

6-2018

SPANISH-SPEAKING CLIENT-WORKER EXPERIENCES AT A CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE AGENCY

Koressa Castillo

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SPANISH-SPEAKING CLIENT-WORKER EXPERIENCES AT A CALIFORNIA
CHILD WELFARE AGENCY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Koressa Castillo

June 2018

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ABSTRACT

With the growing presence of Latino families across the United States, service providers must remain cognizant of this group's unique sociocultural characteristics. Culturally competent service provision requires child welfare professionals to remain aware of the stressors often faced by this population. Immigration and acculturation issues, language and cultural barriers, poverty, discrimination, fear of deportation, and lack of access to a variety of services are a few of the stressors that are commonly experienced by this group. Linguistically competent practice requires service provision to be in a families' native language; however, there are many other factors to consider even when doing so. Cultural unfamiliarity, inadequate bi-lingual worker training in professional terminology, and issues with translators and interpreters are all factors to be considered.

It was hypothesized that the relationships between clients and workers may depend on shared culture, that cultural differences due to different backgrounds and countries of origin may hinder working relationships. Through qualitative face to face interviews, this study gained insight into Spanish-speaking client and worker perspectives on their working relationships. The study aimed to understand the advantages and limitations to matching clients and workers solely on shared language. Findings suggest that cultural similarities or differences were not the primary relationship concerns for either workers or clients. Rather, both clients and workers expressed more salient concerns related to the lack of resources for translation and interpretation, the absence of

worker Spanish-language training, clients' limited willingness/ability to advocate for themselves, and increased workload and supervisory lack of support.

It is recommended that supervisors take part in mandatory trainings aimed at managing such complex caseloads, that workers receive continuous Spanish language training in professional terminology as well as case management training tailored towards this specific population, and that a more uniform and informative approach is developed when working with these families. Although the present study attempts to address the knowledge gap involving client perspectives, additional research should focus on client experiences more heavily. Further research is also needed in assessing the adequacy of county-made language certification tests and worker perception of language competency while out in the field.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The United States (U.S.) Census Bureau defines Hispanic/Latino origin as “a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race” (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011, p. 2). Approximately 50 million, or 16 percent of the United States total population was of Hispanic or Latino Origin in 2010 (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). This number has steadily increased within the last 17 years and is projected to continue to grow (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). According to the U.S Census Bureau, more than half of the country’s total population growth (27.3 million) between 2000-2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population (15.2 million) (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). In 2010, more than half of the Hispanic population in the U.S. resided in just 3 states: California, Texas, and Florida; California held the majority (23%) of Hispanic residents in the nation (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

The rapid inflow of Immigrant Latino families in the U.S warrants increased attention in the child welfare system (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010). This is particularly important since several studies have shown that children in immigrant families may be at increased risk for maltreatment (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010). Unique stressors common to limited English proficiency (LEP) clients that may contribute to this include: immigration and acculturation issues, language and cultural

barriers, poverty, fear of deportation, lack of access to a variety of services (including health insurance and public benefits), and discrimination (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010; Ayón, 2014; Ayón, 2009; Suleiman, 2003). Due to the large increase of Hispanic/Latino immigrant families, child welfare professionals should be aware of this group's unique stressors and needs, so as to be prepared to provide adequate services (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010).

Linguistically competent practice requires service provision to be in a families' native language to prevent miscommunication (Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2010) and potentially serious consequences, especially relating to child welfare cases. Effective communication is less likely to occur when workers and clients do not share a common language; case outcomes will inevitably suffer and client satisfaction and adherence to case plans will more than likely be low (Taylor, Gambourg, Rivera & Laureano, 2006; Gregg & Saha, 2007). However, there are many other factors to consider even when providing services in the client's native language; these include the use of translators or interpreters, cultural unfamiliarity, and inadequate bi-lingual worker training in professional terminology (Maiter, Alaggia, Chan & Leslie, 2017; Chand, 2005; Taylor, Gambourg, Rivera & Laureano, 2006; Engstorm, Piedra, & Min, 2009). This study uses qualitative interviews to gain insight into Spanish-speaking client and worker perspectives on their working relationships. The study aimed to understand the advantages and limitations to matching client and worker solely on shared language.

Policy Context

Although many federal and state policies are designed to improve and facilitate the well-being of families across the country, their impact on the Latino population is often troublesome (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003). Historically, policy efforts have not considered Latino sociocultural characteristics when designing and implementing policies (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003). This one-size-fits-all policy approach often leads Latino families to fall through the cracks. “Policies and practices that cannot offer support in a culturally responsive manner create additional barriers to family cohesion that can lead to negative outcomes” (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003, p.4).

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 has had a negative impact on many Latino families involved in the child welfare system across the country (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003). The ASFA shortened the period of time families have to reunify with their children once they have been removed from their care. For undocumented LEP clients who face numerous language and legal barriers in obtaining and accessing services ordered by the court, this additional time pressure makes it extremely difficult and for some, even impossible to follow through with case plans (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003). The ASFA is not culturally sensitive to the Latino population and hinders the possibility for successful family reunification by not acknowledging the additional burdens and challenges that

this population faces in obtaining and receiving services in the allotted amount of time. Despite the considerable growth (and projected growth) of the Latino population in the United States, the needs of Latino families are often overlooked in child welfare policy discussion (The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, 2003). This research study gains a deeper understanding as to what Latino families and the workers assigned to help them experience within the child welfare system; this knowledge will assist child welfare agencies in improving the efficacy of current policies and practices utilized by their Spanish speaking social work staff.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study seeks to understand how Spanish-speaking clients and Spanish-speaking workers at a Southern California county children's service agency perceive their working relationships. The study explores client and worker perceptions on the benefits and limitations of matching workers and clients solely by Spanish language ability. The study is practice-informed in that administrators at the agency contributed to the study's development. These administrators wondered whether cultural differences between clients and workers might negatively impact service delivery. This question prompted child welfare agency administrators' interest in assessing the language-matching dynamic between clients and workers. Understanding the complexity of factors that affect LEP client-worker relationships may benefit and potentially improve services for this population at this county social service agency.

When there is large unmet need for workers who speak a particular language, caseloads typically rise for the few who can meet these needs. Furthermore, service providers carrying cases in languages other than English may encounter potential difficulties in locating accessible resources for clients. Consequently, some potential themes that are expected to arise include: worker frustration with high Spanish caseloads as well as barriers to resources and adequate service delivery. On a broader level, the insight gained by the study will contribute to the expanding body of research focused on LEP clients and their particular needs, specifically within child welfare.

The qualitative design includes in-depth interviews with both clients and workers to facilitate the gathering of rich information. The study's small sample size is conducive to gathering extensive detailed data. An interview guide was utilized to guide discussion around several points including (but not limited to): language history and preferences, experiences working with Spanish-speakers, pros/cons of working with someone who speaks Spanish, and cultural practices/beliefs.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

Due to the increased presence of the Latino population, not only in the country, but within the child welfare system (rising Latino caseloads), it is extremely important that Latino client perspectives and needs be taken into account in service delivery. Similarly, understanding Spanish-speaking worker perceptions may shed a light on current county policies or practices that may be

facilitating or hindering their work with clients. Children Services agencies may utilize the information to improve or adjust existing processes.

The study seeks to explore the following research question: What are Spanish-speaking client/worker perceptions of their working relationships within a county child welfare agency? The study focuses on personal experiences and delves into the perceived benefits of working with someone who shares a language, as well as the limitations that arise when language is the *only* factor taken into consideration when pairing clients and workers. The information gathered from the study may benefit future policy planning and implementation on a county level. It is a step towards having the Latino voice heard and considered throughout policy discussions within the child welfare system. Additionally, information gathered throughout the study will add to the existing knowledge base on culturally competent service delivery with the Latino population.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following section includes literature focusing on the professional perspectives of those who have worked with clients with limited English proficiency (LEP). The barriers that clients face in obtaining services will also be discussed through a review of the literature. Lastly, this chapter addresses cultural competency along with some of the potential disadvantages in utilizing interpretive services.

Limited English Proficiency Clients: Professional Perspectives

There have been several notable studies exploring professional perspectives in working with LEP clients. A qualitative study by Maiter, Alaggia, Chan and Leslie (2017) utilized focus groups to obtain child welfare worker perspectives on experiences providing services to LEP clients. The sample included 30 workers with an average of 8 years' experience in the field. Results indicated that agency guidelines concerning how to work with LEP clients were non-existent. Workers reported several difficulties when having to use interpreters to communicate with clients; workers reported feeling less able to build rapport, the interpretation quality was questioned, and role confusion was addressed. Study participants indicated that interpreters take on a 'worker role' instead of simply interpreting as they are meant to do. It was also noted that role

confusion and conflicts of interest may occur between bilingual workers and clients with a shared culture (Maiter, Alaggia, Chan & Leslie, 2017).

The study also found that participants recognized many benefits in interpretive services such as: ease of relatability, understanding, and overall facilitation of interaction (Maiter, Alaggia, Chan & Leslie, 2017). Child-welfare workers reported many structural barriers (inherent in the work and beyond one's control) when working with the LEP population. Findings paralleled previous research which suggested the development of agency guidelines and formal agency protocols to help facilitate LEP client-worker interaction (Ayón, 2009; Engstorm, Piedra, & Min, 2009). Similar to previous research, limited and scarce resources and client accessibility issues were also noted as structural barriers when working with LEP clients (Ayón, 2009; Maiter, Alaggia, Chan & Leslie, 2017).

Engstorm, Piedra, and Min (2009) also conducted a qualitative study aimed to understand the experiences of social workers working with limited English proficiency clients. In-depth interviews were conducted with 26 bilingual social workers in San Diego County. Of those included in the study, 88% reported having disproportionally high LEP caseloads (compared to monolingual workers). Matching clients solely on language *may* have negative effects on service quality. The majority of participants described LEP case-carrying as a complex feat; cases were more time consuming, required a greater amount of work/effort, and necessitated far more extensive case management than

monolingual cases. The study suggests that the few available bilingual social workers typically tasked or pressured to carry LEP cases may not have the time or the means to provide each client with sufficient attention. Although LEP cases were described as requiring higher effort and work, agency workload expectations were the same for both bilingual and monolingual workers which resulted in increased expressed worker frustration (Engstorm, Piedra, & Min, 2009).

Bilingual social workers reported providing interpretive and/or translation services to their colleagues which was viewed as an interruption and barrier in completing their own work (Engstorm, Piedra, & Min, 2009). Switching from one language to another consistently throughout the day was reported as a contributor to fatigue. Although bilingual workers reported having a competitive advantage over monolingual workers seeking employment, they reported issues regarding salary and promotion. A notable challenge among social service agencies who do not screen or test for language proficiency among newly hired bilingual workers is the assumption that all bilingual workers have the same competency and expertise. The researchers noted this as a dangerous assumption to make that may result in inadequate service provision. They recommended agency administrators identify the minimum level of skill required from bilingual workers and suggested the provision of on-going training in professional terminology (Engstorm, Piedra, & Min, 2009). Similar to several studies focusing on child welfare *worker* perspective, this study did not obtain

information regarding client experiences; the proposed study aims to address this gap by interviewing LEP clients in hopes of gaining a deeper insight on their experiences and perspectives.

Barriers to Services

Ayón's (2009) qualitative study involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 14 child welfare workers from a Southern California agency and aimed to gain worker perspectives on the different paths that recently immigrated Mexican families face in pursuing mandated services. The major finding was that ease of obtaining services was heavily dependent on documentation status and need for exclusively Spanish services. Undocumented Spanish-speaking Mexican families faced greater challenges in completing court mandated services. Spanish-language services are scarce and very limited, often requiring long waiting lists. Undocumented families are ineligible for Medi-Cal Services and often do not have the financial means to pay out of pocket costs which further limits their ability to obtain and complete the services mandated by the court. As previously mentioned, the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 shortened the time frame in which families may complete court mandated services for family re-unification. After the allotted amount of time, parental rights may be terminated if services are not completed. This is especially worrisome for undocumented, Spanish-speaking families who face far greater barriers in obtaining services than their documented, English-speaking counterparts. The assigned worker's knowledge on available resources, systems of care, and

willingness to provide additional assistance further influences the client's success in completing services (Ayón, 2009). Consistent with Engstorm, Piedra, and Min's study (2009), Ayón proposes child welfare workers carrying LEP cases be assigned lower caseloads; Ayón suggests that agency protocols and guidelines should be developed and implemented when working with undocumented, monolingual clients so that a more uniform approach is taken when working with these families (Ayón, 2009).

In a more recent study, Ayón (2014) utilized focus groups to develop a greater understanding of parents' perceptions of their families' service needs; 52 first-generation Latino Immigrant parents in Arizona were included in the study. Findings indicated 5 major need categories: mental/behavioral health, physical health care, education, information/support services, and community efforts. Similar to Ayón's (2009) study, documentation status played a major role on overall ease of obtaining services. In Arizona, proof of documentation is required when accessing care; undocumented Latino parents are asked to provide proof for both themselves and their U.S born children. In this way, many children may be covertly prevented from accessing services and their health may suffer the consequences. From a child welfare perspective, this fear of deportation and consequent lack of care may be misinterpreted as parental neglect (Ayón, 2014). It is extremely important to consider the potential barriers that undocumented, Spanish speaking clients encounter, especially when working with them in a child welfare setting where such barriers can have grave consequences.

Cultural Competency

Culturally competent service provision is essential for successful outcomes within any organization. Consequently, the way in which service providers define this concept is important. In-depth interviews with 9 experienced Southern California therapists working with Latino families were conducted in a study on therapist perspective and insight on cultural competency (Taylor, Gambourg, Rivera & Laureano, 2006). The importance of language was a major theme reported by participants. Language proficiency coupled with awareness of the variations in word meanings across Spanish-speaking countries were regarded as important factors in achieving competency. Latino therapists who grew up speaking Spanish reported an ease in relatability with their Latino clients. Maiter and colleagues (2017) noted that role confusion and conflicts of interest may occur when bilingual workers and clients share a culture. However, culture-matching, in addition to language-matching may have some potential advantages as it may lead to increased rapport, understanding, and empathy between the worker and client. Therapist self-awareness and sensitivity to the client's culture may safeguard against potential cultural clash, especially as it relates to issues of gender, power, social class, and immigration. At the core of cultural competency lies self-awareness, openness to differences, and tolerance (Taylor et al., 2006).

Chand (2005) reviewed various research studies which looked at the complexity involved with utilizing interpretive services for minority ethnic families

in the child welfare system of the United Kingdom. Chand discussed several issues highlighted in these studies including a lack of available interpreters, insufficient time allotted for meetings requiring an interpreter, and external issues related to the interpreter's gender that influence the client's ability to speak freely and comfortably. Issues involving interpreter accuracy were also mentioned, as was the lack of social worker training in utilizing interpretive services. Similar to suggestions made by Engstorm, Piedra, and Min (2009), Chand emphasized the importance in appropriate interpreter training in professional terminology. Like Maiter and colleagues (2017), this study highlighted issues concerning interpreter role confusion throughout the review. Several studies included in this review deemed utilizing children as interpreters as unacceptable and inappropriate for a variety of reasons including: the involvement of sensitive case information unsuitable for children and insufficient knowledge and understanding to make proper translations. One study noted the impact that culture has in carrying an investigation, stating that misunderstandings are more likely to occur when cultural differences exist (Chand, 2005).

It is important to note that all of the research studies reviewed so far have been qualitative in nature, and consequently, have had small sample sizes resulting in low external validity. There is an overall lack of research dedicated to the LEP population within the child welfare system; large quantitative studies are non-existent, possibly due to the difficulty associated with obtaining voluntary

participation within this population. Small qualitative studies however, offer extremely detailed and rich accounts of experiences.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization. As the country becomes increasingly more diverse, social work practitioners in a variety of sectors will have to adjust their service provision accordingly to provide adequate, culturally competent services (NASW, 2003). Cultural competence refers to:

the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each (NASW, 2003). (p.13)

The study aims to explore client and worker perceptions regarding the benefits and limitations of matching workers and clients based solely on language ability. Cultural Competency theory assists in guiding this discussion and in answering the following questions: Has language-matching been a reasonable culturally competent effort in response to the growing diversity in this country? Is there more than can be done to increase the quality of services?

There is an undeniable need for cultural competency within child welfare agencies for a variety of reasons (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.). The United States is becoming increasingly more diverse and agencies should respond to clients' varied needs, accordingly (Child Welfare Information

Gateway, n.d.). Cultural competency will assist in eliminating the disparities found within families of color who are in the child welfare system as well as improve service quality and case outcomes (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.). Cultural competency aids in building rapport with families, increases respect and understanding, fosters trust and cooperation, and encourages inclusion among diverse groups (Brownlee & Lee, n.d.). The availability of culturally competent services and service providers is critical and necessary to social work practice.

Systems Theory notes that families interact with, and are part of a larger environment (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Issues and circumstances that lead a family to become involved with the child welfare system often do not have one single explanation but rather are a result of the unique interaction between micro, mezzo, and macro systems. Consequently, when assisting these families, it is vital that the larger environment and all its systems are taken into account. Doing so avoids placing blame on the client and attributing their hardships to personal faults. This approach builds on existing strengths, strives to empower clients, and facilitates rapport building and client engagement by creating a positive, helpful atmosphere (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Engaging mandated minority clients who may already be suspicious of governmental systems can be a daunting task, but a culturally sensitive approach coupled with an understanding of the systems involved and worker self-awareness can aid the process (Baker, 1999).

Summary

As the Immigrant Latino population continues to grow in the United States, service providers must remain cognizant of this group's unique sociocultural characteristics. Culturally competent service provision requires child welfare professionals to remain aware of the stressors often faced by this population. Immigration and acculturation issues, language and cultural barriers, poverty, discrimination, fear of deportation, and lack of access to a variety of services are a few of the stressors that are commonly experienced by this group of people and that consequently influence the course that open child welfare cases take.

Through the use of in-depth, qualitative interviews, this study seeks to gain a deeper insight on Spanish-speaking client and worker perceptions of their working relationships, and aims to uncover the perceived benefits and limitations to language-matching within a child welfare context. The information yielded from this study will add to the existing knowledge base on culturally-competent service delivery with the Latino population. Existing literature on professional perspectives of working with LEP clients highlights the complexity involved in managing such cases as well as the frustration that workers experience along the way. Due to the limited research involving client perspectives, the proposed study aims to address this gap by taking client experiences into account. It is expected that such information will assist county administrative staff in evaluating and adapting current policies and practices to best fit the needs of their Latino client population.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This chapter includes a detailed description of the study's methods. The sampling process and study design is outlined, step by step procedures are discussed, and instruments utilized to gather data are delineated. Steps taken to protect human subjects are also defined, as are the data analysis techniques.

Study Design

This study used a qualitative design to explore and describe the following research questions: How do Spanish-speaking clients and workers perceive their working relationships? What do Spanish-speaking clients and workers view as the benefits and limitations of matching clients and workers based solely on language ability? A strength within a qualitative design is that it facilitates the collection of rich information regarding subjective personal experiences. In-person, in-depth interviews lasting between 30 minutes to 1 hour allowed for the collection of detailed information. In regard to the participants, it was not expected that the clients and workers had worked directly with one another in the past, but rather that they had experience working with their Spanish-speaking counterparts. This pilot study generated a sample size of 8 participants (5 clients and 3 workers), which limits the external validity, or generalizability of findings, due to the small sample size.

Sampling

This study used a small sample size consisting of 8 participants (5 clients and 3 workers) for two reasons. First, the small sample size allowed the researchers to test recruitment methods with child welfare clients who are involuntary and often fearful. Second, the small sample size provided an opportunity for the researchers to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences faced by Spanish-speaking clients and workers who are matched based on language in order to lay the foundation for a subsequent study with a larger population. Non-probability, availability (convenience) sampling was utilized to gather participants; participants were recruited from a Southern California child welfare agency. The selection criteria for client participation in the study consisted of clients having *closed* cases within the Children's services agency, participants were over the age of 18, and spoke Spanish. Social worker participants also spoke Spanish and served Spanish-speaking clients directly. Due to the Spanish-speaking recruitment criteria, most of the participants were Hispanic/Latino; however, ethnicity was not a recruitment criterion and Spanish-speaking staff who are not Hispanic/Latino were also recruited. Both male and female adult participants of varying ages (18+) participated.

Data Collection and Instruments

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, in-depth, face to face interviews were conducted with 8 participants. An interview guide was utilized with both client and worker participants (Appendix A). The client interview guide consisted

of 10 main questions; some questions had additional furthering questions to assist and guide the interviewer. Questions included pertained to: languages spoken in and out of the home, language preference, specific experiences with Spanish-speaking workers, cultural beliefs, pros and cons of working with Spanish-speaking staff, treatment received, etc. Client interviews were conducted in Spanish. The worker interview guide also consisted of 10 main questions, with some additional furthering questions to guide the interviewer. Worker interviews were conducted in English. Questions included in the guide asked about the worker's role in the agency, their history with the agency (how long they have been employed, training and education received), languages spoken, Spanish language caseloads, frequency of Spanish-language use at work, communication with clients, cultural practices/beliefs, relationships with Spanish-speaking clients, pros and cons of language-matching, etc.

Procedures

California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) researchers sought permission to conduct research on Spanish-speaking clients and workers from a Southern California child welfare agency. Agency administrative staff identified Spanish-speaking clients with closed cases in one geographic region of the agency's service area and asked clients' permission to release contact information to CSUSB researchers (total of 2 students and 2 faculty members from the departments of social work and sociology). After clients agreed to this release of information, participants were contacted via telephone by CSUSB

researchers and invited to participate in the study. Clients were given a brief description of the study and were informed of a 20-dollar gift card incentive upon completion of the interview. Client interviews were scheduled to take place at convenient public locations, at a time that worked best for the participant, and were conducted by a CSUSB researcher. Individual arrangements were made with each client depending on their geographical location and time of availability.

Agency administrative staff invited all Spanish-speaking social workers to participate in the study via email. Agency staff who wished to participate in the study contacted CSUSB researchers directly to arrange an interview. Interviews were conducted during work hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm) at county offices, or in locations suggested by the workers (outdoor area, café, etc.). Client interviews were conducted in Spanish and worker interviews were conducted in English, both utilized an interview guide. Interviews were audio-recorded for ease of accuracy; prior to beginning the interview, the CSUSB researcher reviewed an informed consent document (Appendix B) with the participant and asked each participant for their permission to record the interview. Recordings were later transcribed and analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. If a participant denied the recording of the interview, the CSUSB researcher took notes in lieu of the recording. All interviews were conducted between July 2017-September 2017.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before any data was collected, the researcher conducting the interview reviewed an informed consent document with the client (in Spanish) and worker (in English). The document specified that participation was completely voluntary and that participants would not benefit nor be penalized for their decision to participate or not to participate in the study. Participants were informed that they did not have to answer any question that they did not wish to answer and could stop participating at any time without consequence. Further, the document stated that the child welfare agency would *not* be informed of the client's/worker's decision to participate, and researchers would not ask about immigration status or about the client's Children and Family Service (CFS) case. Clients were informed that their decision to participate or not to participate would not impact any current or future services they receive from the County.

CSUSB researchers took several steps to ensure the confidentiality of the data. To protect client confidentiality, interviews with client participants were held at a neutral site, not at Children's Services locations. Upon completion of the interview, the CSUSB researcher immediately transferred the digitally recorded audio files into password protected computer files and deleted audio files from the recording device once transcribed. Transcription files were stored in password protected files accessible only to the CSUSB research team. Participant pseudonyms and numbers were utilized in place of participants' names in transcripts, analysis materials, and final products. As is appropriate in

qualitative research, quotes from individual participants were used in presentations and written reports; however, CSUSB researchers ensured that quotes did not reveal details of participants' characteristics or experiences that might reveal participants' identities. All recordings, transcripts, and notes related to the study were kept in password protected files or in locked cabinets. All transcriptions and notes will be destroyed 3 years after the project has ended. Participant identity will not be disclosed in any publications or presentations. However, participants were informed that their confidentiality was not guaranteed; under certain circumstances, identifying information may be given out if required by law, or if self-harm/ harm to others, child/elder abuse is disclosed. County identity will also remain anonymous; "a county in Southern California" will be utilized in written materials and presentations.

Deception was not utilized in the proposed study; therefore, a debriefing statement was not included. Participants were provided with contact information, should any questions arise after the interview took place. Participants were informed of when the results would be available and where they could access this information.

Data Analysis

Eight in-depth face to face, qualitative interviews were utilized to collect data. One researcher conducted the client interviews in Spanish and a different interviewer conducted the worker interviews in English. The interviews were audio-recorded and both interviewers took hand-written notes as needed.

Interviews were transcribed and translated by a professional transcription/translation company. The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. Transcribed interviews were first coded independently by three researchers (one MSW student and two experienced faculty researchers). Client interviews were coded first and the worker interviews, second. The researchers then met on two occasions to discuss the codes, to identify their qualities and characteristics, and to discuss emerging themes relate to those codes. The research team also explored areas of agreement/disagreement to further elaborate on themes emerging from the data. The MSW student researcher also used a journal throughout the data analysis process to assist with the identification of themes and categories.

Summary

A qualitative research design was utilized to explore how CFS Spanish-speaking clients and workers perceived their working relationships and to address the potential pros and cons to matching clients and workers based solely on language ability. In-depth, face to face interviews were conducted via availability sampling to a group of 8 participants (5 clients and 3 workers). Spanish-speaking, male and female adult participants of varying ages (18+) participated. Interview guides were utilized with both client and worker participants; questions included pertained to languages spoken/preferences, cultural beliefs, experiences providing/receiving services, perceived benefits and limitations in language-matching, and much more. Informed consent documents

outlining voluntary participation, risks/benefits, and confidentiality and anonymity were utilized to ensure the protection of participants. Data was gathered via audio recording and handwritten notes and was transcribed and analyzed using a thematic analysis technique.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the general findings of the qualitative interviews conducted. A total of three Spanish-speaking clients and five workers were interviewed over a three-month period beginning July 2017.

Client participants were asked about languages spoken/preference, perception of communication ability and relationship quality with agency staff, perceived shared cultural practices and beliefs, and pros/cons of working with Spanish-speaking child welfare employees. All client participants were female and were of Hispanic/Latino origin. All clients reported speaking Spanish at home and with their children. Two of the three client participants had a Spanish preference when working with county staff. All clients had worked with Spanish-speaking county staff at some point, either through their assigned social worker or interpreter.

Worker participants were asked about their role within the agency, education and training, Spanish language communication ability and fluency, Spanish-speaking client caseloads, perceived shared cultural practices/beliefs and relationship quality with Spanish-speaking clients. Participants worked in a variety of units within child welfare including: investigative services, continuing services, adoptions, and as jurisdiction/disposition writers. All but one participant were native Spanish speakers, all stated they were fluent and confident in their

Spanish language abilities. All workers were college educated; four out of the five held their Master in Social Work. All but one worker stated that their caseloads were predominately Spanish. All worker participants were female and most were of Hispanic/Latino origin.

Client-Worker Relationships

All clients reported good communication and good relationships with the Spanish-speaking staff they worked with. All workers reported a good working relationship with their Spanish-speaking clients. A social worker's country of origin seemed relatively unimportant to clients; all participants were not entirely sure of their worker's heritage or ethnicity.

All client participants reported their workers to be helpful, pleasant, and responsive to their needs. One client regarded her workers as accommodating by saying "since I didn't have a car or anything like that, they would tell me 'we will take you to your child visitation,' they would even offer to do that" (Client 1). Some participants noted knowledge of other clients having "bad experiences" and referred to themselves as "lucky" for having positive and effective working relationships with the staff they interacted with. Regarding treatment, Client 2 said: "they treated us well, I heard a lot of stories about mistreatment, and they always treated us very good." Throughout the interviews, clients referred to *all* county employees (including office and reception staff) as social workers and it was unclear whether these bad experiences were with CFS social workers or other county personnel.

Clients also stated they did not want to “bother” their workers with questions or inquires, one participant noted:

I haven’t spoken to her [social worker] a lot, well I hold off-if they tell me, ‘we’re going to give you the information for everything on such and such date,’ I wait until that day-I don’t bother them...like pressuring them before that time or things like that...I respect what they tell me (Client 1).

Along these same lines, workers described clients as compliant and passive and related this to the fear that most immigrant families experience. One worker described complacency as a cultural norm in Latin American countries, noting the following:

Culturally, Spanish speaking countries, you don’t push back, you don’t question authority. You especially don’t want to piss off your worker, because you think they’re gunna retaliate against you, and especially if you’re not documented, right? ‘Cause that adds a whole other layer. You just want to go with the program, ‘cause you don’t want to bring attention to yourself (Worker 3).

Clients were unfamiliar with a social worker’s role and whether they are required to report undocumented clients to immigration services; because of this uncertainty, clients preferred not to disclose their status to government workers and may be compliant so as not to jeopardize their stay in the United States.

Regarding how citizenship affects client-worker relationships, Worker 4 said, “my undocumented clients tend to wanna comply with everything, and

they're also wary of resources...they wanna be compliant, but they're also a little worried." Clients want to follow social worker directives and complete services but are distrustful and cautious of government representatives. Immigrant, Spanish-speaking families were described as fearful and easily intimidated, especially since most are unfamiliar with social worker job duties and are afraid to ask. It was noted that "this [Latino] culture is very scared to ask for anything...they're still scared to ask anything relating to their rights, they're scared to even know what their rights are..." (Worker 2). Fear and distrust inhibits client-worker relationships.

Although service availability was dependent on citizenship, this did not always hinder the working relationship between client and worker; one undocumented client participant stated: "that didn't stop them [social workers] from helping me, they would help me even more" (Client 1). Client 1 noted that her social worker helped with her "son's papers" (immigration documents relating to citizenship). In contrast, Client 3 noted a negative working relationship with one particular social worker and attributed it to her undocumented status.

Language: Interpretation and Translation

Both clients and workers reported that social worker Spanish-language mastery was variable, as was interpreter quality. In reference to her Spanish-speaking husband, one participant noted "even though they [interpreter and husband] spoke the same language [Spanish] they really didn't understand each other" (Client 2). Interpreter quality was reported to vary by location, one

participant said: "...they were different interpreters...the interpreter at the court was very good, but the interpreter from the office was not that good" (Client 2). Court interpreters have their own personnel dedicated solely to translating and interpreting court hearings; their language certification process is much more intensive and rigorous than the language certification test utilized by the county to assess office social worker language ability and fluency. Regarding office interpreters, Client 2 stated:

It seemed like the lady [worker] spoke more English than Spanish, she is an interpreter, but I noticed in her accent that she spoke better English than Spanish...she was trying to get him [husband] to understand a word, but she was saying it in English, not Spanish, and he couldn't understand.

Office translators may not necessarily be certified in the same way court interpreters are; office use of translators is much more informal and based on staff availability. Court interpreters were noted as more responsive to client needs than office interpreters, Client 2 stated: "I would notice that at other places they don't ask, even if [client] has questions, the [office] interpreters won't ask." Office translators (bilingual social workers) are not trained to translate or interpret for others as this is not their main job function.

Prior to entering the field, workers spoke about a Spanish-language certification test which assigns people to one of three levels depending on language ability and fluency. Workers described this test as "really easy," one worker noted: "anybody could really pass that, and you're not exactly fully-you're

not really, really fully bilingual, enough for an investigation” (Worker 2). Once in the field, all workers noted a lack of training in Spanish-language professional terminology; one worker said:

In the county here there is no policy and there’s no piece of paper, there’s no packet of translating words in the stuff that we say. We pretty much do our own thing. We say our own thing in our own way of translating things. I’ve heard workers use really crazy words that are not Spanish, but if it works for them, it works for them. That was hard for me..when I have to do very technical things, translating that... (Worker 2).

Part of a child welfare social worker’s job description is to write reports and other official documents intended for court; these documents are written in technical court jargon and are not easy to translate into another language without some type of training or support. Social workers are expected to translate these documents to the Spanish-speaking families they work with.

Regarding training, one worker said:

Oh, no. There’s no training at all. Not in induction, which is the Academy we go through, and not ever is there a training on how to explain things to Spanish-speaking families. I feel like that would be beneficial for bilingual social workers to have training of some sort, because they are a big part of our client population (Worker 2).

Social Worker Workload and Barrier to Services

Social workers described serving Spanish-speaking families as taking on “additional work.” One worker said, “you have more complex cases, they take more time, and you have more of them” (Worker 1). Workers explained that there are usually more people involved (larger families) and described the “storytelling culture” of Latino families as important for rapport building but also as a lengthy endeavor. One worker explained, “I think Spanish is a storytelling language, just in itself. It takes a lot longer to get through an investigation. It takes a lot longer to get through an assessment” (Worker 2). The same worker added “on the one hand, you don’t have to work so hard to get them to tell you things, but then on the other hand you have time constraints.”

Extra Help for Clients

Workers noted the additional time it takes to explain American culture and systems to immigrant families; educating clients on topics such as domestic violence, for example and on U.S norms, expectations, and available resources. One worker said: “I do have to educate them a lot more than I would other clients, ‘cause oftentimes they’re not aware of the resources or where to go or who to call” (Worker 5). Because many Spanish-speaking clients are immigrants, they are unfamiliar with county programs and the resources that are available to non-citizens. If clients are undocumented, a worker must spend additional time finding alternative resources for the family. Services for

undocumented Spanish-speaking clients were described as scarce and often inaccessible due to geographical challenges.

Regarding Spanish services, one worker stated: “I have my challenges with that, I have had my challenges with finding a Spanish-speaking therapist, a Spanish speaking substance abuse counselor, parenting class. It’s been a challenge through all the time I’ve been here” (Worker 1). Another worker stated, “services are lacking...you might be ineligible [for services] because you are undocumented, but then on top of that, there might be a waitlist because you need the service in Spanish” (Worker 2). Clients also noted long waiting lists for Spanish services. For clients, responses were mixed regarding availability and accessibility to Spanish services. Some participants did not note any issues, for others, this was not the case. Referring to location of services, Client 2 stated: “it was difficult to get to them [classes], the class might be in [far-away cities] then they have to check for space. What made us fall behind was everything that had to be done in Spanish.” Translating and interpreting documents for families was also noted as an additional task when working with Spanish-speaking families.

Extra Help for Colleagues

Spanish-speaking workers are typically assigned Spanish-speaking clients; however, when there is an overflow of Spanish-speaking families, English-speaking workers are assigned those cases. Regarding the increased workload stemming from assisting English Speaking colleagues, all workers spoke about the translating and interpreting they are continuously asked to do

which consequently takes time away from their own responsibilities and duties.

One worker said:

...you get pulled [from your own work]. 'Can you go to the front to the lobby to talk to somebody? We have a call on the line, can you talk to this person?' That kind of stuff. Then there's been times when I'm like, 'No, I can't do it.' Then a supervisor will come and be like, 'I really need you to.'

Sometimes you are just told to do it (Worker 3).

Spanish-speaking workers are expected, and sometimes told to assist their colleagues, not only within their unit, but anywhere in the office (including reception, as noted in the quote above).

Lack of Support

Workers expressed a lack of supervisory support, recognition, and county monetary compensation in handling Spanish language caseloads. Regarding supervisor understanding, one worker said: "I don't think they understand that it takes more time with questions or clarification or reassurance and resources...also not knowing where to look for resources" (Worker 1). It was also noted that the majority of supervisors are not Spanish-speaking and consequently, "don't get it. They don't even understand it. They've never served Spanish-speaking clients" (Worker 3). Regarding monetary compensation, Worker 3 stated: "compensation is inhumane almost. At level 3 [on language certification test], you only get \$1.00 an hour extra, but I'm doing a zillion dollars an hour of extra work...the workload's so high." Regarding lack of

acknowledgement on the increased workload with Spanish-speaking families, Worker 3 noted:

there is absolutely no acknowledgment from the county on that. There's no acknowledgment from children's services on that. There's no acknowledgment from immediate supervisors on that. There's no forgiveness.

Workers expressed a lack of reduction in caseload and overtime despite the additional work they take on as interpreters/translators for their office and the amount of additional work that bilingual cases require. One worker said: "It's not that we don't we don't want to help, but...we get overloaded" (Worker 5).

Summary

The relationship between clients and workers was described as both pleasant and complacent. Spanish-speaking immigrant families are both unfamiliar to the country and to local resources. Their storytelling culture allows social workers to gather rich information, but also adds to the amount of additional time that it takes to handle such complex cases. Due to the unique circumstances and sociocultural factors of this population, there were numerous barriers to services identified (lack of services, long wait lists, service ineligibility etc.). Social worker Spanish-language mastery and interpreter quality was noted as varying, particularly within departments (court vs. office setting). Workers noted the lack of training in professional terminology and the low standard of the Spanish language certification test. Workers also identified the factors that lead

to increased workload when serving this particular population and noted the lack of supervisory support, recognition, and monetary compensation for the additional work they are tasked with.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's key findings and compares them to the existing literature. Limitations and strengths are considered and recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research are noted.

Discussion

Social workers included in this study indicated a lack of training in Spanish language professional terminology; this was similar to previous research findings which highlighted a lack of child welfare agency guidelines when working with LEP clients (Maiter et al., 2017). Social workers handling Spanish-language caseloads do not feel fully equipped in managing the complexities inherent in such cases. Agency attempts to pursue worker competence are evident as with the implementation of a language certification test; however, the level of skill required to pass such exam seems to be viewed by both workers and clients as sometimes insufficient for the level of fluency required for effective communication between workers and clients.

The existing literature on LEP clients echoes the plethora of service barriers that immigrant, Spanish speaking families face in the United States; undocumented, Spanish-speaking Latino families face greater challenges in completing court mandated services (Ayon, 2009; Ayon, 2014; Engstorm, at al.,

2009). The present study's research findings were no exception. Not only are service barriers detrimental to a family's limited time-frame in completing court mandated services, but they also increase workload for the individual worker assigned to the case. Workers must spend additional time locating accessible services in the preferred language and in explaining and educating clients on country culture and norms. Furthermore, workers are constantly asked or told to interpret and translate for their non-Spanish-speaking colleagues in addition to their demanding caseload. Although workers receive a slight compensation for their Spanish language skills, it is insufficient for the additional hours that using these skills generates. These findings parallel Engstrom, Piedra, and Min's 2009 study which found that agency workload expectations for both bilingual and monolingual workers were identical, despite the increased complexity and demands of a bilingual case, which resulted in increased worker frustration. Providing interpretive/translation services to colleagues was viewed as an interruption and barrier to completing one's assigned caseload.

The workers in this study expressed that their supervisors and managers did not understand the work involved in serving Spanish-speaking clients, and therefore, were not sufficiently supportive of workers' efforts. This finding resonates with Engstrom, Piedra, and Min's study which highlighted the issue of bilingual workers' lack of promotion to supervisory positions within child welfare (2009). That study noted the high need for Spanish-speaking *direct* service

providers and presented this as a probable cause for Spanish-speaker's lack of promotion to supervisory positions.

Workers in the present study also perceived Spanish-speaking clients as more compliant and passive than other clients. Similarly, clients viewed their roles as compliant to worker demands, noting that they do not “bother” workers and they “respect” what they are told. Complacency was attributed to the fear and intimidation common in most undocumented families and was noted as being ingrained in the culture. This client mentality and subsequent behavior (passivity and compliance) should not be confused with caregiver lack of motivation or interest in reunifying with their children. Workers must remain cognizant of the intrinsic fear experienced by this population and work towards empowering clients to advocate for their families.

Strengths

The qualitative nature of the study aided in gathering rich information and in tailoring the questions to the participant's unique experience. The present study expanded on previous research that has predominately addressed worker perceptions and included client perspectives. The results support and add to the knowledge base on immigrant Spanish-speaking families within the child welfare system; they further confirm the need for increased attention.

The worker participants included in the study all had diverse roles and experiences within child welfare and had many years of experience working with the population. This helps in providing a more complete picture of child welfare

employees' perspectives. Regarding data analysis, interviews were coded independently by three researchers to avoid bias and subjectivity.

Limitations

The study is limited in that it includes the experiences of only 3 clients. Understandably, as child-welfare clients are often involuntary, interviews with clients were difficult to obtain. Only clients with closed cases were invited to participate; their experiences in the system might not be representative of all Spanish-speaking families, particularly of those whose cases remain open. Additionally, clients were provided an incentive to participate and so our participants may have been different from those who chose not to participate, perhaps because economic hardships led them to participate in order to earn the \$20 incentive. Similarly, although the study included 5 workers, their experiences may vary from those of other workers at this agency, at other agencies, or in other communities.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

The present study offers insight as to the barriers that immigrant, Spanish-speaking families face in the child welfare system and the impact that has on employee caseload and satisfaction. Recommendations for policy and practice are discussed; suggestions for future research are outlined.

Practice and Policy

In order for immigrant, Spanish-speaking families to overcome the many obstacles they face and have successful outcomes within the child welfare

system, they must have access to quality service provision that is tailored to their unique needs. It is recommended that agencies develop a more uniform and informative approach in working with undocumented, Spanish-speaking families. It is recommended that workers participate in mandatory trainings addressing common barriers faced by this population, ways in which employees can respond, and available county resources. Workers would spend much less time attempting to figure out a best way to address a case if they are provided with an outline and an understanding of what assistance they can offer. A more uniform and informative approach would ensure that all families receive the same level of service delivery (this would also decrease employee workload).

Additionally, supervisors should attend additional mandatory trainings relating to managing such complex caseloads; hands-on training and role-playing activities may shed some light and increase understanding of what day to day activities with immigrant, Spanish-speaking clients entails. Spanish-speaking workers in supervisory roles is uncommon; consequently, a lack of managerial support and understanding was echoed among the workers interviewed in the present study. It is recommended that workers with experience carrying these complex cases be promoted onto supervisory roles.

Continuous Spanish language training in professional terminology is also recommended. The Spanish language certification test that is currently utilized should be analyzed closely to ensure that the minimum level of language competency that is required adequately meets work demands. Social workers

should be encouraged to express any language difficulties they encounter while out in the field; passing a certification test does not automatically ensure complete understanding and language mastery. Because Spanish-speaking workers are being stretched thin when asked to perform their normal duties in addition to providing translation and interpretive services for colleagues, it is recommended that more Spanish-speaking workers be recruited to meet the high demand. Due to the excess barriers that immigrant, Spanish-speaking families face and the additional work that is required from the employees involved, the final recommendation is that child welfare workers carrying LEP cases be assigned lower caseloads (Engstorm et al., 2009; Ayon, 2009).

Research

Although the present study attempted to address the knowledge gap involving client perspectives, additional research should focus on client experiences more heavily. It may be beneficial to follow a client's case from its beginnings (as a referral) and gather client perspectives along the life of the case; this may offer unique insight as to the different experiences that clients have with each new worker that they encounter along the way. Additionally, further research is needed in assessing the adequacy of county-made language certification tests and worker perception of language competency while out in the field. It is recommended that future research look at existing agency policies and procedures relating to working with immigrant, Spanish-speaking families.

Conclusion

The present study's findings parallel past research in a variety of ways. Overall, the following was noted: a lack of employee language training, client service barriers and client complacency, and increased employee workload with insufficient compensation, recognition, or support. Several policy, research and practical recommendations were made; most notably, the implementation of agency protocols and guidelines in hopes that a more uniform approach is utilized when working with LEP clients. A variety of trainings were recommended, both for direct service providers and supervisors. It would be beneficial for future research to focus on client perspectives throughout the life of their case so as to gain a better understanding of their experiences with different workers and departments within child welfare.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Guía de Entrevista Para el Cliente

1. Cuénteme sobre usted.
2. ¿Que idioma(s) habla?
 - A.) ¿Habla español con sus familiares?
 - B.) ¿Usted o otros miembros de su familia hablan español?
 - C.) ¿Donde habla(n) español? ¿En su casa? ¿En su trabajo? ¿En la escuela?
3. ¿Que idioma prefiere usar cuando necesita comunicarse con Children's Services?
 - A.) ¿Alguien en Children's Services le preguntó qué idioma prefiere?
 - B.) ¿Alguna vez ha preguntado/ tenido que comunicarse en inglés en Children's Services?
 - C.) ¿Alguna vez ha preguntado/ tenido que usar un intérprete en Children's Services?
4. ¿Trabaja usted con personal de Children's Services que hablan español?
 - A.) ¿Cuántos empleados?
 - B.) ¿Hay algún empleado en particular con el que usted trabaja más?
 - C.) ¿Qué tan frecuentemente ve/habla usted con empleados que hablan español?
 - D.) ¿Como pudiera describir el origen étnico (país de origen/patrimonio) de los empleados que hablan español que usted conoce en Children's Services?
 - E.) ¿Como pudiera describir a estos empleados?
5. ¿Cómo describiría su habilidad de comunicarse con el personal de agencia que habla español?
 - A.) ¿Qué tan bien puede entender al personal?
 - B.) ¿Qué tan bien lo pueden entender a usted?
 - C.) ¿Que hace si tiene problemas comunicándose?
6. ¿Comparten usted y el personal que habla español prácticas o creencias culturales?
 - A.) ¿Qué prácticas o creencias culturales tienen en común?
 - B.) ¿Qué diferencias ve usted entre usted y el personal?
7. ¿Cómo describiría su relación entre el personal y usted?
 - A.) ¿Como lo tratan el personal que habla español?
 - B.) ¿El personal que habla español te trata de manera diferente que el personal que habla inglés? ¿En qué manera?
 - C.) ¿Se sentiría cómodo para pedir trabajar con un miembro diferente del personal?
 - D.) ¿Cómo pediría a otro trabajador?
8. ¿Pensando en su tiempo en esta agencia, ¿puede pensar en un momento desafiante o difícil que tuvo con un trabajador que habla español?
 - A.) ¿Que paso?
 - B.) ¿Porque cree que pasó este problema?
 - C.) ¿Cómo manejo esta situación?
 - D.) ¿Estabas satisfecho con el resultado?

9. ¿Cuáles son algunos de los pros y contras de trabajar con el personal de habla español?
A.) ¿Preferiría ser servido por otra persona del personal, a pesar de que signifique que tenga que usar un intérprete?
10. ¿Qué más le gustaría contarme sobre sus experiencias con el personal que habla español en Children's Services que no le he preguntado ya?

Interview Guide For Clients

- 1) Tell me about yourself.
- 2) What language(s) do you speak?
 - a. Do you speak Spanish with your family members?
 - b. Do you or other members of your family speak English?
 - c. Where do you/they speak English? At home? At work? At school?
- 3) Which language do you prefer to use when you have to communicate with Children's Services?
 - a. Did anyone at Children's Services ask you which language you preferred?
 - b. Have you ever asked/had to communicate in English at Children's Services?
 - c. Have you ever asked/had to use an interpreter at Children's Services?
- 4) Do you work with Children's Services staff who speak Spanish?
 - a. How many workers?
 - b. Is there one worker in particular you work with most?
 - c. How often do you see/talk with staff who speaks Spanish?
 - d. How would you describe the ethnic background (country of origin, heritage) of the Children's Services Spanish-speaker workers you know?
 - e. How else would you describe these workers?
- 5) How would you describe your ability to communicate with agency staff who speak Spanish?
 - a. How well are you able to understand the staff?
 - b. How well are the staff able to understand you?
 - c. What do you do if you have trouble communicating?
- 6) Do you and the staff who speak Spanish share similar cultural practices or beliefs?
 - a. What cultural practices or beliefs do you have in common?
 - b. What differences do you see between you and the Spanish-speaking staff?
- 7) How would you describe your relationships with Spanish-speaking staff?
 - a. How do Spanish-speaking staff treat you?
 - b. Do Spanish-speaking staff treat you differently than English-speaking staff? In what ways?
 - c. Would you feel comfortable asking to work with a different staff member?
 - d. How would you ask for a different worker?
- 8) Thinking back over your time at this agency, can you think of a challenging or difficult time you had with a Spanish-speaking worker?
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Why do you think this problem happened?
 - c. How did you handle this situation?

- d. Were you satisfied with the outcome?
- 9) What are some of the pros and cons of working with Spanish-speaking staff?
 - a. Would you rather be served by another staff person, even if it meant you had to use an interpreter?
- 10) What else would you like me to know about your experiences with Children's Services Spanish-speaking staff that I did not already ask?

Interview Guide For Workers

- 1) Tell me about your role here at the agency.
 - a. How long have you worked here?
 - b. How long have you worked in this field overall?
 - c. What training or education have you had in preparation for this role?
- 2) Do you speak Spanish?
 - a. Do you consider yourself fluent in Spanish?
 - b. Are you able to speak, read, and write in Spanish?
 - c. How did you learn Spanish (at home, in school)?
 - d. What is your family's heritage in terms of country of origin?
- 3) How often do you use Spanish at work?
- 4) Do you have clients who speak only Spanish?
 - a. How many clients?
 - b. How often do you talk with/see those clients?
 - c. How would you describe the ethnicity or country of origin of those clients?
 - d. How else would you describe your clients who speak Spanish?
- 5) How would you describe your ability to communicate with clients who speak Spanish?
 - a. Are you able to understand each other?
 - b. How do you know they understand you?
 - c. What do you do if you have difficulty communicating?
- 6) Do you and your clients who speak Spanish share similar cultural practices or beliefs?
 - a. What cultural practices or beliefs do you share? Which are different?
 - b. What do you know about the culture or practices in your clients' countries of origin?
- 7) How would you describe your relationships with clients who speak Spanish?
 - a. How do think your clients who speak Spanish view their relationships with you?
 - b. Are these relationships different from those you have with English speaking clients? In what ways?
 - c. How would you feel if a client requested to be transferred to a different Spanish-speaking worker?
- 8) Thinking back over the past couple of years, can you think of a particularly challenging time you had with a client who spoke Spanish?
 - a. What happened?
 - b. What did you think the problem was?
 - c. How did you handle this situation?
 - d. What was the outcome?
- 9) What are some of the pros and cons of Spanish-speaking clients being served by you as opposed to by an English-speaking worker who uses an interpreter?

10) What else would you like me to know about your work with Spanish-speaking clients that I did not already ask?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT



California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 6/11/2018 VOID AFTER 6/11/2018
IRB# SW 1788 CHAIR [Signature]

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

Consentimiento Informado Para el Cliente

El estudio en el que se le pide participar está diseñado para ayudarnos a entender las experiencias de los clientes con los trabajadores que hablan español en Children's Services. En este estudio, le pedimos a los clientes que describan sus interacciones y cómo se sintieron trabajando con el personal que habla español. Este estudio está siendo realizado por la Dra. Deirdre Lanesskog, Profesora Asistente de Trabajo Social y el Dr. José Muñoz, Profesor Asociado de Sociología en la Universidad Estatal de California, San Bernardino. Este estudio ha sido aprobado por la Junta de Revisión Institucional, Subcomité de Trabajo Social, California State University, San Bernardino.

DESCRIPCIÓN: Se le pide que complete una entrevista en persona en la que se le pedirá que describa sus experiencias trabajando con personal que habla español en Children's Services.

PARTICIPACIÓN: Su participación es totalmente voluntaria. No tiene que responder a ninguna pregunta que no desea responder y puede dejar de participar en cualquier momento. NO le diremos a Children's Services si usted participó o no participó. Su opción de participar o no participar NO afectará los servicios actuales o futuros que reciba.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD: Su identidad y todo lo que diga será confidencial. Sólo el equipo de investigación de CSUSB tendrán acceso a la información que usted proporcionara. Nosotros destruiremos las grabaciones después de transcripciones y retiraremos cualquier información que pueda ser usada para identificarlo de la transcripción. No lo identificaremos a usted ni a su familia en cualquiera de nuestros futuros informes o artículos.

La única vez que revelaremos su nombre es si es requerido por un juez o si usted nos dice que tiene la intención de dañarse a usted o a otros (incluso si revela abuso infantil).

DURACIÓN: Se espera que esta entrevista dure entre 30 y 60 minutos.

RIESGOS: Hay riesgos mínimos de participar en este estudio, como el sentirse incómodo/a hablando sobre sus experiencias.

BENEFICIOS: No hay beneficios para usted por participar en este estudio, sin embargo lo que aprenderemos de este estudio nos podría ayudar a mejorar los servicios para otros clientes.

909.537.5501

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
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GRABACIÓN DE AUDIO: Las entrevistas serán grabadas en audio con su permiso y serán transcritas para que los investigadores las puedan estudiar.

_____ (Inicial aquí) Entiendo que esta investigación será grabada en audio.

CONTACTO: Si tiene preguntas sobre este estudio, puede comunicarse con Deirdre Lanesskog al (909)537-7222 o al dlanesskog@csusb.edu.

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, puede comunicarse con el Oficial de Cumplimiento de Investigaciones, Michael Gillespie al (909) 537-7588.

RESULTADOS: Los resultados de este estudio estarán disponibles después del 15 de junio de 2018 en el sitio web de la Biblioteca Pfau Scholarworks en <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>, o de la Dra. Deirdre Lanesskog al (909)537-7222.

DECLARACIÓN DE CONFIRMACIÓN: Entiendo que debo tener 18 años de edad o más para participar en su estudio, haber leído y comprendido el documento de consentimiento y estar de acuerdo en participar en su estudio.

Firma:

Firma: _____ Fecha De Firma: _____

909.537.5501

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California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 6/12/12 VOID AFTER 6/11/2015
IRB# SW-1988 CHAIR [Signature]

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT for Clients

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to help us understand clients' experiences with Spanish-speaking staff at Children's Services. In this study, we ask clients to describe their interactions and how they felt in working with Spanish-speaking staff. This study is being conducted by Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog, Assistant Professor of Social Work and Dr. Jose Munoz, Associate Professor of Sociology at California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, Social Work Subcommittee, California State University, San Bernardino.

DESCRIPTION: You are being asked to complete an in-person interview in which you will be asked to describe your experiences working with Spanish-speaking staff at Children's Services.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and you can stop participating at any time. We will not tell staff whether or not you participated. Your choice to participate or not to participate will not impact any current or future services you receive.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your identity and anything you say will be kept confidential. Only the CSUSB research team will have access to the information you provide. We will destroy the audio recording after transcription and we will remove any information that might be used to identify you from the transcript. We will not identify you or your family in any of our future reports or articles.

The only time we would reveal your name is we were required to do so by a judge or if you tell us that you intend to harm yourself or others (including if you disclose child abuse).

DURATION: This interview is expected to take between 30 and 60 minutes.

RISKS: There are minimal risks to you from participating in this study, such as feeling uncomfortable talking about your experiences.

BENEFITS: There are no benefits to you from participating in this study; however, what we learn from this study may help us improve services for other clients.

AUDIO RECORDING: Interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission and will be transcribed so that the researchers may study them.

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____ (Initial here) I understand that this research will be audio recorded.

CONTACT: If you have questions about this study, you may contact Deirdre Lanesskog at (909)537-7222 or at dlanesskog@csusb.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact the Research Compliance Officer, Michael Gillespie at (909)537-7588.

RESULTS: Results from this study will be available after June 15, 2018 from the Pfau Library Scholarworks website at <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu> or from Dr. Lanesskog at 909-537-7222.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT: I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

SIGNATURE:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 6.11.2018 VOID AFTER 6.11.2018
IRB# SD 1788 CHAIR [Signature]

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School of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT

for Workers

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to help us understand workers' experiences with Spanish-speaking clients at Children's Services. In this study, we ask workers to describe their interactions and how they felt working with Spanish-speaking clients. This study is being conducted by Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog, Assistant Professor of Social Work and Dr. Jose Munoz, Associate Professor of Sociology at California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, Social Work Subcommittee, California State University, San Bernardino.

DESCRIPTION: You are being asked to complete an in-person interview in which you will be asked to describe your experiences working with Spanish-speaking clients at Children's Services.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and you can stop participating at any time. Your employer **will not** be notified of your decision to participate or not to participate.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your identity and anything you say will be kept confidential. Only the CSUSB research team will have access to the information you provide. This information will be kept in password protected files or in locked cabinets. We will destroy the audio recording after transcription and we will remove any information that might be used to identify you from the transcript. We will not identify you or anything that might reveal your identity in any of our future reports or articles.

The only time we would reveal your name is if we were required to do so by a judge or if you tell us that you intend to harm yourself or others (including if you disclose child abuse).

DURATION: This interview is expected to take between 30 and 60 minutes.

RISKS: There are minimal risks to you from participating in this study, such as feeling uncomfortable talking about your experiences.

BENEFITS: There are no benefits from participating in this study. What we learn from this study may help us to improve services for clients and for staff.

AUDIO RECORDING: Interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission and these audio recordings

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transcribed word for word.

_____ (Initial here) I understand that this research will be audio recorded.

CONTACT: If you have questions about this study, you may contact Deirdre Lanesskog at (909)537-7222 or at dlanesskog@csusb.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact the Research Compliance Officer, Michael Gillespie at (909)537-7588.

RESULTS: Results from this study will be available after June 15, 2018 from the Pfau Library Scholarworks website at <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu> or from Dr. Lanesskog at 909-537-7222

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT: I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

SIGNATURE:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee

Researcher(s) Deirdre Lanesky, Jose Munoz, Stephanie Muniz, and Korissa Castillo
Proposal Title Client-Worker Linguistic Matching at a California
Child Welfare Agency
SW1788


Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

Proposal is:

- ☒ approved
☐ to be resubmitted with revisions listed below
☐ to be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- ☐ faculty signature missing
☐ missing informed consent ☐ debriefing statement
☐ revisions needed in informed consent ☐ debriefing
☐ data collection instruments missing
☐ agency approval letter missing
☐ CITI missing
☐ revisions in design needed (specified below)
- _____


Committee Chair Signature

Date

6/12/2017

Distribution: White-Coordinator; Yellow-Supervisor; Pink-Student

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