meetings</li> <li>d) Bilingual program in the district</li> <li>e) ESL program in the district</li> </ul>

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Table 6

*Standard Sequential Regression for Respondents' Satisfaction*

Dependent Variables	Predictor (Independent) Variables
Respondents' Satisfaction	<p data-bbox="646 457 967 493">a) Instructional materials</p> <ol data-bbox="743 533 1403 785" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="743 533 1403 569">1. written materials in languages other than English</li> <li data-bbox="743 604 1317 640">2. primary language materials for the parents</li> <li data-bbox="743 676 1292 785">3. augmentative communication devices in language other than English</li> </ol> <p data-bbox="646 827 938 863">b) Bilingual assistance</p> <ol data-bbox="743 903 1260 1226" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="743 903 1117 938">1. personal language abilities</li> <li data-bbox="743 974 1260 1010">2. bilingual related service professionals</li> <li data-bbox="743 1045 1187 1081">3. bilingual instructional assistants</li> <li data-bbox="743 1117 1135 1152">4. formally trained interpreters</li> <li data-bbox="743 1188 1162 1226">5. informally trained interpreters</li> </ol>

somewhat dissatisfied, satisfied, and highly dissatisfied) were consolidated into only two; satisfied (*yes*) or dissatisfied (*No*). A total of eight predictors or independent variables were obtained from the questions in the survey that covered the available resources for teachers who had ELLs in their classrooms. These variables were divided into two themes: instructional materials and bilingual assistance. The following variables were part of instructional materials: written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, and augmentative communication devices in language other than English. The following variables were part of the bilingual assistance: personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, and informal interpreters. The standard sequential regression was conducted using SPSS and the variables were entered in the order mentioned above.

#### *Mann-Whitney U Test*

A comparison of responses from the evaluator and the teacher groups was conducted through the Mann-Whitney U test in order to find out if there were any significant differences between the answers from the two groups on the questions listed in Table 7. According to Huck (2008), this procedure is very powerful in detecting significant differences between two groups on the same variable and it is not likely to produce a Type II error. First, the data from each of the two groups (teacher and expert evaluator) was combined under each of the variables of interest. A grouping variable was created to identify the teachers from the evaluators in each column. After the nonparametric analysis was run in SPSS, results showed calculations for U and *p*-values

Table 7

*The Mann-Whitney U Test for Responses from Teacher and Evaluator Groups*

Question #	Question
5	What expressive language should be taught to an English learner who is learning basic pragmatics, makes simple vocalizations, uses single words in the PL only, uses 2 word utterances only in the PL, uses 3-5 word phrases only in the PL, uses single words in English, uses 2-3 word utterances in English, uses 3-5 word utterances in English, and uses alternative communication?
6	Were parents asked their preferences regarding language of instruction during the IEP meeting or as part of the assessment of the child?
11	How satisfied are you with instruction for your students who are English Language Learners?
12	Did the administrator attending the IEP meeting encourage discussion about the language of instruction?
14	Did early childhood teachers and special education evaluators receive training for working with ELLs?
20	Do LPAC representatives attend the IEP meetings for children in PPCD programs?
21	Are children in PPCD programs flagged for future referral to the Bilingual or ESL program?

were derived. These  $p$ -values were used to detect any significant differences that existed between the two groups within each of the variables. These questions were selected for this analysis because they reflected actual practices from each group. Also, questions did not differ in the way they were posed to participants, thereby allowing the researcher to make a direct comparison between groups.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter is organized into two sections that report the results from each of the two surveys included in the study. Each section includes demographic information and addresses the study's research questions.

#### **Study 1: Teacher Survey**

A total of 381 teachers completed the teacher survey. Of these, 297 (77%) teachers reported that they were currently teaching students who came from homes where a language other than English was spoken. Only these 297 surveys were included in the sample.

#### *Demographic Information*

The sample of 297 teachers included education professionals from school districts ranging in population from less than 5,000 students to greater than 50,000 students. A total of 17.5% (N=52) of teachers reported their district size as being less than 5,000, while 35.7% (N=106) reported that their district was larger than 50,000 (Table 8). A total of 26.6% (N=79) of teachers reported that they had a Bachelor degree whereas 0.7% of the teachers reported that their highest degree was a doctoral degree (Table 8). When asked about their educational setting, 72.7% (N=216) indicated that they taught in a PPCD classroom while 27.3% (N=81) reported that they taught in a PRE-K inclusion classroom. When asked to describe their position, 33% (N=98) indicated that they were early childhood teachers, 24.6% (N=73) reported that they were elementary special education teachers, 3% (N=9) identified themselves as early

Table 8

*Demographics: Size of Districts*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>District size</i>		
<5,000	17.5	52
5,000 – 10,000	6.4	19
10,000 – 15,000	3.0	9
15,000 – 20,000	7.1	21
20,000 – 30,000	7.1	21
30,000 – 40,000	13.1	39
40,000 – 50,000	10.1	30
>50,000	35.7	106
<i>Highest Educational Degree</i>		
Bachelor Degree	26.6	79
Bachelor + Additional Units	36.4	108
Master Degree	22.6	67
Master + Additional Units	13.8	41
Ph.D.	0.7	2
<i>Years of Experience Teaching ELLs</i>		
0-5	49.8	148
6-10	16.5	49
11-15	11.8	35
16-20	10.8	32
21-26	4.7	14
27-31	5.4	16
32+	1.0	3
<i>Teacher Position</i>		
Early Childhood	33.0	98
Early Intervention	3.0	9
Elementary Special Education	24.6	73
Inclusion Specialist	1.0	3
Other	38.4	114

intervention teachers, and 1% (N=3) indicated that they were inclusion specialists (Table 8). The remainder 38.4% (N=114) identified their position as “other,” which included such titles as administrator, bilingual early childhood special education teacher, disability coordinator, educational diagnostician, LSSP, PPCD teacher, Pre-K teacher, special education teacher, and typical classroom teacher. See Table 9 for a comprehensive list of responses.

### *Research Question 1*

What are the existing practices concerning language of instruction for young ELLs in PPCD programs? Descriptive statistics were obtained on four different variables.

*Language of instruction.* Research Question 1 addressed the existing practices concerning language of instruction for young ELLs in PPCD programs. A total of 67.0% (N=199) of teachers reported that language proficiency testing was performed on ELLs in their PPCD program; 13.1% (N=39) of teachers indicated that no proficiency testing was performed in their program; and 19.9 (N=59) of teachers indicated that they did not know whether language proficiency testing was performed in their programs.

Concerning language dominance testing, a total of 57.9% (N=172) of teachers indicated that language dominance testing was performed on their students, 16.2% (N=48) of teachers said no, while 25.9% (N=77) of teachers indicated that they did not know if language dominance testing was performed on their students (see Table 10).

*Instructional practices.* Questions about instructional practices included items that asked teachers what linguistic approaches they used when teaching receptive and

Table 9

*Description of Teacher Position “Other”*

Titles	Count
Administrator	4
Autism teacher	2
Bilingual teacher	1
Consultant	1
Co-teacher	1
Disability Coordinator	1
Dyslexia/ESL Teacher	1
Early Childhood Special Education Teacher	12
Early Childhood Special Education Teacher/Bilingual	1
Early Childhood Specialist	1
Educational Diagnostician	2
ELL teacher	1
ESL teacher	2
Inclusion teacher	1
Instructional Specialist	4
Licensed School Specialist in Psychology	2
Mentor Teacher	1
Occupational therapist	2
Occupational Therapy Assistant	1
Paraprofessional	3
Physical Therapist	2
PPCD Teacher	21
Pre K	2
Pre-K ESL teacher	1
Pre-K Inclusion Teacher	3
Preschool director/owner	1
Preschool special education teacher	1
Regular education	1
Speech Language Pathologist	33
SLP/Bilingual	1
Special Education Teacher	3
Substitute Teacher	1

Table 10

*Language Dominance and Proficiency Testing (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Language Dominance</i>		
Yes	67.0	199
No	13.1	39
Don't Know	19.9	59
<i>Language Proficiency</i>		
Yes	57.9	172
No	16.2	48
Don't Know	25.9	77

expressive language. A total of 11.4% (N=34) chose primary language instruction, 13.5% (N=40) chose English language immersion, 33.3% (N=99) chose English-only instruction, and 41.8% (N=124) supported the use of English with some primary language support (see Table 11).

Teachers were asked to choose whether they would use the native language of the student or English given different hypothetical scenarios. Scenario choices ranged from having basic pragmatic skills, making vocalizations, using single words, and using longer word utterances. In every situation, teachers chose English as the preferred language for their students (see Table 12).

*Parent preferences.* A total of 55.6% (N=165) of teachers responded that they asked parents about their preference regarding the language of instruction for their students, while 44.4% (N=132) responded that they did not ask parents for of input regarding language of instruction (see Table 13). When asked what language teachers used for evaluating their students, a total of 48.8% (N=145) of teachers indicated that they assessed students in their primary language while 51.2% (N=152) did not (see Table 14).

*Resources.* Teachers were asked to choose the instructional resources available to them from a list of items on the survey. This list of materials included written materials in L2, teacher's own L2 abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, primary language materials for parents, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters, and augmentative communication. A majority of teachers, 73.4% (N=218), reported that they had access to informal interpreters (e.g.,

Table 11

*Teaching Receptive and Expressive Language (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Teaching Receptive Language</i>		
Primary language	11.4	34
English language immersion	13.5	40
English only	33.3	99
English with some L1 support	41.8	124
<i>Teaching Expressive Language</i>		
English only	50.8	151
English and primary language	44.8	133
Primary language only	4.4	13

Table 12

*Expressive Language in Primary Language or English (N=297)*

<i>Student is...</i>	Primary Language		English	
	%	Count	%	Count
learning pragmatics	31.0	92	69.0	205
making simple vocalizations	31.3	93	68.7	204
using single words in PL	46.8	139	53.2	158
using 2 words in PL	42.4	126	57.6	171
using 3-5 words in PL	37.0	110	63.0	187
using single words English	12.8	38	87.2	259
using 2-3 words in English	10.4	31	89.6	266
using 3-5 words in English	8.8	26	91.2	271
using alternative communication	21.9	65	78.1	232

Table 13

*Parent Preferences (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Ask for Parent Preferences</i>		
Yes	55.6	165
No	44.4	132

Table 14

*Language of Evaluation (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Teachers evaluate students in Primary Language</i>		
Yes	48.8	145
No	51.2	152

other students, relatives, friends, or instructional aides), 63.6% (N=189) indicated access to primary language materials, and 63.3% (N=188) reported access to bilingual instructional assistants. Also, 55.9% (N=166) of teachers indicated they had access to written materials in languages other than English, 53.5% (N=159) reported that they were provided with bilingual related service professionals; and 50.2% (N=149) of teachers identified they used formally trained interpreters. Furthermore, 35.7% (N=106) of teachers relied on their own second language abilities and 25.3% (N=75) of them used augmentative communication devices in a language other than English (see Table 15).

### *Research Question 2*

Research Question 2, “What are the beliefs and attitudes of teachers concerning the type of instruction available for young ELLs in PPCD programs?” focused on the beliefs and attitudes of teachers who worked with ELLs in PPCD programs. Teachers were forced to choose one of six options. A total of 26.9% (N=80) of teachers indicated that they believed children need to develop their primary language before they are able to acquire English as a second language. A total of 19.9% (N=59) of teachers reported that they believed that students who reside in the United States should learn English. A total of 18.9% (N=56) of teachers believed that students should learn to communicate in two languages while 17.8% (N=53) of teachers indicated that whatever language the child would most use in the future should be the language taught to the child. Finally, a total of 10.8% (N=32) of teachers responded that they believed students must be able to communicate with the parents and family members in their primary language while 5.7% (N=17) chose “none of the above” (see Table 16).

Table 15

*Resources for Teachers (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Written materials in L2	55.9	166
Teacher's own L2 abilities	35.7	106
Bilingual related service professionals	53.5	159
Bilingual instructional assistants	63.3	188
Primary language materials for parents	63.6	189
Formally trained interpreters	50.2	149
Informal interpreters	73.4	218
Augmentative communication	25.3	75

Table 16

*Teacher Beliefs Regarding Language of Instruction (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Children need to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English.	26.9	80
Whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.	17.8	53
Students must be able to communicate with parents and family in primary language.	10.8	32
Students should learn to communicate in two languages.	18.9	56
Residents of the U.S. should learn the main societal language, English.	19.9	59
None of the above.	5.7	17

Teachers were asked to weigh which needs were more important when making programming decision for ELLs with disabilities; special education needs or language needs. A total of 87.2% (N=259) of the teachers indicated that both needs were equally important. Only 10.4% (N=31) of the teachers indicated that the special education needs were more important than the language needs of the students, while 2.4% (N=7) of the teachers considered the language needs more important than the special education needs (see Table 17).

Teachers were asked to rate their satisfaction with the instruction in their district for ELLs. A total of 51.2% (N=259) of teachers indicated that they were satisfied, 23.2% (N=69) were somewhat dissatisfied, 17.2% (N=51) were highly satisfied, and 8.4% (N=25) were highly dissatisfied (see Table 18).

Teachers were asked if the administrators at their school encouraged discussion during IEP meetings about the language that should be used to teach receptive and expressive language skills. A total of 52.5% (N=156) of teachers indicated that administrators in their school encouraged discussion about choice of language while 47.5% (N=141) of teachers indicated that administrators did not encourage such discussion (see Table 19). Furthermore, teachers were asked to describe the attitude of the administrator in their school regarding the language of instruction decisions. A total of 51.5% (N=153) of teachers reported that administrators promoted bilingual instruction, 30.6% (N=91) of teachers indicated that administrators in their school were silent on the question, while 17.8% (N=53) of teachers responded that administrators in their school promoted English only instruction (see Table 19).

Table 17

*Special Education and Language Needs (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Special education needs are more important.	10.4	31
Language needs are more important.	2.4	7
Both needs are equally important.	87.2	259

Table 18

*Teacher Satisfaction with Instruction for ELLs (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Highly dissatisfied	8.4	25
Somewhat dissatisfied	23.2	69
Satisfied	51.2	152
Highly Satisfied	17.2	51

Table 19

*Administrator Involvement in Language Decisions for ELLs (N=297)\**

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Administrator Encourages Discussion</i>		
Yes	52.5	156
No	47.5	141
<i>Attitude of Administrator</i>		
Promotes English only	17.8	53
Promotes Bilingual instruction	51.5	153
Is silent on the question	30.6	91

\* As perceived by teachers responding to survey

*Research Question 3*

Research Question 3, “To what extent are early childhood teachers prepared to work with young ELLs in PPCD programs?” addressed the professional preparation of teachers who work with young ELLs. When asked to indicate if they had received training for working with ELLs as part of their teacher education program, 54.2% (N=161) of teachers indicated that they had received training while 45.8% (N=136) of teachers responded that they had not received training in this area (see Table 20).

Also, teachers were asked if, in the past two years, they had received any training on ELL issues. A total of 53.2% (N=158) of teachers reported that they had not received any training while 46.8% (N=139) of them reported that they had received training. The number of hours of training reported by teachers ranged from zero to 100. Furthermore, teachers were asked if they were familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the role of the IEP and LPAC teams regarding the language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities. A total of 43.8% (N=130) of the teachers answered “yes” while 56.2% (N=167) answered “no.”

Additionally, teachers were asked if they had a Bilingual endorsement and if they had an ESL endorsement. A total of 91.2% (N=271) of the teachers indicated that they did not have Bilingual endorsement. Also, a total of 70.7% (N=210) of the teachers indicated that they did not have ESL endorsement. Finally, teachers were asked to describe their second language abilities. A total of 25.6% (N=76) did not speak a second language; 36.4% (N=108) spoke 20-50 words in a second language; 22.9% (N=68) reported that they could carry a limited conversation in a second language; while 15.2%

Table 20

*Qualifications of Teachers of ELLs (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Received ELL Training during teacher training</i>		
Yes	54.2	161
No	45.8	136
<i>Speak a second language</i>		
No	25.6	76
20-50 words	36.4	108
Limited conversation	22.9	68
Fluent in one or more languages	15.2	45
<i>Received ELL training in the past two years</i>		
No	53.2	158
Yes	46.8	139
<i>Familiar with latest TEA recommendations</i>		
Yes	43.8	130
No	56.2	167
<i>Bilingual endorsement</i>		
Yes	8.8	26
No	91.2	271
<i>ESL endorsement</i>		
Yes	29.3	87
No	70.7	210

(N=45) were fluent in one or more languages (see Table 20). When asked to list the number of hours of training related to ELL/Special Education issues they had received, teachers' answers varied greatly from "none" to 100 hours. Table 21 shows hours of training received by participants.

#### *Research Question 4*

Which variables best predict future referral of young ELLs in PPCD programs to the Bilingual and ESL program?

*Descriptive statistics.* In response to the item regarding whether there was a bilingual or ESL program in the district, a total of 90.2% (N=268) of teachers responded that there was a bilingual program in the district while 93.9% (N=279) of teachers indicated that there was an ESL program (see Table 22). When asked if 3- to 5-year-old students in early childhood programs in their district were flagged as LEP for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program, a total of 56.2% (N=167) of teachers answered yes, 14.5% (N=43) said no, and 29.3% (N=87) indicated that they did not know. When asked if representatives from the LPAC attended IEP meetings for these students, a total of 60.3% (N=179) teachers responded yes, 21.2% (N=63) said no, and 18.5% (N=55) related that they did not know (see Table 22).

*Cross Tabulation analysis for flagging ELLs for future referral in the Bilingual or ESL programs: Teacher group.* The Crosstabs procedure in SPSS was used to find out the relationship between five predictive variables and the independent variable of flagging ELLs with disabilities for referral to bilingual or ESL programs. The predictive variables used were the practices of determining the (1) language dominance testing; (2)

Table 21

*Hours of Training in ELL Issues (N=198)*

Number of Hours	Frequency	Percent of Respondents
2	3	2.3
3	8	6.3
4	2	1.6
5	3	2.3
6	18	14.1
7	1	0.8
8	5	3.9
9	2	1.6
10	10	7.8
12	11	8.6
14	1	0.8
15	3	2.3
16	6	4.7
18	1	0.8
19	1	0.8
20	7	5.5
21	3	2.3
24	3	2.3
25	1	0.8
27	1	0.8
28	1	0.8
30	15	11.7
31	1	0.8
32	1	0.8
36	2	1.6
37	1	0.8
40	4	3.1
48	2	1.6
50	1	0.8
51	1	0.8
60	5	3.9
80	1	0.8

Table 21 (continued)

*Hours of Training in ELL Issues (N=198)*

Number of Hours	Frequency	Percent of Respondents
90	1	0.8
100	2	1.6

Table 22

*Young ELLs and Bilingual/ESL Issues (N=297)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Bilingual Program in District</i>		
Yes	90.2	268
No	8.4	25
Don't Know	1.3	4
<i>ESL Program in District</i>		
Yes	93.9	279
No	2.4	7
Don't Know	3.7	11
<i>LPAC Representative at IEP Meetings</i>		
Yes	60.3	179
No	21.2	63
Don't Know	18.5	55
<i>Young 3-5 ELLs Flagged?</i>		
Yes	56.2	167
No	14.5	43
Don't Know	29.3	87
<i>Language Dominance Testing</i>		
Yes	57.9	172
No	16.2	48
Don't Know	25.9	77
<i>Language Proficiency Testing</i>		
Yes	67.0	199
No	13.1	39
Don't Know	19.9	59

language proficiency testing; (3) inclusion of an LPAC representative in the IEP meetings of young ELLs in PPCD programs; (4) the existence of a bilingual program in the district; and (5) the existence of an ESL program in the district. Each step of this procedure determined the percentage of teachers who responded in the affirmative to both the predictive and each of the independent variables (see Table 23). The first combination involved the language dominance testing of ELLs.

Results indicated that a total of 38.8% (N=115) of teachers reported that children were flagged for future referral and that language dominance testing was performed. For the second combination, results indicated that a total of 45.3% (N=134) of teachers reported that children were flagged for future referral and that they were also given language proficiency testing. The third combination involved the representation of the LPAC at the IEP meetings of young ELLs. A total of 41.9% (N=124) of teachers indicated that ELLs were flagged for future referral and that LPAC representatives attended the IEP meetings. In the fourth combination involving the existence of a bilingual program in the district, a total of 51.0% (N=151) teachers reported that children were flagged and that there was a bilingual program in their district. The fifth combination included the flagging of children and the existence of an ESL program in the district. A total of 54.4% (N=161) of teachers reported that children in their schools were flagged for future referral and that there was an ESL program in their school.

In summary, results from this analysis illustrated that a majority of the teachers who indicated that children were flagged for future referral to the bilingual or ESL programs in their districts also reported that dominance and proficiency testing was

Table 23

*Cross Tabulation Analysis**Predicting Future Referrals of Students in PPCD to the Bilingual Programs*

Combination of variables	Percent of Respondents	Count
Children are flagged and there is an ESL program in the school	54.4	161
Children are flagged and there is a bilingual program in the school	51.0	151
Children are flagged and language proficiency testing is performed	45.3	134
Children are flagged and an LPAC representative attends IEP meetings	41.9	124
Children are flagged and language dominance testing is performed	38.8	115

conducted in their schools, that there was LPAC representation at the IEP meetings for these children, and that there were bilingual and ESL programs in their schools. The two combinations of variables that yielded highest percentages involved the existence of bilingual or ESL programs.

*Correlation analysis: Teacher group.* The bivariate Pearson correlation procedure using SPSS was conducted to describe the linear relationship between the following variables: (1) language dominance testing; (2) language proficiency testing; (3) inclusion of an LPAC representative in the IEP meetings of young ELLs in PPCD programs; (4) the existence of a bilingual program in the district; (5) the existence of an ESL program in the district, and (6) the flagging of ELLs for future referral in the Bilingual or ESL programs (see Table 24). The SPSS program yielded alphas that were statistically significant at both the 0.01 and at 0.05 levels. Results from this analysis indicated a moderately high correlation between the two variables, language dominance and language proficiency testing ( $r=.629$ ).

Low correlations were noted between the flagging of students and language proficiency testing ( $r=.288$ ); between flagging of students and LPAC representation ( $r=.277$ ); and between the availability of bilingual program and the availability of ESL program ( $r=.279$ ).

Low correlations were also noted between the flagging of students and language dominance testing ( $r=.223$ ). Also, a low correlation was noted between the LPAC representation at the IEP meetings and the language proficiency testing variables ( $r=.187$ ).

Table 24

*Pearson Correlation Analysis: Teacher Group (N=296)*

Variable	Language Proficiency	Language Dominance	LPAC Rep.	Bilingual Program	ESL Program	Flag
Language Proficiency						
r	1	.629**	.187**	.034	.099	.288**
Sig.		.000	.001	.565	.088	.000
Language Dominance						
r	.629**	1	.124*	.110	.058	.223**
Sig.	.000		.033	.058	.318	.000
LPAC Rep.						
r	.187**	.124*	1	.037	.126*	.277**
Sig.	.001	.033		.530	.030	.000
Bilingual Program						
r	.034	.110	.037	1	.279**	.006
Sig.	.565	.058	.530		.000	.923
ESL Program						
r	.099	.058	.126*	.279**	1	.099
Sig.	.088	.318	.030	.000		.091
Flagging						
r	.288**	.223**	.277**	.006	.099	1
Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.923	.091	

Sig. (2-tailed)

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Finally, weak correlations were also noted between the following variables: (a) the LPAC representation and language dominance ( $r=.124$ ); (b) LPAC representation and ESL program availability ( $r=.126$ ); and ESL program availability and Bilingual program availability ( $r=.279$ ). See Table 24 for an illustration of these correlations.

In summary, the correlation analysis conducted on the teachers' responses yielded low to moderate relationships between all variables tested. The highest correlations were found to exist between language dominance and language proficiency.

#### *Research Question 5*

Are responses from the early childhood teacher group similar or different from the answers reported by the group of special education evaluators?

*Descriptive statistics.* Teachers reported fifty-one languages with the most popular Spanish, followed by Vietnamese, Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, and Korean (see Tables 25 and 26).

*Sequential logistic regression to predict inclusion of parents in the decisions of language of instruction: Teacher group.* The analysis conducted by Mueller et al. (2006) was replicated. Sequential logistic regression analysis was performed to predict parent participation in the language of instruction decisions for ELLs in PPCD programs. The predictor variable was dichotomous and could only be answered in a *yes* or *no* fashion. The independent or predictor variables that contributed to parent participation in this decision-making process included a total of 22 variables: (a) twelve instructional practice variables (pertaining to assessment of students in their primary language, approaches to teaching in the expressive language, and approaches to teaching in the

Table 25

*Number of Languages Reported by Individual Teachers (N=296)*

Number of Languages Reported	Frequency	Percent of Respondents
1	186	63.1
2	54	18.3
3	25	8.5
4	15	5.1
5	6	2.0
6	7	2.4
7	1	0.3
9	1	0.3

Table 26

*Languages Reported by Teachers*

Languages Reported	Count
Spanish	96
Vietnamese	37
Urdu	34
Chinese	21
Arabic	18
Hindi	16
Korean	10
French	7
Portuguese	6
Romanian	6
Tagalog	6
Filipino	5
Swahili	5
Igbo	4
Mandarin	4
Russian	4
Sign Language	4
Cantonese	3
Dutch	3
Farsi	3
African dialects	2
American Sign Language	2
Asian	2
Bengali	2
Bosnian	2
German	2
Japanese	2
Middle Eastern	2

Table 26 (Continued)

*Languages Reported by Teachers*

Languages Reported	Count
Albanian	1
Egyptian	1
English	1
Ethiopian	1
Gujarati	1
Hmong	1
Kenyan	1
Kurdish	1
Near Eastern countries	1
Nigerian	1
Norwegian	1
Polish	1
Punjabi	1
Taiwanese	1
Tamil	1
Thai	1
Tongan	1
Wolof	1
Yiddish	1

receptive language), (b) eight available resources (written materials in other languages, respondents' second language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, primary language materials for parents, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters, and augmentative communication devices in other languages), and (c) two administrative variables (administrative encouragement and administrative attitude regarding language of instruction decisions).

Results from the SPSS logistic regression analysis are displayed in Table 27. The predictor variables were included in the program as follows: First, the instructional practice variables were added, followed by the available resources variables, and ending with the administrator variables. The researcher chose the forward stepwise option in which the statistical program enables one to determine the order in which the variables are added to the formula (Tabachnick & Fidell; 2007). In this case, five steps were generated. The variable entered on step one was the language teachers used to teach expressive language to their students. The second step added the administration support variable to the expressive language variable. The third step added the variable of the language in which students were assessed. The fourth step added the variable of the language teachers used for instructing children who were making vocalizations. Finally, the fifth step added the variable of whether parents in their schools were provided with materials in their primary language (see Table 27).

According to the Cox and Snell's R<sup>2</sup> and Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup> values, there was an increase in each additional model. Therefore, the fifth model which included assessing in the primary language, teaching expressive language, expressive language vocalizations,

Table 27

*Sequential Logistic Regression**Predicting Inclusion of Parents in Language of Instruction Decisions*

Step	Variables	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	Increase increment
Step 1						0.127
	Expressive Language	1.170	.228	.000	3.221	
Step 2						0.230
	Expressive Language	1.234	.243	.000	3.434	
	Administrative Support	1.300	.261	.000	3.671	
Step 3						0.263
	Assess in PL	.815	.276	.003	2.259	
	Expressive Language	.988	.259	.000	2.685	
	Administrative Support	1.289	.265	.000	3.630	
Step 4						0.285
	Assess in PL	.728	.281	.010	2.070	
	Expressive Language	.811	.271	.003	2.249	
	Expressive Language Vocalizations	-.793	.319	.013	.452	
	Administrative Support	1.297	.269	.000	3.659	
Step 5						0.301
	Assess in PL	.693	.284	.015	1.999	
	Expressive Language	.792	.274	.004	2.209	
	Expressive Language Vocalizations	-.811	.323	.012	.445	
	L1 Written Materials Available	.589	.280	.035	1.802	
	Administrative Support	1.196	.273	.000	3.305	

availability of L1 materials, and administration support variables was found to be the strongest model that predicts parent inclusion in the language decisions for their children. As the models added each variable, the strength of the model increased as noted in Table 28. There was a 13% difference between the strength of model 1 and the strength of model 5.

The Chi-square statistic and its significant level were also used. The value of the significance is the probability of obtaining the chi-square statistic given that the null hypothesis is true. It is the probability of obtaining this specific Chi-square if there is no effect of the independent variables, taken together, on the dependent variable. The p value is then compared to a critical value (in this case, 0.05) to determine if the overall model is statistically significant. In this case, the five models were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level and the strength of the model increased as each step added one more variable (see Table 29).

Results from the sequential logistic regression indicated that there were five models that were statistically significant regarding decisions of language of instruction. Practices for teaching expressive language effectively discriminated between teachers who asked parents for their preferences in language decisions for their children and those who did not. These teaching practices accounted for 12.7% of the variance. Hence, teachers who taught students in their primary language were more likely to ask parents their own preferences regarding the language of instruction decisions for their children.

In the second model, the administration support variable was added to the teaching practices variable. When the administration support variable was added to the

Table 28

*Model Summary*

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	375.933 <sup>a</sup>	.095	.127
2	349.601 <sup>a</sup>	.172	.230
3	340.842 <sup>a</sup>	.196	.263
4	334.523 <sup>a</sup>	.213	.285
5	330.081 <sup>a</sup>	.225	.301

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 29

*Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients*

Steps		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	29.325	1	.000
	Block	29.325	1	.000
	Model	29.325	1	.000
Step 2	Step	26.332	1	.000
	Block	55.657	2	.000
	Model	55.657	2	.000
Step 3	Step	8.758	1	.003
	Block	64.415	3	.000
	Model	64.415	3	.000
Step 4	Step	6.320	1	.012
	Block	70.735	4	.000
	Model	70.735	4	.000
Step 5	Step	4.442	1	.035
	Block	75.177	5	.000
	Model	75.177	5	.000

equation, this accounted for 23.0% of the variance—an increase of 10.3% between the first and second models. Results from the second model suggested that respondents who had administrative support were more likely to include parents in the language decisions of their children.

The third model added the variable of whether teachers assessed their students in their primary language to the previous variable of expressive language practices and the administrative support. By adding this variable, a total of 26.3% of the variance in the criterion variable was accounted for, with an increment of 3.3% from the second model, and an increment of 13.3% from the first model.

The fourth model added the variable of whether teachers used the primary language as the instructional language with students who were making simple vocalizations. By adding this variable, a total of 28.5% of the variance in the criterion variable was accounted for, with an increment of 2.2% from the third model and an increment of 15.8% from the first model.

The fifth model added the variable regarding the availability of materials in the students' primary language. By adding this variable, a total of 30.1% of the variance in the criterion variable was accounted for, with an increment of 1.6% from the fourth model and an increment of 17.4% from the first model.

The five variables in the fifth model all appeared to be good predictors of parent participation in the language decisions of their children. However, in each of the steps described above, the variable related to administrative support appeared to have the most

weight and can be regarded as the most influential factor for predicting the inclusion of parents in the language of instruction decisions made for their children.

*Standard sequential regression for professional satisfaction: Teacher group.*

Following the Mueller et al. (2006) example, standard sequential regression was conducted to examine teachers' satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs.

A forced dichotomy was created for the dependent or criterion variable "respondent satisfaction" in order to satisfy the requirements of the logistic regression analysis. The four choices offered in the questionnaire (highly dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, satisfied, and highly dissatisfied) were consolidated into only two; satisfied (*yes*) or dissatisfied (*No*). A total of eight predictors or independent variables were obtained from the questions in the survey that covered the available resources for teachers who had ELLs in their classrooms. These variables were divided into two themes: instructional materials and bilingual assistance. The following variables were part of instructional materials: written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, and augmentative communication devices in language other than English. The following variables were part of the bilingual assistance: personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, and informal interpreters (see Table 30).

Standard sequential regression analysis was more appropriate than logistic regression analysis because the goal of the analysis was to determine which of the two models (instructional materials vs. bilingual assistance) was responsible for the

Table 30

*Standard Sequential Regression for Professional Satisfaction: Teacher group*

Step	Variables	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	Increase increment
Model 1						0.021
	L1 written materials for students	.337	.284	.236	1.400	
	L1 written materials for parents	.365	.284	.198	1.441	
	L1 augmentative communication devices	.165	.318	.604	1.179	
Model 2						0.036
	L1 written materials for students	.322	.288	.264	1.380	
	L1 written materials for parents	.443	.305	.146	1.557	
	L1 augmentative communication devices	.134	.332	.687	1.143	
	Own L2 abilities	.402	.277	.148	1.494	
	Bilingual related professionals	.255	.288	.375	1.291	
	Bilingual instructional assistants	-.306	.293	.298	.737	
	Formal interpreters	-.259	.283	.359	.772	
	Informal interpreters	.193	.292	.509	1.213	

professional satisfaction of the teachers; the two models and their variables were predetermined and the obtained results highlighted which of the two models was stronger.

The first model, which included the three variables corresponding to the instructional materials available to teachers, was not statistically significant. Therefore, teacher satisfaction did not appear to be connected to the availability of written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, or augmentative communication devices in languages other than English. The variables related to the availability of written materials in the primary language appear to have similar weights in the equation.

In the second model, the bilingual assistance variables were added to the model for a total of 8 variables—3 variables related to materials available (e.g., written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, augmentative communication devices in language other than English) and 5 variables related to bilingual assistance (e.g., personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters). The bilingual assistance variables included personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, and informal interpreters.

For Model 1, a total of 2.1% of the variance in teacher satisfaction was accounted for by classroom materials. For Model 2, a total of 3.6% of the variance in teacher

satisfaction was accounted for by both classroom materials and primary language factors (see Table 30).

In summary, the first model that included instructional materials available to teachers in order to predict their satisfaction did not yield enough statistical significance to make this relationship valid.

According to the results exhibited in the Cox and Snell's  $R^2$  and Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  values, there was an increase noted in the second model from 3.0% to 5.1%. Therefore, the second model in which all the variables were incorporated appeared stronger (see Table 31).

Results indicated that the strength of the model increased even though none of the variables appeared to be statistically significantly in relation to the teachers' satisfaction with the instruction of their students. Therefore, it was concluded that all of the variables in this model equally influenced teachers' sense of satisfaction.

### **Study 2: Expert Evaluator Survey**

A total of 98 evaluators completed the survey which represented 35% of 279 members of the BALG and BSEEG groups combined. Among the 98 evaluators who participated in the study, 69 (70%) met the criteria of "experts" in matters of experience and knowledge related to the appropriate evaluation and effective recommendations for ELLs with disabilities (see Table 32).

#### *Demographic Information*

The "Expert Evaluator" sample totaled 69 expert evaluators and included a total of 71.0% (N=49) evaluators who responded on the survey that they held a Master degree

Table 31

*Model Summary*

Model	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	359.845 <sup>a</sup>	.021	.030
2	355.247 <sup>a</sup>	.036	.051

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 32

*Demographic Information (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Positions</i>		
Educational Diagnostician	62.3	43
LSSP	17.4	12
SLP	11.6	8
Other	8.7	6
<i>Highest Educational Degree</i>		
Bachelor Degree	0.0	0
Bachelor + Additional Units	2.9	2
Master Degree	23.2	16
Master + Additional Units	71.0	49
Ph.D.	2.9	2
<i>Years of Experience Evaluating ELLs</i>		
0-5	11.6	8
6-10	17.4	12
11-15	21.7	15
16-20	23.2	16
21-26	10.1	7
27-31	8.7	6
32+	7.2	5

or higher as their highest educational degree. A total of 23.2% (N=16) of expert evaluators reported that they had a Master degree, 2.9% (N=2) had a Bachelor degree plus additional units, and 2.9% (N=2) had a Ph.D. When asked to describe their position, 62.3% (N=43) identified themselves as Educational Diagnosticians, 17.4% (N=12) as Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSPs), 11.6% (N=8) as Speech/Language Pathologists (SLP), and 8.7% chose “other” which included six expert evaluators who described their titles as Ancillary Examiner, Bilingual/ESL Coordinator, Dyslexia Specialist, SLP/Diagnostician, Special Education Consultant, or Special Education Director/Former Diagnostician (see Table 32).

Table 33 lists the universities where the expert evaluators received their training. The universities most mentioned were the University of Houston, Texas Women’s University, University of Texas at El Paso, and the University of St. Thomas. There were three expert evaluators who received their university degrees from Texas A&M University and one from The University of Texas at Austin.

#### *Research Question 1*

What are the existing practices concerning recommendations related to language of instruction for young ELLs in PPCD programs?

A total of 87.0% (N=60) of the expert evaluators reported that they recommended language proficiency testing be performed on ELLs in PPCD programs, 10.1.0% (N=7) of expert evaluators indicated that they did not recommend proficiency testing be performed, and 2.9% (N=2) of expert evaluator indicated “Don’t Know.” Concerning language dominance testing, a total of 88.4.0% (N=61) of expert evaluators

Table 33

*List of Universities Attended by Expert Evaluator Group (N=69)*

Name of University	Mode
University of Houston	7
Texas Women's University	6
University of Texas at El Paso	5
University of St. Thomas	4
Our Lady of the Lake University	2
Stephen F. Austin State University	2
Sul Ross State University	2
Texas A&M University	3
Texas State University @ San Marcos	2
University of Houston @ Clear Lake	2
University of North Texas	2
East Texas State	1
Fairfield University in Connecticut	1
Houston Baptist University	1
Houston ISD Alternative Certification	1
Loyola University Chicago	1
Rafael Urdaneta University - Venezuela	1
Sam Houston State University	1
Southern Methodist University	1
St. Thomas University	1
Tarleton State University	1
Texas A&M @ Commerce	1
Texas A&M @ Prairie View	1
University of Texas Pan American	1
University of Houston at Clear Lake	1
University of Texas @ Austin	1

indicated that they recommended that language dominance testing be performed on ELLs, 10.1.0% (N=7) of expert evaluators said no, and 1.4% (N=1) indicated “Don’t Know” (see Table 34).

Instructional practices in classrooms include the teaching of both receptive and expressive language skills. When asked what approach evaluators recommended for teaching ELLs receptive language, 72.5% (N=50) of expert evaluators recommended primary language instruction, 13.0% (N=9) recommended English language immersion, 1.4% (N=1) recommended English only instruction, while 13.0% (N=9) supported the use of English with some primary language support. When asked what language they recommended for teaching expressive language, 81.2% (N=56) of expert evaluators chose English and the primary language, 15.9% (N=11) indicated primary language only, and 2.9% (N=2) chose English only (see Table 35).

Expert evaluators were asked to choose the circumstances in which they would recommend the choice of English over the primary language to instruct ELLs. Expert evaluators were given specific descriptions of students’ language skills using a continuum of language acquisition milestones beginning with basic pragmatics, followed with vocalizations, continuing with using single words, and using longer word utterances.

Expert evaluators favored instructing ELLs in their primary language in all scenarios except when ELLs were using 3-5 words in English. In the situation where ELLs were learning pragmatics such as protest, request, and taking turns, a total of 88.4% (N=61) of expert evaluators favored primary language instruction while 11.6%

Table 34

*Language Dominance and Proficiency Testing (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Language Dominance</i>		
Yes	88.4	61
No	10.1	7
Don't Know	1.4	1
<i>Language Proficiency</i>		
Yes	87.0	60
No	10.1	7
Don't Know	2.9	2

Table 35

*Recommendations for Teaching Receptive and Expressive Language (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Teaching Receptive Language</i>		
Primary language	72.5	50
English language immersion	13.0	9
English only	1.4	1
English with some primary language support	13.0	9
<i>Teaching Expressive Language</i>		
English only	2.9	2
English and primary language	81.2	56
Primary language only	15.9	11

(N=8) favored English instruction for these students. Also, a total of 89.9% (N=62) expert evaluators favored delivering instruction in the primary language for ELLs who were making simple vocalizations while 10.1% (N=7) selected instruction in English.

Results indicated that a total of 94.2% (N=65) expert evaluators favored instruction of ELLs in their primary language when a student was only able to use single words in their primary language while a total of 5.8% (N=4) of expert evaluators indicated that they favored English instruction for these students. In situations where ELLs were using 2 word utterances in the primary language, a total of 91.3% (N=63) of expert evaluators chose the primary language as the language of instruction and 8.7% (N=6) chose English instruction. Furthermore, a total of 87% (N=60) of expert evaluators favored instruction of ELLs in their primary language over 13.0% (N=9) who chose English when a scenario was given in which the students were already using 3-5 word phrases exclusively in their primary language.

In the scenario where ELLs used single words in English, a total of 62.3% (N=43) of expert evaluators chose the primary language for instruction and 37.7% (N=26) chose English. Also, a total of 50.7% (N=35) of evaluators chose the primary language as the language of instruction for ELLs who used 2-3 word utterances in English and 49.3% (N=34) chose English. Furthermore, a total of 73.9% (N=51) of evaluators chose the primary language as the language of instruction for those ELLs who used alternative communication and 26.1% (N=18) chose English. The only case in which the majority of evaluators chose English over the primary language as the language of instruction was when ELLs were making 3-5 word utterances in English. In

this scenario a total of 43.5% (N=30) expert evaluators chose the primary language and 56.5% (N=39) chose English (see Table 36).

A total of 81.2% (N=56) of expert evaluators responded that they asked parents for their preferences regarding the language of instruction for their children, while 18.8% (N=13) responded that they did not ask parents for language of instruction input (see Table 37). When asked what language expert evaluators used for assessing ELLs, a total of 100.0% (N=69) indicated that they assessed students in the primary language (see Table 38).

When asked to report the resources available to them, 91.3% (N=63) of the expert evaluators of ELLs reported that they relied on their own second language abilities. A total of 85.5% (N=59) of the evaluators reported that they had access to written materials in languages other than English. The use of bilingual related service professionals was reported to be used by 81.2% (N=56) of expert evaluators while bilingual instructional assistants were reported to be used by 72.5% (N=50) of expert evaluators. Also, 78.3% (N=54) of expert evaluators indicated that parents were provided with materials in their primary language; 60.9% (N=42) expert evaluators indicated that formally trained interpreters were used; and 65.2 (N=45) reported that they used informal interpreters. A total of 20.3% (N=14) of expert evaluators indicated that augmentative communication devices in a language other than English were available to them (see Table 39).

Table 36

*Expressive Language in Primary Language or English (N=69)*

<i>Student is...</i>	Primary Language		English	
	%	Count	%	Count
learning pragmatics	88.4	61	11.6	8
making simple vocalizations	89.9	62	10.1	7
using single words in PL	94.2	65	5.8	4
using 2 words in PL	91.3	63	8.7	6
using 3-5 words in PL	87.0	60	13.0	9
using single words English	62.3	43	37.7	26
using 2-3 words in English	50.7	35	49.3	34
using 3-5 words in English	43.5	30	56.5	39
using alternative communication	73.9	51	26.1	18

Table 37

*Parent Preferences (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Ask for Parent Preferences</i>		
Yes	81.2	56
No	18.8	13

Table 38

*Language of Evaluation (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Evaluators evaluate students in</i>		
<i>Primary Language</i>		
Yes	100.0	50
No	0.0	0

Table 39

*Resources for Evaluators (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Written materials in L2	85.5	59
Evaluator's own L2 abilities	91.3	63
Bilingual related service professionals	81.2	56
Bilingual instructional assistants	72.5	50
Primary language materials for parents	78.3	54
Formally trained interpreters	60.9	42
Informal interpreters	65.2	45
Augmentative communication	20.3	14

*Research Question 2*

What are the beliefs and attitudes of evaluation professionals concerning the type of instruction available for young ELLs in PPCD programs?

Research Question 2 focused on the beliefs and attitudes of professionals who evaluated young ELLs. A total of 68.1% (N=47) of expert evaluators indicated that they believed children needed to develop their primary language before they were able to acquire English as a second language. A total of 14.5% (N=10) of expert evaluators reported that they believed that students should learn to communicate in two languages. A total of 5.8% (N=4) believed that whichever language the child would most use in the future should be the language in which they should be taught; 1.4% (N=1) believed that students must be able to communicate with the parents and family members in their primary language; and 1.4% (N=1) believed that students who reside in the United States should learn the main societal language, English. A total of 8.7% (N=6) of expert evaluators indicated “none of the above” (see Table 40).

Evaluators were asked to weigh which needs were more important when making programming decision for ELLs with disabilities; special education needs or language needs. A total of 98.6.0% (N=68) of the expert evaluators indicated that both needs were equally important. Only 1.4% (N=1) of the expert evaluators indicated that special education needs were more important than the language needs of the students, and none indicated that they considered the language needs more important than the special education needs (see Table 41).

Table 40

*Evaluator Beliefs Regarding Language of Instruction (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Children need to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English.	68.1	47
Whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.	5.8	4
Students must be able to communicate with parents and family in primary language.	1.4	1
Students should learn to communicate in two languages.	14.5	10
Residents of the U.S. should learn the main societal language, English.	1.4	1
None of the above.	8.7	6

Table 41

*Special Education and Language Needs (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Special education needs are more important.	1.4	1
Language needs are more important.	0.0	0
Both needs are equally important.	98.6	68

Evaluators were asked to rate their satisfaction with instruction for ELLs in their district. A total of 53.6% (N=37) of expert evaluators indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied, 26.1% (N=18) were satisfied, 18.8% (N=13) were highly dissatisfied, and 1.4% (N=1) was highly satisfied with ELL instruction in their district (see Table 42).

Evaluators were asked if the administrators who attended IEP meetings encouraged discussion about the language that should be used to teach receptive and expressive language skills. A total of 58.0% (N=40) of expert evaluators indicated that administrators did not encourage discussion about choice of language while 42.0% (N=29) of expert evaluators indicated that administrators did encourage such discussion (see Table 43). Furthermore, evaluators were asked to describe the attitude of the administrator regarding the language of instruction decisions. A total of 44.9% (N=31) of expert evaluators reported that administrators promoted bilingual instruction, 34.8% (N=24) of expert evaluators indicated that administrators were silent on the question, and 20.3% (N=14) of expert evaluators responded that administrators promoted English-only instruction (see Table 43).

### *Research Question 3*

To what extent are evaluators prepared to work with young ELLs in PPCD programs? Descriptive statistics were obtained on six different variables.

*Professional training.* Research Question 3 addressed the professional preparation of evaluators who work with young ELLs. When asked to indicate if they had received training for working with ELLs in their university/college program, 72.0% (N=36) of expert evaluators indicated that they had received training while 28.0%

Table 42

*Evaluator Satisfaction (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
Highly dissatisfied	18.8	13
Somewhat dissatisfied	53.6	37
Satisfied	26.1	18
Highly Satisfied	1.4	1

Table 43

*Administrator Involvement in Language Decisions for ELLs (N=69)\**

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Administrator Encourages Discussion</i>		
Yes	42.0	29
No	58.0	40
<i>Attitude of Administrator</i>		
Promotes English only	20.3	14
Promotes Bilingual instruction	44.9	31
Is silent on the question	34.8	24

\* As perceived by expert evaluators responding to survey

(N=14) of expert evaluators responded that they had not received any training (see Table 44). Additionally, evaluators were asked if, in the past two years, they had received training on ELL issues. A total of 16.0% (N=8) of expert evaluators reported that they had not received any training while 84.0% (N=42) of them reported having had received training. Number of hours reported by expert evaluators ranged from 6 to 250.

*Knowledge.* Furthermore, evaluators were asked if they were familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the role of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities. A total of 95.7% (N=66) of the expert evaluators answered yes and 4.3% (N=3) answered no.

*Bilingual and ESL endorsement.* Additionally, evaluators were asked if they had a Bilingual and/or an ESL endorsement. A total of 62.3% (N=43) of expert evaluators indicated that they had Bilingual endorsement while 37.7% (N=26) of expert evaluators did not have Bilingual certification. A total of 53.6% (N=37) of expert evaluators identified themselves as ESL endorsed and 46.4% (N=32) did not have ESL certification.

*Language abilities.* Finally, evaluators were asked to describe their second language abilities. A total of 95.7% (N=66) indicated that they were fluent in one or more languages other than English, 2.9% (N=2) indicated that they could carry on a limited conversation in a second language, and 1.4% (N=1) could speak 20-50 words in a second language.

Table 44

*Evaluator Qualifications (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Received ELL Training at University</i>		
Yes	69.6	48
No	30.4	21
<i>Received Bilingual Special Education Assessment Training?</i>		
Yes	100.0	69
No	0.0	0
<i>Received Cultural Competence Training?</i>		
Yes	94.2	65
No	5.8	4
<i>Speak a second language</i>		
No	0.0	0
20-50 words	1.4	1
Limited conversation	2.9	2
Fluent in one or more languages	95.7	66
<i>Received ELL training in the past two years</i>		
No	5.8	4
Yes	94.2	65
<i>Familiar with latest TEA recommendations</i>		
Yes	95.7	66
No	4.3	3
<i>Bilingual certification/endorsement</i>		
Yes	62.3	43
No	37.7	26
<i>ESL certification/endorsement</i>		
Yes	53.6	37
No	46.4	32

*Cultural competence.* A total of 94.2% (N=65) of expert evaluators responded that they had received training in cultural competence and 5.8% (N=4) indicated that they had not received any training. A total of 88.4% (N=61) of expert evaluators indicated that they were members of a “bilingual assessment leadership group” and 11.6% (N=8) indicated that they were not members of any such local group. A total of 92.8% (N=64) of expert evaluators reported that they had at least 5 years of experience assessing ELL special education students (see Table 44).

*Training.* All of the expert evaluators indicated that they have received training in bilingual special education assessment. When asked if they had received training on ELL/Special Education issues in the past two years, 94.2% (N=65) of expert evaluators indicated that they had received training and 5.8% (N=4) indicated they had not. When asked to list the number of hours of training related to ELL/Special Education issues received, expert evaluators’ answers varied greatly from “none” to 100 hours. See Table 45 for the number of hours listed by expert evaluators.

#### *Research Question 4*

Which variables best predict future referral of young ELLs in PPCD programs to the Bilingual and ESL program?

In response to whether there was a bilingual or ESL program in the district, a total of 95.7% (N=66) of expert evaluators responded that there was a bilingual program in their district while 4.3% (N=3) indicated that there was no bilingual program. A total of 95.7% (N=66) of expert evaluators indicated that there was an ESL program in their district, while 2.9% (N=2) indicated that there was no ESL program, and 1.4% (N=1)

Table 45

*Hours of Training in ELL Issues (N=69)*

Number of Hours	Mode
50	4
40	4
30	4
100	3
60	3
8	3
25	2
24	2
21	2
10	2
BALG sessions	2
250	1
200	1
63	1
36	1
32	1
20	1
18	1
16	1
12	1
9	1
6	1
Consistent information and training	1

indicated “Don’t know.” When asked if young 3- to 5-year-old students in early childhood programs were flagged as LEP for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program, a total of 55.1% (N=38) of evaluators answered yes, 18.8% (N=13) said no, and 26.1% (N=18) indicated that they did not know. When asked if representatives from the LPAC attended IEP meetings for these students, a total of 50.7% (N=35) evaluators responded yes, 18.8% (N=13) said no, and 30.4% (N=21) related that they did not know (see Table 46).

*Cross Tabulation analysis for flagging of ELLs for future referral in the Bilingual or ESL programs: Expert evaluator group.* The Crosstabs procedure in SPSS was used to find out the relationship between five predictive variables and the independent variable of flagging ELLs with disabilities for future referral in the bilingual or ESL program. The predictive variables included the practices of determining the language dominance and language proficiency of ELLs, the inclusion of an LPAC representative in the IEP meetings of young ELLs in PPCD programs, and the existence of a bilingual program in the district or an ESL program in the district. Each step of this procedure determined the percentage of expert evaluators who responded in the affirmative to both variables (see Table 47). The first combination involved the language dominance testing of ELLs. Results indicated that a total of 49.3% (N=34) of expert evaluators reported that children were flagged for future referral and also that they recommended that language dominance testing be performed. For the second combination, results indicated that a total of 49.3% (N=34) of expert evaluators reported that children were flagged for future referral and also that expert evaluators also

Table 46

*Young ELLs and Bilingual/ESL Issues (N=69)*

	Percent of respondents	Count
<i>Bilingual Program in District</i>		
Yes	95.7	66
No	4.3	3
Don't Know	0.0	0
<i>ESL Program in District</i>		
Yes	95.7	66
No	2.9	2
Don't Know	1.4	1
<i>LPAC Representative at IEP Meetings</i>		
Yes	50.7	35
No	18.8	13
Don't Know	30.4	21
<i>Young 3-5 ELLs Flagged?</i>		
Yes	55.1	38
No	18.8	13
Don't Know	26.1	18
<i>Language Dominance Testing</i>		
Yes	88.4	61
No	10.1	7
Don't Know	1.4	1
<i>Language Proficiency Testing</i>		
Yes	87.0	60
No	10.1	7
Don't Know	2.9	2

Table 47

*Summary of Cross Tabulation Analysis**Predicting Future Referrals of Students in PPCD to the Bilingual Programs*

Combination of variables	Percentage	Count
Children are flagged and language Dominance testing is performed	49.3	34
Children are flagged and language proficiency testing is performed	49.3	34
Children are flagged and an LPAC representative attends IEP meetings	40.6	28
Children are flagged and there is a bilingual program in the school	52.2	36
Children are flagged and there is an ESL program in the school	53.6	37

recommended language proficiency testing. The third combination involved the representation of the LPAC at the IEP meetings of young ELLs. A total of 40.6% (N=28) of expert evaluators indicated that ELLs were flagged for future referral and also that LPAC representatives attended the IEP meetings. In the fourth combination involving the existence of a bilingual program in the district, a total of 52.2% (N=36) expert evaluators reported that children were flagged and that there was also a bilingual program in their district. The fifth combination included the flagging of children and the existence of an ESL program in the district. A total of 53.6% (N=37) of expert evaluators reported that children in their schools were flagged for future referral and also that there was an ESL program in their school.

In summary, results from this crosstabs analysis were that a majority of the expert evaluators who indicated that children are flagged for future referral to the bilingual or ESL programs in their districts also recommended that (a) dominance and proficiency testing be conducted in their schools, (b) there was LPAC representation at the IEP meetings for these children, and (c) there were bilingual and ESL programs in their schools. The two combinations of variables that yielded highest percentages involved the attendance of LPAC representatives at the IEP meetings of these students.

*Correlation analysis: Expert evaluator group.* The bivariate Pearson correlation procedure using SPSS was conducted to describe the linear relationship between the following variables: (1) language dominance testing; (2) language proficiency testing; (3) inclusion of an LPAC representative in the IEP meetings of young ELLs in PPCD programs; (4) the existence of a bilingual program in the district; (5) the existence of an

ESL program in the district, and (6) the flagging of ELLs for future referral in the Bilingual or ESL programs (see Table 48). The SPSS program yielded three statistically significant correlations at the 0.01 alpha levels. A moderately high correlation incorporated the LPAC representation and the flagging for future referral variables ( $r=.580$ ). A moderate correlation combined the language proficiency testing and the language dominance testing ( $r=.481$ ). A moderate correlation involved the existence of Bilingual programs and the existence of ESL programs ( $r=.481$ ). In summary, the correlation analysis conducted on the expert evaluators' responses yielded moderate to moderately high relationships between all variables tested. The highest correlations were found to exist between language dominance and language proficiency.

#### *Research Question 5*

Are responses from the evaluator group significantly similar or different from the answers reported by the group of special education evaluators?

*Descriptive statistics.* Evaluators reported fifty-one languages with the most popular Spanish, followed by Vietnamese, Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Hindu, and Korean (Table 49).

*Sequential logistic regression to predict inclusion of parents in the decisions of language of instruction: Expert evaluator group.* This study replicated the analysis conducted by Mueller et al. (2006) in their research. Sequential logistic regression analysis was performed to predict the parent participation in the language of instruction decisions for ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion programs. The variable obtained was dichotomous and could only be answered in a *yes* or *no* fashion. The independent or

Table 48

*Pearson Correlation: Expert Evaluator Group (N=69)*

Variable	Language Proficiency	Language Dominance	LPAC Rep.	Bilingual Program	ESL Program	Flag
<b>Language Proficiency</b>						
r	1	.481**	.125	.035	-.077	.114
Sig.		.000	.306	.775	.530	.349
<b>Language Dominance</b>						
r	.481**	1	.178	-.076	-.073	.135
Sig.	.000		.143	.535	.552	.269
<b>LPAC Rep.</b>						
r	.125	.178	1	.088	.085	.580**
Sig.	.306	.143		.471	.489	.000
<b>Bilingual Program</b>						
r	.035	-.076	.088	1	.358**	-.083
Sig.	.775	.535	.471		.003	.497
<b>ESL Program</b>						
r	-.077	-.073	.085	.358**	1	.043
Sig.	.530	.552	.489	.003		.728
<b>Flag</b>						
r	.114	.135	.580**	-.083	.043	1
Sig.	.349	.269	.000	.497	.728	

Sig. (2-tailed)

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 49

*Languages Reported by Evaluators (N=69)*

Language	Count
Spanish	48
Vietnamese	7
Arabic	5
Chinese	5
Urdu	5
Portuguese	4
French	3
Farsi	2
African languages	1
Bosnian	1
Cambodian	1
Dutch	1
English	1
Filipino	1
German	1
Hindi	1
Japanese	1
Laotian	1
Mandarin	1
Mandingo	1
Other languages with interpreter	1
Russian	1
Tagalog	1

predictor variables that contributed to parent participation in this decision-making process were a total of 22 variables including: (a) twelve instructional practice variables (assessment of students in their primary language, approaches to teaching in the expressive language, and approaches to teaching in the receptive language), (b) eight available resources (written materials in other languages, respondents' second language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, primary language materials for parents, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters, and augmentative communication devices in other languages), and (c) two administrative variables (administrative encouragement and administrative attitude regarding language of instruction decisions).

Results from the SPSS LOGISTIC REGRESSION analysis are displayed in Table 50. The predictor variables were included in the program as follows: First, the instructional practice variables were added, followed by the available resources variables, and ending with the administrator variables. The researcher chose the forward stepwise option in which the statistical program defined the order in which the variables were added to the formula. Only one model was generated that had a variable with an alpha value less than 0.05. The forward steps were thus suspended as there were no additional variables that fit the criteria of inclusion. The variable entered on step one was what expressive language should be taught to students who are using one word utterances in the primary language (see Table 50).

According to the results exhibited in the Cox and Snell's  $R^2$  and Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  values the variable accounts for a low 14.4% of the variance (see Table 51).

Table 50

*Sequential Logistic Regression: Predicting Inclusion of Parents in Language of Instruction Decisions*

Step	Variables	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp (B)	Increase increment
Step 1						0.144
	Expressive Language 1 Word in PL	-2.803	1.205	.020	.061	

Table 51

*R Square Results*

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
Step 1	60.311 <sup>a</sup>	.089	.144

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

In this case, the overall model was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level (see Table 52).

The sequential logistic regression analysis conducted to predict parent inclusion in decisions of language of instruction resulted in one statistically significant model. This model indicated that the practice of teaching expressive vocabulary in the primary language to students accounted for 14.4% of the variance—in the variable that looked at parents' input in the language decisions of their children.

In contrast with the forward regression results obtained from the teacher group, results from the expert evaluator group did not yield information that was informative regarding parent input in the language of instruction decisions for their children.

*Standard sequential regression for professional satisfaction: Expert evaluator group.* Following the Mueller et al. example, standard sequential regression was conducted to examine expert evaluators' satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs. In this case, the standard sequential regression analysis was more appropriate than logistic regression analysis because the goal of the analysis was to determine if the model with the instructional variables or the model with both the instructional variables and bilingual assistance variables was responsible for the professional satisfaction of the expert evaluators. The two models and their variables were predetermined and the obtained results highlighted which of the two models was stronger. A forced dichotomy was created for the dependent or criterion variable "respondent satisfaction" and consolidated the four choice offered in the questionnaire into only two: satisfied or dissatisfied. The predictors or independent variables included the responses from the

Table 52

*Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients*

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	6.468	1	.011
	Block	6.468	1	.011
	Model	6.468	1	.011

resource question and were divided into two categories: instructional materials (e.g., written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, augmentative communication devices in language other than English) and bilingual assistance (e.g., personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, informal interpreters (see Table 53).

The first model which included the three variables corresponding to the instructional materials available to teachers did not appear to be statistically significant. Therefore, teacher satisfaction is not connected to the availability of written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, or augmentative communication devices in language other than English.

In the second model, the bilingual assistance variables were added to the model for a total of 8 variables- 3 variables related to materials available (e.g., written materials in languages other than English, primary language materials for the parents, augmentative communication devices in language other than English ) and 5 variables related to bilingual assistance. The bilingual assistance variables included personal language abilities, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, formally trained interpreters, and informal interpreters.

In Model 1, 23.9% of the variance in teacher satisfaction can be accounted for by the availability of classroom materials. According to Model 2, a total of 32.7% of the variance in teacher satisfaction can be accounted for by both the availability of

Table 53

*Standard Sequential Regression for Professional Satisfaction: Expert Evaluator Group*

Step	Variables	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	Increase Increment
Model 1						0.239
	L1 written materials for students	19.922	12356.665	.999	4.488E8	
	L1 written materials for parents	1.376	1.114	.217	3.960	
	L1 augmentative communication devices	.975	.664	.142	2.652	
Model 2						0.327
	L1 written materials for students	18.835	12295.770	.999	1.514E8	
	L1 written materials for parents	1.233	1.148	.283	3.431	
	L1 augmentative communication devices	1.126	.74	.131	3.083	
	Own L2 abilities	-.322	1.067	.763	.725	
	Bilingual related professionals	.857	1.183	.469	2.355	
	Bilingual instructional Assistant	.759	.926	.412	2.137	
	Formal interpreters	.033	.671	.960	1.034	
	Informal interpreters	1.175	.795	.140	3.237	

classroom materials and the primary language factors. An increment of 8.8% was noted between Model 1 and Model 2 (see Table 53).

In summary, the first model that used the variable of instructional materials available to predict expert evaluators' satisfaction did not yield enough significance to make this relationship valid.

According to the results exhibited in the Cox and Snell's R<sup>2</sup> and Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup> values, there was an increase noted in the second model from 23.9% to 32.7%. Therefore, the second model which incorporated all the variables appeared stronger (see Table 54).

Results indicated that the strength of the model increased; however, none of the variables appeared to influence the expert evaluators' satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs. Therefore, it was concluded that all of the variables related to materials available together with the bilingual assistance variables equally influenced expert evaluators' sense of satisfaction.

*Mann-Whitney U test for comparisons between teacher and evaluator groups.*

The Mann-Whitney U is a nonparametric test used to compare two independent samples on one variable (Huck, 2008). Responses from the teacher and the evaluator groups were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U test on the following questions: (a) What expressive language should be taught to an English learner who is learning basic pragmatics, making simple vocalizations, uses single words in the PL only, uses 2 word utterances only in the PL, uses 3-5 word phrases only in the PL, uses single words in English, uses 2-3 word utterances in English, uses 3-5 word utterances in English, and uses alternative

Table 54

*Model Summary*

Model	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	68.762 <sup>a</sup>	.165	.239
2	63.515 <sup>a</sup>	.226	.327

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations had been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

communication? (b) Were parents asked their preferences regarding language of instruction decisions for their children? (c) Were professionals satisfied with instruction for their ELLs? (d) Did administrators attending the IEP meeting encourage discussion about the language of instruction of their children? (e) Did early childhood teachers and special education evaluators receive training for working with ELLs? (f) Did LPAC representatives attend the IEP meetings for children in PPCD programs? (g) Are children in PPCD programs flagged for future referral to the Bilingual or ESL program? These questions were selected for this analysis because they reflected actual practices from each group. Also, questions did not differ in the way they were posed to participants, thereby allowing the researcher to make a direct comparison between groups.

Statistically significant differences were found between the teacher and evaluator groups in four areas: their choice of English or the primary language for teaching expressive language to ELLs, their training background to work with ELLs, their satisfaction with ELL instruction, and their efforts to involve parents in the language decision-making process. There were no statistically significant differences between answers from the two groups on the other variables of administrator encouragement, LPAC representation, or flagging of children for future referral (see Table 55).

### **Existing and Recommended Practices**

#### *Demographic Information*

Results obtained from the demographic information indicated that the teacher sample included a fairly equal representation from a variety of district sizes. However,

Table 55

*The Mann-Whitney U Test for Responses from Teacher and Evaluator Groups*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig
Which language if...				
pragmatic	4358.000	6773.000	-8.679	.000
vocalizations	4244.500	6659.500	-8.831	.000
1 word in PL	5353.000	7768.000	-7.154	.000
2 words in PL	5235.000	7650.000	-7.286	.000
3-5 words in PL	5127.000	7542.000	-7.286	.000
1 word in Eng.	5159.000	7574.000	-8.895	.000
2-3 words in Eng.	6101.500	8516.500	-7.813	.000
3-5 words in Eng.	6669.000	9084.000	-7.191	.000
alternative comm.	4906.500	7321.500	-8.335	.000
Parent Preferences	7582.000	51538.000	-3.932	.000
Professional Satisfaction	5976.5000	8391.5000	-6.319	.000
Administrative Support	9107.500	11522.500	-1.570	.116
ELL Training	5353.000	49309.000	-7.154	.000
LPAC Representative	9555.000	11970.000	-.941	.347
Flagging	9887.000	9887.000	-.462	.644

approximately one third of teachers worked in school districts with a student population larger than 50,000 (see Table 9).

The data obtained from the teachers concerning their years of experience was compared to the data reported by the Texas Education Agency. Results from this study were very similar to statewide averages reported by TEA in all categories with the exception of 0-5 years of experience. For this category (0-5 years), the reported state average is 38% while the average reported by teachers in this study was 50%.

#### *Language Dominance and Proficiency Testing*

Some of the differences between answers from the teacher and the expert evaluator groups were noted by comparing the resulting percentages. A statistical comparison was inappropriate as the wording of these items was different in the teacher and evaluator versions of the surveys. As reported, language dominance and language proficiency testing appeared to be good predictors for the flagging and referral of young ELLs to either a Bilingual or ESL program. This study found that 57.9% of teachers reported language proficiency testing and 67% of teachers reported language dominance.

This suggests that the majority of children in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion classrooms will be referred to the Bilingual or ESL programs in their schools (see Table 9). However, these teacher practices fall short of those practices recommended by expert evaluators. High percentages of experts recommended language proficiency (87%) and language dominance (88.4%) testing for 3-5 year-old ELLs enrolled in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion programs. Again, these results have not been tested for statistical significance and the comparisons made are not based in any specific test.

### *Teaching of Expressive Language*

When asked about the language in which they taught ELLs to express themselves, half (50.8%) of the teachers reported they used only English in contrast with only 2.9% of expert evaluators who recommended English-only instruction. The difference noted here was not tested for statistical significance. The primary-only instruction language option was recommended by a small group of expert evaluators (15.9%). Neither was it preferred by teachers (4.4%). However, the two groups differed in their percent in the option of using *both* English and the primary language: 81.2% of expert evaluators recommended this option as opposed to only 44.8% of teachers. Again, differences between answers from the teacher and the expert evaluator groups were noted by comparing the resulting percentages. However, statistically significant discrepancy between the expert evaluator group and the teacher group was noted in their language choices for students who had some expressive language (see Table 55).

Notably, in every scenario presented in which teachers were asked to choose which language they would use to teach students who (a) made simple vocalizations, (b) used single words in the primary language only, (c) used 2-word utterances in the primary language only, (d) used 3-5 word phrases in the primary language only, (e) used single words in English, (f) used 2-3 words in English, and (g) used 3-5 word utterances in English, the majority of the teachers (see Table 56) chose English as the language of instruction. These responses contrasted with those obtained from expert evaluators (see Table 56), who chose the native language over English as the language of instruction for the student in all scenarios except when students already had 3-5 English word

Table 56

*Teachers and Expert Evaluator Responses: Expressive Language in Primary**Language or English*

<i>Student is</i>	Teacher Responses				Expert Evaluator Responses			
	<u>PL</u>		<u>English</u>		<u>PL</u>		<u>English</u>	
	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>
Learning pragmatics	31.0	92	69.0	205	88.4	61	11.6	8
Making single vocalizations	31.3	93	68.7	204	89.9	62	10.1	7
Using single words in PL	46.8	139	53.2	158	94.2	65	5.8	4
Using 2 words in PL	42.4	126	57.6	171	91.3	63	8.7	6
Using 3-5 words in PL	37.0	110	63.0	187	87.0	60	13.0	9
Using 1 word in English	12.8	38	87.2	259	62.3	43	37.7	26
Using 2 words in English	10.4	31	89.6	266	50.7	35	49.3	34
Using 3-5 words in English	8.8	26	91.2	271	43.5	30	56.5	39
Using alt. communication	21.9	65	78.1	232	73.9	51	26.1	18

utterances in their repertoire. Also, when teachers were asked in which language they evaluated their students, almost half of them (48.8%) responded that they used the primary language. Here again, their responses are contradictory to their reported non-use of the primary language of their ELLs.

### *Seeking Parental Input*

Another significant finding was that only a slim majority of teachers (55.6%) favored asking parents their preferences regarding the language of instruction of their children. In contrast, 81.2% of the expert evaluators indicated that they asked parents their preferences on this issue (see Table 13). The difference between responses from the two groups was statistically significant (see Table 55).

### *Resources*

Teachers reported adequate access to written materials in L2, bilingual related service professionals, bilingual instructional assistants, primary language materials for parents, formally trained interpreters, and informal interpreters. The following comparisons were based on differences between percents obtained by each group and not by analyses that yielded statistical significance. Notably, there were differences in the second language abilities reported by teachers and by expert evaluators. Only 35.7% of teachers indicated that they relied on their own second language abilities as opposed to 91.3% of expert evaluators who relied on their own second language abilities. While this difference existed, both groups agreed that they had limited access to augmentative communication devices in the students' primary language with a total of 25.3% for the teachers and 20.3% for the expert evaluators (see Tables 15 and 39). Again, the

comparison made here was simply a comparison between percentages and not the result of statistical analysis.

### *Languages*

Both groups reported that Spanish was the most popular language among ELLs, followed by Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, Portuguese, and French. These languages were also reported by the State of Texas in their Comprehensive Annual Report (2008) as the most popular languages spoken by ELLs in schools across the state. Furthermore, a total of 52 different languages were reported in the two groups combined highlighting the great primary language diversity that exists in this young population of students.

## **Beliefs and Attitudes of Education Professionals**

### *Support for Primary Language Development*

Comparisons made between the two groups in this section were based on differences between percentages and not on statistical analyses. More than half of the teachers surveyed supported, to some extent, the inclusion of the primary language as the language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities. Results from this study indicated that 26.9% of teachers appeared to support developing the primary language of their students, 10.8% agreed that students must be able to communicate with their parents in the primary language, and 18.9% supported the instruction in the primary language and English (see Table 16). However, actual practices did not appear to support this assertion as teachers chose English as the language of instruction regardless of how many words the child already knew in the primary language. Thus, reported teaching practices did not

actually reflect that teachers incorporated the ELLs' primary language into their daily instruction. This conclusion was not based on statistical analysis. A total of 68.1% of evaluators indicated that the primary language should be developed before ELLs acquired English, 1.4% of them thought that ELLs must be able to communicate in the primary language with their parents, and 14.5% of them considered that ELLs should learn to communicate in both the primary language and English (see Table 40).

Therefore, a total of 84% of expert evaluators gave reasons why the inclusion of the primary language was important. Again, there was a difference between the results from the teacher and the expert evaluator groups. However, this comparison was based on a comparison of percentages and not on statistical analysis.

#### *Language Needs versus Special Education Needs*

Results from this study revealed that teachers and expert evaluators considered that the language needs and the special education needs of their ELLs equally important. Once again however, the practices described by teachers did not seem to match their reported beliefs.

#### *Professional Satisfaction*

When teachers and expert evaluators were asked to rate their satisfaction with instruction for ELLs, results showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups (see Table 55): Only 26% of the expert evaluators responded that they were satisfied while 51.2% of the teachers responded that they were satisfied. Again, 23.2% of the teachers reported that they were somewhat dissatisfied, while 53.6% of the expert evaluators indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied. The nonparametric analysis

conducted between the two groups on the professional satisfaction variable indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the responses from the two groups (see Table 55).

#### *Administration Involvement*

The majority of the teachers (52.5%) reported that the administrators in their schools encouraged discussion concerning language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities at the IEP meetings. Also, 51.5% of the teachers reported that the administrators promoted bilingual instruction (see Table 19). However, reported teacher practices proved that English was the language of choice for all scenarios presented.

### **Preparation of Education Professionals**

#### *Teacher and Expert Evaluator Qualifications*

The majority of the teachers (54.2%) reported that they had not received ELL training during their teacher training while the majority of the expert evaluators (69.9%) indicated that they had received such training during their university training. With respect to more recent training, the groups differed significantly with 53.2% of the teachers reporting that they had not received training in ELL matters in the past two years while all (100%) of the expert evaluators indicated that they had received training in the past two years. This difference noted between the two groups on ELL training in the past two years is statistically significant (see Table 55).

Furthermore, the majority of teachers (56.2%) were not familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning ELLs with disabilities as compared with the great majority of evaluators (95.7%) who responded that they were

familiar with these recommendations. Also, only 15.2% of these teachers reported being fluent in one or more languages while the majority of evaluators (95.7%) reported that they were fluent in one or more languages. Finally, the overwhelming majority of the teachers 91.2% did not have bilingual endorsement and 70.7% of them did not have ESL endorsement. In comparison, the majority of expert evaluators (62.3%) had bilingual endorsement and the majority of them (53.6%) also had ESL endorsement (see Tables 20 and 44). These comparisons were not made through statistical analysis. However, this data underscored the limited preparation of the teachers while it also highlighted the preparation of their expert evaluator counterparts.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to report the educational practices of early childhood teachers in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion settings who instructed ELLs with disabilities and to compare those teaching techniques with recommendations and practices from an expert group of evaluators in the field of bilingual special education.

The research questions focused on the existing and recommended practices for ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion classrooms, the beliefs and attitudes of education professionals about the type of instruction available for young ELLs with disabilities, and the preparation of education professionals who work with young ELLs with disabilities. Furthermore, this study identified the best predictors for the referral of ELLs to bilingual or ESL programs in their districts. Finally, this study contrasted these results with those obtained in the Mueller et al. (2006) study.

#### **Findings of the Study**

##### *Primary Language Support*

Notwithstanding extensive research (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Cummins, 1984, 1986, 1989, 1992, 2001; Figueroa, 2005; Krashen, 1985; Thomas & Collier, 1996) that emphasizes the benefits of incorporating the primary language for young ELLs with disabilities, the practices highlighted here underscored the considerable gap that continues to exist between research and practice. Differences were noted in this study between language supports recommended by the expert evaluators and what teachers reported as their current practices. Some of these differences were noted by comparing

the resulting percentages from each group. Due to the difference in wording of items in the teacher and expert evaluator surveys, a statistical comparison was not deemed appropriate. First and foremost, teachers' preference for English as the sole language of instruction differed from the strong support for primary language instruction reported by the expert evaluators. Only 11.4% of teachers indicated that they used the primary home language of the child as their approach in teaching these ELLs receptive language while 72.5% of the expert evaluators indicated that they recommended primary language instruction. Similarly, when asked about what language they used when teaching children expressive language, the majority of teachers chose English while the expert evaluators chose the bilingual option. The practices suggested by the evaluator group in this group followed research that supports the development of receptive language in the L1 (Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001). Again, some comparisons made in this section do not reflect results from statistical analysis. By recommending bilingual instruction beginning at an early age, expert evaluators seemed to support the belief that children with disabilities can and do learn expressive language in two or more languages (Bernhard et al., 2006; Mueller et al., 2006; Pérez, 2004).

#### *Effective Teaching Practices: Future Referral to Bilingual/ESL Programs*

A major goal of this study was to examine the factors that affected the referral of ELLs with disabilities in PPCD or Pre-K inclusion programs to Bilingual or ESL education. Teachers were asked: (a) whether ELLs were flagged for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program, (b) if language dominance and proficiency tests were administered, (c) whether they were familiar with the latest TEA recommendations

concerning LPAC and IEP team collaboration, and (d) if an LPAC representative attended the IEP meetings for these children.

The data obtained from evaluators and teachers in this study indicated that both language dominance and language proficiency testing were the major predictors for flagging children for future referral to the bilingual or ESL programs in their district. The high percentages of teachers in this study that reported either language proficiency or language dominance testing appeared to suggest that a substantial number of ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K classrooms would be referred to a Bilingual or ESL program.

Another good predictor of future referral of ELLs with disabilities to Bilingual or ESL programs was the presence of a LPAC representative at their IEP meetings. State guidelines (19 TAC) mandate that school districts must have a representative of the LPAC at every IEP meeting of ELLs with disabilities. Furthermore, State requirements obligate the IEP committee, in conjunction with the LPAC committee, to make appropriate programming decisions for ELLs (19 TAC). When asked if they were familiar with the latest recommendations from TEA concerning language decisions for ELLs, 95.7% of expert evaluators indicated that they were familiar with these recommendations while only 43.8% of teachers reported being familiar with them. A difference seems to exist between the knowledge base of the teachers and that of the expert evaluators concerning the role of the IEP committee in making language decisions for ELLs in early education programs. However, this conclusion was reached by comparing the percentages from each group and not by statistical analysis.

*Beliefs and Attitudes*

Results from this study's investigation of teachers and expert evaluators' beliefs concerning the language for instruction—primary language versus English—highlighted differences in percentages between the two groups of participants. These differences were noted between answers from the two groups; however, no test for statistical significance was conducted. A majority of teachers reported using English for teaching expressive and receptive language to ELLs with disabilities in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion settings while a majority of the expert evaluators supported the use of the primary language of the child. Although the overwhelming majority of the teachers (87.2%) and expert evaluators (98.6%) responded that linguistic and special education needs were equally important; the teachers expressed conflicting beliefs: Only 26.9% of teachers believed that children needed to develop their primary language before could acquire English as a second language. This response conflicted with that of the experts evaluators, 68.1% of whom believed in developing the primary language first. Therefore, there appeared to be a contradiction between teachers' reported prevalent use of English as the language of instruction and their purported belief that ELLs' primary language and special education needs were equally important. If teachers believed in the importance of language needs, why did only very few of the teachers support primary language development for ELLs? Again, no statistical analysis was conducted and this conclusion was reached by comparing the percentages obtained from each group.

### *Professional Preparation*

There appeared to be vast differences between the teacher and the expert evaluator groups concerning their professional preparation to teach ELLs with disabilities. While less than 30% of the teachers in the study held an ESL endorsement, 53.6% of the expert evaluators held an endorsement. Only 8.8% of teachers were bilingually certified while 62.3% of the expert evaluators had a bilingual endorsement. Furthermore, the teachers held a bachelor degree while the majority of the expert evaluators held a master degree. The majority of teachers had a range of only zero to five years of experience while the majority of the expert evaluators had between 16 to 20 years of experience. Furthermore, while the majority of expert evaluators (69.6%) and the majority of teachers (54.2%) indicated that they received training for working with ELLs during their university or college program; the majority of evaluators (94.2%) had received training in the past two years while less than half of the teachers (46.8%) reported that they received any training related to ELLs in special education in the past two years. While most of the comparisons in this section were made by noting differences in percentages, there is a statistically significant difference between the teachers and the expert evaluators for ELL training in the past two years (see Table 55).

Mueller et al. (2006) reported that the majority of the teachers in their study (63%) were underprepared to work with ELLs based on these teachers' reported lack of training. In this study, almost half of teachers (45.8%) reported that they did not receive any training for working with ELLs in their teacher education program. Furthermore, when asked if they had received ELL training in the past two years, more than half

(53.2%) reported that they had not. Therefore, even though the reported percentage for lack of preparation of the teachers in the Mueller et al. study was higher, results from the current study lend support to their conclusion.

### *Resources and Professional Satisfaction*

This study also examined the resources available to teachers and evaluators of ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion classrooms. These resources were divided in two types: bilingual assistance and materials. One of the resources under “bilingual assistance” included the ability of teachers to speak a language other than English. Very few of the teachers (15.2%) surveyed indicated that they were fluent in a second language; however, their ratings of satisfaction with the instructional programs available at their schools for ELLs were high. Results from this study appeared contradictory to results obtained by Paneque & Barbetta (2006) in which teachers’ self-efficacy scores were affected when their language of instruction did not match the primary language of their students. In the current study, only 15.2% of teachers reported that they were fluent speakers of other languages but, of these, 68.4% reported that they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the programs available for ELLs.

Further analysis of the data indicated that all instructional and bilingual assistance variables appeared to have similar weight (see Table 30): No one variable emerged as a significant factor that affected teachers’ satisfaction with instructional programming at their school. The investigator concluded that this group of teachers may not be aware of the importance of instructing young ELLs with disabilities in their

primary language. Also, as these teachers did not report a shortage of bilingual materials or bilingual assistance, their own L2 abilities may not have seemed as crucial to them.

Nonparametric analysis was conducted to determine statistically significant differences in the satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs between the two groups of professionals (see Table 55). Responses from the expert evaluator group contrasted significantly with those obtained from the teachers in that 72.4% of expert evaluators reported that they were somewhat to highly dissatisfied with the current status of instruction for ELLs while only 31.3% of teachers reported being somewhat to highly dissatisfied. Even though these results highlight opposing views from the two groups; there is no clear evidence of the cause for this difference. As indicated earlier, none of the instructional variables or the bilingual assistance variables appeared to emerge as the significant factor influencing teachers (see Table 30) or expert evaluators (see Table 53). Furthermore, the reported “satisfaction” of the teachers and the reported “dissatisfaction” of the expert evaluators with the education of ELLs could be connected to the presence or absence of second language abilities in these professionals.

In their study, Mueller et al. (2006) concluded that augmentative and alternative communication devices played a major role in the instruction of students with moderate to severe disabilities. Also, Mueller et al. highlighted the need for written materials in the students’ primary language. In the present study, however, the need for augmentative communication devices and written materials in the primary language of the students did not emerge. A difference in these findings may be due to the differences in ages of the students in the current study and the Mueller et al. (2006) study. Teachers in the Mueller

et al. study taught students from a range of grade levels from early intervention through high school, whereas this study focused on a narrow group of children 3-5 years of age. It may have been that the need for augmentative communication devices and written materials by ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion programs were perceived as less important.

#### *Role of Administrators*

Another issue that this study brought to the forefront pertained to the administrators' role in the process of choosing a language of instruction for ELLs with disabilities in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion settings. The current study investigated two aspects of administrator involvement. First, it examined whether administrators who attended the IEP meetings for these children encouraged discussion about which language to use for teaching ELLs. Second, the study explored the attitude of the administrators regarding language decisions. The majority of teachers (52.5%) reported that administrators who attended the IEP meetings encouraged discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction. However, less than half of expert evaluators (42%) reported administrator encouragement. The difference between the two groups was statistically significant (see Table 55).

With respect to administrator support for bilingual education, the majority of teachers (51.5%) and nearly half of expert evaluators (44.9%) indicated that their administrators seemed to promote bilingual instruction. However, these differences were not the result of statistical analysis, but a comparison of resulting percentages.

A difference exists between the reported stance of administrators related to the instructional language for ELLs and the teachers' instructional language of choice. If, as stated earlier, administrators favored bilingual education, why did the majority (50.8%) of teachers report that they used only English to teach expressive language to their ELLs? In addition, 33.3% of teachers reported that they used English only as the approach to teach receptive language to ELLs, and an even higher percentage of teachers (41.8%) indicated that they instructed in English over 80% of the school day. Regardless of the differences in how teachers and expert evaluators reported administrator support for bilingual education, the results are the same: ELLs in PPCD classes appear to be instructed in English-only environments. The differences reported in this section were not tested through statistical analysis but through a comparison of resulting percentages.

As reported by Mueller et al., the role of administrators is very important in relation to the language of instruction decisions for ELLs. There were several similarities between this study and the Mueller et al. study. In this study, a larger percentage of teachers (52.5%) and expert evaluators (42%) reported administrator encouragement in comparison with the results from the Mueller et al. (2006) study. However, both studies reported that a substantial number of administrators encouraged discussion of language of instruction issues at the IEP meetings of ELLs. Furthermore, the administrator encouragement for discussions related to language of instruction at IEP meetings was a very good predictor for parent participation in those meetings. Again, this finding is similar to that obtained by Mueller et al. Results from this study highlight the importance of the administrator role in the instructional decisions for ELLs.

*Parent Participation*

Another contradiction highlighted in this study concerned the participation of parents in making instructional language decisions for their children. The majority of the teachers reported that they asked parents their preferences regarding which language to use with their children at school—English or the primary language. However, the majority of ELLs were reported as being educated in English rather than in their home language. As this study did not directly interview parents, the causes and motivations for this disparity cannot be determined. However, given that English was predominantly used as the sole language of instruction, we must assume one of two scenarios: (1) that parents are recommending English and teachers are complying with those recommendations, or (2) parents are recommending the use of their child’s primary language and teachers are ignoring parents’ suggestions. This finding may also represent a disconnect related to the cultural expectations that influence the educational roles of teachers and parents. Mainstream American culture expects parents to be active participants in the development of the individualized education plan for their children (e.g. IDEIA, 2004); however, as noted by Cheatham (2008), Spanish-speaking parents usually defer to the teachers’ expertise and expect teachers to make instructional decisions. Parents of other cultures and languages may not grasp the underlying notion of parental participation as understood by the mainstream culture (Harry, 1992; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999).

*Summary*

In conclusion, findings from this study yielded interesting results that highlight differences in the recommended versus actual teaching practices related to language of instruction for ELLs ages 3-5 in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion classrooms. Some of these contrasts between practice and expert recommendations were analyzed with statistical measures while other comparisons highlighted differences in the percentages reported by each group. The following points summarize the findings of this study: (a) teachers of ELLs with disabilities preferred English as the exclusive language of instruction, (b) expert evaluators strongly recommended bilingual instruction for ELLs with disabilities, (c) language dominance and language proficiency testing of young ELLs were major predictors of whether children would receive referral to the bilingual or ESL programs in their district in the future, (d) LPAC representation at the IEP meetings was a good predictor for future referrals to bilingual or ESL programs, (e) teachers' reported prevalent use of English as the language of instruction is contradictory with their purported beliefs that special education and language needs of their students are equally important, (f) teachers reported being underprepared to work with ELLs, (g) administrators at IEP meetings encouraged discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction—and this variable was a good predictor of parent participation in the IEP discussion, (h) most teachers reported that administrators promoted bilingual instruction, (i) a high percentage of expert evaluators reported that administrators did not promote bilingual instruction, (j) most teachers reported satisfaction with the instruction of ELLs in their schools, (k) most expert

evaluators reported dissatisfaction with the instruction of ELLs in their districts, and (i) teachers asked parents their preferences regarding language of instruction.

Results from this study illuminate the state of affairs in the education of young ELLs (3-5 years of age) who receive special education services in public schools. Language of instruction decisions for this young group of children must be put at the forefront of the educational discussion. Regardless of political issues; school policies; attitudes of professionals; or availability of programs, all which may prevent the use of the primary language for young ELLs with disabilities, the results of this study suggest that high percentages of these children are not being provided with appropriate instruction. The lack of ELL training exhibited by the teacher participants in this study is alarming—only 8.8% of respondents had bilingual endorsement and only 29.3% had ESL endorsement—especially within the context of the geographical region where this study was conducted. Without clear laws and specific state and local guidelines, appropriate language instruction for ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion programs will not be guaranteed.

This study has substantiated the differences between the recommended and the actual practices currently in effect for young ELLs with disabilities—while highlighting research that supports the development of the primary language for these children. Furthermore, this study underscores the discordance among teachers' beliefs, training, and practices as they relate to the instruction of ELLs in PPCD and Pre-K settings. As a result of these inappropriate instructional practices, the mandate at the heart of the special education movement will not be met for these children. As reported in this study,

young children with disabilities can and do learn two languages—and instructional decisions that limit or remove their primary language support during this crucial developmental stage can have long-lasting repercussions. In addition, primary language development plays a crucial role in the second language acquisition process and fosters the continued communication of children with their parents. It is the educational and ethical obligation of educators to provide appropriate instruction to these students in the language that will best support their future linguistic, intellectual, and social development.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations associated with this study. First, the rate of return of the survey could not be established for the teacher sample because the total number of teacher recipients was unknown as they were distributed by third parties. The surveys were distributed by the Region 4 ESC Special Education Early Childhood Division director and the Early Childhood Advisory Committee coordinators. Given the link that the director and coordinators had with the early childhood special education teachers, the researcher assumed that all early childhood special educators in the Region 4 ESC area were contacted. Also, the Region 4 ESC Special Education Early Childhood Division director and the ECAC coordinators asked participants to forward the link to the survey to other possible teacher participants. As this anonymous snowball sampling (Sue & Ritter, 2007) was used the exact number of teachers contacted for this study could not be determined.

A second limitation concerned the rate of return for the evaluator group, which was 48%. Given professional affiliation of expert evaluators to the BALG and BSEEG groups, this researcher expected them to actively participate in this study. This researcher also expected a higher rate of return based on the appeal of Web-based surveys (Schonlau et al., 2002; Sue & Ritter, 2007) and the high rate of return obtained by other researchers using this methodology (Herzberg & Stough, 2007).

A third limitation of this study relates to the veracity of responses from the teacher and the evaluator groups. This is a common threat for any type of survey and can limit the validity of an instrument due to the intentional or non-intentional misinformation from the part of the participant (Sue & Ritter, 2007). However, given the intent of this study to replicate the Mueller et al. (2006) study this limitation was unavoidable.

Another limitation of the study related to the lack of direct information from the administrators and the parents. All the information related to actions of administrators and parents was obtained from the perspective of the teachers and evaluators. A follow-up of this study with interviews or focus groups with these stakeholders would help clarify the results obtained from the teachers.

Finally, given steps taken to maintain anonymity, the researcher could not draw a direct parallel between the districts in which the teachers worked and the districts in which the expert evaluators worked. This limitation could have been prevented by choosing the teacher and the evaluator participants from the same school districts and

linking this data. However, the size of the expert evaluator group may have been compromised by the relatively smaller size of the teacher group.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Evaluators in this study, most of whom were experienced and well-trained, reported that it is best practice to instruct young ELLs with disabilities in their primary language. Their responses reinforce results found in other studies that the instruction of children with disabilities in their primary language is considered the most effective teaching practice for ELLs (Dickinson et al., 2004; Duran & Heiry, 1986; Milian & Pearson, 2005; Rohena et al., 2002). National and state immigration trends suggest that the Latino population and other groups of immigrants will continue to escalate at a rapid rate (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2006; García & Cuellar, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000). With the growth of the ELL population in the nation, the need for trained educational professionals, who can implement these best practices, is also increasing. Positive outcomes for ELLs with disabilities depend on their opportunity to develop their primary language in order to make an effective transition into English (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Cummins, 2001; Ruiz et al., 2002). However, teachers who lack the necessary training or knowledge to work with these children (Roache et al., 2003) as well as a lack of parental voice in the language decisions for their children (Harry, 1992; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999) will almost certainly exacerbate this situation. Without highly qualified teachers (IDEIA, 2004) who possess training in special education and second language acquisition, the direct instruction of young ELLs with moderate to severe disabilities in PPCD and Pre-K inclusion settings may be left to educators who may be

familiar with the language of the student but unfamiliar with effective instructional practices. Furthermore, decisions concerning the instruction of young ELLs that are made with limited parental input may ignore important cultural and linguistic considerations. These factors place young children with disabilities who are ELLs at risk for not achieving their full academic and linguistic potential.

Based on the findings in this study, several future investigations are suggested. First, teachers of ELLs with disabilities should implement best practices which include using the students' primary language, using ESL strategies, and having cultural competence. A study that targets the reasons why teachers do not implement best practices is recommended.

A second implication concerns the influence that school and district administrators have on the language of instruction decisions for ELLs during their IEP meetings. This study taps into the attitude and participation of administrators from the teachers and evaluators' point of view. Therefore, a study that will tap directly into the knowledge of administrators concerning ELL legal issues is recommended.

Other implications relate to parent participation in the decision-making process concerning language of instruction for their children. A study that will focus on parents' perspectives and cultural underpinnings on the language of instruction for their children is recommended. Also, young children who receive special education at an early age need instruction targeting the development of their primary language. A study that will target the primary language development of young ELLs in special education is recommended. Furthermore, expert evaluators who assess young ELLs, identify their

disability conditions, and make sound recommendations about instructional strategies and language of delivery should be satisfied with the education of these children. A study that will investigate why their recommendations are not followed is suggested.

Finally, the differences between the preparation of teachers and the expert evaluators in this study, along with similarities in the results when compared to the Mueller et al. (2006) study, highlight the need for teacher training. Interestingly, some of the teachers surveyed in this study reported that they were unaware whether or not an LPAC representative was present at IEP meetings for ELLs. Given the characteristics of children with disabilities in preschool programs it is surprising that some teachers might not be aware of the requirement to have an LPAC representative at IEP meetings. As reported, very few teachers in this study had bilingual or ESL endorsement and they may not have received training that addressed the role of the LPAC at these meetings. This finding points to the need for additional teacher training in the following areas: (a) primary and second language acquisition theory and practices, (b) bilingual education and ESL theory and practices, (c) collaboration practices between the bilingual/ESL program and the special education program, and (d) special education and bilingual legal issues related to ELLs in special education. Such training should be integrated into university and college programs as well as into continuing education training in order to provide teachers with updated and relevant information in the rapidly growing field of bilingual special education.

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## APPENDIX A

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM REGION 4 ESC

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT	COUNTY	DISTRICT	COUNTY	ENROLLMENT
Aldine	58,093	Harris	Pasadena	Harris	49,227
Alief	47,595	Harris	Pearland	Brazoria	15,543
Alvin	13,266	Brazoria	Royal	Waller	1,821
Anahuac	1,454	Chambers	Santa Fe	Galveston	4,554
Angleton	6,444	Brazoria	Sheldon	Harris	5,239
Barbers Hill	6,519	Chambers	Spring	Harris	31,389
Brazosport	13,260	Brazoria	S. Branch	Harris	32,701
Channelview	8,070	Harris	Stafford	Fort Bend	3,103
Clear Creek	35,232	Galveston	Sweeny	Bazoria	2,086
Cleveland	3,486	Liberty	Tarkington	Liberty	1,957
Col-Brazoria	3,056	Brazoria	Texas City	Galveston	5,965
Crosby	4,574	Harris	Tomball	Harris	9,077
Cy-Fair	86,256	Harris	Waller	Waller	5,045
Damon	164	Brazoria			
Danbury	759	Brazoria			
Dayton	4,986	Liberty			
Deer Park	12,345	Harris			
Devers	139	Liberty			
Dickinson	7,332	Galveston			
E. Chambers	1,205	Chambers			
Fort Bend	66,104	Fort Bend			
Friendswood	5,709	Galveston			
Galena Park	21,271	Harris			
Galveston	9,045	Galveston			
Goose Creek	20,215	Harris			
Hardin	1,253	Liberty			
Hempstead	1,344	Waller			
Hitchcock	1,143	Galveston			
Houston	210,292	Harris			
Huffman	3,044	Harris			
Hull-Daisetta	613	Liberty			
Humble	29,706	Harris			
Katy	48,247	Harris			
Kendleton	119	Fort Bend			
Klein	39,432	Harris			
La Marque	3,872	Galveston			
La Porte	7,807	Harris			
Lamar	19,662	Fort Bend			
Liberty	2,270	Liberty			
Needville	2,571	Fort Bend			
North Forest	9,966	Harris			

## APPENDIX B

## SAMPLE EMAIL FOR TEACHERS

Dear Colleague:

I am a graduate student at Texas A&M University in College Station. As partial fulfillment of my graduate studies, I am conducting a research study concerning recommended best practices and current practices of instruction for English language learner (ELL) students with disabilities in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) and Pre-Kindergarten inclusion programs in Texas. This research has been approved by the TAMU Institutional Review Board (2008-0193).

I am particularly interested in your responses because your experience teaching ELLs will contribute significantly toward solving the problems we face in this important area of education. The questionnaire that you will be asked to complete has been tested with a sample of teachers, and I have revised it in order to make it possible to obtain all the necessary data with a minimum of your time. The average time required for teachers trying out the survey instrument was 6 minutes.

A few days from now you will receive an email from Jan Andreas, Special Education Specialist at Region 4 Education Service Center with a link to the survey posted in the "Survey Monkey" website. Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated. I am writing in advance because it is known that many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is only with the generous help of teachers like you that this research can be successful.

Other phases of this research cannot be carried out until I complete analysis of the survey data. I would welcome your comments concerning any aspect of the instrument. Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

Fifty \$25.00 gift certificates to [www.target.com](http://www.target.com) will be randomly awarded to participants of this study. I will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Corinna Villar Cole, Ph.D. Candidate  
monavil@yahoo.com  
Texas A&M University

## APPENDIX C

## SAMPLE EMAIL FOR EVALUATORS

Dear Colleague:

I am a graduate student at Texas A&M University in College Station. As partial fulfillment of my graduate studies, I am conducting a research study concerning recommended best practices and current practices of instruction for English language learner (ELL) students with disabilities in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) and Pre-Kindergarten inclusion programs in Texas. This research has been approved by the TAMU Institutional Review Board (2008-0193).

I am particularly interested in your responses because your experience evaluating ELLs will contribute significantly toward solving the problems we face in this important area of education. The questionnaire that you will be asked to complete has been tested with a sample of evaluators, and I have revised it in order to make it possible to obtain all the necessary data with a minimum of your time. The average time required for evaluators trying out the survey instrument was 6 minutes.

A few days from now you will receive an email from Dr. Kim Arredondo, Education Specialist at Region 6 Education Service Center and/or from Dr. Criselda G. Alvarado, BALG director, with a link to the survey posted in the "Survey Monkey" website. Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated. I am writing in advance because it is known that many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is only with the generous help of professionals like you that this research can be successful.

Other phases of this research cannot be carried out until I complete analysis of the survey data. I would welcome your comments concerning any aspect of the instrument. Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

Fifty \$25.00 gift certificates to [www.target.com](http://www.target.com) will be randomly awarded to participants of this study. I will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Corinna Villar Cole, Ph.D. Candidate  
monavil@yahoo.com  
Texas A&M University

## APPENDIX D

## TEACHER SURVEY

1. Is language proficiency testing performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Don't know
  
2. Is language dominance testing performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Don't know
  
3. What approach do you use in teaching English Learner students receptive language?
  - a) Primary language instruction
  - b) English language immersion: provide instruction in English and then the primary language
  - c) English only
  - d) English with some Primary language support, as needed (No more than 20% primary language instruction).
  
4. In what language do you teach your English Language Learner (ELL) students to express themselves?
  - a) English only
  - b) English and their primary language
  - c) Primary language only
  
5. What expressive language should be taught to an English learner student who...
  - a) is learning basic pragmatics (protest, request, take turns):  
     Primary language      English
  - b) is making simple vocalizations (phonemes but no words):  
     Primary language      English
  - c) uses single words in the primary language only (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - d) uses 2 word utterances only in the primary language (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - e) uses 3-5 word phrases only in the primary language (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - f) uses single words in English:  
     Primary language      English
  - g) uses 2-3 word utterances in English:

- Primary language      English
- h) uses 3-5 word utterances in English:  
Primary language      English
- i) uses alternative communication (objects, pictures, drawings, symbols):  
Primary language      English
6. Do you ask parents their preferences regarding the language of instruction?
- Yes
  - No
7. Which of the following are available to you? (circle all that apply)
- Written materials in languages other than English
  - My own second language abilities
  - Bilingual related service professionals
  - Bilingual instructional assistants
  - Primary language materials for the parents (e.g., handouts, manuals, videos)
  - Formally trained interpreters (available through service or district)
  - Informal interpreters (e.g., family members, instructional assistants)
  - Augmentative Communication Devices in language other than English
8. Do you assess your students in their primary language?
- yes
  - no
9. Which of the statements below describes your belief regarding the language of instruction for English Learner students who have disabilities?
- I believe that a child needs to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English as a second language.
  - I believe that whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.
  - I believe that students must be able to communicate with their parents and family members in their primary language.
  - I believe students should learn to communicate in two languages.
  - I believe that if a student is a resident of the United States, she should learn the main societal language, English.
  - None of the above
10. When making programming decisions for preschool non-English speaking children with disabilities, I think that:
- The special education needs are more important than the language needs of the student.
  - The language needs are more important than the special education needs.
  - Both needs are equally important

11. How satisfied are you with instruction for your students who are English Language learners?

Highly Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
1	2	3	4

12. Does the administrator who attends your IEP meeting encourage discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. Which best describes the attitude of your administration regarding language decisions?

- a) Promotes English only
- b) Promotes Bilingual instruction
- c) Is silent on the question

14. In your teacher education program, did you ever receive any training for working with English Language learner students?

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. Do you speak a second language in addition to English?

- a) No
- b) I can speak 20-50 words in a second language.
- c) I can carry on a limited conversation in a second language.
- d) I am fluent in one or more languages other than English.

16. In the past two years, have you received training related to ELL/Special Education issues?

- a) Yes, Total Hours: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) No

17. Are you familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the roles of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELL students with disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. Do you have a Bilingual certification/endorsement?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. Do you have an ESL certification/endorsement?

- a) Yes
- b) No

20. Does a representative from the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) attend the IEP meetings of 3 to 5 year old ELL students considered for PPCD programs?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

21. Are young children 3 to 5 years old in early childhood special education programs flagged as Limited English proficient (LEP) for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

22. Is there a Bilingual program in your district?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

23. Is there an ESL program in your district?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

24. Do you currently teach students who come from homes where another language is spoken?

- a) Yes, Language(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) No

25. What is the highest educational degree you have received?

- a) Bachelor degree
- b) Bachelor degree plus additional units
- a) Master degree
- b) Master degree plus additional units
- c) Ph.D.

26. How many years have you worked with special education students who come from homes where another language is spoken?

- a) 0-5
- b) 6-10

- c) 11-15
- d) 16-20
- e) 21-26
- f) 27-31
- g) 32+

27. How would you describe your position?

- a) Early childhood teacher
- b) Early intervention teacher
- c) Elementary special education teacher
- d) Inclusion specialist
- e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

28. What is your educational setting?

- a) PPCD classroom
- b) Pre-Kindergarten inclusion

29. What is the size of your district?

- a) < 5,000
- b) 5,000 – 10,000
- c) 10,000 – 15,000
- d) 15,000 – 20,000
- e) 20,000 – 30,000
- f) 30,000 – 40,000
- g) 40,000 – 50,000
- h) >50,000

## APPENDIX E

## EVALUATOR SURVEY

1. Do you recommend that language proficiency testing be performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Don't know
  
2. Do you recommend that language dominance testing be performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Don't know
  
3. What approach do you recommend in teaching English Learner students receptive language?
  - a) Primary language instruction
  - b) English language immersion: provide instruction in English and then the primary language
  - c) English only
  - d) English with some Primary language support, as needed (No more than 20% primary language instruction).
  
4. In what language do you recommend your English Language Learner (ELL) students to express themselves?
  - a) English only
  - b) English and their primary language
  - c) Primary language only
  
5. What expressive language should be taught to an English learner student who...
  - a) is learning basic pragmatics (protest, request, take turns):  
     Primary language      English
  - b) is making simple vocalizations (phonemes but no words):  
     Primary language      English
  - c) uses single words in the primary language only (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - d) uses 2 word utterances only in the primary language (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - e) uses 3-5 word phrases only in the primary language (Not English):  
     Primary language      English
  - f) uses single words in English:  
     Primary language      English

- g) uses 2-3 word utterances in English:  
Primary language      English
  - h) uses 3-5 word utterances in English:  
Primary language      English
  - i) uses alternative communication (objects, pictures, drawings, symbols):  
Primary language      English
6. Do you ask parents their preferences regarding the language of instruction?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
7. Which of the following are available to you? (circle all that apply)
- a) Written materials in languages other than English
  - b) My own second language abilities
  - c) Bilingual related service professionals
  - d) Bilingual instructional assistants
  - e) Primary language materials for the parents (e.g., handouts, manuals, videos)
  - f) Formally trained interpreters (available through service or district)
  - g) Informal interpreters (e.g., family members, instructional assistants)
  - h) Augmentative Communication Devices in language other than English
8. Do you assess your students in their primary language?
- a) yes
  - b) no
9. Which of the statements below describes your belief regarding the language of instruction for English Learner students who have disabilities?
- a) I believe that a child needs to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English as a second language.
  - b) I believe that whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.
  - c) I believe that students must be able to communicate with their parents and family members in their primary language.
  - d) I believe students should learn to communicate in two languages.
  - e) I believe that if a student is a resident of the United States, she should learn the main societal language, English.
  - f) None of the above
10. When making programming decisions for preschool non-English speaking children with disabilities, I think that:
- a) The special education needs are more important than the language needs of the student.
  - b) The language needs are more important than the special education needs.
  - c) Both needs are equally important

11. How satisfied are you with instruction for the students you evaluate who are English Language learners?

Highly Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
1	2	3	4

12. Does the administrator who attends your IEP meeting encourage discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. Which best describes the attitude of your administration regarding language decisions?

- a) Promotes English only
- b) Promotes Bilingual instruction
- c) Is silent on the question

14. In your university/college program, did you ever receive any training for working with English Language learner students?

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. Do you speak a second language in addition to English?

- a) No
- b) I can speak 20-50 words in a second language.
- c) I can carry on a limited conversation in a second language.
- d) I am fluent in one or more languages other than English.

16. In the past two years, have you received training related to ELL/Special Education issues?

- a) Yes, Total Hours: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) No

17. Are you familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the roles of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELL students with disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. Do you have a Bilingual certification/endorsement?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. Do you have an ESL certification/endorsement?

- a) Yes
- b) No

20. Does a representative from the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) attend the IEP meetings of 3 to 5 year old ELL students considered for PPCD programs?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

21. Are young children 3 to 5 years old in early childhood special education programs flagged as Limited English proficient (LEP) for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

22. Is there a Bilingual program in your district?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

23. Is there an ESL program in your district?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

24. Do you currently evaluate students who come from homes where another language is spoken?

- d) Yes, Language(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) No

25. What is the highest educational degree you have received?

- a) Bachelor degree
- b) Bachelor degree plus additional units
- c) Master degree
- d) Master degree plus additional units
- e) Ph.D.

26. How many years have you worked with special education students who come from homes where another language is spoken?

- a) 0-5
- b) 6-10
- c) 11-15

- d) 16-20
- e) 21-26
- f) 27-31
- g) 32+

27 How would you describe your position?

- a) Educational Diagnostician
- b) Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP)
- c) Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)
- d) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Through what university program did you receive your assessment training?

\_\_\_\_\_

29. Have you received training in bilingual special education assessment?

- a) Yes
- b) No

30. Have you received training in cultural competence?

- a) Yes
- b) No

31. Are you a member of the Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group in your area?

- a) Yes
- b) No

32. Have you had at least 5 years of experience assessing ELL special education students?

- a) Yes
- b) No

## APPENDIX F

## TEACHER AND EVALUATOR SURVEYS

*Italics: Questions from Mueller et al. (2006) survey*

**Bold: Modified Questions**

**Blue: New Questions**

**Red: Changes from the Teacher Survey to the Evaluator Survey**

Teacher Survey	Evaluator Survey
<b>Research Question 1</b>	
What are the existing and recommended practices concerning language of instruction for young ELL students in PPCD programs?	
<p>1. Is language proficiency testing performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>	<p>1. <b>Do you recommend</b> that language proficiency testing be performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>
<p>2. Is language dominance testing performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>	<p>2. <b>Do you recommend</b> that language dominance testing be performed on ELL students in PPCD programs in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>
<p>3. <i>What approach do you use in teaching English Learner students receptive language?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Primary language instruction</i> b) <i>English language immersion: provide instruction in English and then the primary language</i> c) <i>English only</i> d) <i>English with some Primary language support, as needed (No more than 20% primary language instruction).</i></p>	<p>3. <i>What approach do you <b>recommend</b> in teaching English Learner students receptive language?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Primary language instruction</i> b) <i>English language immersion: provide instruction in English and then the primary language</i> c) <i>English only</i> d) <i>English with some Primary language support, as needed (No more than 20% primary language instruction).</i></p>
<p>4. In what language do you teach your English Language <b>Learner (ELL)</b> students to express themselves?</p> <p>a) English only b) English and their primary</p>	<p>4. In what language do you <b>recommend</b> your English Language <b>Learner (ELL)</b> students to express themselves?</p> <p>a) English only b) English and their primary</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>language</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">c) <i>Primary language only</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>language</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">c) <i>Primary language only</i></p>
<p>5. <i>What expressive language should be taught to an English learner student who...</i></p> <p>a) <i>is learning basic pragmatics (protest, request, take turns):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>b) <i>is making simple vocalizations (phonemes but no words):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>c) <i>uses single words in the primary language only (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>d) <i>uses 2 word utterances only in the primary language (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>e) <i>uses 3-5 word phrases only in the primary language (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>f) <i>uses single words in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>g) <i>uses 2-3 word utterances in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>h) <i>uses 3-5 word utterances in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>i) <i>uses alternative communication (objects, pictures, drawings, symbols):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p>	<p>5. <i>What expressive language should be taught to an English learner student who...</i></p> <p>a) <i>is learning basic pragmatics (protest, request, take turns):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>b) <i>is making simple vocalizations (phonemes but no words):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>c) <i>uses single words in the primary language only (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>d) <i>uses 2 word utterances only in the primary language (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>e) <i>uses 3-5 word phrases only in the primary language (Not English):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>f) <i>uses single words in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>g) <i>uses 2-3 word utterances in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>h) <i>uses 3-5 word utterances in English:</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p> <p>i) <i>uses alternative communication (objects, pictures, drawings, symbols):</i> <i>Primary language    English</i></p>
<p>6. <i>Do you ask parents their preferences regarding the language of instruction?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Yes</i></p> <p>b) <i>No</i></p>	<p>6. <i>Do you ask parents their preferences regarding the language of instruction?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Yes</i></p> <p>b) <i>No</i></p>
<p>7. <i>Which of the following are available to you? (circle all that apply)</i></p> <p>a) <i>Written materials in languages other than English</i></p> <p>b) <i>My own second language abilities</i></p> <p>c) <i>Bilingual related service professionals</i></p> <p>d) <i>Bilingual instructional assistants</i></p> <p>e) <i>Primary language materials for the</i></p>	<p>7. <i>Which of the following are available to you? (circle all that apply)</i></p> <p>a) <i>Written materials in languages other than English</i></p> <p>b) <i>My own second language abilities</i></p> <p>c) <i>Bilingual related service professionals</i></p> <p>d) <i>Bilingual instructional assistants</i></p> <p>e) <i>Primary language materials for the</i></p>

<p>parents (e.g., handouts, manuals, videos)</p> <p>f) <i>Formally trained interpreters (available through service or district)</i></p> <p>g) <i>Informal interpreters (e.g., family members, instructional assistants)</i></p> <p>h) <i>Augmentative Communication Devices in language other than English</i></p>	<p>parents (e.g., handouts, manuals, videos)</p> <p>f) <i>Formally trained interpreters (available through service or district)</i></p> <p>g) <i>Informal interpreters (e.g., family members, instructional assistants)</i></p> <p>h) <i>Augmentative Communication Devices in language other than English</i></p>
<p>8. <i>Do you assess your students in their primary language?</i></p> <p>a) <i>yes</i></p> <p>b) <i>no</i></p>	<p>8. <i>Do you assess your students in their primary language?</i></p> <p>a) <i>yes</i></p> <p>b) <i>no</i></p>
<p><u>Research Question 2</u></p> <p>What are the beliefs and attitudes of professionals (early childhood teachers and special education evaluators) concerning the type of instruction available for young ELL students in PPCD programs?</p>	
<p>9. <i>Which of the statements below describes your belief regarding the language of instruction for English Learner students who have disabilities?</i></p> <p>a) <i>I believe that a child needs to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English as a second language.</i></p> <p>b) <i>I believe that whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.</i></p> <p>c) <i>I believe that students must be able to communicate with their parents and family members in their primary language.</i></p> <p>d) <i>I believe students should learn to communicate in two languages.</i></p> <p>e) <i>I believe that if a student is a resident of the United States, she should learn the main societal language, English.</i></p> <p>f) <i>None of the above</i></p>	<p>9. <i>Which of the statements below describes your belief regarding the language of instruction for English Learner students who have disabilities?</i></p> <p>a) <i>I believe that a child needs to develop their primary language before they will be able to acquire English as a second language.</i></p> <p>b) <i>I believe that whatever language the child will most use in the future should be taught.</i></p> <p>c) <i>I believe that students must be able to communicate with their parents and family members in their primary language.</i></p> <p>d) <i>I believe students should learn to communicate in two languages.</i></p> <p>e) <i>I believe that if a student is a resident of the United States, she should learn the main societal language, English.</i></p> <p>f) <i>None of the above</i></p>
<p>10. <i>When making programming decisions for preschool non-English speaking children with disabilities, I think that:</i></p> <p>a) <i>The special education needs are</i></p>	<p>10. <i>When making programming decisions for preschool non-English speaking children with disabilities, I think that:</i></p> <p>a) <i>The special education needs are</i></p>

<p>more important than the language needs of the student.</p> <p>b) The language needs are more important than the special education needs.</p> <p>c) Both needs are equally important</p>	<p>more important than the language needs of the student.</p> <p>b) The language needs are more important than the special education needs.</p> <p>c) Both needs are equally important</p>
<p>11. How satisfied are you with instruction for your students who are English Language learners?</p> <p>a) Highly Dissatisfied (1)</p> <p>b) Somewhat Dissatisfied (2)</p> <p>c) Satisfied (3)</p> <p>d) Highly Satisfied (4)</p>	<p>11. How satisfied are you with instruction for <i>the students you evaluate</i> who are English Language learners?</p> <p>a) Highly Dissatisfied (1)</p> <p>b) Somewhat Dissatisfied (2)</p> <p>c) Satisfied (3)</p> <p>d) Highly Satisfied (4)</p>
<p>12. Does the administrator who attends your IEP meeting encourage discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction?</p> <p>a) Yes</p> <p>b) No</p>	<p>12. Does the administrator who attends your IEP meeting encourage discussion about what language should be used for receptive and expressive language instruction?</p> <p>a) Yes</p> <p>b) No</p>
<p>13. Which best describes the attitude of your administration regarding language decisions?</p> <p>a) Promotes English only</p> <p>b) Promotes Bilingual instruction</p> <p>c) Is silent on the question</p>	<p>13. Which best describes the attitude of your administration regarding language decisions?</p> <p>a) Promotes English only</p> <p>b) Promotes Bilingual instruction</p> <p>c) Is silent on the question</p>
<p><u>Research Question 3</u></p> <p>To what extent are early childhood teachers and special education evaluators prepared to work with young ELL students in PPCD programs?</p>	
<p>14. In your teacher education program, did you ever receive any training for working with English Language learner students?</p> <p>a) Yes</p> <p>b) No</p> <p>Name of Institution: _____</p>	<p>*14. In your <i>university/college</i> program, did you ever receive any training for working with English Language learner students?</p> <p>a) Yes</p> <p>b) No</p> <p>Name of Institution: _____</p>
<p>15. Do you speak a second language in addition to English?</p> <p>a) No</p> <p>b) I can speak 20-50 words in a second language.</p> <p>c) I can carry on a limited conversation in a second language.</p>	<p>*15. Do you speak a second language in addition to English?</p> <p>a) No</p> <p>b) I can speak 20-50 words in a second language.</p> <p>c) I can carry on a limited conversation in a second language.</p>

<p>d) <i>I am fluent in one or more languages other than English.</i></p>	<p>d) <i>I am fluent in one or more languages other than English.</i></p>
<p>16. In the past two years, have you received training related to ELL/Special Education issues?  a) Yes, Total Hours: _____  b) No</p>	<p>*16. In the past two years, have you received training related to ELL/Special Education issues?  a) Yes, Total Hours: _____  b) No</p>
<p>17. Are you familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the roles of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELL students with disabilities?  a) Yes  b) No</p>	<p>*17. Are you familiar with the latest recommendations from the Texas Education Agency concerning the roles of the IEP and LPAC teams when deciding language of instruction for ELL students with disabilities?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
<p>18. Do you have a Bilingual certification/endorsement?  a) Yes  b) No</p>	<p>*18. Do you have a Bilingual certification/endorsement?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
<p>19. Do you have an ESL certification/endorsement?  a) Yes  b) No</p>	<p>*19. Do you have an ESL certification/endorsement?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
<p><u>Research Question 4</u>  Which variables best predict future referral of young ELL students in PPCD programs to the Bilingual and ESL program?</p>	
<p>20. Does a representative from the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) attend the IEP meetings of 3 to 5 year old ELL students considered for PPCD programs?  a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't know</p>	<p>20. Does a representative from the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) attend the IEP meetings of 3 to 5 year old ELL students considered for PPCD programs?  a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't know</p>
<p>21. Are young children 3 to 5 years old in early childhood special education programs flagged as Limited English proficient (LEP) for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program?  a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't know</p>	<p>21. Are young children 3 to 5 years old in early childhood special education programs flagged as Limited English proficient (LEP) for future referral to the Bilingual/ESL program?  a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't know</p>

<p>22. Is there a Bilingual program in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>	<p>22. Is there a Bilingual program in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>
<p>23. Is there an ESL program in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>	<p>23. Is there an ESL program in your district?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No c) Don't know</p>
<p><u>Research Question 5</u> Are responses from the early childhood teacher group significantly similar or different from the answers reported by the group of special education evaluators?</p>	
<p><u>Demographic Information</u></p>	
<p><b>24. Do you currently teach students who come from homes where another language is spoken?</b></p> <p>a) <b>Yes, Language(s)</b> _____</p> <p>b) <b>No</b></p>	<p><b>24. Do you currently evaluate students who come from homes where another language is spoken?</b></p> <p>a) <b>Yes, Language(s)</b> _____</p> <p>b) <b>No</b></p>
<p>25. <i>What is the highest educational degree you have received?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Bachelor degree</i> b) <i>Bachelor degree plus additional units</i> c) <i>Master degree</i> d) <i>Master degree plus additional units</i> e) <i>Ph.D.</i></p>	<p>25. <i>What is the highest educational degree you have received?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Bachelor degree</i> b) <i>Bachelor degree plus additional units</i> c) <i>Master degree</i> d) <i>Master degree plus additional units</i> e) <i>Ph.D.</i></p>
<p>26. <i>How many years have you worked with special education students who come from homes where another language is spoken?</i></p> <p>a) <i>0-5</i> b) <i>6-10</i> c) <i>11-15</i> d) <i>16-20</i> e) <i>21-26</i> f) <i>27-31</i> g) <i>32+</i></p>	<p>*26. <i>How many years have you worked with special education students who come from homes where another language is spoken?</i></p> <p>a) <i>0-5</i> b) <i>6-10</i> c) <i>11-15</i> d) <i>16-20</i> e) <i>21-26</i> f) <i>27-31</i> g) <i>32+</i></p>
<p><b>27. How would you describe your position?</b></p> <p>a) <b>Early childhood teacher</b> b) <b>Early intervention teacher</b></p>	<p><b>27 How would you describe your position?</b></p> <p>a) <b>Educational Diagnostician</b> b) <b>Licensed Specialist in School</b></p>

<p>c) Elementary special education teacher  d) Inclusion specialist  e) Other: _____</p>	<p>Psychology (LSSP)  c) Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)  d) Other: _____</p>
<p>28. What is your educational setting?  a) PPCD classroom  b) Pre-Kindergarten inclusion</p>	
<p>29. What is the size of your district?  a) &lt; 5,000  b) 5,000 – 10,000  c) 10,000 – 15,000  d) 15,000 – 20,000  e) 20,000 – 30,000  f) 30,000 – 40,000  g) 40,000 – 50,000  h) &gt;50,000</p>	
	<p>28. Through what university program did you receive your assessment training?  _____  _____</p>
	<p>*29. Have you received training in bilingual special education assessment?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
	<p>*30. Have you received training in cultural competence?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
	<p>*31. Are you a member of the Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group in your area?  a) Yes  b) No</p>
	<p>*32. Have you had at least 5 years of experience in assessing ELL special education students?  a) Yes  b) No</p>

\* For identification of Best Practice Group

## APPENDIX G

## TERMS

ASHA	American Speech-Language Hearing Association
BALG	Bilingual Evaluation Leadership Group
BEA	Bilingual Education Act
BSEE	Bilingual Special Education Evaluation
CLDE	Culturally Linguistically Diverse Students with Disabilities
DD	Developmental Delay
ECAC	Early Childhood Advisory Committee
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
ELL	English Language Learners
ESL	English as a Second Language
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program/Plan
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LPAC	Language Proficiency Assessment Committee
LSSP	Licensed Specialists in School Psychology
NCEC	Noncategorical Early Childhood
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
PPCD	Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities
Pre-K Inclusion	Pre-K classrooms serving students with/without disabilities
Primary Language	Students' native home language
SEECD	Special Education Early Childhood Division
SLD	Specific Learning Disabilities
SLP	Speech and Language Pathologists
TAC	Texas Administrative Code
TSBEP	Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

## VITA

Corinna Villar Cole was born in Bogotá, Colombia. She has traveled and lived in many countries around the world in North and South America, Europe, and the Middle and Far East. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in academic studies from Sam Houston State University in December 1993. She entered the Special Education program at Sam Houston State University September 1997, she received her Master of Education degree in December 1999, and her Ph.D. degree from Texas A&M University in 2009. Her research interests include assessment and evaluation practices for ELLs, special education, bilingual education, and early childhood education. She plans to publish articles on these topics, focusing on second language acquisition factors that affect the education of all ELLs in special education.

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