

Role of Language Status in Predicting Parent School Engagement and School Relationships

Amanda Czik, M.A.



Abstract

The present study explores how parents of English Language Learners (ELs) rate child's school climate and engagement in school. Parents of 16,936 students, grades PreK-12, completed the Delaware School Survey- Home Edition, which included items assessing their child's primary language and language abilities. Although effect sizes were minimal, language ability was found to be related to several aspects of school climate and engagement.

School Climate & Student Outcomes

Positive school climate and student engagement is related to:

- Academic achievement
- Student motivation and engagement
- Fewer behavior problems, including bullying
- Higher emotional well-being
- School completion

School engagement of ELLs is related to:

- Resilience
- Lower rates of substance abuse
- Less delinquency
- More secure attachment to formal learning

Research Questions

1. What is relationship between students' language status and parents' ratings of school climate and of their child's engagement in school?
2. What is the relationship between students' English ability and parents' ratings of school climate and of their child's engagement in school?

Study Design

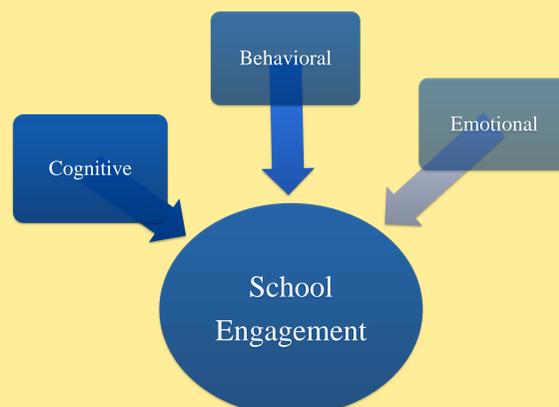
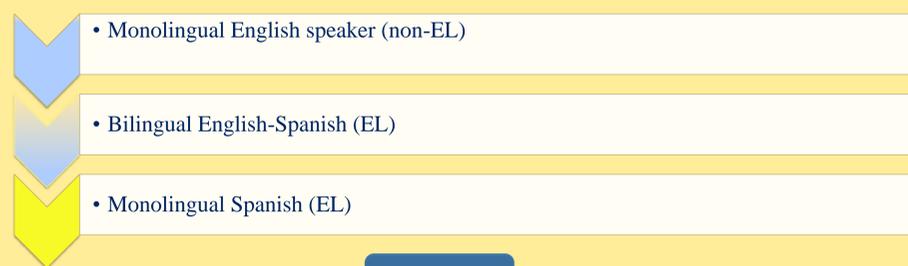
Participants: 16,936 parents of students in Delaware schools, including 2,212 self-identified native Spanish speakers and 696 speakers of a language other than English or Spanish. Based on multiple survey items, parents identified their child as: monolingual non-English; bilingual English and another language; or, monolingual English (non EL). They also rated their child's English as poor, fair, good, or excellent.

Demographic Information of the Sample by Family Language and Gender

Family Language	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
English Only	5445 (45.1%)	6631 (54.9%)	12076 (85.3%)
Spanish Only	414 (48.7%)	437 (51.4%)	851 (6.0%)
Spanish and English	986 (45.4%)	1188 (54.7%)	1222 (8.6%)
Total	6845 (48.4%)	8256 (58.4%)	14149 (100%)

Measures: As part of Delaware's School Climate Transformation Grant, parents completed two scales of the Home version of the Delaware School Surveys (Bear, Yang, Harris, Hearn, & Boyer, 2016): the School Climate Scale and the School Engagement Scale. The surveys had been translated into Spanish.

Differential language status categorization is presented below in Figure 1 and . Evidence of reliability and validity of scores are supported by several studies, including results of confirmatory factor analyses.



Results

Regression analyses showed minimal but statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) relationships between parents' ratings of their child's **language ability and various aspects of school climate and school engagement:**

- **Cognitive engagement** ($r=0.202, r^2=0.041$)
- **Emotional engagement** ($r=0.202, r^2=0.041$)
- **Total engagement** ($r=0.145, r^2=0.021$)
- **Teacher student relations** ($r= 0.061, r^2=0.014$)
- **Student student relations** ($r=0.046, r^2=0.003$)
- **Total school climate** ($r=0.032, r^2=0.006$)
- **Behavioral engagement** ($r=0.032, r^2=0.006$)

Relationships between parent's rating of their child's **English ability** parent ratings of **subscales of school climate and student engagement:**

- **Cognitive Engagement** ($r=0.183, r^2=0.034$)
- **Behavioral engagement** ($r=0.137, r^2=0.019$)
- **Total engagement** ($r=0.130, r^2=0.004$)

Research Underway

Now examining:

- How engagement among ELs differs from that of their non-English learning peers
- How schools with higher populations of Spanish speaking EL students differ in overall socio-emotional wellbeing

Clustered relationships, using HLM, between language status and perceptions of EL parents on their student engagement.

The influence of covariates:

- Number of minority students in a school.
- Size of school
- Percent receiving Free or reduced price meals (school level SES)
- Teacher-student ratio