


2014

# Spanish/English bilinguals' strategies for finding bias in historical texts

Theresa A. Orlovsky  
*Iowa State University*

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**Spanish/English bilinguals' strategies for finding bias in historical texts**

by

**Theresa A. Orlovsky**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

Major: Teaching English as a Second Language/Applied Linguistics  
(Literacy in English as a Second Language)

Program of Study Committee:  
Tammy Slater, Major Professor  
John Levis  
Gary Phye

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2014

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family in thanks to their unending support.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Tammy Slater, and my committee members, Dr. John Levis and Dr. Gary Phye. Your guidance, feedback, and patience throughout this research contributed greatly to its completion and success.

I would also like to thank Roberto and Manuel Hernandez for their help with the translation of the propaganda text. *¡Muchísimas gracias!*

Additionally, I would like to also offer my appreciation to those who were willing to participate in my study, without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their constant support during my graduate studies. Thank you.



## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the literacy resources and strategies Spanish/English bilinguals use to detect bias in a propaganda text. Drawing upon previous work done in history literacy by Schleppegrell, Achugar, and Oteiza (2004), this study presented participants with a propaganda text from Nazi Germany which criticizes Albert Einstein. Without knowing the context of the article, participants responded to discussion questions which investigated whether participants could detect the bias, what literacy strategies the participants used to find the bias, and whether and how the participants perceived differences between reading the text in their first (L1) and second languages (L2). Overall, the participants had difficulty correctly identifying the bias, and in general, most found the text easier to read and the bias easier to detect in their L1. This study makes a case for including the L1 in the instruction of history and the need for explicit instruction about critical reading strategies, especially for detecting bias in historical texts.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Context of the Study

In a predominantly monolingual culture such as the United States, bilingualism can seem like an idealized, but often unattainable goal. Indeed, in a country so dominated by one language, language learning often takes the role of a hobby rather than a necessity. However, for many immigrants coming to the US, learning a new language is necessary in order to function in their new home. Moreover, their children are confronted with the challenge of not only learning a new language, but also learning other subjects such as math, science, and history through the medium of this new language.

Their teachers are thus faced with the challenging task of determining the best methods for educating these students, both in the target language (TL) and in grade-appropriate content. This can prove a complicated undertaking, given that each subject often has its own specialized lexicon and writing style.

Throughout the years, different strategies have been employed to “bridge the gap” between the students’ first language (L1) and the TL, which in the US is most often English. One approach has been to transition English language learners (ELLs) from their L1 to English as quickly as possible so that they would not fall behind in content (Cummins, 2012). As a result, ELLs were “defined in terms of what they lack (English) rather than what they have (fluency in another language)” (Edwards, 2012, p.1). Some claim that this sort of strategy demeans the ELLs’ L1 and its corresponding culture, making the ELLs themselves feel equally dejected (Cummins, 2012, p.1-2). This study, however, takes an additive rather than subtractive view of

second-language learning, making the case that the L1 could be used to as means to learn through the L2.

### 1.2 Benefits of L1 Use in TL Acquisition

Many studies have shown that incorporating the ELLs' L1 into content instruction is highly beneficial in a variety of ways. Studies have shown that bilingual instruction does not impair acquisition of the TL, and that it often gives the ELLs an advantage both linguistically and cognitively (Cummins, 2012). Additionally, studies have shown that ELLs are able to transfer academic skills learned in the L1 to the TL. As Cummins (2012) cited, "this transfer of skills and knowledge explains why spending instructional time through a minority language entails no adverse consequences for the development of the majority language" (p. 3).

In fact, the length of time spent in L1 seems to be one of the major factors of overall success for ELLs. As stated above, many programs seek to transition ELLs quickly from their L1 into English. However, as Cummins (2013) noted, students may need at least five years to acquire the academic fluency necessary to keep up with grade-level content. With this in mind, such programs that transition students from one language to another cannot be truly considered bilingual because they do not promote literacy across both languages (Cenoz, 2012) nor do they bolster the ELLs' self-image (Cummins, 2012).

On the other hand, programs that aim to enrich or maintain the ELLs' L1 generally have bilingualism and biliteracy as goals (Cenoz, 2012) and also have high success rates. For example Edwards (2012) cites longitudinal studies of programs that only used English, transitional programs in which the L1 is only used for few years, and "late-exit" bilingual programs in which the L1 is used concurrently with the TL for the remainder of the ELLs' grade school years. According to Edwards, these studies found that the third type of program had the best results..

Furthermore, using truly bilingual methods can help build a healthy sense of self for ELLs (Cummins, 2012).

### 1.3 Use of the L1 in Content Instruction

Whether or not to use a student's L1 in second language (L2) instruction is highly debatable, but a question often overlooked is whether or not to incorporate the L1 in content areas, such as science and math, taught in the L2. While some research has been done studying the use of the L1 in the teaching of classification in science (Tong, 2004), a large gap remains in the investigation of L1 use in the teaching of history.

With its high linguistic load and dependence on background information, history as a subject presents particular challenges when taught in the L2 (Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Otieza, 2004). For instance, most of the content is given to students through textbook readings and instructor lectures. The textbooks often do not provide enough background information for the events described nor do they give adequate explanations so that the students can understand how the events fit together into the larger scheme of history. Furthermore, the texts may assume that students have certain background knowledge based on the country in which the texts were written.

In the case of English language learning, the texts use certain linguistic elements that do not often occur in the spoken English that ELLs may use to talk about the events in their own lives (Schleppegrell et al., 2004). Thus, some of the key concepts needed to understand historical texts, such as detecting author bias, may be more successfully learned through the L1.

The ability to detect author bias is a valuable skill throughout all disciplines, but it is especially important in the field of history as, through learning about their past, students build a self-identity. Thus, if students do not learn to detect an author's bias in historical texts and in

texts written about history, they may be subject to a self-image created entirely by others (Shleppegrell, 2004). In learning to detect author bias, students are able to become independent and active critical readers of history who can use what they have learned to shape their own self-identity and future.

However, while a collection of research exists detailing methods students can use to analyze author choices within history texts, very little exists describing what students already use to detect author bias within history texts. Therefore, as bias detection in historical texts is such a highly valuable skill, it is important to question whether or not bilingual students can detect bias in history texts without outside instruction. Such a question consequently leads to many more. For instance, if bilingual students can detect bias in history texts, what is it within the text that makes them think it is biased? Are bilingual students consciously aware of what they are using within the text to find the bias? Which linguistic resources or literacy strategies, such as those identified in the research on history texts, do bilingual students use to find the bias? Do bilinguals detect bias in historical texts differently in their L1 than in their L2? How do they perceive any differences? In an attempt to answer some of these many questions, the current study constructed three main research questions as detailed below.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This qualitative study uses an open-ended guided interview format to investigate the linguistic resources students possess in detecting author bias in historical texts, both in their L1 and their L2. Three main research questions arise:

RQ1: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L1 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ2: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L2 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ3: How do Spanish/English bilinguals perceive the differences between detecting bias in their L1 vs. their L2 in historical texts?

### 1.5 Overview of the Study

To investigate these questions, the study presents eight Spanish/English bilingual participants with the task of reading a propaganda text in both their L1 and their L2 . A propaganda text is used because it is a genre of historical text with inarguable bias created, in its time, with the clear intention of converting its audience to a specific viewpoint (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015). The particular piece of propaganda used in this study comes from an anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda publication originally written in German and discusses why Albert Einstein, a Jewish man, is not as remarkable as people would believe.

In a recorded interview, the participants were asked a series of questions about the text to investigate whether they thought the text was biased and what within the text has led them to that conclusion. Participants were also asked to describe the experience of reading the same text in their L1 and their L2 and if the difference in code influenced how they saw the bias in the text. The results from the interviews were analyzed and compared in order to identify any similarities among them.

The interview results were analyzed in light of bias previously identified within the text using a textual analysis method similar to that described in Schleppegrell et al. (2004). . Schleppegrell et al. (2004) used Systemic Functional Linguistics, or SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to point out key features that may help students detect bias in such history texts. For instance, students may pay attention to which nouns are performing actions (agents) vs.

receiving actions (receivers) in addition to the kinds of verbs (e.g., action, thinking-feeling, saying). A similar method was used to analyze the Einstein text in order to identify how the bias is expressed within it and to identify possible linguistic resources that the participants could use to identify the bias.

### 1.6 Goals of the Study

This study aims to better understand the strategies bilinguals use to detect bias in historical texts, and whether any differences arise when the language of presentation is considered. The results of this study could lead to implications about the instruction of content areas such as history to ELLs and the possible benefits and drawbacks of including a student's L1 in that instruction. Studies have shown that ELLs are able to transfer academic skills learned in the L1 to the L2 (Cummins, 2012; Tong, 2004), and that the use of the L1 can provide benefits (Cummins, 2012); this study hopes to find evidence to support and continue the work done by these previous studies.

### 1.7 Defining Bilingualism

A primary focus of this study is on Spanish/English bilinguals' strategies for finding bias in history texts. Before we can address what bilinguals can do, however, we need to define what "bilingual" means. The word "bilingual" can have a many different definitions. Some think of bilingualism as the ability to speak two languages at equal levels of proficiency while others are adamant that a person is only truly bilingual if he or she has known both languages since birth. Both Grosjean (2013) and Baker (2011) cautioned against such over-simplifications.

Instead, both Baker and Grosjean considered the multiple variables that could influence a bilingual or multilingual person. Baker outlined eight "Dimensions of Bilingualism," which consider factors such as age, context, and choice (2011, p. 3-4). Baker also pointed out that bilingualism extends beyond simply being able to speak two languages; a person's language

ability can vary within the four basic skill sets of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. As he pointed out, reading proficiency can “range from simple and basic to fluent and accomplished” (p. 7). For instance, a bilingual person may be able to read only for literal meaning in one language but may better understand complex and nuanced texts in another.

Grosjean also noted the multiple facets of bilingualism, stating that it is difficult to define bilingualism because a person’s proficiency level may vary between different domains such as home and school and may also vary depending on what they aim to accomplish through the language. Moreover, where and how bilinguals use each language can change. Therefore, in his own work, Grosjean defined bilingualism and “the use of two or more languages...in everyday life” (p. 5).

Baker (2011) agreed that considering a person’s “everyday use of the languages” can help avoid from having too narrow or too wide a definition (p. 8). Nevertheless, he advised the consideration of the many different dimensions that can influence a person’s language use and create many different “patterns” of bilingualism (p. 16). For instance, he noted that one bilingual person might not use both languages frequently despite being highly proficient in both, while another may use both languages frequently but have less fluency. Likewise, this study includes bilinguals that vary in their patterns of proficiency and frequency of use of their two languages.

### 1.8 Defining Bilingual Education

The results of this study could carry implications for the use of the L1 in history instruction, making a case for bilingual education in this content area. Like bilingualism, however, bilingual education can also have multiple meanings. Baker (2011) identified 10 different kinds of bilingual education, which were categorized into “weak” and “strong” forms (pp. 209-210). The weakest form he identified as sink-or-swim submersion. Even with pull-out



support, Baker still claimed the end-goal of this method as assimilation (p. 209). In fact, Cenoz (2012) did not consider programs that transition students from their L1 to L2 to be bilingual. Bilingual programs, she stated, must build bilingualism and biliteracy.

Baker (2011) concurred, stating that the two strongest forms of bilingual education are two-way/dual immersion programs and mainstream bilingual programs. In dual language programs an equal number of students are proficient in the minority language as those proficient in the majority language. Instruction takes place in both languages with bilingualism and biliteracy as the over-all goal. Mainstream bilingual programs involve the use of two majority languages for instruction. For instance, Baker cited German schools that also include instruction in French. As in the dual immersion programs, mainstream bilingual programs aim for students to become bilingual. It is the hope of the current study to find support for the need for more authentic forms of bilingual education promote literacy in both the L1 and the L2, especially in the subject of history.

### 1.9 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis will proceed with a review of the literature relevant to this study in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology and design of the study, while the results of the study will be reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will analyze the data collected in the study, draw conclusions, and identify limitations to and future directions for the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to this study. It explores how history as a subject has been traditionally taught (2.2) and what attempts have been made to support ELLs in content areas such as history (2.3). This chapter also discusses the importance of instruction in critical literacy (2.4), in addition to the potential of using students' bilingualism as a pedagogic strategy (2.5). This research exemplifies the idea that language and content are inseparable and supports the idea that language learning truly means learning language, learning through language, and learning about language (Halliday, 1999). Therefore, the content of history cannot be separated from the language used to tell it. Rather than seeing history texts as a list of facts to be memorized, students could learn how to use the language of history to analyze and question the views these texts pass on.

#### 2.2 Teaching History in the Mainstream

In order to better understand how to improve history instruction for ELLs, it is useful to understand how history is commonly taught in mainstream classes in the US. According to Larry Cuban (2010), a prominent voice in US education reform, history pedagogy can be put into two categories: "heritage" and "historical" (para. 5).

Heritage pedagogy views history as a shared story that students must learn in order to better understand their own national identity and the values of their nation. A historical approach, on the other hand, views history as historians do. Cuban explained that historians piece together the past by studying authentic artifacts. Historians do this not to fulfill any preconceived ideas about the past; in fact, doing so challenges their biases "in their accounts by closely examining

their own values as they retrieve documents from library archives, cellars, and official records” (para. 7). Sometimes their findings may also challenge the values passed down through the heritage approach.

Cuban cited how, since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, professional historians have been urging teachers to take a more historical approach to their teaching. Still many teachers hold fast to a heritage pedagogy supported by lecture, textbook reading, and fact memorization. However, according to Cuban, the root of this divide is that of a much larger debate: whether education is meant to teach students “community values” or to teach them “to think for themselves and to question those values” (para. 8). The current research supports a historical rather than heritage view of history as this study aims to see how readers interpret a historical artifact without outside influence.

### 2.3 Teaching History to ELLs

As a content area, history presents ELLs with particular challenges. As both Cuban (2010) and Schleppegrell et al. (2004) note, most of the subject matter in history classes is traditionally imparted through a textbook. ELLs must not only learn the content of their history classes, but they must also work through the language in which it is told. Over the past twenty years, applied linguists have developed different methods of support for ELLs that take into account this two-fold task. Two of these methods widely known in the field are SIOP and CALLA.

#### **2.3.1 Sheltered Instruction Observational Procedure (SIOP) Model**

Sheltered Instruction Observational Procedure (SIOP) was developed by Echavarría, Vogt, and Short (2010), with the theoretical basis “that language acquisition is enhanced through meaningful use and interaction” (p.19). Meant to provide support for both grade-appropriate

content and academic literacy development, SIOP uses a variety of methods to allow students at different levels of proficiency to move through the content in English. Some of these methods include “visual aids, modeling,... graphic organizers,... adapted texts,... and native language support” (p. 19). SIOP aims to move students beyond simply memorizing information to being able to perform “an academic task like writing a science report” and building strong “study skills and learning strategies” (pp. 19-20). The model is adaptable to different classroom settings, including those with both ELLs and native English speakers.

The SIOP model has been adapted for key content areas. The History-Social Studies edition (Short, Vogt, & Echavarría, 2011) discussed how traditional methods of teaching this subject can be especially difficult for ELLs. When teachers do most of the talking, ELLs are deprived of opportunities to develop their own language proficiency. Even when teachers ask students questions during class, discussion often fall into an IRE/F (Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback) pattern. Teachers spend more time prompting students to form specific fact-based responses rather than stimulating “higher level thinking” (p. 6).

Furthermore, the language used to construct this subject may confuse seemingly proficient ELLs. Short et al. (2011). pointed out that on top of general academic terms, each social studies subfield has its own specialized vocabulary and often uses words that might have a different meaning in common speech, such as rose vs. “compass rose” and party vs. “political party” (p. 11). The SIOP model offers many different methods and activities that target these concerns that could be overlooked in a traditional classroom. The method does not, however, appear to target critical reading of texts or focus on subtleties and nuances of author position.

### **2.3.2 The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)**

CALLA is another method that aims to support ELLs in content areas. Developed by Chamot and O'Malley, the approach combines three components: "curriculum content," "academic language," and "learning strategies" (Chamot, 2005, pp. 91-95). The approach is bolstered by model of cognitive processing which differentiates between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Consequently, like SIOP, CALLA is designed not only to help students learn content and language but also to help them form habits and metacognitive strategies that will support them in the classroom. Students become independent learners as they move through the five phases of CALLA: preparation, presentation, practice, self-evaluation, and expansion. According to Chamot, CALLA is adaptable and flexible and both ELLs and NES can benefit from it. But as with SIOP, any focus on teaching to understand how texts can be colored is left to the discretion of individual teachers.

### **2.3.3 The Knowledge Framework (KF)**

Work in Western Canada has also seen success in the integration of language and content learning using the Knowledge Framework (KF) developed by Mohan (1986). The KF sees "language as discourse in the context of social practice" (Early, 2001, p. 158). That is, different social practices require different elements and patterns to complete them. These social practices can be simplified into six Knowledge Structures (KS) that students use across multiple disciplines, including history. The KF has also been used as a basis for graphic organizers that aid reading comprehension.

Initially, Early and Tang (1991) saw the potential for graphic organizers as a means of activating schema in pre-reading activities. Based on research that indicates the importance of prior knowledge in content reading comprehension, Early and Tang developed a series of "key

visuals” that can illustrate the different KS in academic texts (p. 36). Illustrating KS graphically gives students the ability to see them without being hindered by language so that content can be learned in tandem with language, rather than having to develop language first. By comparing a “graphic” group and a non-graphic control group, Early and Tang found that the graphic group had improved in reading comprehension in eight different post-tests while the non-graphic group had improved in only two. None of these post-tests sought to examine whether bias was found in the texts.

Specifically, Tang (1992) found that tree graphs that showed the KS aided student comprehension. As described in the larger study of Early and Tang (1991), participants were divided into graphic and non-graphic groups. The graphic group received instruction on how to use tree graphics to understand a Social Studies text. The non-graphic group learned vocabulary terms and answered questions about the text. Both groups then had to write what they could recall from the text. The procedure was repeated in a post-test, and it was found that the graphic group had improved in comprehension. Student attitude toward the strategy was also found to be very positive. Whether the students were able to detect any bias in these texts was beyond the scope of Tang’s study.

Tang (1997, 2001) outlined a pedagogic model developed from previous studies on the use of graphics in reading comprehension. This model includes explicit teaching of how the KS is represented in both the text and the graphic, teaching of the linguistic feature of the KS, and having students complete a task with graphic and the text. Students may either create a graphic for a text or they may write a text based on a graphic. In social studies education, this may include charting causes and effects of historical events on a table or writing a paragraph based on a timeline. Tang asserts that the key to success for this model is “explicit teaching and practice to

acquire the skills of understanding and expressing content knowledge with appropriate academic language” (p. 77, 1997). Although Tang found success with the use of this method, it was used mainly for general comprehension and recall of the text rather than analysis, promoting a more traditional heritage-based model of history as facts to be memorized rather than questioned.

#### **2.3.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspectives on the Language of History Texts**

Many Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) researchers believe that improving history literacy in any setting requires students to look beyond the meaning of the content to do an in-depth analysis of the language used to present that content. For instance, Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) have worked out a system in which students conduct a critical analysis of a history text by identifying three primary questions: 1) “How did the author organize the text?” 2) “What is going on in the text?” and 3) “What is the perspective of the author?” (p. 43).

Fang and Schleppegrell proposed that answering these three questions would allow students to arrive at three different types of meaning that can be found in the text: textual meaning, experiential meaning, and interpersonal meaning. Textual meaning corresponds well with the initial question about the author’s organization choices. Fang and Schleppegrell propose using SFL terminology to equip students with the tools to describe the organization of the text. For instance, in their method, students are asked to identify the themes, processes, participants, and circumstances within each clause. The processes are then categorized to type and frequency. Doing such a thorough textual analysis makes it easier for students to then move on to identifying experiential meaning. Analyzing the different clause components allows students to see how content and meaning are built through the text. This then prompts an analysis of why the author made those language choices and how they reflect the author’s perspective and contribute to the interpersonal, or interpretive, meaning of the text. Fang and Schleppegrell noted that doing

such a thorough analysis will show students how closely intertwined these three types of meaning are within the text. Moreover, “it also helps [students] recognize the language choices as options chosen to present a particular view of history, thereby also encouraging a critical reading perspective” (2008, p. 43). The third question provides an entry point into the detection of bias, which is at the center of this current study’s focus.

Coffin (2006) likewise explored how SFL can be used to improve history instruction, most notably in helping students conceptualize concepts of time. Coffin noted that most historians and educators take for granted that history is measured calendarically, but that students may have some difficulty seeing time divided this way. Students may be unfamiliar with temporal language like “dynasties,” “millennia,” and “epochs” that may be used to divide up historical periods (2006, p. 212). Coffin recommended defining such terms explicitly, as a means of putting some sequential order to what students may otherwise view as a random collection of events.

Within her research, Coffin also identified some key characteristics of history texts that can be very useful in helping students understand what a history is and what it does. For instance, she outlined three main reasons that history texts are written: 1) to record the past, 2) to explain the past, and 3) to argue about the past. Coffin also noted that, throughout their schooling, students move through each of these categories, beginning with recording, then moving to explaining, and finally arguing.

Coffin used SFL to conduct a close textual analysis of the three different categories of history texts, looking more closely at Recording and its subgenres. By looking at how time was represented grammatically in the texts, she determined six different types of temporal functions: “sequencing, segmenting, setting, duration, phasing, and organizing” (2006, p. 216). She found



that these temporal functions are concentrated at different levels through the three different types of history texts. As students move from recounts onto explanations and arguments, they use different temporal categories. For instance, sequencing is used at its highest rate in autobiographical recounting. Segmenting, on the other hand, has the highest rate of occurrence in argument texts. Overall, Coffin saw this progression through the different types of historical texts and their corresponding temporal categories as students' movement from "personal to historic time" (2006, p. 224).

While Coffin's findings can be very useful in helping students orient themselves in otherwise abstract historical texts, one point that Coffin does not address is how the choices that the author makes in representing time can affect how history is portrayed. Many of the texts that Coffin used as examples have the potential to contain a great deal bias, which could possibly be influenced by language choices such as how time is constructed. For instance, one text that she analyzed is titled "What has happened to the [Australian] Aborigines since the time of white settlement?" Some analysis could be done on how white settlement is used as a marker of time and how the language choices within the text show author bias. While Coffin (2006) and Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) have both contributed a great deal to understanding the genre of history texts, how an author colors history texts has not played a major role in either of their work.

Addressing this oversight, Unsworth (1999) cited the importance of critical literacy in history precisely to detect author bias. He noted that written academic English has a much higher lexical density than spoken English and that different areas of study require different forms of literacy. Like Coffin (2006) and Fang and Schleppegrell (2008), Unsworth used SFL to analyze the linguistic features of history texts, especially those that could hinder students' comprehension.

Most notably, he explained, is the use of grammatical metaphor within the text. Grammatical metaphor occurs when a word or phrase stands in for a larger clausal idea. This most often results in a nominalization—another grammatical category is transformed into an abstract noun. Unsworth tracked this pattern throughout the history texts, showing how an idea from one sentence is nominalized within the next. Unsworth pointed out that how the author chooses to “package” these abstract ideas under a single term or phrase, in addition to other linguistics choices, can “color” the text. Altogether, Unsworth identified four strategies an author can use that can color history texts: nominalization, use of appraisal resources (such as modal verbs and evaluative language), nominalizing time as a participant, and replacing processes of deduction with nominalizations. These resources, when taught, can help readers identify author bias in history texts. But are students conscious of these linguistic resources without prior instruction? The current study aims to explore this question.

#### 2.4 Teaching Critical Analysis

An essential part of identifying bias within a text is understanding how to conduct a critical analysis. Wodak (2014) identified three “key issues” within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): “power, ideology, and critique” (p. 303) and outlined different definitions of what it means to be critical. According to Wodak, in CDA, critical analysis is meant to “make the implicit explicit” (p. 304). Critically analyzing a text uncovers how language interacts with power and ideology. Wodak stated that CDA is often used to expose and challenge ideologies hidden within texts. Otherwise, if a dominant group goes unchallenged, they will continue to have the power to make meaning for those they dominate.

Similarly, Luke (2013) called for critical literacy pedagogy in which students are taught to closely analyze the myriad messages they receive on a daily basis. Luke pointed out that

literacy has expanded beyond print to include digital and social media. Without learning how to “unpack” (p. 139) this input, students will be easily manipulated by the messages, ideologies, and world views they passively take in. Luke advocated teaching students how “words, grammar and discourse choices shape a representation” of the world (p. 145). With this ability, students will be equipped to reveal “misleading ideological versions of the world provided in media, literature, textbooks and everyday texts” (p. 142).

In their analysis of Australian history textbooks, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) uncovered that messages of power can also be conveyed through images. For instance, one of the images within a text portrayed the colonizing British, armed with large guns, as powerful and strong. In contrast, the Australian aborigines and their weaponry appeared smaller and consequently weaker. This analysis reveals how ideologies of power can be passed almost subliminally, making a strong case for the teaching of critical analysis.

### 2.5 Transferring Understanding from L1 to L2

Some students may bring background knowledge including previously learned content and strategies with them that they are not able to express in their L2. Cummins (2000) used the metaphor of a two-peaked iceberg. Students may have an underlying cognitive proficiency below the surface, shared by the L1 and L2 represented by the two peaks. However, this knowledge may be manifested differently above the surface due to a higher proficiency in the L1 than the L2. Because of this, students may seem to be lacking content knowledge when they actually already possess this but they simply do not yet have the words to express it. Although there has been work on such transfer as using the L1 in teaching L2 vocabulary (e.g., Tian & Macaro, 2012), not a lot of research has systemically examined how linguistic strategies, such as being

able to transfer how to identify or construct particular knowledge (such as bias in text), taught in the L1 manifest themselves in the L2.

Tong (2004) used this idea of an underlying proficiency in her work on the teaching of science content. In her study, Tong used a graphic organizer similar to those used by Early and Tang (1991) to teach the KS of classification. Tong used ELLs with a shared L1 of Chinese and taught part of the lesson in Chinese. She then had students perform a classifying task in English. The results of the study implied that the students were able to learn a concept in their L1 and then transfer that concept into their use of the L2.

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

Whereas examining whether teaching how to detect bias in the L1 will transfer to the L2 is an excellent goal, the current study provides the springboard to this by exploring the resources and perception readers have of bias in their L1 and L2. This study hopes to investigate the underlying relationship between the L1 and L2 in English/Spanish bilinguals. It attempts to investigate how this relationship influences the reading of bias in history texts.

As seen in this chapter, history has been traditionally taught as “heritage” (Cuban, 2010) through textbooks and lecture, which burdens ELLs with a heavy language load (Schleppegrell et al., 2004). In order to provide support for ELLs in content areas, different methods have been used such as SIOP, CALLA, and the Knowledge Framework. Others have used SFL to teach students how to identify how history texts are structured and how the texts and content are intertwined. However, most of these methods have not explicitly instructed students how to use a historical approach to detect bias within the text through critical analysis, and research has not examined how such instruction transfers between languages. Research is thus needed to

understand the strategies and resources ELLs bring with them from their L1. With that in mind this study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L1 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ2: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L2 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ3: How do Spanish/English bilinguals perceive the differences between detecting bias in their L1 vs. their L2 in historical texts?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Chapter Overview

Whereas the previous chapter reviewed relevant literature on the teaching of history, this chapter will describe and justify the design of the study. Additionally, it will describe the text used in the study and provide an analysis of the bias it contains.

#### 3.2 Design of the Study

In this qualitative study, which received IRB approval for the use of human subjects, participants read a historical text in their L1 and the same text in their L2. As a major purpose for this study was to investigate how participants detect bias in historical texts, a propaganda text was used. After reading both versions of the text, the participants were then asked a series of questions aimed at gauging how well and in what ways the participants detected the bias within the text. The context of the text, such as the author and where it was originally published, was not disclosed to the participants until the end of the procedure so that it would not influence how they read the text.

#### 3.3 The Text

As stated above, the text used in this study is piece of historical propaganda. Originally written in German by Fritz Redlin, it was published in 1939 in the Nazi “Institut zum Studium der Judenfrage” (Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question) newsletter, *Mitteilungen über die Judenfrage (Communications about the Jewish Question)* (Bytwerk, 2012). It appeared in English as part of the online German Propaganda Archive (GPA) administered by Professor Randal Bytwerk as part of the department of Communication Arts and Sciences at Calvin

College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Special permission by Bytwerk was granted for the reproduction of an adapted version of the text used in this study (see Appendices A and B).

Titled “Albert Einstein: A ‘Tourist Attraction’ at Princeton” in English, the original text details Einstein’s departure from Germany and subsequent work in Belgium and the United States. Mockingly, the article lists Einstein’s famed achievements and then discusses how insignificant, forgettable, and at worst, dangerous they really are. The article gives the impression that Einstein’s major support comes mainly from other Jews who see him as a sort of demi-god. Quotes from Einstein’s critics portray him as a plagiarist, a communist, and an all-around trouble-maker.

### **3.3.1. Adapting the Text**

The full-length text found on the GPA website was adapted to better serve the purposes of this study. Namely, the text was shortened and translated into Spanish, as will be detailed in the following sections.

#### 3.3.1.2 Shortening the Text

The propaganda text, originally 1,139 words, was cut down to the 382 words, with the exception of an introductory anecdote and a long quotation from *The Jüdische Nationalbiographie* (The Jewish National Biography). The text was shortened in order to make the task more manageable for participants and to ensure that the participants were not influenced by the indisputable criticism of Einstein and the Jews, topics that come later in the article. The subtle bias within the opening paragraphs was of more interest to this current study as participants would need to rely on literacy strategies other than content comprehension in order to identify the bias.

### 3.3.1.1 Translation

The text was translated into Spanish, with additional help from an online dictionary and consultation with two native Spanish speakers. A major goal of the translation was to achieve a natural sounding text in Spanish while altering the syntax and lexical choice as minimally as possible. This was done to ensure that the only difference between the two texts was the language itself. Otherwise, other differences such as syntax may have impacted how the participants found the bias. With the code being the only difference between the texts, any differences in how the participants saw the bias could possibly indicate a difference in how the participants process their L1 and L2.

### **3.3.2 Analysis of the Text**

Before expecting participants to be able to find bias in a historical text, it is highly important to affirm that it is actually in the text. Using a propaganda text better ensures the existence of such bias, but analysis is still needed to determine what within the text actually contributes to that bias. Such an analysis, loosely following methods described in Schleppegrell et al. (2004), can be found in Table 1.

The English version of the text was analyzed through an SFL lens to determine which linguistic elements within the text contributed to its bias against Einstein and his Judaism. These findings could then be compared to those identified by the participants in this study. As seen in Table 1, a chart was made to analyze the construction of each grammatical clause within the text to isolate the agents, processes, and recipients or other aspects within each of those clauses and compare them across the entire text. Notes were also made about other grammatical constructions such as noun phrases, lexical choices, and punctuation. This analysis was



**Table 1.** Analysis of the Bias in the Article

| Participants                                 | Process  | Other  |
|--|--|--|
| Albert Einstein                              | must have been                                 | his scientific stature   |
| he (Einstein)                                | shook  | the dust of Germany  |
| (Einstein)                                   | went   | to America   |
| He   | has since been                                 | about the Theory of Relativity   |
| the Jewish public relations machine          | claimed  | the greatest scientific discovery since Adam   |
| Einstein                                     | currently works                                | in a fine laboratory at Princeton University   |
|  | provided by                                    | the American government  |
| Jews in every country                        | made   | their racial comrade Einstein a Messiah.   |
| His discovery                                | would transform                                | humanity's religious views   |
| The world (with the exception of the Jews)   | would have more or less forgotten              | about "Relativity"-Einstein  |
| Passive (no subject)                         | not occasionally reminded in an unpleasant way | it, of the "politician" Einstein.  |
| A special correspondent of <i>Paris Soir</i> | wrote  | The politician became an engineer.   |
| The politician                               | became   | an engineer  |
| Einstein                                     | has received                                   | 72 patents   |
| the <i>Paris Soir</i> correspondent          | noted mysteriously                             | things of a confidential nature intended only for the government, since it could be dangerous if they fell into the hands of the public. |
| it   | could be                                       | dangerous  |
| Other inventions in the area of photography  | are  | of a more peaceful type  |
| The most recent discovery, a new lens        | is   | "likely to transform cinematography"   |
|  | finally provide                                | The world "with the perfect cinema"  |
| one  | would expect                                   | what else from Einstein  |
| No subject                                   | when asked                                     | why he concerned himself   |
| He   | concerned                                      | himself with such everyday things  |
| Einstein                                     | answered modestly                              | that he wanted to thank his new "fatherland" for the warm reception it gave him.   |

Table 1. continued

|  |                                 |   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| He   | wanted to thank                 | his new “fatherland”  |
| It   | gave                            | Him a warm reception  |
| our correspondent from<br><i>Paris Soir</i>  | wrote                           | (quotion)   |
| Einstein   | is                              | one of the sights ( <i>curiosités</i> ) of highly<br>modern Princeton |
| the Committee to Encourage<br>Tourism  | cannot promote<br>(conditional) | this or that football game  |
| Einstein’s lecture from 2 to 3<br>on ‘Differential Calculus and<br>Nuclear Reactions | remains                         |   |
| (the lecture)  | may not attract                 | hundreds of thousands   |
| (the lecture)  | lures                           | a most interesting ‘audience.’  |

performed with the English text as the translation into Spanish was done with the intention of maintaining the structure, grammar, and word choice of the English text.

Many different factors seemed to contribute to the text’s bias. Analyzing the grammatical agents within the piece revealed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the most common agent was “Einstein,” some referent to Einstein such as “he” or “the politician,” or something that belonged to Einstein such as “his discovery” or “Einstein’s lecture.” The second most common agent referenced something about Judaism such as “The Jewish public relations machine,” “Jews throughout the world,” and “The world (with the exception of the Jews).” The high occurrence of these agents seem to suggest that the author is continually putting Einstein as grammatically “in control,” but further analysis seems to indicate that he sees Einstein as more of an instigator than the Messiah the Jews supposedly make him.

Analysis of the processes and other aspects revealed some patterns, such as a large use of conditionals that point to the conjectural nature of the piece. Many of the recipients have something to do with Einstein’s work, such as “72 patents,” or “the greatest scientific discovery since Adam.” Religion and the heavy impact of Einstein’s work also seemed to be a theme

among recipients, such as “humanity’s religious views,” “their racial comrade Einstein a Messiah,” “into the hands of the public.” Einstein and his work are also linked to appraisal adjectives such as “dangerous.”

While looking at agents, processes, and other aspects on their own gives some insight into patterns within them, what gives more insight to the author’s bias is to look at how those different pieces fit together. If Einstein is the most common agent, then he is continually tied to the other parts listed above, enacting upon “humanity” and “the public” and perhaps even thought of as “dangerous.”

Such a close analysis also draws attention to some of lexical choices that individually contribute to the author’s bias. However, again, when seen how they are linked in context, they are even more powerful. For instance, in the relative clause “which the Jewish public relations machine claimed was the greatest scientific discovery since Adam” that comes within the first paragraph, the choice of “machine” has inhuman, aggressive, and almost dishonest connotations. “Claimed” alludes to improbability and more possible dishonesty, rather than the more neutral “stated” or “said.” The ending noun phrase rings of the hyperbolism the reappears throughout that piece while bringing in the element of religion.

Moreover, the author is attributing this and other exaggerated and brash views to the Jewish people as if they have said these exact words. And when he does use a direct quote, he frames it in a way that better supports his portrayal of Einstein as a man not to be trusted, saying that the *Paris Soir* correspondent “noted mysteriously” about Einstein’s top-secret work for the government.

The author uses other subtle ways to cast Einstein in a negative light. For instance, throughout the piece, the author exaggerates the Jews’ supposed admiration for Einstein so much

that the scientist begins to sound absurd. Indeed, when discussing Einstein's contributions to cinema, the author makes a sarcastic jab in the middle of the sentence: "a new lens — what else would one expect from Einstein — is 'likely to transform cinematography' and finally provide the world "with the perfect cinema." The author makes Einstein sounds too good to be true and rather self-important, as he deigns to concern "himself with such everyday things" like inventing new camera parts in order to give back to his new "fatherland." In fact, the author seems especially bitter than Einstein renounced the land of his birth, metaphorically shaking the "dust of Germany from his feet."

The author ends the article by spinning Einstein's success at Princeton against him. Einstein is labeled "a tourist attraction" which draws "a most interesting 'audience.'" Indeed, dubbed "*curiosité*" like a sideshow freak or an animal in the zoo, Einstein is made to sound not successful, but subhuman.

This close reading of the text has shown the article shows the author's bias against Einstein in many different ways. Using the basic elements of SFL to chart the parts of each clause extracts the general pattern of Einstein somehow harming the world. Moreover, the author's word choice and phrasing express a sarcastic, mocking view of Einstein. Altogether the bias in the article is undeniable, but how easy is it for other people to uncover? This study hopes to learn whether the participants will also be able to detect it and how they will do so.

### 3.4 The Setting

The study was conducted at Iowa State University, a major research institution in Ames, Iowa. All participants are current or recently graduated students of the university at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and come from diverse fields of study. To be permitted into the university, non-native English speakers must receive a minimum of 71 on TOEFL iBT or 530

on TOEFL PBT. Thus given that they were all students or graduates of the university, the native speakers of Spanish were judged as highly competent speakers of English.

### 3.5 The Participants

The participants in this study included six native Spanish speakers who had learned English as a second language (three female; three male) and two Spanish language learners (both female) for total of eight. Of the Spanish language learners, one was a native English speaker and the other had learned English as a young child. The participants also ranged in proficiency in their second language, and participants were asked to rate their proficiency in their L2 on a 5-point scale, with 1 being very low proficiency and 5 being very high proficiency. Although self-reported data can be considered unreliable (Gonyea & Umbach, 2005), the participants were asked this question in order to give a better picture of how they see their own bilingualism, which could better inform the data analysis as well. Table 2 summarizes their profiles.

*Table 2. Participant Profiles*

| Participants | L1                                      | Status        | Self-Reported L2 Proficiency |
|--------------|---|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1            | Spanish                                 | Undergraduate | 3                            |
| 2            | Spanish                                 | Graduate      | 4.5                          |
| 3            | Spanish                                 | Graduate      | 5                            |
| 4            | Spanish                                 | Graduate      | 3                            |
| 5            | Spanish                                 | Undergraduate | 4                            |
| 6            | Spanish                                 | Graduate      | 4                            |
| 7            | English                                 | Undergraduate | 3                            |
| 8            | Malayalam/English<br>learned as a child | Graduate      | 4                            |

### 3.6 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through a series of one-on-one interviews, which lasted about 30-45 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed. During the interviews, the

participants were told that they would be given a text in English and in Spanish and that they were to read both texts and then answer some discussion questions about the texts. A “mini-lesson” on critical reading of history texts based on Schleppegrell et al. (2004) followed the recorded discussion.

Participants were alternatively given either the English or Spanish version of the text first as a means of randomization to help eliminate the chance that the language of the text would influence the participants’ interpretation (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991). Participants were instructed to read the text at their own pace and told they could mark on the text if they wished but that they did not need to memorize the content. Once the participant had finished the first text, he or she was given the second text.

Upon finishing the second text, participants were asked a series of five discussion questions meant to uncover whether they could find the bias and what specifically within the text had helped them find it. Further questions investigated their perception of reading the text in both their L1 and their L2 and if they had noticed any differences between the experiences. The discussion questions used in the data collection follow below:

#### Discussion Questions

1. What is this text about?
2. Do you think this text is biased?
  - 2a. (If yes) What within the text makes you think that its biased?
  - 2b. (If no) What within the text makes you think that it is unbiased?
3. Which would you rather read, the text in English or the text in Spanish? Why?
4. How was reading the text in English different from reading the text in Spanish?
5. How was reading the text in Spanish different from reading the text in English?
6. What differences did you observe in how you found the bias in English vs. in Spanish?

### 3.7 Historical Literacy Mini-Lesson

After completing the official data collection, participants were offered a short lesson on critical reading strategies for history texts based on those described in Schleppegrell et al. (2004). Using two sample texts, both about the after-effects of the American Civil War, from Schleppegrell et al., participants were shown how grammatical structures within the texts can influence the meanings they convey. For instance, it was demonstrated how listing and categorizing processes can determine what historical events are actually being reported (action verbs) and what opinions have been included (saying verbs).

Participants were also shown how determining who is performing and who is receiving the action can reveal who the author has put in power and who is not, thus revealing some of the author's bias. Additionally, participants were shown how nominalizations and passive constructions can remove the human element from historical texts, blurring culpability and sanitizing gruesome experiences such as war.

As the mini-lesson was not part of the formal data collection, it was not recorded or transcribed. It was offered as an optional benefit for participants for their participation in the study.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The recording of each interview was manually transcribed by the researcher, with the emphasis of the transcription being on the content of the participants' responses to the discussion questions and not the linguistic patterns of their speech.

A chart was then made in Microsoft Excel in which the discussion questions were placed horizontally across the top. The eight participants' responses were then listed vertically on the left-hand side of the chart. Each of their responses were added under the corresponding question

and then summarized underneath. These summaries were transferred to a smaller chart which was used to look for trends among the data.

### 3.9 Justification of Design

This study uses a qualitative open-ended interview format as it was determined to be the best design to answer the research questions investigated. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), “qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (p. 2). Garcia (2012) identified qualitative research as especially useful in the study of bilingualism and multilingualism as it better accounts for the “complexity of the interdependent systems of bilinguals...and the dynamism of bilingual practices in society” (p.1). As this study aims to observe and interpret rather than statistically quantify (Mackey & Gass, 2005) what resources bilinguals use to detect bias in history texts presented in both their L1 and L2, qualitative methods seemed highly appropriate. Moreover, because quantitative methods favor the use of “mathematical models, statistical tables and graphs,” using a quantitative method would not give the same detailed, individualized feedback that qualitative research can yield (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 6). It was therefore determined best to reproduce the literacy task in a controlled setting and use questions to make observations and interpretations.

The interviews were recorded to allow the researcher to return to the data for easier observation. Benson (2012) identified the use of transcription of recorded data as a “striking feature of qualitative research in applied linguistics” (p. 5). Whereas data are often recorded in qualitative applied linguistics research in order to study the actual speech patterns of the participants, they can also be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to “find out the attitudes and beliefs of the speakers” (García, 2012, p.3) as was the case in this study.



Additionally, the interview was designed to be open-ended because it was truly unknown what resources the participants would use to detect the bias, but rather than having the interview completely unstructured, the same set of questions were used in each of the interviews so that “the participants [were] responding to the same stimuli (Garcia, 2012, p.4). Nonetheless, allowing the participants to supply their own answers gave a more authentic look at what bilinguals use to detect bias without guidance or instruction.

### 3.10 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the design of the study was described in addition to a justification of the methodology, a profile of the participants, and description of the setting. This chapter also included an in-depth SFL-guided analysis of the text used in the study. In Chapter 4, the data from the study will be reported, using the discussion questions as a guide, to uncover whether the participants were able to find the same bias in the text as was found during the analysis, how the participants found the bias, and how they perceived the differences between reading the text in English and reading the text in Spanish.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

## 4.1 Chapter Overview

Data collected from the eight participants in this study yielded an array of interesting results regarding how the participants perceived bias in the historical text and the relationship between reading in their L1 and L2. Those results are first organized in this chapter by the data collection discussion questions outlined in Section 3.6, and then analyzed in Chapter 5 in light of the major research questions.

The participants' responses were condensed to highlight the most pertinent information for each question. Ellipses are used in the excerpts to cut out unnecessary repetition or fumbling of words that can occur in spoken language. Brackets are used to indicate additional information that is necessary to understand the participant's answer, such as clarifying pronouns, translating Spanish phrases, and explaining prompting questions the researcher asked. These methods of transcription were considered appropriate and useful as the content, rather than the linguistic patterns, of the participants' responses was of the highest interest to this research. Those responses follow below.

## 4.2 What is this Text About?

During data collection, participants were first asked to describe what the text is about. For the most part, participants answered very simply that the text was giving background information about Einstein and his achievements at Princeton and in the US in general, while others mentioned details such as how Einstein was "trying to avoid the Nazis in Germany and how he was well-received" (Participant 2) in the US.

Two participants ventured to categorize the text into a genre, calling it a “small biography” (Participant 1) or a piece of “public relations” (Participant 4) put out by Princeton “to attract some kind of people.” Two participants also pointed out the significance of the Jewish perspective in the article, as Participant 2 said, “it’s about ... how the Jews look at him and you know and they make an image of him” and Participant 6 succinctly summarized, “It’s about Albert Einstein after coming to America and the way the Jews view him.”

Overall, participants showed a familiarity with the topic, but through their description of the content of the text, it seems that most saw it as an innocuous factual account of Einstein and his work rather than an anti-Semitic piece of propaganda.

#### 4.3 Do You Think this Text is Biased?

After gauging the participants’ understanding of the content of the piece, the researcher asked participants if they felt the text was biased. Two of the participants did not understand the meaning of “biased” or what was meant by the question. It was then rephrased to ask if the piece was fair or if it showed one side more than another.

The answers from participants were varied, but one commonality arose. All but two of the participants were unable to recognize the bias against Einstein in the piece. Instead, most participants stated that the piece did not contain bias or, surprisingly, that the piece was biased in favor of Einstein, Princeton, or the US in general.

For instance, Participant 1 stated “that text is like made to support ... Einstein and does not present the other side of the history, only one side, the good side of Einstein.” Participant 5 stated that, “in the American ways, it’s a little bit biased,” and with further probing, the participant felt that the author had a slanted view towards the US. Participant 4 thought the piece was biased, but stated that “it’s biased in the sense that they are they are not using what I think is

the proper figure of Einstein.” This participant noticed that the piece did not focus on the work Einstein is most known for, but instead focused on “the political consequences of the things he did.”

Other participants stated that the piece was neutral and therefore contained no bias. Participant 3 stated point blank that the piece “doesn’t seem like it takes one side.” Likewise, Participant 6 stated that he could not “tell if it’s biased. I mean, I feel like it’s talking more about opinions; it’s not really claiming anything.” He explained that the author was simply reporting the opinions of others. Participant 7 stated that she also could not see any bias as the text “stated mostly just facts, except maybe with the exception of one paragraph.” The participant explained that the second paragraph, in which the author discusses the Jewish perception of Einstein, seemed to take a different tone from the rest of the text.

Out of all eight participants, only Participants 2 and 8 detected the bias against Einstein. Participant 2 also thought the piece was biased against the US and Einstein:

“I don’t know how much [the author] liked the US, but maybe he’s making the point that maybe Einstein’s not that huge as he was. He’s just like ‘Oh, nobody would remember relativity;’ or stuff like that. But, I mean, I’m a physicist, and I’m like, yeah, we do. He changed the world so um, yeah, it is trying to make his point, he kind of like, you know, . . . yeah, he’s not, he’s not looking the US point of view, only the writer’s.”

Participant 8 felt apprehensive to call what she found “bias” but eventually agreed that the text was unduly casting Einstein in a negative light:

“Um, . . .I don’t know if I’d say ‘biased,’ but it certainly takes a different view than any other text that I’ve seen or read about Einstein. I don’t know if those are the biased ones or this is the biased one, but I do see a different spin on it. Um, it almost makes him

seem... like less accomplished, or less motivated than other texts either scientific textbooks, articles, have painted him to me. I think it takes one like viewpoint more over the other, ... Um, almost painting him as something who hadn't really accomplished much or done much, almost making it seem like his discoveries have been all petty or small. ... Like it gave him some credit, that says he worked on something secretly for the government, but besides that they call it like 'inventions' or just talking about patents, and, oh yeah, 'inventions in photography.' ... It's kind of making it seem really like menial, or unimportant. And it's seems to undermine the brilliance that most people associate with Einstein."

In sum, most of the participants seemed surprised by this question, as if it were something they had not considered while reading. Out of the eight participants, only two correctly identified the bias against Einstein. The others thought the text was biased in favor of Einstein, the US, or Princeton or that it was not biased at all. A summary of the participants' responses is shown below in Table 3.

**Table 3** Summary of Responses to "Do you think this text is biased?"

| Participants  | Is the text biased?                              |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 1 | Yes, in favor of Einstein                        |
| Participant 2 | Yes, against Einstein and the US                 |
| Participant 3 | No   |
| Participant 4 | Yes, in favor of Princeton                       |
| Participant 5 | Yes, in favor of the US                          |
| Participant 6 | No   |
| Participant 7 | No, with the possible exception of one paragraph |
| Participant 8 | Yes, against Einstein                            |

#### 4.4 What Within the Text Makes You Think that it is Biased or Unbiased?

After stating whether or not they felt the text was biased, the participants were asked to identify what within the text made them arrive at that answer.

Participant 1, who responded that he thought the text biased towards Einstein, said that statements like “Einstein has received 72 patents since then” and information about Einstein’s work in cinematography made it seem like “the writer wanted to present like a point of view that Einstein only worked for the government, like helped the government in a good way.”

Participant 5, who thought the text unequally favored the US and Einstein, pointed out that “when it says like he shook um the dust of Germany...kind of like at that point I thought that it wasn’t written by a German.” She also questioned the author’s exaggeration of Einstein’s achievements: “Saying the ‘perfect movie’ kind of like makes it look like it’s greater than it would have been.”

Participant 4 explained his conclusion that the piece did not use “the proper figure of Einstein” by pointing out that he thought it was “too much” when the author stated the Jews had made Einstein “a Messiah” and that his discoveries would “restore religion to the world.” Participant 4 stated that he did not “see any necessity in pointing out those kind of things.” The participant also took issue with the closing statement about Einstein’s lectures attracting so many people to Princeton, saying that “something more important about Einstein would have been able to attract more people, you know what I mean. It’s like, that reference— it’s not a good reference to say what they want to say.” The participant felt that a reference to Einstein’s research work would have been more appropriate.

Participant 8 found bias in two places within the text, saying that the text “was just talking about how people have more or less forgotten about relativity, ..Um, ...and then again

‘When he was asked why concerned himself with such “everyday things.”” Things like that made it seem like they were trying to make it seem ‘small.’”

Participant 3 was very adamant that the piece was neutral, even going back for a closer look to see if the text “use[ed] adjectives like this, this place is better than the other one.” Still, after she “went over pretty much the whole text,” she came to the same conclusion that she “didn’t find any indication of the author, um, taking any side. ...It was pretty much a description.”

Similarly, Participant 6 said that the text seemed fair because “it presents both sides. Uh...it’s not just accusing.” This participant said that one of the sides represented in the text was the “Jewish community,” as the text “says that the Jewish think of [Einstein] as some kind of Messiah.” The participant continued by saying that “it seems to me like they want to give a lot of importance to the fact that he was Jewish” in order to “use that as a ‘flag’ [of pride] for the Jewish community and their accomplishments.” Still, the participant maintained that he did not think these points made the text biased.

Participant 7 explained that she thought the second paragraph stood out because it seemed less objective than the other: “I don’t know, it sounds more opinion-based than the others ones. I feel like the other ones say like ‘Albert Einstein, the founder of the Theory of Relativity, the winner of the Nobel Prize,’ like it’s more factual.” She pointed out that, while in the third paragraph, the opinions were attributed to a reporter from the *Paris Soir*, the opinions espoused in the second paragraph were not directly connected to anyone:

“‘The world, with the exception of the Jews, would have been more or less forgotten about.’ Like, ok, well who’s saying that really? I don’t know, it just sounds more like an opinion to me.... ‘Jews in every country made their racial comrade Einstein a Messiah.’ I

just kind of wondered who the author is, who's saying that? It makes me question who's writing it.”

Thus, the resources the participants used mainly relied on the facts about Einstein included in the article and comments by the author. The participants who did not think the article was biased did not find any evidence of bias within the text.

#### 4.5 Which Text Would You Prefer to Read?

Next, the participants were asked whether they preferred to read the text in their first language or their second language. Overall, the participants preferred to read the text in their L1, whether that was English or Spanish. Their explanations gave some insight into their experiences of reading both texts.

Participants 1, 2, and 7 all explained that they preferred to read in their L1 because it is their first language. Participant 6 explained his preference by saying that he “had trouble reading the English [version].” Participant 4 stated that he “understood the main idea in the English text, but some details that I didn't get when I read the English text, ... I understood them and I got them while reading in Spanish.”

Participants 5 stated that she “feels really comfortable reading both of them” so she “would have no preference [because] it's pretty similar.”

Participant 8 stated that she would rather read the text in Spanish, her L2, because the English text seemed too negative:

“[The Spanish version]seemed a little better worded. It didn't seem to downplay his achievements as much. I don't know if that's just my perception of it or what. I think it's just like the word choice, like when they were talking about him as a politician, they say “unpleasant,” but then um, “desagradable” can also just mean, not necessarily unpleasant



but disagreeable, so, I don't associate such a negative connotation with the word in Spanish as I would with the English translation.”

Two participants cited some issues with the Spanish translation. Participant 4, a native speaker of Spanish, stated that some of the Spanish did not seem “natural” and that it could confuse some Spanish speakers. For example, “lectura,” he said, is closer to a reading than a lecture. Additionally, the word “lente,” (lens) is used to mean “male” in his particular dialect of Spanish. Participant 3, also a native Spanish speaker, said that she would prefer the English version because “there are some problems with the translation” in Spanish. For instance, she cited the phrase “‘extraordinariamente callado sobre la Teoria de la Relatividad.’ [extraordinarily quiet about the Theory of Relativity] Ese ‘callado’ [This ‘quiet], so ‘quiet’ about something, err, Ok, that’s more like English.” When asked how she would translate the text, she stated that she would change the syntax completely to “no ha dicho nada” [he hasn’t said anything].

Thus, most of the participants felt that it would be easier to read the text in their L1. Still, some participants said they would have no preference, and two even preferred the L2. Additionally, two participants cited parts of the translated text that could be improved.

#### 4.6 How is Reading the Text Different Between Languages?

When asked to compare and contrast reading the text in their L1 vs. L2, five participants noted that the L1 was easier or went faster. Two of the participants explained that reading in the L1 was more “natural” (Participants 1 and 4) and that they did not need as much processing time. In the L2, however, participants noted that often had to take more time to understand both lexical items and syntax:

“Sometimes when I read it in English I have to stop for a while and try to connect things to make them, to have them make sense? But [in Spanish] it’s like, I can go faster and even if I don’t get one from like from the context I can get it right away.” (Participant 4)

“Just it takes me a little more time to, to make sense out of each sentence [in English].” (Participant 6)

“Some words I had to reread again in the English text, also sometimes I had to go back and reread the sentence again because it didn’t make sense the first time.” (Participant 5)

“When I’m reading something in Spanish I have to really focus ...when I’m reading in Spanish, it’s almost doesn’t stick in my brain.” (Participant 7)

Seven of the participants noted particular words or phrasings that were at confusing when presented in the L2 but were clarified by reading in the L1. Both Participant 1 and Participant 2 said that at first they did not understand the English word “fatherland,” but that the Spanish “patria” made the meaning clear. Participant 1 stated, “I like maybe if I had not read it in Spanish, I would not understand what it want to say with ‘fatherland.’ I know because I read it in Spanish. They want to say ‘patria,’ but in the first, if I read in English only maybe I would say like , ‘Fatherland? What they want me [to know]?’”

Likewise, Participant 5 noted that she had to reread words like “lures” and “comrade” in English, but “with Spanish it was easier because I mean I didn’t have to go backward or like not know a word because I knew them all.” Participant 7 said she was confused by the word

“pacífico” until she read the English translation: “I was thinking like ‘Pacific’ like ocean. And I’m like, “What does that mean?” And I didn’t even think. And then I read, uh, ‘peaceful’ over here, and I was like, ‘oh, duh’.”

In addition to lexical items, participants also noted syntactical phrases that were clarified in the L1. For instance, many of the participants commented on the phrase “shook the dust of Germany from his feet,” saying that reading the phrase in their L1 made its meaning clearer:

“This phrase, ‘Shook the dust Germany,’ ummm .... ‘under the moral pressure of the Nazis,’ ... In Spanish, like, I think in this phrase in Spanish but I never think in this phrase in English. It’s very different for me, like translate this phrase in English for me. And when I see it English, it’s very different, like shock for me.” (Participant 1)

“...like, at the beginning I didn’t understood when he said once he got here, he somehow he cleaned the dust from his feet, and eh, when I read it at the beginning, when I read it in English, I wasn’t sure what was the meaning. But now when I read it in Spanish, it’s like well, I understand ... Yeah I understood, I mean, when I was reading in English, I wasn’t sure what was that meaning, but when I read it in Spanish it was like ‘Ok, I know now what they mean.’” (Participant 4)

“Uh, yeah, one of them ‘Sacudió el polvo.’ I’ve never heard that phrase. Like every time I’ve heard ‘Dust yourself off,’ or...it’s always ‘quitar el polvo.’... I remember something about shaking the dust off his boots or ‘shook the dust of Germany off his feet,’ and so like I knew what it was getting at.” (Participant 8)

The participants also noted other less idiomatic syntactical patterns that were easier to understand in in the L1.

“Eh, then I wasn’t sure why they said, I mean, in English, “six years later.” I thought that it—that doesn’t make sense. But then, it seems like they are here; when I read it in Spanish it seems like they are writing this six years later after that happened and at the beginning I was thinking when I read it in English I was thinking they were—it was some article from nowadays. But then reading it in Spanish, it was like oh, maybe this was written six years after something. I mean it put me it put me in the timeline. Eh, the other part was, eh, eh, the same happen here when they say ‘El politico se volvió engineer, ingeniero’ eh, again I was at the beginning like, in English, I was like was like I don’t get this quite well, but in Spanish, it was like Ok, so they are trying to point out that Einstein now, it’s, I mean, he has left his scientific role somehow to use his recognition to talk about politics. It seems, I mean that’s what I got, from that.” (Participant 4)

“And uh, I would say sometimes just the structure of the sentence that was right here. Um, where was it...ok, “were it not...politician Einstein.” I have to like reread it a couple of times and then it makes sense to me... I mean, the translation’s pretty accurate it was just, I mean it was easier to read in Spanish; it made more sense, uh, the structure and the content than some sentences in English.” (Participant 5)

The participants also described differences in reading strategies between the L1 and L2:

“It might be that since I read the English one first and then the second one in Spanish, I might have just skimmed through the Spanish one because I can skim better through the Spanish version than the English one.” (Participant 7)

“But [in Spanish] it’s like, I can go faster and even if I don’t get one from like from the context I can get it right away.” (Participant 4)

One participant in particular showed the reverse reaction of most of the participants.

Participant 3, a native Spanish speaker and highly proficient English speaker, read in her L1 first.

She found she read in her L2 faster than her L1. However, she attributed this to receiving the

Spanish version first:

“I read the Spanish version before...And so I felt that I didn’t have to look at the English version that much, uh, in that much detail. I guess, so you go a lot faster the second time you read something...I read the Spanish version a lot more carefully. ‘Cause it was the first time I read the text. It took me a while to read it. I’m a slow reader.” (Participant 3)

Participant 1, who read first in his L1, Spanish, noted that he had used the English version to clarify some committee names he knew better in his L2:

“Um, in English, for example, um, some name of committee um, I remember in English, and when I read it in Spanish it’s like so difficult for me like ‘What committee is that?’ When I need read it in English, and ok, yeah I know what committee is that because it’s easy for me to see it in English because the original committee name is in English.”

Most of the participants perceived reading in the L1 to be faster and easier than reading the text in the L2. They also described having a greater ease of understanding both lexical items and syntactical phrases. However, one participant noted that she read in the L2 more slowly because it was the first time she read the text. Additionally, another participant found certain terms easier to understand in the L2 because it was the language in which he learned them.

#### 4.7 What were the Differences between Detecting Bias in L1 vs. L2?

The participants were also asked if they detected the bias differently in their L1 vs. their L2. Three of the participants stated there was no difference as they assumed the texts were the same:

“Um, the difference?...I don’t know, I assumed it was the same text, so I only looked at the English version, when I was, when I was looking at the bias.” (Participant 3)

“I would say [I found the bias in] both, uh, because they use similar words than well, the words made me think about it, I would say same parts....Yeah, when I read the English I catch some words, ‘shake the dust.’ That was the one that really caught my attention the most and same [in Spanish]. I mean, because the translation is the same it sounds the same, it kind of like means the same.” (Participant 5)

“No, no, I don’t think it was different. Uh, I didn’t feel like it was biased. I feel like maybe it might have been written by somebody who is part of the Jewish community? I’m not sure but I don’t think that made, I don’t think that was what he was trying to get across. Um, I don’t really know what the point is. It’s just like a historical fact, I think. That he trying to get some historical point.” (Participant 6)

The remaining five participants found it easier to detect the bias in their L1. For instance, Participant 2 described how, in the description of Einstein, the Spanish “desagradable” sounded much more negative to him than the English “unpleasant.” The other four participants also sensed more easily in the L1 that the writer was not completely neutral:

“Yeah, ok, yeah, well, in Spanish I confirmed that they were trying to point out something that I read in English so I, I mean I never thought about the bias thing until you said it. But I will say that now, after you asked me that question, I would say that ok, I got the idea they were trying to emphasize some part of Einstein, but reading this in Spanish helped me to confirm that, yeah they were basically trying to point out these facts about Einstein, which I think are not the most important facts about Einstein.”

(Participant 4)

“It was just, I don’t know, I think it’s more easy for me to grab on biases in English than in it is in Spanish because I can, I can pick up on like a writing vs. like in Spanish it’s more difficult for me to pick up on a style of writing because it’s like I have to take it so literally ...there’s just a certain attitude or style in English that I can pick up on if it’s bias, vs. if it’s in Spanish it’s much more difficult for me to, to notice. I have to take it as it and try and comprehend it so I’m not even thinking about the style at all. My Spanish isn’t good enough, to be honest with you, yet to be able to do that, so.” (Participant 7)

One participant made an interesting point. Initially, Participant 1 stated that he “didn’t see too much difference” between the bias in the English and Spanish texts. The main difference he

saw was not in the language, but in the country in which the text was written. Because the text was in English, he had assumed that it was from an American perspective. :

“...if you asked me in my cultural context if I read this in Spanish and in my country, I think that has another implication than if I read this English here in the USA. Basically, the difference I see depend on the place that I read it, not the language, the cultural and the political context because basically, this paper talks about the political implications that Einstein had in here, in USA, but if I read this in Puerto Rico, I would think in other implications.”

The participant, who had originally thought the text was biased in favor of Einstein, pointed out some specific words that would change depending on where he read the text:

“Um, like, the bias here is a little, when he say the word ‘misteriosamente’ in English like mysteriously, like it’s something to implicate something is like wrong, something isn’t good here. I like, when I read that, I say like Einstein wants to hide something with that, um, in Puerto Rico, I think so that Einstein work for the USA to, to like imperialize, something like that.”

Finally, when the participants were told that the reading came from a piece of Nazi propaganda published in the 1930s, all but one of the participants thought that knowing the author made the piece “make more sense.”

“Um, it, it makes sense now why it was portraying a different view of Einstein than I had previously seen. Because I’ve read a fair bit about him. And so it was a little surprising to see this viewpoint. But that does make sense why now they address things a certain way.



Just downplaying the achievements, making um, talking about him as an ‘unpleasant politician turned inventor.’” (Participant 8)

Five of the participants found that knowing who the author was allowed them to find the bias more easily within the text. The participants began to find bias in the author’s voice, the facts included, and even the use of quotation marks in the text:

“Wow! It changed a lot of it. Like, it—I don’t know, it like changes everything, in the way that I thought that, it was American, the writer, and now it’s like a Nazi, ..Uh, yeah, yeah, with [ ‘fatherland’ and ‘shaking off the dust of Germany’ ] I thought that the writer want to, an implication that he abandon-like he left his nation and um, ...Betrayed, like the country, the nation, with this line.” (Participant 1)

“ ...Eh, well, now I understand the part of, “the Jew-los judios en cada pais...Messias.” Yeah, now it’s like, now that you are telling me this, it’s like yeah, that sounds too much, so knowing that it was the Nazis who wrote that, now I know why they used that word. Especially, well, because for the Jewish the Messiah was, it was a big deal, so yeah, so somehow they were trying to, no, it seems that they are using the word on purpose to ridicule, no, yeah, ridicule, yeah, I don’t know if that’s the right word.”(Participant 4)

“Well now that you said—I wasn’t paying attention to the um, how you call it? The quotation marks; I wasn’t paying attention. Now they kind of like make sense.

‘Fatherland’ in quotation marks. But I don’t know, for me, well, yeah, it’s a little bit

unclear if they're criticizing Albert Einstein. Whoa, it's confusing. ... Yeah, like now they said like sarcasm, it be taken like that." (Participant 5)

"Like if I reread it, it might be in the back of my mind that this is written by a Nazi... Yeah... 'the moral pressure of the Nazis in 1933.' So it seems this person is mocking what he may have been feeling, perhaps and maybe ... when I read the English one, I noticed that, that maybe I paid a little more attention to those words or sentences in quotations and it seems to do it in a, to emphasize something that they want to mock about Einstein. And I wanted to see if they would use the same thing in Spanish text, which they do. For example,...like uh, 'bajo la presión moral de los Nazis.' They use, they seem to emphasize that as if it's a valid thing to use. Uhhh, mmm, 'la Relatividad' they also put in quotations as if it's, they're not giving it enough importance. Uhh, even the title has 'Una Atracción Turística' in quotations like he's some kind of animal at the zoo perhaps. So I think they emphasize those things 'perfect cinema' in quotations, or asking certain questions at certain points. Uhh, it says that his discovery will transform the religious views of humanity going back to, taking the religion back to a cultural world and then it's asking 'And today, six years later?' People will have forgotten about the Theory of Relativity. So...I feel like they use like questions here to say that it has not transcended with time. 'The most recent discovery, a new lens—what else would you expect from Einstein.' That little phrase now seems like, mocking, sort of way.. So I—I noticed that they were using a lot of questions and quotations and little comments like that one—'What else would one expect.' So maybe after reading it a second time, it's biased. I would change my mind." (Participant 6)

“I mean, yeah, I thought it sounded weird. There were just some things in here that I was like, ‘What?’ like I don’t know. I never had—I-I guess I didn’t know that Einstein was Jewish. Or maybe I did know that somewhere along the way I just forgot, but I was kind of like wondering why they were even talking about that. I feel kind of, I feel really dumb now.... Some of the wording was a little weird, like, I guess it makes more sense: ‘The Jewish public relations machine,’ I don’t know that sounds weird but um, if you’re thinking that it was Nazi propaganda, I mean that sounds a little more fitting. ...It does clarify a little bit more like the timeline too, because as I was reading the second paragraph it said ‘And today, six years later, the world would have been, the world, uhh, with the exception of the Jews would have more or less been forgotten about.’ Like I’m like, what is six years later? I don’t know. Yeah it does clarify like the time a little bit more. ... The part where it said, ‘Things of confidential nature intended only for the government since it could be dangerous if it fell into the hands of the public.’ I mean, I feel like they’re just trying to make it sound like Einstein is uh, I don’t know, is up to something dangerous, or like bad, I don’t know. But then they go on to mention that he had other like, other areas of a more peaceful type, which I don’t, I don’t know. This whole article to me is really strange to me when I was reading it. I don’t know, I feel like I’m kind of all over the place now. The language in the first paragraph, um, ‘he must have been sure of his scientific stature when he shook the dust of Germany from his feet under the moral pressure of the Nazis in 1933 and went to America. ’’As he shook the dust of Germany from his feet.’’ So is that like saying he like he like--Yeah, I can’t like pick up on this. ...Yeah, ‘good riddance,’ exactly. Yeah, I don’t know.” (Participant 7)

Like many of the other participants, Participant 3 seemed surprised by the revelation, but did not immediately see the article differently:

“Nazi propaganda?...I didn’t see that. [Does that change how you read it?] Yeah, probably, but, still I would still have to reread the whole thing with that, with in mind now.” (Participant 3)

Thus, asking the participants about how finding the bias in their L1 vs. L2 shed some light onto how the participants processed each text. For many, it showed a deeper, more nuanced connection to lexical items and syntactical phrases in the L1. Because of this, some participants seemed better able to go past the literal meaning of the text in their L1 to find some bias within the article. Moreover, knowing the context of the article alerted the most of the participants to more instances of bias within the text. With this information, many participants took a second look at the text and began to find many more examples of bias is expressed in the text, such as the author’s word choice, comments, and even his choice of punctuation.

#### 4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the results of the data collection. The participants’ responses were organized according the discussion questions outline in Chapter 3. Noteworthy trends were identified among the responses and illustrated using excerpts from participant interviews. Many of these trends stemmed from the participants’ ability or, in many cases, inability to correctly identify the bias within the text. Similarities were also noted in how the participants’ perceived the difference between reading the text in their L1 and L2. In order to answer the research questions proposed at the beginning of this study, Chapter 5 will expand on and provide analysis

of these results in connection to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, in addition to identifying implications and limitations to the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the conclusions that have arisen after analyzing the results discussed in Chapter 4. This chapter begins with a discussion of the three main research questions in Section 5.2. Section 5.3 identifies additional conclusions found through the results of the study. Implications for instruction and further research are discussed in Section 5.4, while Section 5.5 discusses limitations to the study. Finally, the purpose and findings of the research are discussed in an ending conclusion in Section 5.6.

#### 5.2 Research Questions

At the beginning of this study, three primary research questions were proposed:

RQ1: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L1 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ2: What linguistic resources and literacy strategies do Spanish/English bilinguals use in their L2 to detect author bias in historical texts?

RQ3: How do Spanish/English bilinguals perceive the differences between detecting bias in their L1 vs. their L2 in historical texts?

The qualitative design of this study as outlined in Chapter 3 was meant to investigate these three questions. The data presented in Chapter 4 can now be used to answer these three questions. The first two research questions will be discussed together because of the difficulty of determining which resources the participants were using in each language. When describing how they found the bias, participants often referred to both the English and the Spanish text interchangeably, often grabbing whichever text was closest to make reference.

### 5.2.1 RQs 1 and 2: L1 and L2 resources for detecting bias

The resources that the participants used to detect bias in both their L1 and L2 were strongly affected by whether or not the participants saw bias in the text. As stated in 4.3, many of the participants did not feel the text was biased and surprisingly, some participants did not even understand what was meant by “biased.” Those that did see the text as biased thought it unfairly favored Einstein or his new “fatherland,” rather than the intended opposite. Therefore, until the context of the article was revealed, the resources the participants used to detect bias were greatly influenced by whether or how they saw the bias at all.

The resources that the participants used were (1) literacy conventions, (2) facts, (3) author’s voice, (4) feelings, (5) background knowledge, (6) contextual knowledge, and (7) punctuation. Each of these will be described below.

#### Literacy Conventions:

When asked about the content of the article, some of the participants tried to categorize the text into a specific genre because of the literacy conventions it followed. Because of the text appeared to contain many facts about Einstein, some of the participants saw it as a profile or biography. A few of the participants also said that it was meant to be promotional material for Princeton, using Einstein as a means to draw people to the campus.

Cuban (2010) pointed out that most students, at least in the United States, have been taught history as “heritage” (para. 5). That is, many students see “history,” and the texts that carry it, as unchangeable and unquestionable. Therefore, because the participants were told they would read “a historical text,” it may not have even occurred to them to doubt its impartiality. These perceptions may have constrained the participants’ ability to recognize the bias within the text or they influenced the participants to see the text as favoring Einstein.

#### Facts:

Many of the participants analyzed the text based more on its content than its form. The inclusion of positive facts about Einstein such as his achievements, inventions, and titles led some of the participants to believe that the article was biased in favor of Einstein rather than against him or that it was a neutral biography. However, one participant stated that although he did not think the text was biased against Einstein, he thought that by presenting more facts about Einstein's inventions than his work in Physics, the author was not showing "the proper figure of Einstein."

While some of the participants took the article at face value, many of the participants paid attention to what background the author included and did not include about Einstein. Therefore, some of the participants showed a surface awareness of the author's choices of content. However, they did not seem to show the same awareness for how author's linguistic choices portrayed that content as outlined in Fang and Schleppegrell (2008), Coffin (2006), and Unsworth (1999). Instead, these participants' responses appeared to reflect the traditional method of teaching history as a collection of facts (Cuban, 2010).

#### Author's Voice:

Many of the participants used comments made by the author about Einstein as clues to the bias. For instance, some of the participants were suspicious of the author's comments about the Jews making Einstein a Messiah. The participants looked for the author's opinion in the adjectives he used, corresponding well with Unsworth's (1999) identification of appraisal language as a vehicle for author bias. However, this again led some of the participants to conclude the author favored Einstein too much ("perfect cinema"). The participants were more critical of content that did not appear to be factual, but they sometimes drew incorrect



conclusions or did not appear to know how to analyze the author's voice. Moreover, they limited their analysis to lexical items—most notably adjectives—and phrases, rather than analyzing the actual grammar of the text as described in Schleppegrell et al. (2004).

#### Feelings:

Participants also stated that they felt parts of the text were biased because some parts just *seemed* more opinionated, strange, or out of place. Participants struggled to pinpoint what exactly in the text made it seem this way. Some of them pointed to insertions of the author's voice as discussed above, but the participants still could not explain why one statement seemed like a fact and another like an opinion or why certain comments from the author sounded odd. Although their suspicions were often on the right track, the participants, most likely taught history through a heritage approach (Cuban, 2010), lacked the critical analysis skills and a metalanguage like those outlined in Schleppegrell and Fang (2008) to describe and categorize what they were finding.

#### Background Knowledge:

Some of the participants relied on background knowledge about Einstein to recognize the author's bias against him. Most notably, the first participant to correctly recognize the author's bias was a PhD student in Physics. Another participant commented on how her lack of background knowledge kept her from recognizing the bias. It seems then that possessing background knowledge about the topic of the text can impact whether participants will detect the bias. This, of course, reflects one of the particular challenges that come with history texts as highlighted by Schleppegrell et al. (2004). Without background knowledge, students can often struggle to comprehend a historical text. While some bilinguals may contain historical background knowledge in their L1, they may not be able to recognize it in their L2 (Cummins,

2000). In this study, participants had the opportunity to read the text in both their L1 and their L2, but in most history classes, that is not the case.

### Contextual Knowledge

After learning that the text was a piece of Nazi propaganda, nearly all of the participants stated that they could now recognize the bias more easily. With this knowledge, participants were better able to make sense of the author's comments, word choice, and tone because they knew who was in power when and where the text was written and the ideologies that that context implies (Wodak, 2013; Luke, 2014). This change in the participants' ability to detect the bias indicates that knowing who wrote the text, when it was written, and where it was published could influence how students read and understand it. Moreover, understanding how the influence of power and ideology are represented in a text could increase the likelihood that students will be able to identify bias within it, supporting ideas put forth by Fang and Schleppegrell (2008), Unsworth (1999), and Luke (2014).

### Punctuation:

After learning the context of the article, two participants pointed to the use of the punctuation as an indicator of bias. Both participants stated that they now saw the author's use of quotation marks as sarcastic and mocking.

As SFL sees grammar and content as intrinsically intertwined, (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2004), Unsworth (1999), Fang and Schleppegrell (2004), and Coffin (2006) all identified the how the syntax and lexical choice of history texts can carry meaning and even bias. Additionally, Halliday and Mattiessen (2004) cited the "graphological resources" available to readers. From this perspective, every mark on the page of text contributes to its meaning. (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2004,p. 6-7). It seems that after knowing the context and being instructed to find the

bias, these two participants were also able to recognize how the smallest details can contribute to the bias of the piece.

### **5.2.2 RQ3: Perception of detecting bias in L1 vs. L2**

Participants were directly asked to describe if they found the bias differently in their L1 vs. their L2. Three of the participants saw no difference between the two texts, saying that one was simply a translation of the other. However, five of the eight participants said the bias was easier to find in their L1. The participants pointed out words and phrases that carried deeper, more nuanced meanings in their L1 than in the L2 translation.

Other participants relied on their L1 to confirm the meaning of whole phrases that indicated bias, while another stated that she could sense an attitude of bias in her L1 because, unlike her L2, she could sense meaning beyond the literal.

Thus, it seems that, in their L1, participants relied most on word meanings and connotations that they had carried with them to the reading. Although the words in English and Spanish may have had the same literal meaning, for many of the participants, seeing words or phrases in their L1 made the bias more evident. Lexically and syntactically, the participants appeared to glean more meaning from the text in their L1 due to the linguistic support they carry for it.

### **5.3 Additional Conclusions**

In addition to the providing answers to the research questions discussed above, this study also uncovered other findings which could have important implications for bilingual literacy and history education.

### **5.3.1 The Role of Background Knowledge**

It was striking how few of the participants (2 out of 8) were able to correctly identify the bias against Einstein without knowing the context of the article. The two participants who did identify the bias correctly both cited prior knowledge of Einstein and his work.

Background knowledge, it seems, played a key part for these two participants to be able to detect the author's bias against Einstein. Participant 2 was able to use his background knowledge as a graduate student in Physics, and Participant 8 was able to use past readings about Einstein to see the article's bias against him.

On the other hand, while all of the participants were familiar with Einstein as a historical figure, it may have been their lack of background knowledge that caused the other participants to overlook or misinterpret the bias within the article. These findings seem to illustrate Anderson's "Schema Theory" (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). According to Carrell and Eisterhold, this theory suggests that readers create meaning from text based on the background knowledge the readers bring with them. Readers interpret new information based on this "previously acquired knowledge" and try to fit it into the knowledge structures they already have (1983, p. 556). Therefore, it is possible that the participants who already possessed knowledge about Einstein could recognize the article's inconsistency with what they had previously learned.

### **5.3.2 The Importance of Context**

Another significant finding from this study was the role that context played in the participants' ability to detect bias in the article. After being told that the article was a piece of propaganda from the 1930s, all but one of the eight participants agreed that they could now see how the article ridiculed and mocked Einstein. Five of the eight participants took the opportunity to take a second look at the text and found more indications of bias against the scientist.

Knowing who wrote the article, when it was written, and where it was published had a significant impact on the participants' ability to detect the bias within it.

#### 5.4 Implications for Instruction and Further Research

The conclusions drawn from the research questions in 5.2 and the additional conclusions outlined in 5.3 carry implications for educators in the classroom and for researchers in the field.

##### **5.4.1 Implications for Instruction**

###### 5.4.1.1 Explicit Instruction of Bias Detection

This research has shown that while students do possess some tools to detect bias in a historical text, they still greatly underuse the resources available to them for interpreting a text. This may reflect their preconceptions of what history and history texts are. However, it is to their advantage to analyze and question texts presented as “history” (Cuban, 2010; Luke, 2013)

Using a pedagogical method such as the one outlined in Schleppegrell et al. (2004), in which students use SFL to parse apart history texts, could raise students' awareness of bias in texts and give them more ways in which to detect it. This could be combined with the work in bias detection done by Unsworth (1999). Using such methods provides students with the metalanguage to talk about the bias within the text so that they can describe what exactly within a text makes it biased.

###### 5.4.1.2 Context and Background Knowledge

In addition to explicit instruction of how to find bias within texts, lessons on detecting bias should also stress the importance of context and background knowledge. While students may have some prior knowledge about the topic of the text, not all students will have the same amount or depth of knowledge. For instance, in this study, all of the participants were familiar with Einstein, but their familiarity with his work, his politics, and his religion varied among the

participants, and this familiarity may have influenced their reading of the text. As a general practice, schema-building pre-reading exercises, such as the graphic organizers used by Early and Tang (1991), can often be as essential as actually reading the text itself. Otherwise, students may not be able to fully comprehend the topic discussed or the bias contained in the reading.

Furthermore, knowing the context of the reading also plays an important part in being able to find bias within a text. Much of the bias was hidden in words with multiple shades of meaning or comments and phrases that could be taken both literally and sarcastically. Once the participants knew that the article was published as a piece of Nazi propaganda, they could better read the bias within it. However, not knowing the context caused many of the participants to conclude that the text was a neutral biography of Einstein or a promotional material produced by Princeton, impairing their ability to find the bias in the text. Understanding how ideas of power and the ideologies that influenced the text when it was written seem to have an impact on how students understand a text, as Luke (2013) suggested

#### 5.4.1.3 The Use of Two Languages

The results of this study hold some implications specifically for the bilingual classroom. One of the most interesting findings of this study was that many of the participants used their L1 to better understand parts of the L2 text. The participants explained that syntactical phrases such as the idiomatic “shook the dust of Germany from his feet” were clarified by reading the text in the L1. One participant noted the opposite held true. Participant 1 used his L2 to clarify committee names he first read in his L1.

Additionally, participants in the study noted that certain words in the text carried deeper and more varied meanings in the L1 than their L2 translations. For instance, the English “unpleasant” was translated into Spanish as “desagradable.” Participant 2, a native Spanish

speaker thought that “desagradable” had more negative connotations than “unpleasant,” but Participant 8, a native English speaker, stated in regards to the pair that she did not “associate such a negative connotation with the word in Spanish as [she] would with the English translation.”

Therefore, it appears that if students are working their L2, they may need some explicit instruction of the varied meaning of the words used in the text. Although students may have access to these nuanced meanings in their L1, they may not yet be able to manifest those meanings in their L2 (Cummins, 2000). Comparing them with their L1 equivalents could be an interesting activity to help students understand the author’s intent.

#### **5.4.2 Implications for Further Research**

This research opens the door to future research in this area. As stated above, much more research needs to be done to investigate the interaction between L1 and L2 in the bilingual mind. Many theories and models exist to give possible explanations of how bilinguals process and connect their two languages (de Groot, 2013), but more specific research could be done to uncover how this interaction is used in the bilingual classroom. For instance, it is evident that participants have a deeper connection to syntactical structures and lexical items in the L1, but could this depth ever be achieved in the L2? Is there anything that could be done in the classroom to help bilingual students make these connections, specifically with regards to detecting bias?

Further research could also be to done study whether the findings in this study hold over to other L1/L2 combinations. Linguistically, English and Spanish share many similarities such as syntactic patterns and orthographic systems. If the same results arose from using more varied

language such as a Chinese and English, the conclusions found in this study may be strengthened.

### 5.5 Limitations

This study, of course, is not without limitations. To ensure that code was the only difference between the two texts, the content of the texts was the same. Some students commented that this made them read the first text slowly and carefully, but only skim the second text as they assumed it was the same as the first. This may have made them more sensitive to the language of the first text they read, and with so few participants, randomization was a challenge.

For the same methodological reasoning, the syntax of the Spanish translation was kept as similar as possible to the English text, even though alternate phrasing in Spanish may be more common. While most of the participants thought it was an accurate translation, two participants pointed out constructions that seemed unnatural to them in Spanish. This may have distracted them from detecting more subtle differences between the texts.

Additionally, it should be noted that the original text published in 1939 was written in German. The article was found in English through the German Propaganda Archive maintained by Calvin College. The text was then translated into Spanish by the PI with the help of native Spanish speakers. Therefore the Spanish version of the text is essentially a translation of a translation<sup>1</sup>. Using translations of the original text could have some inadvertently changed the bias that was written in the original German, causing it to be much less subtle than the original and thus perhaps more difficult to detect, even for expert readers. A more obvious text may provide different results

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<sup>1</sup> As the article also contained a quotation originally in French, some parts of the text have even been translated through three languages.



Another possible limitation could be the number of participants in the study. With eight participants in this study, it is impossible to make generalizations about bilinguals. It is very possible that another group of eight bilinguals could easily find the bias in a propaganda text. More research is needed to know if the findings of this study are common among bilinguals as a whole.

### 5.6 Final Conclusion

This study was begun in order to investigate the resources Spanish/English bilinguals used to detect bias in history texts. Using a text from a 1930s Nazi publication, participants read the text in both English and in Spanish without being told the original context of the article. Participants were then asked if the text was bias and what made them think so.

It was found that students use words, phrases, and content to uncover bias, but without guidance, they can often misidentify or overlook bias, even in propaganda texts. Having sufficient background information and knowing the context of the text could be key factors as to whether students will be able to identify bias and do so correctly.

This study also explored the bilingual participants' perceptions of reading the text in both their L1 and their L2. Most participants stated that they would rather read the text in their L1 because it was easier. Moreover, many of the participants stated they could see the bias more easily in their L1.

It is the hope that future research will shed light on history instruction for ELLs. In such a dense, content-rich subject, ELLs face particular challenges (Schleppegrell et al., 2004). Learning to detect bias in a text is a valuable skill for all students to build. By learning to uncover biases in historical texts, ELLs can also learn to become more critical of the texts that

surround them in their own daily lives. In doing so, these students may no longer be subject to what others say about them, but will be better able to tell their own stories.

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Appendix A: Historical Text in English  
 Historical Text  
**Albert Einstein**  
**A “Tourist Attraction” at Princeton**

(...)

Albert Einstein — Founder of the Theory of Relativity, Nobel Prize Laureate, former director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics, former Professor at the Universities of Berlin and Leiden, Member of the Amsterdam Academy of Sciences, Member of the “Committee for Intellectual Cooperation” of the League of Nations and the board of the University of Jerusalem — must have been sure of his scientific stature as he shook the dust of Germany from his feet “under the moral pressure of the Nazis” in 1933 and went to America. He has since been remarkably quiet about the Theory of Relativity, which the Jewish public relations machine claimed was the greatest scientific discovery since Adam. Einstein currently works in a fine laboratory at Princeton University provided by the American government...

(...)

Jews in every country made their racial comrade Einstein a Messiah. His discovery would transform humanity’s religious views, giving religion back to a “cultural world” that had given up on religion. And today, six years later? The world (with the exception of the Jews) would have more or less forgotten about “Relativity”-Einstein, were it not occasionally reminded in an unpleasant way of the “politician” Einstein.

A special correspondent of *Paris Soir* who visited Einstein in his laboratory in 1937 wrote: “The politician became an engineer.” Einstein has received 72 patents since then, among them as the *Paris Soir* correspondent noted mysteriously “things of a confidential nature intended only for the government, since it could be dangerous if they fell into the hands of the public.” Other inventions in the area of photography are of a more peaceful type. The most recent discovery, a new lens — what else would one expect from Einstein — is “likely to transform cinematography” and finally provide the world “with the perfect cinema.” When asked why he concerned himself with such everyday things, Einstein answered modestly that he wanted to thank his new “fatherland” for the warm reception it gave him.

As our correspondent from *Paris Soir* wrote (7.4.1937), “Einstein is one of the sights (*curiosités*) of highly modern Princeton. If the Committee to Encourage Tourism cannot promote this or that football game, there remains Einstein’s lecture from 2 to 3 on ‘Differential Calculus and Nuclear Reactions,’ which may not attract hundreds of thousands, but nonetheless lures a most interesting ‘audience.’”

(...)

Appendix B: Historical Text in Spanish  
 Texto Histórico  
**Albert Einstein**  
**Una “Atracción Turística” en Princeton**

(...)

Albert Einstein—Fundador de la Teoría de la Relatividad, laureado del Premio Nobel, antiguo director del Instituto de Física de Káiser Wilhelm, antiguo profesor en las Universidades de Berlín y Leiden, Miembro de la Academia de Ciencias de Ámsterdam, Miembro del “Comité por la Cooperación Intelectual” de la Sociedad de Naciones y de la junta de la Universidad de Jerusalén—debe haber estado seguro de su estatus científico cuando sacudió el polvo de Alemania de sus pies “bajo la presión moral de los Nazis” en 1933 y fue a América. Desde entonces ha estado extraordinariamente callado sobre la Teoría de la Relatividad, que la máquina de relaciones públicas Judía afirmó era el descubrimiento científico más grande desde Adán. Einstein actualmente trabaja en un buen laboratorio en la Universidad de Princeton proporcionado por el gobierno Americano...

(...)

Los judíos en cada país hicieron de su camarada Einstein un Mesías. Su descubrimiento transformaría las vistas religiosas de la humanidad, regresando la religión a un “mundo cultural” que había dejado la religión. ¿Y hoy, seis años después? El mundo (con la excepción de los Judíos) habría olvidado más o menos sobre “La Relatividad”—Einstein, si no fuera recordado ocasionalmente en un modo desagradable del “político” Einstein.

Un corresponsal especial del Paris Soir que visitó a Einstein en su laboratorio en 1937 escribió: “El político se volvió un ingeniero.” Einstein ha recibido 72 patentes desde entonces, entre ellos como el corresponsal del Paris Soir notado misteriosamente “cosas de un carácter confidencial planeadas solamente para el gobierno, ya que podrían ser peligrosas si cayeran en las manos del público. Otras invenciones en el área de la fotografía son de un tipo más pacífico. El descubrimiento más reciente, una nueva lente—que más se esperaba de Einstein—es probable que transforme la cinematografía” y finalmente proporciona al mundo “con el cine perfecto.” Cuando se le preguntó por qué se preocupaba con cosas tan ordinarias, Einstein respondió modestamente que quería agradecer a su nueva “patria” por la recepción amable que le dio.”

Como nuestro correspondiente de Paris Soir escribió (7.4.1937), “Einstein es una de las curiosidades (curiosités) de un Princeton muy moderno. Si el Comité para Fomento del Turismo no puede promover tal o cual partido de futbol, todavía queda la lectura de Einstein de 2 a 3 de ‘Calculo Diferencial y Reacciones Nucleares’, que quizás no atraerá cientos de miles, pero no obstante sí atrae a una ‘audiencia’ más interesante.”

(...)