Thesis Proposal

Working title

Transmitting Values of Bilingualism for Returnee Children in Rural Mexico

Purpose

Since 2005, more Mexican immigrants have returned to Mexico from the United States than have migrated to the US (Pew, 2015). There is little empirical work on the issues that arise due to this return migrant flow. This thesis will explore the students who attended school in the U.S. before returning to Mexico, their parents, and the Mexican teachers who are now educating them. The research will address three main questions: How do parents and teachers value Spanish-English bilingualism of returnee children in rural Mexico? How are these values communicated to returnee children? How do these values influence the bilingualism of returnee children? With these three questions in mind, I will work to find out the returnee students’ goals, habits, and lifestyle. I want to conduct comparative ethnographical case studies of U.S.-born returnee children in Mexico to address the influences and pressures of bilingual preservation in a rural community.

Project Importance

The Mexican Migration Project was created in 1982 to better understand the complex process of Mexican migration to the United States (MMP, 2017). For more than thirty years researchers have studied migrant people, their experiences, and history. In recent years, studies have commenced specifically to find out more about U.S. born returnee students. Because of the return migrant flow that has been occurring since 2005, there is a portion of the Mexican student population that have specific needs that are not being met. These returnee students speak varying levels of both English and Spanish. Their bilingualism has a multitude of benefits, demonstrated
by research in multiple disciplines. "Indeed, more recent studies suggest that all other things being equal, higher degrees of bilingualism are associated with higher levels of cognitive attainment. Measures have included cognitive flexibility, metalinguistic awareness, concept formation, and creativity." (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989). The benefits that students receive range from cognitive to social to linguistic in nature. In light of current scholarship within the education field, this study addresses teacher and parent values of bilingualism and the ways these values are transmitted to returnee children in a rural community in Central Mexico. Findings will help educators to identify ways of enriching schooling by drawing on the linguistics resources of returnee students. This study is the first of its kind in Mexico. I hope the findings will be of interest to academic journals, policymakers, and the larger educational community. Outcomes intended include publication in a peer-reviewed journal and a presentation at academic conferences.

**Project Overview**

I will conduct two to three comparative ethnographic case studies comprise to examine the experiences and contexts of returnee children and their bilingualism in Mexico. The professors working with me on the project have already established positive and strong relationships with local stakeholders such as administrators, teacher educators and co-researchers in rural Mexico (more specifically Tetela del Volcan in the state of Morelos). I will observe classroom interactions and home interactions. I will be conducting two to three case studies on returnee students. I will be with these students every weekday and be able to get to know them and their situation. I will also be completing this research alongside five other co-researchers who will also be completing two to three case studies each. I will be able to utilize these data as necessary. I will conduct observations and interviews, gather artifacts (e.g., classroom work sample), and administers some basic surveys. I will observe based on specific protocols that the research team
Dr. Bybee is an assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education. He teaches SCED 353, Multicultural Education. He has published more than 15 publications including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, policy briefs, and other manuscripts. He has had several editorial and reviewer experiences for various journals. He has received 17 awards and fellowships as well as three large grants for research. He has been the mentor and committee member for more than 10 committees, programs, and teams. His studies focus on Latino/a education and cultural studies. He is prepared for the research in Mexico and has visited to help build relationships and positive rapport.

*Faculty Reader: Dr. Juan Freire*

Dr. Freire is an assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education. He teachers TELL 450, Family, School, and Community Partnerships. He has published six refereed journal articles, one book chapter, and one book review. He has won seven honors and awards as well as presented at 22 scholarly paper presentations. He taught elementary school for seven years in both Spain and the United States. He has served in many capacities ranging from a journal reviewer for the *Bilingual Research Journal* and *Journal of Teacher Education*, to the campus liaison for the Graduate Student Council for the American Educational Research Association. His research specializations include bilingual and bicultural pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, language education policy, and teacher education with an equity focus.

**Project Timeline**

February – April 2017 – Prepare for field study: prepare research methods, complete IRB approval, literary analysis, etc. (Part time, average 10 hours a week)

April 2017 – Thesis Proposal submitted and approved

May 2017 – Field Study in Mexico (collect data)
June – December 2017 – Analyze data, write thesis

January 2018 – Submit Thesis Defense Information Form

January 2018 - Defend

January 2018 - Submit Thesis Defense Submission Form

**IRB Approval**

https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w89dfb08f-4135-4756-8bb9-1f6ecd10bf04-22275175

This link leads to the certificate that I have completed the CITI Program course under the requirements set by Brigham Young University.

https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k0124154b-fdb6-48de-a200-f9b467abee45-22275175

This second certificate shows the specific score for each section of the IRB approval.

As a collaborative team we are currently working on the IRB approval for the project as a whole. We will have that turned in by the end of March 2017.

**Funding**

$828 – Tuition. For my thesis we are going on a field study to Mexico for the month of March. The professors starting this study are transforming this research into an official field study for the Mckay School of Education through the Kennedy Center. To do so it must complete a class for credits. I am requesting this money to pay the three credits for Spring 2017 tuition for my field study to complete my thesis project.

$172 – Food. While in Mexico our food for the field study will not be paid for.

For this specific research experience, a grant has been awarded. The grant will cover all of my expenses for the field study except for food, including: airfare, housing, and transportation. We also receive a $500 stipend, but not until the end of the field study.
Sources


