



BETWEEN WORDS, BETWEEN WORLDS

**Linguistic and Contextual Disruptions in the Transition
from English to Spanish Literacy among Children Moving
from the U.S. to Mexico**

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Introduction

- Invisibility of international child migrants.
- Reversal of migration movements between Mexico and the United States. More people moving from the U.S. to Mexico and from Mexico to the U.S.

Taxonomy of child migrants moving from the U.S. to Mx

- U.S.-born children who arrive in Mexico without prior school experience in U.S. schools
 - U.S.-born children who arrive in Mexico with prior school experience in U.S. schools
 - Children who were born in Mexico, migrated to the United States, and then returned while still of school age
- There are also those who -still of school age- are returning to the United State after living in Mexico.

Purpose of the presentation

- To analyze the literacy transitions of children moving from the United States to Mexico.
- Transitions from English to Spanish,
- Both oral and written languages.

Three common contexts in the lives of children moving from the United States to Mexico

In U.S. schools

Losing proficiency in their heritage language

diminishing Spanish fluency

limited opportunities to learn or practice academic Spanish

Avoidance of using Spanish in school settings

In Mexican schools

Losing their English language acquisition

lack of support for transitioning into Mexican schools

little recognition of English language skills

In both systems

Incomplete acknowledgment of children's circumstances, affiliations, and transnational experiences

encountering linguistic barriers when moving between two school systems

Conclusion

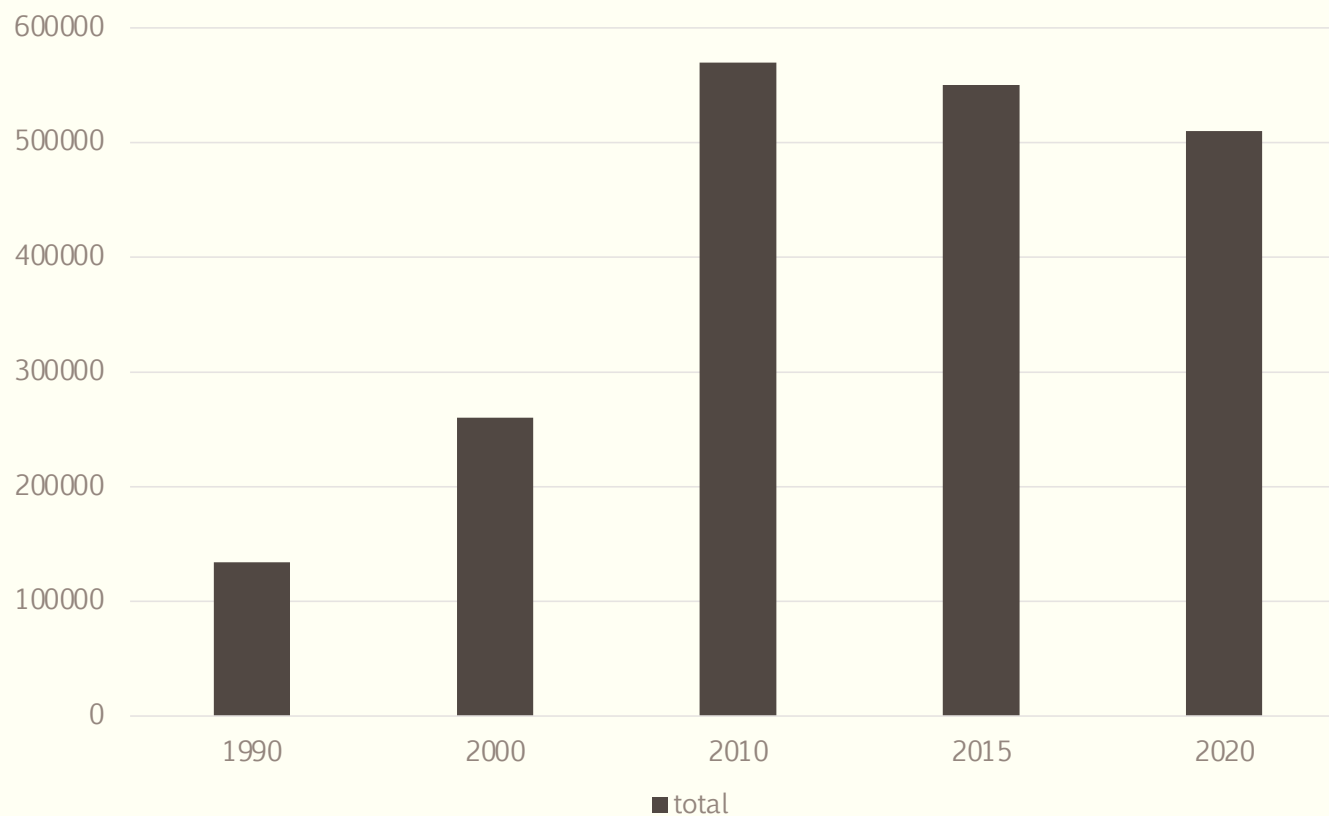
The school systems ignore each other



DEMOGRAPHICS

From 2000 to 2020

Evolution of the Number of Minors 0-17 years old born in the U.S. and living in MX



Sources: Masferrer et al. 2019; Zúñiga and Giorguli 2019; Bautista and Terán, 2023



TRANSITIONS FROM ENGLISH TO SPANISH

Linguistic Ruptures

L1 and L2 oral languages versus L1 and L2 written language

In the U.S. schools

- ❖ Oral language L1: Spanish spoken at home.
- ❖ Oral language L2: English spoken as dominant language
- ❖ Written language L1: English as language for learning in schools
- ❖ Written language L2: rarely students learn to read and write in Spanish

In Mexican schools

- ❖ Oral language L1: English learned at school
- ❖ Oral language L2: Spanish spoken at home.
- ❖ Written language L1: it is nuclear, written English? Written Spanish?
- ❖ Written language L2: Spanish, as a Second Language?



WHAT TRANSNATIONAL STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO THEIR TEACHERS IN MX SCHOOLS

Using the fiction/non-fiction technique

Lulu -7th grade student- is talking with her teacher

I beg you, sir, not to call me dumb just because you say I can't read well and I'm already 13 years old. The thing is, sir, I can read in English, but I struggle with Spanish. Sometimes I mix up the letters, and I don't know how to pronounce the words. I kindly ask you not to tell me that Spanish is very easy to read because it's written how it's pronounced, as if the written language were a mirror of the spoken one.



Lulu -7th grade student- is talking with her teacher

Then, why is it written “queso” -cheese- and not “ceso”? Or why isn't the “h” pronounced? Why is “lápiz” -pencil- and not “lapis”? For those of us who learned to read and write in English, the differences between “y” and “ll”, “r” and “rr” are not at all clear. Tell me why the “r” sounds like double “rr” when I say “Roberto” or “ratón” -mouse-, but not when I read “coraje” -anger- or “puro” -cigar-. So, don't tell me that Spanish is very easy to read because it's written how it's said.



Lulu -7th grade student- is talking with her teacher

I ask you a favor, sir, please don't assume that just because I speak Spanish, I know how to read and write in Spanish. I have been studying in schools in the United States where everything is in English. This is the first time I enter a school where everything is in Spanish. I learned Spanish at home, with my mom, my dad, my grandparents, and some neighbors, but I have never studied Spanish formally...





WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW AND WHAT WE DON'T KNOW, YET

Using the fiction/non-fiction technique

What We Know and What We Need to Know

Until now, we know:

- Children do not receive support
- In Mexican schools there is no pedagogy of linguistic transitions
- The linguistic challenges are often an important factor leading to academic failure and school dropouts

We need to know:

- The barriers children encounter during the first weeks after they enter to Mexican schools
- The linguistic difficulties transnational students face in speaking, writing, and reading Spanish
- The common misunderstandings in teacher-student relations
- The roles played by family members in linguistic transitions
- The teachers' hesitations, questions, suggestions, beliefs, and practices regarding linguistic transitions

Many thanks for your
attention!