ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND HOME-LANGUAGE TEXT USE IN SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study dissertation provides an overview of a problem of practice: the disengagement of English language learners in the secondary English language arts classroom. The researcher would like to determine how secondary English language arts teachers effectively incorporate one well-researched, yet infrequently used intervention: the integration of home language texts to teach transferrable English language arts skills to English language learners. An overview of relevant literature about the topic is included and multiple research questions for further study are provided. An action research phenomenological study to address the research questions along with the findings from the implementation of the plan of action are described, and recommendations for further study are offered.

Keywords: English language learner, ELL, home language text, secondary, NCTE, bilingual education, bilingualism, home language resource

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CREDE……Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence

DACA……Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

ELA……..…. English Language Arts

ELL……. English Language Learner

ESL……English as a Second Language

ESOL……. English as a Second/Other Language

ESSA……Every Student Succeeds Act

LIEP……..……..Limited Instruction Education Program

LOTE…….…… Language Other than English

NAEP……..… National Assessment of Educational Process

NLP……..……National Literacy Panel

NCLB…….…… No Child Left Behind

SDAIE……...…….Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English

SFA……Success for All

WIDA…….... World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Each year in my high school English language arts (ELA) classroom, there were a handful of students who did not seem involved in the classroom community or engaged in the learning process. Several of these students were English language learners (ELLs), students who spoke at least one language fluently at home and were in the process of becoming bilingual or multilingual speakers of academic English. Through scaffolding the instruction and altering the instructional materials, I tried to make the learning objectives of the course more accessible to these students. Content was presented in a variety of formats, text was simplified, assessments were modified, and students were paired in mixed-ability groups.

However, my attempts to use these strategies in an English-only environment did not always seem beneficial to my ELL students. One student completed basic question-and-answer activities in a workbook assigned by another teacher instead of taking literature notes or participating in most of the lessons. A student who liked to talk and who demonstrated good oral English communication skills put his head on his desk during assigned reading times. Another student who was supposed to be involved in a group project sat at his desk silently, not saying a word to his group mates—and they did not speak to him either. Occasionally, these students looked interested in the material and put forth their best effort, but more frequently, they seemed bored, frustrated, excluded from the classroom dynamic, or overwhelmed with difficult material to the

point that they did not try. They did not interact with their classmates often, and their classmates did not attempt to interact often with them either.

As a teacher, I wanted all my students to be included in the classroom community and to understand content area material. My ELLs were intelligent, capable students whose broad range of experiences, home languages, and cultures should be appreciated in the ELA classroom community and represented in the ELA curriculum. I should have determined why my students were not engaged and then figured out how to engage them through creating a positive classroom climate in which everyone is valued and providing appropriate teaching methodology that reflects high educational standards. However, as much as I wanted these students to succeed, I was at a loss: how could these students' experiences and cultures be considered valuable assets to the classroom dynamic if their knowledge of the languages they spoke at home was minimized or ignored? Even with accommodations and modifications of the curriculum in place, how could these students learn the advanced academic content of a high school English language arts course when they were early in the process of acquiring functional English, and their teacher was unable to communicate or assess their progress in their first languages?

Problem of Practice

Every teacher has a few students who do not participate in class activities or interact with others; an effective teacher, upon determining the reason for the students' lack of success in the classroom, should formulate a plan for success for these students, enlisting the help of parents, classmates, and other educators when necessary. These interventions become more difficult to implement and less successful on average, however, when the problem is a language barrier. How does a teacher contact home or

ask parents to help their children with school assignments when the parents are new to the English language as well, and most teachers do not speak a second language well enough to use it in conversation with parents? (Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013). How does a teacher solicit assistance from fellow students to work collaboratively with their English language learner (ELL) classmates, when both the ELL student and English speaker may feel shy or overwhelmed about trying to communicate with each other? (Goldenberg, 2013). What does a teacher do when an ELL student's oral English seems on par with his or her classmates, but grade level-appropriate literature is too difficult for the student to understand? (Genessee, 2006). When a teacher attempts to provide accommodations in instruction and assessment in an English immersion classroom, but those accommodations are not sufficient to allow ELLs to gain the literacy skills needed to become proficient in the English language, what else can that teacher do to ensure those students' success? (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Genesee et al., 2005; Goldenberg, 2013; Krashen, 2004; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

As a novice teacher who began my high school ELA teaching career in the early 2000s during the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) era of education, I was aware of and able to provide a few accommodations for my ELLs: I was required to alter testing conditions for my ELL students in specific ways and encouraged to alter instructional strategies using any research-based methods available to me. Instructional accommodations included pairing ELLs and English-speaking students together, altering or simplifying assignments, and presenting content and instructions in a variety of formats (August & Shanahan, 2006). Assessment accommodations used, as mandated by federal law, included the use of a bilingual dictionary on all assessments, simply worded

test questions, and additional support services in the form of an English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) class. These assessment modifications and support services were available to ELLs for a period of only three years unless a student could obtain a waiver allowing an additional one to two years of ESOL class support and testing modifications (No Child Left Behind, 2001). Content was only offered to my students in English for a variety of reasons: I did not know about the research that supported the use of a student's home language to learn content area skills; I was unsure about state or federal laws regarding home language use in an ELA classroom; and I was not confident in my ability to use a language other than English (LOTE) for any instructional task, including giving directions, reading literature, explaining content, or assessing student work.

Several years into teaching, I realized that the limited accommodations I had provided to my ELL students were often insufficient to engage them in the learning of the high school ELA course standards to which students were held accountable and to provide them with the necessary knowledge and requirements to receive a high school diploma. While the on-time high school graduation rate for American students hit a record high of 82% in the 2013-2014 school year, the graduation rate for ELLs at this time was less than 63% (US Department of Education, 2015), and the percentage of my ELL students who graduated on time was similar. In 2007, the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests showed that ELLs in eighth grade scored 44 points lower on the English section than non-ELL eighth graders scored (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Standardized tests scores from my students' eighth grade year were rarely available to me, but my ELL students on average scored significantly lower than their

classmates on the standardized English 1 End-of-Course test. There had to be a better way to reach my students than by basic modifications of instruction and assessments in an English immersion environment. What I was doing was not enough, and as a result some of my students were slipping through the cracks.

Although I was interested in using students' home languages in ELA class to provide at least an occasional Internet-generated translation of course content or instructions, the barriers to doing so seemed insurmountable. While federal law officially supports the use of ELL students' home languages to be used in instruction and this practice is supported by educational research, most schools in my geographic area did not qualify at that time for the federal funding available through NCLB that would make it financially possible to integrate a comprehensive bilingual education program ("No Child Left Behind Act of 2001"). Besides the prohibitive cost of implementing home language materials in English class, there was also the commonly-held and inaccurate belief that an ELL might rely on the content provided in the home language to the exclusion of the material presented in English (Goldenberg, 2008; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). In addition, the language limitations of many American teachers are an important consideration; most, including me, are fluent only in English (Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013). Even when a second or third language is known, what do teachers do for the students who do not happen to speak one of those two or three languages? Providing teacher-created resources, giving instructions, or assessing student work in a language other than English might be difficult or impossible for most teachers, especially when multiple home languages besides English are represented in a single classroom. The needs of ELL students in my classroom were not ignored, but more accessible, universal,

teaching accommodations were promoted in lieu of home language use, including language instruction and modification in their separate ESOL classes and some measures of lesson modifications and accommodations from me in their ELA class.

Theoretical Framework

One research-supported intervention to help ELLs succeed, the utilization of home language instruction, was something that I wanted to try with my students despite the apparent challenges. Teaching or providing texts written in a student's first language can be useful in every secondary classroom including English language arts because many of the ELA skills are transferable between languages (South Carolina State Department of Education, 2015; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). Research shows that allowing students to read texts written in the students' home language, in certain situations for certain lengths of time, actually helps rather than hinders both the students' understanding of English language and course content (Francis et al., 2006; Genesee et al., 2005; Krashen, 2004; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). This strategy is supported by federal law (Center for Public Education, 2007; One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 1991).

Besides being supported by research and by policy, the use of home language texts in a high school ELA classroom is supported by various pedagogical theories. In a learner-centered classroom, flexibility, concern for the individual students, and joint responsibility are emphasized as the focus shifts from how teachers can best teach to how students can best learn (Wohlfarth, Sheras, Bennett, Simon, Pimental, & Gabel, 2008). In a classroom that supports the social reconstruction theory, cooperation is the key to

societal transformation and students have the right to use and build upon their home language in that goal of creating an improved society (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). In classrooms that support additive acculturation including students' funds of knowledge, the use of students' home language also supports the validation of home culture (August & Hakuta, 1998; de Jong, 2011; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012) and works to ensure that a classroom is asset-oriented as opposed to deficit-oriented (de Jong, 2011; Hopkins, 2013; Paris, 2012). By providing space in the ELA classroom for students' home language, teachers can potentially help students to find meaning in course content, confidence in their skills, and validation of their personal lives (Bennett, 2019).

Despite the research and federal law in support of the home language text integration, it seems that many teachers have encountered obstacles to integrating home languages into a content area course and have chosen not to try this strategy (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). As a result, more research about this topic is needed. Although a clear link has been established between the utilization of home language texts and an improvement in transferable knowledge, more information is needed to determine how this intervention can benefit students and how the students perceive the intervention. While quantitative research shows a positive correlation between student achievement and the use of first-language texts, more detailed research is needed to determine which students can most benefit from this intervention, in which settings, and for what length of time (Goldenberg, 2013). Citing the National Literacy Panel (NLP) and Center for Research, Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) reports of 2006 about English language learners, Goldenberg (2013) explains, "We lack a body of solid studies that permits us to go beyond the general finding about the positive

effects of primary language instruction on reading achievement in English" (p. 14). Qualitative data, such as ethnographic research or phenomenological studies, may help educators make more informed decisions regarding the implementation of home language texts into content area instruction.

The need for more information regarding home language materials in content area classes is a critical concern, and its importance is growing with the increased numbers and diversity of ELL students in our public schools (Batalova et al., 2007; Garcia et al., 2009). ELLs comprise the fastest growing segment of the American population, and while 80% speak Spanish as a home language, the remaining 20% come from virtually every nation on the planet and represent almost all the world's languages (Zong, Batalova, & Burrows, 2019). As of the 2013-14 school year, over 43,000 students in South Carolina were in the process of learning English (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2014) and the number of ELLs in American schools has more than doubled in the past 20 years (Council of the Great City Schools, 2014). Currently, one in nine students nationwide is an English language learner (Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). In 20 years, that number is expected to be one in four (Goldenberg, 2013).

Research Questions

Many high school ELA course standards focus on skills that are transferable between languages, and current research supports the use of students' home language as a helpful learning tool to acquire both content knowledge and knowledge of the English language. Consequently, I intended to determine teachers' perceptions of their efforts to incorporate home language texts in the ELA classroom, specifically, to what extent that they feel that offering ELLs the opportunity to use home language literacy can result in a

more positive learning experience and what steps they must take to make these opportunities available and meaningful for students.

Research questions were as follows:

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high quality home language resources for their ELL students?
2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?
3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

Researcher Positionality

As a former ELA teacher who planned to return to the classroom in the near future, I conducted a phenomenological study as action research to determine how the use of home language texts can be implemented successfully to aid ELLs in the ELA classroom. A phenomenological study design was the most appropriate fit for the research questions because it allowed me to unobtrusively and objectively collect data in the form of structured and semi-structured interviews from multiple other professionals in a variety of secondary education settings who have experience with home language text inclusion in the ELA classroom. While the findings of this action research project are context-dependent (Herr & Anderson, 2015), this data will be applied for the improvement of my own practice in the future and could potentially be used as circumstantial evidence to others who are considering implementing similar changes in their classrooms.

My role in this research was as an outsider, an uninvolved interviewer of multiple high school ELA teachers who utilize home language texts with ELL students. A

phenomenological study could yield useful information through multiple perspectives: other teachers with more experience with this intervention offered insight into the varying levels of support, background knowledge, curricular demands, and student populations that make their home language text interventions successful, for which patterns emerged to be studied more closely (Mertler, 2017).

Research Design

To address these questions, a phenomenological study as action research was conducted, the steps of which are described by multiple authors (Cresswell, 2012; Giorgi, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mertler, 2017). In this type of study, qualitative data collection relies on multiple semi-structured interviews of participants who have experience with the phenomenon being studied. Regardless of positionality as insiders or outsiders to the educational setting, the researchers of a phenomenological study act as uninvolved collectors of information without sharing preconceived opinions or prior experiences of the phenomenon with participants. As patterns or themes from the data emerge, the researchers use their understanding of the phenomenon to describe it to others. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of information gathered, the results are externally audited through procedures such as member checks and peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Significance of the Study

ELLs deserve to have access to the most effective learning tools even when those learning tools are difficult to obtain or implement. This study could potentially help me and other teachers reach a deeper understanding of how home language texts can be obtained and implemented to help ELLs succeed. The specific findings in each

participants' contexts may not mirror the experiences of other educators (Herr & Anderson, 2015), but this data could still be useful as circumstantial evidence to me and to others who are considering implementing similar changes in their classrooms. I am hopeful that this research could possibly benefit my fellow educators, but the main connection to the field of education will be my own improved practice.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Several limitations and delimitations of related to this project were considered: finding participants who were an appropriate fit for the study, determining that these candidates had the resources needed to make this study successful, and ensuring that all involved were describing their teaching experiences as accurately as possible.

The first consideration was the pool of participants in this study. The target population for this study was between 10 and 15 candidates whose context and experience, regardless of location, matched the learning conditions of my own teaching setting, which would also be typical of most South Carolina high school ELA classrooms (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016): secondary ELA teachers with at least the average number of ELL students in South Carolina, which is 5% (Education Commission of the States, 2014), who are among the small percentage of teachers who use home language texts (Collier & Thomas, 2017), and who are monolingual (Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013). It is possible to find candidates who fit this specific criteria, but considering that data collection took place in the spring when high school teachers were busy with administering multiple standardized tests and helping struggling students to obtain course credit for the year, some may not have had time to participate even if they were interested.

Upon finding participants for the research, the resources available to the participants and participants' interest in using the resources available were considered. The integration of home language texts is dependent on a variety of factors including personal background (such as the participants' interest level and prior experience in teaching home language texts), the support of other educators who may speak the home languages represented, the funding and distribution of home language materials, the school or school district's policy concerning home language use in ELA class, and the use of other teaching accommodations for ELLs. These factors could have significantly influenced each participant's efforts in using the accommodation that is being studied (Mertler, 2017).

When the participants and their home language accommodations were determined, it was necessary to consider the limitations of being an uninvolved observer of the phenomena. The level of participation, cooperation, and self-reflection of cooperating teachers that was provided in the form of thoroughly, honestly answered interview questions may have varied; for example, teachers might have attempted to give the "right" interview answer if they did not want to admit to a teaching practice that is less than ideal or they feel that they are in "competition" with the other participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My positionality as an outsider may have exacerbated this problem: limited time was available to build trust with participants and most of them were unknown to me before the study begins. Additionally, my ability to be an objective recorder interview data may have varied; I may have misinterpreted phenomena based on my own background or lack of understanding of the participant's intentions when making statements (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Organization of the Dissertation

In the following pages of this dissertation, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, methodology, and findings of this study will be examined in detail. Current, relevant literature about the challenges facing ELLs and potential interventions for educators to implement will be shared in chapter two. Research methods, including a detailed plan for the design, my role as a researcher, setting, implementation, and data collection, will be provided in chapter three. The findings and results of the study along with implications for further research will be described in chapter four. A summary of the elements of the study along with a description of my role and positionality to the setting will be given in chapter five. Materials used in the study will be provided in the appendix, and a complete list of references will follow.

Glossary of Key Terms

Academic English—challenging, abstract, and complex language that will permit the student to participate successfully in mainstream classroom instruction (Goldenberg, 2008)

Bilingual—being able to communicate fluently in two languages

Biliterate—being able to read and write fluently in two languages

Codeswitching—alternating between two languages or linguistic codes within a single sentence or conversation (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008)

CREDE—an abbreviation for Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence

ELA—an abbreviation for English Language Arts, the course offered to all students in American public schools to acquire knowledge of reading, writing, and inquiry

ELL—an abbreviation for English Language Learner; a student who is acquiring the English language; the most commonly used term and government protected label to describe students who are acquiring English in addition to other language(s) spoken (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008; Wixom, 2015)

Emergent bilingual—a student who is developing skills in English in addition to skills in other language(s); this term is considered more positive than the terms, "English language learner" (ELL) or "limited English proficient" (LEP), because it focuses on the acquisition of a language in addition to prior knowledge of another language (Wixom, 2015; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

ESSA—an abbreviation for the Every Student Succeeds Act, an act of US Congress passed in 2015 to replace the No Child Left Behind Act; these laws continue to require yearly state assessments, to which federal funding is tied; this is the commonly known

name for the 2015 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015)

ESL or ESOL—an abbreviation for English a Second Language or English as a Second/Other Language; this term often applies to the classroom setting in which one teacher addresses the needs of students with varied levels of English proficiency (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011)

Home language—the native language or first language spoken by a student

LIEP—an abbreviation for Limited Instruction Education Program, one method of providing academic content in English to English language learners

LOTE—an abbreviation for Language Other Than English

Monolingual—the ability to communicate fluently in one language only

NAEP—an abbreviation for the National Assessment of Educational Process; a standardized test measuring what American students know and can do in multiple course subjects

NLP—an abbreviation for National Literacy Panel; an educational advocacy group that published a report with recommendations for ways educators could help learners gain literacy

NCLB—an abbreviation for No Child Left Behind; the 2001 act by United States Congress replacing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; this act required states to develop yearly assessments to measure basic skills; federal funding was tied to the results of these assessments (No Child Left Behind, 2001)

SDAIE—an abbreviation for Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English, one method of providing academic content in English to English language learners

SFA—an abbreviation for Success for All, one of the most widely studied comprehensive school reform approaches that has been adapted for English learners and evaluated (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011)

SIFE—Students with Interrupted Formal Education, a term usually reserved for ELLs that refers to missing an extended period of school up to two years (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018)

SLIFE—Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, a term usually reserved for ELLs that refers to missing more than two years of school (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018)

WIDA—an abbreviation for the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, a nationwide approach to targeted language instruction (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As a high school English language arts teacher in South Carolina, I often struggled to find instructional strategies and relevant content material to engage English language learners (ELLs). Many of my ELL students seemed bored, frustrated, overwhelmed, or excluded from the content and from the classroom community. I was encouraged to help ELLs by differentiating instruction or providing learning accommodations as much as possible, but the measures of which I was aware and able to utilize did not seem to be very effective. Nationwide, high school graduation rates and standardized test scores are significantly lower for ELLs on average than for their English-speaking peers (US Department of Education, 2015), and this trend was true in my own class as well. Finding effective interventions to help these students succeed is important, and it is becoming more important as this group becomes larger and more diverse. In 2000, the number of children in the U.S. with immigrant parents was 13.1 million; as of 2017, that number had grown by 39 percent to 18.2 million (Zong, Batalova, & Burrows, 2019).

ELLs deserve access to the same rigorous, relevant, grade-level-appropriate knowledge and skills as other students in their content area high school classes (Lopez, Gundrum, & Scanlan, 2013), and one research-supported intervention to provide this to ELLs is the use of home language texts in content area classes (Peal & Lambert, 1962;

Cummins, 1979, 2007; Goldenberg, 2008). Although nearly 60 years of research has established a clear link between allowing ELLs to use home language texts in content areas to learn transferrable skills and knowledge, the barriers to utilizing this strategy are numerous and many teachers do not attempt it (Collier & Thomas, 2017). Therefore, more research is needed to determine how the use of home language texts can help ELLs: which students can most benefit, which settings are most appropriate, and what length of time is best for this intervention (Goldenberg, 2013).

An action research qualitative study of multiple secondary ELA classrooms in which teachers integrate home language texts helped me to determine how the use of home language texts in the English language arts classroom can be implemented effectively, considering the steps that teachers must take to make these literacy opportunities available and beneficial for students. These qualitative findings which are unique to the various educational contexts studied would not be considered generalizable (Herr & Anderson, 2015), but this data could provide circumstantial data to other educators interested in implementing similar changes with their ELL students.

Research questions

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high quality home language resources for their ELL students?
2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?
3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

Organization of literature review

This chapter is divided into three sections of necessary information: English language learners, the programs and policies regarding English language learning instruction, and the educational theory and research about using home language texts to teach English language learners. The first section, an overview of ELL students, provides information about the backgrounds and educational needs of ELLs nationwide and in South Carolina; introducing an effective modification to instructional strategies does not seem likely without a solid understanding of the students. The second section, an overview of the government policies related to ELLs, educational programs available for these students, and educator preparation for teaching ELLs, provides the researcher or reader with background knowledge necessary to understanding the ease or difficulty in implementing the strategy of home language use with ELLs. The third section, describing the history and previous studies of home language use in the classroom, provides the necessary framework for conceptualizing the research of this qualitative phenomenological action research study.

Purpose of review

A detailed review of literature may provide the researcher or the reader with sufficient information about ELLs, educational policies and strategies related to ELLs, and home language use in the classroom to determine if the use of home language texts in an English language arts classroom is an appropriate intervention. Information has been gathered from various sources: many pieces of peer-reviewed, scholarly articles accessed from ERIC and Education Source databases, five meta-analyses of research regarding home language use also gathered from ERIC and Education Source databases, and

various committee-approved published reports from multiple government or private sector agencies providing information regarding population, educational trends, government policies, ELL teaching strategies, and demographics.

Overview of ELL Students

Nationwide

English language learners are a diverse and rapidly growing group of students with varying life experiences, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, family structures, prior educational opportunities, personalities, aptitudes, and interests. This heterogenous blend of students comprises a large and growing number of students in American schools. Currently, one in nine students is an ELL (Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). This number has doubled in the last 20 years (US Department of Education, 2012) and is expected to double again in the next 20 years (Goldenberg, 2013).

Lowenhaupt (2016) points to a "New Latino Diaspora" that has emerged in some suburban areas in regions of the US, including the Southeast. ELL families in these communities often face a complex process of inculturation characterized by mixed immigration statuses, movement between the US and the home country, and frequent communication with others in the home country. Many, but not all, come from poor families (Cohn, 2017; Zong, Batalova, & Burrows, 2019). Within suburban communities, the most recent demographic change is the acculturation of lower income ELL groups into more affluent areas, though downward mobility of ELL families is possible, especially when ELLs move to areas of high poverty (Lowenhaupt, 2017).

Research by Zinth (2013) states that of the approximately five million ELL public school students spread across the US, Spanish is the predominant home language, with

73% of ELLs speaking it, followed by Chinese, Vietnamese, French/Haitian/Creole, Hindi, Korean, German, Arabic, Russian, and Miao/Hmong spoken by 16% of students. The remaining 10-11% of ELLs speak another language at home (Zinth, 2013).

Educational experiences also vary greatly with this group. Garcia and Kleifgen (2018) report that over half of ELLs are native-born citizens who have attended American public schools since kindergarten. Many are proficient in spoken English but show room for improvement in successful completion of academic work. On the other end of the educational spectrum, approximately 11-20% of high school ELLs are identified as students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) or students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), meaning that they missed more than two years of school (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

In South Carolina

South Carolina does not have as large a concentration of ELLs as many other states, but the number is significant. Approximately 22 percent of Americans nationwide, or 66 million, report speaking a language other than English (LOTE) at home, but in the state of South Carolina, that percentage is only five percent of population, or roughly 244,000, according to the most recent data available through the Migration Policy Institute (2017). More detailed statistics of South Carolina ELLs are available through the American Immigration Council (2017): newcomers to the state and country represent many different nationalities: 28% from Mexico, 5% from India, 4.5% from the Philippines, 4.5% from China, 4% from Germany, and the remaining 54% from other nations. Of these, 40% are naturalized US citizens, 23% are legal residents, and 37% are undocumented (American Immigration Council, 2017). Their levels of

education vary widely; while more than average lack a high school diploma (30% of immigrants versus 12% of natives), more than average have at least one college degree (28% of immigrants versus 27% of natives), and over 75% report that they speak English well or very well (American Immigration Council, 2017). Of these approximately 240,000 newcomers, roughly 16,557 are children.

At school

English language learners, as a diverse group of students, bring a range of resources that can enhance their educations: home language, prior literacy knowledge, academic knowledge sets, and unique cultural practices or perspectives (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). ELLs enrolled in U.S. public schools where English is used have three language tasks to overcome: learning academic English at a high level, mastering challenging academic skills and course content taught using English, and adopting new social skills that allow them to work cooperatively or interact with their English-speaking classmates and teachers (Genesee, 2017). These students share the need for the same content and same level of rigor as their English-proficient peers (Lopez, Gundrum, & Scanlan, 2013), and with the proper learning conditions, they can be successful in achieving high academic standards and participating fully in rigorous instruction (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

A key characteristic in the acquisition of these language tasks, besides individual aptitude and motivation, is home environment (Burgess-Brigham, Dixon, Gezer, Shin, Snow, Su, Wu, & Zhao, 2012). Language acquisition of ELLs is impacted by the education levels of parents and grandparents, opportunities for informal language use at home, and strong home literacy practices (Burgess-Brigham et al., 2012). Talking with

teachers or helping their children with homework may not be possible for parents who are still in the process of acquiring English. In addition, there may be different culturally-driven expectations about the roles of teachers and parents in education, or U.S. public school may be an overwhelming environment for parents (Wixom, 2015; Zinth, 2013).

Another key component of language acquisition is the ELL's age while trying to learn; the notion that younger students acquire a new language faster than older students is not true, but younger English language learners typically acquire English grammar and pronunciation more easily than older learners, while older ELLs typically demonstrate English language proficiency more easily than younger learners, according to Burgess-Brigham et al (2012). A realistic time frame for an ELL of any age to acquire English as a second or other language is three to seven years (Burgess-Brigham et al., 2012).

The triple challenge of understanding content, language, and culture may have contributed to the gap between educational outcomes of English language learners and their peers in graduating high school, earning passing grades, and scoring well on standardized assessments. While the graduation rate of American high school students reached a record high in the 2013-2014 school year (US Department of Education, 2015), with 82% of students graduating on time, only 63% of ELLs graduated on time. On the NAEP reading assessment administered in 2011, there was a 36-point achievement gap at the fourth-grade level and 44-point gap at the eighth-grade level (US Department of Education, 2012).

The achievement gap is more pronounced among students in long-term English language acquisition programs. In secondary schools, between 30% and 70% of ELLs are designated as long-term English learners because they have been in U.S. schools

since kindergarten but have not yet become fluent in English (Olsen, 2010, as cited in Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Even students who speak English well may appear to be proficient in all aspects of the language, but they still may need explicit, focused instruction in academic English: genre knowledge, literacy skills, and grammar (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). ELLs who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for a period of longer than six years are much more likely to have a grade point average (GPA) below 2.0, to score at least two to three years below grade level on a standardized math assessment, and to drop out of high school without earning a diploma (Zinth, 2013).

One factor that may negatively impact educational attainment of ELLs is discussed by Goldsmith, Flores-Yeffal, Reese, Salinas, and Cruz (2017), who state that undocumented status of parents decreases the likelihood of ELL students graduating from high school or enrolling in college compared to ELL students whose parents are documented. This was found to be true for ELL children who grew up in the United States; further research should be conducted to determine how the documentation status of parents affects teenagers who have recently arrived in the United States. Least likely to attain a high school diploma or attend college are the ELL children who grew up in a household with an undocumented father and without a mother, especially the ELL children who emigrated from Mexico (Goldsmith et al., 2017).

It should be noted that research concerning the number or percentage of ELLs is usually an approximation. Reliable data on ELLs, especially for unauthorized immigrants, is difficult to determine because most records and surveys do not include immigration statistics (Cohn, 2017). Adding to the difficulty with identification, the two-step process of schools administering a home language survey and assessing English

language proficiency is often flawed, as pointed out by Wixom (2015). Because only a few states require an ELL teacher or speaker of a student's home language to assist with an identification survey, some students may be incorrectly identified as ELLs or not identified as being ELLs when they should have been (Wixom, 2015). Additionally, Wixom explains, most states stop tracking the progress of their former ELLs two years after they leave a language development program which provides an incomplete picture of ELL and former ELL students' progress.

In summary, ELLs are a significant, growing, and varied proportion of students in American classrooms who deserve the same high level of rigor and quality of content as they are educated. With the proper supports in place, they are capable of successful participation in grade-level instruction and achievement of high academic goals. This information leads to the next questions of what constitutes rigorous, good quality instruction and what supports educators should offer so that they can access this instruction. To answer this, it is necessary to examine current educational policies and programs in place for ELLs and preparation of educators in teaching ELLs.

Overview of Educational Policies, Programs, and Educators Impacting ELLs

Educational policies: standards, terminology, and levels of government

English language arts vs. English language proficiency standards

For instructors to effectively educate English language learner students, they need to first understand what is to be taught. There may be some confusion between providing coursework for a high school student to gain proficiency in the English language and providing coursework for a high school student to gain grade-level content ability in English language arts class. English language proficiency development standards in a

pull-out English as a second or other language (ESOL) course (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012) differ from English language arts standards in an ELA course (Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016). Both sets of standards should respect and build upon the primary language and culture of ELL students through using those resources in the classroom; in both courses, students will benefit from an enriched learning experience if they utilized their prior knowledge of language and culture in the new setting. The difference, however, is the way those resources should be utilized.

English language proficiency standards focus on the acquisition of effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening ability in the English language. They should be specifically designed for ELL students and they should define progressive levels of competence in English. The focus of these standards is the improvement in communication in the English language (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012).

English language arts standards also focus on effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening ability in the specific academic content skills, but the language and background knowledge of these skills are not dependent upon acquisition of a specific language. A students' home language and prior literacy knowledge can and should transfer to the content of the ELA classroom. ELLs may be assessed in English language arts standards in their home languages for three years or longer in certain circumstances (Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016).

The key practices of South Carolina ELA standards (which are also the key practices of Common Core State Standards) are the following:

1) Consider audience and purpose when writing narratives, arguments, and explanations related to read texts,

2) Consider evidence, ideas, and sequencing when writing,
3) Use evidence from text when writing,
4) Draw upon a range of language practices when researching,
5) Consider conventions and critical language practices when listening and speaking,
6) Listen to others critically but respectfully and with increasing specificity and precision when expressing ideas,
7) Consider tone, context, and audience to integrate and evaluate what is seen and heard, and
8) Craft prose and make strategic decisions in various contexts (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012).

The 2015 Obama administration reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), puts the needs of ELLs as a higher priority by placing increased accountability on schools for the academic progress in English language proficiency of ELLs. Increased funding for ELLs is mandated by the legislation also. Simultaneously, the ESSA places pressure on school systems to produce students who are proficient in content area skills; school funding is tied to this progress as well (One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015). Therefore, ELA teachers are legally responsible for teaching ELA standards, but every teacher is also accountable for teaching English language proficiency standards.

This information is essential for secondary English language arts teachers to know if they intend to teach students who are in the process of acquiring the English language in addition to increasing their skill level in language arts. These two competencies are

related; standards-based content area instruction can support English language acquisition (Hakuta & Santos, 2013). Instructors cannot easily follow research-based legislative initiatives if they are not aware of these initiatives.

Terminology used for students acquiring English

According to Garcia and Kleifgen (2018), government policies are also the reason that students who are in the process of acquiring English are labeled specifically as "English language learners." These researchers also indicate that some do not care for this terminology due to its emphasis on the need of students to learn English, not the strength and value in acquiring an additional language to go along with the one(s) that the learners already know. Because the term is a government-protected label and the one that is most often used in the literature, it is used throughout this dissertation and in the educator's practice rather than the more positively worded term, "emergent bilingual," although that designation is gaining popularity. When students have the label of "English language learners," their need of learning English is officially recognized by legislation, and government funds can be allocated for their language education needs (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

State and local laws versus federal laws

Contrary to popular belief, states are not able to pass laws that fail to uphold federal law, and public school districts are not able to pass regulations that fail to uphold state or federal law. However, while individual states do not have the authority to break federal law, they may request waivers for implementing certain policies or interpret the federal law in a way that other states do not, such as opting out of Common Core curriculum and placing a similarly-rigorous set of students in place instead (Woods,

2017). When it comes to home language use, states may restrict the use of languages other than English in certain circumstances, but their power does not supersede federal legislation, particularly Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which guarantees ELL students the right to learn course content by using any properly implemented research-based strategies deemed effective, regardless of the teachers' ability to speak languages other than English (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 1991).

For example, in South Carolina state law, English has been designated as the "official state language," but the state law also stipulates that educators are permitted to use languages other than English with the purpose of increasing ELLs' proficiency in English or in a language other than English, and they have been permitted to do this for years, according to item 1-1-698 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina (Crawford, 2008). Additionally, the regulations of an American public school district or county cannot go against federal or state law because as taxpayer supported and government-run entities, they are duty bound to uphold the Constitution (Center for Public Education, 2006). Therefore, an individual school district or school in South Carolina may adopt a particular program or method of instructing ELLs, but that cannot infringe upon a teacher's right to provide home language resources for the purpose of helping students to gain proficiency in the subject area taught and acquisition of the English language.

Educational programs

Besides an understanding of the government-mandated standards and policies regarding ELL students, teachers and other educators should also understand the placement of ELL students.

Difficulty of providing data

Exact information about utilization of each strategy and degree of effectiveness within schools is not currently available due to the rapid increase in the number of ELLs and the autonomy afforded to each educational institution regarding curricular and instructional decisions. The varying school policies and programs have not yet been deeply studied in terms of changing student populations and efficacy of the provided programs (Cohn, 2017; Collier & Thomas, 2017; Goldenberg, 2013). To analyze these policies and programs, ELLs and former ELL students should be monitored throughout their school career, but one reason this consistency of data collection is difficult to acquire is due to the systematic underestimation of ELL subgroup improvement: higher-achieving ELLs reach English proficiency and exit ESOL programs while new students with lower proficiency levels join ESOL programs (Wixom, 2015). Overall, little is known about how the racial, economic, and linguistic change in suburban areas impacts schools even though the U.S. is undergoing a dramatic demographic change (Frankenberg et al., 2016).

Despite the lack of information regarding how effective English learning programs are for different groups of learners, the need remains for ELL educators to understand these programs.

Overview of Programs for ELLs

Garcia and Kleifgen (2018) describe three categories of programs for English language learners: nonrecognition, bilingual, and ESL/ESOL. Nonrecognition programs do not provide any language-based accommodations for ELLs such as English language support courses or home language practices. Differing language needs of the ELL student are not recognized with this approach. This method is not often used in South

Carolina but may happen when a school has a low enrollment of ELLs. The second category, which is on the other end of the spectrum but is also not often used in South Carolina, is the bilingual approach, in which ELLs' home languages are used to teach content area subject matter either to develop their ability in bilingualism and biliteracy or to support their acquisition of English. Approximately three percent of ELL students nationwide have access to a comprehensive bilingual education program (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). The third category, English as a Second Language programs, commonly referred to in South Carolina as English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), is the most widely utilized approach in approach in the state. It provides pull-out courses in which students receive targeted language instruction usually in English or occasionally in the home language. This category includes a nationwide program called the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

The Hunt Institute (2014) offers more information about the ESL program, WIDA, which South Carolina joined in 2013. WIDA provides a broad framework for teaching students in the four areas of language acquisition: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students are expected to achieve specific language benchmarks, but the means of achieving these benchmarks are largely left to each educational institution's discretion. Beyond the general recommendations of WIDA and state policy to align language acquisition standards with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and ESSA, South Carolina school districts or schools may choose to take curricular approaches to teaching ELLs as they wish. These approaches include language instruction education programs (LIEPs) that are English-only or that use the students' home languages in conjunction with English. For schools that provide an English-only

environment, supports are available to students via structured English immersion, sheltered English instruction, specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE), content-based English as a second language (ESL), and pull-out ESL programs. While these programs are officially designated as "English-only," it is imperative to note that educators, no matter how their linguicism can be described, retain the right to provide resources to students in languages other than English for purpose of helping students to understand the English-language content (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). Dual language programs or programs for heritage speakers who want to continue with their home languages are also allowed by law but practiced infrequently (Hunt Institute, 2014).

While exact figures about frequency of models of instruction used or numbers of learners impacted by each model of instruction are currently unreported, what is known is that in suburban and rural areas nationwide, ELLs are far more likely to be separated for English language arts class than for other academic subjects (Frankenberg, Ayscue, & Tyler, 2016). In the cases in which ELL students are placed in an English language arts course with peers who speak English as a first or only language, the level of the course is often remedial and additional support for ELL students is usually provided through an ESOL course (Lowenhaupt, 2016). Regardless of the title or specific elements of language support program chosen to help ELLs acquire English, there are three options available for the placement of ELLs in an ELA course: a separate ELA course open only to ELLs, an integrated ELA course in which native speakers and ELLs are combined, and a dual immersion ELA course in which all learners utilize a second or other language to complete coursework.

Separate ELA class for ELLs. An occasionally-utilized strategy for teaching English language arts to ELLs is the separation of ELL students into their own ELA class. This separation can provide benefits to ELLs by providing focused language acquisition instruction but can also lead to negative outcomes such as marginalization and social isolation (Frankenberg, Ayscue, & Tyler, 2016; Lowenhaupt, 2016). According to Ovander and Collier (1998), pull-out programs for ELLs are also the most expensive and least effective model of all language acquisition programs.

Remedial ELA class combining ELLs and native English speakers. The much more common approach to teaching ELA to ELLs in South Carolina is placing ELLs in remedial-level English language arts courses with native English speakers and providing a separate course of ESOL to ELL students. This method can provide the benefit of inclusion with native English speakers. However, it is not an ideal arrangement for students, either, according to the research of Frankenberg, Ayscue, and Tyler (2016). A large body of research has shown that tracking segregates students, especially within high schools that have a diverse student body (Mickelson, 2001; Welton, 2013). Students in remedial classes often do not understand the link between completing a high school course successfully and enrolling in a post-secondary school (Castro, 2013). Adding to this problem, many lower track classes have a less-experienced teacher and more students per class than is optimal (Frankenberg et al., 2016). When English language learners are placed in technical-prep or remedial English language arts classes, schools are placing those who often have the greatest financial need, the fewest opportunities for academic assistance at home, and the most limited understanding of the English language in large

classes, often with teachers who are the least experienced and most overwhelmed (Burgess-Brigham et al., 2012; Cohn, 2017; Frankenberg et al., 2016; Wixom, 2015).

Challenges to effectively educating ELLs in a remedial ELA course are exacerbated by teachers' confusion over responsibilities and lack of cohesion between content in different courses. Supplementary ESOL courses do not typically incorporate the lessons of English class (McKeon, 1987, as cited by Zinth, 2013), and the limited time frame of an ESOL course, usually between 30-45 minutes, does not often allow sufficient language growth (Duke & Mabbot, 2001, as cited by Zinth, 2013). Additionally, in one recent study, content-area teachers who believed it was primarily the ESOL teacher's job to instruct ELLs took no ownership for ELL student performance. When they did not involve ELLs as participants in the classroom community, the non-ELL students followed the teacher's lead and declined to include students in collaborative assignments (Zinth, 2013). Therefore, in some situations, the additional support provided by the pull-out ESOL course teacher may be undermined or even negated by the lack of support provided by either the teacher or peers in the integrated content area courses.

Dual-immersion. The third category of educating ELLs in an ELA course, dual-immersion, is an option not readily available to many students in my location in South Carolina. Currently, there is only one local option for students to use a second or other language in an academic setting, and it is neither available for high school students nor attainable for many of the area's ELL students. It is a private preschool and kindergarten program housed in a church that aims to produce students who speak Spanish and English (Lowcountry Language Academy, 2018). At this time, there is no public or private elementary, middle, or high school in the area with a comprehensive bilingual education

program to build on the foundation of these preschool and kindergarten students' dual-immersion education. Recently, a tuition-free English-Chinese bilingual charter school serving grades kindergarten through second was opened, but it stayed open for fewer than two months due to the difficulty of complying with regulations regarding accommodations and certified teachers (Bowers, 2018).

The automatic assumption, upon reading this information, might be that the discrepancies between ELL outcomes and the outcomes of their native-English-speaking peers might be solved with an increase in funding to programs and policies. However, Wixom (2015) advises that adequate funding levels by themselves do not lead to improved student performance: states, districts and schools must also strengthen their ELL programs and program capacity with non-monetary-dependent measures such as cultural competency training and ELL instructional methods training, which would include the incorporation of home language texts in an English language arts classroom, might be a better use of existing funding (Wixom, 2015).

Educator preparation

Along with understanding the government policies impacting English language learners and the educational programs offered to these students, it is also essential to understand the background and levels of preparation of the teachers who work with them. It is not easy for educators to provide ELLs with the best supportive measures to enhance their education, embrace their culture, and to help them achieve academic success when most educators are unaware of the best supportive measures, culture, and unique challenges to academic success surrounding ELLs.

Although it has been found that teacher preparation and certification impact student achievement in reading more than any other factor (Darling-Hammond, 1999, as cited in Garcia & Kleifgen, 2017), most teacher education programs do not include a requirement to complete Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) training. As of 2009, fewer than 20% of teacher education programs required a course about ELLs or bilingualism, and fewer than 20% of these allowed teacher candidates exposure to ELLs through a practicum setting (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009). Additionally, it should be noted that of these teacher education programs requiring a course about instruction for ELLs, there is no requirement in any state that potential teachers take a course in both home language content delivery and bilingual methods (Lopez, Scanlan, & Gundrum, 2013).

After college graduation and initial teacher certification, most secondary content-area educators have access to professional development opportunities regarding teaching ELLs. Unfortunately, in many cases, that access is limited. By the time that teachers are certified and working in a classroom with emergent bilinguals, only one in eight of these educators has had more than eight hours of professional development regarding practices or policies of ELLs (Samson & Collins, 2012). Additionally, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2009), only 11% of ELL teachers are certified in bilingual education and only 18% are certified in teaching English as second or other language instruction (TESOL). As stated in the policy section of this literature review, there are specific standards in the four domains of language acquisition for all teachers to address with ELLs, but many content-area classroom teachers lack the specific skills and knowledge needed to bring ELLs to proficiency in the domains (Zinth, 2013).

This lack of training is compounded by other issues of teacher preparation: a lack of understanding of ELLs' various cultural backgrounds and home language, as well as an increased likelihood of changing schools, districts, or professions. While recent research points to the benefits of student exposure to teachers of the same racial, cultural, or ethnic background (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015), according to Crawford and Krashen (2007), only 15% of teachers are able to communicate fluently in a language other than English (LOTE). Also, as of 2011, only 16% of teachers refer to themselves as a race other than white (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Adding to the difficulties of understanding each ELLs' culture or unique circumstances, there is a higher than average turnover rate of teachers and administrators of ELLs (Sanchez, 2017).

Teaching Strategies for ELLs: Home Language Use and Other Interventions

With an increased awareness of teacher preparation levels in instructing ELLs, along with knowledge of programs and policies affecting ELLs and background information about this group, the question remains: how can educators best reach this group? What teaching strategies or interventions can be implemented easily into a classroom, especially considering potential limitations of programming, policies, funding, and teacher training, and what is the research supporting these strategies or interventions? If a teacher would like to use the home languages of ELLs in the classroom, he or she should first determine if this strategy is appropriate, considering the research surrounding the issue and if it is possible, considering the existing circumstances.

Home language use is not the only suitable teaching strategy for ELLs, but it is the chosen intervention for the focus of the research because it is simultaneously the least

utilized of all interventions and the most proven through research to be effective (Goldenberg, 2008). In the following sections, the theoretical framework will explain the placement of home language in the context of U.S. educational ideology and the conceptual framework will demonstrate the need for this specific intervention through over 60 years of peer-reviewed research (Peal & Lambert, 1962; Cummins, 1979; Krashen, 2004). Through recognition of the unique strengths and experiences of ELLs, combined with the challenges in ELL programming, policies, and teacher training, various instructional interventions and the considerations of home language use will be examined in detail.

Theoretical framework: Educational ideology relating to ELLs

The pedagogical theory behind integrating home language texts into English language arts classrooms can be traced to the learner centered approach which began more than 100 years ago from the work of philosophers John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky with their theories of constructivism (Matthews, 2003). With the learner centered movement, the interests, needs, and desires of learners influence the nature of the school program, the content of the curriculum, and to some degree, the governance of the classroom (Schiro, 2013). This does not mean that students have complete freedom to do what they want in a classroom. Rather, they can make choices among several learning alternatives provided by the teacher such as choosing to read a text or conduct research in a home language or in English. Flexibility, concern for the individual students, and joint responsibility are key components of the learner centered theory because the focus in the classroom shifts from how teachers can best teach to how students can best learn (Wohlfarth, Sheras, Bennett, Simon, Pimental, & Gabel, 2008). Although the applications of this theory have recently declined in public schools due to

the increasing emphasis of standardization, social efficiency, and scholarly academic ideologies, research shows that learner centered curriculum is as effective or more effective than other methods utilized, and it continues to be used extensively in affluent communities and private schools (Schiro, 2013).

Strategies for educating English language learners also developed from the social reconstruction ideology, also referred to as social justice, empowerment, praxis, or critical analysis (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). This ideology, which rose to prominence in the 1930s and became the focus of study again in the 1960s with the ground-breaking work published by Paulo Freire, claims that the purpose of education is to facilitate the construction of a new and more just society that offers maximum satisfaction to all members, taking into account that societal measures and past injustices have resulted in racial, gender, economic, and social standing inequality (Schiro, 2013). School reform can result in societal transformation; cooperation is key; shared hope and a shared vision are essential to improving society (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). With this ideology, education is not confined to the four walls of a classroom; it also occurs in the student's community and with the student's family (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). This emerged as educational researchers analyzed issues of choice versus standardization, emancipatory curriculum, and power (Schiro, 2013).

Social reconstruction ideology encompasses the rights of English language learners in terms of their linguistic human rights: language plays a role in power relations, and students have the right to use their own language and to learn the commonly used language of their location. The community also has a right to determine the curriculum presented in area schools (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017). Placing

a student in an English-only classroom environment promotes the loss of the home language and diminishes ELL students' ability to communicate in multiple languages, which could potentially be an asset for future achievement (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010, as cited in Lowenhaupt, 2016). This is an example of subtractive schooling, the marginalization of certain communities or encouragement to abandon home culture or language (Valenzuela, 1999, as cited in Lowenhaupt, 2016).

In line with social reconstructionist theory, academic achievement of ELLs can be supported by additive acculturation through schools' efforts to foster opportunities for social integration, build on cultural or home language resources, and create trust among communities (Lowenhaupt, 2016). The use of home language also supports the positive valuation of home culture (August & Hakuta, 1998; de Jong, 2011; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012) and works to ensure that a classroom is asset-oriented as opposed to deficit-oriented (de Jong, 2011; Hopkins, 2013; Paris, 2012). By acknowledging that students have gained funds of knowledge through their unique experiences rooted in home culture including home language, teachers can help students to find meaning in course content, confidence in their skills, and validation of their personal lives (Bennett, 2019).

Conceptual framework: Research findings regarding home language use

There is an undeniable and growing body of scientific, empirical evidence that the inclusion of home language in curriculum considerably benefits ELLs' overall academic success (Cummins, 2007; Fu, 2009; Gajo, 2007; Lewis, 2009; Li Wei, 2009). Extensive research has found that the many skills and knowledge related to reading from ELL students' first language facilitates the acquisition of reading skills in the second language. There are many teaching strategies that build upon the assets of ELLs besides home

language, but home language has been found to be a vital aspect of most successful programs whether the programs are labeled "bilingual" or not (August & Hakuta, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 2004). While one simple solution or answer to the question of how monolingual teachers in US schools can utilize ELL students' home languages in the classroom does not exist, teachers can and should attempt to try, according to 55 years of carefully constructed, carried out, and documented items of peer-reviewed research (Genesee, 2017).

The seminal work of Peal and Lambert (1962) paved the way for incorporating home language texts into U.S. classrooms. Their work found that bilingualism is an important factor in cognitive development. The bilingual ten-year-old students of their study were found to have better skills in concept formation and greater mental flexibility than the monolingual ten-year-old students of their study. This finding led to many future studies concerning different aspects of cognitive advantages in children who were fluent in two or more languages (Peal & Lambert, 1962).

More pivotal research concerning language acquisition resulted from the work of Cummins (1979, 1981) who found a positive relationship between a student's home language and the acquisition of a second or additional language: this is linguistic interdependence. Cummins also found that knowledge and abilities acquired in one language might be used in the acquisition of another language: this is common underlying proficiency. These findings, too, led to many future studies with similar purposes of examining students' proficiency in home language and its correlation to academic achievement in a second or other language (Cummins, 1979, 1981).

Lambert (1974) added to the field of language acquisition study as well: he found that bilingualism could be either subtractive or additive. The acquisition of English can result in a subtraction of a student's home language in English-only school programs or transitional bilingual education, but if ELLs are given the opportunity to study their home language in addition to English, the result is additive bilingualism, in which ELLs' home languages are valued and supported (Lambert, 1974).

A sufficient amount of research on the topic of home language use led to multiple separate meta-analyses in which researchers examined the available data in detail. In one meta-analysis of the effectiveness of bilingual education, Green (1998) found that students who were taught with utilization of at least some of their home language outperformed peers who were taught in an English-only setting. Krashen (2004) and Cummins (2000) also found that instruction in students' home language supports their acquisition of English while bolstering content knowledge. The meta-analysis of Genesee and Lindholm-Leary (2005) found that systematically incorporating the use of ELLs' home languages lead to better academic outcomes than English-only programs. Additional meta-analyses by August and Shanahan (2006), Greene (1997), Rolstad et al. (2005), Slavin and Cheung (2005), and Willig (1985) reviewed by Goldenberg (2008) came to a similar conclusion: home language use in U.S. classrooms is a valuable resource in helping ELLs to improve reading achievement. Goldenberg made the startling observation in his review that he is familiar with no other area of educational research that can find as many meta-analyses based on experimental studies that come to the same conclusion. Therefore, the evidence is very strong that the use of a student's

home language for academic tasks can promote reading achievement in English (Goldenberg, 2008).

Despite this strong evidence for home language use in the classroom, it is necessary to point out that one barrier to utilizing home language texts in a secondary ELA classroom may be the ELLs' proficiency in literacy of home language. While exact figures are unknown, an estimated 39 percent of ELLs have below grade level-proficiency in literacy in their home language (Zehler et al., 2008). Consequently, the transfer of language arts skills between the home language and English might not be entirely possible for all ELLs if the language arts skills in the home language are not sufficient to the academic tasks at hand in an English language arts classroom. This may be one of the reasons that only 25% of teachers in U.S. schools report that they use a different textbook or any other home language resource for ELLs (Parrish et al., 2002). Efforts to encourage teachers to use this method might be more successful if specific home language instructional strategies were examined.

Instructional Strategies

To use home language in a classroom, teachers do not need knowledge of the students' home language to bring ELLs to proficiency in the four domains of language acquisition which are speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Zinth, 2013). While its use in texts and other materials is encouraged, instructors do not need to have the ability to understand or use a student's home language in order to promote its use among ELL students, and it is important to situate home language use among other instructional strategies that have been found to be helpful. In other words, home language use is not a magic answer to solve the problem of an achievement gap between ELLs and their

monolingual peers; instead, it is one strategy that can and should be used in conjunction with many others to promote successful academic outcomes (Brogadier & Stuft, 2011; Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018).

Echevarria, Frey, and Fisher (2015) identify four effective areas of practice to improve achievement levels of ELLs. The authors state that the core curriculum should be comprehensive. Utilizing differentiated instruction, modeling techniques, language supports, vocabulary development strategies, collaborative conversations, and visual representations may assist teachers in providing this. Educators should promote a positive school and classroom climate by developing positive student-teacher relationships, showing respect for the culture and ethnicities of ELLs, utilizing home language or allowing students to utilize home language as much as possible, avoiding sarcasm, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with students. Explicit, focused instruction in academic English, such as genre knowledge, literacy skills besides vocabulary, grammar, and oral language is another effective area of practice (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Also, teachers should maintain high expectations for students. Students' aspirations should be fostered, daily goals and objectives should be appropriate for the grade level, expectations should be clear, easier vocabulary should be provided in addition to (rather than in place of) more difficult vocabulary, and the same opportunities should be provided to all students (Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015).

Brogadier and Stuft (2011) provide suggestions for administrators to better facilitate the instruction of ELLs in urban areas, regardless of teachers' ability to speak students' home languages. To show ELLs that they are valued members of the

educational community and to emphasize achievement of academic goals, educators can do the following:

- reflect high expectations for ELL students,
- have and show a sincere desire for ELL students to achieve success,
- involve parents,
- provide opportunities for other educators to better understand the background issues that may impact ELLs,
- stress functional communication as opposed to flawless communication with ELLs,
- organize academic content and basic skills instruction into integrated thematic units,
- support literacy and language skills in ELL students' home language,
- provide staff development about effective ELL instruction for all teachers, not just ESOL teachers,
- encourage the use of common visual language, and
- develop a connection with ELLs' cultures and families by using culturally linked teaching methods and curriculum (Brogadier & Stuft, 2011).

Frankenberg, Ayscue, and Tyler's (2016) study of high schools provides educators with strategies to provide access to better outcomes and awareness of barriers preventing access to better outcomes. High schools focused on ways to provide access to better outcomes such as college preparation information for diverse students by implementing structural reforms or disseminating information more effectively (Frankenberg et al., 2016). Specific changes that are possible to implement on the

classroom level may include ideas such as providing college preparation materials to students and parents that are written in the home language or allowing ELL students to conduct research on career or college topics in the home language.

The lack of motivation in reaching high readability levels for some ELL students may be related to educators' failure to be aware of differing cultural needs; content and curriculum in US schools have historically accommodated European learning styles and culture (Rustrian, 2018). Therefore, it may be helpful to consider what each ELL's language background is and try to incorporate it into the curriculum for all students. Examples of incorporating culture into a high school ELA classroom include the following: moderating class discussions of cognates, which are words that sound and mean the same in both languages (Genesee, 2017), asking students to translate pieces of news written in a home language and also reported upon in English and reflecting upon the different messages conveyed and reasons for those differences (Cummins, 2007), interviewing family members in a home language and then sharing the findings in English (Garcia, Flores, & Chu, 2011), and sharing folk tales, poems, or traditional pieces of literature with all students that are provided in home languages and English (Helot, 2006, as cited in Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

These teaching modifications are just a small sampling of the instructional strategies that can be presented in an ELL student's home language; due to the fluid nature of language and the skills addressed in the ELA standards, almost all can be adjusted to an ELL's home language (South Carolina State Department of Education, 2015; Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016).

Summary

Most teachers have had limited opportunities to learn appropriate, research-based language acquisition instructional methodology to assist the growing and diverse population of English language learners (Samson & Collins, 2012; Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). Similarly, as a high school ELA teacher, I have had equally limited opportunities and would like to learn more to improve classroom practice and to ensure that all students are able to utilize all tools available to achieve academic success. One of the instructional methodology components, using ELL students' home language to study texts and conduct research in a high school English language arts classroom, has been evaluated and shown to be effective in multiple meta-analyses (Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018). Reasons that home language use is not often utilized in American public schools are numerous: a heterogenous student body speaking a wide variety of languages at home (Zinth, 2013) coupled with a mostly homogenous teacher body speaking only English (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The difficulty of placing ELLs in developmentally-appropriate courses, evaluating and tracking their progress over the years, providing rigorous, culturally-responsive, differentiated instruction; and providing adequate training and resources to instructors regarding the best practices for teaching ELLs (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). These barriers do not have a simple solution (Goldenberg, 2013), and home language use in itself might not be sufficient to eradicate a gap in average level of achievement between ELLs and their non-ELL peers (US Department of Education, 2015). However, I am eager to determine how English language arts teachers respond to these barriers to successfully integrate home language texts in an English language arts classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Overview of Study

English language learners (ELLs), a diverse and increasing segment of the American high school student body, deserve appropriate, research-based instructional interventions to ensure their success in all educational settings, including secondary English language arts (ELA) class (Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015; Samson & Collins, 2012). One of the instructional interventions, using ELL students' home language to study texts and conduct research in a secondary ELA classroom, has been evaluated and shown to be effective in multiple meta-analyses, but more qualitative research is needed to determine how this intervention can be implemented successfully (Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018). The potential barriers to including home language texts in ELA curriculum are numerous and do not have a simple solution (Goldenberg, 2013), but it is of interest to determine how English language arts teachers respond to these barriers to successfully integrate home language texts in their ELA classrooms.

Research questions to examine this problem of practice are as follows:

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high-quality home language resources for their ELL students?
2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?

3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

Research Design and Intervention

To address these research questions, a qualitative phenomenological study to be carried out as action research was designed (Creswell, 2012; Mertler, 2017; Moustakas, 1994; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). With this method of research, an attempt is made to understand perceptions regarding a particular phenomenon through data collection measures which can include conversations, focus meetings, lengthy interviews, observations, or artifact viewing (Giorgi, 2012). This type of design was the most appropriate fit for my research questions because it allowed objective data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews from multiple other professionals who use home language texts in differing capacities in a variety of secondary ELA classroom settings (Mertler, 2017). A phenomenological study could yield useful information through multiple perspectives: other teachers can offer insight into the varying levels of support, background knowledge, curricular demands, and student populations that make their home language text interventions successful or unsuccessful, from which patterns may emerge to be studied more closely (Blichfieldt & Anderson, 2006; Mertler, 2017).

Acting as an uninvolved observer engaged in phenomenological research, the aim of my data collection was to gather information that was as objective as possible and not marred by subjective participatory limitations (Mertler, 2017). The purpose of this study as action research was to help me make better-informed decisions regarding home language text use in my own secondary ELA classroom, not to yield results that are

applicable or generalizable to every secondary ELA classroom, although they may be helpful to some as circumstantial evidence (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

To address the problem of practice, I followed the steps traditionally associated with phenomenological research study (Moustakas, 1994). First, I reflected upon my own beliefs and experiences associated with ELLs and home language text use and then put these beliefs to the side; this practice of suspending judgment is referred to as epoch or bracketing. Next, I immersed myself in the phenomenon by arranging interviews with multiple secondary ELA and ESOL teachers in various secondary settings who currently modify or have modified some instruction for their ELL students to include the use of home language texts. Through qualitative data collection methodology of semi-structured interviews conducted through e-mail or phone calls (Cresswell, 2012; Grand Canyon University, 2019; Mertler, 2017), I gained information about participants' experiences with home language text integration in high school ELA classrooms; this step of the process is known as intuition. In the next step of the research, the analysis phase, the initial data recorded was gathered and examined closely to identify themes which were coded by subject and used to describe the overall experiences of the professionals who have used the intervention of home language texts (Mertler, 2017; Grand Canyon University, 2019). Approximately eight weeks were needed to gather a sufficient amount of data for the purposes of the study. All data was formally analyzed through reflection on positionality and external auditing through member checks and peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the last step of phenomenological research, the description phase, findings of the study were written to be shared in chapters four and five of this dissertation.

The success of this qualitative action research phenomenological study was dependent upon several variables related to participation. The first consideration was that I chose to study an education intervention that is not used by most ELA teachers (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015); therefore, finding enough participants who have experience with the phenomenon of home language text use was challenging. Upon finding members of the target population, secondary ELA teachers who teach ELLs using home language texts, my placement as an uninvolved researcher may have made it more difficult to garner trust. Although several local school districts reviewed my study protocol and graciously allowed me to work with their teachers, some teachers may have felt reticent to participate because they did not know me personally and therefore could not trust that my intentions in gathering data were altruistic. This concern was probably even stronger when I solicited participation via social media groups: members of the target population could ask questions about my research or read the information concerning the Institutional Review Board process and the aims of my study, but there was no easy way to confirm that my social media profile was legitimate and that my request was valid. Additionally, the time of year was a concern: despite some teachers' interest in participating in the study, finding time to do so may have been an issue for some. Because participation in a research study is considered a non-instructional task, participants needed to be able to be interviewed in their own free time outside of school hours, which for secondary teachers in the fourth quarter of the school year is often limited.

To solve the problem of finding enough participants who met the target population criteria, re-evaluating my research questions and goals of the study became

necessary. Initially, I had planned to interview only secondary ELA teachers from the three local school districts who currently use home languages in their classrooms. These teachers would most likely be the most accessible candidates for conducting in-person interviews. Additionally, their educational settings might be the closest match to my former and future educational setting as a fellow secondary ELA teacher working in South Carolina. These teachers would be located and asked to participate after obtaining the permission from each local school district research request liaison or committee, each principal of local high schools who serve multiple ELL students, each ELA department chair of these schools, and then, finally, every ELA teacher who taught ELL students using home languages and wished to participate.

However, after talking informally about the project aims with many other secondary educators in the area and then beginning the necessary steps to secure permissions from participants, it became clear that widening the target population criteria would be the best choice for increasing the amount of qualitative data available to me while still adhering to the original aims of the project (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). I decided to solicit the help of teachers outside of South Carolina in addition to teachers within because the experiences of ELA teachers who use home language materials did not seem dependent upon geographic location. To rule out this possibility of discrepancies due to location, participants would be asked questions about this, especially concerning funding, state law, proscribed curriculum, and community support available. Another way to widen the target member criteria was to consider participants who acted in a support role to ELA teachers: the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers. In the initial interviews with ELA teachers, it became clear that ESL teachers often served

as a valuable resource in helping to locate home language resources and to facilitate their use. ESL teachers' primary instructional objectives are to help students in their acquisition of speaking, listening, writing, and reading English (Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016), but they often seem to take responsibility for the success of ELL students in the content area classes, including providing home language resources or helping students with these materials (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). By including interview questions based on ESL teachers' teaching environment, personal background, and opinions of content area home language use, I could gain information about home language experiences while simultaneously considering how their positionality might affect their responses. Also, the research questions did not depend heavily on the timeframe of using home language resources; whether a teacher was currently using these materials or had used them in the recent past, their experiences were valid. For that reason, I widened the search of participants to include those who had recently used home language in a high school ELA setting even if they did have current opportunity to do so. These decisions entailed the subsequent decision to remove observations as a form of data collection, but with the wealth of data I hoped to get from this wider participant pool, it seemed like a valid choice.

After going to extensive measures to reach local and national teachers of the target population, I had to consider ways of gaining their trust. Most of the local teachers and administrators with whom I had contact were supportive, helpful, and wonderful to work with; they seemed to trust in the research committee's decision to approve my research initiative and expressed interest in the project without ever meeting me in person or asking for additional information to verify the legitimacy of my request. Others

volunteered to participate because mutual friends had explained the aims of the project and trust was gained through them. I tried to increase trust by being open and available; I aimed to reply quickly to e-mails, to offer to meet in person with participants, to supply answers to any questions, and to make sure that my gratitude was evident in every communication.

For national participants, trust was harder to establish. I joined multiple social media groups for ELA teachers and ESL teachers and reached out to those who had previously posted in the forum about using home language. I provided information about the study to these candidates, including contact information for others involved in the research approval process, before they asked explicitly for it, and followed up with the answers to any questions they had about it. I had originally offered a thank-you gift for participation through the Facebook Pay feature, but then offered to pay through other applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Google Pay because those are more commonly utilized (and perhaps seen as more trustworthy). Meeting in person with national participants was not an option, but I offered to chat with them via telephone or video call so that my identity could be confirmed to an extent.

Despite these attempts to increase transparency, I should acknowledge that this study would not have happened and my attempts to gain trust from local participants would have failed without the time and consideration of those who approved my research request or vouched for my character, and I will be grateful always. For all participants positioned locally or nationally, without a genuine desire to help others in agreeing to participate in a research study with a stranger and a certain amount of innate trust not dependent on my actions, my research attempt would never have succeeded. For these 14

dedicated volunteers and the educators behind them who helped to facilitate this process, I am very thankful.

A qualitative phenomenological action research study examines a single problem of practice explained by multiple participants who have experience in this area (Mertler, 2017). In this study, the participants were 14 secondary ELA and/or ESL teachers who have taught at least one ELL in which the home language of that student was at least partially integrated into the curriculum. Participants' statements that include identifying features of the school setting, classroom, or individuals in the classroom have been omitted to protect participants' confidentiality. Acting as an uninvolved researcher wishing to learn from other educators to improve learning experiences of my own students, I collaborated with ELA and ESL teachers using home language texts in their curriculum who were willing to be interviewed and with other educators who were willing to peer review the study to find flaws or confirm the credibility of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants

Desired participants of this study were a representative sample of 14 secondary ELA and/or ESL teachers who incorporated home language texts for ELLs into their curriculum. The target population must be adequately represented in the accessible sample of teachers to address the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) so I carried out this research by working with secondary ELA or ESL teachers in the United States who teach or have taught ELL students by utilizing home language texts.

Secondary ELA and ESL teachers might be more familiar with the specific aims and standards of the ELA course content than other content-area secondary teachers, and

teachers working in the United States are held to the same federal laws regarding home language use and national curriculum standards in the classroom to which I would also be held. Federal policy protects the rights of students in all 50 states to learn with home language when the purpose is to strengthen their knowledge of English. ELA standards differ from English language proficiency standards, but ELA teachers are responsible for teaching both to students, so it seemed that the study results would be more valuable if the data was collected from those who worked in ELA classrooms in a capacity as either an ELA or ESOL teacher.

Because each ELA teacher's curriculum, group of learners, and school setting differs from others, the conditions can never be replicated exactly. Therefore, I aimed to study more than one setting to get a more generalized overview of the context to be studied. However, because each participant's experiences should be studied intensively, the number of participants were few enough that I had adequate opportunity to learn about and analyze each in detail (Trochim, 2006); for this reason, I chose to include between ten and fifteen participants in the research, recruited 30 educators with an interview request, responded affirmatively to the 23 who agreed to be interviewed, and kept the initial interview window open for eight weeks, at which time 14 participants had begun and completed the interview process. The nine potential candidates who did not get interviewed during this time were sent a single e-mailed reminder, but I did not want to risk losing their trust by being too aggressive in my efforts to secure their help for a voluntary project.

A questionnaire was given to prospective participants to determine eligibility in the study (see Appendix Item A for the eligibility questionnaire). The purpose of this

study was to interview teachers whose experiences with home language could easily transfer to other secondary ELA teachers, including me, who wish to incorporate home language texts. Only participants who currently teach or have taught or assisted with the curriculum of ELA and incorporated home language texts in the lesson plans were considered for inclusion in this study. To mirror conditions in my own classroom and those that are typical in U.S. schools, these participants would ideally either be or work with ELA teachers who speak only one language, English, fluently (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006) and who have a class roster containing some ELL students from a wide variety of backgrounds and/or home languages spoken (Zinth, 2013). Because 89% of teachers of ELLs are not certified in bilingual education and 82% are not certified in TESOL instruction (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009), the ideal participants would either be or assist ELA teachers also lacking these certifications; the purpose of the study is to see how it is possible for any ELA teacher who lacks fluency in a second language or certifications outside of the ELA content area can successfully implement the teaching accommodation of using home languages.

As the data collection phase of this research progressed, I widened criteria for study inclusion because I was not getting much diversity in experiences with home language; despite vastly different teaching contexts, I heard the same information from candidates who did not know each other. This is explained in more detail in chapter four of this dissertation. For that reason, I widened the scope of participants yet again to include a few ELA teachers who either held an endorsement or certification in teaching ESOL and who spoke more than one language at a conversational or higher level (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

Participants of this study were not limited to those living in South Carolina because the South Carolina State Standards for College and Career Readiness in English language arts are almost identical to the Common Core State Standards adopted by most other states. Additionally, the state legislation in South Carolina for ELLs follows the federal guidelines to which other states are also held (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012; Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016).

Each of the 14 participants teach in a secondary educational setting unique to the others. Of these 14, six teach in schools in my home state of South Carolina and the other eight are spread out from the Southwest to the Northeast of the United States. Five participants are certified to teach ELA only, five are certified to teach ESOL courses only, and four are certified to teach ELA but also possess an ESOL endorsement or certification. All teachers interviewed felt that they were given freedom in designing and implementing ELA curriculum, provided that the standards are taught and, in some cases, that certain pieces of literature were taught. These teachers ranged in their years of experience in a classroom, with one being a first-year teacher, four having fewer than five years of experience in the classroom, and the others having between eight and 19 years of experience teaching.

Table 3.1: Background Data of Participants

ID	Location	Certification	Years of Teaching Experience	Freedom to Choose ELA Curriculum
A	Middle school in Utah	Both	3	Yes
B	Middle school in North Carolina	ESL	3	Yes
C	Middle school in Pennsylvania	ESL	18	Yes
D	K-12 school in Texas	Both	1	Yes

E	High school in Georgia	Both	9	Yes
F	K-12 school in Louisiana	ESL	19	Some: literature includes mandatory grade level texts
G	High school in suburban South Carolina	ELA	9	Yes
H	High school in rural South Carolina	ELA	10	Some: literature includes mandatory grade level texts
I	Middle school in urban SC	ELA	8	Yes, but encouraged to use specific curriculum program
J	K-12 school in Massachusetts	ESL	8	Yes
K	High school near state capital of South Carolina	ELA	10	Yes
L	High school in suburban SC with large ELL population	ELA	8	Yes
M	High school in Illinois	ELA with ESL endorsement	3	Some: literature includes mandatory grade level texts
N	High school in rural South Carolina	ELA	2.5	Some: literature includes mandatory grade level texts

Language ability and levels of cultural exposure varied across contexts. Every teacher interviewed speaks English fluently; four teachers are also proficient in Spanish, one teacher is also proficient in Spanish and French, one teacher is proficient in German, and one teacher is also proficient in Greek. Twelve of the teachers interviewed have traveled or lived in countries where English is not the first language, one has a family member who is from a country where English is not the first language, and one has limited personal experience with other cultures, but finds this topic interesting. 13 out of

the 14 participants either use home language resources in their ELA classrooms or assist students with their ELA work by using home language resources.

The one participant who does not use home language resources in any capacity but who expressed interest in being interviewed, Teacher E, has been included as an outlier to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Teacher E initially agreed to be interviewed with the understanding that she had used home languages in the past, but her interview data provided did not support this. However, her experiences in the classroom have been deemed as worthy of inclusion in this phenomenological study because as the outlier to this phenomena, she provides a point of view held by the majority of ELA teachers (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015) that other participants who were interviewed have encountered in their own settings.

Table 3.2: Participants' Cultural and Language Experiences

ID	Knowledge of Languages Besides English	Experiences with Other Cultures	Home Language Used in ELA Curriculum?
A	Some sign language and small amount of Spanish	Family member from a country where English is not the primary language	Yes
B	Some Spanish	From culturally diverse area, traveled to Italy and across USA	Yes: small amount
C	Spanish	Extensively traveled and studied in Spanish-speaking countries	Yes
D	Spanish	Extensively traveled and studied in Spanish-speaking countries	Yes
E	Limited	No experience, but interested in learning more	No
F	French and Spanish	From culturally diverse area, extensively traveled, studied, and lived in Spanish- and French-speaking countries	Yes
G	Limited	Lived in culturally diverse area of US, traveled to European-languages countries, and close friends from a country where English is not the primary language	Yes

H	Limited	Traveled to European-languages countries	Yes
I	Some Spanish	Lived in Italian-speaking country and culturally diverse area of US	Yes
J	Some Spanish, some Italian	Extensive travel	Yes
K	Intermediate Spanish	Lived in Spanish-speaking country	Yes
L	Spanish	Lives in culturally diverse area of US and some travel	Yes
M	Greek	Traveled to European-languages countries and has family members who live in Europe	Yes: small amount
N	German	Lived in German-speaking country	Yes

Participants' experiences and opinions are described in more detail in chapter four of this dissertation.

Data Collection Measures, Instruments, and Tools

The qualitative data for this action research phenomenological study was gathered through multiple interviews of each participant. These measures were developed based on recent literature describing qualitative data collection protocol (Blichtfeldt & Anderson, 2006; Mertler, 2017; Trochim, 2006). A brief e-mailed questionnaire (see Appendix Item A for e-mailed questionnaire) and extensive semi-structured interview (see Appendix Item B for interview questions) preceded brief follow-up interviews to gain clarity about specific details and to reflect upon shared points of discussion, or themes, that needed elaboration (see Appendix Item C for list of themes).

The initial vetting process to determine if a prospective participant was in the target population of the sample was conducted through a brief questionnaire, an e-mailed, open-ended survey (see Appendix Item A for the questionnaire). This format is not an ideal method of observing the quality of response, including the participant's enthusiasm for the task at hand or any body language or gestures that may be evident (Trochim,

2006). However, with a potentially large pool of applicants operating within the confines of demanding teaching schedules, e-mail was considered to be the mode of communication that is the most convenient for them and the easiest for the researcher to compare basic qualifications to determine case study eligibility (Mertler, 2017).

After candidates were identified, they were interviewed through e-mail, video call, or phone call to determine more information about their use of ELLs' home languages in their ELA classes. Responses were recorded immediately in the form of typed notes; audio or video responses can provide a more detailed and accurate record, but may compromise candidness (Creswell, 2013). Candidates were encouraged to respond using techniques of asking for elaboration, asking for clarification, probing silently, and offering overt encouragement (Trochim, 2006). An essential component of the interview was my expression of sincere thanks for their participation in the study and their commitment to teaching secondary students. See Appendix Item B for a list of initial interview questions.

Immediately following the initial interview, I recorded notes, such as the respondent's emotional response to a particular question or follow-up questions to ask in the future. I strove to provide a factual, descriptive, unbiased account of the participants' words and an emphasis on connecting the material to the theoretical constructs in place with the goal of presenting findings that are applicable to my own setting and to the community (Mertler, 2017). In the course of conducting interviews, there were some items from the portions of interviews that needed additional clarification or elaboration. These additional interview questions were asked to individual participants through an

additional e-mail request (Moustakas, 1994) and recorded directly on the initial interview notes page (Creswell, 2013).

After data was collected and analyzed for common themes, participants were interviewed again to provide them with an opportunity to comment or reflect upon these themes. See Appendix Item C for the list of themes found in the original interview transcripts analysis and provided to participants. The responses to these themes were carefully analyzed and combined with other existing data from participants and from published research (Creswell, 2013) to create a revised set of themes which are presented in chapter four of this dissertation.

Research Procedure

This qualitative phenomenological study described by Mertler (2017) relied on data collected through the initial eligibility questionnaire followed by a semi-structured interview for subsequent decisions about data collection to be made. After those preliminary data collection measures took place, the study became more focused on refining and answering specific research questions based on the emerging patterns or themes made visible. The steps of this process were to collect the initial data, examine it for commonalities across settings or specific phenomena of interest, continue to collect data, choose themes or patterns to describe and explain in detail, work with the data further including the use of triangulation to ensure accuracy of transcription through member checks, peer auditing, and positionality, and then summarize the most relevant findings (Mertler, 2017). After these steps took place, the findings were peer-reviewed through an audit trail and member checks to ensure their credibility and trustworthiness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Future researchers who wish to replicate the study should be

aware that it is not possible to fully recreate the conditions found in qualitative research due to the inability for reality to ever be recreated and for that reality to ever be recorded exactly as it happens (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), but it may be of interest to other researchers to try.

The timeline and exact structure of the data collection were open-ended and could have been adjusted, depending on the amount and quality of information gathered. Locating participants and collecting data took eight weeks. This timeline and structure depended on a variety of factors related to observed behaviors; the study was over when sufficient data had been collected and analyzed to formulate answers to the research questions (Mertler, 2017). It is important to note that issues of transferability, credibility, and dependability of the findings cannot be well-established without sufficient data collection and auditing. Readers of the qualitative study should have a clear, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied, all complexities of the data should be considered and incorporated by the researcher, and an understanding of each teacher's classroom context should be fully provided (Mertler, 2017). For my study, the exact timing of each interview varied due to considerations of the teacher's schedule, such as holiday breaks and scheduled testing days. Thirteen of the participants chose to type and e-mail original questions, and I followed up with additional questions asked through e-mail or phone call. One participant chose to be interviewed completely by phone call. Because these interactions took place at each teacher's convenience, data collection began in March and concluded in May of 2019, with the majority of initial interviews collected during the week of spring break.

Initial research questions were open-ended. According to multiple authors who have written about the steps of qualitative research, the questions could be adjusted as needed (Blichfieldt & Anderson, 2006; Mertler, 2017; Trochim, 2006). I chose not to adjust the initial interview questions, but I did add new questions specific to elaboration or clarification of items originally asked. Qualitative research, including phenomenological studies, can be analogized as a funnel: broad avenues for collecting data are initially explored, and then the area of research narrows as more data is collected and a specific focus for the study emerges. Research questions may then be refined to reflect the new focus of study (Mertler, 2017). After analyzing the responses of the 14 participants, multiple themes became apparent due to the convergent data sources of participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Using the strategies of checking the accuracy of findings described by Creswell (2013), I followed up with the participants to share these themes and provide them with an opportunity for self-reflection. These responses were analyzed and refined through triangulation with original interview data and published, peer-reviewed literature (Creswell, 2013).

The target population of this study was located through strategies such as soliciting local school district approval, joining social media groups for ELA and ESOL teachers, and through personal networking. This process is purposeful sample selection (Grand Canyon University, 2019). Candidates for the study who fit the research criteria according to the initial e-mailed survey were contacted to arrange an interview in any format with which they were most comfortable and provided research information, including interview questions, so that they could make an informed choice about participation. I aimed to find 15 participants of the target population in order to provide a

variety of background experiences related to the phenomenon while still being able to provide detailed information of each context (Mertler, 2017). However, teacher participation is difficult to obtain in the fourth quarter of school, so I recruited 30 participants, of whom 23 agreed to be interviewed, and 14 followed through with the interview within 50 days of being asked. Following each interview, I contacted each participant again to ask questions for clarification or to ensure accuracy of transcribed conversations. This procedure was repeated until an extensive body of data was gathered from multiple respondents so that patterns would emerge, research questions would be answered, and a better understanding of this phenomenon was reached (Creswell, 2013). My tentative goals of the study were to examine how ELA teachers feel that home language resources improve their instruction, students' progress, and students' inclusion, as well as what choices teachers make when integrating home language texts, but these areas of study narrowed as the study progressed (Mertler, 2017). After an attempt was made to study patterns and formulate answers to the research questions, the data was peer-reviewed by another educational professional, checked by members, and self-reflected upon to ensure reliability and credibility.

One consideration in gathering high quality data was the participants' ability to find time to be interviewed. The fourth quarter of the school year is often busier than the others for a variety of reasons, including the administration of standardized tests (South Carolina Department of Education, 2019). Originally, I planned to conduct each interview in person, if possible, and through video or phone call if an in-person interview was not possible. However, to fit better with teachers' schedules, I decided to allow the flexibility of e-mailed interview questions. Because participants could view and consider

the interview questions before they provided answers and e-mailed responses could decrease the likelihood that I might mis-transcribe or misconstrue the data (Creswell, 2013; Mertler, 2017), this seemed like the best fit for teachers and the goals of the study. I also resolved to be available to candidates whenever their schedules permitted, resulting in occasional correspondence that took place despite a three-hour time difference or scheduled interviews that interfered with vacation plans. Some potential study candidates expressed interest in being interviewed but were unable to make the time to be interviewed. This is understandable and to make up for this problem, I recruited more participants than needed; about 23 candidates agreed to be interviewed, and of these, I was able to collect a significant amount of data for the study from 14 candidates.

After making these considerations regarding participants and collecting qualitative data, the information was analyzed carefully using multiple measures to ensure the credibility and reliability of findings, including reflection of positionality, triangulation of data, and external auditing through member checks and peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I appreciate the teachers who chose to become involved in this study and respect the right to their privacy. As such, their identities have been protected by using a system of name changing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each teacher involved in this study was randomly assigned a letter of the alphabet to be referred to as, such as "Teacher A" or "Teacher B." All data from each teacher was then recorded with a notation of that letter instead of the teacher's name. The notation of the teachers' names with corresponding letter of the alphabet were kept in a notebook and locked in a home office. The necessary correspondence using a real name that occurred through e-mail or social media contact

was stored in a password-protected e-mail file and password protected social media account which were accessed on a password-protected computer. All other documents, either printed from the computer or stored on a password-protected computer, were marked by alphabet code, not by name or other identifying information. Because the research questions pertain to teachers' perceptions of home language text integration and the researcher did not have contact with students, it was not necessary to devise a system of providing confidentiality for students; their identities remained anonymous to me. Additionally, identifying names and details of schools were removed from interview notes. At the conclusion of each interview, participants received a small thank-you gift in appreciation of their time and effort. These thank-you gifts were delivered to local participants in a sealed envelope to keep their participation unknown to coworkers. For distance teachers, thank-you gifts were delivered through private transactions such as PayPal, Facebook Pay, Google Pay, and Venmo.

Treatment, Processing, and Analysis of Data

After collecting extensive pieces of interview data from the 14 participants, I realized that despite a wide variety of educator backgrounds and settings, teachers were sharing very similar experiences. More information about these commonalities are included in chapter four of the dissertation. With similar experiences being shared repeatedly, it seemed that the logical time had come to stop the search for more participants and to begin coding the data in a process described by Creswell (2013). To analyze the data collected, first I made a spreadsheet that included the 14 participants and 11 initial interview questions of interest. I read through the participants' interviews and summarized their answers to the 11 questions of the spreadsheet. After examining these

important 11 interview questions and their answers, I typed my initial observations about commonalities between the participants' answers. Then, I read through the 14 participants' interviews again, and added themes to the typed list as they became apparent. Next, the research questions of the project were examined, and themes were matched to the research questions and grouped together where appropriate. These themes were shared with participants in an additional interview so that participants would have a chance to reflect upon them and share additional insights about each (Creswell, 2013). These reflections were triangulated against statements from earlier interviews and from published research to create a revised set of themes. Finally, participants' words from their interviews were matched to the themes and recorded in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), qualitative data is recorded through the subjective eyes of an observer, and events cannot be measured without simultaneously altering those events to some degree. Therefore, a researcher must instead focus on the likelihood, or credibility, of findings. By using a variety of methods to analyze data, I hope to provide multiple examples of credibility and trustworthiness, rendering the findings of this study useful to my own practice and potentially to others' practices as well.

Quality measures of a qualitative study were determined partially by placing information gained outside of the context in which it was gathered. One way to do this was through triangulation, the use of multiple methods and data sources to confirm findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data gathered from an individual interview was considered along with data from other participants' interviews, data from previous interviews with that participant, and literature available on the topic of educating ELLs

using home language texts. Additionally, the researcher's position was triangulated (Creswell, 2013); I reflected upon my own opinions or worldviews, especially those concerning my own preferred style of teaching ELA or experiences teaching ELLs, along with the interview questions and consideration given to interview responses to ensure that my positionality did not influence the type of interview questions asked or weight given to certain responses.

Other educators provided significant help with data analysis as well. Member checks, or soliciting feedback about the preliminary findings from the study participants, was conducted as part of the post-observation interview questions; instead of relying on my own potentially biased interpretation of words that were spoken or the meaning intended behind the words, I asked those directly involved in the interview for clarification (Creswell, 2013). Peer review took place at the conclusion of the study; another educational professional examined the study for flaws to confirm credibility. Qualitative data cannot be replicated with the same conditions, but peers could review an audit trail, a detailed description of data collection methods, category derivation, and a record of the decision-making progress (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Summary

This action research qualitative phenomenological study was designed to address the following questions:

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high-quality home language resources for their ELL students?
2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?

3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

A qualitative phenomenological research study was deemed as the most appropriate fit for the research questions because it allowed the researcher to attempt unobtrusive, objective data collection from secondary teachers who have experience with home language text inclusion. These educators offered insight into the varying levels of support, background knowledge, curricular demands, and student populations that make their home language text interventions successful, for which patterns emerged to be studied more closely (Blichfieldt & Anderson, 2006; Mertler, 2017). As an uninvolved observer, I aimed to collect data from multiple teachers who report utilizing home language texts in a secondary ELA classroom. The study's purpose is to help the me make better decisions regarding home language text use in my own high school ELA classroom and to potentially help other readers to make better decisions, also, but the purpose is not to yield results that are applicable or generalizable to every high school ELA classroom (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The problem of practice was addressed through eight weeks of qualitative data collection in the form of interviews. This data was gathered and examined for the identification of patterns or themes. All data was formally analyzed and externally audited; findings are reported in chapters four and five of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview of Study

All students enrolled in a high school English language arts (ELA) course, including English language learners (ELLs), deserve access to appropriate, research-based instructional interventions that will allow them to be successful in meeting the goals of the course (Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015; Samson & Collins, 2012). One teaching strategy to help ELL students to gain ELA course content knowledge, the use of ELLs' home language, has been evaluated in multiple meta-analyses and found to be effective. However, due to limited implementation, additional qualitative research is needed to determine how this strategy can be most successfully implemented (Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018).

To better understand how secondary ELA teachers are able to successfully implement this strategy, a qualitative phenomenological action research study (Creswell, 2013; Mertler, 2017; Moustakas, 1994; Starks & Trinidad, 2007) was designed to address these research questions:

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high-quality home language resources for their ELL students?
2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?
3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

Intervention/Strategy

The qualitative phenomenological design allowed objective data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews from 14 members of the target population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) who use home language texts in differing capacities in a variety of secondary ELA classroom settings. Useful information was gained through multiple perspectives: other teachers offered insight into the varying levels of support, background knowledge, curricular demands, and student populations that have made their home language text interventions successful or unsuccessful; consequently, patterns emerged to be studied more closely (Blichfieldt & Anderson, 2006; Mertler, 2017). The purpose of this study as action research was to help me make better-informed decisions regarding home language text use in my own secondary ELA classroom. Although the results are not intended to be applicable or generalizable to every secondary ELA classroom, they may be helpful to some as circumstantial evidence (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

With this eight-week qualitative study, I followed the steps traditionally associated with phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013; Grand Canyon University, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertler, 2017; Moustakas, 1994). The first step is bracketing, in which I put aside my own beliefs or experiences to approach this topic as objectively as possible. The next steps were immersion and intuition, in which the phenomenon was studied deeply through interviews with those who have experience with it and follow-up questions were asked. Analysis, the next step, involved studying the participants' recorded words carefully to identify common themes. These themes were described in the final step of the process, the description phase.

General Findings

Thirteen themes were identified through the strategies of establishment through convergent data sources of participants' perspectives, comparison against other data sources, and opportunities for participants to comment on accuracy (Creswell, 2013). From these measures, the following themes related to the research questions emerged:

1. Availability of online resources
2. Importance of choosing home language materials carefully
3. High level of support from other educators
4. Limited level of support from parents
5. Cultural experiences
6. Limited professional development opportunities related to teaching ELLs
7. Freedom to design and implement curriculum
8. Varying levels of ELLs' home language literacy
9. Limiting use of home language resources
10. Positive responses to home language use by ELLs
11. Variety of responses to home language use by non-ELLs
12. Increase in content access
13. Other accommodations for ELLs

Each theme corresponded to one of the three research questions, as shown in this table:

Table 4.1: Research Questions and Corresponding Themes

Research Question Addressed	Corresponding Themes
How do ELA teachers obtain home language resources?	Availability of online resources Importance of choosing materials carefully High level of support from other educators Limited support from parents
How doe ELA teachers decide how and when to implement home language resources?	Cultural experiences Limited professional development opportunities Freedom to design and implement curriculum Varying levels of home language literacy Limiting use of home language resources Increase in content access
How have home language resources impacted student learning?	Increase in content access Positive responses to home language use by ELLs Variety of responses by non-ELLs Other accommodations

Availability of online resources. A variety of home language materials have been found on the Internet by all of the teachers involved in this study. These include online texts, translation applications, study aids, language review games, and videos of grammar explanations. Most options utilized by the participants of this study are free.

Participants mentioned a wide variety of free resources available online. Teacher D included "online texts, bilingual flash cards, and bilingual games" in her list of home language resources, but added, "Generally we have not needed literature translations. We use a document translator website and I search the web for Spanish versions of literature." Teacher F said, "I can print Readingatoz.com 'books' in Spanish. I can print other resources from the Internet," while Teacher G explained that when she has used home language texts, "I Googled them. If I could find a free translated version, I would

use it. I've never paid for a translated text." Teacher L found materials through "Google Translate or a fluent student translates or send it to ESL teacher," and the materials found by Teacher I came from a variety of websites. Besides listing sources of free fiction texts online, she mentioned, "NewsELA is the only website I can find with translated news articles, but they are usually current events and not based on historical events or on science curriculum." She advised teachers, "If there is a great resource that costs money, call the company to see if they will extend a free trial so you can ensure it's right for you, BEFORE you spend what little money you make. Companies always work with teachers."

Teacher J's home language resources come from multiple sources, some of which were funded by her school district. She explained:

> We use the service, Lexikeet, for parent communication. All of my students have a Chromebook, so I often use Google Translate to help with translating documents or with daily interactions. Also, when teaching grammar, I tend to find a video using the students native language to explain the concept as well as me explaining it.

Teacher K's classroom includes a mix of free and paid resources. She stated, "A lot of times, I am able to find short stories or plays via online pdfs that are free." She also cited Google research and Amazon as sources of home language materials, but mentioned that she did occasionally pay for materials: "Other times when I need literature, it comes out of pocket."

None of the teachers involved in the study mentioned an inability to obtain home language resources for students. All reported the ease of finding free or low-cost texts

written in home language, but some participants also reported the risk of using low-quality or poorly-translated materials.

Importance of choosing home language materials carefully. Twelve study participants mentioned the need to carefully select resources before using them. Many reported that Google Translate is a widely used resource with multiple practical applications for ELLs, but there are limitations to its efficacy and accuracy.

Several participants discussed the advantages of using Google Translate as a free resource. Teacher J explained, "I was able to show teachers that you can translate any Google document into a bunch of different languages at the hit of a button. They were very impressed because they felt like they could now reach out to their ELL students and parents more often. They can also try to get the students to do things that the mainstream kids are doing." Teacher I pointed out how the limitations of Google Translate can be used to educators' advantage: "At times, the translations can be incredibly literal, which is not helpful, but it also helps point out how much we use multiple meaning words and phrases, which is instructional for teachers in simplifying their language for better comprehension." Teacher C stated, "For formal documents it is not the best bet but for survival it works. The problem comes with multiple meaning words – the translator picks the most popular word, but it might not be the correct one."

Other participants mentioned a reluctance to use Google Translate and discussed alternatives to this resource. Teacher K, a bilingual ELA instructor, stated, "I also personally try to choose novels and readings that have an option to buy in Spanish (so I don't have to worry as much about exactness or quality of the translation). The test modifications are done with a mix of Google Translate and then myself editing

them…incredibly unreliable. Sometimes it's too literal and doesn't offer translations for nuances in the language." Teacher B advised educators to use a bilingual dictionary instead of Google Translate because it "can often be incorrect when translating a large text since connotation is not taken into consideration when translating." Teacher N observed, "It isn't always accurate, obviously, and can sometimes act as a crutch that hinders their advancement in learning English." Teacher H shared, "Google Translate saved me in class, but cannot be too much of a crutch. For me, with absolutely no Spanish familiarity and a student with no English whatsoever, it was the only way I could communicate with S[student's name has been deleted for privacy], get instructions to her, translate my quizzes."

Teacher G continued this theme by cautioning other educators, "The internet can be very useful but always verify the source." Teacher J added that the most difficult aspect of locating appropriate home language resources in ELA class is:

> Finding the correct materials. Also making sure that the material is as accurate as the model material. Making sure the translations accurate. With Google Translate you run a huge risk for it being wonky. There is also a voice compatibility to it so they can say their native language and it speaks back in English. I've found that it's better with some languages like Spanish and Portuguese just probably because they have more people checking in those languages to make sure it's the same meaning. I had a student who spoke Hindi and he said it was unreliable for the most part.

Teacher F offered insight into the difficulty of spelling words correctly and monolingual teachers' ability to provide guidance. She explained, "Most of the teachers

don't speak Spanish, so they wouldn't know if the computer translation was accurate or not. A lot of students can't spell in Spanish, so giving them the computer to look up words doesn't help if they are, for example, looking for 'vasura' instead of 'la basura.'" She also discussed the difficulty of researching information in a home language and then attempting to translate this information to English, which "would probably only happen if they were doing research on the computer. In that case, it would be awkward if the student then translated via computer from Spanish to English. The language would be wonky and it would be obvious it was above their language level."

Teacher B elaborated on this teaching tool and how another teacher in her setting used it:

> Our third ESL teacher is a brand new teacher that struggles with teaching content, especially to the novice students because she isn't "comfortable" with teaching them. She is still adjusting on how to effectively modify for ESL students. She loves the idea of teaching content in students' home language. However, the issue becomes that students are reading the content along with her and she has absolutely no idea what it says and whether it is accurate or not. She just takes the regular content and puts it into Google Translate. As I've stated earlier is a horrible idea because it often doesn't translate accurately.

According to the participants of this study, Google Translate is a well-known and widely used resource in providing home language materials to students, but this application and others should be considered carefully along with learners' needs to determine how students best gain course content. Support from other educators may assist when making determinations about source content quality.

High level of support from other educators. Although initial teacher preparation courses and professional development opportunities regarding strategies to teach ELLs have been limited, thirteen of the fourteen study participants reported favorable interactions with other educators when help was needed in meeting the needs of their ELL students. Educators such as ESL teachers, media center specialists, community members, and/or administrators often provide resources or assistance to support ELA teachers in teaching ELLs, according to the participants of this study.

Some participants reported a high level of support given by a variety of educators in their teaching settings. Teacher J explained that she could buy literature translations with money supplied by the ESL director or librarian. Teacher K reported a high level of assistance including administrators who provided funds for ELL materials or conferences and helpful faculty members. She stated, "They don't always check in regularly, but we are a large district. They respond quickly to concerns or struggles I am having and keep us all up to date on valuable ESL opportunities and events. I've been happy overall with their support." Teacher I reported that that if she needs a specific material, she can ask other teachers for it, request funding through her department or school, or use Donors Choose. Teacher H, a teacher with a single ELL newcomer in a low ELL population school, mentioned the efforts of multiple educators who were able to facilitate home language instruction:

> My librarians were everything. They got me the classroom novels needed, plus gathered all Spanish language novels for S to read. We also had computer programs for S to use to help with language acquisition. S also had a resource teacher here half days who helped me a lot. She would explain things to S that

would have taken me forever to get across. My media specialists were a great resource, along with our EL support teacher. I needed them desperately to get things off the ground with S.

Some participants gave examples of assistance they have received outside of the school district. Besides collaborating with ESL teachers, Teacher A "has had our local university provide interpreters for Parent Teacher Conferences." Teacher C explained, "ESL teacher collaborates once a month to plan content and language objectives for the upcoming month. ESL teacher translates materials." She added, "I think that if the ESL teacher really wants to find resources, they will reach out to the area churches, universities, government agencies and see what is available. Yes, some of the more unique languages are a challenge but there is a wide variety of materials available in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, French, Thai, Karen, Hindi, etc."

Eleven of the 14 of the study participants mentioned the key role that ESL teachers play in their settings. ELA teachers reported a high level of support from ESL teachers, and the ESL teachers of this study confirmed the high level of support they typically provide to content area teachers. Teacher G, an ELA teacher, explained: "We do have an ESOL teacher on site this year. I think this is the first year that I've taught at this particular school (out of the three that I've been here) that she has been on site full time. Students are able to go to her when they need to. She helps with assessments and does some instruction with them. She also is in charge of testing." This participant added, "We also have access to teachers who can translate letters that need to go home for parental contact." Teacher I reported similar experiences with other educators in her teaching environment: "We get a lot of support from translators and our co-teachers in

ESOL. They share what they have with us: resources, professional contacts, etc. Talk to ESOL teachers or bilingual educators. They are a great resource. Our school provides many, but also, our district has access to services for these."

Teacher L described not only the help she received in offering home language resource accommodations for her ELLs through an ESL teacher's willingness to translate, but also her positive experience with the free ESL teacher training that is offered in her district once per year with the district ESL coordinator:

> Working with her is how I learned to gesticulate more. They might not be able to understand my words, but they can understand my actions. She started speaking Portuguese and we could get bits and pieces of the facts, we had no idea what she was talking about, and then she said it again using gestures, and we understood the meaning about dress code because she was using her body. I never would have thought to do it until she showed us. Point received, got it! And then she gave us the script that she had.

Teacher N, an ELA teacher, explained her desire for receiving help from an ESL teacher and how she and others in her setting worked around this barrier when help was not available:

I think that our ESL teacher tried very hard to provide us with support but she, unfortunately, was overworked and overwhelmed with the number of students she had, plus traveling to multiple schools in one day. When [two ELLs] came into the class, we were reading the memoir *Night*. I contacted our school library to see if we had any Spanish or Mandarin copies. She ordered some, but it did not get here in time. We had ESOL tutoring after school last year, but it was stopped early (maybe February or

March?) because they ran out of funds and we don't have it this year due to funding. It really helped ESOL students with one-on-one time since they are normally just thrown into a regular classroom and often ignored because the teacher has 29 other students to handle. Most of my direct ELA colleagues use the same practice as I do. We work closely together, and since none of us have any type of ELL certification, we often talk to each other to get ideas and insight.

The ESL teachers involved in the study described similar circumstances from their perspective of providing support to ELA teachers. Teacher C explained, "I think this depends on the district/state. We meet with our regular ed teachers once a month for professional development and chats about how to best help the kiddos." Teacher D described her efforts in helping to translate standardized testing materials for other educators and co-teach students; she reflected, "I think some instructors appreciate it since they are monolingual and aren't able to communicate with the students." Teacher E described a similar level of assistance that she provides to ELA teachers and media specialists, while Teacher F provided a differing account of resources available to ELA teachers in providing home language learning opportunities:

> Sometimes the head librarian for our CMO orders books in Spanish for the libraries. The library is, however, an underused and undervalued resource. One of our schools has hired a Spanish/family liaison (though that position is now vacant) due to their large population. I get cooperation but not support from other teachers. I have been asked to translate a lot in situations where I don't feel my Spanish is adequate, and have declined. Related to this, we have an OS ticket

system established to have letters, tests, assignments, etc. translated. Teachers don't really use the system as much as they should.

Teacher M, an ESL teacher, reported experiences that were slightly different and tailored to the needs of her school's ELL population. She stated that home language texts were not provided due to expectations placed on the large number of Spanish speakers working in her school: "I think our administration expects us to rely on these individuals as resources. I think we are also expected to collaborate with other ELL teachers to create materials from scratch. Students have tutors who are there to support students by making sure they understand what is expected of them. They do a lot of translating."

Based on the words of multiple participants in this study, it is common for an ELA teacher who wishes to incorporate home language text use in the content area classroom to rely on other educators such as ESL teachers for support. Relying on parents for support did not happen as frequently.

Limited level of support from parents. Of the 14 teachers interviewed, 12 expressed that parents of ELLs do not often provide support to educators in obtaining home language resources for their children to use. However, multiple participants provided reasons that this was case and their attitude toward the ELL families did not seem to be negative or judgmental. Several expressed an unwillingness to ask parents for classroom assistance due to an awareness of extenuating personal circumstances that may make school involvement difficult for some families.

Teachers A, G, K, and M stated either that the parents were "generally not involved" or "never involved" in matters pertaining to curriculum and their child's progress. Teacher L mentioned that in her setting, she was more likely to get support

from ELL parents with the ESL teacher's intervention: "If there was a problem with their grades, it would usually be the ESL teacher who would contact home. He would take care of it and let them know and then we would both take care of it together."

Teacher K described similar experiences, but elaborated by providing potential reasons for the lack of support: "I don't get a lot of support from parents overall. There are a few who check in regularly about their own child's progress, but many of these families cannot aid in providing materials. It's not that they aren't lovely people or that they do not care, but parents who speak other languages are a lot less hands on with the school in my personal experience."

Teacher J mentioned background information about her ELLs that might have affected their parents' level of support also: "Most of my students are on free and reduced lunch. A lot of my students are here with one parent or no parents. All came for a better life in the States."

When asked how much support she received from ELL parents, Teacher F stated, "Pretty much none. They are newcomers of minimal resources. Quite a few of those families are homeless (doubled-up). The most I hope for is for them to put their kids on an educational app at home rather than having them watch TV."

Teacher N stated a variation of this also: "Many students can't afford it or their parents speak limited English, so it's not always easy to ask. I always was able to get [home language texts] from the library, so I did not have to ask the parents to help."

Teacher D mentioned similar experiences, but added a positive interaction that she had with an ELL parent:

> I work in a high poverty school. Therefore, I don't ask parents for very much if possible. A mom wrote to me and told me she was so happy with the growth that she had seen in her students. They have only been here for a few months, but they have been like sponges soaking up the English language. People had told her transitioning to the United States from Mexico City would be difficult but thanks to the ESL staff her children have a support at school.

Teacher C offered a different perspective, disagreeing with the common theme that ELL parents are not as involved and encouraging educators to reach out more: "It is all about the rapport that you have with the families."

Teacher F offered advice for other educators in building better relationships with ELL families:

> Using home language resources is probably the only way some families are going to get involved in their child's education. It may also be the hook to get families involved. To find resources, first look for what's free or already paid for, then see what funds are available to augment that. Check with the school library and the public library. Make sure that this is where you want to devote the resource of your time. Track the results in order to be able to request further funds. Survey the families to determine what they want. Work with homeroom teachers to determine which literacy skills are appropriate for which grades, and find ways (such as colorincolorado.com) to communicate to families that those skills are

transferable from L1 to L2. Also, make sure your school is in compliance as per which school communications are required to be in the home language.

Teacher H mentioned the challenges that might prevent ELL families from providing support to educators and her opinion of the situation: "What these families suffer breaks my heart. I cannot bear the way many people think of refugees and immigrants. I won't say more. My head could explode because I get so upset with the current situation here. It is shameful what we are doing as a nation."

None of the 14 participants who were interviewed reported ELL families as a resource in obtaining home language materials such as novels. Whether this lack of support stemmed from parents' inability or unwillingness to provide resources or from educators' inability or unwillingness to request resources from parents was unclear in some cases. With the abundance of home language materials available to these teachers through other avenues, asking potentially financially burdened families to provide resources was not an option that any study participants exercised.

Participants' decisions to incorporate home language texts did not seem to relate to the level of support received from ELLs' family members. Instead, it is possible that these 14 educators made decisions about home language text use due to other factors including their personal experiences of travel and cultural opportunities.

Participants' cultural experiences. Nearly all of the teachers involved in this study mentioned multiple opportunities for exposure to other cultures and languages. Twelve of the fourteen participants have traveled extensively to other countries, four of those twelve have lived in diverse communities, and several discussed the connections they have felt with their learners as a result of their travel experiences.

Teachers B, C, D, F, H, I, J, G, K, and N have had travel experiences including studying abroad, visiting family members in other countries, being stationed overseas with a military parent, working as a volunteer, and taking multiple vacations to destinations outside the US. All reported positive perceptions of their travel experiences. Teacher H explained, "I love seeing other cultures," and Teacher J reported a deeper understanding of and appreciation for her students as a result of her traveling experiences. She stated, "I try to get away as much as I can. I love learning about other places and eating their food. I find when I travel to places either where my students are from or around it makes me understand and appreciate their culture." Teacher I explained how she feels her experience of moving to Italy while she was a high school student and living in Miami have impacted her efficacy in the classroom regarding her ability to communicate with her learners: "Understanding languages has been beneficial when traveling to a new country, as I am able to quickly pick up a dialect and necessary words and phrases."

Teacher G, who grew up in a community with a large Latino population, has traveled to Europe, but reported that a local cross-cultural friendship has had the most impact on her ability to help ELL students succeed in ELA class. She explained, "I am very close to an elderly couple in my church who are Cuban and have spent hours talking with them. She was a Spanish teacher for 30 years in local schools and I have found her to be a wealth of information and wisdom when I need guidance for helping Spanish speaking students."

One participant, Teacher K, discussed how her own ability to speak the home language of many of her ELL students have increased their confidence in using English.

She stated, “I am not a perfect speaker, and the mistakes that I make speaking Spanish allow my students to see that it’s okay to not be perfect in your second language.”

Teacher N described her personal experience with learning another language without being able to communicate in English and how it has impacted her understanding of ELLs’ experiences in an English immersion environment: “I took German in high school and in college, and I lived in Germany for a year after college. I lived in a German household that did not allow me to speak English, so I have been on their side of it.” Teacher F echoed this theme of “being on the other side” of a language barrier, how it has shaped her educational philosophy, and how a lack of such experiences may have shaped other teachers’ educational philosophies. “It is crucial for teachers to understand the experience of being a language learner,” Teacher F stated, and then added:

> We can talk about Stephen Krashen, but it’s more helpful to live the experience of the ‘affective filter.’ In addition, I understand the morphological and phonological structure of a language. I know what it means to be a level one or two (according to the original ACTFL standards) language learner. I understand what it feels like to use circumlocution, a dictionary, to learn a new word by ear or by text, and to feel embarrassed. I went to class at the Sorbonne where the teachers had no empathy for the exchange students’ struggles. We were college students with resources. Imagine the same situation but for the SLIFE students, minimally literate in their L1 and with few resources? Unfortunately, most of the core/mainstream teachers with whom I work have done neither.

Teacher E discussed a link between a wealth of cultural experiences and willingness to use home language, also, from the perspective of other educators: “Most of

the positive responses come from our Foreign Language department teachers (most who have taught ESOL at one time or another) and often interact with our students in their home language."

Teacher A, who has not traveled outside the US but does have a family member who moved to the US from another country, did not mention a link between cultural experiences and home language use, but she did describe how her own experiences have shaped her philosophy regarding the use of home language texts in an ELA classroom. She explained the impact of a mentor teacher in her decision to implement home language texts: "The reason I have this belief is that it came from the teacher I did my clinical student teaching with. She was letting them do it. The teacher that I student taught and did my clinicals under always used it to help students."

In making the decision either to incorporate home language texts in the ELA curriculum or to assist ELA teachers in using home language texts, personal experiences of the teachers of this study seemed to play a key role. Unfortunately, pre-service training or professional development experiences did not.

Limited professional development opportunities. Five participants expressed that ELA teachers have not had many opportunities for professional growth regarding teaching strategies for ELLs or education regarding the legality and efficacy of using home languages in content area classes. Other participants simply did not report if adequate professional development opportunities were given to ELA teachers in their educational settings.

Teacher N reported a lack of training not just in the use of home language resources, but in other appropriate teaching strategies for ELLs as well:

> I have a Master's in teaching English, but none of my classes even talked about how to handle ELLs in a regular classroom setting. I feel this could be very valuable, as most teachers get assigned ELLs at some point. I guess the biggest thing is the frustration that we feel as educators because we know we can't help them in the best way possible. We have zero training to know how they can best learn, and I hate letting any of my students down. I want them to get something out of my class and not just totally confuse them, but sometimes I feel like that is what is happening.

When asked if she was trained in ESL, TESOL, or TEFL, Teacher G responded, "I'm not going to lie to you. I'm not even sure what all of those acronyms mean. I know I had a class in college that dealt with this, but it was not entirely dedicated to ESOL. I think it was like 'dealing with diversity in the classroom' or something like that."

Besides a lack of training in strategies to teach ELLs, there may be a lack of training in the legality of using certain strategies such as home language text integration. Teacher E, who teaches in Georgia, a state whose law stipulates that home language can be used for academic purposes and who has as ESL certification, mistakenly advised, "Check with your county to see if they allow this in the classroom. If not, then tread lightly." It is unclear whether this confusion stemmed from a directive mistakenly given by her county's board of education or policies mistakenly created by school district administrators.

Teacher F mentioned a lack of mandatory professional development or coursework requirements for educators in charter school settings. She claimed, "There is no requirement for pre-service training with ELs in Louisiana. In the charter world, many teachers haven't done typical training anyway. Learning a few years in high school is the most the majority of staff have done."

Teacher H, an ELA teacher in a rural setting with few ELLs, discussed the challenges she faced in teaching an ELL without much prior training: "Sadly, I was thrown into the deep end with S, and without our EL support teacher, who was here only half days, I was adrift for help."

For these educators, the decision to use home language materials in the classroom did not relate to preservice training or professional development opportunities. This decision may have been impacted partially by the flexibility offered to these educators in designing and using their own choices of curricular materials.

Freedom to design and implement curriculum. Thirteen participants reported that ELA teachers have a large amount of flexibility and freedom in choosing curricular materials. An exception to this would be the selection of texts; some pieces of literature are protected or required reading for a particular grade level of students. Six teachers stated that they had almost complete freedom in deciding what and how to teach their subject matter and two stated that they had a lot of freedom other than being required to teach certain texts with certain grade levels.

Teacher C pointed out that "the curriculum is based on state standards but the materials I use are up to me," and "in my in my school, we have choice based on a theme," while Teacher J simply stated that she had "a lot of freedom."

According to Teacher G, "English 3 is technically an American literature survey, though that has changed quite a bit in the last 10 years or so. But I try to stick to a chronological study of American literature. Leadership is a different ball of wax entirely. I've had to make up the curriculum for that class as I've gone along this year."

Teacher K's experience has been similar: "I have almost 100% choice in the curriculum. I run ideas by my mentor and check in with other teachers, but I am not obligated to follow a specific curriculum."

Teacher B reports similar conditions related to the ELA curriculum and the flexibility she has with it:

> At my school, we have complete control over our curriculum. There was nothing that was developed or handed to us. […] The only stipulation was that I had to teach the normal ELA standards that the rest of the mainstream students were learning. I've worked with mainstream teachers and a PLC leader to try to incorporate as much of the mainstream ELA material into my curriculum as possible with modified content or extra focus on certain material to try and attain understanding.

Teacher E explained, "I have a lot of input in who and what classes I teach. I enjoy teaching the freshman and American Lit and was able to choose my co-teachers, too. I do actively help plan our lessons by suggesting strategies to help our ELLs and any other student who needs differentiation."

Other participants described similar flexibility with the exception of mandatory or protected texts. Teacher H said, "I have a little choice in what my students read but have

to follow book lists by grade level," and Teacher M stated, "The texts I've been required to teach this year have been mandatory."

For these educators, making instructional decisions about the integration of home language texts did not seem to be contingent upon following a strictly prescribed curriculum; their decision to use their own strategies, including the use of home language resources, was neither encouraged nor discouraged by those in higher educational positions. This freedom may have positively impacted educators' feelings about using home language texts. However, something that may have negatively impacted educators' feelings about this strategy was a consideration of ELL students' level of literacy in their home languages.

Varying levels of ELLs' home language literacy. Five study participants mentioned the wide range in home language literacy levels of their ELLs while one participant mentioned that she found this to be a non-issue in her setting.

Several teachers discussed the importance of establishing ELLs' levels of home language proficiency along with their levels of English language proficiency. When asked how her ELL students respond to the use of home languages, Teacher C answered, "the ones that are literate in their native language appreciate it." She added, "The most important thing is to first assess if the students are literate in their native language and would they benefit from it. Then, you simply need to explain to the class that this is the way they learn, and it doesn't create any unfair advantage." Teacher A shared, "I think this depends on their age when entering an American school and their immigration story. I will say refugees are not literate in their home language because they have years without education." Teacher F recommended against providing a content area text in an

ELL's home language because "that only happens for rare students who are literate in L1 and able to deal with the metacognitive task of reading the book (e.g. *The House on Mango Street*, last year--no longer in our curriculum) in both languages."

Teacher L, who teaches ELA to a diverse population of students, shared her complex understanding of her learners and the accommodations she provides for them related to their unique needs:

> In the English 2 class, I have five Spanish ELLs: one that is high-functioning who has only been learning for five or six years, and you would never know English is her second language, but she still needs to support of translations in her home language. The lower level ones are illiterate in Spanish, so in that class I have it set up as a buddy system: two lower-level students and five low-level L2 ELLs buddied up with first language speakers and one fully bilingual student. The bilingual student is great about providing directions, but it does provide a challenge that the student is the one is translating.

One participant in the study, Teacher H, revealed how she adjusted her teaching strategies to match the home language literacy level of her ELL student:

> I discovered that S did not really have good content vocabulary in her HOME language. So instead of just translating, for example, "simile," I had to teach the concept to her through Google Translate. That applied for almost all basic content vocab. I mistakenly thought she would have that foundation in Spanish, but she did not. It was disappointing to find out, and it redirected how I taught her vocab.

Teacher N shared a different perspective based on her experience: "I teach high school, so mine have always been literate in their home language; I think this may differ with the younger kids."

For these educators, a consideration of students' home language literacy levels played an important role in making curricular decisions related to the use of home language texts. Another factor that may have played an important role is the belief that too much exposure to home language materials might hinder students' progress with understanding English materials.

Limiting use of home language resources. One concern with using home language resources, according to thirteen study participants, is the possibility of using them too often to the exclusion of acquisition of the English language. Many participants stated that home language texts are used in their educational settings for newcomer ELLs who are early in the process of acquiring English. Several mentioned a perceived overuse of materials that were not high quality.

Nearly all participants mentioned their opinion that home language resources should be used less often as students gained proficiency in English. Teacher C said, "It must be a balance of what the student needs to have access to the information but not a crutch that is never removed. Like all strategies, it has its time and place." Teacher K's ideas were similar. She explained, "Definitely, you can over-baby your students and wind up simply teaching the class to them in Spanish, which should not be the goal. If they are not producing and practicing English, you've overdone it. I think it's a definite skill. I was probably over-reliant on Spanish last year, but I've done much better this year, and I'll have an even better curriculum next year. There's definitely a learning

curve." Teacher N stated that she looks at her students' level of English and then scaffolds the home language resources based on progress. Teacher F shared a similar opinion that teachers focused too much on home language resources and "not enough on comprehensible input. Let's say it should be less than 20% but, for newcomers, there's way too much Google Translate."

Teacher D, an ESL instructor, stated, "It depends on the student. I learn what their strengths and weaknesses are and then decide with the [content area] classroom teacher what they need in order to be successful and challenging." Teacher J said, "I use native language all the time in my classroom and then slowly release as they become more familiar." She elaborated, "For my beginning level student I would say 80 percent and for my upper level students maybe 20 percent. It usually depends on their ELD level and how literate the student is in their native language. Students who rely heavily on native language support are usually students in their first one to two years. If they are older then maybe even longer."

Teacher A shared a similar opinion and advised about the importance of an instructional release goal: "First, know what level of language acquisition your ELLs are at. If they are capable of doing the task without their home language, let them." She also said, "My purpose in using home language is to give the students a foundation so they can then transfer it to the English language they are learning. I also will use it to deepen the activity being done in the class." Teacher A also said that the most difficult aspect of using home language resources to teach ELA standards is "knowing when to use it and when to push the students to use English" as well as considering the availability of the resources. Teacher H stated that home language resource inclusion "completely depends

on the student and his or her ability," and that it was used in her context for "only those who have little to no English."

Several teachers gave similar responses while bringing up the availability of resources. Teacher G explained, "When I have used home language texts it was because it was obvious that the student had no clue what was going on in the English text. If I was able to find translated texts, I used them. If I was not, I had the student work with the ESOL teacher." Teacher B stated, "Any student is more than welcome to look up content resources on their own. However, I would say novice students would benefit the most from it."

Teacher M discussed how she weighs the factors of relationship building, holding students to high expectations, and preparing them for an English immersion environment upon leaving the ESL support class:

> Sometimes I am concerned that students rely on their tutors or Google Translate too frequently when they could likely use context clues to figure out the meaning of words. I would say there is a time and a place to implement home language texts. A teacher who uses home language texts likely has a better chance of building a trusting relationship for the student. In my case, all of my ELLs are soon to be exiting the program, so I want to expose them to as much grade level texts as possible. However, an article in their home language about an important, complex topic could go a long way.

Teacher L, an ELA instructor, shared her opinion related to her experiences as a language learner and the expectations of ESL teachers in her setting:

> ESOL teachers don't want us to give them translations. As much as they help, they still want the students to learn in English. We were supposed to be reading *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros and I was talking with the media center specialist and she said had Spanish copies, but the ESOL teacher said, "No, they are going to rest on it too much. Make it the English copy." I said, "OK." But I don't feel… I kind of see what he's saying, but I do think there should be a bigger bridge for the gap. When I was learning French, I didn't have total immersion until college. When I'm giving them an assessment, it's can the student do the skills, not can students know the English. I will give them the translation for the test.

Teacher B offered a similar perspective and advice for other teachers related to this topic:

> The issue that I find with home language resources is that you don't know what they are saying. Although students might be learning the same content (which is good) they aren't getting the extra practice reading in their target language, which transfers over into their writing as well. The idea is to activate background knowledge while also incorporating new language skills at the same time.

Teacher B elaborated, "I will always allow a student to look up content in their home language on their own to use in conjunction to the material that I am supplying if that is going to help them with their background knowledge, but their project is going to be

completed in the target language. Be careful. Don't make it excessive, and don't neglect to teach English at the same time."

One participant mentioned the importance of valuing home culture. Teacher K said, "I have seen teaching without a home language, and it seems to be missing something. I think that something is an appreciation for the home language." She added, "I think students need to incorporate both in the lower levels of learning in content areas. Then we get progressively heavier in English…then we work on how to turn that in English…we practice in English…that is not their favorite part."

Teacher N discussed the difficulty presented to her ELLs in comprehending grade-level texts of a high school ELA class as opposed to understanding more basic texts written in English:

> They needed their translation to make sense of what we were talking about or learning in class. I also gave them an English copy so that they could read both and make comparisons, but that is also a lot of work for them that they often don't have time for. I believe immersion helps them the most, but when we're reading more advanced texts, it's not helpful immersion. Maybe a lower-level book could be assigned to them in English.

Several participants mentioned the issue of standardized testing being conducted in the English language; this affected several teachers' decisions to teach using home languages.

Teacher B explained how she determines when and how she will use home language based on standardized testing:

> Dictionaries are allowed for the end of year tests so getting them comfortable with using them at the beginning of the year is a must. Testing both classroom assessment and at the state level is done in English. Therefore, getting the content in the home language doesn't really prepare them for taking the test over the same content in English. Yes, they have the content knowledge, but they still have the language barrier. Whereas you can teach, modify, and scaffold the same information in English, and they are receiving both the content and language skills needed.

Teacher K also described the impact of testing on her decisions to use home language in her ELA classroom:

> I ask myself, "Will the use of home language be a help or hindrance in this project?" If we are working on poetry, I know from years of studying it, it's almost always better in your first language as translations don't always work well in such a creative style of writing, so I allow home language. However, when we are writing to practice for our End of Course Exam, they must work in the target language because they will have to perform, so practicing in a home language will be more of a hindrance. The least they could do is provide instructions to the kids in their home language when they are able. Low level students have no idea what is happening on those days and become frustrated before the test even begins.

Teacher C was the only participant who explicitly stated that standardized testing did not affect her curricular decisions regarding home language. She shared her opinion

that "state tests are only one measure of how our students are doing. We need a lot more info than that so using home language is fine."

In making decisions about home language use in the ELA classroom, most of the study participants considered students' current level of English acquisition and shared their impression that home language use might hinder English acquisition, and several mentioned the limitations of standardized assessments being conducted in English. Despite these beliefs that home language use might cause a decrease in progress in English, multiple study participants mentioned the belief that home language use might also cause an increase in access to grade level content.

Increase in content access. According to ten of the fourteen participants interviewed, a reason to incorporate home language resources is the desire for all students to be included and to learn content of the ELA curriculum, and the belief that home language texts aid in this goal. Teachers A, C, D, H, I, J, K, L, M, and N mentioned the an increase in success, connections, engagement, support, access, or comprehension in ELLs as their justification for using home language materials in an ELA classroom.

Teacher N explained her views on including her ELL students through home language use materials next to English language materials to make curricular connections, and added, "When I didn't have their home language resources at the beginning of the year, you could visibly see their relief when I got it. The amount their brains have to work in relation to English speakers is vastly different, so I feel for that struggle and frustration. I feel like I am really helping them and doing more of a service for them when they are able to get the novel in a home language and compare to the English version."

Teacher K provided a similar explanation for her reasons for using home language in the ELA classroom. She mentioned the lack of supportive programs for secondary ELLs and the improved curricular outcomes when students could access course material in their first language:

> It seems like there are so many programs and opportunities for younger ELLs who come to class in elementary and even middle school (dual immersion programs, etc.). However, students who don't speak English and come to high school often spend years repeating English 1, which can lead to feeling unsuccessful and dropping out. I wanted to help where I was needed. The ESOL teachers have been incredibly supportive of my curriculum and said that they are amazed at how much the students are retaining from my class. When we read *Animal Farm* in English, and my students had it in Spanish, it made a huge difference in the quality of their work and engagement in the reading.

Several participants mentioned an increased level of engagement in ELLs when the home language was valued through inclusion in the curriculum. Teacher M explained, "Many of our student are bilingual. We recently read a book that contained many Spanish words and although the students are reluctant readers, they were so eager to participate in reading aloud so they could use the language they use at home in school." The words of Teacher J were similar: "Integrating home language texts is very important. It is important because the kids understand that their language and culture is valued. It also offers a lot of background for the students because they are building off of something they already know."

Teacher I stated the value she places on overall comprehension: "I feel using home language resources greatly affects our students. They are given some on-level content, which is helpful when trying to keep them on the same level as their peers. Once students do acquire more English, they then have the prior instruction (even if it's not as in depth) as their peers. The importance for them to understand Big Ideas in lessons is imperative so they do not fall behind."

The majority of study participants specifically mentioned the importance of providing all students will access to course material. Teacher A explained, "We were reading *The Giver* and *The Barefoot Heart* in Spanish. Are we reading literature together or are we denying them access?" She added, "It helps them feel like they can complete the task being asked of them." Teacher C stated, "Integrating home language texts into the curriculum makes the content more accessible for ESL students," while Teacher L shared the opinion that ELLs typically are denied access to course content through the use of only English: "If I could absorb [knowledge of all students' home languages], I would take nothing but ESL students. They only get 15 percent of what every other student is getting because of the language barrier, so if I could bridge the gap, I would." Teacher D shared, "I want my students to be as successful as possible so I always try to provide anything that I can for them."

Several teachers involved in the study mentioned the extra effort that providing home languages might entail but encouraged the use of this strategy regardless of extra effort. Teacher H gave her opinion that home language use "is a lot of extra work but very rewarding. Having support from an EL teacher is key, and buy-in from kind students makes it even more special." Teacher J's advice was, "Just try it! You would be

amazed how much you can connect with a student with it. Also, imagine being in a different country and walk a mile in their shoes. You would want to see your native language if you were in that position," and Teacher D stated the same: "I would say try it, anything to help your students succeed!"

This common theme in the collected data made it clear that the educators involved in this study have a deep desire to see their students become successful learners. Through analyzing the word choice, the punctuation, and the frequency of statements related to the importance of increasing content access, it seems that the value that participants place on their learners' needs is the main reason that the teachers involved are willing to go to the extra effort of providing home language texts. This effort seems to be justified by the participants in their reports that students respond positively to the intervention.

Positive responses to home language use by ELLs. Twelve of the teachers interviewed reported that ELLs respond positively when they or other classmates are provided with home language materials to learn ELA content.

Six participants mentioned the appreciation that their ELLs expressed due to a better understanding of the ELA course content. Teacher K stated, "They appreciate it immensely most days. It's also helped them greatly gain content knowledge as their English is developing." Teacher J shared similar thoughts: "Students like using their home language. They know it is going to help them and they like to be able to think in the language they are most comfortable." Teacher N said, "They are grateful that they have a resource that doesn't make them feel so lost or frustrated. It gives them a basis to start with." Teacher C added that when her students used resources in their home

language, they "understood the story and were able to participate in the conversation within the class."

Four study participants mentioned that their ELLs appreciated the intervention because they felt included. Teacher D, a bilingual educator, reported, "They are receptive to me, as I might be the only person all day that can speak to them in their home language." Teacher I mentioned how her knowledge of students' home language has helped to create an inclusive classroom community because:

> They feel more comfortable with a language they are used to speaking. This helps with the security they feel in the classroom environment. They are all happy I can speak Spanish pretty well. My ELL students are also happy that I'm still a language learner and often ask them how to correctly pronounce a word or what a more accurate word is for something. Having this openness to learning has helped my students overcome their own fear of making mistakes.

In trying to determine how home language resources have impacted student learning in the participants' classroom settings, it is clear that the educators of this study feel that their ELL students have benefitted from this intervention. They reported mixed reactions from non-ELLs.

Variety of responses to home language use by non-ELLs. According to the study participants, non-ELL students have a variety of reactions regarding the use of home language materials for their classmates. Many students do not notice or comment on this phenomenon. Other educators have reacted with a variety of responses to home language use.

Five participants reported collaboration and curiosity between ELLs and their non-ELL classmates. Teacher G said, "I have been able to help one student through another student in class who is fluent in both English and Spanish." Teacher D stated that she has "never had a problem with" negative reactions by students and "Some of them ask me how to say words so they can communicate with my students." Teacher C commented, "Most of the non-ELLs find it fascinating." She added, "Some non-ELL students asked why the ELLs 'get extra help.'" Teacher H reported an extremely positive response by non-ELL students to the single ELL in the class:

> Students in S's class were amazing at helping her translate, looking up words on Google, etc. It was a very sweet class of freshmen who needed a double block of English but were not Special Ed. It was a community, like a family, and they welcomed and helped me support S. It was so wonderful to observe. My kids were amazing with S. Patient, anxious to help, supportive always. My kids with teensie Spanish knowledge tried to talk to her all the time! We had not a single Spanish speaker in the class.

Teacher K reported mixed reactions from her students and her method of handling interactions that are not positive:

> Sometimes it seems to frustrate other students in the class. They don't like to feel on the outside when I speak in another language or provide different tests for my students. They worry they are not receiving enough support. They are a bit uncertain and nervous about it; however, I think location may be a part of this as well. Living in a Southern state where many children have only been exposed to one language, it seems strange to walk into a classroom and hear a teacher

speaking something other than English. I would say it depends on the class and culture and how much exposure to new people the students have. I have some classes with sheltered students who are initially very uncomfortable with the presence of another language in the classroom. Most get used to it, but I have one period where they are sometimes openly rude about the inclusion of Spanish into the room. I hear things like, "This is America, blah, blah, blah." I still do what I want. My room, my rules!

Teacher L described mostly positive reactions from non-ELLs in her classroom, but added:

> The only ignorant thing I've ever heard in my classroom was that it wasn't fair that ESL Spanish speakers could take Spanish classes because they would make an A automatically. Just because they speak it, doesn't mean they read it or write it. Or speak Spain Spanish versus wherever they're coming from. I haven't had trouble with Shakespeare Spanish, except with one student who was from a small Spanish speaking country who said it sounded broken up.

Teacher B described mixed reactions in her teaching setting from other students as well:

> For the most part, they seem to be okay with students speaking in their home language with each other. However, there have been times where they get negative reactions because non-EL students will think that they are talking about them. We have had instances where mainstream students have been paired or grouped with an EL and have refused to work with them.

Teacher E stated that in her teaching environment, home language use by ELLs was not accepted very well: "This year I have seen and experienced a lot of disdain for the use of another language in the classroom. Our freshmen are very judgmental towards each other and I believe these attitudes are taught in the home."

However, several participants in the study reported that the non-ELLs in the classrooms were unaware that home language accommodations were taking place, so they did not have opinions on the matter. Teacher A explained, "They never knew, as far as I knew. I always had communication with the ELLs before, so they knew what to do when I got the whole class started." Teacher N said the same: "My non-ELL students aren't usually affected by it and don't really respond in any way toward it . . . don't even seem to notice honestly." Teacher M described similar reactions from her setting: "Non-ELL students don't seem to have an opinion. The community is primarily Hispanic, so the idea of language learning is not foreign to them." Teacher G described similar classroom awareness about the use of home language:

> When I have had to use them, I have been very discreet. I wouldn't want to embarrass a student who needed the extra help, so I don't ever draw attention to the fact that I am using a home language resource. Students who have needed and have used home language resources have always been grateful for the resource. Other students are always fascinated when a student who can uses his or her home language in the classroom.

Several study participants discussed a lack of acceptance or understanding from other educators in using this intervention. Teacher E stated, "Generally teachers don't mind students using their home language although I do know of specific educators in the

building who do not agree with the practice. We always encourage our students to use their home language for academic talk but try to encourage them to speak English when engaging in social conversation." Teacher I reported similar attitudes and beliefs in her setting: "Some educators and non-ELL students feel we should not use any home language and that students should all learn in the same way. It is a poorly educated way of thinking and is being overcome more and more each year," and Teacher A said, "In the past, I've had other ESL teachers refuse to use it because they wanted to students to develop their English faster." Teacher M reported, "Other educators in my building would see using home language resources in any form as offering a crutch to students and not engaging them in 'productive struggle.'" Teacher J, who teaches in a state that requires all teachers to have a certificate in teaching English as a Second Language, shared that educators in her area are "still very confused" about the use of home language in a content area classroom. She explained:

> A lot of educators think it should be English only. Massachusetts passed a law in 2001 saying you could only use English. This past year we passed another law called the LOOK Act which says you can use native language. I work in a small white town and a lot of students think they should "speak English only." There are a lot of closed minded kids in the town. I get a lot of "Well, how are they going to learn English?" or "I don't have time to do that" from other educators. Since there is a small number of ELL kids and a large number of kids with special ed issues that teachers feel like they can't do both. Unfortunately, the ELL kids suffer because their parents are not the ones in the principal's office all the time.

Three teachers reported primarily positive reactions from other educators in using home languages. Teacher F reported positive attitudes toward home language use in her teaching context: "There is no stigma about using Spanish or not. Teachers would understand if I was using Spanish to explain something. We are a data-oriented organization, so the numbers speak as to whether students are learning or not. It is an advantage to be able to communicate with newcomers in their home language. We avoid using anecdotal observation to form conclusions."

Teacher K also described a mostly supportive environment with a few exceptions who did not seem to be aware of research surrounding home language use and content area classrooms:

> I have a few teachers who don't understand exactly what I do and haven't read any research. They do not talk to me directly about their disapproval; however, I hear gossip about it. Some of the more experienced teachers have said they feel all learning should be in the target language, but they are monolingual and haven't read any research on home language use. A couple believe that this is a radical thing I am doing on my own based on personal experience. I'm not sure they are aware of all the supporting literature that exists. No one has been vicious or openly rude to me, but I've overheard conversations that weren't flattering. I just ignore it and continue to try to prove myself.

Teacher E also described an incident with a content area teacher which revealed that educator's opinions and knowledge related to teaching ELLs:

> This year I specifically remember handing out our student's blue folders which contains their Access Scores, a bio sheet that I put together and their

accommodations. One of the history teachers saw me handing out the folders and as I was looking to see if he had a folder, I joked with him, "Not this year but maybe next year you'll have our students." To which he responded, "I hope not!" I looked at him with surprise because this is a teacher who is teaching AP World History, coaching football, raising a large family, and married to another teacher. He immediately checked his response and joked, "I am looking to make my job easier not harder." I did not say anything but will always remember this interaction.

The teachers of this study reported a variety of reactions from non-ELL students and other educators regarding the use of the impact of home language resource on student learning; the most common response reported was a lack of reactions from students regarding this phenomenon and minimal negative comments from others. Regardless of positive responses from ELLs and varied responses from non-ELLS, all research participants mentioned a continued reliance on a range of strategies used to help ELLs learn, not simply integrating home language texts.

Other accommodations for ELLs. Every teacher involved in this study reported that home language use is not the only or best way to teach ELLs; other strategies can be used successfully also.

Teacher C stated, "One strategy alone is never the way to go," and that mindset seems to hold true for the other participants of the study as well. In Teacher D's classroom, she has used "iPads for Google Translate and Rosetta Stone, modified work, and one on one instruction and tutoring." Teacher I explained, "We allow extra time to complete work, limit answer choices on multiple-choice tests, have them work with a

same-language peer and about 20 other accommodations, including using a word to word dictionary." The accommodations and modifications available in Teacher F's setting include "sentence stems, reduced workload, modified text to reading level, peer assistance, dictionary, vocabulary support, extended time, directions in Spanish…" Teacher A advised, "Don't be afraid to use the home language either. All students are entitled to the content we teach. An ELL isn't someone who passes by just showing up. Use whatever scaffolding is needed to help students learn what is being expected of the other students in the class." Teacher J simply offered the advice, "Picture dictionary," while Teacher N stated, "I also usually paired them with another student that volunteered to help since I couldn't stand by and help them the entire class period. A multitude of strategies should be used for ALL students—not just ELLs." Teacher L stated, "For the lower-level students, accommodations could include less work, shorter writing assignments, simple sentence structure, directions in Spanish and assignment in simple sentence English, or some can be in Spanish but at least some in English so that they are not overwhelmed."

Teacher K pointed out the need for additional accommodations based on the limitations of utilizing any one single strategy: "I use a lot of home language inclusion, and there are still students who don't want to participate in activities. Home languages do not magically make all kids 'great, actively engaged students.'" She added:

> I modify tests to include instructions in Spanish. I often give vocabulary words in English, but their definitions in Spanish. During creative units such as poetry, I allow them to create their poetry in Spanish. The poetry unit test is still in English, but I modify their test so language problems do not interfere with their

demonstration of content. I also give whole class instruction daily in English and then repeat directions in Spanish to my students. I offer graphic novels for them to use to get general ideas of main events. I shorten extended writing assignments (essays for example). I think home language use is one of the best in today's mixed classroom of skills and large class sizes. The ELLs are not my only students who need special attention and accommodations. In the level of students that I teach, there are so many needs! I don't have enough time to go over directions and then always check in with my ELLs and speak English slowly enough for them. If they have the same instructions typed up in Spanish in front of them, then they don't have to wait for me to get to them. They at least have a jumping off point to start classwork.

Teacher E described the accommodations and modifications offered to ELLs in her context where there is no sheltered instruction or newcomer program:

> In the classroom, I serve my students by offering word to word dictionaries for our newcomers, differentiating materials (including note, assessments, reading materials, etc.) to match their language proficiency, lunch tutoring (I give up one of my planning periods) and negotiate on my student's behalf with teachers who may or may not understand how to teach ELLs. The county offers no curriculum because the county does not do this. Period. Our students have generic testing accommodations assigned to them including but not limited to small group, extended time, paraphrase directions, etc. Differentiated teaching materials are used in the classroom on a daily basis.

Teacher B discussed the importance of collaborating with ESL teachers to learn strategies not related to home language use:

> I would encourage mainstream ELA teachers to reach out to ESL teachers within their schools to ask about those conditions and what other methods, strategies, and modifications they can use within the classroom to make input the most comprehensible for students. If novice students are in the mainstream classroom (they shouldn't be) there should be some alternate activity for them to complete. That <u>does not</u> include sitting them in a corner by themselves on Rosetta Stone, but rather a different language building resource that they should be actively working on for a grade, such as close readings from the book, chunked passages, or shorter (perhaps summarized versions of the chapter/reading) that still target the standard that is being taught within the classroom.

Another participant mentioned the importance of collaboration with other professionals as well. Teacher M explained:

> Our students have tutors as stated earlier. I also modify assignments to be simplified for ELLs. I grade them on modified rubrics. I don't grade them on grammar, spelling, punctuation. I sometimes give them materials in lower Lexile levels from NEWSELA, the free version. I allow my students to always use whatever resources they like. However, if I was utilizing home language *texts*, I would not offer translations if there were adequate supplemental materials. For example, when teaching Homer's *The Odyssey*, the objective is to understand character development. We do a lot of activities about Ancient Greece. We watch clips from the film. In this situation, I would not give my ELL students

translations or summaries because I feel like they should grapple with the text. However, if teaching Shakespeare, I would give some ELLs summaries or translations depending on their level. I have some students who scored near a 2/2.5 on ACCESS. These students would be able to use home language resources like translations.

Teacher B offered similar advice related to providing accommodations along with details from her own experiences in teaching ELLs:

> Scaffold, scaffold, scaffold, and modify, modify, modify. ELs are capable of learning the same content as mainstream students, they just need different supports to get there. I take more time to explain the standard that is being taught and usually incorporate extra practices, activities, exercises, scaffolds, TPR, and examples of what you are wanting. All my students are given a dictionary at the beginning of the year that they are responsible for. They are allowed to use them on all tests, quizzes, and homework in all of their classes.

Several participants discussed how they offer support to their students through being available. Teacher G stated, "I make it clear to my kids from day one that they can come to me with any issues. I allow for multiple assessment chances, especially with my ELL students. I've made translated texts available to them when I could find them. I'm always available to them before and after school as well as during our lunch hour to offer extra assistance or find tutors who are able to help." Teacher K advised, "I would tell them to start by building strong relationships with students. Don't sit them in the corner and ignore them. You can communicate with people with no words. We do it every day. Let that student know that you care, and slowly start incorporating home languages, even

if it's just Google translate to start with." She added that it was important to not give up because "it will be frustrating at times but dealing with a language that is not your home language will help you appreciate your students and their struggle so much more."

Teacher L shared similar advice about building relationships for her fellow ELA teachers who teach ELLs:

> The thing that has probably helped me the most has been getting to know the students individually. I treat my 6 in the same class differently: different levels, different background situations going on, different expectations. Use whatever resources you have! The buddy system is the best thing. "This is your buddy." Last year, we could switch schedules around as needed to give them extra student support. I don't know where I would be without.

Teacher N's advice to other educators included, "Order things early! They can take time." She also stated:

> I would also say just do some research on the best way possible to implement their language and how/what they need or don't need. I often don't give them worksheets in their home language since worksheets use simpler language. That way they can use Google Translate but also learn some English vocabulary. They tend to just read things in their home language and ignore the English if possible, so I just try to make sure if I give them something in their home language, then they're also still looking/reading the English version or translation so that they are getting some sort of immersion. Also, try to set aside time to really go through things with them.

One participant emphasized the importance of home literacy. Teacher B said, "I always tell parents to read, read, read. I don't care if students are reading in English or their home language. The more they read, the more information they are exposed to and will transfer over in their language learning. Reading (in any language) is never a bad thing."

Despite participants' belief that home language use in an ELA classroom can promote student learning, all mentioned a continual reliance on and valuation of accommodations other than home language resources.

Interpretation of Results of the Study

In analyzing the themes of this study, it became apparent that what participants did not say was as illuminating as what they did say. Three common threads were evident throughout the presentation of themes: there is an abundance of resources available to educators in implementing home languages, a lack of knowledge provided to educators and others regarding how and why to implement home languages, and a great deal of value in autonomy among the majority of teachers in this study. It is not wise to make a broad generalization about what should or should not be done based on the experiences of 14 individuals, but this information could potentially be used in conjunction with published research on the topic to help educators make decisions about the level of funding, amount of training, and amount of choice offered to teachers that would be most beneficial to ELL students.

Before conducting interviews and after studying research published about home language use, I was under the impression that the biggest challenge for the educators involved in this study in implementing home language resources would be gaining access to materials written in students' home languages. I assumed that the research question of

how teachers obtain home language resources would be the most complicated for participants to answer and the most difficult for others who are interested in this research to attempt to replicate in their own settings, but outcomes do not reflect what the participants described to be true in their experiences. Many participants reported the ability to locate a wide range of high-quality, low-cost resources, depending on the amount of effort that ELA teachers are willing to put forth and the amount of assistance that they are willing to seek from others.

However, is the ability to find resources relevant if participants report a lack of information necessary to make good decisions regarding how and when to implement these resources? Additionally, if there is an absence in teachers' awareness of how and when to implement home language texts, is it reasonable to expect students, community members, or other educators to have a deep understanding of this intervention, either? Each of the 14 participants of this study mentioned limited professional development opportunities or pre-service coursework available that relates to teaching ELLs, a heavy reliance on ESL teachers for support due to this lack of training, or limited knowledge of the research or government-enacted policies relating to teaching ELLs. The impact on student learning was perceived as positive by multiple educators involved in this study, but because many participants also reported limited use of this intervention either in their own classrooms or in their fellow educators' classrooms, it is possible that the impact on student learning would be greater if it were more widely used. Of the three research questions—how educators obtain home language resources, how teachers decide how and when to implement these resources, and how ELA teachers feel that these resources have impacted student learning—the second research question is of primary concern. Without

access to research-based and legal policy-based information of how and when to use home language materials for ELL students in ELA class, the concerns of where to find these materials and how teachers feel that students benefit from this intervention are not as relevant.

When participants were asked questions about how they obtained home language materials, it became apparent that if these educators were determined to find access to these resources, they were able to find them, no matter the obstacles. Despite some participants' ability to get materials through adequate funding for ELLs, a lack of funding was not an impediment for any teachers in the study and their desires to implement home language texts. As Teacher G stated, "I've never paid for a translated text," and this was true of other participants' experiences as well. Multiple participants stated the ease of finding materials or translations online for free, although some did caution educators to choose resources wisely based on the possibility of a lack of understanding the text or an issue in quality. The following Internet materials were mentioned as being of value to educators in providing students with home language resources:

- Albalearning website for French and Spanish texts, audio, and video
- Alkitab website for Arabic and English texts
- Amazon website to purchase texts
- Bilingual flash cards and games
- BrainPop website for French and Spanish activities and instructional videos
- ColorinColorado website for support and materials
- Cuentoseningles.com.ar website for free companion texts in English and Spanish
- cuny-nysieb.org/translanguaging-resources website for support and materials

- Document translator website
- Free trial request before purchasing resources
- Google search for translated texts
- Grammar videos using students' home language
- LeeandLow website to purchase books in English, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese
- Lexikeet website for parent communication
- ListeninEnglish website for lessons in English with Korean instructions
- Literaturnetz.org website for texts in German and English
- MandarinCompanion website to purchase companion texts in English and Mandarin
- MATSOL.org: Multilingual Books & Literacy website for a database of texts in over 50 languages
- Nalibaba website for stories in multiple languages
- NewsELA website for nonfiction articles
- Online texts or pdfs of short stories or plays
- Penguin Parallel Text Series website to purchase short story companion texts in English and Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish
- Readingatoz.com website for books in Spanish
- SpeakingLatino.com: Parallel Text Reading website to purchase short story companion texts in English and Spanish

Google Translate was the resource most widely mentioned by study participants, usually in the context of being an unreliable resource, but several teachers did mention its

usefulness when teaching students who were new to the English language. For example, Teacher H explained, "For me, with absolutely no Spanish familiarity and a student with no English whatsoever, it was the only way I could communicate with S, get instructions to her, translate my quizzes," and a variation of this sentiment was repeated by other educators who had faced similar circumstances with new learners.

Besides finding resources online, study participants also reported obtaining district- or community-provided materials and assistance. Members of the community who could potentially assist with translating included university translators, paid tutors, and area churches. Participants mentioned translating software or ticketing systems, media center specialists, and administrators with discretionary funds as sources of help within the school system. The parents of ELLs could be considered as a resource in some cases; while some participants did mention their difficulties in involving many of their ELL parents due to extenuating circumstances such as Teacher J's observation that many of her ELLs came to the US with one or zero parents, other participants stated that home language resource use at home could be the link between school and home culture.

Teacher B advised, "I always tell parents to read, read, read. I don't care if students are reading in English or their home language. The more they read, the more information they are exposed to and will transfer over in their language learning," and others stated similar views. The most widely mentioned means of support were other educators including those who spoke another language, those who taught the same content area, and ESL teachers. Teacher I advised, "Talk to ESOL teachers or bilingual educators. They are a great resource," and others in the study mentioned a high regard for ESL teachers as well.

An ESL teacher served as the first point of contact for many ELA teachers involved in this study, but several participants mentioned points related to ESL teachers that should be considered before relying on them heavily for support with home language use. They may have too many responsibilities already to be able to provide in-depth support in accessing home language materials. Teacher N stated, "I think that our ESL teacher tried very hard to provide us with support but she, unfortunately, was overworked and overwhelmed with the number of students she had, plus traveling to multiple schools in one day," and others in the study, both ELA content area teachers and ESL teachers, also mentioned the difficulty that ESL educators in their environment had in balancing the needs of many students.

Additionally, because the goals of an ESL course are specifically designed around teaching students the four domains of English language acquisition and these goals are assessed through high stakes standardized testing, ESL teachers may not feel strongly about incorporating home language texts. Multiple participants revealed the commonly held belief that an over-reliance on home language materials would slow progress in learning English, and because ELLs' progress in English is the measurement by which ESL teachers' efficacy is judged, a reluctance or lack of understanding about using home language could result. Teacher L, an ELA teacher who reported a positive relationship with the ESL teacher at her high school, stated, "ESOL teachers don't want us to give them translations. As much as they help, they still want the students to learn in English."

A variation of this statement was made by multiple other study participants as well. Teacher M, an ESL teacher whose ELLs would be mainstreamed after her course concluded, pointed out that regardless of her desire to provide students with bilingual

education, students would soon be in an English immersion environment and she believed an overreliance on home language texts would impede their English: “In my case, all of my ELLs are soon to be exiting the program, so I want to expose them to as much grade level texts as possible.”

A possible solution, according to the words of the 14 teachers who were interviewed, would be additional training for educators who wish to accommodate their ELLs. Training could include a variety of strategies for ELLs including implementation of home language resources and knowledge of research and policy regarding this intervention. ELA and other content area teachers could benefit from gaining additional tools to reach their learners; Teacher N pointed out, “I have a Master’s in teaching English, but none of my classes even talked about how to handle ELLs in a regular classroom setting. I feel this could be very valuable, as most teachers get assigned ELLs at some point.” ESL teachers could benefit as well because content area teachers might not feel as reliant on them to provide all accommodations and support. Other educators and students may be positively impacted by this training, also, even if it was not directly offered to them because they would be exposed to teachers who were now aware of the laws and carefully constructed studies encouraging the use of home language in a content area classroom and potentially talking about this with others. Teacher M shared the misconceptions she has heard, “Other educators in my building would see using home language resources in any form as offering a crutch to students and not engaging them in ‘productive struggle,’” and it seems that the best way of overcoming this way of thinking presented by those interviewed may be with access to knowledge.

While professional development or pre-service coursework related to teaching ELLs through the use of a variety of strategies was a request listed by the majority of study participants, it is also important to recognize a common thread not directly spoken but present nevertheless: the value that many in this study place on autonomy. As Teacher K stated, "My room, my rules!" Most participants shared that the reasons for using home language resources in an ELA classroom were related to personal beliefs based on experiences, not mandates handed down from administrators. Many enjoyed a high level of freedom in choosing curriculum. Some participants mentioned the considerations that might limit effective use of home language resources: students' literacy levels in the home language, research showing that other strategies work as well, and the added level of difficulty of using home languages when the ELA teacher does not know the home language. It brings up the question that if most ELA educators do not use home language resources and those that were interviewed for this study use them or help others use them based on their own experiences and opinions, would a directive to implement this intervention be successful?

Teacher F commented that in her educational setting, "We avoid using anecdotal observation to form conclusions," and that is a valid point for this qualitative study as well. From the words of these 14 participants, a deeper understanding of their thoughts and experiences has been obtained but whether or not their words can be applied to other circumstances is unknown. In analyzing the themes, it seems that based on the words of these teachers, having access to valid information and training regarding home language use takes precedence over having access to materials and gauging impact of home language use on students' learning in ELA class. According to those interviewed, a range

of home language materials can be found and students who are able to use these materials will have increased access to the content, but these words have little impact if the majority of educators, according to participants, lack the training or knowledge of this intervention to try it.

Summary

In this qualitative action research study using phenomenology, fourteen secondary ELA and ESL teachers shared their opinions, ideas, and experiences related to home language use for ELL students in the secondary ELA classroom. Through multiple interviews with participants, fourteen common themes were identified and described. These themes address the three research questions of the project: how ELA teachers obtain home language resources, how ELA teachers make decisions about the best use of these resources, and how ELA teachers feel that these resources have impacted their learners. To obtain home language resources, many educators involved in this study discussed the high number of resources available online, the importance of choosing materials carefully to determine that they are high quality, the high level of support available from other educators, and the limited support available from parents. To decide how and when to implement home language resources, participants mentioned the impact of their personal experiences on their curricular decisions, the increase in ELA content access as a result of using home language, the limited formal training opportunities offered, the freedom to design and implement their own curriculum, the varying levels of ELL students' literacy in the home language, and the perceived need to limit the use of home language resources. Participants reported a positive impact on student learning as a result of home language text use through the increase in content access and positive

responses by ELLs, but many also mentioned a variety of responses by non-ELLs and an emphasis upon using home language texts in conjunction with many other strategies.

In chapter five of this work, the correlation between published research and these study results will be discussed. Recommendations for educational policy related to ELLs, future ELA teaching practice, and future research endeavors will also be addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

Introduction

English language learners (ELLs) deserve access to the same rigorous, relevant, grade-level-appropriate knowledge and skills as other students in their content area high school classes (Lopez, Gundrum, & Scanlan, 2013). Although nearly 60 years of research has established a clear link between allowing ELLs to use home language texts in content areas to learn transferrable skills and knowledge (Peal & Lambert, 1962; Cummins, 1979, 2007; Goldenberg, 2008), the barriers to utilizing this strategy are numerous and many teachers do not attempt it (Collier & Thomas, 2017). Therefore, more qualitative research from educators with experience in using home language texts is needed to determine how the use of home language texts can help ELLs: which students can most benefit, which settings are most appropriate, and what length of time is best for this intervention (Goldenberg, 2013).

An action research phenomenological study of multiple secondary educators who use this intervention in secondary English language arts (ELA) classrooms helped me to determine how the use of home language texts can be implemented effectively when considering the steps that teachers must take to make these literacy opportunities available and beneficial for students. These qualitative findings which are unique to the various educational contexts studied may provide helpful information for my own benefit and for the benefit of other educators when paired with the educational research supporting the data gathered qualitatively (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Research Questions

Three research questions were considered when conducting this study:

1) How do ELA teachers obtain high quality home language resources for their ELL students?

2) How do ELA teachers make decisions about when and how to implement the use of home language materials?

3) How do ELA teachers feel that the use of home language resources has impacted their students' learning?

The first question aimed to determine how ELA teachers manage to obtain high quality home language resources for their ELL students despite limited funding or limited ability to use students' home languages to find materials or assess student work. Multiple participants of this study revealed that a wide variety of free materials are available online although the quality is not consistently good. Many reported that other educators provided assistance as well, but parents were not often asked to provide materials. Most stated that if an ELA teacher was determined to implement home language texts, there would be sufficient availability of resources.

The second research question related to how ELA teachers decide to use home language resources and how often they do this. Multiple educators reported that their personal life experiences, cultural or otherwise, impacted their views on home language use. A freedom to design and implement curriculum aided this decision. Many reported inadequate training opportunities to learn more about the importance of and best practices associated with integrating home language use in addition to the barrier of some students' low literacy levels in home languages. While many expressed the belief that home

language use increased content access, many also expressed the belief that limiting home language use would increase English proficiency.

The third and final research question was how ELA teachers in this study felt that home language resource use has impacted their students' learning. Besides reporting a perceived increase in content access when ELLs utilized home language resources, participants also reported the positive responses by ELLs. Many teachers reported a range of reactions from non-ELL students and other educators. All participants interviewed stated the importance of continuing to offer other accommodations for ELLs in addition to home language resources.

Summary of the Study

Answers to the research questions were determined through qualitative data collection of extensive interviews data with 14 ELL and ESL teachers in secondary school settings across the United States. Common themes garnered from the interviews led to three major points of the study: the importance of recognizing the autonomy that many teachers feel that they have and allowing them to maintain this autonomy, the importance of providing adequate training for all teachers of ELL students regarding a variety of ELL teaching strategies including, but not limited to home language use, and the importance of informing fellow educators of the wealth of available high-quality home language resources, especially those that are free or low-cost. These findings are well-supported by the information provided in existing literature on the topic. The majority of teachers in this study did not feel that they were limited in their ability to access texts in languages other than English and translated materials regardless of district- or school- funding levels; this was particularly true when participants looked for

materials in Spanish. Nearly all participants either directly stated that they lacked as much formal training in strategies for educating English language learners as they desired, or they revealed a lack of adequate training through stating information that was not supported by research or current educational policy. Finally, while it is imperative to provide educators with the tools and support that they need to successfully implement home language resources—the physical materials and training to use these materials—it is also imperative to recognize that educators will benefit from these tools and support only if they have made the decision for themselves that this intervention is something that they are interested in doing. If educators have not determined that this particular accommodation for ELLs is worthy of their limited time and attention, it does not matter how many hours of mandatory training and how many dollars a school or district devotes to this cause; teachers must have the intrinsic desire to use this accommodation for it to benefit students.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a synthesis of the existing published research with the results of this study and a proposal for a plan of action regarding needed changes in my own secondary ELA classroom that may pertain to other educators as well. In addition, suggestions for future topics of research and recommendations for those responsible for making policy decisions are provided as well.

Research Related to Study Data

Availability of Resources

In finding an answer to the research question of how ELA teachers obtain home language texts for their ELL students, it became apparent that a wide variety of resources can be found regardless of an educator's ability to understand a language other than

English. Although the research published on the subject of home language materials use that was found focuses on testing or promoting its effectiveness rather than suggesting specific sources or ascertaining an ease in acquiring it, there were other links between the results of this phenomenological study question data and previously published research.

Many of the participants of this study recommended online sources and other translation tools that they used to promote students' comprehension of new material when they were unable to provide translation services for those students. This correlates with the assertion of multiple researchers that only 15% of American educators are bilingual (Crawford & Krashen, 2007), but that should not be an impediment to facilitating the successful integration of home language resources because teachers do not need knowledge of a student's home language to promote its use among ELL students (Brogadier & Stuft, 2011; Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018). When translation services were mentioned as being a resource provided to students, Spanish was the language referenced, and many of the bilingual or multilingual online text sources recommended were written in Spanish. This information matches with the demographic information available about ELLs in the U.S.; according to Zinth (2013), 73% of ELLs in the U.S. speak Spanish as a home language.

While home language materials were easy for most participants to find, families of ELLs were not often described as a resource for obtaining them. A common theme reported in the study was the limited support either requested or received from the families of ELL students due to perceived cultural differences or difficulties in providing aid. For many Latino ELLs, home situations include poverty, mixed immigration statuses of family members, and movement between the U.S. and countries of origin

(Cohn, 2017; Lowenhaupt, 2016; Zang, Batalova, & Burrows, 2019). For all ELL families, there may be communication difficulties or differences in culturally-driven expectations about the roles of teachers and parents in education, and these factors may be overwhelming for some ELL parents (Wixom, 2015; Zinth, 2013). However, as several study participants mentioned, home language text use may be a bridge to these barriers, and family-school relationships might improve if more effort were made by some educators. This idea is supported by researchers Brogadier and Stuft (2011) and Lowenhaupt (2016), who explain that the use of home language resources and other culturally linked teaching methods or curriculum may be a way to engage families in their children's education; this is termed *additive acculturation*.

Additive acculturation, or the efforts by educators to build upon cultural or home language resources, was also evidenced by participants' assertion that other educators and community members frequently provided support to ELA teachers in providing materials or translation assistance. This is a key tenet of the social reconstruction theory of education: cooperation between educators and community members is essential (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). Education is not confined to the classroom (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). Through these efforts of collaboration with others, an asset-oriented mindset— ELL students have valuable knowledge upon which to build— is taken to the classroom as opposed to a deficit-oriented approach (de Jong, 2011; Hopkins, 2013; Paris, 2012). Educators' willingness to go above and beyond for their ELL students shows not just a commitment to meeting the academic needs of their learners, but also a deep sense of caring and concern for the emotional needs of their learners.

When and How to Use Home Language Resources

The educational decisions made by the teachers involved in this study of how and when to utilize home language materials were often based on their personal experiences and perceived freedom to make curricular decisions, not professional development opportunities related to the research that supports this intervention. None of the study participants mentioned professional development coursework or enforced mandates as a reason for integrating home language resources with their ELL students. In fact, multiple participants mentioned the lack of training that was offered to ELA teachers or other content area instructors either in their preservice coursework or in their current educational settings. At some points during the interviews, educators—including those who were certified to teach ESL—made statements that were incongruent with research or policy related to teaching ELLs, which were also indicative of a lack of training. This limited access to professional development is a well-documented issue in published research (Lopez, Scanlan, & Gundrum, 2013; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009; Zinth, 2013). Occasionally, students' ability level to use home language in academic settings was considered by participants; funding was not.

Few college students pursuing an education degree are required to extensively study issues and strategies related to helping ELLs learn. As of 2009, fewer than 20% of teacher education programs required a course related to ELLs or bilingualism methods (U.S. Government Accountability Office). Only four states require Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) training for educators, and South Carolina is not one of those four states (Zinth, 2013). Even in the four states that require TESOL training, there is no requirement that prospective teachers take a course in both home language

content delivery and bilingual methods (Lopez, Scanlan, & Gundrum, 2013). Placement in a school setting as a full-time educator does not necessarily lead to more education about this topic, either; only one in eight teachers has had more than eight hours of professional development regarding ELLs (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Even ESL certification status does not guarantee much knowledge of this infrequently used strategy of implementing home language texts. Several study participants who were full-time ESL teachers made statements revealing that they did not know that students have the right to use any properly implemented research-based strategies deemed effective, such as home language use (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 1991) and that individual districts must comply with state and federal law unless a waiver has been put into place which allows the law to be followed, but interpreted differently (Center for Public Education, 2006; Woods, 2017). The phrase "English only" was used several times by participants in describing the state's or school district's stance on education or program offered to ELLs, but there did not seem to be an awareness that educators retain the right to provide resources to students in languages other than English (LOTE) for the purpose of helping students to understand content (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

There was also confusion among some participants in the differences between ELA course skills which are often transferrable between languages and ESL course skills which promote the acquisition of English in the four domains of writing, reading, listening, and speaking (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008; South Carolina State Department of Education, 2015). Multiple teachers of this study mentioned the fear that students might rely on the content presented to them in a home language rather than

learning English as quickly as possible. However, course standards of content knowledge should not be ignored and this belief that home language use will hinder English acquisition is and unsupported by federal policy included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which emphasizes that allowing students to read texts written in home language improves ELLs' ability to understand both the English language and course content (One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015).

The belief that home language use will hinder English acquisition is not only unsupported by federal policy, but also unsupported by the research that has shaped the federal policy. According to 55 years of carefully constructed, carried out, documented, and replicated items of peer-reviewed quantitative research studies, all teachers—including the 85% who are monolingual—can and should try to utilize ELLs' home languages in the classroom (Genessee, 2017). However, while it is true that multiple researchers have determined that allowing students to read texts written in a student's home language in certain situations for certain lengths of time improves English acquisition (Francis et al., 2006; Genesee et al., 2005; Krashen, 2004; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008), it is also true that more research needs to be conducted to determine which students in which settings can benefit from this intervention, and for what length of time (Goldenberg, 2013).

Most participants of this study stated that a main consideration for how and when they implemented the use of home language resources depended on their ELLs' ability level in English; the majority reported that they used this accommodation only when their ELL students were unable to grasp the content in English, and therefore home language

materials were seen as a necessity to help students understand course content. Many expressed the belief that the overuse of home language would lead to diminished progress in English. It is not possible to make a generalization about home language use based on the interview data of only 14 individuals, but this theme should be studied more extensively in future research projects. It is unclear at this point whether the participants' views that an overuse of home language will eventually decrease the amount of English learned are accurate ideas based on their own experiences in a classroom or if this is an incorrect idea resulting from a lack of information available from existing research.

This confusion is understandable considering not just the lack of professional development offered and lack of research conducted due to the infrequency of this intervention's use, but also the seemingly mixed messages provided by policy. While the ESSA does legally protect the rights of students to learn in their home language and emphasizes content knowledge proficiency through school funding measures, it also places increased accountability on schools for the academic progress in English language proficiency of ELLs (One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015). If the ESL teachers involved in or mentioned in this study are reluctant to implement home language texts due to the fear that this will inhibit English language growth, which is the primary goal of their courses, it is understandable that they would often discourage home language use to content area teachers. Considering that ESL teachers are often the first or only support personnel available to content area teachers (Zinth, 2013), it becomes clearer why content area teachers are often under the impression that English proficiency supersedes content knowledge acquisition.

While inadequate training for teachers of ELLs may have impacted study participants' decisions regarding how and when to use home language resources, another factor that is important to consider is the statement of several participants regarding their ELL students' literacy in their home language. An estimated 39% of ELLs have below grade level proficiency in literacy in their home language (Zehler et al., 2008). Between 11 and 20 percent of high school ELLs are classified as students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) which impacts home language literacy (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). According to Parrish et al. (2002), this may be why only a fraction of teachers of any content area—25% or fewer—report using a different textbook or any other home language resource for ELLs.

The decision of how and when to use home language resources did not seem to correlate to the financial resources provided to the teachers in this research project. None of the study participants mentioned a lack of funding as a hindrance to implementing home language texts; this goes along with Wixom's (2015) assertion that funding levels alone do not lead to improved student performance. The decision of when and how to use home language texts is more dependent on cultural competency training and ELL instructional methods training, including the incorporation of home language texts, rather than simply providing monetary resources for teachers to purchase these materials.

Perceived Impact on Student Learning

The third research question of this phenomenological research study, how the use of home language materials has impacted student learning, yielded information from participants regarding the perceived increase in access to content knowledge, the positive responses from ELLs to this intervention, the range of reactions from non-ELLs and other

educators, and the importance of continuing to rely on other learner accommodations besides home language materials. The range of reactions from non-ELLs and other educators can be traced to the research provided in the previous section regarding the lack of training (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018; Parrish et al., 2002; Wixom, 2015; Zehler et al., 2008)—it is difficult to expect other educators or non-ELLs to understand and appreciate this intervention if they do not have access to the research that supports this practice. The data provided by teachers in this study regarding the increase in content access, positive ELL responses, and use of other accommodations are directly tied to available published research as well.

Nearly all interview respondents, 14 out of 15, mentioned the belief that the use of home language resources provided an improved learning environment for their ELLs and that these students appreciated the intervention. This positivity is supported by years of data gathered on the subject; home language use in content area classes has been described as the least utilized of all ELL interventions yet the most proven to be effective (Genesee, 2017; Goldenberg, 2008). The positive relationship between a student's first language and the acquisition of another language, or linguistic interdependence, was established in 1979 (Cummins) and the ability of students to transfer of knowledge and abilities from one language to support the acquisition of another, called common underlying proficiency, was established in 1981 (Cummins). Green (1998) found that students who were taught with home language resources in addition to English resources demonstrated better mastery of content than their peers who were taught only in English. Studies by Krashen (2004) and Cummins (2000) built upon the previous work to determine the same. Meta-analyses of the data available came to the same conclusion:

home language use in content area classrooms lead to better academic outcomes compared to English-only use in content area classrooms (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Rolstad et al., 2005; Slavin & Cheung, 2005).

Despite this wealth of data to support the inclusion of home language materials in the high school ELA classroom, every participant of this study mentioned the importance of situating home language use among other accommodations for ELL students as well. One participant mentioned that home language resource use was not a "magic answer" to reach every student, and all participants described other strategies they utilized in the classroom. This view is supported by the work of Brogadier and Stuft (2011) Goldenberg (2013), Rustrian (2018), and Echevarria, Frey, and Fischer (2015), who indicate that home language is a single strategy that can and should be used in conjunction with many others to promote successful learning outcomes for ELLs. Other strategies mentioned by participants and supported by research include differentiated instruction, modeling techniques, language supports, vocabulary development strategies, collaborative conversations, and engagement of meaningful dialogue (Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015). Also, educators should reflect high expectations for all students, have and show a sincere desire for ELL students to achieve success, stress functional communication instead of flawless communication, encourage the use of common visual language, and provide integrated thematic units (Brogadier & Stuft, 2011).

Just as the study participants stated, home language use in the content area high school classroom is not the best or only way to teach ELLs in ELA class. However, from the large amount of data in favor of using this intervention, it seems that this strategy is valid and may be integrated successfully into most ELL classrooms.

Action Plan

The findings from this context-dependent action research study may not be applicable to every educator depending on variables not experienced by participants (Herr & Anderson, 2015), but they will be used in my own South Carolina high school ELA classroom and shared with educators of other classrooms. The problem of practice, how to make decisions regarding home language use in my own educational setting considering the range of languages that my students speak at home and my inability to speak another language well, has been addressed through the research questions, design, and data collection of this qualitative phenomenological study.

From the extensive study of published research regarding home language use and in-depth interviews with 14 educators who have experience with this phenomenon, I gained information that will help me to make better decisions in my own classroom. As a result of this study, I now have a better understanding of federal law and how it relates to state law. South Carolina, like other states, must follow federal legislation, and therefore, the use of home language is allowed (Woods, 2017) and encouraged (One hundred fourteenth Congress of the United States of America, First Session, 2015). With the large number of free or low-cost online multi-language materials recommended by participants, it is possible to integrate home language texts without spending much money or having the ability to speak students' home languages (although I should consider the inaccuracy of translation programs such as Google Translate before using these resources). Based on the words of the teachers involved in this study and the unavailability of large-scale quantitative research about properly implementing home language resources (Goldenberg, 2013), I should approach home language use with each

student on a case-by-case basis, considering home language literacy level, progress in English, motivation level to acquire content knowledge, interest in using home language, and specific transferrable skills to be taught in the lesson.

The knowledge gained from this action research project will help me to integrate home language resources more effectively, and I strongly believe in the importance of this practice in creating a more supportive classroom environment and enhanced learning experience for my ELLs. In addition to this accommodation, I will continue to use other strategies for teaching learners who are in the process of becoming bilingual. Other strategies for teaching ELLs, such as using visual aids, grouping students together, and providing simplified texts, may benefit all learners and will serve to further assist ELLs in their acquisition of a second or other language (Brogadier & Stuft, 2011; Echevarria, Frey, & Fischer, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013; Rustrian, 2018). While the use of home language resources has been proven through research to be effective and understood more deeply as a result of this phenomenological study, I owe it to my students to provide as many supports as possible to help them to become successful.

Although my ELL students may appreciate the availability of these resources, I have learned from this research that other educators and non-ELL students may not have yet had the opportunity to understand the benefits of home language use in an ELA classroom. Therefore, the results of this study may benefit others outside my own classroom as well. The teachers with whom I have interacted tend to be a wonderful and collaborative group of individuals; we have sought each other's help and support on numerous occasions, and opportunities to share knowledge about this research project have arisen without additional effort. To my surprise, I have learned that on many

occasions, teachers are placed in an ESOL classroom without having an ESL teaching certification; several of these hardworking, caring individuals have reached out to me when they needed help finding an updated accommodations page, a piece of state legislation that showed support for home language use, or even a full-length accommodations presentation to submit to their faculty.

Additionally, the creation of an informative brochure, slides presentation, and website to share with my colleagues are appropriate interventions (Samson & Collins, 2012; Zinth, 2013). The slides presentation and brochure have already been requested by several educators and districts and will be provided upon successful defense of this dissertation. Before finishing this research, I was asked to submit a proposal to speak at a statewide educators' language conference about this topic; I did not feel qualified at the time to do so, but will consider this now. There is a statewide conference for English teachers at which I would consider presenting this information, also, as well as several professional development opportunities to share information in or near my school district. A website to share information about home language policy and research along with specific links to home language resources will be created as well.

Recommendations for Policy/Practice

As interview data was collected, organized by theme, and paired with existing research, three common threads became apparent: the value that many teachers place on having autonomy in their individual classroom settings, the limited amount of ESL training offered to most teachers, and the ease in finding home language materials online. From these findings, it is recommended that expanded professional development opportunities should be made available to all educators. This does not have to be a

complex, time-consuming endeavor; perhaps a brochure or slides presentation with an overview of the benefits of incorporating home language and a review of other research-based strategies for teaching ELLs could be offered. Additional information provided in the brochure or slides could include methods that educators could use for procuring these resources: websites, setting-specific community partners, and local educators working in the school or district who are able to supply materials or assistance. While teachers may appreciate learning more about home language use in the content area classroom, it is essential to remember that one of the aspects of teaching that many educators find enjoyable is a high level of autonomy; as such, this approach might best be appreciated if it is simply recommended as a possible strategy to use voluntarily, not as an enforced strategy to be used involuntarily.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study yielded beneficial information that will improve my own practice, there were limitations in the data collection related to my strategies and timing for finding study participants that should be considered and may have impacted the results. Because large-scale, quantitative studies to determine for whom, for when, and for how the use of home language texts can be most beneficial are not currently available (Goldenberg, 2015), and my own qualitative research of fourteen individuals using this intervention was limited in time and scope, it is recommended that more research is conducted to find more in-depth answers to the research questions.

Existing research is scarce for several reasons. Quantitative studies involving a large number of educators and ELL students are difficult to conduct due to the low number of ELA teachers who use this intervention (Collier & Thomas, 2017) and due to

the subjective, non-replicable nature of each ELA learning context (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). This difficulty arose in my own attempts to gather research, as well and was exacerbated by the tight schedule of time allotted to gain IRB approval, gain school district approval, collect data, and write results. My initial goal of locating and interviewing between twelve and fifteen monolingual ELA teachers who have been minimally trained in ESOL strategies may have been more successful during the summer months when teachers typically have much more free time to participate in extra projects.

Of the research gathered in this phenomenological study, primarily of interest is the assertion of multiple participants that home language resources are most appropriately used with ELLs who are early in the stages of becoming bilingual. Published research states that allowing students access to home language texts improves educational outcomes, but this is equivocal: beyond a general guideline to incorporate these materials, information is not given about which students can most benefit from this intervention, for what length of time, and in what educational settings (Francis et al., 2006; Genesee et al., 2005; Krashen, 2004; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Did the participants in my study consider home language resources to be best used with newcomers because they have tried it many times with advanced ELLs and it does not work well, or because they have not had an opportunity to see the advantages of this strategy when used with advanced learners of English? Further study to address this question would be helpful.

Conclusion

In this phenomenological action research study, fourteen secondary ELA and ESL teachers shared their opinions, ideas, and experiences related to home language use for

ELL students in secondary ELA classroom. From these participants' interviews, fourteen common themes emerged which address the research questions of this study: how ELA teachers obtain home language materials for their ELLs, how they make decisions about the effective use of these materials, and how they feel that these materials have impacted their students' learning. To obtain home language resources, many educators involved in this study discussed the high number of resources available online, the importance of choosing materials carefully to determine that they are high quality, the high level of support received from other educators, and the limited support received from parents. To decide how and when to implement home language resources, participants mentioned the impact of their personal experiences on their curricular decisions, the increase in ELA content access as a result of using home language, the limited formal training opportunities offered, the freedom to design and implement their own curriculum, the varying levels of ELL students' literacy in the home language, and the perceived need to limit the use of home language resources. Participants reported a positive impact on student learning as a result of home language text use through the increase in content access and positive responses by ELLs, but many also mentioned a variety of responses by non-ELLs and an emphasis upon using home language texts in conjunction with many other strategies.

This information will be used to strengthen my practice as an educator and may also be used to help others make educational decisions regarding home language use in their educational settings. Before embarking upon this research project, I was aware of my ignorance regarding the benefits of using home language resources to teach English language arts to English language learners, but I assumed that this lack of knowledge was

due to my lack of teaching experience. I assumed that most others in the field of education were familiar with the laws and research that support emergent bilingual students' right to learn using their home language when their teachers deem it to be appropriate. As a result of reviewing the existing literature and carrying out an in-depth, phenomenological study on the topic, I now have a deeper understanding of why this accommodation is used so infrequently and how to encourage others to use it: not simply by providing information about *how* and *when* it should be done, or explaining *what impact* it has on learners, but rather conveying *why* it should be done and explaining *who* has determined already if it is an effective intervention. It seems that many teachers, including me, might not be concerned about how to do something if they do not first understand why they should be doing it.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH STUDY ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Are you a secondary ELA or ESOL teacher?	YES	NO
Do you teach or have you taught English language learner students?	YES	NO
Do you use or have you used home language materials for your ELLs? (Examples: German novel for German-speaking student, Spanish-speaking student allowed to look up information in Spanish for research report) If you are an ESOL teacher, do you help provide home language resources for students to use in ELA class?	YES	NO
Are you conversational or fluent in a language besides English?	YES	NO
Are you willing and available to arrange an interview soon to discuss the details of your experiences with home languages? This could take place through e-mail, over the phone, or through video call.	YES	NO
Are you willing and available to arrange subsequent interviews in the near future to clarify information, elaborate, or check to ensure information provided is correct?	YES	NO

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part A: Positionality

Teaching Environment:

1. Where do you teach?
   (A general description of your school setting is fine, such as "a large middle school in southern Illinois with a small ELL population." The researcher does not need specific identifying details such as name or town in which school is located.)

2. What do you teach?

3. How many students you teach, and how many of these are ELLs?

4. How much choice you had in your students and the curriculum that you teach?

5. How would you describe the languages and backgrounds of your ELL students?

6. How would you describe the learning environment that you provide for ELLs? This may include the bell schedule, learning supports in place, accommodations or modifications you make for them, or curriculum that is offered.

Personal Background:

7. How would you describe your personal knowledge or experience with using languages other than English, and how has this helped or hindered you with your ELLs?

8. What are your personal experiences with traveling or interacting with other cultures?

9. Describe the amount of training or certification in TESOL, EFL, or TEFL that you have.

10. Why did you become a teacher?

11. How much teaching experience do you have?

Part B: Home Language Materials

Description of Materials:

12. Describe the non-English resources (home language resources) used by your students.

13. How are you able to locate these home language materials?

    What support do you get from other educators, such as ESL teachers, translators, or media center specialists?

    Where do you get literature translations? Who pays for it?

    What support do you get from the students or their parents in providing these materials?

Decisions about Materials

14. Why did you decide to integrate home language texts into your curriculum?

15. What other teaching accommodations do you use for ELLs beside home language?

16. Approximately what percent of the accommodations that you use are home language resources?

17. What is the most difficult aspect of using home languages in your ELA class?

18. When you're designing a project, how do you decide if a student should use home language resources or not?

19. Which of your students may use these resources?

Perceived Impact on Student Learning

20. How do other educators in your setting view the use of home language in your class?

21. How do your ELL students respond to the use of home languages?

22. How do your non-ELL students respond to the use of home languages for ELL students?

23. Describe the most positive responses you've received from ELL students, other educators, and non-ELL students regarding the use of home languages.

24. Describe the most negative responses you've received from ELL students, other educators, and non-ELL students regarding the use of home languages.

25. What advice would you give to a teacher who wanted to implement home language resources but had never done this before?

APPENDIX C: THEMES REFLECTION FORM

18 Themes Regarding Home Language Resource Use in Secondary ELA Classrooms:

Research Question #1: How do ELA teachers obtain home language resources?

Theme 1: It can be difficult to provide home language resources to students who speak a language other than Spanish or English.

Theme 2: Google Translate is not always an appropriate accommodation to use.

Theme 3: Parents often provide limited support to educators.

Theme 4: Educators such as ESL teachers or media specialists provide a high level of support to ELA teachers with ELL students.

Theme 5: I (the ESL or ELA teacher) would like a list of ways to incorporate home language in the classroom.

Theme 6: The ELA teachers in my educational setting can find a variety of home language materials and support by looking online, asking media center specialists, or working with others in my school setting such as ESL teachers or translators.

RQ #2: How do ELA teachers decide how and when to implement home language resources?

Theme 7: Home language materials are most beneficial to students with a low level of English acquisition.

Theme 8: Many ELLs are not literate in their home language.

Theme 9: ELA teachers do not have many professional development opportunities regarding home language use for ELLs or the legality of using this intervention.

Theme 10: ELA teachers should have the freedom to choose if they will incorporate home language materials in their class; this should not be a prescriptive program mandated by the district or school.

Theme 11: A reason for ELA teachers to incorporate home languages is the desire for all students to be included and to learn content of the ELA curriculum.

Theme 12: The issue of standardized testing interferes with ELA teachers' desire or ability to teach using home languages; most ELLs do not have the option to take standardized tests in their home languages.

Theme 13: Teachers' positive attitudes toward home language use might be related to exposure with other cultures and languages.

Theme 14: ELA teachers have a lot of flexibility and freedom in choosing curricular materials (although some texts are required reading for a particular grade level).

RQ #3: How have home language resources impacted student learning?

Theme 15: Home language materials make ELA content more accessible to some ELL students.

Theme 16: Most students, both ELLs and non-ELLs, respond positively when an ELL student has access to home language materials.

Theme 17: Teachers should be careful to avoid an over-reliance on home language materials.

Theme 18: Home language use is not the only or best way to teach ELLs; teachers should consider other strategies as well.