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Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Dual Language Learners

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PARENT AND TEACHER PERSPECTIVES OF THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Dual Language Learners

by

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Parent and teacher perspectives of young children’s social competence were compared by analyzing parent and teacher ratings of 30 dual language learners and 30 monolingual native English-speaking children. Parents and teachers rated children on the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) rating scales. Participants were 60 parents and 9 teachers of 3-to-5 year-old children who attended a Head Start preschool center. For each child, one parent and one teacher completed an SSIS rating scale, resulting in two rating scales for each child. The purpose of this study was to examine whether (a) parent and teacher ratings were significantly different on SSIS measures of social competence for young children and (b) whether parent and teacher ratings were significantly different for children based on children’s language designation. In particular, this study examined both social skills and problem behaviors when looking for differences in parent and teacher ratings.

Results indicated that parent and teacher ratings were significantly different for four of the subscales based on participant category, meaning that the SSIS ratings differed based on whether parents or teachers were completing the rating scales. For the social skills subscale, empathy, results indicated that teachers were likely to give children higher ratings than parents.
On the externalizing, internalizing, and hyperactivity/inattention subscales, which are all Problem Behaviors subscales, parent ratings for children were higher than teacher ratings, and these differences were statistically significant.

Parent and teacher ratings on two subscales also differed for children based on their language designation. Results from analysis of the communication subscale, which is a social skills subscale, indicated that parents and teachers rated dual language learners higher than monolingual native English-speaking children. From the Problem Behaviors scale, parent and teacher ratings for bullying were higher for monolingual native English-speaking children than for dual language learners.

Findings from this study also indicate that dual language learners received higher ratings on communication scales and lower ratings on bullying scales than their native English-speaking peers. Further research should more closely examine the relationship between these two constructs. The role of language in the development of social competence is still not well understood, however it is important to understand the developmental trajectory of dual language learners in order to provide the most appropriate educational experiences opportunities for children and their families and improve outcomes.
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DEDICATION

To all of my students over the years…this is my path because of you.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

English language learners (ELLs) are one of the fastest growing student populations, making up an estimated 9.2% of the enrolled K-12 student population (Kena et al., 2015). More than one out of every five children comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken as the primary language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). For the majority of children who are ELLs, Spanish is their home language, although this is not always true. Nationally, in 2015, Spanish was spoken in 71% of ELLs’ homes, and was the most frequently spoken language in all but five states (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). It is important to note that ELLs may have very diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Espinosa, 2015). English language learners may represent many different countries of origin, as well as their various languages, cultures, and unique family traditions and values (Castro & Espinosa, 2014).

These varied languages, cultures, and values are not mirrored in the teaching population. As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, research indicates a significant divide between the demographics of the student population and those of the teaching population (Han, 2010). According to the 2016 U.S. Department of Education report, the teaching workforce lacks diversity with 82% of teachers identifying as White. This lack of diversity originates in teacher preparation programs, where students of color comprise only 25% of total enrollment in such programs, compared to 36% in all postsecondary programs. This disconnect between a very diverse population of students and their primarily White teachers has resulted in advocacy for more culturally responsive pedagogy (Bernard, 2004). Researchers have called for teacher preparation programs to include coursework that requires consideration of how beliefs and
perspectives influence teaching and interactions with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Han, 2010; Weinstein, 2002).

**Academic Outcomes**

English language learners consistently perform below their native English-speaking peers (Espinosa, 2015) on measures of academic achievement. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2015a), for students who are classified as ELLs, 15% of fourth graders are at or above proficient in math, compared to 43% of non-ELL children. Additionally, 8% of ELLs are proficient in reading compared to 38% of non-ELL children. Following this trend, only 62.3% of ELL children graduate from high school compared to a national average of 82.3% (NCES, 2015b).

In an effort to address the needs of our nation’s youth, particularly those of our ELLs and children living in poverty, there is an increased focus on providing access to high quality early childhood education programs that will, in turn, increase the likelihood of academic success (National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 2009). Children who attend preschool programs have better language, literacy, math, and social skills, all of which are highly predictive of both academic achievement and high school graduation (Dickinson & Porche, 2011). Development and educational experiences during early childhood years influence children’s development throughout the course of their lifetimes (NAEYC, 2009; National Research Council, 2001; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Children in preschool programs have complex needs (e.g., cognitive and social-emotional needs) as they prepare to enter kindergarten. Yates et al. (2008) reported that while 60% of children beginning kindergarten possess the cognitive skills required to be successful in elementary school, only 40% of children have the social-emotional skills to necessary to
succeed. Therefore, preschool programs must be equipped to meet children’s academic and social needs as well as their increasingly diverse linguistic needs.

At kindergarten entry, one in seven children has a primary language other than English (Kena et al., 2015), which highlights the critical role early childhood programs play in the future academic achievement of young children. Research indicates that language proficiency by kindergarten is more likely to result in better academic achievement (Halle, Hair, Wandner, McNamara, & Chien, 2012). Young children who are acquiring two languages simultaneously or who are developing proficiency in a primary language while learning an additional language are referred to as dual language learners (DLLs; OHS, 2009). Dual language learners bring unique cultural and linguistic experiences to early childhood programs.

Several cultural and contextual factors affect a child’s language proficiency. While there are many family and environmental factors that affect a child’s academic achievement, attainment of social skills is one significant factor that can be influenced by early childhood program attendance. Development of strong social skills is highly predictive of academic success, as well as success in life post-graduation (Coolahan, Fantuzzo, Mendez, & McDermott, 2003), and this skill set can be fostered through high quality early childhood education. For many DLLs, preschool programs provide their first exposure to English, introductions to different cultures, opportunities to socialize with peers (Figuera-Daniel & Barnett, 2013), and contexts for DLLs to enhance their social skills.

While the nation’s youngest learners are increasingly diverse (Kena, et al., 2015), the persistent lack of diversity among educators means that their teachers do not always recognize students’ strengths or understand their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Chamberlain, 2005). Discrepancies may exist between social competencies valued by teachers and those valued by
families (Lane, Stanton-Chapman, Jamison, & Phillips, 2007). Critical and foundational social-emotional development occurs in early childhood years, so early childhood educators have a vital role in supporting this process. Through a more comprehensive understanding of perspectives of parents and teachers about DLLs’ social-emotional development and unique needs, educators may be able to plan more effective ways to support children and their families. Development of these competences may result in significant long-term academic achievement.

**Background of the Study**

Language is social behavior: its structures are social conventions, its functions are communicative, and it can only be learned through social interactions with other humans (Tomasello, 1992). Tomasello also notes that young children acquire nearly all of their early language in the context of cultural routines, beginning with joint attention between the caregiver and child during routine care activities. When children begin to imitate others’ behavior and language, their learning is a cultural product that demonstrates understanding of not only the behavior itself, but the reasoning and purpose for the behavior as well. They make inferences about how to use language, and this process results in acquisition of social competencies (Tomasello, 1992). During the language acquisition process, children naturally participate in social and cultural learning transactions that help to develop their own social competence.

Early childhood educators have unique opportunities to support young children’s social-emotional development. The nature of their role allows them to observe children’s relationships with peers and facilitate social interactions that will best encourage social emotional-development en route to social competence (Kemple & Ellis, 2009). Teachers should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to select from a variety of supports and interventions in order to
best meet individual children’s needs, including dual language learners, within varying contexts (Kemple & Ellis, 2009).

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms and definitions were used in this study. Specific interpretations, as outlined below, are gathered from existing research and literature in the field and will be critical to interpreting the implications of this study:

*Assessment.* Assessment is the process of collecting data and information for the purpose of making informed decisions (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005).

*Dual Language Learners (DLLs).* Young children who are acquiring two languages simultaneously, or who are developing proficiency in a primary language while learning an additional language are Dual Language Learners (OHS, 2009).

*Emotional Competence.* Emotional competence is the ability to efficiently employ emotions to adapt to social contexts and situations (Buckley, Storino, & Saarni, 2003). Emotional competence includes emotion understanding, emotional expressiveness, and emotional regulation (Denham, 2006).

*L1.* L1 is the term used to refer to an individual’s native, first, or home language.

*L2.* L2 refers to the language a child is acquiring in addition to their native or home language (L1). For the purposes of this study, L2 refers to English.

*Problem Behaviors.* Problem behaviors are those behaviors that interfere with the development, acquisition, or performance of socially skilled behaviors (Gresham & Elliot, 2008).

*Social Competence.* Social competence is the personal knowledge and skills children develop to deal with the many choices, challenges, and opportunities they face in life. It also includes the
ability to interact effectively with others, resulting in the development and maintenance of desired, positive relationships (Fabes, Gaertner, & Popp, 2006).

**Social-Emotional Development.** Social-emotional development is the capacity of children, ages birth to 5 years old, to form close and secure adult and peer relationships and to experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Social-emotional development involves learning and exploring their environment within the contexts of family, community and culture (The Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning; CSEFEL, 2015).

**Self-Regulation.** Self-regulation includes a variety of behaviors, but generally includes at least the ability to focus one’s attention, manage one’s emotions, and control one’s behaviors (Blair & Razza, 2007). Self-regulation is a precursor to development of social competence, including the ability to match one’s appropriate emotional expressions with cultural and societal expectations (Halle et al., 2014).

**Social Skills.** Social skills include learned behaviors that simultaneously promote positive interactions within social situations and discourage negative interactions (Gresham & Elliott, 2008).

**Statement of the Problem**

The social competence of DLLs is an important emerging area of study (Castro, 2014). The relationship between social-emotional development and dual language learning is still not well understood. The majority of research studies involving DLLs have traditionally focused on academic achievement rather than social-emotional development. The limited research on social-emotional development of DLLs indicates that their development may either be enhanced by
their ability to navigate multiple cultures and languages, or may be hindered by anxiety and pressure to perform proficiently in a new language and culture (Halle et al., 2014).

Dual language learners develop their social identity in multi-cultural and multi-linguistic environments. These contexts provide opportunities for different transactional relationships between DLLs with their parents and caregivers, potentially resulting in distinctly different patterns of social-emotional development (Halle et al., 2014). Parents provide the earliest contexts and feedback for social-emotional learning; whereas early childhood educators structure young children’s primary educational experiences.

Social competence is notably a value judgment (Lim, Rodger, & Brown, 2013), making it necessary to consider both environmental and contextual factors when evaluating social competence. Zhang and Nurmi (2012) note that children display different social competencies in different settings, which are observed and valued differently by different people. Parents rarely have opportunities to observe children in classrooms and teachers rarely have opportunities to see children in the home. To address these differences, data is commonly gathered from both parents and teachers in order to obtain a more accurate representation of a child’s abilities or competencies (Renk & Phares, 2004). Including families in the assessment process is also a way to use multiple sources to gather data about a child. This practice aligns with the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005). It is important to investigate both teacher and parent perspectives of young children’s social competence to examine whether linguistic diversity is a factor in the development of social-emotional competence in young children. There are currently few studies examining parent and teacher discrepancies related to ratings of preschool aged children’s social competence (Cai, Kaiser, & Hancock, 2004;
Dinnebeil et al., 2013; Heyman, Poulakos, Upshur, & Wenz-Gross, 2016; Major, Seabra-Santos, & Martin, 2015; Phillips & Lonigan, 2010; Winsler & Wallace, 2002). Findings in these studies indicate that, generally, parent ratings for children are higher on measures of social skills and problem behaviors than teacher ratings. However, there is extremely limited research about parent and teacher ratings of social competence for children who are dual language learners.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner.

**Research Questions**

This research study was guided by four primary research questions. The research questions are as follows:

**Research Question 1:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

**Research Question 2:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

**Research Question 3:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?
**Research Question 4:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

**Significance of the Study**

There are an increasing number of DLLs in early childhood programs. Early childhood educators have opportunities to provide social supports as well as to form important attachments and relationships with children. These opportunities form a basis for children’s future social-emotional development, which in turn can improve academic trajectories. In early childhood, children are closely associated with their families and their care providers. Their families and schools make up the majority of systems that influence their lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When parents and educators work collaboratively toward common goals for children, outcomes are more positive for all involved. Foundational development in social-emotional and academic outcomes occurs in early childhood years. Parents and teachers may view the same behaviors through different cultural lenses or with different levels of objectivity based on their previous experiences (Lane, Stanton-Chapman, Jamison, & Phillips, 2007).

There is an existing body of research that suggests that DLLs’ development is different than monolingual children’s development across domains (e.g., language and literacy development, language processing, neural development; Espinosa, 2013). However, there is very little research involving the social-emotional development of dual language learners (Castro, 2014). The limited research on DLLs’ social-emotional development does not provide educators with sufficient information about how to proceed with providing the best educational and social opportunities for children who are actively acquiring two languages and interacting
with multiple cultures. An understanding of differences that result from participation in multiple cultural and linguistic contexts may increase the social competence of teachers as well as students in their classrooms and their families.

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. Findings from this research will contribute to current literature by providing evidence of parent and teacher perspectives and data related to DLLs’ social-emotional development. These data could be used to inform teacher preparation programs or professional development in order to ensure that teachers are able to meet DLLs’ unique cultural and linguistic needs, and are able to structure social opportunities that promote learning and engagement, as well as to enhance communication and collaboration between families and early childhood educators. A more complete understanding of DLLs’ social-emotional development will allow educators to effectively meet their students’ unique needs. Providing those critical opportunities for social and linguistic learning and exploration in the early years may promote more positive outcomes throughout their lives.

**Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations of this study. The limitations include:

1. The study was conducted at one site which limits generalizability to wider populations.

2. Parent reporting of skills and behaviors for their children may vary based on their previous experience with other children of the same age.
3. Parent and teacher participants did not complete the importance ratings on the SSIS rating scales, which would have given information about the participants’ beliefs about the importance of each skill or behavior.

4. Parent and teacher participants completed rating scales only and did not have the opportunity to explain their ratings with written or oral descriptions.

Assumptions of the Study

For this study, the following statements were presumed to be true:

1. Parents and teachers will provide thoughtful and honest responses on rating scales related to their children’s social competence.

2. Parents and teachers will understand the meaning and wording of rating scale items, in order to provide accurate answers representative of their child’s abilities and competencies.

Organization of the Study

This research study was organized and presented over five chapters. In Chapter One, an introduction to the background and research is presented, including a definition of terms, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, limitations and assumptions of the study. A comprehensive review of relevant literature is included in Chapter Two. Following an introduction, the theoretical framework for social-emotional development in early childhood is presented, specifically as it relates to young dual language learners. Unique contributions from both parents and educators to children’s social competence are also outlined, as well as the rationale for collecting data from multiple sources. Chapter Three includes the methodology and research design. Procedures are outlined, including the context of the study, participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and
a summary of the methodology. In Chapter Four, results are presented in the context of each of the research questions, along with the relevant analysis. In Chapter Five, limitations of the study, implications for the field, conclusions, and directions for future research are discussed.
CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Social-emotional development is critical for children’s academic success as well as for their general well-being (Halle et al., 2014). Important outcomes, such as early academic success, have been linked to social-emotional development (Arnold, Kupersmidt, Voegler-Lee, & Marshall, 2012). Components of social-emotional development include self-regulation, emotional management, behavioral control, and social cognition (Halle et al., 2014). The social experiences of dual language learners (DLLs) are unique because these children are learning and growing while acquiring multiple languages (Halle et al., 2014) and interacting within multiple environments.

Some theorists suggest that language and culture are interconnected (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Language acquisition is a means to becoming a person who is a member of a particular society, as language conveys a society’s cultural norms (Nelson, 2003). Although social-emotional outcomes are defined and generally agreed to be universal (Halle et al., 2014), the theoretical perspective of DLLs’ social-emotional development suggests that these outcomes may progress along a unique continuum, or in unique ways, due to cultural, linguistic, and contextual factors that influence DLLs’ development differently than their monolingual peers (Castro, Mendez, Garcia, & Westerberg, 2012; Chen & Rubin, 2011; Garcia Coll, Akerman & Cicchetti, 2000). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research related to understanding the social-emotional development of DLLs and development of their cross-cultural social skills (Chen, Wang, & DeSouza, 2006). Cross-cultural social skills are those social skills which are appropriate to apply in each of the cultural contexts the child navigates. A summary of the existing research examining DLLs’ social-emotional development will be presented in this chapter.
Theoretical Framework

Understanding how children learn and develop requires comprehension of the various contexts in which they live and learn, as well as multiple factors that interact to affect their overall development (Halle et al., 2014). A number of theories exist about how children develop their social-emotional competence, and researchers are beginning to examine factors that affect DLLs’ overall development. This is a complex process, as Castro and Espinosa (2014) note that DLLs are a diverse group of learners. DLL’s development and learning is shaped by the unique characteristics of the society, community, family, and other contexts (Halle et al., 2014). Many contextual factors contribute to a child’s developmental process and eventual outcomes, including embedded factors (e.g., race, ethnicity, immigration status, socio-economic status), socio-cultural factors (e.g., exposure to native language), and physiological factors (e.g., intrinsic motivation). A number of theoretical perspectives provide explanations for how development occurs, as well as the potential for variations in developmental trajectories.

Theoretical Perspectives

Bioecological developmental models of social-emotional development suggest that children progress through a series of stage-relevant tasks that are influenced by interactions with their family, peers, and community systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). According to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, each individual is affected by social systems and interactions with others within various levels of nested ecosystems. Closer and more frequent interactions within a given ecosystem (e.g., family, school, community), result in that system’s greater influence on that child’s development. Other, more distant systems, such as policies and government, influence the child’s development, but to a lesser degree than those systems with closer and more frequent interactions. In this model, family and caregivers who have the most
frequent interactions with the child have the most significant influence on the child’s development.

Learning, both social and cognitive, occurs by during interactions within specific cultural contexts, primarily by way of language (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). The developmental framework for DLLs (Halle et al., 2014) combines bioecological theory with a sociocultural model, and suggests that social-emotional development is based on bidirectional interactions within varied cultural contexts, quality of language interactions, and the amount of exposure to one’s primary language (L1) and additional language (L2).

The aforementioned theories explain the role of culture in affecting child development, in terms of direct influence (social interactions with those who are more competent and knowledgeable) and indirect influence (interactions with social organizations, such as schools, community sites, etc.) (Chen & Rubin, 2011). Additionally, these theoretical frameworks consider relationships between development and culture (Halle et al., 2014) and more specifically, the interconnectedness of culture and language and their influences on social-emotional development (Tomasello, 1992). Language allows information expression through meaning, but it also relays important socio-cultural information through various nuances and functional components (e.g., turn taking, duration of turns, lexical variations, intonations). Children’s use of language is a measure of their understanding of related social norms and practices (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Contextual-development models view social development as both bi-directional and transactional. While constructs such as social competence are often viewed as characteristics belonging to an individual, there are contextual factors that may influence an individual’s social competence (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993). Individual development occurs within dynamic
contexts of various social relationships (with family members, caregivers, peers, etc.) (Chen & Rubin, 2011; Sameroff, 2009), and culture is directly related to the nature of reciprocal interactions between the individual, others, and the environment (Bornstein, 2009). The perspective of bi-directionality in this model suggests that within each interaction, each participant has the potential to influence the development of the other participant’s social-emotional behaviors, skills, and understanding (Halle et al., 2014). During these early interactions, elements of a child’s development are formed (e.g., self-concept, social skills, identity formation) and influenced by contexts in which they occur (Espinosa, 2005).

Bioecological and sociocultural perspectives have previously been combined within theoretical frameworks for understanding ethnic minority children’ development; however, the articulation and application of these frameworks to understanding DLLs’ development is just beginning (Halle et al., 2014). Current theories are also expanding to include those characteristics of DLLs that may result from their experiences (such as from ethnic or language-minority status) and traits they possess that may make them more successful in varied and novel social situations (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). In contextual-developmental models, an individual’s social-emotional development is related to the cultural context; children learn social behaviors through participation in and observation of social interactions and relationships (Chen, 2011; Stevenson-Hinde, 2011). Sheridan and Walker (1999) outlined an ecological-contextual model of social behaviors explaining social behaviors as interactions among three factors: child characteristics, characteristics of individual(s) with whom the child interacts, and relevant features of the interaction. These theoretical perspectives all consider the contexts in which the DLL participates from a very young age.
**Parental factors.** For the first five years of a child’s life, parents have significant influence on a child’s learning, as they provide context and shape early learning experiences (Figueras-Daniel & Barnett, 2013). Very young DLLs learn from their parents about when to appropriately use language in social contexts. DLLs have multiple opportunities to learn and practice skills across settings, as well as use their languages differentially and appropriately with others (Genesee, 2015). Genesee, Nicoladis, and Paradis (1995) studied 2-year-old children who were acquiring French and English simultaneously from their parents and found that these children were able to use their two languages appropriately in context—they used more of the mother’s language with their mother than with their father and, conversely, more of their father’s language with their father than with their mother. In a follow-up study, Genesee, Boivin, and Nicoladis (1996) found DLLs were able to use their languages appropriately with strangers with whom they have had no prior interactions or experience. The need to understand the social and contextual guidelines or cues related to when and how to use each language appear to result in cognitive advantages for these DLLs (Cheung, Mak, Luo, & Xiao, 2010).

**Parental socialization.** Parental socialization practices are the primary means by which children learn about their cultural backgrounds, including their race and ethnicity (Bornstein, 2009; Hughes, et al., 2006). For example, parents create learning opportunities for their children that are specific to their racial and ethnic backgrounds, yet specific to their children’s ages. A parent’s primary language is used to share oral traditions and cultural customs with children, making language an important cultural and social means of connection (Padilla, 1999). When children are learning two languages early in life, they have greater opportunities to experience different socialization practices, in home, school, and community settings, and have more
opportunities to learn to skillfully differentiate among those socialization practices and respond
appropriately in more varied social contexts (Halle et al., 2014).

**Attachment Bonds**

The foundation for positive social relationships is believed to be the attachment bond that
children form with their parents and caregivers during infancy and early childhood (Ainsworth,
1979; Bowlby, 1982). The relational context of this early attachment is where infants develop
language and communication skills (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1988). However, there is very little
research investigating the relationship between early attachment between DLLs and their parents
as related to later social-emotional development (Halle et al., 2014). Understanding the
relationship between DLLs, their parents, and their early care providers is essential in
understanding factors influencing social-emotional development (Halle et al., 2014).

**Educator relationships.** Within the attachment perspective, early educators and
caregivers can serve a regulatory function for children’s social-emotional development (Halle et
al., 2014). The attachment bond between the child and the early educator, more so than the bond
between the parent and the child, is predictive of that child’s social competency with peers
(Howes, Matheson, & Hamilton, 1994). The quality of the relationship between educator child –
and, therefore, the level of attachment between them – varies depending on levels of closeness,
conflict, and dependency in the relationship (Howes, et al., 1994). Sometimes children have
similar levels of attachment (e.g., secure, insecure, or avoidant types) with their parents and
caregivers, but this is not always true. The caregiver-child relationship is significant, because in
some cases, a secure attachment between a caregiver and a child may overcome any difficulties
resulting from an insecure parent-child attachment (Mitchell-Copeland, Denham, & DeMulder,
1997). The concept of differentiated internal working models of attachment – that is, developing
relationships that are distinct in their quality and type of attachment (Davis, 2003) – may mean that DLLs are more proficient in varied socialization practices, including various speech patterns, as well as behaviors, than their monolingual peers (Halle et al., 2014).

Teacher-child relationships have been correlated with social competence and peer relationships (Halle et al., 2014). Children who have secure relationships with their teachers tend to have more optimistic outlooks, higher expectations, and become more socially competent (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). When children have insecure relationships with their teachers, relationships they develop with others may be based upon negative assumptions and they may be less socially competent (Howes, et al., 1994). Secure teacher-child attachment relationships have been positively associated with more complex play among children and peers as well as children being perceived more favorably by unfamiliar same-aged children (Howes, et al., 1994). The quality of teacher-child interactions can affect children’s social competence, because teachers will adapt support for children by teaching appropriate cognitive and social skills in the context of social interactions.

**Peer relationships.** Children engaged in positive peer relationships, characterized by sharing behaviors, appropriate communication, play, and acceptance, are more likely to achieve academic success (Downer & Pianta, 2006; Ladd & Burgess, 1999). Peer relationships are important in developing social-emotional competence. Little is known about DLLs’ quality of peer relationships (Halle et al., 2014). Additionally, socialization and interaction with English-speaking peers may be correlated with DLLs’ English language proficiency (Barrows Chesterfield, Chesterfield, & Chavez, 1982). Peer relationships provide natural and meaningful opportunities to practice socialization skills and develop social competency as well as provide opportunities for developing English language proficiency (Castro, 2014).
Model of Social Competence in Early Childhood

In this model of social competence, shown in Figure 1, foundations are formed by children’s internal factors, such as their abilities (cognitive, motor, processing, etc.), temperament, and attachments with others. These internal factors, as well as interactions among external factors, determine various components of a child’s social-emotional development. Lim, Rodger, and Brown (2013) note that constructs of sociability (such as participating in, rather than withdrawing from, social situations) and functions of prosocial behaviors (e.g., cooperation, caring) are perceived and valued differently in different cultures and in different contexts, and they contribute to the overall determination of a child’s social competence.

Figure 1. Model of social competence in an early childhood environment. Reprinted from “Model of Social Competence in an Early Childhood,” by S. M. Lim, S. Rodger, and T. Brown, 2013, Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, 29(2), p. 120. Copyright 2013 by Taylor & Francis. Reprinted with permission. (See Appendix A).
Brown, Odom, & McConnell (2008) examined the role of context in a child’s social-emotional development, and considered both factors originating within the child (e.g., temperament, cognitive ability, neurology) and external factors affecting the child (e.g., family dynamics, culture, peer relationships). There are some environmental factors that are significant because they may immediately affect a child’s behavior in social situations. Social competence is described as a child’s ability to determine that what may be an effective behavior or skill in one specific interaction may be inappropriate in a different setting. Socially competent children will likely not exhibit consistent behavioral patterns across unique social situations (McFall, 1982), as they will efficiently adapt their behaviors to social situations or contexts.

Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood

The ability to interact effectively with peers is essential to social development, cognitive development, and academic success (Kemple & Ellis, 2009). Social-emotional development contributes to children’s overall well-being (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006). During each stage of development, children have opportunities to develop distinct sets of social skills (Fantuzzo et al., 1995). Prosocial behaviors, such as empathy, helpfulness, turn-taking, and perspective-taking, developed during early childhood can support positive peer relationships. The acquisition of prosocial skills is an important milestone in social-emotional development for children as young as two or three years of age (Fantuzzo, et al., 1995; Odom, McConnell, & McEvoy, 1992).

Social-emotional development also plays a critical role in young children’s cognitive development. Developing positive peer relationships during preschool has been linked with successful adjustment to kindergarten as well as to academic success in elementary and high school (Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1988). Social-emotional development is essential to later academic success. Children who do not develop these positive peer relationships are more likely to engage
in delinquent behavior and experience school failure (Denham & Holt, 1993). The ability to meet expectations for appropriate classroom behaviors (e.g. following directions, cooperating with peers, managing frustration) helps facilitate classroom learning (Coolahan, Fantuzzo, Mendez, & McDermott, 2003). Particular components of social-emotional development contribute to learning behaviors that affect academic achievement, including motivation, engagement, attentiveness, and openness. Researchers have found connections between social skills and learning behaviors, such as motivation and positive attitudes toward learning, although there is little research in this area focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Coolahan et al., 2003).

Early childhood years are when social-emotional competencies are developed. Relationships between children and parents, as well as between children and other caregivers or peers, create the foundation for social skills (Halle et al., 2014) that affect children’s cognitive development and later academic success. Several key dimensions of social-emotional development appear to be critical to a child’s overall well-being, including self-regulation, social cognition, social competence, and inhibition of problem behaviors.

**Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation is the ability to selectively attend and focus attention, to manage and control one’s emotions and behaviors (Blair & Razza, 2007). During early childhood, self-regulation development is a critical precursor to later social and academic competence, and difficulties with self-regulation in early childhood can be predictive of later behavioral troubles. Emotional self-regulation is a complex skill set, and Raver (2004) places the construct in both sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts in order to frame the expectations and norms related to competence. Raver notes that in children with more complex developmental trajectories, the
value and influence of self-regulation may be even greater, and suggests that self-regulation skills are also developed within complex interactions.

Elements of emotional regulation that comprise social competence in young children facilitate development of prosocial skills such as initiation and maintenance of peer relationships (Denham et al., 2003). Research indicates that children who remain emotionally positive during group interactions are viewed by both teachers and parents as more likeable and easier to get along with (Denham & Holt, 1993).

**Social Cognition**

Social cognition is the ability to understand how to interact in social situations, based on one’s relationship with others involved (Halle et al., 2014). Children develop social cognition in a number of important ways in early childhood, beginning with skills such as self-recognition (Bischof-Kohler, 1991), purposeful imitation (Johnson, Booth & O’Hearn, 2001), and various stages of play with other children (Asendorf, 2002). Children who are better able to identify their peers’ emotions during interactions and respond appropriately are more socially successful and have more friends than children who misinterpret their peers’ emotions and respond inappropriately (Gagnon & Nagle, 2004). Children who achieve desirable peer status may behave increasingly positively as a result of the positive reinforcement, including additional social opportunities, which result from their appropriate social interactions (Lee, 2006). Children who do not acquire social competency are less likely to develop peer relationships, resulting in even fewer opportunities to practice and learn prosocial behaviors, and will continue to exhibit difficulties in social interactions. Social competence is reinforced and stimulates continued growth (Hatch, 1987).
Social Competence

Social competence is a complex combination of the personal knowledge and skills that children develop to deal with the many choices, challenges, and opportunities they face in life (Leffert, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 1997). Social competence also includes factors developed throughout one’s childhood, including the ability to manage one’s emotions, to feel positively about oneself, and to engage in positive relationships with family and peers through verbal and nonverbal communication (Raver & Zigler, 1997). Other important components of social competence include the ability to initiate social interactions, to reciprocate to social initiations made by others, to share with others, to effectively resolve conflicts, and to engage in turn-taking behaviors (Denham, 1998). Children who are socially competent are able to balance their own wants and needs with those of others and exhibit emotional responses that are appropriate relative to group norms (Lee, 2006). Social competence also consists of judgments, based on a number of criteria such as the opinions of significant others, comparisons to norms, social performance, or other predetermined explicit criteria (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

Social Skills

Definitions of social skills vary throughout the literature, but generally are those behaviors that result in a child being socially skilled (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). Social skills are the specific behaviors that one exhibits that, when combined, show a more accurate picture of the person’s overall social competence. They are typically explicitly defined behaviors an individual uses to assess and perform within a social environment, whereas social competence is the evaluation or judgment of whether an individual has successfully completed a social task (McFall, 1982). Social tasks are situations where social skills can be employed, (e.g., initiating and maintaining conversations, playing with peers). Using social skills appropriately in social
tasks promotes positive relationships and interactions and simultaneously decreases negative interactions, thereby increasing one’s social competence.

Gresham and Elliott (2008) describe seven social skills (communication, cooperation, responsibility, assertion, empathy, engagement, self-control) that ultimately contribute to a socially competent individual. Children begin learning these social skills in early childhood, and must demonstrate increasing proficiency to achieve personal and academic success. A child’s ability to cooperate with others in a learning environment is associated with increased intellectual development and improved academic outcomes (Wentzel, 1991). Social responsibility, defined as adhering to social rules and norms, cooperating with others, demonstrating respect for others, participating in activities, and following rules and directions (Wentzel, 1991) is critical for learning and academic performance. Additionally, between the ages of two and six, children begin to understand the meanings of feelings (their own and those of others); this allows them begin to empathize with others by expressing concern for their peers during times of distress and considering others’ feelings.

The role of engagement as a social skill is complex. Coie and Krehbiel (1984) suggested two ideas for explaining the function of engagement in increasing one’s social competence. The first was that children with higher levels of academic competence will naturally participate more in class, resulting in higher levels of engagement with both teachers and peers. These interactions will be more positive and improve children’s self-esteem and overall demeanor. The second explanation was that children with more appropriate classroom behaviors spend more time on-task and more time appropriately engaging with academic tasks (Coie & Krehbiel, 1984).

During early childhood years, children must master the ability to manage their emotional arousal during social interactions with peers (DeMulder, Denham, Schmidt, & Mitchell, 2000).
In infancy and toddlerhood, their perceptions were very egocentric, and during early childhood, they begin to recognize others in their world. The first step in this process is often imitation of behaviors they notice in others. Over time, children begin to adhere to social norms, moving away from imitation and toward genuine behavior that originates from their own personality.

**Social Skills Deficits**

In some instances, children fail to demonstrate competency, based on assessment of these social skills. When this happens, it is important to determine whether the child’s social skill deficit is due to an acquisition deficit (meaning the child has truly never learned, and therefore never displayed, the behavior under any circumstance) or whether the deficit is due to a performance deficit (meaning the child possesses the skill and has performed it but does not do so with the desired frequency or under the appropriate circumstances). Performance deficits are not evidence of acquisition problems, rather they generally indicate issues with motivation (Gresham, 2002). Determining the cause of the deficit is important for selecting appropriate interventions, as acquisition deficits typically require explicit teaching of the social skill, and performance deficits generally require appropriate reinforcement and motivation, along with eliminating competing problematic behaviors, until the socially skilled behavior occurs at a desired level. Gresham, Elliott, and Kettler (2010) examined the social skills ratings of over 4000 children ages 3 through 18 in the subdomains outlined by Gresham and Elliott (2008) on the SSIS rating scales. Using these ratings, the researchers identified social skills performance deficits as well as social skills acquisition deficits. Their findings indicated that less than 1% of all deficits were acquisition deficits. Gresham et al. (2010) replicated these findings across raters and age groups.
These findings suggest that overall social competence can be improved by reducing performance deficits, rather than explicitly teaching social skills to address acquisition deficits. This would be a shift from directly teaching appropriate social skills to ensure mastery toward carefully planning for and providing opportunities for social situations where the child can receive timely reinforcement for using a social skill to appropriately complete a social task (Gresham et al., 2010).

**Problem Behaviors in Early Childhood**

For young children who fail to develop adequate self-regulation, social competence, and emotional expression, resulting behaviors that are expressed are often considered problem behaviors (Campbell, 2006). When children do not acquire adequate social skills, they are more likely to solve social problems with aggressive or undesirable behaviors than children who have higher levels of social competence (Coy, Speltz, DeKlyen, & Jones, 2001). The resulting problem behaviors may have different topographies; they may be internalizing problems (e.g., worrying, withdrawing) or externalizing problems (e.g., aggressiveness, hostility, outbursts, impulsivity) (Campbell, 2006; McMahon, 1994). Hughes, Dunn, and White (1998) examined the relationship between young children’s problem behaviors and their levels of social competence. They found that young children with more problematic behaviors have more difficulty understanding emotions than children who possess appropriate social behaviors. Similar to the connection between positive peer relationships and positive social skills, it is difficult to determine whether problem behaviors are the cause or consequences of poor social skills and low peer status (Ladd et al., 1988). Research indicates there is a negative relationship between problem behaviors and long-term academic outcomes (Meltzer, 1984).

Externalizing behaviors are characterized by disruptive behaviors: defiance, impulsivity,
aggression, acting out, and antisocial behaviors (Hinshaw, 1992). Hinshaw conducted a literature review in order to examine the relationship between externalizing behaviors and academic underachievement (defined as reading below the level predicted by the child’s IQ score), and found that both externalizing behaviors and low academic achievement were related to other deficits, including self-esteem, conduct problems, and difficulty with successful interpersonal relationships (1992). Based on these findings, Hinshaw (1992) concluded there were significant data to support a relationship between externalizing behaviors and low achievement, but expressed concern that the existing research did not delineate among the various types of externalizing behaviors, such as hyperactivity and antisocial behavior.

In the extensive literature review conducted by Hinshaw (1992), hyperactivity and inattentive behaviors were the most predictive of underachievement. Similar effects of inattention were also found in a regression analysis of the relationship between behavior ratings and achievement scores; attention problems contributed to lower academic achievement in reading, writing, and math (Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004).

There are two categories of aggressive behavior: proactive and reactive (Fite, Colder, Lochman, & Wells, 2007). Proactive aggression is the style of aggression that occurs when a child’s behavior is calculated and driven by an external reward or personal satisfaction. The other child’s feelings are of no consequence in this type of aggression. Reactive aggression occurs in response to another’s threatening behavior. These reactive behaviors occur without planning or analyzing, and are frequently immediate responses to situations outside of the child’s control.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning that characteristics of children with Autism will vary widely and fall along a continuum. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of*
Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5), children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) display the following characteristics, to some degree: social communication impairments and restricted or repetitive behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). While children with Autism do not necessarily demonstrate problem behaviors, one of the most common deficits, based on the diagnostic criteria, is in the area of social behavior. These deficits manifest in children’s inability to initiate social interactions and failure to respond to the initiations from peers (Gonzalez-Lopez & Kamps, 1997). Other behaviors, such as repetitive gestures or movements, or an inability to accept changes to routine, may prevent children from achieving social competence based on the value judgments from peers, family, and teachers. Difficulty in these specific skill areas also makes forming relationships difficult for children with Autism. For these reasons, the behaviors commonly associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders are considered as problem behaviors.

**Social-Emotional Development of Dual Language Learners**

Social-emotional development and experiences of DLLs are unique because these children are learning and growing while acquiring multiple languages (Halle et al., 2014) and interacting within multiple cultural environments. Emerging research indicates that these young learners may follow different developmental trajectories as a result of participating in multilingual, multicultural environments. Research has shown that the early experiences of young children have significant effects on brain development as well as life-long impacts on many other areas of development. Recent studies indicate that DLLs may have long-term cognitive and linguistic advantages that may influence their social-emotional development. While it is difficult to isolate each of these developmental processes, for clarity they will be discussed individually.
Cognitive Development

Research has shown that bilingual individuals have specific cognitive advantages over their monolingual counterparts (Genesee, 2015), including increased attentional capacity and overall increased executive functioning, which can be detected as early as the first year of life (Castro, 2014). This early bilingualism results in specific changes to the young child’s brain. Petitto et al. (2012) found that bilingual infants have increased brain plasticity and linguistic processing ability, and process language input in different parts of their brains than monolingual infants. Kovacs and Mehler (2009) discovered bilingual infants as young as seven months old were better than their monolingual peers at anticipating changes in learning conditions, likely as a result of additional and enhanced attention acquired during speech processing.

There is evidence to suggest that DLLs have increased density and neural activity in areas of the brain that control language processing, attention, and memory (Kovelman, Baker, & Petitto, 2008; Mechelli, et al., 2004). Experiences and interactions within two separate and distinct languages result in cognitive changes from very young ages (Barac, Bialystok, Castro, & Sanchez, 2014). These cognitive advantages manifest in the form of more advanced non-verbal executive processing skills, such as working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control (Castro & Espinosa, 2014). Castro and Espinosa found these benefits consistently across socio-economic status and across cultural and language combinations (2014).

Linguistic Development

The majority of recent research examining language development of children who are DLLs has focused on those factors that may influence children’s proficiency and outcomes in both languages (Dubasik & Wilcox, 2013). Some of these important factors include: the child’s age of acquisition of second language (Goldberg, Pradis, & Crago, 2008); the child/family’s
socioeconomic status (Flege, Yemi-Komshian, & Liu, 1999); the child’s expressive and receptive experiences within both languages (Bohman, Bedore, Pena, Mendez-Perez, & Gillam, 2010); and the child’s total exposure to the second language (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). For example, Goldberg and colleagues (2008) found that after approximately three years of exposure to English, five-year-olds who were non-native English speakers had similar vocabulary scores to their English-speaking peers. The authors also found that when compared to younger children, older children seemed to acquire second languages more quickly (Goldberg et al., 2008).

Although DLLs have less exposure to each language, on average, than their monolingual peers, they reach language milestones during approximately the same time frame (Kimbrough Oller, Eilers, Urbano, & Cobo-Lewis, 1997; Maneva & Genesee, 2002; Patterson & Pearson, 2004; Petitto et al., 2001). When children learn and use two languages, they must also learn to selectively apply attention in order to minimize interference, which results in the development of an enhanced executive functioning system (Genesse, 2015).

There are some factors that affect children’s eventual second language achievement, such as their age at the time of initiating second language acquisition (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Another factor is the age at which a child begins to favor one language over another, particularly if the second language is eventually favored over the first language. When younger children begin to lose proficiency in their L1 before they are proficient in their second language L2 they often begin to use their L1 only for oral communication with family and friends, and do not fully develop L1 language proficiency the same way that they develop their L2 (Roessingh, 2011). This results in DLLs having very different purposes and functions for each language.
Social-Emotional Development and Academic Outcomes

Social-emotional development has been found to be related to academic outcomes (DuPaul, McGoey, Eckert, & VanBrackle, 2001; Merrell & Wolfe, 1998; Welsh, Parke, Widaman, & O’Neil, 2001). Cognitive abilities are typically accepted as being the best predictors of academic performance (Snow, 2006), however in research on school readiness (Trentacosta & Izard, 2007) authors found that if cognitive abilities are similar, children with higher social and emotional competencies were more likely to perform best on academic tasks. It is difficult to definitively determine, though, whether increased social competence results in higher academic achievement, or whether higher academic achievement results in increased social competence (Welsh et al., 2001). There is some evidence that within the context of school settings, social skills have a positive correlation with successful learning behaviors and, in turn, academic achievement (Zins, Bloodworth, Weiss, & Walberg, 2007). Young children’s social competencies, particularly when paired with high teacher and parent expectations, have been hypothesized as key predictors for latter school adjustment (Raver & Zigler, 1997). Early social-emotional development seems to be linked to cognitive achievement (Arnold et al., 2012). In fact, while social skills support academic achievement, they are generally essential for successful navigation through the life span (Gresham & Elliot, 2008; Williams-White, Keonig, & Seahill, 2007).

Summary

Early childhood is a time for significant learning and growth for all children, and this learning happens across environments and contexts. As children grow and develop, they naturally learn from their social and academic surroundings and from interactions within those contexts. Families and educators are the earliest providers of those learning experiences. The
impact of social development on future learning and academic success provides an important foundation for all children. However, the uncertainty of this developmental trajectory for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may contribute to their varied academic successes, which often does not match expected paths, based on what is known about early bilingualism. By comparing parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence and examining the role of language status in these perspectives, educators may find more efficient and appropriate ways to connect meaningful early social-emotional and learning opportunities to children and families.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

As a result of their participation in multiple linguistic and cultural contexts dual language learners (DLLs) are acquiring a unique set of social-emotional skills (Halle et al., 2014). The interconnectedness of language, culture, and social competence results in a complex set of factors that affect a child’s social emotional development. However, this developmental path is not fully understood for children who are DLLs. Children who are acquiring English are performing academically below their monolingual native English-speaking peers, despite their early bilingualism and the significant cognitive, social, and academic advantages bilingualism can provide (Espinosa, 2010). For this rapidly growing population, it is urgent that the teachers who serve these children and their families understand and support their social-emotional development in the critical early years, as it is predictive of future academic success (Castro, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. Social competence is notably a value judgment (Lim, Rodger, & Brown, 2013), making it necessary to consider environmental and contextual factors when evaluating competence. Factors that may influence these perspectives and children’s social emotional development have been outlined in previous chapters. In this chapter, the methodology employed to answer the research questions will be outlined.

This chapter is organized in the following sections: (a) research questions, (b) context of the study (c) participants, (d) materials and procedure, (e) data collection, and (f) data analysis.
Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

Research Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

Research Question 3: Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

Research Question 4: Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

Context of the Study

This study took place in a Head Start preschool program located within an urban city in the southwestern United States, serving 282 children and their families (see Table 1).
The Hispanic/Latino population in this program is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups, although many other ethnicities are represented. Approximately 60% of the total enrolled student population speaks a language other than English in the home.

Table 1

Demographic Data: Head Start Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total center enrollment is 282.

Head Start services are available through various local community agencies for low-income families. The children, aged 3 to 5 years old, in Head Start programs, attend either half-day or full-day programs designed to improve school readiness outcomes. Family involvement is a critical component of the Head Start model, as Head Start acknowledges parents’ roles as their children’s first and most significant teachers (OHS, 2015). Family involvement days are scheduled to provide families with the opportunity to learn more about ways to collaborate with their children’s teachers, to promote effective family literacy strategies, and to address family concerns about early education.

Selection of Participants

Participants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling method (Jupp, 2006). A purposive sampling method allows the researcher to deliberately select a sample based on a variety of criteria, including knowledge of the study and the population (Jupp, 2006). This
method was used in order to ensure approximately equal representation of DLLs and monolingual native English-speaking children in the groups since it was important that teachers would have worked with balanced groups. The participant pool was comprised of parents and teachers of 282 young children, aged 3 through 5, enrolled in the selected Head Start center located in a large urban city in the southwest United States. One parent and teacher pair of each enrolled child were invited to participate. Children did not participate in the study. An equal number of parent and teacher pairs of children who were designated as monolingual native English speakers (n=30) and who were DLLs (n=30) were used for participation in this study. For each child, one parent and one teacher completed a rating scale of the child’s social competence.

Protection of participants. A human subjects protocol form was submitted and processed through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas’ Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects. All participants’ rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g: 34 CFR Part 99) were honored. Both participant teachers and parents were asked to sign informed consent forms prior to completing the rating scales to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. Parents chose to sign informed consent in either Spanish or English, if they agreed to participate, prior to beginning the study. Participants were informed that if they agreed to participate, they could complete some or all of the rating scale items, and that participation and completion were completely voluntary. See Appendices B, C, and D.

Research for this project included data from only adult participants: parents and teachers of children enrolled in the selected Head Start center. The data collected from parent and teacher rating scales was not recorded in any way that would allow children to be directly identified. Parent and teacher forms were numbered with matching four-digit codes. Parents completed
rating scales and filled out removable labels with their children’s information on them. The labels were placed on the matching teacher form, and after teachers completed their rating scales, the labels with the children’s names and information were removed and destroyed, so that the children’s names were not identifiable to the researcher.

The final number of participants was the number of parent-teacher pairs that completed rating scales: nine teachers completed 60 teacher rating scales and 60 parents completed parent rating scales. Descriptive data for parents and teachers completing the rating scales were collected, including relevant demographic and descriptive information such as languages spoken, race/ethnicity, gender, and length of time teaching. See Tables 2 and 3. The number of participants eligible to participate in the study included all parents with an enrolled child at the Head Start center. However, 128 parents attended informational sessions and 75 parents took consent forms and parent rating scales. Of the 75 rating scales that were distributed, seven were not returned to the researcher. The remaining 8 were not able to be used, either because they were missing consent forms (n=4), or because parents did not complete the removable label with children’s information (n=4) so teachers were unable to do the corresponding rating scales.

**Parent Participants**

Sixty parent participants completed the rating scales (see Table 2). Of the 60 parents who completed rating scales, 22% of participants were male and 78% were female. In terms of ethnicity, 12% identified as Caucasian (n=7), 22% as Black/African American (n=13), 50% as Hispanic/Latino (n=30), 3% as Asian (n=2), 3% as Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (n=2), 7% identified as Other (n=4), 3% preferred not to answer (n=2). Thirty-eight percent of the participants indicated that they were fluent (either speaking and understanding, or reading and writing) in English (n=22).
Teacher Participants

Teacher participants included nine teachers who work full-time at the selected Head Start center (See Table 3). All of the teacher participants were females. In terms of ethnicity, three teachers identified as Caucasian/White, two as Asian/Pacific Islander, one as African-American/Black, and three identified as Hispanic/Latino. One teacher had over ten years of experience, and four were in their first three years of teaching. The remaining four had between 4-9 years of experience. Four teachers reported that they speak and understand another language in addition to English. Three of the teachers indicated that the language other than English is Spanish. Four teachers indicated that they read and write fluently in Spanish, in addition to English. In each of the language questions, one teacher selected “other” as a response.
Table 2

Demographic Data: Parent Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Parent Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Percent/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Spoken &amp; Understood Fluently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>17 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Spanish &amp; English</td>
<td>14 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Read &amp; Written Fluently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>18 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Spanish &amp; English</td>
<td>13 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6 10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>7 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>13 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/ Spanish origin</td>
<td>30 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer not to answer</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Language Designation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only – native English speaker</td>
<td>30 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English at home (DLL)</td>
<td>30 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

**Demographic Data: Teacher Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Teacher Participants (n=9)</th>
<th>Percent/100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>I prefer not to answer</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience (Number of Years Teaching)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
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<td>7-9 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 years or more</td>
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<td>Languages Spoken &amp; Understood Fluently</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Spanish &amp; English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Read &amp; Written Fluently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both Spanish &amp; English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Materials and Procedure

Instrumentation

The Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales, developed by Gresham and Elliott (2008), is based on the theoretical perspective that social skills are observable and measurable behaviors that can be altered through instructional strategies. The SSIS Ratings Scales are based on an understanding of social skills as being learned over a period of time, interactive and contextual, verbal and nonverbal, and including both initiation and response elements (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). Deficits in social skills can either result from failure to acquire the skills or failure to adequately perform the skills.

The SSIS Rating Scales were developed as a means of evaluating children’s behavior across three interrelated domains: social skills, problem behavior, and academic competence. This norm-referenced assessment is based on behavioral components of Social Learning Theory, which provides that learning is a social construct where children engage in interactions in order to make meaning. Gresham and Elliot focused on those particular behaviors that would be most useful in practical applications, such as interventions, for measuring and improving social skills. The social skills in the SSIS rating scale inventory are behaviors that can be observed and measured, which allows data collection for an individual student. The assessment identifies social skills deficits, strengths, and weaknesses, and for any deficit areas, allows insights into whether the deficit is from lack of acquisition or a true performance deficit. The SSIS was initially published in 1990 as the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990), and has been revised to the current edition that supports implementation within a tiered intervention system, such as a response to instruction (RTI) model.
Seven primary subdomains are assessed under the broader domain of social skills (communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control) are identified in the SSIS. Within these domains are ten key social skills: listening to others, following directions, following classroom rules, ignoring peer distractions, asking for help, taking turns in conversations, cooperating with others, controlling temper during conflict, acting responsibly, and demonstrating kindness to others (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). In order to fully assess a child’s social competence, the SSIS measures children’s problem behaviors in addition to their social skills. There are five subdomains included under the broader category of problem behaviors (internalizing, externalizing, hyperactivity/inattention, bullying, and Autism Spectrum). These behaviors are the competing behaviors that may affect that acquisition or demonstration of desired social skills. The significance of these social skills and their relationship to social-emotional development are rooted in the behavioral constructs that operationally define social skills as those skills that allow one to competently perform social tasks (McFall, 1982). The SSIS also includes a rating scale for the Academic Competence domain, however this applies only to school-age children, so this scale was not used for the purposes of this study.

**Reliability and validity.** Through its standardization process, SSIS authors gathered evidence to determine reliability and validity of all scores. According to the administration manual, the SSIS is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing children’s social competence (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). Reliability is the degree to which an assessment remains consistent. There are three types of reliability to take into consideration when choosing an assessment: internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and inter-rater reliability. Internal consistency is whether test items that propose to assess the same construct consistently produce the same results.
throughout the assessment. Test-retest reliability assesses the consistency of scores for an individual, upon re-administration of the assessment, after a short period of time. Inter-rater reliability is another measure that assesses consistency of scores for one individual when the assessment or individual items are administered and scored by two different raters.

Reliability of the SSIS was examined using all three measures, and will be reported for the age group used for this proposed study (ages 3-5): internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and inter-rater reliability. Internal consistency coefficient alpha estimates for parent and teacher forms (Social Skills Total Scales) were as follows: \( \alpha = .97 \) and \( \alpha = .96 \). Two-month test-retest reliability coefficients for parent and teacher forms (Social Skills Total Scales) were as follows: \( r = .86 \) and \( r = .84 \). Finally, inter-rater reliability coefficients for parent and teacher forms (Social Skills Total Scales) were as follows: \( r = .62 \) and \( r = .70 \). For the Problem Behaviors Sum, for parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: \( \alpha = .94, r = .87, \) and \( r = .62 \). For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: \( \alpha = .94, r = .81, \) and \( r = .61 \).

Validity refers to the extent to which a test or assessment measures what it intends to measure. The manual provides evidence for content validity, internal structure validity (including internal correlation and item-total correlation), relationships with other variables (including developmental trends and differences between sexes), convergent and discriminant validity, correlations with other measures, and special populations (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). Concurrent validity was examined between scores on the SSIS Social Skills scale and scores on assessments that measure similar constructs, including: the SSRS Social Skills scale \( (r = .73) \) (the previous edition of the SSIS; Gresham & Elliot, 1990); the Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2) Adaptive Skills scale \( (r = .62) \); the Vineland-II Socialization scale \( (r = \)
and the Home and Community Social Behavior Scales (HCSBS) Social Competence scale ($r = .77$).

**The Social Skills Improvement System subtests.** The SSIS rating scale requires respondents to indicate the frequency with which they observe the child engaging in a target behavior on a 4-point scale ($N=never$, $S=seldom$, $O=often$, and $A=almost always$). The SSIS forms were hand scored following the detailed instructions found in the administration manual. Parent rating scales are available in Spanish and in English. The SSIS rating scales (Gresham & Elliot, 2008) assess the following social skills, through the following subscales, as defined by the administration manual:

**Communication.** The communication scale asks raters to indicate if the child says “please” and “thank you” and responds appropriately when others initiate conversations or activities. Other scale items include turn-taking in conversations, maintaining appropriate tone of voice and eye contact when contact, and using gestures or body language appropriately with others. There are seven items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .85$, $r = .83$, and $r = .62$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .76$, $r = .76$, and $r = .63$.

**Cooperation.** The cooperation scale differs on the parent and teacher forms, and raters are asked to indicate how the child cooperates in the respective settings. Raters indicate how well the child is able to follow household or classroom rules, work with peers or family members, complete tasks without bothering others, and follow directions or instructions. There are six items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha$
= .90, r = .80, and r = .67. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: α = .86, r = .86, and r = .60.

**Assertion.** The assertion scale includes several measures such as whether the child asks for help from an adult, questions the fairness of rules, and expresses when there is a problem or a sense of being wronged. Items also include whether the child stands up for himself or for others who are being mistreated and whether the child can say nice things about himself without bragging. There are seven items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: α = .87, r = .76, and r = .35. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: α = .81, r = .74, and r = .38.

**Responsibility.** The responsibility scale asks raters to indicate how well a child behaves without supervision, and whether the child can accept responsibility for his or her own actions individually, as well as within the context of a group. This subscale also asks how well the child respects others belongings, and how responsibly the child acts around others. There are six items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: α = .90, r = .82, and r = .70 For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: α = .86, r = .82, and r = .54.

**Empathy.** The empathy subscale asks parent and teacher raters to indicate whether the child attempts to comfort and forgive others, and if the child feels bad when others are sad, and is nice to others when they feel bad. Items also ask if the child is able to show kindness to others when they are upset and to show concern for others, generally. There are six items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for
internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .88$, $r = .78$, and $r = .51$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .88$, $r = .78$, and $r = .55$.

**Engagement.** The engagement scale asks raters to indicate how easily the child makes friends, introduces himself to others, interacts with peers, and starts conversations with peers. Additional items include participating in games or other activities that have already started, and invites others to join in activities. There are seven items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .89$, $r = .86$, and $r = .54$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .86$, $r = .83$, and $r = .71$.

**Self-Control.** The self-control scale includes items about staying calm when upset and accepting criticism without getting upset. Additional items for raters to consider include whether the child stays calm during disagreements and responds appropriately when provoked. There are seven items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of the forms. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .90$, $r = .80$, and $r = .62$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .83$, $r = .86$, and $r = .62$.

The SSIS also includes the following subscales for Problem Behaviors, which are those behaviors which may interfere with the acquisition or demonstration of desired, socially appropriate, behaviors (Gresham & Elliott, 2008) as defined by the authors in the administration manual:

**Internalizing.** The internalizing scale includes items to determine whether a child is
anxious, sad, lonely, or demonstrating behaviors consistent with low self-esteem. There are seven items on the teacher version of this form and 10 items on the parent version of this form. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .80$, $r = .84$, and $r = .50$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .81$, $r = .81$, and $r = .39$.

*Externalizing.* The externalizing scale asks raters to consider behaviors that may indicate whether the child has any verbally or physically aggressive characteristics, the child’s ability to control his or her temper, and the frequency with which the child argues with others. There are 12 items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of this form. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .90$, $r = .84$, and $r = .53$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .93$, $r = .84$, and $r = .57$.

*Hyperactivity/Inattention.* The hyperactivity/inattention scale includes items that ask raters to consider whether the child moves about excessively, has impulsive reactions, or becomes easily distracted. There are seven items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of this form. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .85$, $r = .86$, and $r = .56$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .90$, $r = .82$, and $r = .58$.

*Bullying.* The bullying scale includes items that ask raters to consider whether children exhibit behaviors such as forcing others to do something, physically or emotionally hurting others, or not letting others join in activities. There are five items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of this form. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest
reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .75$, $r = .70$, and $r = .46$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .82$, $r = .75$, and $r = .37$.

**Autism Spectrum.** The autism spectrum scale includes items that ask raters to determine whether a child is having trouble interacting with others, not taking part in conversations, having difficulty with eye contact, making odd gestures or movements, or becoming easily upset by changes in routines. These are included as problem behaviors because they are considered as behaviors that inhibit or suppress desired social skills. There are 15 items in this subscale on both parent and teacher versions of this form. For parent forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .85$, $r = .92$, and $r = .58$. For teacher forms, measures for internal consistency, test-rest reliability, and inter-rater reliability are as follows: $\alpha = .88$, $r = .85$, and $r = .69$.

**SSIS Rating Scales, Spanish Format.** The Spanish language versions of the SSIS Rating Scales were developed through the process of systematic translation. Upon completion of the Spanish translation forms, preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the reliability of scores by calculating item-total correlations and internal consistency reliability coefficients and comparing those with scores from the English versions. For the SSIS-PF Spanish format, item-total correlations for Social Skills subscales ranged from $.32 – .70$, and internal consistency coefficient alpha estimates ranged from $.75 – .84$ (Social Skills Total Scale, $\alpha = .95$). Though they were not tested for statistical significance, the authors reported item-total correlations and internal consistency coefficients were similar for both language formats, therefore reliability of scores produced on the Spanish format SSIS Ratings Scales are tentatively supported as similar to the English language forms. Specific examinations of Spanish format score validity, however,
were not conducted in this procedure.

**Informational Sessions**

Prior to the beginning of the study, the researcher attended staff development days at the selected Head Start center and met with the center director multiple times. The purpose of these meetings was to deliver information about the study, as well as to thoroughly explain the SSIS-PF and the SSIS-TF to the center director, the family advocates, and the teaching staff. Then the researcher attended multiple family involvement days at the selected Head Start center site and explained the purpose of the study and the SSIS-PF rating scales to parents and asked them to complete the rating scales for their children. Included with the rating scales were demographic questionnaires for both parent and teacher participants. The parents had the option of completing both the rating scale and the demographic form in either English or Spanish, as these were the primary languages the center director reported as home languages on the campus.

**Informed Consent**

After explaining the study and the procedures, the researcher secured informed consent from participant teachers (See Appendix D). During the parent involvement days, after listening to the informational session presented by the researcher, if parents understood the requirements for participation and were willing to participate, they signed informed consent forms prior to completing the rating scales (See Appendix B and C). Only rating scales from participants, either parents or teachers, who completed and signed consent forms, are included in the data analysis.

**Data Collection**

Data collected for this study included demographic data as well as rating scale data from both parents and teachers. The data collection procedures will be thoroughly outlined in this section.
Social Skills Improvement System Parent Rating Scales

The instructions and items in the rating scales, along with answer choices, were read orally and administered in a group setting by a volunteer family advocate for the Head Start center. The family advocates work with the families by providing a range of services, including translating between English and Spanish to improve communication among parents, teachers, and center staff. The families had all worked with the family advocates in some capacity prior to the family involvement day. The family advocates did not see any of the responses or assist with data collection in any way – they simply provided direct translation services in the capacity they typically provide. In this large group administration, first the instructions for the demographic questionnaire and the rating scales were read to the parent participants. The researcher and family advocates were available for any questions they had during the session. Each item from the rating scale was read orally to the parent group, first in English, then in Spanish, so that parents were able to choose their preference in language and still had the opportunity to hear the alternate version, and to have each item read aloud. Parents were able to ask questions about the meaning of individual rating scale items prior to answering or before submitting completed rating scales. Parents filled out information about the child on and put it on a removable label on the parent form, which was then placed on the corresponding teacher form.

SSIS Teacher Rating Scales

Teachers were asked to complete teacher forms of the rating scales for each of the children whose parents completed the rating scales. Each set of forms, consisting of one parent form and one teacher form, were labeling with matching random four-digit numbers generated using the randbetween() function available in Microsoft Excel. This ensured that the teachers knew which teacher rating scales they were completing for a particular child. The teachers
completed rating scales for each of the children, and the labels with the children’s names were removed and destroyed so that the children’s names were not identifiable to the researcher. The teacher rating scales were completed over several sessions, as each teacher had to complete multiple rating scales. The researcher had volunteers work in the teachers’ classrooms for short periods of time in order to allow them to focus on completing the rating scales.

**Scoring Rating Scales**

Parent and teacher rating scales were hand-scored following the instructions in the rating scales manual. These scores provided information about each child’s social competence, as perceived by parents and teachers, so that comparisons could be made on each dimension, for each child, and across groups. Each of the rating scales, completed by parents or teachers, yielded raw scores. While participants answered items on a Likert-type scale, indicating the frequency with which they had seen behaviors, their responses were scored according to the administration manual, converting responses into numerical scores (0=never, 1=seldom, 2=often, and 3=almost always), resulting in raw scores for subscales and total scales. For the Social Skills Total scores and the Problem Behaviors Sum scores, the raw scores were then converted to standard scores according to the charts provided in the SSIS administration manual. The researcher used the gender-normed standard scores for the purposes of this study. The standard scores from the SSIS rating scales represent an equal-interval scale that has a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. The authors of the SSIS note that the equal-interval property allows for the comparison of scores from different scales, which would not be possible with raw scores (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). The use of standard scores allows for comparisons directly between Social Skills Total scores and Problem Behavior Sum scores. The authors note that in some instruments, the distribution of standard scores is reshaped in order to match a normal
distribution and allow the relationship between standard scores and percentiles to remain the same across norm groups and scales (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). The authors opted to keep the original shape of the distribution for the SSIS Rating Scales because the authors note indicate that there is no theoretical rationale or empirical evidence suggesting that the social skills or problem behaviors measured in the SSIS form a normal distribution in the general population (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). The authors note that the distribution of the Social Skills raw scores tended to be normally distributed, however the distribution of Problem Behaviors raw scores was significantly skewed. This is important for interpretation purposes, as the Social Skills scales assess positive behaviors, so a standard score of 100 is an average score, and a Total Social Skills standard score of 115 would indicate that a child demonstrates higher social competence than the average child of the same age and gender in the population. On the other hand, standard scores of 85 or lower are below average and may indicate the need for social skills training or interventions. Additionally, the Problem Behaviors scale assesses negative behaviors, so higher scores on this scale are not desirable. For example, a child with a Problem Behaviors Sum standard score of 115 would have more problem behaviors than the average child of the same age and gender in the population, and therefore, may need behavioral intervention.

**Inter-rater scoring**

The researcher trained an undergraduate student in the Honors College and Department of Psychology from a large university in the southwest United States to score the rating scales in accordance with the SSIS administration manual (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). This was done by administering practice protocols and scoring them according to the guidelines in the administration manual. The student has experience working on research projects in the Department of Psychology, and has current, valid human subjects research certification.
The researcher and undergraduate student both scored 100% of the parent and teacher rating scales; each scored one rating scale and the other scored it again to verify the calculations. In the event of a discrepancy, which occurred on three of the rating scales, both raters independently rescored the scales until an error was located in the scoring process and both agreed on the valid, final score. Both the researcher and the undergraduate student double-checked the data entries in SPSS after scoring to ensure data were accurately entered and matched the participant codes for the parent and teacher forms of the rating scales for each of the subtests. The researcher used the sum function in Excel to verify Total Social Skills scores and Problem Behavior Sum scores. Data from standard scale conversion charts were also verified by both scorers for accuracy, using relevant age and gender charts in the administration manual to convert raw scores to standard scores for Total Social Skills and Problem Behavior Sum scores (Gresham & Elliott, 2008).

**Data Analysis**

Data from parent and teacher rating scales were entered into SPSS Statistics (IBM Corporation, 2015) and analyzed to answer each research question.

**Power Analysis**

In order to ensure that the number of participants in the study allowed the researcher to maintain adequate power while using statistical analyses, such as t-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests, designed to detect differences between groups, power analysis was conducted. Using Cohen’s (1998) recommendation of .50 for a large effect size, G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2009) was used to conduct a power analysis for the Mann Whitney U test, and recommended 27 participants in each group, for a total of 54 participants. The final number of
participants (N=60) exceeded that required by the power analysis for the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test statistical analysis.

**Research Question 1:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

**Analysis of Data:** In order to answer this question, all of the data were coded by “participant category” to provide parent and teacher scores for each of the Social Skills subscales (communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control) as well as the Total Social Skills standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales and the Total Social Skills score to determine whether the distributions were significantly different based on whether parent or teachers completed the rating scales. The Mann-Whitney U test was selected, as opposed to a t-test, because some of the data sets violated the assumptions of normality and the nonparametric alternative Mann-Whitney U is the most appropriate statistical test for this situation.

**Research Question 2:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

**Data Analysis:** In order to answer this question, all of the data were coded by “participant category” to provide parent and teacher scores for each of the Problem Behaviors subscales (externalizing, internalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention, and autism spectrum) as well as the Problem Behaviors Sum standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales as well as the Problem Behaviors Sum score.
to determine whether the distributions were significantly different based on whether parent or teachers completed the rating scales.

**Research Question 3:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

**Data Analysis:** In order to answer this question, all of the parent and teacher data were coded by “language designation” (DLL or monolingual) for each of the Social Skills subscales (communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control) as well as the Total Social Skills standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales as well as the Total Social Skills score to determine whether the distributions were significantly based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner.

**Research Question 4:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

**Data Analysis:** In order to answer this question, all of the parent and teacher data were coded by “language designation” (DLL or monolingual) for each of the Problem Behaviors subscales (externalizing, internalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention, and autism spectrum) as well as the Problem Behaviors Sum standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales as well as the Problem Behaviors Sum score.
to determine whether the distributions were significantly based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner.

Summary

In order to compare teachers’ and parents’ perspectives about linguistically diverse children’s social competence, quantitative data from both parents and teachers were collected and analyzed. For this study, rating scales of social competence were completed by parents and teachers of children who are monolingual native English speakers and children who are DLLs.

The theoretical framework outlined previously suggests that measuring social-emotional development within the context of both the school and home environments, through information obtained from teachers and parents, would result in a more accurate summary of the child’s overall abilities (Halle et al., 2014). Teachers and caregivers commonly complete rating scales of social skills in order to assess social competence or social-emotional development. However, it is not unusual for parent and teacher ratings of the same child to differ, due to different referents and levels of objectivity (Atkins & Pelham, 1991). Parent and teacher ratings of children’s social competence are important, as their perceptions about children’s competencies may influence the quality and quantity of learning opportunities they provide (Lee, 2006). Henderson and Strain (2009) outline the criteria for selecting instruments for assessing social-emotional behaviors in young children, and one of the considerations they advise is taking into account the “values, norms, preferences, and knowledge base” of those who will be interpreting that data (p. 3). Including both parents and teachers in the data collection process through rating scales allows their values, norms, and expectations for the children’s social behaviors to be represented in the data for the children. This practice also aligns with the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application (Sandall,
Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005), by including families in the assessment process as well as by using multiple sources to gather data about a child.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. Results from the statistical tests for differences were assessed with an alpha level of .05 (i.e., p<.05 for determining statistical significance) and are reported by research question. Mann-Whitney U tests were run to test the distribution of scores and determine whether the distributions were significantly different based on the research questions. The Mann-Whitney U test was selected, as opposed to a t-test, because some of the data sets violated the assumptions of normality and the nonparametric alternative Mann-Whitney U is the most appropriate statistical test for this situation. Effect sizes were calculated using the formula $r=Z/\sqrt{N}$ (Rosenthal, 1994).

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for parent and teacher ratings are presented in Table 4. Included are median scores from parents and teachers, as well as the Mann-Whitney U test statistics. The descriptive statistics for ratings based on language designation are presented in Table 5. Median scores for DLLs and monolingual native English speakers are included, as well as the Mann-Whitney U test statistics.
### Table 4

**Test Statistics: Parent and Teacher Ratings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSIS Scale</th>
<th>Parent Mdn</th>
<th>Teacher Mdn</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n =60)</td>
<td>(n =60)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Social Skills</strong>**</td>
<td>103.5</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>1639.0</td>
<td>-.845</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>1502.5</td>
<td>-1.571</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1511.5</td>
<td>-1.523</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertion</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1757.5</td>
<td>-.224</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1651.0</td>
<td>-.785</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1208.0</td>
<td>-3.118</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>1488.5</td>
<td>-1.642</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1443.5</td>
<td>-1.876</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Behaviors</strong>**</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>1775.5</td>
<td>-.129</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1340.5</td>
<td>-2.447</td>
<td>.014*</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1113.5</td>
<td>-3.615</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1653.0</td>
<td>-.809</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactivity/Inattention</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>949.5</td>
<td>-4.486</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>1785.0</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Indicates statistical significance, p<.05. **Represented by Standard Score.

### Table 5

**Test Statistics: Parent and Teacher Ratings by Language Designation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSIS Scale</th>
<th>DLL Mdn</th>
<th>Monolingual Mdn</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n =60)</td>
<td>(n =60)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Social Skills</strong>**</td>
<td>104.0</td>
<td>106.0</td>
<td>1791.0</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1316.5</td>
<td>-2.554</td>
<td>.011*</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>1581.0</td>
<td>-1.156</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertion</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1706.5</td>
<td>-.493</td>
<td>.622</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>1463.5</td>
<td>-1.773</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>1772.5</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>1689.5</td>
<td>-.582</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>1516.0</td>
<td>-1.495</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Behaviors</strong>**</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>1631.0</td>
<td>-.888</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1708.5</td>
<td>-.487</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1478.5</td>
<td>-1.693</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1414.0</td>
<td>-2.124</td>
<td>.034*</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactivity/Inattention</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1549.0</td>
<td>-1.324</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>1765.5</td>
<td>-.182</td>
<td>.856</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Indicates statistical significance, p<.05. **Represented by Standard Score.
Research Questions and Related Findings

Below are the results organized by research question.

**Research Question 1:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

All of the data were coded by “participant category” (i.e., parent or teacher) to provide parent and teacher scores for each of the Social Skills subscales (communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control) as well as the Total Social Skills standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales as well as the Total Social Skills score to determine whether the distributions were significantly different based on whether parent or teachers completed the rating scales.

Test statistics from the Mann-Whitney U for parent and teacher ratings for the Total Social Skills scores and each of the subscales are presented in Table 4. The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the empathy subscale ratings were higher from teachers (Mdn = 15.0) than from parents (Mdn = 13.0), $U=1208.00$, $z=-3.118$, $p=.002$, $r=.28$. This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., $p<.05$ for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a small to medium effect size for participant category based on the empathy subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., $r^2$) indicates that 8% of the variance in the ratings on the empathy subscale is explained by participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).

All other subscales, in addition to the Total Social Skills standard score, did not have statistically significant differences based on participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).
**Research Question 2:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

Test statistics from the Mann-Whitney U for parent and teacher ratings for the Problem Behaviors Sum scores and each of the subscales are presented in Table 4. The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on three of the problem behaviors subscales.

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that externalizing subscale ratings were higher from parents ($Mdn = 8.0$) than from teachers ($Mdn = 4.0$), $U=1113.50$, $p=.000$, $z=-3.615$, $r=.33$. This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., $p<.05$ for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a medium effect size for participant category based on the externalizing subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., $r^2$) indicates that 11% of the variance in the ratings on the externalizing subscale is explained by participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that internalizing subscale ratings were higher from parents ($Mdn = 3.0$) than from teachers ($Mdn = 1.0$), $U=1340.50$, $p=.014$, $z=-2.447$, $r=.22$. These results indicate a significant effect of participant category for the internalizing subscale. This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., $p<.05$ for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a small effect size for participant category based on the internalizing subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., $r^2$) indicates that 5% of
the variance in the ratings on the internalizing subscale is explained by participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).

The Mann-Whitney U test also indicated that hyperactivity/inattention subscale ratings were higher from parents (Mdn = 6.0) than from teachers (Mdn = 3.5), U=949.50, p=.000, z=-4.486, r=.41. This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., p<.05 for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a medium effect size for participant category based on the hyperactivity/inattention subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., r²) indicates that 17% of the variance in the ratings on the hyperactivity/inattention subscale is explained by participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).

All other scales, including the Problem Behaviors Sum standard score, did not have statistically significant differences based on participant category (i.e., parent or teacher).

**Research Question 3:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

All of the data were coded by “language designation” (DLL or monolingual native English speaker) to provide parent and teacher scores for each of the Social Skills subscales (communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control) as well as the Total Social Skills standard score. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to test the distribution of scores for each of the subscales as well as the Total Social Skills score to determine whether the distributions were significantly different based on whether the rating scales were completed for DLLs or monolingual native English-speaking children.
Test statistics from the Mann-Whitney U for Social Skills ratings for dual language learners and monolingual native English speakers scores are presented in Table 5. The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences for ratings of DLLs and monolingual native English-speaking children on only one of the Social Skills subscales. All other scales, including the Total Social Skills standard score, did not have statistically significant differences based on whether parents and teachers completed the rating scales for DLLs or monolingual native English-speaking children.

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that communication subscale ratings were higher from parents and teachers for DLLs (Mdn = 17.0) than from monolingual children (Mdn = 15.0), U=1316.50, p=.011, z=-2.554, r=.23 This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., p<.05 for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a small effect size for language designation based on the communication subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., r²) indicates that 5% of the variance in the ratings on the communication subscale is explained by whether the child is a DLL or a monolingual native English speaker.

**Research Question 4:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

All of the data were coded by “language designation” (DLL or monolingual native English speaker) to provide parent and teacher scores for each of the Problem Behavior subscales (internalizing, externalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention, Autism Spectrum) as well as the Problem Behaviors Sum standard score. Test statistics from the Mann-Whitney U for Problem
Skills ratings for dual language learners and monolingual native English speakers scores are presented in Table 5. The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences for ratings of DLLs and monolingual native English-speaking children on only one of the Problem Behavior subscales. All other scales, including the Problem Behaviors Sum standard score, did not have statistically significant differences based on whether parents and teachers completed the rating scales for DLLs or monolingual native English-speaking children.

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that bullying subscale ratings were higher from parents and teachers for monolingual children (Mdn = 1.0) than for DLLs (Mdn = 0.0), U=1414.00, p=.034, z=-2.214, r=.20. This is a statistically significant difference, based on the established alpha level of .05 (i.e., p<.05 for determining statistical significance). These results indicate a small effect size for language designation based on the bullying subscale (small effect size =.1, medium effect size =.3, and large effect size =.5; Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination (i.e., r²) indicates that 4% of the variance in the ratings on the bullying subscale is explained by whether the child is a DLL or monolingual.

**Summary of Findings**

There were statistically different ratings for four of the subscales based on participant category, meaning that the ratings differed significantly based on whether parents or teachers were completing them. For the empathy subscale, which is considered a social skill, the ratings differed between parents and teachers, and results indicated that teachers were likely to give children higher ratings than parents in this subscale. For the other three subscales, which are all subscales in the Problem Behaviors scale (i.e., externalizing, internalizing, and
hyperactivity/inattention), parent ratings for children were higher than teacher ratings, and these rating differences were statistically significant.

The other research questions examined whether parent and teacher ratings differed for children based on their language designation. For these subscales, ratings on two of the subscales differed significantly based on children’s language designation. Results from analysis of the communication subscale indicate that parents and teacher rated children who are DLLs higher than monolingual children. From the Problem Behaviors scale, parent and teacher ratings for bullying were higher for monolingual children than for DLLs.
CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. For this study, the researcher analyzed 120 rating scales – 60 parents completed rating scales for their children and 9 teachers completed the corresponding 60 rating scales for their students. The rating scales asked parent and teacher participants to answer items indicating the frequency of behaviors they observed in their child or student. By analyzing these rating scales, the researcher compared differences between parent and teacher ratings for children and also examined differences in ratings based on children’s language designation. Findings from this study will contribute to research about social-emotional development for dual language learners and help educators connect with young children and their families to plan relevant learning experiences. By promoting social-emotional development, early childhood educators are ultimately promoting academic success.

Data collection for this study was guided by four research questions, which will also guide the discussion in the following section, and will be framed by the relevant data analysis. Limitations, practical implications, suggestions for future research, and a summary are also included in this chapter.

Research Question Discussion

Research Question 1: Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?
The results from the statistical analyses conducted and discussed in the previous chapters indicated that, on the social skills section of the SSIS, parent and teacher ratings differed on the empathy subscale. Upon further examination of the differences, results indicated that teachers rated children higher than parents for those behaviors that exemplify empathy. Knafo and colleagues (2009) define empathy as the knowledge and sharing of others’ feelings, resulting in prosocial behaviors, such as thinking of others’ feelings, needs, and desires. Early childhood is an experimental time for children, when they begin to try to understand what others may be thinking and test out their theories to see if they are accurate. Their attempts to understand another’s perspective, and then to act to support or comfort the other during distress, are seen as empathetic behaviors. Children as young as 14 months are able to demonstrate empathy (Knafo et al., 2009). In a longitudinal study involving twins, Knafo et al. (2009) found empathy to be an enduring disposition with a high degree of stability and consistency. The researchers found that children’s affective knowledge - meaning their knowledge and of feelings (their own and others’) - did not correlate with empathy ratings. Similar to the model of social competence (see Figure 1), the researchers found that parent behavior and family environment were more predictive of children’s empathy scores.

In considering findings from this research study, educators rated children higher than parents on the empathy subscale, and it would be important to determine whether parents are concerned by their lower empathetic ratings, as these are not necessarily indicative of deficits. If parents would like to support their children in becoming more empathetic, research indicates that it will not be sufficient to simply make them aware of others’ feelings; children with higher empathy, sustained over time, come from families and homes where more empathetic behaviors
happen, which may require family level supports and changes at the family systems level closest to the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Teachers and parents may have different perspectives when observing the same behaviors, or the child may truly behave differently in different contexts (e.g., the child may appropriately display more empathetic behaviors toward peers in a classroom environment resulting in a higher rating from teachers than parents; Gresham, Elliott, Cook, Vance, & Kettler, 2010). Children may actually behave differently at home and at school due to different opportunities, expectations, values, and beliefs (Hauser-Cram et al., 2003). Another explanation for parent-teacher discrepancies are differences in perceptions based on ethnic background and social class (Lareau, 1987; Ogbu, 1993). By understanding and supporting those social skills that are positive and generalize or transfer across contexts, educators can increase children’s chances for overall competence and well-being (Dinnebeil et al., 2013).

**Research Question 2:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales?

There were statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings for three of the problem behavior subscales. Parent ratings were higher than teacher ratings for externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, and hyperactivity/inattention. It is possible that parents have different expectations for children’s behaviors or that parents observe more of children’s problem behaviors than teachers do, so parents’ perspectives are accurately reflected in their higher behavioral ratings. It is also a possibility that children display different problem behaviors in different contexts, so parents may see more of the problem behaviors than teachers, or that the amount of time spent in each environment contributes to the ratings, with parents
having higher ratings of problem behaviors because they spend more time with their children than teachers.

Previous research findings in studies comparing parent and teacher ratings of preschool aged children’s social competence (Cai, Kaiser, & Hancock, 2004; Dinnebeil et al., 2013; Phillips & Lonigan, 2010; Winsler & Wallace, 2002) indicate that parent ratings are higher on measures of both social skills and problem behaviors. The findings in the current study are somewhat in contradiction to the majority of the previous research, in that parent ratings were only higher on three of the problem behaviors and none of the social skills. This closer match in ratings from parents and teachers may result from a more diverse teacher population in the current study, as well as more frequent parent-family interactions in the Head Start program.

The demographics of the current study included an ethnically diverse teaching population that more closely matched the student population than may typically be represented in research studies. It would be important for future research to examine whether teacher diversity affects how closely parents and teachers view the social skills of young children.

Another difference in the current study is that the research took place at a Head Start center, where family involvement is a key component of the early childhood program, and parents are invited to attend regularly scheduled activities and parent-teacher communication is readily facilitated (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Parent involvement is a means for schools to increase the performance and achievement of underperforming children (Berger, 1991), and is encouraged widely by educators, parents, policy makers, and researchers (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Typically, parent involvement is considered for promoting academic achievement, however, research indicates that when parents and teachers work together,
children’s social functioning may also benefit (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003; Supplee, Shaw, Hailstones, & Hartman, 2004). Fantuzzo, McWayne and Perry (2004) found that parent involvement was associated with decreased problem behaviors. Parents at the selected Head Start center attend parent involvement days weekly, with topics of interest about their children’s development, and are given the information in both Spanish and English. The children are allowed to attend as well, in order to promote attendance. These increased opportunities for shared information and communication may help inform the more similar ratings that parents and teachers had on the rating scales than would be expected based on the existing literature.

**Research Question 3:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Social Skills section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

There were statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the communication subscale for children who are DLLs than for children who are monolingual native English speakers. Both parents and teachers rated DLLs higher in communication than monolingual English speaking children. Communication, for this scale, was measured by asking raters to indicate how frequently the child engaged in socially appropriate communication tasks, such as initiating conversations, responding to others appropriately, and using manners. The social constructs that were measured included some nonverbal components of communication such as making and maintaining eye contact and using gestures.

The findings from this research align with previous research findings that show early bilingualism has cognitive and linguistic advantages (Espinosa, 2015), particularly in terms of
communication. Children who are DLLs often have to learn the norms and rules for communicating in two languages that have different cultural expectations (Halle et al., 2014). This research supports the findings of previous research examining the linguistic aspect of communication and adds to the literature on the social aspect of communication, by demonstrating that both parents and teachers rated children who are DLLs higher on social communication tasks than their monolingual native English-speaking peers. While students’ linguistic competence was not measured, both parent and teacher perceptions of students’ communication skills indicate that this may be the case. Future research should include such measures.

**Research Question 4:** Are there statistically significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the Problem Behaviors section of the Social Skills Improvement System rating scales based on whether the child is a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner?

The only Problem Behavior subscale where parent and teacher ratings were statistically significant for children based on their language designation was bullying. For the bullying subscale, parents and teachers rated monolingual children higher, indicating that DLLs have a lower level of problem behaviors consistent with bullying. For the purpose of this study, bullying is considered in the context of the preschool years, although most of the research on bullying focuses on children over eight years of age. Bullying behavior requires the development of social skills, cognition, and language, and can be either direct or indirect in form (Vlachou, Andreou, Botsoglou, & Didasklou, 2011). Bullying has been defined as being an aggressive and intentionally harmful behavior which is carried out repeatedly, over time, in the context of an interpersonal relationship with an imbalance of power (Olweus & Limber, 1999).
The preschool years are often the first opportunity for parents to observe social difficulties, and these may begin to be assessed by educators and professionals. However, this subscale did not indicate a difference between parent and teacher ratings which would be expected if the ratings were a result of first exposure to school or peer relationships. Rather, the differences result between comparisons of both parent and teacher ratings when language designation is considered.

Preschool is the time when children learn to build and maintain friendships by establishing consistent play partners and developing their repertoire of social skills. The complexity and nature of these relationships changes, increasing with age (Vlachou, Andreou, Botsoglou, & Didasklou, 2011). Also, as children develop increased communication and regulation of emotion and behaviors, they develop greater self-control. The relationship between communication and this specific problem behavior should be examined further in future research.

**Limitations**

The purpose of this study was to compare parent and teacher perspectives of children’s social competence. Specifically, this research examines whether differences in perspective may be attributed to a child’s designation as a monolingual native English speaker or a dual language learner. This information contributed to the current research and filled a need in the field, but it is not possible to make any definitive conclusions about differences between parent and teacher ratings in any particular domain based on these ratings alone. One limitation is that the study participants were not selected randomly; participants were eligible to participate if they were parents or teachers of the children attending the selected Head Start center. Parents of 60 out of the 282 enrolled children completed rating scales. It is not possible to determine whether these
findings are representative of the parents who did not complete rating scales. It is also impossible to generalize these findings to the entire population. However, the findings could be generalized to similar subpopulations of students.

The current study did not include direct observations of child behavior or follow-up explanations by parents or teachers of their ratings. However, by gathering and analyzing multiple sources of information, this research will contribute to the understanding of young children’s social-emotional development (DeLos Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). Another limitation of this study is that it relied only quantitative data to represent social competence. Additional qualitative research could be conducted to allow insights into values and perceptions of children’s social behaviors. Additionally, parent and teacher participants did not complete the importance ratings on the SSIS rating scales. These data would provide insights into the relative significance and importance of each of the skills and behaviors for the raters.

**Practical Implications**

This study has a number of important implications for parents and educators. In early childhood education programs, parents entrust their children’s development to educators who must provide experiences that meet the complex needs of young learners. This includes preparing them for academic success, by understanding that both social-emotional development and linguistic development are critical to overall academic achievement; early identification and intervention in social-emotional delays is an important factor in preventing negative outcomes (Sanner, Smith, Wentzel, Larsen, & Moe, 2016; Shonkoff, 2010). When educators understand their own perspectives and values about social skills and problem behaviors in the classroom, they can more thoughtfully structure and develop learning opportunities for children that promote development of those skills.
The SSIS was designed to be used to identify social behaviors that educators and families may elect to target for intervention. Use of these rating scales provided a broad, multi-rater assessment of the social behaviors that affect both parent-child relationships and teacher-child relationships as well as academic performance (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). The administration time (15 to 20 minutes per child) may be somewhat prohibitive, in addition to the cost of the assessments and intervention plan. While the rating scales may be useful in identifying areas of need, there is a commitment in terms of training and an investment in terms of cost, before beginning implementation of the entire system.

Especially in instances where parents and teachers of dual language learners have differing ratings, it is important to communicate about those particular social skills or problem behaviors and the cultural or linguistic factors may have affected these differences. For areas of concern, such as bullying behaviors, teachers may be able to improve behaviors in one domain by increasing attention and instruction in language, as children who have higher language and communication abilities may not exhibit the aggressive or frustrated behaviors. These are areas that would be appropriate topics for family involvement days in early childhood programs, for coursework in teacher preparation programs, or for professional development for inservice teachers. Finally, the discrepancies between parent and teachers support the need for assessments that consider the cultural values that comprise social competence, and to continue the practice of obtaining multiple sources of assessment data in early childhood education in order to ensure the child is appropriately assessed.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Examining the beliefs and intentions of educators would be an important area of research. It would also be important to examine the value of the social skills for both teachers and parents,
perhaps by conducting a follow up interview. The findings from this research confirm that parent and teacher ratings do differ, but more of the ratings are not significantly different. Future research should focus on communication and collaboration between parents and teachers on expectations for young children’s behaviors so that parents and teachers can work toward common goals.

As the findings from this research indicate that parents and teachers rate DLLs higher in communication skills, it would be important to further examine whether those skills persist throughout elementary school and whether specific skills should be targeted for intervention in monolingual children, or whether bilingual education should be supported throughout a child’s educational career. Additionally, since parent and teacher ratings of bullying are higher for children who are monolingual children than for DLLs, it would be important for future research to look for connections between language designation and behavior, including both prosocial and problem behaviors.

**Summary**

The findings of this study provide insight into parent and teacher perspectives of young children’s social competence, and the effect that language designation has on parent and teacher ratings of social competence. Previous literature that suggested that parents and teachers often have differing views of children’s behaviors (DuPaul & Eckert, 1994; Gresham, 1998; Gresham, Elliot, & Kettler, 2010), however parent and teacher ratings differed only on the rating scales for empathy, externalizing, internalizing, and hyperactivity/inattention. The two rating scales where language designation affected parent and teacher ratings were communication and bullying. Parents and teachers rated DLLs higher in communication and lower in bullying than their monolingual peers.
These findings support the call for a more substantial partnership between home and school: for educators to better understand parent expectations for behaviors and for social skills, and for parents to better understand what is expected of children as they move from home environments to school environments (Manz et al., 1999). To determine whether teacher diversity affects how similar parent and teacher ratings for children are, it would be beneficial to replicate this study in a setting more representative of the general teaching population. Future research should also examine the impact of family involvement on parent-teacher discrepancies. Future research should also examine the role that educator preparation programs or professional development can play in ensuring educators are capable of matching children’s needs with appropriate learning opportunities. By promoting and facilitating those social competencies that are mutually valued by parents and teachers, perhaps educators can positively influence the academic trajectory of dual language learners who begin their academic careers with promise and numerous advantages, and ensure that they are given every opportunity to remain successful.
APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO REPRINT FIGURE

Title: Model of Social Competence in an Early Childhood Environment
Author: Sok Mui Lim, Sylvia Rodger, Ted Brown
Publication: Occupational Therapy In Mental Health
Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Date: Apr 1, 2013

Thesis/Dissertation Reuse Request

Taylor & Francis is pleased to offer reuses of its content for a thesis or dissertation free of charge contingent on resubmission of permission request if work is published.

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APPENDIX B
PARENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - ENGLISH
INFORMED CONSENT
PARENT PARTICIPANT FORM

Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

TITLE OF STUDY: Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Young Children as a Function of Linguistic Diversity: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

INVESTIGATOR(S): Christine Baxter and Drs. Tracy Spies and Cori More
For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact either Christine Baxter or Dr. Spies or Dr. More at 702-895-3205.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free 877-895-2794, or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine parent and teacher ratings of children’s social behaviors for students who speak only English and for students who speak another language at home and are learning English.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you meet this criteria: you are the parent of a young child who is enrolled in a preschool program where many children are learning more than one language.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: complete a brief paper/pencil survey (about 10-25 minutes) about your child’s behaviors and social skills. Your child’s teacher will also complete a teacher version of the rating scale and your child’s teacher may be asked to participate in a brief small group interview after the rating scales have been completed.

Rating scale items on the parent form ask the parent to indicate the frequency and importance of their child’s social skills, including items such as:
Says “thank you.”
Follows your directions.
Tries to understand how others feel.
Makes eye contact when talking.
Starts conversations with adults.
TITLE OF STUDY: Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Young Children as a Function of Linguistic Diversity: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

Benefits of Participation
There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about what parents and teachers think about the social behaviors of their children.

Risks of Participation
This study includes only minimal risks. The rating scale questions may involve topics that are sensitive for some participants.

Cost/Compensation
There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The questionnaire/rating scale portion of the study will take approximately 10-25 minutes of your time, per child. If you have more than one child enrolled at the center, you may complete one rating scale per child, but you do not have to complete a rating scale for each of your children. You will not be compensated for your time.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be de-identified, using numerical codes in place of names, and stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may complete some, all, or none of the questions on the rating scale. If you have more than one child enrolled at the center, you may choose to complete a rating scale for each enrolled child, or only one child. You may withdraw from the study at any time. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

☐ Yes, I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age.

____________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Participant  Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

☐ No, I do not want to participate at this time.
TITOLO DEL ESTUDIO: Perspectiva de padres y maestros acerca la competencia social de niños menores como una función de diversidad lingüística: Estudio explicativo de métodos mixtos secuenciales.

INVESTIGADOR(ES): Christine Baxter y Dr. Tracy Spies y Cori More

Para preguntas a cerca de este estudio puede contactar a Christine Baxter o Dr. Spies o More al 702-895-3205.

Consultas acerca de los derechos de los sujetos de la investigación, reclamos y preguntas acerca de la manera en que el estudio esta siendo conducido puede contactar al UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects al 702-895-2794, Llame sin costo 877-895-2794, o por correo electrónico al IRB@unlv.edu.

Propósito del Estudio
Esta invitado a participar en un estudio investigativo. El propósito de este estudio es el examinar valoraciones de padres y maestros del comportamiento social de aquellos estudiantes que hablan solo Ingles y de estudiantes que hablan otro idioma en casa y están en proceso de aprender Ingles.

Participantes
Se le pide participación en el estudio porque usted satisface el siguiente criterio: Usted es el Padre/ Madre de un niño quien esta inscrito en un programa pre-escolar donde muchos de los niños están aprendiendo mas de un lenguaje.

Procedimientos
Si usted se ofrece de voluntario para este estudio, se le pedirá que complete lo siguiente: Una breve encuesta en papel/lápiz sobre el comportamiento y las capacidades sociales de su hijo(a). El maestro de su hijo(a) también completarán una versión para maestros de la escala de calificación y el maestro de su hijo(a) pueden ser invitados a participar en una breve entrevista en grupos pequeños después que las escalas de calificación ha sido completadas.

Los elementos de la escala de calificación piden a los padres que indiquen la frecuencia y la importancia de las habilidades sociales de su hijo(a), incluyendo elementos tales como: Decir “gracias”. Seguir sus instrucciones. Trata de entender como se sienten los demás. Hace contacto visual al hablar. Inicia conversaciones con adultos.
**TITULO DEL ESTUDIO:** Perspectiva de padres y maestros acerca la competencia social de niños menores como una función de diversidad lingüística Estudio explicativo de métodos mixtos secuenciales.

**Beneficios de Participación**
Puede que no haya beneficios para usted como participante en este estudio. Sin embargo, esperamos poder aprender más acerca de lo que padres y maestros piensan sobre el comportamiento social de sus hijos (as).

**Riesgos de Participación**
Este estudio incluye riesgos mínimos. Las preguntas en escala de calificación pueden implicar temas que son sensibles para algunos participantes.

**Costo/Compensación**
No habrá costo financiero para participar en este estudio. La porción cuestionario / escala de calificación del estudio tomará aproximadamente de 10-25 minutos de su tiempo, por niño. Si usted tiene más de un hijo(a) inscrito en el centro, usted puede completar una escala de calificación por niño pero no tiene que completar una escala de calificación para cada uno de sus hijos(as) No habrá compensación por su tiempo

**Confidencialidad**
Toda la información reunida en este estudio será de carácter confidencial cuando sea posible. No se hará referencia en materiales escritos ni orales que puedan relacionarlo con este estudio. Todos los archivos serán de forma anónima usando códigos numéricos en lugar de nombres y conservados en una instalación segura en UNLV por 3 años después de la conclusión del estudio. Después del término de conservación la información reunida será destruida.

**Participación Voluntaria**
Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Usted puede rehusarse a participar en este estudio o en partes del estudio. Puede completar una parte, toda o ninguna parte del la escala de calificación. Si usted tiene más de un hijo(a) inscrito en el centro, puede completar una escala de calificación por niño o solo para uno de sus niños. Usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento. Le alentamos a que haga preguntas acerca de este estudio al comenzar o durante cualquier momento de la investigación.

**Consentimiento del Participante:**
He leído la información que se incluye en este documento y doy mi consentimiento para participar en este estudio. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas acerca de este estudio. Tengo por lo menos 18 años de edad. Se me ha proporcionado una copia de esta forma.

☐ Sí, he leído la información que se incluye en este documento y doy mi consentimiento para participar en este estudio. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas acerca de este estudio. Tengo por lo menos 18 años de edad.

Firma del Participante _______________________ Fecha __________

Nombre del participante (Letra de molde) __________________________

☐ No, Yo no quiero participar en este momento.
TITLE OF STUDY: Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Young Children as a Function of Linguistic Diversity: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

INVESTIGATOR(S): Christine Baxter and Drs. Tracy Spies and Cori More
For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact either Christine Baxter or Dr. Spies or Dr. More at 702-895-3205.
For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free 877-895-2794, or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine parent and teacher ratings of children’s social behaviors for students who speak only English and for students who speak another language at home and are learning English.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you meet this criteria: you are the teacher of preschool children who speak only English, as well as children who are learning English in addition to the primary language spoken in their home.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: complete a brief (10-25 minute) paper/pencil questionnaire about your students’ behaviors and social skills. At a later date, you may be asked participate in a focus group/follow-up interview (not more than 2 hours). Both parents and teachers will complete rating scales about their perceptions of children’s social skills and behaviors. The focus group will only involve teacher participants.

Rating scale items on the teacher form ask the rater to indicate the frequency and importance of a specific child’s social skills, including items such as:

- Says “thank you.”
- Follows your directions.
- Tries to comfort others.
- Makes eye contact when talking.
- Starts conversations with peers.
Focus group interview questions may include items such as:

How do these social skills impact children’s social emotional development?
What role do you have in the development of social skills?
   Is this role different for children who are dual language learners?
What role do parents have in the development of social skills?
   Is this role different for children who are dual language learners?

**Benefits of Participation**

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about what parents and teachers think about the social behaviors of their children.

**Risks of Participation**

This study includes only minimal risks. The rating scale questions may involve topics that are sensitive for some participants. Participants in the focus group interview will have some additional risks. The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed, and due to the nature of the group setting it may be difficult to limit discussion outside of the research setting.

**Cost/Compensation**

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The questionnaire/rating scale portion of the study will take approximately 10-25 minutes of your time, per student. The focus group portion of the study will take approximately 2 hours of your time, should you be asked and choose to participate in the focus group interview. You will not be compensated for your time.

**Confidentiality**

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. Participation in the focus groups has greater risks to confidentiality, due to the nature of the group setting for the interviews. All records will be de-identified, using numerical codes in place of names, and stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may complete some, all, or none of the questions on the rating scale. You can participate in the rating scale portion only. You may withdraw from the study at any time. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.
TITLE OF STUDY: Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Young Children as a Function of Linguistic Diversity: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

☐ Yes, I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age.

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Participant                        Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Audio/Video Taping of Focus Group Interview:
I agree to be audio taped for the purpose of this research study.

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Participant                        Date

Participant Name (Please Print)
APPENDIX E

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FACILITY

Acelero Learning

Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Facility

Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects
University of Nevada Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway Box 451047
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1047

Subject: Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Acelero Learning Spring Valley.

Dear Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects:

This letter will serve as authorization for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas ("UNLV") researcher/research team, Christine Baxter, Dr. Tracy Spies and Dr. Cori More to conduct the research project entitled “Parent and Teacher Perspectives of the Social Competence of Young Children as a Function of Linguistic Diversity: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study at Acelero Learning Spring valley” (the “Facility”).

The Facility acknowledges that it has reviewed the protocol presented by the researcher, as well as the associated risks to the Facility. The Facility accepts the protocol and the associated risks to the Facility, and authorizes the research project to proceed. The research project may be implemented at the Facility upon approval from the UNLV Institutional Review Board.

If we have any concerns or require additional information, we will contact the researcher and/or the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Facility’s Authorized Signatory

[Signature]
Jessica Halling, Center Director

Date 4/18/16

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Signatory
APPENDIX F

PARENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE - ENGLISH

Demographic Information – Parent Form

Please complete the following information, by selecting the appropriate answers. All information provided will be kept confidential.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Ethnicity

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- I prefer not to answer
- Asian
- Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Other:__________

Languages You Speak & Understand Fluently

- Spanish
- English
- Both English & Spanish
- Other(s) – Please List ____________________________________________________________________
- I prefer not to answer

Languages You Read & Write Fluently

- Spanish
- English
- Both English & Spanish
- Other(s) – Please List ____________________________________________________________________
- I prefer not to answer
Información Demográfica – Forma para los Padres

Por favor complete la información siguiente seleccionando la respuesta correcta. Toda la información proporcionada será mantenida de manera confidencial.

**Genero**
- o Masculino
- o Femenino

**Grupo Étnico**
- o Blanco/Caucásico
- o Negro/Afroamericano
- o Hispano/Latino/ De Origen Español
- o Indígena Americano/ Nativo de Alaska
- o Prefiero no responder
- o Asiático
- o Nativo de Hawái / Otras Islas del Pacífico
- o Otro: ___________

**Lenguajes que usted Habla y Entiende con fluidez**
- o Español
- o Inglés
- o Ambos Inglés y Español
- o Otro(s) – Por favor enumere __________________________
- o Prefiero no responder

**Lenguajes que usted Escribe y Lee con fluidez**
- o Español
- o Inglés
- o Ambos Inglés y Español
- o Otro(s) – Por favor enumere __________________________
- o Prefiero no responder
APPENDIX H

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information – Teacher Form

Please complete the following information, by selecting the appropriate answers. All information provided will be kept confidential.

Gender
  o Male  o Female

Ethnicity
  o White/Caucasian  o Asian
  o Black/African American  o Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander
  o Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin  o Other:_____________
  o American Indian/ Alaskan Native
  o I prefer not to answer

Education (Highest level completed)
  o High School  o Some college  o Bachelors Degree  o Graduate Degree

Teaching Experience – (Total number of years teaching, including this year)
  o 1-3
  o 4-6
  o 7-9
  o 10 years or more

Languages You Speak & Understand Fluently
  o Spanish
  o English
  o Both English & Spanish
  o Other(s) – Please List ____________________________

Languages You Read & Write Fluently
  o Spanish
  o English
  o Both English & Spanish
  o Other(s)
APPENDIX I

PERMISSION TO USE RATING SCALES

Permission to Use SSIS Rating Scales

Dear Mrs. Baxter,

Permission to use a Pearson assessment is inherent in the qualified purchase of the test materials in sufficient quantity to meet your research goals. In any event, Pearson has no objection to you using the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS®) and you may take this email response as formal permission from Pearson to use the test in its as-published formats in your student research using the test forms you have purchased.

However, permission is not granted for appending tests to theses, dissertations, or reports of any kind. You may not include any actual assessment test items, discussion of any actual test items or inclusion of the actual assessment product in the body or appendix of your dissertation or thesis. You are only permitted to describe the test, its function and how it is administered and discuss the fact that you used the Test, your analysis, summary statistics, and the results.

Regards,

William H. Schryver
Senior Legal Licensing Specialist
References


Publishing Co.


CURRICULUM VITAE
Christine M. Baxter

702-622-9677  cbaxter6@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2017  Ph.D.  Special Education  University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dissertation title: *Parent and teacher perspectives of the social competence of dual language learners.*
Dissertation committee: Dr. Tracy Spies, Dr. Cori More, Dr. Margarita Huerta, and Dr. Chyllis Scott.

2009  M.Ed.  Special Education  University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2002  B.A.  Psychology  Arizona State University
2002  Honors  Honors by Thesis  Barrett Honors College
Honors thesis title: *Emotional words: Perceptual-conceptual trade-offs as a functional of working memory capacity.*

LICENSURE

Classroom Teacher
  Generalist (Grades EC-4)
  Generalist (Grades 4-8)
  Generic Special Education (Grades PK-12)
  English as a Second Language Supplemental (Grades EC-12)

AREAS OF RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL INTEREST

Inclusive practices for children with disabilities, effective interventions for children with autism, culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families, social-emotional development, professional learning communities, literacy development for children with disabilities and children who are dual language learners.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Present  Professional Learning Community Strategist  Innovations International Charter School of Nevada
  Las Vegas, NV
  • Facilitate collaboration and communication among teachers, administration, parents, and students to improve student achievement through the implementation of a professional learning communities model.
• Monitor, guide, and support the development and implementation of effective lesson plans, instruction, and assessment aligned to state standards.
• Analyze and interpret available data and assist teachers with improving their planning and instruction to reflect necessary interventions and supports.

2013-2016  Faculty/Lecturer  University of Nevada, Las Vegas,
            Early Childhood  Las Vegas, NV
• Taught graduate and undergraduate courses in special education, early childhood education, and early childhood special education in both traditional face-to-face and online formats.
• Supervised students during practicum and field experience courses.
• Made organizational and instructional improvements to courses to improve student experiences and outcomes.

2012-2013  Literacy Coordinator  Nevada Department of Education
            Striving Readers Grant  Las Vegas, NV
• Monitored implementation of a federally funded comprehensive literacy grant, serving at-risk children aged birth through twelfth grade. Support Clark County School District, the fifth largest school district in the country, with implementation of their subgrant in order to improve literacy outcomes for students.
• Developed monitoring tool, conducted site visits of each school funded by the grant, and worked with site-level and district-level administration to determine staff and student needs. Provided technical assistance and professional development as needed to administrative personnel and coaches in order to support the objectives of the grant. Provided multiple professional development sessions on Data-Based Decision-Making.
• Analyzed data at multiple levels to determine success of initiatives and interventions. Worked with project director to compile APR and GPRA reports for the United States Department of Education. Worked with the grant’s external evaluator to compile summaries of data and reports for the purpose of program evaluation.
• Contributed to the Nevada Department of Education’s submission of a grant proposal to the National Governor’s Association. Upon award notification, participated in Governor Sandoval’s Literacy Summit to connect education professionals with policymakers.

2008-2012  Part-Time Instructor/ Graduate Assistant  University of Nevada, Las Vegas,
            Graduate Assistant  Las Vegas, NV
• Taught graduate and undergraduate courses in early childhood special education and early childhood education.
• Supervised student teachers in community preschool settings, providing support, feedback, and direction during their student teaching and field experience year.

2004-2007  Special Education Teacher  Jo Ella Exley Elementary
            Katy, TX
• Provided both resource and co-teaching instruction for elementary students with a variety of disabilities.
• Served as the special education team leader for a team of 17 faculty members.
• Successfully mentored three teachers through their first year of teaching.
• Served as the state developed alternative assessment (SDAA) coordinator for children taking below-level assessments.

2003-2004  Special Education Teacher  Nottingham Country Elementary  
Katy, TX
• Developed effective instructional and behavioral interventions for students in a variety of settings, ranging from self-contained to inclusive.
• Chosen to transfer to open a new elementary school and develop and implement an inclusion model at the new campus.

2002-2003  Special Education Teacher  3D Academy: A KIPP/Houston ISD School  
Houston, TX
• Worked with an at-risk population of culturally and linguistically diverse students in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood.
• Provided before- and after-school tutorials and made home visits to encourage parent involvement.
• Maintained special education records, presented educational assessment data, drafted IEPs for parent review, conducted IEP meetings, and performed all responsibilities of team leader.

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES
ECE 251: Curriculum in Early Childhood Education
ECE 252: Infant and Toddler Curriculum
ECE 299: Practicum for Infants/Toddlers
ECE 441: Play Theory, Creativity, and Aesthetics in Early Childhood Education
ECE 453: Methods in Early Childhood Education: Social Studies
ECE 454: Methods in Early Childhood Education: Mathematics and Science
ECE 481: Internship in Early Childhood Education Management/Administration
ECE 482: Preschool Fieldwork in Early Childhood Education
EDSP 411: Students with Disabilities in General Education Settings
EDSP 471: Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education
EDSP 473: Developmental Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education
EDSP 474: Curriculum Development in Early Childhood Special Education
EDSP 475: Strategies for Early Childhood Special Education

GRADUATE COURSES
ESP 701: Introduction to Special Education and Legal Issues*
ESP 708: Advanced Strategies for Students with Disabilities
ESP 771: Perspectives in Early Childhood Special Education
ESP 772: Family Education in Early Childhood Special Education
ESP 773: Assessment for Young Children with Disabilities
ESP 774: Seminar on Curriculum Development in Early Childhood Special Education
ESP 775: Strategies for Teaching Young Children with Disabilities
ESP 778: Behavior Management in Early Childhood Special Education
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION

2013 Montana Office of Public Instruction – Early Reading First Initiative
• Developed family literacy kits to be used in each of the funded early learning centers.
• Collaborated with OPI staff on best practices and cross-walking the early learning guidelines with their new state standards to ensure effective implementation.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2013-2015 College of Education, UNLV, Zoom Project
Early Childhood Education, Literacy, & English Language Learners
2012-2013 Department of Educational and Clinical Studies, Doctoral Development Committee, Doctoral Student Representative
2011-2012 Council for Exceptional Children, UNLV Chapter, Secretary
2010-2011 Council for Exceptional Children, UNLV Chapter, Doctoral Student Representative

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS


POLICY BRIEFS & TECHNICAL REPORTS


### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**Baxter, C. M.** & Reding, C. (April, 2017). *Parent and teacher perspectives of the social competence of dual language learners.* Accepted poster presentation at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Boston, MA


**Baxter, C. M.** (March, 2010). *Universal Design for Learning in early childhood education.* Presented at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Spring Doctoral Colloquium, Las Vegas, NV.


### INVITED PRESENTATIONS

**Baxter, C. M.** (November, 2013). *Strategies to support emergent literacy development in inclusive environments.* Presented at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center, Las Vegas, NV.
TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT


STATE AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2012-2013 Nevada State Literacy Team
2012-2013 Nevada Early Childhood Collaborative

LOCAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2016-Present Variety Early Learning Center, Board of Directors
2011-2013 Discovery Children’s Museum, Advisory Council

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2015-Present National Association for the Education of Young Children
2009-Present Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
2009-Present CEC – Division of Early Childhood
2009-Present CEC – Division of Autism and Developmental Disorders