

What Not to Do

- Do not translate from Spanish to English or vice versa.
- Do not choose unrelated Dictados.

Bad Example

I got in trouble because of you.
What happened at recess?
There's a TV in the living room.

- Do not mark the words spelled correctly.

In summary, theDictado is an effective cross-language method that provides emerging bilingual children with the opportunity to develop metalinguistic awareness in two languages. Because it invites a focused examination of the linguistic similarities and differences across languages, it affords children extended opportunities to expand their written knowledge in both Spanish and English. TheDictado, when integrated as part of Spanish literacy and literacy-based ELD, is effective at combining listening, speaking, reading, writing, and metalinguistic awareness.

Conclusion

Writing instruction is as important to biliteracy development as instruction in oracy, reading, and metalinguage. The instructional approaches used within Literacy Squared are part of a holistic biliteracy framework. In addition to theDictado, they include modeled, shared, collaborative, and independent writing. As with the teaching of reading, a greater emphasis is given to shared and collaborative writing. These instructional approaches are recommended in lieu of a process approach, such as writers' workshop, because they allow teachers to demonstrate explicitly the skills and knowledge about language involved in both the writing process and product.

The importance of purposefully connecting the four core instructional elements of the Literacy Squared model (writing, reading, oracy, and metalinguage) cannot be overemphasized. When literacy activities are meaningful and authentic, writers read and talk about what they or others have written; similarly, through writing and talking they respond to what they have read. Chapters 9 and 10 have examples of integrated biliteracy units that highlight the reciprocal relationship between reading, writing, oracy, and metalinguage; these units demonstrate how that relationship is reflected in well-planned lessons.

Questions for Reflection and Action

- What would your literacy block schedule look like with the integration of the recommended approaches to writing instruction described in this chapter?
- How might you begin to modify writing instruction to address the language and literacy strengths and needs of emerging bilingual students in your classroom?
- How does your school curriculum address the aspects of writing development promoted through the use of theDictado? How can theDictado enhance or augment your current instructional practices?
- Which beginning steps might you take to implement theDictado in your classroom? What collaboration structures are necessary for a schoolwide implementation?

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Metalinguage

I have never known what is Arabic or English, or which one was really mine beyond any doubt. What I do know, however, is that the two have always been together in my life, one resonating in the other, sometimes ironically, sometimes nostalgically, most often each correcting, and commenting on, the other. Each can seem like my absolutely first language, but neither is.

Edward Said, 1999, *Out of Place: A Memoir*

Key Terms

Así se dice	Cross-language connections
Anchor charts	Funds of knowledge
Code-switching (intersegmentally/intrasegmentally)	Literal translations
Cognates	Metalinguage
Concurrent translation	Strategic use of language

Guiding Questions

- Why are metalinguistic skills important for emerging bilingual students?
- What does it mean to use language "strategically" in a bilingual context?
- How should translation and code-switching be handled in the classroom?

Becoming literate in two languages differs from becoming literate in one. An important difference is that students benefit from having two languages that interact and complement one another. As such, a critical conceptual construct of the Literacy Squared holistic biliteracy framework is attention to the development of metalinguage.

Briefly defined, metalinguage is thinking and talking about language. It is the case of biliteracy, understanding the relationships between and within languages. It is the language used to talk about language and its mastery allows students to analyze how language can be leveraged to express meaning. The development of metalinguage includes the ability to identify, analyze, and manipulate language forms, and to analyze sounds, symbols, grammar, vocabulary, and language structures between and across languages. It has been identified as one of three fundamental skills, along with the psycholinguistic abilities to decode and comprehend, required for a person to become literate (Blahytsok, 2007; Koda & Zehler, 2008).

Within Literacy Squared, we emphasize consciously elevating students' abilities to detect, understand, and talk about how their languages are similar and dissimilar, so that they can use this knowledge to develop a self-extending bilingual communicative system.

We recommend that metalinguistic awareness be developed in Spanish, English, and across languages and propose that it constitute about 25% of literacy instruction.

Importance of Metalinguage: What the Research Says

Research reveals that when learners of two languages discover similarities and differences in the two language systems, they tend to have improved phonological awareness in comparison to monolingual children (Campbell & Sais, 1995; Koda & Zehler, 2008). In a recent study, children who were read to using dual language books to help them make cross-language connections between French, Punjabi, Urdu, and English demonstrated greater gains in graphophonemic knowledge than children who were read to only in English (Naqvi, Thorne, McKeough, & Pfitscher, 2010). This gain occurred specifically in the children who spoke the additional language at home. Importantly, however, the children who did not speak the additional language showed no deficit in emergent literacy competencies; that is, the exposure to additional languages in the books they were read did not slow their literacy development in the languages they were already using. Finally, we know that the development of metalinguage results in an improved ability to compare languages in terms of words and sentence structures (Sneddon, 2008) and an enhanced ability to transfer conceptual knowledge and skills across languages (Cummins et al., 2005).

As with the other quadrants of the holistic biliteracy framework, it is evident that there is research support for the development of metalinguage and metalinguistic awareness. This chapter outlines and explains the specific strategies that teachers can use to attend deliberately and explicitly to the development of metalinguage across languages.

Cross-Language Connections

In Literacy Squared, we refer to the development of metalinguage across languages as cross-language connections. Cross-language connections are purposefully planned opportunities to compare languages. They require students to work in groups or pairs to examine the similarities and differences in their languages. These higher-order thinking tasks are bidirectional in nature. In other words, they involve moving from Spanish to English as well as English to Spanish. This conceptual construct was added to our holistic biliteracy framework to ensure that direct and explicit attention is paid to children who are developing metalinguage regarding Spanish and English similarities and differences. The teaching of cross-language connections involves an explicit awareness of linguistic form and structure, separate from content, and is an essential element of literacy and biliteracy development.

Within Literacy Squared, we use two types of cross-language connections. The first refers to specific methods that the model has adapted from Mexico and modified for use in U.S. English/Spanish literacy programs. The second focuses on teaching children the metacognitive linguistic skills of cross-language expression in reading and writing (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010).

As Valdés and Figueroa (1994) and others have demonstrated, cross-language adaptation and conceptualization are skills that represent the most sophisticated types of bilingualism and biliteracy. Opportunities for translation and adaptation across languages are ideal strategies for developing these cross-language metacognitive skills.

Processing and communicating across languages affords students the opportunity to strengthen their understanding of the reciprocal nature of languages. Increasingly, bilingual scholars advocate exploring practices that nurture these competencies (Cummins, 2008; García, 2009; Hopewell, 2011). In fact, a growing number of scholars currently argue that strictly separating languages is not always appropriate (Canağarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Cafo, 2007; García, 2011; Wei & Wu, 2009). Flexible pedagogical practices that expand students' abilities to analyze the similarities and differences between and within their languages deepen understanding of subject matter, strengthen language competence, and nurture powerful literacy competencies.

By definition, these comparisons require that we create spaces in which students and teachers can purposefully and deliberately use and examine their languages. Doing so is a direct challenge to programs that insist on strict language separation. While we understand the need for strong language models and the importance of practicing and using a language in order to acquire it well, we conclude that there is much to be gained in allowing for a hybrid time/space in which languages can be compared side by side. This cannot happen if we are never permitted to examine or reference both languages in a single environment.

A Word of Caution about Concurrent Translation. Within Literacy Squared, teachers are encouraged to plan the use of both languages strategically, so as to maximize learning and to achieve the greatest efficiency in the classroom environment: the cross-language strategies recommended in the holistic biliteracy framework are described in the following sections. We strongly caution, however, against the use of concurrent translation! Concurrent translation teaches students that they need not attend to information presented in the second language (Faltus, 1996). Because they know the same information will be stated in their first language, there is a natural tendency for students to tune out when the less familiar language is used. The direct translation of every statement or instruction eliminates an authentic need to engage with and practice the newly acquired language. Creating spaces for bilingualism and the strategic use of language is not meant to replace the need to spend significant amounts of time focusing on only one language at a time.

Teaching Strategies to Develop Cross-Language Connections

Related to the idea that teachers need to make connections between the literacy environments is the idea that teachers need to use explicit cross-language strategies when creating Literacy Squared Lessons. Cross-language strategies are focused on teaching children the metalinguage skills of cross-language expression in reading and writing. They may be either formally planned or implemented informally when children need clarifications to ensure their understanding of lessons. The idea is to extend students' knowledge from one language to the other and to make differences explicit to children through direct instruction.

Within Literacy Squared, we suggest that effective formal strategies for teaching cross-language connections include the use of bilingual or dual language books, cognate instruction, the strategic use of language, and a unique approach we call *así se dice* (that's how you say it). All of these strategies share certain characteristics:

- Strategic integration into literacy instruction
- Purposeful planning and explicit teaching
- Explicit guidance to promote higher-order thinking
- Focus on group and collaborative projects
- Bidirectional (Spanish to English and English to Spanish)

Conversely, cross-language strategies do *not* include concurrent translation, individual assignments, or unidirectional activities.

Bilingual Books

Books written in two languages (bilingual books) offer unique educational opportunities for emerging bilingual students and their teachers. In bilingual books both languages are represented in one text. Alternatively, one might use two separate interpretations of the same story or text by obtaining texts written in only one language (e.g., a Spanish language text of *La caperucita roja* and an English language text of *Little Red Riding Hood*). Because an appropriate translation should be a cultural and linguistic adaptation, the versions may vary across languages. (Note that literal translations should be used with caution; they are often inferior and use unnatural language that can be more problematic than helpful as children strive to comprehend.) The key feature is that the story or concept is essentially the same.

Bilingual books are commonly used around the world as a way of developing cross-language connections and metalinguage. Using bilingual or dual language books promotes children's cultural awareness in that students become attentive to the uniqueness of their own and others' cultures as well as becoming conscious of the similarities among cultures. Further, the use of bilingual books has been demonstrated to improve literacy achievement in English, even in schools where English is the sole medium of instruction. In these studies, bilingual books were used in after-school literacy programs (Erns-Slavt, 1997; Rodriguez-Valls, 2011). Bilingual books provide opportunities for parents and students to utilize knowledge of their first language to acquire reading skills in the second language. They also assist teachers to develop a cultural biliteracy in the classroom that values and embraces the bilingualism experienced by students in their daily lives. Carefully chosen books inspire language lessons that extend emerging bilingual children's proficiencies in reading, writing, oracy, and cross-language metalinguistic awareness.

The use of bilingual books as a method to teach cross-language connections in both Spanish and English is an essential part of the Literacy Squared instructional framework. Incorporating bilingual books gives emerging bilingual children an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Spanish texts and extends their linguistic skills in English. In other words, a book that has been used to foster Spanish language literacy may also be used in the literacy-based ELD lesson, but to accomplish different tasks and learning objectives. When students are able to understand the story line and book structure with ease, they are more prepared to focus their energy on practicing and learning the oracy and literacy goals of a particular session. Bilingual books are a powerful tool for developing conceptual and strategic knowledge in one language and linguistic knowledge in the other. When using bilingual books, teachers can reduce the cognitive load of English text comprehension and instead focus on building students' English language skills. The use of bilingual books allows teachers to show students explicitly how to make use of both their concurrent translation, but rather to utilize both languages in a deliberately coordinated way to deepen conceptual knowledge about literacy, to activate prior knowledge or cultural schema, and to help children make connections. We recommend beginning the use of bilingual texts in kindergarten (or sooner, if possible) to focus on developing students' bilingual texts deepen vocabulary in both languages, create a cognitive awareness of the nuance in inter- and intracultural communication, and foster self-reflection on students' own bilingualism.

In order for these lessons to be effective, teachers need to consider carefully the book selection and their students' literacy and language needs. After selecting a book that is interesting and culturally relevant to students, the teacher should determine the skill or strategy for which the book can be used. Then the teacher proceeds to create a lesson for this population, because what students learn in Spanish can be transferred to English. However, students will need support in developing the necessary language to communicate their understanding in English. Thus, the English objectives must be strategically and thoughtfully planned and should focus on the language that students need to learn to interact successfully with the text. To achieve this goal, oracy objectives that include targeted language structures, vocabulary, and dialogue must be identified for each lesson.

Students learning to read and write in two languages have the advantage of being able to create, interpret, and process text by accessing multiple linguistic resources. Bilingual books serve as mentor texts for capitalizing on these linguistic advantages and as anchors for connecting language and literacy environments. They provide rich models for enjoying and celebrating biliteracy. Their inclusion in literacy lessons and in classroom libraries sends a very strong message to children and families that all of their languages and cultures are valued. They provide a commendable way to keep languages in high profile and support a natural connection between home and school. Finally, and importantly, the different experiences with each text complement each other and increase access to knowledge and learning.

Cognate Instruction

Cognates are words in different languages that share an etymological root resulting in similar spelling, meaning, and pronunciation. There are thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, Spanish/English cognates. They derive from the same Latin roots and range from being identical to sharing morphological, orthographic, syntactical, and semantic characteristics. For example, *hospital* and *hospital* are identical in spelling and meaning. Their pronunciation varies, but only slightly. *Naturamente* and *naturally* share meaning and morphology; yet, they are spelled differently because the suffixes *-mente* and *-ly* accomplish the same linguistic function vary by language. In this case, the suffixes *-mente* and *-ly* are language-specific ways to form adverbs. Then, there are simple relationships that students can be taught that will help them to recognize and utilize a greater breadth of words. For instance, most words in Spanish that end in *-dad* can be assumed to end in *-ty* in English (e.g., *electrical/electricity*; *universidad/university*). The importance of explicit cognate instruction is to help students understand how their two (or more) languages interact in predictable and patterned ways that can expand their ability to comprehend and create text exponentially. We must caution, however, that cognates are best taught in meaningful contexts. We do not advocate the memorization of lists of words or rules. Also, it is important to teach students that words that look and sound alike are not always cognates (e.g., *exitio/text* or *sucesos/exit*). Teach students to attend to the context to determine if a word that appears to be a cognate makes sense semantically given the words around it.

In a recent study of Spanish/English cognates, Lubliner and Hiebert (2011) conducted three separate analyses of Spanish/English cognates. Results revealed that both the general service list (GSL) and the academic word list (AWL) contain a substantial number of Spanish/English cognates. The GSL is a list of 2,000 frequently used base words in English identified by West (1953). The AWL contains 570 words that are not included in the GSL, but are found frequently in university textbooks across disciplines (Coxhead, 2000). In their examination, Lubliner and Hiebert concluded that carefully designed cognate instruction may provide Spanish-speaking children with a "cognate advantage" in comprehending English academic texts. However, it is important to note that despite the potential advantage that cognates offer, bilingual students often fail to notice cognate pairs even when they appear to be quite transparent (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Nagy, Garcia, Durgunoglu, & Hamlin-Bhatt, 1993). For example, Nagy et al. (1993) documented that grades 5 and 6 bilingual, biliterate Spanish-speaking students circled less than half of the known cognates that they encountered on a test of cognate identification. The authors concluded that even though cognates can be matched in orthographic, phonologic and semantic ways, this matching needs to be directly taught to students.

In Literacy Squared, we recommend that teachers use explicit instruction to teach what cognates are and how they work across languages. We also ask instructors to teach students that knowing cognates can help them become more sophisticated readers and writers in both languages. To illustrate, it is important that children understand first and foremost that true cognates share a semantic meaning across languages. That they also share similar spelling and/or morphological patterns is important, but the major understanding needs to be in the meaning of the word. If cognates are to help children make cross-language connections, then meaning must be at the center of instruction. Figure 5.1 provides an example of cognates found in the Spanish and English versions of the fable *Leonard the Lion and Raymond the Mouse*, as identified by students from a grade 3 classroom in Salem, Oregon. Figure 5.2 illustrates a cognate chart from a grade 4 classroom in Oregon, showing words commonly used in their classroom. In this chart, the teacher has helped children identify words with the same meaning in Spanish and English, and she has used a color-coding scheme to differentiate cross-language differences in spelling.

Understanding the power of cognates aids students in reading comprehension and in writing. It is a literacy strategy unique to bilingual learners. Through direct instruction and modeling, teachers help students develop their abilities to draw upon their knowledge of word-level visual and auditory relationships to expand their comprehension skills. Cognate recognition and use is a cognitive skill that helps students interpret and produce language by synthesizing what they know across languages.

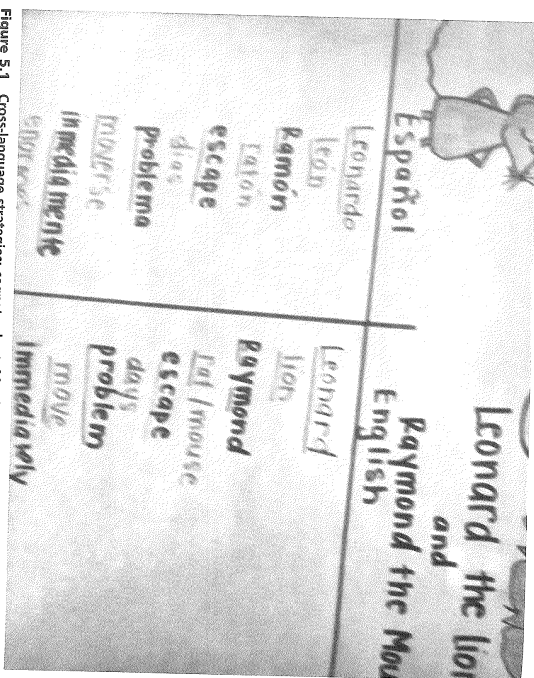


Figure 5.1 Cross-language strategies: cognate chart. Ms. Green had students identify the cognates used in the English and Spanish versions of the fable she was teaching, *Leonardo el León y Ramón el Ratón* and *Leonard the Lion and Raymond the Mouse*. (Courtesy of Nubia Green, grade 3 teacher, Highland Elementary School, Salem, OR.)

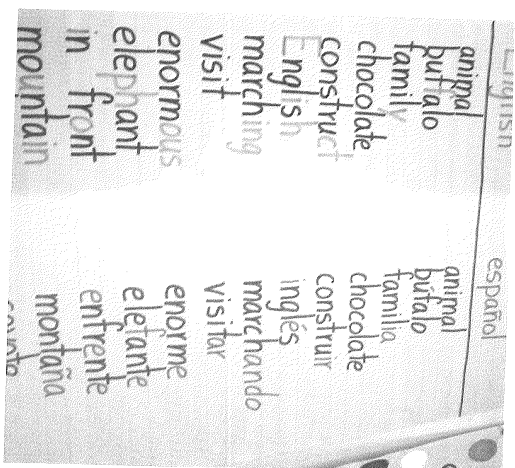


Figure 5.2 Cognate chart: words in our classroom. This cognate chart illustrates different spelling patterns in words in Spanish/English with the same meaning. (Courtesy of Jill Eke, grade 3 teacher, Mary Eyre Elementary, Salem, OR.)

Strategic Use of Language

When language environments are planned so that all languages are understood to be resources that can be accessed and invoked strategically, in service to language and literacy acquisition, space is created in which the deliberate and purposeful use of Spanish and/or English facilitates accelerated learning. Knowing two languages not only augments meaning-making repertoires, it expands teaching repertoires (Hopewell, 2011).

Research to support the strategic use of language is grounded in González, Moll, and Amaniti's (2005) work around identifying and capitalizing on children's funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge are those skills, concepts, bodies of knowledge, and ways of knowing that students acquire in their families and communities; they include language and ways of conveying meaning. Beginning in the mid- to late 1980s, Moll et al. conducted a series of studies exploring the use of a language other than English in the literacy environment (Díaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986; Moll, 1988; Moll & Díaz, 1985). They found that successful teachers of bilingual students rejected a reductionist philosophy that valued English above Spanish and encouraged the strategic use of Spanish, so that students could demonstrate reading comprehension when in the English environment. Further, they demonstrated advanced learning gains for students when their teachers sometimes reverted to Spanish.

More recent research shows that hybrid language environments, where all languages are accessed and used strategically and systematically to maximize mutual understanding and to aid in inquiry and problem solving within the learning context, expand opportunities for collaboration and language acquisition (Creese & Blackledge, 2011; García, 2009; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Martí-Beltrán, 2010). Research also confirms that hybrid literacy practices result in greater linguistic flexibility on the part of Spanish-speaking bilingual students, as demonstrated through translation skills, a tendency toward cross-language collaboration, and the development of biliteracy (Mandryk, 2002).

Careful attention to how and when each language is used can enhance a student's understanding of linguistic interconnectiveness. There are three formal methods used within Literacy Squared to access and use language purposefully and strategically: the preview-review strategy, the keyword method, and the incorporation of bilingual anchor charts.

Preview-Review. Preview-review is a technique in which the teacher takes a few minutes prior to teaching a lesson and a few minutes following the lesson to have a brief discussion with the students to activate prior knowledge and to summarize key concepts for the topic to be taught (Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999). Though the majority of the instructional time is spent in the targeted language, these few minutes at the beginning and end of a lesson were shown to increase student learning by allowing students to activate schema and solidify essential concepts.

Keyword. Another purposeful technique is the keyword method developed for language learning (Avila & Sadoski, 1996). When using this technique, the teacher asks students to create mnemonic devices in which they associate the form and meaning of a word in the target language with a word in the first language. Mnemonics are memory strategies that increase vocabulary and concept retention. Often the relationship between the associated words is acoustic and visual rather than semantic. For instance, to learn the English word "cart" a student might associate it with the Spanish word *carra* (postal letter). After selecting a word that sounds and looks similar, the student would create or be given an image that associates the divergent meanings (e.g., a cart carrying a mailbox). These visual, auditory, and semantic connections aid the student in recalling low-frequency vocabulary. Avila and Sadoski demonstrated that the keyword method is useful within and across languages, and that it aids in long-term vocabulary retention.

Anchor Charts. Third, we encourage teachers to create anchor charts with their bilingual students to provide explicit comparisons of language features (Buhrow & García, 2006). These anchor charts are co-created by teachers and students and serve to hold a lesson firmly in place. The chart is a stable reference that students can return to when in need of clarification. Anchor charts are used to record and display student thinking, key concepts,

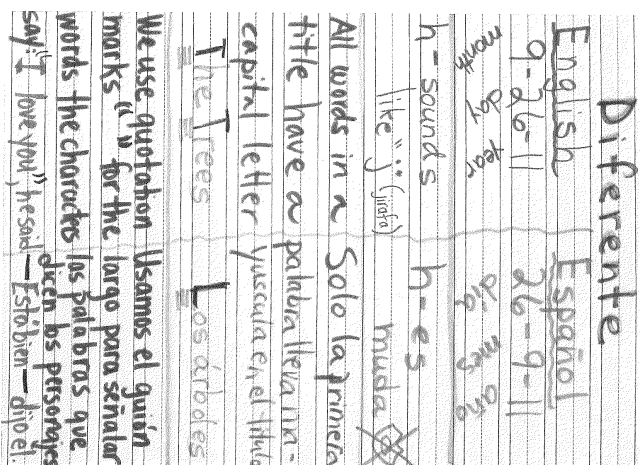


Figure 5.3 Cross-language strategies. This anchor chart shows different writing conventions between English and Spanish. (Courtesy of Nubia Green, grade 3 teacher, Highland Elementary School, Salem, OR.)

and essential skills. These tools for contrastive analysis help students to see the connections across literacy environments. Figure 5.3 is an example of a bilingual anchor chart created in a grade 4 classroom. This chart illustrates several important differences between Spanish and English with which students are grappling: annotation devices for writing the date in Spanish and English; differentiation between how the letter “h” works in Spanish and English; differences in how titles of books and stories are written in Spanish and English; and differences in punctuating dialogue between Spanish and English.

Informal Strategies. Finally, it is worth noting that some cross-linguistic strategies recommended by Literacy Squared are neither formal nor explicit; rather, they are informal and meant to be used depending on context and student need. The strategic use of both languages in a given lesson can be very effective and efficient.

As we’ve pointed out, concurrent translation is an ineffective method of bilingual instruction. However, during a literacy-based ELD lesson, Spanish might be used by a teacher in the following ways:

- To clarify conceptual confusions
- To activate prior knowledge or cultural schema
- To help children make personal connections to the material
- To allow children to discuss and process information heard in English (e.g., when children are talking with one another, or when a child can understand information in English but can’t yet produce what he or she understands in English).

When students clearly do not understand a concept during literacy-based ELD, we suggest the teacher simply tell the children what the word is in Spanish rather than spend

ing precious time and energy trying to teach the concept. For example, in one classroom we were observing the children were confused by the phrase “to make believe.” The teacher tried to explain the phrase in various ways but the children were still clearly confused. Finally, she told them that in Spanish the phrase means *finger*. By strategically using one Spanish word the teacher cleared up confusion, thereby enabling the children to move ahead with the purpose of the lesson (“to make believe they were a character in the story and write about it”).

In another classroom, the teacher was explaining the rules for playing the game “ready?” within literacy-based ELD. The purpose of the lesson was to give children opportunities to do transformations wherein they turned statements into questions. Trying to explain the rules of the game to the children was quite confusing, so the teacher decided to explain the rules in Spanish and then play the actual game in English. In this example, using Spanish strategically saved important teaching and learning time and ensured that students were able to spend the majority of their time engaged in language learning and task rehearsal, as opposed to figuring out how to participate in the activity. Again, it is important to note that this is not an example of concurrent translation. Instead, it illustrates how the teacher used one language strategically to allow for the majority of the students’ time to be spent engaging in the activity in the other language, thus providing students with more time to practice and master the language objectives.

Así se dice (That’s How You Say It)

Así se dice (that’s how you say it) is a cross-language strategy that we developed to validate translation as a constructive and worthwhile endeavor that engages students in a complex, sophisticated scrutiny of language and emphasizes the subtleties and nuances of communicating messages across cultures and languages. We posit that the approach of *así se dice* is an effective strategy to teach explicit cross-language connections that ultimately enhance students’ cognitive and linguistic growth while providing a space in the classroom to use two languages in an interconnected way. This method is fundamentally different from using concurrent translation or repeating or emphasizing key concepts through regular rephrasing. *Así se dice* develops metalinguistic awareness because it requires students to engage in creating translations and interpretations for the express purpose of thinking and talking about the intersection of culture and language. Accurate and efficient interpretation of a text produced in one language into another through *así se dice* is a complex and sophisticated skill. It requires a deep understanding of concepts, a thorough knowledge of culture, a precise use of vocabulary and language structures, a willingness to collaborate and negotiate, and the knowledge of how and when to consult outside references. Because of its complexity and requirement of abstract thought, we recommend that the purposeful use of *así se dice* begin in grade 3.

The ability to translate effectively is indicative of higher-order thinking skills and one of the markers of bilingual/biliterate proficiency (Orrellana, Martinez, & Montano, 2013; Valdes & Figueroa, 1994). For some translation tasks, a literal translation is sufficient and requires only a simple word order change (e.g., *el carro nuevo de mi abuela es un Toyota*/my grandmother’s new car is a Toyota). However, *así se dice* work should also include tasks where literal translations make no sense or are very awkward. In these cases, students will need to use conceptual translations. For example, the expression *no hay mal que por bien no venga* is much better translated as “every cloud has a silver lining” than its literal translation from Spanish to English: “there is nothing bad from which good doesn’t come.”

When engaging in *así se dice* tasks, student groups should articulate whether or not the translation requires literal or conceptual translations. The procedure for teaching *así se dice* is outlined in Table 5.1, and is further outlined in Escamilla, Gaisler, Hopewell, Sparrow, & Butvilofsky (2009). Briefly, however, we recommend choosing short pieces of text that are conceptually rich. We have found poetry (Table 5.2) and idioms to speak rich conversation. Students are given the text to translate, asked to work with a partner or a group to construct an interpretation, and share and discuss the alternatives. The richness of *así se dice* comes from the whole group discussion and the negotiation of meaning following the small group work. We have seen children argue vehemently and eloquently over the use of

TABLE 5.1
Cross-Language Connections: *Así se dice* Procedure

Procedure	Notes
Choose a text with targeted language	
Group students to work collaboratively to interpret and translate chosen text	Getting a "right" answer is not important—arriving at a reasonable answer with a justification is
Discuss the translations	Focus on why particular translations are more/less effective
Limit the discussion to 10–15 minutes	
Model	Use think-alouds to demonstrate how you read and reread text to maintain the meaning of the piece
	Explain how you evaluate different alternatives ultimately either accepting or rejecting them
	Illustrate that word-for-word translation is often inadequate—communicative function and context are as important as the words themselves
	Consult classroom resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus)
	Do shared <i>así se dice</i> exercises with shorter text
	Have students share their group translations

the word "enemy" versus "opponent." There is no doubt that every student in that classroom deepened his or her understanding of English through the debate they created. Simply asking students to translate without engaging in the conversation to clarify and expound is *not* doing *así se dice*!

It is of critical importance that teachers understand that there is not one correct way to make conceptual translations. Conceptual translations can be worded in many different ways, and the value of this strategy to metalinguistic and cross-language development is the cognitive practice of moving from one language to another and negotiating and defending one's translations within and between groups. Is the translation of *caras rasas, canchizas no sabemos* "don't judge a book by its cover" or "a wolf in sheep's clothing"? The difference is subtle, but critical. One connotation is more positive while the other is negative. To understand which is more appropriate, you need to have more than vocabulary and concept knowledge. You need to reference culture and intent. Table 5.3 demonstrates student variations on *así se dice* translation tasks.

The use of the *así se dice* strategy not only gives teachers an opportunity to teach children about cross-language strategies, it also provides the opportunity to deal with false cognates and deepen students' awareness of the semantic nuances of words. Further, by undertaking this strategy, teachers can often better understand words and concepts that students are misunderstanding in Spanish. We believe that a major goal of instruction is to take students from where they are and extend their understandings to further develop their language. This particular exercise gives insights into student thinking and metalinguistic

TABLE 5.2
Así se dice: Bilingual Poetry

An example of students' translation of the poem, *Los libros*, by Francisco Alarcón

Alarcón Spanish Original	Student Examples	Alarcón English Translation
<i>Los libros</i>	Books	Books
<i>Pasaportes de talla mayor</i>	Grand passports	Oversized passports
<i>Que nos permitan viajar</i>	That take us on journeys	That let us travel
<i>A dondequiera cuandoquiera</i>	Whenever, wherever	Anywhere, anytime
<i>Y no dejar de soñar</i>	And keep our dreams alive	And keep on dreaming

From *Arquí, ríta Bites and Other Fall Reams* by Francisco X. Alarcón. Copyright ©1999 by Francisco X. Alarcón. Permission arranged with Children's Book Press, an imprint of Lee & Low Books, Inc. New York, NY, 10016. All rights not specifically granted herein are reserved.

TABLE 5.3
Así se dice: Task Taken from the Legend of Popocatepetl

Original Spanish Text	Student English Translations
<i>Le exige a Popo que encabece el ejército del impero para derrotar al enemigo.</i>	1. He told Popo to be the leader of the army and defeat the enemy. 2. He commanded Popo to take lead of the army to the empire to defeat the enemy. 3. He demands to be the leader of the empire's army so he could destroy all the opponent. 4. He tells Popo to switch the ejercit to derrotae the enemy

Courtesy of students in Silvia Leitner's classroom, Columbine Elementary School, Boulder, CO.

awareness that is hard to discern elsewhere. As an example, one group of students was asked to translate the sentence *le exige a Popo que encabece el ejército del impero para derrotar al enemigo*, "from Spanish to English (see Table 5.3)." They wrote "he tells Popo to switch the *ejerciti* to *derrotate* the enemy." When the teacher asked the students to explain their translation, she found that they made some very logical and strategic connections. They concluded that if *carro* is car, and *ranchito* is ranch, then *ejercita* could be *ejerst*. They further inferred that if *celebrar* is celebrate, and *interrogar* is interrogate, then *derrotar* could be *derrotate*. The students were making logical, albeit incorrect, inferences, and the example presented the teacher with an excellent teaching opportunity, another example of metalinguistic awareness!

Code-Switching

Invariably, when we broach the topic of developing students' metalinguistic skills through the use of cross-language strategies, we are asked about students' code-switching. Those who advocate strict language separation tend to view code-switching as an indication of a linguistic deficit. We see it differently.

Code-switching, defined briefly, is the alternation of languages within one linguistic context. This may take place within sentences (intrasententially) or in alternating sentences (intersententially). It is rule-governed behavior that requires a high degree of understanding of each of the languages being inserted into the communication.

Bilingual students draw on multiple resources to communicate. These resources are fundamentally based in their unique ability to process across languages. Students not only transfer skills and strategies, but also themselves, their persons, their social realities, and their knowledge of the world. Too often what bilingual children know and have to share in their writing is devalued because of the undue emphasis placed on form and convention, without regard to the ideas and voice. Historically, code-switching has been labeled a deficit behavior, used only by children who are limited in both of their languages. Code-switching has been negatively characterized as "an individual whim," "merely stylistic and largely nonfunctional," "done out of lexical need," and "a preprogrammed community routine" (Zenitella, 1997). While recent research has questioned this deficit orientation, deficit views of code-switching are still pervasive in the field (Benjamin, 1996; Gort, 2006; Kenner, 2004).

We, along with others, have begun to suggest that simultaneous bilinguals—that is, children who acquire and/or are exposed to two languages from the time they are born—do not strictly separate languages. Instead they use two languages strategically in oral and written communication. Code-switching is an important aspect of their bilingual development. Bilingual children move regularly between multiple worlds. Bilingual living results in children who are able to draw on more than one set of resources when communicating. Code-switching represents a strategic use of two languages to capture and detail their lives in multiple worlds. In our professional development at Literacy Squared, we offer three recommendations regarding code-switching: teachers should understand what to ignore,

what to worry about, and the instructional implications. We use evidence from a study we did of the code-switching behaviors of 327 bilingual students' writing to inform these recommendations (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2007).

What to Ignore

Our research indicates that children often code-switch when referring to specific people and their titles. For example, one student wrote, "mi maestro se llama Miss Jones." They would also refer to the titles of books and television programs by their English names, even when Spanish alternatives existed and the rest of the writing sample was in Spanish. For example, "me encanta *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, se trata de un perro rojo. . . ." or "mi programa favorita se llama *Sponge Bob*." Another common occurrence was a conceptual code-switch. For example, "si no se porta bien, la maestra le da un *time out*" or "over the weekend, we went to my cousin's *quinchera*."

Contrary to being problematic, these code-switches indicate that children have a level of cognitive flexibility with regard to the use of two languages. For example, they know that one should not change proper names, that book titles and TV shows are named in the language that they are read or watched, and that some concepts cannot be translated across languages (e.g., you cannot translate the word *enchiladas* into English). Similarly, classroom concepts such as "time out" are culturally bound to U.S. classrooms and quite frequently are taught and learned only in English. Teachers need to understand that students make a series of linguistic decisions as they communicate, some of which indicate that students are making logical, often sophisticated choices.

What to Fix

Our research indicates that the vast majority of code-switches were related to cross application of phonetic principles. They were literally code (convention) switches. Often students would attempt to encode words they knew orally in one language using the phonetic principles from the other ("guan a si" for "want to see"). In most cases, as in this example, the words are high-frequency or high-utility words that students have had sufficient exposure to in written form.

Individually, these words do not pose problems to a person who is trying to read a child's writing. However, in the study, many of the children's writing samples demonstrated that children frequently use Spanish phonetics and invented phrasings to express themselves in writing, thus making it difficult to read an entire story. The following example illustrates this issue.

THE DAY A GO TO MEXICO

The day a go to Mexico was a day very Happy Y was to nerves dicos y was can a si my grama y neve si her a log time ago then wiget into the house end a si may grama the was very spechol.

The day I went to Mexico was a very happy day. I was very nervous because I was going to see my Grandma and I haven't seen her for a long time. We get to her house and I saw my Grandma. This was very special.

The child who wrote the above story is code-switching in multiple ways (e.g., Spanish phonics in English—y for i; invented phrasing—wiget for we get; cross-language homophones—si for see). Collectively, she is using many strategies to express herself in writing. However, her strategies make it difficult to read her work. It is important that teachers directly and explicitly teach children to maintain their voices in writing and express themselves in a standard way in both of their languages.

Instructional Implications

Given that the majority of code-switching entailed applying Spanish phonetics to English (or vice versa) or that children did not know appropriate English phrasing, one effective strategy for moving children toward more standard ways of writing is the use of the Dictado (see Chapter 4).

Further, at the word level, we recommend that students be taught to indicate that they are consciously choosing to code-switch by encasing the word or phrase in quotation marks, using italics, or using words to signal that the alternate language text is appropriate. For example, "my favorite book in Spanish is *Capitularia roja*" or "famoso al acanaro yrimos 'jellyfish.'" These indicators alert the reader that the writer is cognitively aware of code-switching, a sign of developing metacognition about bilingualism.

Children should learn when and with whom to code-switch. A knowledge of the whens, whys, and hows of code-switching is an important metacognitive skill associated with bilingualism. Some strategies for developing metalinguistic awareness of sophisticated code-switching are the following:

- *Bilingual word walks.* In addition to having individual Spanish and English word walks, it may be beneficial to have a bilingual word wall highlighting differences between English and Spanish.
- *Adaptations.* As a way of helping children learn the whens, whens, and hows of code-switching, teachers could ask children to translate jokes or riddles from one language to another and then discuss whether or not these sayings make sense when translated.
- *Author studies.* Analyze the writing of published bilingual writers to understand how, when, and for what purpose they code-switch.
- *Bilingual poetry.* Have students write poetry in which they deliberately use two languages. Discuss their linguistic choices with the whole group.

In short, the research on code-switching is telling us not to censor or eradicate this skill if we want to make space in our classroom for bilingualism. We should explicitly teach children about code-switching and about when and how to be strategic and effective code-switchers.

Conclusion

Cross-language strategies are used formally and explicitly to teach specific similarities and differences between Spanish and English (e.g., writing patterns typical to English but not to Spanish, grammatical rules that are the same or different). This assists students in creating metalinguistic awareness, which allows them to develop the ability to talk about and reflect on language. Within the holistic biliteracy framework created at Literacy Squared, metalinguage is developed in Spanish, in English, and across languages and children are taught explicitly how to make cross-language connections. Talking about language helps children to develop cross-linguistic grammatical, morphological, and orthographic awareness; use of punctuation, rhetorical structures; and so forth.

Given our emphasis on the holistic nature of bilingual and biliterate development, we encourage teachers to note and list the formal cross-language strategies they will be teaching or using. The Literacy Squared framework emphasizes that teachers need to be thinking about how students' two languages can be used strategically to enhance their intellectual and linguistic growth. Further, we reiterate that cross-language strategies must be carefully and thoughtfully taught and employed. Creating a space for students to be deliberately and strategically bilingual is fundamentally different than randomly switching back and forth between languages or the persistent or consistent use of concurrent translation. Concurrent translation is ineffective for any type of biliterate development. Informal cross-language strategies, however, including the occasional use of Spanish within literacy-based ELD, are encouraged to help clarify concepts for children, for efficiency in instruction, and to help children see their two languages working together in the process of becoming biliterate.

Questions for Reflection and Action

- Analyze the language policy in your school or school district. How does it foster or deter the development of metalinguage for your emerging bilingual students? What recommendations might you make given the information presented in this chapter?

- Create an action plan for using language strategically. What specific parameters will you use to determine how and when to alternate languages? How will these boundaries ensure that you do not defer to concurrent translation?
- Choose a cross-language strategy (e.g., bilingual books, *así se dice*). Develop a plan for how the strategy could be implemented at your grade level within your biliteracy program. What will your teaching and learning objectives be? How do these reflect the goal of direct and explicit instruction to raise students' metalinguistic awareness?

PART III

ASSESSMENT

Monitoring Trajectories for Biliteracy in Reading and Writing

Assessment provides us with a small window in which to observe and garner information about what a student knows. During this time we want to see not only what students know about biliteracy but how they process this information. When assessing emerging bilingual students, it is important to take the time to observe this processing and to gather as much information as possible about what they know in Spanish and English literacy to inform paired literacy instruction.

Literacy Squared promotes and supports the premise that students' languages are cultural and societal resources that should be embraced and nurtured by our educational institutions. The co-existence of two or more languages in young children contributes to a uniquely endowed human being whose experiences and knowledge can never be measured or understood as independently constrained by each language separately. There is no reason to believe that emerging bilingual children can, or should, demonstrate the totality of their literacy capabilities solely in one language. As Grosjean (2006) reminds us, "... bilinguals are speakers-hearers in their own right who will often not give the same kinds of results as monolinguals" (p. 36).

In Chapters 6 and 7, we demonstrate a paradigm shift from a *parallel monolingual* to a *holistic bilingual* view of assessment—from looking at biliterate development as a set of independent cognitive and linguistic processes that are traditionally assessed and interpreted separately—to looking at the development of biliteracy of Spanish-English emerging bilingual children through a holistic lens (see table on next page). In this part, while we continue to assess children's biliteracy development separately, we propose that a holistic interpretation of outcomes is a more authentic way to observe, evaluate, and monitor students' biliteracy trajectories.