

Linking Languages:

Leveraging a Cross-Linguistic Framework
to Foster Connections in Biliteracy Programs

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Introduction

Dual-language programs have increasingly proven their effectiveness in promoting not only bilingualism and biliteracy but also academic achievement and sociocultural competence. These programs embody the Three Pillars of Dual-Language Programs—bilingualism/biliteracy, academic achievement, and sociocultural competence—through their commitment to additive bilingualism, with which students maintain and develop their primary language while acquiring a second language (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2018). The success of these programs relies on the deliberate cultivation of metalinguistic awareness—the ability to reflect on and analyze language as a system—within a program structure that maintains fidelity to the critical features of dual-language education, including appropriate language allocation and high-quality instructional practices (Beeman & Urow, 2013).

The purpose of this whitepaper is to examine the role of metalinguistic awareness in fostering bilingualism and biliteracy. Considering metalinguistic awareness is strengthened through strategic use of cross-linguistic instruction, this whitepaper explores how the facilitation of cross-linguistic connections is a powerful tool within dual-language education. The cross-linguistic framework will be introduced as a structured approach to foster these connections. By integrating cross-linguistic lessons into weekly instruction, dual-language programs can better fulfill the promise of creating equitable learning environments in which all students achieve academically, regardless of their native language, while developing strong biliterate and bicultural competencies. The objectives of this whitepaper include:

Objectives:

- 1 Illustrate how strategic cross-linguistic connections support the three pillars of dual-language education.
- 2 Outline practical implementation strategies using the cross-linguistic framework.
- 3 Provide educators with a research-based approach to fostering metalinguistic awareness.

Understanding Cross-Linguistic Connections

Theoretical Foundation

This section summarizes the theoretical foundations of dual-language education, including key concepts such as translanguaging, and cross-linguistic connections. It establishes how the cross-linguistic framework builds upon foundational research from leading scholars in bilingual education.

Valuing Bilingual Identities and Experiences

Grosjean's (1989) seminal work established that "one bilingual is not two monolinguals," emphasizing that emergent Multilingual Learners do not have two separate and distinct language systems. Rather, research in neurolinguistics has proven that Multilingual Learners have one linguistic repertoire that contains elements of all the languages they speak. More recent research has further expanded the understanding of how bilinguals' neural networks integrate both languages into a unified system that functions differently from monolingual networks, allowing bilinguals to strategically utilize their dynamic linguistic repertoire based on context and communicative needs (Grosjean, 2015; Otheguy et al., 2015; García & Kleifgen, 2018).

The understanding of multilingual students as unique language users, not monolinguals with separate languages, has profound implications for developing cultural competence and critical consciousness in dual-language programs. When educators recognize students' complete linguistic repertoires, they validate bilingual identities and create spaces where students can bring their full cultural selves to the learning process.

Critical consciousness is the foundation of dual-language education, provides nurturing, empowering, multilingual environments for all students, and directly challenges the monolingual bias (Dorner et al., 2023). Effective dual-language education must deliberately foster what Paris and Alim (2017) term as "culturally sustaining pedagogy," which positions students to retain and develop pride in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017).

Effective Dual-Language Instructional Practices

The Center for Applied Linguistics (2018) highlights the need for instructional practices that promote bilingualism and biliteracy through structured language and content integration. In multilingual classrooms where Spanish and English are taught, three linguistic instructional spaces emerge: Spanish, English, and the cross-linguistic space. The cross-linguistic space is when connections between both languages are facilitated by the teacher. Understanding the similarities and differences between Spanish and English and how language and literacy skills transfer between the two languages is key to navigating the complexities of teaching reading in two languages (del Castillo & Cloat, 2022; Whitley, 2002). Teaching in this space enables students to transfer and apply lessons from one language to the language of instruction, reinforcing learning and fostering deeper understanding.

Supporting Biliteracy Development through Cross-Linguistic Connections

Collier and Thomas's (2019) longitudinal studies demonstrate that well-implemented dual-language programs benefit all students, and that "by middle school, dual-language students are typically one or two grade levels ahead of their peers not in dual language." Actively facilitating the cross-linguistic transfer of learned skills is crucial for students in dual-language programs, as these connections foster deeper metalinguistic awareness (Colon, 2019). To maximize transfer, teachers must explicitly facilitate cross-linguistic transfer while students engage in a contrastive analysis of the languages (Cummins et al., 2007). This instructional approach validates students' complete linguistic identities and has garnered support from numerous dual-language education experts (Hamayan et al., 2013; Escamilla et al., 2014; García & Wei, 2014; Palmer et al., 2014; Cummins, 2017). Effective biliteracy instruction requires both differentiated approaches responsive to each language's unique characteristics and strategic connections between languages that leverage students' emerging metalinguistic awareness. To successfully integrate linguistically and culturally responsive practices into dual-language settings, educators must recognize that literacy instruction should be tailored to language-specific features while intentionally building bridges between language systems.

Embracing Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the practice of using multiple languages in fluid, dynamic ways to make meaning, communicate, and learn. It emphasizes the use of a speaker's entire linguistic repertoire rather than compartmentalizing languages as separate systems to maximize communicative potential (García, 2011; Li, 2018).

Translanguaging is an essential process in which Multilingual Learners use all available linguistic resources fluidly and flexibly as they communicate and learn.

Effective translanguaging pedagogy involves teachers who actively and flexibly draw on these repertoires to support learning. It includes any instance in which students' native-language practices are intentionally used to enhance understanding. Sometimes, the learning experiences are intentionally designed and guided by the teacher; other times, they are teachable moments that are allowed to emerge organically as students make spontaneous decisions and observations about their language use during instruction.

Having translanguaging spaces for teaching does not in any way negate the necessity for separate spaces in which students are asked to perform in one language or the other (Marrero-Colón, 2021). Maintaining distinct linguistic environments in dual-language programs plays a critical role in fostering deep cognitive engagement and precise language mastery. This strategic separation allows educators to offer targeted instruction that emphasizes the unique grammatical, phonological, and cultural features of each language, ensuring students develop robust bilingual competence. When students practice each language independently, they are afforded the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the specific structures and nuances of that language. Later, when they compare and contrast their experiences across languages, they gain valuable insights into both the shared elements and distinct differences, which enhances their overall understanding and metalinguistic awareness. By integrating both translanguaging practices and dedicated language-specific spaces, bilingual programs can create a balanced, comprehensive framework that not only bolsters academic achievement but also equips students with the adaptive communication skills necessary for success in diverse, real-world settings.

Role of Cross-Linguistic Connections in Dual-Language Classrooms

Cross-linguistic connections refer to the conscious identification and use of similarities and differences between two languages to enhance learning. This involves recognizing parallels, contrasts, and influences between languages. Actively facilitating cross-linguistic connections is crucial for students in dual-language programs, as these connections foster deeper metalinguistic awareness (Colon, 2019). Teachers can facilitate cross-linguistic connections by explicitly discussing how words, grammar, or sounds in one language compare to the other.

The planned comparison of languages involves students comparing their two languages, focusing on their linguistic forms and structures. The facilitation of cross-linguistic connections allows students to examine how their languages are similar or different, thereby strengthening their knowledge of each language and their cognitive ability to switch between them. It involves planned instructional sessions during which teachers integrate non-English languages with English to help students explore similarities and differences in Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and Grammar, Semantics, and Pragmatics.

Cross-linguistic transfer refers to the process by which knowledge and skills from one language influence another. This can be positive (i.e., when knowledge aids learning in the second language) or negative (i.e., when it causes interference). The facilitation of cross-linguistic transfer is a complex task that requires time, thought, and preparation. It requires teachers to have a deep linguistic understanding of the skills in both languages, the curriculum they are teaching, and their students' needs. Careful observation of students' language use and the challenges they face in navigating both languages, particularly in reading, is essential for effective transfer instruction. Observing when and how students encounter and struggle with linguistic differences helps plan for the timing of transfer instruction appropriately and know how to best select the skills to be taught.

Importance of Understanding Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English

To be successful, teachers of emerging multilingual students must understand the similarities and differences between Spanish and English in order to provide more authentic and successful literacy experiences for students. Taking a metalinguistic approach will help students recognize the relationships between Spanish and English and set them up to achieve higher levels of language proficiency, potentially allowing for greater academic achievement than students who regard their languages as distinct and unconnected (Beeman & Urow, 2013).

In dual-language and biliteracy classrooms in the United States, teachers of emerging Multilingual Learners will want to understand similarities and differences of the literacy skills and concepts that are universal and those that are language specific. Universal skills and concepts must be learned by all students who are learning to read, regardless of the language.

Some universal skills, such as the alphabetic principle, will be learned through exposure and in the context of the learning environment by most students. Other universal skills and concepts will need to be taught explicitly in one language, but because they are transferable across languages, they will not need to be explicitly taught in both languages. In contrast, skills and concepts that are language specific must be explicitly taught to all emerging Multilingual Learners (Odlin, 1989; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2018; Ford & Palacios, 2015). Spanish and English share many features, including significant lexical similarities (particularly academic vocabulary with Latin roots) and some grammatical patterns. However, they also differ in crucial ways, including phonological systems, morphosyntactic structures, and pragmatic conventions. A better understanding of the types of linguistic structures will help teachers plan for cross-linguistic connections.

Defining Metalinguistic Areas of Focus

A metalinguistic focus refers to the intentional emphasis on the linguistic structures, skills, and concepts that support students’ understanding of how language works, particularly in relation to language transfer between two languages. When preparing to facilitate cross-linguistic transfer, teachers should choose a specific area based on students’ needs and grade-level standards. Teachers will want to identify the language structures, skills, or content that will support cross-linguistic transfer. Doing so ensures the focus aligns with instructional goals and meets the developmental needs of their students.

Phonetics and Phonology

The sound system of a language is one of the first aspects acquired during language development. As Frankpitt (2024) notes, babies learn their native language’s sound system by determining which sounds and sound features are meaningful and which can be ignored, as different languages prioritize different sound elements. Two language structures associated with the sound system of language are phonetics and phonology.

English Learning Spanish	Spanish Learning English
<p><i>ella</i> = /eLa/</p> <p><i>helado</i> = /hell-ado/</p>	<p><i>mother</i> = /moder/</p> <p><i>steak</i> = /esteak/</p> <p><i>ship</i> = /sheep/</p> <p><i>berry</i> = /very/</p>

Phonetics examines how humans produce and perceive speech sounds (Frankpitt, 2024). Phonetics focuses on the “how” of sound production—the mechanics behind creating speech sounds through the vocal apparatus, analyzing their acoustic properties, and understanding how listeners process these sounds. In contrast, phonology is the study of sound systems within languages and examines how sounds function within a particular language to create meaning—essentially the “why” of sound structure (Frankpitt, 2024). Each language has its unique sound system with specific phonemes (i.e., distinctive sound units), syllable structures, and prosodic features such as stress and intonation patterns. Phonology investigates how these elements are organized and interact systematically within a language.

Languages like Spanish and English share many consonant sounds but differ significantly in their vowel systems and syllable structures. These differences can create challenges when learning a second language, potentially interfering with pronunciation (i.e., phonemic differences) and with decoding or spelling abilities (i.e., phonological differences). These distinctions make phonetics and phonology crucial areas for explicit instruction in language learning. The chart below shows some sounds that students who are dominant in one language may need support with when learning the other language.

Morphology

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and how they are formed. Morphology goes beyond memorizing word parts and rules to focusing on understanding how words relate to each other and convey meaning in different contexts. Morphological awareness can help learners improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling, grammar, and writing skills while enhancing their metalinguistic awareness.

Traditional educational approaches have typically reserved morphological instruction for starting in upper-elementary; however, research indicates that morphological awareness is particularly important in literacy development and that by age 10, morphological awareness becomes a better predictor of decoding ability than phonological awareness (Mann & Singson, 2003). Despite this significance, phonological awareness often overshadows morphological awareness in instruction, with students more frequently encouraged to sound out unfamiliar words rather than break them down into meaningful units.

In dual-language contexts, morphology offers unique advantages through the study of cognates—words that share similarities in form and meaning across languages due to common origins. This cross-linguistic approach integrates both morphological analysis (i.e., examining word structure) and semantic understanding (i.e., comparing meanings). For Spanish–English bilingual education, teachers can leverage shared prefixes and suffixes between both languages to build stronger connections and transfer knowledge across languages.

Syntax and Grammar

Grammar refers to the set of rules that governs how words are used and arranged in a language to create meaningful communication. It encompasses rules for word formation, sentence construction, and linguistic relationships. Syntax, a core component of grammar, specifically focuses on the arrangement and order of words to form grammatically correct phrases and sentences. Together, these linguistic elements provide the structural framework that enables effective language comprehension and production.

Syntax and Grammar Example: Word Order

Word Order Example	
You have a pretty house . Tú tienes una casa bonita.	Denita's house is pretty. La casa de Denita es bonita.

In dual-language classrooms, grammar and syntax instruction become particularly important as students navigate between two language systems with different structural rules. Students must learn to recognize and apply distinct grammatical patterns across languages while understanding both the similarities and differences in syntactic structures. This cross-linguistic awareness helps students better understand how languages work as systems rather than just memorizing isolated rules.

Research suggests that explicit grammar and syntax instruction benefits Multilingual Learners when integrated thoughtfully into meaningful contexts
(Ellis, 2006; Genevieve & Johnson, 2015; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Rather than teaching grammar rules in isolation, effective dual-language instruction embeds grammatical concepts within authentic reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. Strategies such as sentence-building activities in which students construct phrases from images or words, complete sentences with missing elements like verbs, rearrange scrambled sentence components until they make sense, or expand simple sentences by adding new elements, help students internalize the rules of both languages through active practice rather than rote memorization.

Assessment of grammar and syntax development in dual-language classrooms should consider age-appropriate expectations and recognize that grammatical mastery develops gradually. Students may demonstrate different levels of grammatical competence across their languages, often showing stronger command in their dominant language. Progressive assessment approaches track development over time rather than expecting immediate, perfect usage, acknowledging that grammatical errors are natural parts of the language-acquisition process.

Semantics

Semantics in dual-language classrooms focuses on helping students understand the meaning of words and sentences across different contexts, with particular emphasis on literal meaning. In these settings, teachers develop semantic awareness by guiding students to recognize the complex relationships between words, including:

- Vocabulary
- Cognates
- False cognates
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Idiomatic expressions
- Multiple-meaning words

Vocabulary

Vocabulary forms the foundation of semantic understanding in dual-language classrooms. Effective vocabulary instruction goes beyond simple translation between languages, focusing instead on building conceptual knowledge that transfers across linguistic systems. In dual-language settings, teachers will want to introduce vocabulary through meaningful contexts, visual supports, and authentic materials in both languages. Research suggests that young learners benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction that includes multiple exposures to new words and opportunities for active usage and that background knowledge and vocabulary are closely related key components in reading comprehension (del Castillo & Cloat, 2022).

Cognates

Cognates are words that share similar spelling, pronunciation, and meaning across languages due to common etymological origins. Effective vocabulary instruction in dual-language classrooms naturally extends to the strategic exploration of cognates, which helps students leverage knowledge in one language to accelerate vocabulary acquisition in the other. These linguistic bridges are particularly valuable in Spanish–English dual-language programs, as both languages share numerous cognates derived from Latin and Greek roots. For example, words like *información/information*, *artista/artist*, and *familia/family* allow students to transfer semantic understanding between languages, strengthening both vocabularies simultaneously.

False Cognates

Teaching false cognates or “false friends” can be a fun and interesting way to explore languages. False cognates are words that appear to be similar across languages but have different meanings. They can create confusion for dual-language learners and require explicit instruction. Examples include *embarazada* (meaning “pregnant” in Spanish, not “embarrassed”), *asistir* (“to attend” in Spanish, not “to assist”), and *biblioteca* (“library” in Spanish, not “bibliography”). Teaching students to recognize these potential pitfalls helps prevent misunderstandings while building metalinguistic awareness about the complex relationships between languages.

Synonyms and Antonyms

Understanding synonyms (i.e., words with similar meanings) and antonyms (i.e., words with opposite meanings) helps dual-language learners develop semantic precision and flexibility. Teachers can create activities that explore these relationships across both languages, noting how synonyms often carry subtle differences in connotation or usage. Word sorts, matching games, and semantic gradients help students understand the nuanced differences between related words in both languages, building a more sophisticated semantic network.

Polysemy

Polysemy, or multiple-meaning words, refers to a single word having multiple related meanings, depending on context. In dual-language classrooms, exploring polysemy helps students understand the complexity of word meanings across languages. As noted in the example, the Spanish word *banco* can mean both a financial institution and a place to sit. Similarly, in English, *run* can refer to physical movement, operating a machine, or managing a business. Recognizing these multiple meanings develops critical contextual interpretation skills in both languages.

Semantic Fields

Semantic fields are groups of words organized around common themes or concepts. In dual-language education, exploring semantic fields helps students build organized vocabulary networks in both languages. For example, the semantic field of “food” would include words like *fruta/fruit*, *verdura/vegetable*, and *carne/meat* in both languages. Creating visual semantic webs, concept maps, or classification activities helps students organize vocabulary meaningfully while strengthening conceptual understanding across languages.

Word Families

Word families consist of words that share a common base or root, with variations created through affixes. Teaching word families connects morphological awareness with semantic understanding, showing how related words carry shared meaning elements. For example, the English family built on *teach* includes *teacher*, *teaching*, and *teachable*, while in Spanish, *enseñar* connects to *enseñanza*, *enseñante*, and *enseñado*. Exploring these patterns helps students recognize how word meanings relate systematically, enhancing vocabulary development in both languages.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics focuses on language use in social contexts, including register, formality, and cultural conventions. Pragmatics deals with how speakers and listeners use and interpret language in real-world situations, considering factors beyond literal word meanings, including cultural norms, social relationships, conversational conventions, and situational contexts. Pragmatic competence enables language users to communicate effectively and appropriately across different settings and relationships, drawing on sociolinguistic research (Mesthrie, 2011). The [table on the next page](#) provides some pragmatic features, description of the features, and examples.

Pragmatic Feature	Description	Example	Instructional Implications
Speech Acts	How we use language to perform actions such as greeting, promising, requesting, or apologizing	How greetings differ between Spanish and English contexts—not just in vocabulary but also in formality levels, physical gestures, and situational appropriateness	Teachers might create scenario cards that prompt students to perform the same speech act in different contexts, discussing how language choices shift accordingly.
Conversational Implicatures	The implied meanings that listeners infer without an explicit statement	For example, if someone asks, "Is there any salt?" at the dinner table, the pragmatic meaning is likely a request to pass the salt rather than a yes/no question.	To teach this concept, dual-language teachers can present dialogues in which the literal meaning differs from the intended message. Comparing how implicatures work in both languages helps students recognize cultural differences in indirect communication.
Deixis	Expressions whose references depend on context	<i>here, now, this, or that (aquí, ahora, este, or ese in Spanish)</i>	Teachers might create activities in which students must give directions using spatial deixis or recount events using temporal deixis in both languages.
Politeness and Communication Strategies	Involve understanding of how language choices are used to maintain social harmony and navigate different social situations	Teachers can implement lessons comparing politeness strategies between Spanish and English, including formal versus informal address, directness levels in requests, and appropriate ways to decline invitations.	Role-play activities focused on situations requiring different levels of formality help students develop appropriate register awareness.
Contextualization	The importance of cultural, situational, and historical context in message interpretation is central to pragmatic competence.	"It's cold in here" might be a simple observation, a complaint, or an indirect request to close a window or turn up the heat.	Have students match statements to appropriate contexts, analyzing culturally specific references in authentic texts from both language communities or discussing how historical context impacts communication norms in different situations across cultures.
Inference and Presuppositions	Inference involves deriving implied information, while presuppositions are assumptions about shared knowledge between speakers.	Teachers can implement lessons that highlight how these processes work across languages.	Create "cultural context" cards that provide necessary background information for understanding authentic communications, helping students recognize when additional cultural knowledge is needed for accurate interpretation in either language context.

The Cross-Linguistic Framework as a Practical Instructional Tool

Overview of the Framework

The cross-linguistic framework provides educators with a structured approach to creating meaningful cross-linguistic connections in the dual-language classroom. Rather than relying on spontaneous or incidental connections, this framework guides teachers through a systematic process of identifying, planning, and implementing strategic links between languages.

The core purpose of the cross-linguistic framework is to help educators strategically use students' competencies from one language to support learning in another. This intentional approach maximizes transfer while minimizing interference, ultimately accelerating biliteracy development.

Introduction to the Cross-Linguistic Framework

The cross-linguistic framework is designed to help teachers understand and apply the key components of cross-linguistic transfer, where skills and knowledge in one language can support learning in another. It equips you with practical tools to create lessons highlighting these connections, helping your students see how their languages work together. Through engaging activities and discussions, your students will develop their metalinguistic awareness, which will support their growth as confident bilingual learners.

The cross-linguistic framework provides multiple opportunities for practice and reflection, ensuring students can make meaningful connections between their languages. At the same time, it is standards aligned so teachers have the tools they need to address grade-level standards while meeting the unique needs of their emerging Multilingual Learners. The cross-linguistic lessons will not only reinforce academic skills but also celebrate the richness of your students' bilingualism, fostering pride and confidence in their linguistic abilities.

Purpose and Guidelines

The purpose of the cross-linguistic framework is to offer practical guidance for promoting cross-linguistic transfer between Spanish and English. The framework is organized with linguistic guidance for teachers and lessons based on the linguistic focus areas: phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax and grammar, semantics, and pragmatics.

The [Cross-Linguistic Framework Step-by-Step Guide](#) has been provided for the implementation of the cross-linguistic framework, but the following guidelines provide additional context for initial implementation:

- Plan for approximately 15 minutes of instruction to deliver one or more cross-linguistic connection lessons.
- The lesson can occur after a unit's summative assessment or at any point throughout the unit.
- Create an anchor chart during the lesson with the students.
- Focus on one area for the week based on students' needs and grade-level standards.
- Acknowledge translanguaging, and encourage students to use their entire linguistic repertoire.
- The language building blocks provide key linguistic concepts in English and Spanish that will provide you with the understandings needed to confidently lead a contrastive analysis. It is brief, practical, and a must-read!

Step-by-Step Implementation Guide

Based on the Guiding Principles for Dual-Language Education (Howard et al., 2018), instructional methods should be student centered and aligned with the research-based principles of biliteracy education. The purpose of this section is to provide instructional leaders with a summary of each component of the cross-linguistic framework and considerations for building teacher capacity and, ultimately, student success.

- 1 Select a Metalinguistic Focus:** A metalinguistic focus refers to the intentional emphasis on the linguistic structures, skills, and concepts that support students' understanding of how language works, particularly in relation to language transfer between two languages. Teachers should choose a specific area based on students' needs and grade-level standards. They will need to identify the language structures, skills, or content that will support cross-linguistic transfer. Doing so ensures the focus aligns with instructional goals and meets the developmental needs of your students. If a teacher is challenged by selecting a metalinguistic focus, they may need further professional learning on the key terms and types of focus. Engage the team of teachers in a discussion about the metalinguistic focus types, and provide examples of each type. Look through the examples in future units to compare different types of metalinguistic focus and compare similar features of a given type.
- 2 Review Language Building Blocks:** To effectively plan a cross-linguistic lesson, teachers receive Language Building Blocks, which outline essential linguistic features and foundational knowledge to guide their instruction. If a teacher struggles with implementing cross-linguistic instruction, it is beneficial to ensure they review these building blocks to reinforce their understanding of key linguistic elements. This practice helps them design more effective and relevant lessons that address students' developmental needs. Reviewing the Language Building Blocks ensures that lessons focus on key language connections, supporting student learning and promoting cross-linguistic transfer.
- 3 Revisit and Connect:** During the cross-linguistic lesson, teachers should revisit the target skill in the language of instruction that will serve as the foundation for cross-linguistic transfer. They should clearly explain to the students how the target skill connects to the unit's big ideas and contributes to bridging language skills. They are encouraged to use a variety of strategies to actively engage students in reinforcing their understanding. During this process, the teachers preview the standards, goals, targets, and unit assessment. This process of backward design will help teachers view the unit as a whole while preparing to teach it and see how to make the connections between skills and the unit.
- 4 Facilitate Collaborative Key Content Connections:** Teachers should encourage student participation in identifying essential keywords, phrases, or sentences in the language of instruction that capture key concepts. They should focus on specific comparisons and contrasts between languages, using examples from the unit. Teachers will have students actively collaborate in finding and linking these terms with their equivalents in the other language. This process helps students recognize similarities, differences, and connections between the languages, fostering a deeper understanding of language transfer.

At this point, the instructional purpose will shift from guiding connections between the two languages to facilitating the transfer of specific language or skills from one language to the other. The teacher will want to have a blank anchor chart available before the lesson. The teacher, together with the students, will develop a metalinguistic anchor chart that highlights contrasts between both languages, based on the lesson's focus area. They will use color coding to differentiate the languages and make the chart a practical and engaging classroom resource.

- 5 Engage with Linking Questions and Apply Knowledge:** At this stage of the process, teachers will switch from the language of instruction to the other program language. Using contrastive analysis, they will encourage students to discuss and reflect on the similarities and differences between the two languages, focusing on the language into which key lesson elements are being transferred. Teachers should use guiding questions to help students observe and analyze linguistic patterns, fostering metalinguistic awareness and a deeper understanding of language. This approach also encourages students to actively seek opportunities to apply what they have learned.

Classroom Examples of Cross-Linguistic Connections in Action

The following is an example of a Grade 1 cross-linguistic lesson plan for a two-way Spanish–English dual-language classroom with a one-teacher model. The lesson comes at the end of a week in which the students have been reading a fiction story about playing soccer and writing stories about sports they like to play or other things they like to do. While reviewing their writing, the teacher noticed that students were having difficulty with plurals, especially irregular plurals in English, such as *feet*. The teacher decided to teach a cross-linguistic lesson on plurals with morphology as the metalinguistic focus.

Language Building Blocks Review

Spanish	English
<p>In Spanish, the formation of plurals is generally achieved by adding <i>-s</i>.</p> <p>(For example, <i>parque</i> becomes <i>parques</i>.)</p> <p>Although there are some exceptions, this rule allows you to form the plurals of most words clearly and consistently.</p>	<p>In English, plural formation is usually accomplished by adding the suffix <i>-s</i> to the singular noun, as in <i>teacher</i> → <i>teachers</i> or <i>ball</i> → <i>balls</i>.</p> <p>There are also several irregular plural forms, such as <i>tooth</i> → <i>teeth</i> and <i>foot</i> → <i>feet</i>, which do not follow the standard pattern.</p>

Revisit and Connect

Teacher Script
<p>Esta semana hemos aprendido muchas palabras nuevas en español. Cuando hablamos de una sola cosa, usamos el singular; por ejemplo, decimos <i>pelota</i> para referirnos a un solo juguete. Cuando hay más de uno, usamos el plural: agregamos una <i>-s</i> al final, como en <i>pelotas</i>, para mostrar que hay muchos.</p> <p>“Ahora vamos a jugar con palabras. Les voy a señalar una cosa (en singular) y su tarea es pensar cómo se diría si tuviéramos dos o más de esa cosa (en plural). Por ejemplo, si les señalo una casa, ¿cómo se dice cuando hay más de una? ¡Exacto, ‘casas’! Ahora, busquemos otra cosa . . .”</p>
Linking Questions
<p>¿Cómo sabes si la palabra habla de muchos o un solo objeto?</p> <p>¿Puedes pensar en más palabras que puedes cambiar de una a más? ¿Cómo se leería en singular y después en plural?</p>

Collaborative Content Connections

Metalinguistic Focus	Spanish	English
Morfología	<p><i>pino</i> → <i>pinos</i></p> <p><i>pera</i> → <i>peras</i></p> <p><i>pato</i> → <i>patos</i></p> <p><i>piña</i> → <i>piñas</i></p> <p><i>tostada</i> → <i>tostadas</i></p>	<p><i>ball</i> → <i>balls</i></p> <p><i>boot</i> → <i>boots</i></p> <p><i>car</i> → <i>cars</i></p> <p><i>map</i> → <i>maps</i></p> <p><i>duck</i> → <i>ducks</i></p>

Guión del maestro: La regla de los plurales en inglés y español

Hoy vamos a repasar y conversar sobre cómo formamos los plurales en español e inglés. ¡Vamos a descubrir las reglas y compararlas entre los dos idiomas!

Activación del conocimiento

Maestro:

- Durante la semana hemos aprendido cómo convertir palabras de singular a plural. ¿Quién recuerda algunas palabras en español que hemos cambiado a plural?
- Por ejemplo, si tenemos *mesa*, ¿cómo la convertimos en plural? (*mesas*)
- ¿Qué pasa con *león*? (*leones*)

El maestro escribe en la tabla de anclaje metalingüístico las palabras mencionadas por los niños y empieza a crear el anclaje con ellos para después repasarlo.

Identificamos la regla de plurales en inglés

Maestro:

- ¿Alguien recuerda cómo hacemos los plurales en inglés?
- En español, generalmente agregamos *-s* o *-es*. ¿Y en inglés?
- Por ejemplo, en español decimos *gato/gatos*, pero en inglés decimos *cat/cats*. ¿Recuerdan otras palabras en inglés que cambian a plural de manera similar?
- La maestra escribe en el anclaje metalingüístico las palabras mencionadas por los niños.

Tabla de anclaje metalingüístico—Comparación de plurales en español e inglés

Vamos a comparar las palabras en dos idiomas. Primero, repasamos nuestra lista de palabras en singular y luego en plural, y después veremos qué se hizo para pasar de una forma a otra.

Preguntas de enlace

Si en español decimos *perros* para el plural de *perro*, ¿cómo lo diríamos en inglés? ¿Qué pasa con la palabra *bus*? ¿Cómo cambiaría el plural en inglés y en español? ¿Se escriben igual los plurales en inglés y español o hay diferencias?

Hoy hemos aprendido que en inglés como en español, los plurales siguen reglas específicas. Aunque en ambos idiomas agregamos *-s* o *-es*, en inglés hay algunas diferencias en las reglas.

Linking Questions and Application

<p>Linking Questions and Applications</p> <p>*Transfer to the other language.</p>	<p>Teacher Script</p> <p>In Spanish, to indicate that there is more than one, we add an extra letter: If the word ends in a vowel, we add -s (for example, <i>pino</i> becomes <i>pinos</i>).</p> <p>In English, to indicate more than one, we usually add -s at the end (for example, <i>cat</i> becomes <i>cats</i>).</p> <p>Remember that some words change a little when they become plural, and these must be learned by memory.</p> <p>Let's look at the metalinguistic anchor chart we created as a class and circle the plural endings to show that, in both English and Spanish, they are used to indicate more than one. This will help us clearly see how plurals are formed in both languages.</p> <p>Linking Questions</p> <p>How can you tell if someone is talking about one thing or many?</p> <p>What do we add to words to change them from singular to plural?</p>
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Conclusion

The journey toward effective dual-language education requires intentional pedagogical approaches that honor the complex interplay between languages, cultures, and academic content. By strategically leveraging students' knowledge across languages, educators can enhance metalinguistic awareness, accelerate biliteracy development, and promote deeper understanding of academic content.

Implementation of the cross-linguistic framework allows educators to create meaningful opportunities for students to analyze language as a system, develop metacognitive strategies for language learning, and build bridges between their languages. These cross-linguistic connections not only support the immediate goals of dual-language education but also develop the metalinguistic flexibility that will serve students throughout their academic and professional lives.

As dual-language programs continue to expand across educational settings, the cross-linguistic framework offers a practical, research-based structure that empowers educators to fulfill the true promise of dual-language education. By deliberately building these cross-linguistic bridges, **schools create learning environments in which linguistic diversity is recognized not as a challenge to overcome but as an asset to leverage**, ultimately preparing students to thrive as bilingual, biliterate global citizens equipped with the metalinguistic agility to navigate our complex, multilingual society.

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