TRANSCULTURAL BOOK-SHARING:
SIGNIFICANCE FOR FAMILIES
WITHIN A LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE, INNER CITY PRESCHOOL

by
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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
in the Faculty of Education

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Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Transcultural Book-sharing: Significance for Families
within a Linguistically Diverse, Inner City Preschool

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ABSTRACT

This study gathered information about social patterns of language use between minority-language parents and their young children. A library was created within a linguistically diverse, inner-city, preschool in order to provide a setting in which to observe parents interacting with their children over a six-month period. The library was comprised of a variety of children's picture books, mostly with English texts, and included stories from different countries. The parents were encouraged to "read the pictures" in their language of choice. The study demonstrated that this semiotic model of book sharing promoted not only a physical closeness between parents and their children but also a way for parents to practice English with their children while the children continued to learn the home language when it was other than English.

Chapter One describes how a speech-language pathologist, working with minority-language families within an inner-city area, searched for insight into issues of linguistic diversity and ways to provide speech and language services in culturally sensitive ways.

Chapter Two describes the semiotic model upon which the intervention strategy, the Preschool Library, was designed. It was hypothesized that once the parents and children connected in a physical way through books, a setting would be established which would not jeopardize the children's ability to become bilingual.

Chapter Three describes the qualitative methods used for data collection and chronology of events. These methods include participative observation by the investigator and interviews with the parents and teachers.

Chapter Four describes the rationale for book selection based on a transcultural model instead of a multicultural model. The criteria for book selection is discussed.
Chapter Five gives representative samples of quotes from fieldnotes and interview transcripts. Both expected and unexpected findings are documented.

Results of the study, discussed in Chapter Six, suggest that by providing parents with the opportunity to practice both the home language and English with their children through a common pool of books, a medium for continued bilingual language-learning can be established for both parents and their children, and links forged between home and school. The results of this study contribute local knowledge to the fields of early intervention and early education.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all families with preschool children both in England and Canada, who have contributed so much to my understanding of the complexities of language learning. It is also dedicated to my parents whose own love of books and language fostered my interests in both from infancy.
Multilingualism is a powerful fact of life around the world, a circumstance arising, at the simplest level, from the need to communicate across speech communities....

(Edwards, 1994, p.1.)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the Neighbourhood House, Staff, Teachers and Families in the City of Vancouver for their co-operation and support and in particular to the Finning Company who provided funding for the Preschool Library books.

Also many thanks to those who kindly volunteered their time: the interpreters who helped with some of the interviews; Sandra and Brian who helped with the video and photography, Alain for providing both emotional and nutritional sustenance throughout the writing of this paper, and Carol for her help with the final document.

Thanks too to all my friends and colleagues, especially those in the Vancouver Health Board Speech-Language Pathology Department, for giving me their support and encouragement throughout the four years that this project has been in the making.

Special thanks go to Judy McMurter, the preschool and daycare supervisor of the Neighbourhood House whose expertise and enthusiasm made working on this project such a rewarding experience.
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CHAPTER ONE
A Review of the Literature

Introduction

Over the last two decades, Canada has become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. As a result, speech-language pathologists in health and education are faced with the challenge of assessing and diagnosing communication disorders in young children who are learning the majority language as their second language (Westernoff, 1994). However, limited knowledge and training in the area of bilingual language acquisition has created a sense of inadequacy for those of us working in this field. To help guide the practice and policy of services to children learning the majority language, and who may have speech and language difficulties, there is a need to examine current practice and turn to the research.

In the last decade, researchers in the field of communication disorders, have been urging speech-language pathologists and educators to understand more about

... the culture of the mainstream educational system and the culture of the client. They [speech-language pathologists and educators] must understand not only the linguistic variations across languages, but also they must understand the values and belief systems and how these systems affect who talks to whom and in what manner. (Westby, 1995, p.53).

This understanding is of prime necessity if services to families are to be provided in culturally sensitive and informed ways.

As a speech-language pathologist I began to search for information that would increase my understanding of issues related to linguistic diversity and families with young children learning more than one language. I quickly discovered that it was no small undertaking as the literature regarding bilingualism and child language development crossed many disciplines and the issues were complex. However, because I have always strongly held the opinion that a tenet of best practice in the field of speech-language pathology is "the
belief in the *importance of the family in the development of the young child* [italics added]" (Battle, 1993, p. 158) it seemed crucial to maintain *the family* as the central thread as the discussion weaved around the issues of young children and the development of language.

This paper will trace a process of inquiry which began over 20 years ago and recently entailed a study which involved emergent bilingual\(^1\) preschool children and their families engaging in book-sharing using stories from around the world.

The study was designed with children, families, and teachers as participants. It is an action-research process, the outcome of which may contribute to a *local* theory about families and their language choices within a Canadian community.

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\(^1\)Emergent bilingualism is used here to describe young children who may be exposed to more than one language but who, developmentally, have not reached the age when any language has been learned to full proficiency. (Madahani, 1994). Dodson, (1983) refers to these children as "developing bilinguals".
Back to the Future

Entering a Discomfort Zone2 U.K. 1969

I first became aware of the issues of bilingualism in relation to child language development in England in 1969 when I began studying in Leicester, to become a Speech Therapist3. It was at the same time that Idi Amin, the President of Uganda, began to adopt policies that became life threatening for the many South Asians who were the descendants of indentured labourers hired in 1896 to build railways in Uganda (Ghuman, 1994). Thousands of them fled to England, many of them to the Midlands, Birmingham and Leicester in particular, because of the job opportunities in this highly industrialized area. Similar patterns of immigration into the U.K. since the 1950's had resulted in increasing numbers of people for whom English was not their first language, being referred to speech therapy clinics. What distinguished this pattern of immigration from previous decades was the large number of non-English speaking people entering the country. Consequently unprecedented numbers of children entered the school system without knowing English. This influx of non-English speakers parallels, somewhat, the patterns of immigration in Canadian cities, Vancouver in particular.

My awareness of the sociocultural issues concerning second-language learning emerged from the following experience, which had a strong, unsettling impact on me, pushing me into the "discomfort zone." This sense of discomfort, on reflection, forced me to ask questions not only about speech and language assessment and intervention strategies in relation to second-language learners, but also about the nature of the second-language learning process itself.

---

2A condition of vulnerability which leads to inquiry, according to Watson, Burke and Harste (1989, p.12.)
3a.k.a. Speech-language pathologist in Canada and U.S.A.
We, as third year speech therapy students, were given the task of providing intervention services to newly emigrated, non-English speaking students in inner city elementary schools who had been referred by their teachers. We were to assess these children's level of proficiency in both languages and give them extra help to learn English. Older children from South Asia had some opportunity to learn English before they emigrated. However, many of the younger children were entering school without any experience of English and, according to their teachers some of these particular children did not seem to be learning English as quickly as their peers. They were frequently described by their teachers as "slow learners" with possible speech and language problems. On the first day, as I faced a small group of bewildered children, 5 and 6 years old, I experienced misgivings about the process in which we were engaged. These misgivings were mainly due to the lack of background knowledge I had regarding second-language learning. In addition there were no other resources available such as interpreters who, at the very least, could have explained to the children who I was and why they had been taken out of the classroom away from their friends and teachers. The parents were not involved and I questioned how these children were identified as requiring extra help. I had no solutions then, but I was concerned at the speed at which the teachers could "find" children who needed help once they knew a "specialist" (albeit a student) was available. Was it because we knew so little then about the process of second language acquisition and therefore it was easier to label the children "slow learners" than to examine the pedagogy of the system? It was here, that these and other questions began to emerge.

In working with these children I discovered that my training and knowledge in the field of second language acquisition to be grossly inadequate. There were no normative data about children's second language development, no clear guidelines regarding assessment and intervention for children learning the majority language who had potential speech and language delays, and, most significantly, nothing to suggest strategies for intervention. These factors and the fact that I was monolingual contributed to an increasing lack of
confidence in my ability to provide appropriate service to families whose home language was not English. Moreover, I questioned whether health and education practitioners, like myself, were giving the best kind of advice to families about language choices. We, as practitioners, certainly have been guilty of giving overt or implied messages to families that the majority language was "best". Saunders states,

> Medical personnel may attribute problems children may have with speech development. . . to their bilingualism, and advise the parents to expose their children to only one language. . . (1982, p. 1'5).

There were other practitioners in the late seventies whose experiences were similar to mine. Niklas Millar, who came to work for the same department in Leicester the year after I left for Canada in 1977, suggested that

> Without any adequate tools or techniques devised for the situation, the therapist has been expected to consider how far the child's supposed delay or deviance in English is due to the bilingual setting, how far to general or specific developmental factors, what advice ought to be offered to parents and teachers, how is development to be monitored and so on. If the clinician has turned to the literature on the effects of bilingualism on mental development and when best to introduce a second language or how best to teach it, conflicting views will have been found (Millar, 1978 p. 17).

Although I did not know it at the time, the development of "adequate tools" for assessment and intervention entailed the examination of some very complex issues, issues that twenty years later have not been fully resolved within our field.

More recently speech-language pathologists and other professionals in the field of education and child development have begun to address the issue of providing assessment and intervention to bilingual children in culturally sensitive ways (Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Schiff-Meyers, 1992; Battle, 1993; Barrera, 1993 ). However, because these authors address issues of diversity from the situation existing in the U.S.A., questions are raised about whether their findings can be generalized to the situation of families in Canada. Researchers and practitioners alike recognize that there is still currently
The need for speech-language pathologists to understand the communication disorders related to persons from diverse cultural groups [which] has been recognized for the last two decades. (Battle, 1993, p.xv.)

The Discomfort Zone Revisited in Vancouver 1980

Feelings of dissonance and discomfort surfaced again for me when I moved to Vancouver in 1980. I began working with families in a culturally diverse and linguistically varied inner city area of the city. Again my limited knowledge about young children and families learning a second language instilled concern and a sense of inadequacy. Yet again, as I investigated the literature for suggestions and guidelines, I learned that I was not alone in experiencing these feelings. As recently as 1992 Orlando Taylor stated that in the U.S.A. "... several recent surveys show that most ASHA- (American Speech-Language and Hearing Association) certified speech-language pathologists and audiologists feel least competent in providing professional services to culturally and linguistically diverse clients" (1992. p.53).

In the city of Vancouver we, the speech-language pathologists, were challenged by the increasingly diverse populations we served and the intricacies of assessing and diagnosing communication disorders in preschool children for whom English was not spoken at home. We held many wrong assumptions, one of which was that there is a normal rate of development in second language development, just as in first language development.

Research has shown that, regardless of first language or age of acquisition, the order of syntax development in young children follows a similar pattern of acquisition to that of first language development (Scovel, 1989). However, the rate at which the development takes place is affected by so many and varied factors that it is practically impossible to assess development using a normed approach (Hernandez-Chavez et al, 1978). It has been suggested that bilingual language development has an apparent lag of 4-5 months behind monolingual development (Swain, 1972). In spite of these findings, the question remains
"... how can normal second language development be judged?" (Gandara and Merino, 1993 p.321). As part of the solution to this dilemma we took the assessment tools and intervention strategies we were already using with majority-language speakers and tried to find ways of adapting them to each situation as it arose, increasingly drawing on qualitative and ethnographic approaches. In effect we managed the situation as best we could and as Millar described in 1984: "To date it remains largely up to the individuals to adapt existing resources or create their own material for cross-cultural use" (p. 189).

**Vancouver: Languages 1981-1995**

To illustrate the rapid changes that have taken place in Vancouver, the following table gives the numbers and percentages of linguistic variability from the 1981-91 census figures (City of Vancouver Planning Department Report, 1994, p.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>319,270</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>319,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2,865</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>85,950</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>125,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>72,365</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4,155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>9,385</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>6,195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>3,860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29,970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. A Comparison of Home Language in Vancouver: 1981 - 1991 Census

4" Home language refers to the language most often spoken in the home by the individual at the time of the census. The 1981 data for some languages are not available." (City of Vancouver Planning Department Report, 1994, p.8).
The most significant figures are those (bolded) which indicate that there has been a 46.5% increase in people in Vancouver whose home language is other than English or French since 1981. In the neighbourhood in which this research was conducted this percentage is shown to be 51.5%. (City of Vancouver Planning Department Report, 1994, p 3).

The second significant number is the 1991 category of 'other' languages (shown bolded in italics in Table 1) besides those main languages spoken in the city. Due to the relatively low numbers of families using these languages there are consequently fewer resources available (e.g. interpreters and translations) for these families to take full advantage of the range of services provided in their community. For example, although there are over 90 languages, other than English, reported as the home languages of children in the schools, (Ministry of Education, B.C., p.40) the local health agency, for which I work, translates health information from English, into only the four most commonly used languages: Cantonese, Punjabi, Vietnamese and Spanish. Therefore, according to the 1991 census figures, almost 30%\(^5\) of people who reported that their home language was other than English, Cantonese, Punjabi, Vietnamese or Spanish, would not have access to health information in their language.

**Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Language Disability**

In recognition of the changing faces of many English-speaking countries, speech-language professionals have begun make commitments to sociocultural diversity in the areas of research, education and clinical practice. (A.S.H.A., 1985; College of Speech Therapists, 1990).

---

\(^5\) The total number of respondents who reported Tagalog \((n=3,860)\), French \((n=2,185)\) and *Other* \((n=29,970)\) as the home language in 1991 was \(n=36,015\). This figure represents 28.57% of the respondents \((n=125,930)\) in Vancouver with home languages *OTHER* than English and 8% of the total respondents \((n=447,920)\).
Since the 1980s there have been texts devoted to the subject of communication of bilingual children (Erikson & Omark, 1981; Millar & Abudarham, 1984; Battle, 1993; Roseberry-McKibbin, 1994; Butler, 1994). Most of these authors are mainly concerned with the assessment of bilingual school-age children. In comparison there are fewer resources regarding the assessment of preschool children. (Ara and Thompson, 1989; Anderson, 1994). Many of them suggest an ethnographic approach in assessment and intervention, but few speech-language pathologists have been trained in this approach. In addition there is very little research involving culturally and linguistically diverse families and their role in child language development. "This is surprising given the increasing number of linguistically diverse children identified as handicapped, disabled, or at risk and the tremendous activity in language acquisition research for white, middle-class children." (Battle, 1993 p. 160). It should be noted that the latter population historically has provided the normative data for most assessment tools in both education and speech language pathology.

**Models of Bilingual Language Development**

The relationship and functioning of two or more languages in the bilingual speaker has been an intriguing subject for researchers for many years. Investigations have followed linguistic, sociolinguistic, neurological and cognitive lines of inquiry. Depending on the interest of the researcher, the models have reflected their field of study. For example, a syntactic/linguistic emphasis is explored by Cooke (1988); a neurological approach is developed by Green (1986); Romaine (1989) has followed a sociolinguistic approach; Krashen (1981) a psycholinguistic approach; and Cummins (1984b) and others have explored cognitive frameworks. (Madhani, 1994 p.11)

Over the past twenty years researchers in the field of second language learning have been concerned primarily with school-age children (Cummins, 1986; Larsen Freeman and Long, 1991). One important finding, from the position of this paper, is the difference in the process of sequential language acquisition versus simultaneous language acquisition. Sequential language acquisition is the act of learning a second language after a person has
become proficient in his or her first. Simultaneous language acquisition is the process whereby a person develops or acquires more than one language at the same time. Both these processes may result in a person becoming bilingual, that is proficient in at least some aspects of two languages. Lyon gives some indication of the problems in defining bilingualism:

... if children use two languages before the age of three they can be said to be bilingual... This is useful but the term can cover a wide range of youngsters, some of whom may have no more than a few words in a second language... Some work had been done with schoolage children, but little with preschool children." (1994, p.104).

In this paper I will therefore refer to preschool children as "emergent bilingual" children, not as English as a Second Language (ESL) students, as ESL is a term which implies sequential acquisition. Emergent bilingualism more aptly describes young children who, developmentally, have not reached the age when any one language has been learned to full potential or proficiency.

Age of Second Language Acquisition

There has been much controversy generated around whether the age at which someone is first exposed to a second language (SL) affects its acquisition in any way.

At first sight, the SL age looks chaotic, some studies appearing to show child superiority, some favouring adults. As noted by Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979), however, some fairly clear patterns emerge once short-term and long-term studies are distinguished. The conclusion researchers have drawn from the research is that older is faster, but younger is better. (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991, p. 155).

The long-term studies revealed "that in the most crucial area, ultimate attainment" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p.155), only young children were able to achieve second

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6This term also assumes multilingual capabilities and is used in the U.K. (Madhani, 1994, p.10)
language performance that was free of accent and most native-like. Adults appear to pass through the early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children but

... age-related constraints begin to set in as early as six for suprasegmental phonology, and soon after that for segmental phonology. These constraints would make it increasingly difficult for learners to acquire the SL without an accent and have led researchers to hypothesize the existence of a critical period after which the complete mastery of a language is impossible. (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 156.)

If we can assume this critical period for ultimate attainment in children being between 2 years of age and puberty (Lenneberg 1967), then we can extrapolate that for children whose parents speak the non-majority language the critical period is the same. Most children are at home with their parents during the first five years before they enter school and this would give them a good start on the road to bilingualism if their parents continue to speak the home language to them. Children need well-developed linguistic and metalinguistic skills for "Without the acquisition of fairly sophisticated linguistic skills we cannot become either full citizens or fully developed moral human beings." (Mason and Washington 1992, p.5).

However, in Vancouver many children, for various reasons, are enrolled in early childhood programs, daycares or preschool, and the children become exposed to English as early as 18 months, earlier if they have older siblings who already know some English.

The focus of this study was on children who were developing languages simultaneously (emergent bilinguals) in naturalistic settings usually in the home and in early childcare centres. Schiff-Meyers calls this process "early childhood bilinguality" (1992, p.29). She discusses how important it is for these children to develop a threshold of competence in the first language before exposure to a second language if problems are to be avoided. For example, some children who begin to acquire a second language before their first language is fully developed "may present low language test scores in both languages and
for a time will appear similar to language-disordered children." (Schiff-Meyers, 1992, p.29).

This situation illustrates a dilemma, a catch-22 situation, which has ethical implications too and which speech-language pathologists encounter on a daily basis. This dilemma is based on the following facts: first, as discussed previously, there are no reliable normative data for second-language learning in preschool children; secondly, speech-language pathologists are nevertheless, without this normative data, expected to make judgments about which of these children have language disorders; thirdly, if we identify children with language disorders who are learning more that one language there is the risk that we will diagnose "typical" patterns of second language-learning as "disordered" language-learning because our assessment tools are limited due to the first fact; that is, there are no normative data for second-language learning in preschool children. If speech-language pathologists are to then give advice to parents about language, upon what evidence should this advice be based? It appears there are no simple answers.

Language Choice: Guidance for the family

There is little information in the literature which provides parents with guidelines and caveats for language choice within their family. With this dearth of literature it is not surprising that parents may, therefore, turn to their neighbours, friends or family doctor for advice about which language to speak with their children, when and how much. If their children show signs of slow speech and language development, then it often falls to the speech language pathologist to make suggestions in this regard. However, professionals in the fields of medicine, psychology, early childhood education and speech-language pathology have had little in their training regarding the potential consequences that their suggestions may have on the dynamics of language use within the family.

To illustrate the kinds of uninformed recommendations "experts" may make on the issue of language choice for parents, consider the implied message to the family in the following quote taken from a written report produced by a local health professional who saw
this preschool-age child in 1993. No identification is provided here in order to preserve the anonymity of both the healthcare professional and the family.

Given that her parents are not native English speakers; [three languages] were used for family communication; and there is limited contact with people outside the [ethnic] community, it is quite possible that (her) weak verbal skills result from her difficulties with English and [first language], as well as a lack of Canadian culture exposure and experiences. (page 3 of report).

The message here is that multilingualism in this family may be responsible for creating language deficits in the daughter. Although in this case, there is no explicit suggestion for parents to cease speaking their home language, it is my experience that parents interpret these types of observations in such a way that they begin to feel negatively towards their home language. These feelings may be subtle or quite strong but the result is the same; that is, the parents feel guilty or embarrassed about speaking their home language and try to speak more English with their children, even though they have limited proficiency in English. Saunders gives another example of a similar situation:

The family was warned by a child health doctor just after Thomas's third birthday that speaking two languages was too great a burden on him and was impairing his acquisition of English, and it would be in his best interests to be addressed in English only. This pronouncement was made after a fifteen minute examination. Thomas's failure to perform adequately on several verbal tests, due in part to his being shy in performing in front of a stranger, was attributed immediately to his being bilingual [italic added] (1982, p.114).

Barrera warns against the practice of advising parents to speak the majority language in situations where their children may be developing language more slowly than their peers because,

Truncating the development of one language in order to initiate learning of a second is, at best, an inefficient way to develop language and learn concepts, at worst it is inhibiting of optimum development of competent communication in any language. (1993, p. 466.).
It is through this process of 'truncating the development' of their first language that children and adults may experience "subtractive bilingualism" (Garcia and Baker, 1995, p.xvii), in which the second language replaces the first. This loss of first language can have significant social, emotional, cognitive, educational, and familial consequences (Fillmore, 1991). "In addition, language loss may contribute to the misidentification of communication disorders. A child who has lost skills in the native language may exhibit linguistic difficulties similar to those of a developmental language disorder." (Westernoff, 1994, p.164). In contrast, the process known as "additive bilingualism" (Garcia and Baker, 1995, p.xii) in which the second language adds to, rather than replaces, the first language, has the opposite outcome. Additive bilingualism, contributes in many positive ways to a child's development with the potential of creating a fully bilingual adult. The term "bilingual", as mentioned previously is difficult to define. One of the reasons for this difficulty is because there are "literally hundreds of definitions" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.46) of bilingualism which had only added to the confusion which exists for policy makers and practitioners, especially in the field of education. Bilingualism can be defined as the ability "to have native-like control of two languages." (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.47), but how in turn can "native-like control" be defined. For example, does this just mean control of the spoken forms of the languages or does it include control of the written languages too? Too what degree? Does "native-like control" mean control only in social contexts or in academic contexts too? The questions are endless.

If parents themselves go in search for advice in the literature regarding which language they should speak with their young children, there are only few books which have parents as their intended audience. Saunders (1982), Harding and Riley (1986), and Arnberg (1987), provide specific information and advice to help families make informed decisions about what kind of language policy to adopt with their children. The authors of these books all advocate for the maintenance of home language because

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...the learning of a second language before competency in the first language is fully developed may result in arrested development or loss of proficiency in the primary language. This negative effect on the primary language occurs most often if the native language is devalued. (Schiff-Myers, 1992, p.28).

Research has shown that the benefits of being bilingual are great not only in terms of job opportunities and increased cultural awareness but in terms of social and cognitive development. (Peal & Lambert, 1962; Saunders, 1982; Edwards, 1994). Saunders states "From the evidence, therefore, it appears that if bilingual children have a reasonable degree of balance between their two languages, their overall intellectual development is not hindered and is, in fact, in many ways enhanced" (1982, p. 21). Lambert states that "...enough data are available to conclude that under specified conditions, being bilingual can have tremendous advantages not only in terms of language competencies, but also in terms of cognitive and social development" (1990, p.210). Vernon's (1982) findings also support the additive bilingualism model. He investigated the verbal and non-verbal abilities of Chinese and Japanese elementary school children in Calgary, Canada. The findings of this study indicate that although many Chinese children have difficulties with learning to read English in Grades 1 and 2, especially if they attend Chinese language schools in their spare time, by the end of Grade 3, the number of children still having difficulties in English is very small. Therefore there "seems to be remarkably little adverse effect of the still widespread usage of Chinese in the homes." (1982, p.114). Given this evidence and the fact that

To be bilingual or multilingual is not the aberration supposed by many (particularly, perhaps, by people in Europe and North America who speak a 'big' language); it is, rather, a normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority in the world today.(Edwards, 1994, p.1)

then why in Canada are children giving up their home language, or worse not even learning to speak it at all? The limiting condition it seems is "that the two languages involved in the
bilingualism have enough social worth that both can be permitted to flourish as languages of thought and expression [italics added]." (Lambert, 1990, p. 210).

**The Risks of Not Creating "Social Worth": Home Language Loss**

In 1991, Lily Wong Fillmore presented her most recent research findings to the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists in Montreal. She argued that, in the U.S.A., because the pressure to assimilate to the dominant culture was so great, young children were not learning the language of their own families and that the consequences of this language loss pattern could be very costly. Lily Wong Fillmore describes the process in the following way:

Linguistic change almost always begins with the children in language-minority families. The children speak little or no L2 (majority language) when they enter school but they soon learn enough to get by. In that world they quickly learn that the key to acceptance is L2, and they learn it to take part in the social life of the school. All too often English becomes their language of choice. . . . In families such as the ones in our two samples, the adults simply do not learn English as quickly or as well as the children. (1991, p.335).

Wong Fillmore goes on to describe what she sees as the cost to families as a result of this process:

What is lost is no less the means by which parents socialize their children: When parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understanding, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences. (Wong Fillmore, 1991, p.343).

If parents lose the ability to socialize their children using a common language and if their children become aware at a very young age that their own ability to understand and speak the majority language is more proficient than their parents' . . .will they still show them [their parents] and other adults respect? Or, will their peers become more respected and influential in their lives? How do these parents teach cultural and moral values [or] issues such as safety? How can they negotiate
with their children without access to higher level language skills? (Wastie, 1994, p.20).

Saunders, almost a decade earlier, had studied infant bilingualism in the case of one Australian family who had raised its children to be bilingual in German and English. He noted that parents, even though they may want their children to be bilingual, may become discouraged in the attempt:

In trying to establish or maintain bilingualism in a family, the parents may at certain times become discouraged and be tempted to abandon the attempt. Such discouragement may come from outside the family (e.g. from teachers or medical personnel who may attribute any speech difficulties or learning problems to a child's bilingualism). . . " (1982, p.138).

Saunders recognizes the difficulties intrinsic to the process of encouraging young children to speak their home language and that the endeavor of raising children bilingually "is not all plain sailing and does require some effort, it is possible and can be a rewarding experience for both parents and children." (1982, p.5)

These claims suggest that practitioners need to critically examine the advice they give to parents. Moreover, researchers seem to promote the notion that practitioners must indeed advocate for maintenance of home language as much as possible. However, these claims also raise questions about how this advocacy can be initiated, when is it appropriate and for whom.

**Early Childhood Centres**

It is not only the practitioners working with children who have language disorders and delays who may be unsure about what advice to give parents regarding which language to speak with their children. Similar confusion has been demonstrated in early childcare settings, as illustrated in the following example from a local research project:

During the first year [of the study] pressure on the children to learn to speak English
resulted in negative comments about a child using his first language in the classroom. Educational motives, however worthy, may sometimes be harmful for a child's self-image. Greater care was taken after this incident happened to encourage first language in the preschool. (Fraser, 1984, p.102).

In conversations with early childhood educators, with whom I work closely, it is clear that many have also faced the dilemma of providing culturally relevant curricula in centers where children come from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Past practice, based on the idea that children can learn two languages just as easily as one, usually decreed that all children in B.C. should speak the majority language (English) without exception. Some teachers even forbade children with the same language from talking to each other with the intention that the children would learn English quicker if they didn't speak their home language at the preschool or daycare. One parent reported:

Not long ago, the teacher told me to tell my daughter to speak English in childcare. In the childcare some of the Chinese parents had complained about the children talking in Chinese. One time my daughter spoke in Chinese and she was punished by the teacher. She was asked to stand alone. Since then she rarely speaks in Chinese (Bernhard et al, 1995 p. 30).

The practice of discouraging children from speaking their home language in order to produce speakers of English may be responsible for creating, in those same children, a sense of shame for their language. Historically this happened when the children entered school at age five or six. However, terms such as 'Language Loss' (Wong Fillmore, 1991) or 'The English Displacement Effect' (Palij, 1990) now also seem to apply to families of preschool children.

When children from minority-language families are enrolled in early child care centres it is frequently the early childhood educators (ECEs) who provide these families with their first experience of a majority-language setting and experience. "ECE teachers are in the

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8"Non-native English speakers appear to have their native, non-English-language abilities reduced as a function of English that is, English appears to displace other languages a person knows" (Palij, 1990, p.57.)
difficult position of being intermediaries between the powerful social forces and marginalized families. Their implicit mandate to transmit mainstream values, is a difficult and complex task." (Bernhard et al. 1995 p.3).

With the concept of multiculturalism coming into everyday usage and the passing of the B.C. Multiculturalism Act (1992) more effort has gone into the provision of culturally inclusive curricula in the schools and early childhood centres. Because of this increased awareness of cultural diversity there is a more supportive climate for home language maintenance. For example, the Intercultural Association of Victoria sponsored a project designed to strengthen a child's first language. "The results of the program showed that children, after an initial unwillingness to use their home language . . . were later producing much more Punjabi during free play time, and appeared to be functioning comfortably in a bicultural/bilingual setting." (Fraser 1984, p.32).

However, even though the climate for home language maintenance may be more supportive in early childhood settings than in the past, little has been done to provide practitioners in the fields of early childhood education and intervention, or families with young children, with solid theoretical and pragmatic pedagogic models. For example Cummins advises that:

... if parents want their children to reap the potential personal and academic benefits of full bilingualism, they should use the minority language as much as possible. Educators should advise parents on ways to expose their children through the mother tongue to a rich linguistic environment (e.g. reading and telling stories, discussions, etc.) in the home. (1987, p. 116)

It is my experience, however, that these kinds of recommendations cannot be applied simply and easily, in practice. For example, how can we encourage parents to engage in reading and telling stories if they do not have access, or do not know how to access books? How can we explain the benefits of bilingualism or talk about a "rich linguistic environment" when there are language barriers? How can we do any of this with limited and ever
dwindling financial resources coming from the government and increasing socioeconomic pressures on families, particularly in inner-city areas?

**Building Bridges Between Home and Preschool**

It has been well documented that parent involvement in their children's learning enhances their chances of academic success (Shaefer, 1972; Goodson, 1976; Olmstead & Rubin, 1982; Silvern, 1985; Jones & Rowley, 1990). However, involving parents, especially non-English speaking parents and other family members, in educational activities is no simple matter. It is not only language differences that can act as barriers to parental involvement but also the various ways parents view their role and the role of the school in educating their children (Cheng, 1987). Efforts have been made in different parts of the world to involve parents in their children's education because:

The more the school recognizes and values the children's home culture in its curriculum and its communication with parents, the more effective home-school communication will be. This model presumes a highly interactive context between parents and children, teachers and students, teachers and parents, and parents and parents. Through collective effort parents can learn to act as advocates for their children beyond the homework level. Thus they stand a better chance of providing their children with necessary resources as they move through the grades and of providing nurturing learning environments at home, even if the home language and culture differ from that of the school. [italics added]. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p.60).

Given all this information, it seemed that if parents could be given the opportunity to interact with their children in a process such as reading and telling stories with their children, this process might provide a common environment for all in which to gather more knowledge about language use locally. This knowledge may then be helpful in beginning to establish best practice principles or guidelines for those of us working in the field of early intervention. At the same time that this information is being gathered, some additional benefits might be afforded the families by their participation in such a process. It would give all the
families an opportunity to connect with books, especially if they do not have books in the home. It might also provide an opportunity for the families, facing language barriers, to know more about the preschool activities and therefore engage with their children in any meaningful discussion about those activities.

**The Significance of Books**

Historically, schools have ignored parents' values and beliefs and emphasized an assimilative approach for children, expecting children to give up family values and accept school values. Emic\(^9\) approaches to developing educational programs acknowledge the role of parents and the importance of parent involvement in the educational success of children. (Westby, 1995, p.64).

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated positive relationships between measures of children's cognitive ability and home background (see Kellaghan et al., 1993, Chapters 3 and 4 for a review; Delagdo-Gaitan, 1990). Past programs aimed to involve parents have moved from deficit and difference models towards partnership and empowerment models in which the latter emphasize the *strengths* of families rather than the perceived *problems* presented by the children. "Building bridges between home and school inevitably rests upon the co-operative efforts of the school, teachers and parents" (Faltis, 1995, p. 248).

Encouraging parents to read to their children has been one of the most common strategies in parent education programs because of the strong relationship between out-of-school reading and children's performance in school. There have been a number of studies that have demonstrated this relationship, in particular the one by Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988) which showed that reading books outside of school was the one activity that proved to associate most strongly with reading proficiency. One successful program in England, The Haringey Project (Hewison, 1988), demonstrated that as parents increased

\(^9\)A key component of the emic perspective is the ability to observe others from their perspective and to understand how one is conditioned by one's own perspective." (Garcia, 1994, p.37).
reading activities in the home so their children's reading improved. In all the literature I have reviewed, the Haringey Project mirrored most closely the model of intervention described in this paper, namely that parents have access to materials from the school to share with their children. The major differences between the two projects are: a) the age of the children (six to eight years of age in the Haringey Project compared to three to five years of age in this project); b) the parent target group (working-class parents in the Haringey project compared with linguistically diverse parents in this study); and c) parent and children expectations ("reading text" in the Haringey Project compared to "reading pictures" in this project).

Parents and the home environment hold a major key to the learning of children. . . . The socioeconomic level or cultural background of the home need not determine how well a child does at school. . . . It is what parents do in the home rather than their status that is important. (Kellaghan et al, 1993, p.145).

The project described in this paper proposed an empowerment model of parent involvement. Embedded in this model are potential benefits for the children and their families when they engage with books within the school system. Chapter Three will describe the nature of the books and criteria for selection in more detail.

**Emerging Bilingualism: Parents' and Practitioners' Roles regarding Preschool Children**

In the search for answers that would help shape policy and practice for speech-language pathologists working with emergent bilingual children and their families, the sources of information have proven to be varied and world-wide, merging research from speech-language pathology, child development, linguistics, socio- psycho-, and neuro-linguistics, semiotics, education, sociology, psychology, ethnography, anthropology and politics.
However, in spite of all this study and interest, there is a paucity of Canadian and local research regarding emerging bilingualism in preschool children's language development particularly in relation to family, and home language maintenance. Also, from the perspective of potential communication disorders, it is necessary to know what is typical for an emergent bilingual child's language development in order to evaluate which communication behaviours might be atypical. This study was designed to observe patterns of language use in minority-language families in Vancouver in order to contribute to the definition of best practices for speech-language pathologists.

So, given the evident risks of losing home language (Wong Fillmore 1991; Cummins, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1987; Palij, 1990); the benefits of bilingualism; (Saunders, 1982; Lambert, 1990; Edwards, 1994) and the benefits of involving parents in their young children's education. (Kellaghan et al 1993; Faltis 1995), I decided to focus on the needs and issues of families in the hope that the following questions could begin to be answered:

1. Could a speech-language pathologist, working in a linguistically diverse, inner city area, gather local information about patterns of home language and majority language use operating within families who have preschool children?

2. What process should be designed to gather such information?

3. A critical issue for many minority-language families, especially those whose children may have a diagnosed communication disorder, is which language they use with their children. Given this factor, then if more knowledge is gathered about typical patterns of language use within minority-language families locally, could this knowledge be used to guide the practices of other speech-language pathologists working with similar populations?

**From practice to theory**

It could be argued that the practitioner does not seek a theory about bilingualism
and second language acquisition. Rather she wished for more description about how bilinguals perform and how their languages develop, to build up a broad and varied picture of what can be expected from the bilingual person. (Duncan, 1989, p.7).

Although this kind of descriptive data can be useful we still require a framework in which to place the data "so that patterns can be identified, against which hypotheses can be tested. . . . The process is cyclical." (Duncan, 1989, p.7). If we are to provide a service to which all families, regardless of linguistic background, have access we must strive to continually evaluate our work in order to improve it.

This research was designed with these two notions in mind, that is, the need for **description** within a **framework** so that tentative generalizations can be made and theories constructed and reconstructed, and hopefully fed back into practice as quickly as possible, so that this current generation of preschool children may benefit from the outcomes.
A Social Semiotic Model for Research Design

Language in its entirety has many different and disparate aspects. It lies astride the boundaries separating various domains. It is at the same time physical, physiological and psychological. It belongs to both the individual and society. No classification of human phenomena provides any place for it, because language as such has no discernible entity.
(Saussure, 1994, p. 10)

This chapter explains how a social, semiological perspective of communication has shaped a model for this research which was designed to explore the issues of second-language learning with parents and their children.

However, before embarking on the description of this model to guide the research, the following paragraphs will describe theories of first- and second-language learning. This description is necessary to demonstrate some of the conflicting opinions that have existed within the field of linguistics. The description of the conflicting opinions is also provided as a way to reflect my own frustrations, as a practitioner who relies on theory to guide practice. It should be noted that the theories under discussion have arisen mostly from a Western perspective, originating in Europe and North America.

The Search for Theories to Guide Practice

Speech-language pathologists developed their therapeutic practices from numerous and varied disciplines. For example, in Britain in the late 1960s, training of speech therapists involved the study of subjects such as anatomy and physiology, neurology, child development, physics of sound, psycholinguists, psychology, phonetics, and linguistics. Changes in practice evolved as the theories, especially psychological and linguistic theories, also evolved. The field of speech-language pathology, particularly in aspects of child
language development, was in the 1960's heavily influenced by psychologists such as Vygotsky, Luria, Piaget and Skinner, and linguists such as Chomsky. By the mid to late 1970's the various professions which considered language as their domain followed various and often divergent paths. David Crystal, a linguist, summed up the state of affairs as it existed in Britain at the time, by stating that:

...in practice the way in which [language] has been studied has often been divisive, each profession having its own traditions, methods, priorities and pride, and often not communicating with others, or aware of the strength of areas of expertise other than its own. ...But there is an argument here for the development of a common basis of understanding that is explicit, so that the specific expertises of the various professions relating to language can be clearly defined and interrelated, and thus unnecessary overlap, duplication of effort and conflict, in both research and teaching, avoided. (Crystal, 1976, p.10).

At the same time that Crystal was advocating for a common basis for understanding language across professions, Joan Tough, a primary school teacher in England had started to combine theories of language from education, linguistics and psychology in order to view children's language in pragmatic ways and within the social context. Tough states that

We should be building on the intrinsic motivation to use language which develops as the child talks with others and finds new meaning in his experiences and new understanding for what is happening around him. But this hardly seems likely to happen where the child is seen as passively learning the structures of language and his main incentive to learn is praise from the teacher. The use of language is not likely to become more than knowing prescribed answers under these circumstances, and when the teacher is not there to listen and praise, it seems possible that the child will feel little need to use these skills. (Tough, 1976, p.15).

As a result of the shift towards theories concerned with pragmatic language use there was more attention paid to the assessment of language in context. To this day, however, qualitative assessment of language in social context, remains very much in the hands of each individual speech-language pathologist with the result that there is little consistency in the
approaches in assessment protocols for language. This *inconsistency* is unlike the more consistent protocols which guide assessment of other areas of communication, such as hearing, fluency, voice, phonology or oral motor skills. Why is this? I suspect that it has much to do with the fact that language cannot be 'measured' in the quantitative way that other areas of communication might be assessed. Assessment of language skills, particularly in children, requires a more qualitative, subjective evaluation. Without strong theories to guide us, the quality of assessment has to depend on a combination of experience, powers of observation, question-asking and deduction.

So even though linguistic theories have been expanding in order to encompass social and pragmatic aspects of language acquisition, it seemed to me that these theories were still not broad enough to take into account the many and varied issues involved not only in first language acquisition but second-language learning.

There was one area of linguistics known as "semiotics" which did seem to offer the broader approach to language for which I was searching, an approach which could encompass social and cultural domains. In 1994, Sampson presented a view of linguistics which helped me to reflect more constructively on the frustration I experienced in trying to apply theory to practice:

The narrowing of linguistics today to a theory of the sentence... due to the constraining effects of Chomskian and post-Chomskian linguistic theory, belies the original richness and potential power of linguistic theory as originally conceived by Ferdinand de Saussure. For co-extensive with linguistics was semiology—the study of signs as conceived by Saussure. (Sampson, 1994).

I began to question whether the effects of this 'narrowing of linguistics' had in fact created a barrier to those of us in the field whenever we attempted to take those theories of language development tried to apply them in practice.
Theories of First-language acquisition.

Linguistics is commonly defined as the science of language. The word 'science' is of crucial significance here because prior to the nineteenth century "the investigation of language in Europe and America... was subjective, speculative and unsystematic." (Lyons, 1995, p.16). The term 'linguistics' is of therefore of relatively recent origin. It evolved from the rejection of traditional grammar by the 'Bloomfieldian' school of linguistics in the United States shortly after the Second World War. The study of traditional grammar, which originated in Greece in the fifth century B.C., has been intimately connected with philosophy and literary criticism. Teachers, researchers and scholars of language were mainly concerned with the preservation and interpretation of classical Greek texts concentrating more on the written language than on speech or writing. Speech at that time was frequently viewed as an imperfect copy of the written language. Today, by contrast, linguists take the view that speech is primary and written language secondarily derived from speech.

One of the main reasons for the turnaround in the theory of language in this century was that many linguists had been involved in describing the previously unrecorded languages used by indigenous people in the United States, before they were lost to the world. One of these linguists was Franz Boas (1858-1942) whose research gave rise to the idea that every language had its own unique grammatical structure. In 1924 the Linguistic Society of America was founded. Two of the most influential figures in American linguistics around this time were Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949). Sapir was an anthropologist and a linguist but his interest extended beyond these two disciplines into literature, music and art. His approach to linguistics might be called a humanistic approach. Bloomfield on the other hand, chose to make language a scientific study, which meant that he rejected any data that were not directly observable or measurable. At this time a similar approach was being taken in psychology by J.B. Watson who founded the 'behaviourist' approach in which he attempted to explain the behaviour of any organism in terms of responses to stimuli from the environment. Bloomfield adopted behaviourism as a
framework for description of language. Noam Chomsky was a student of the Bloomfield school of linguistics and became critical of his teachers' views that semantics, or the meaning of words and sentences, was considered to be subordinate to the formal task of identifying rules for grammatical and phonological production. In 1957, Chomsky in his first book, Syntactic Structures, had already moved away from the behaviourist view somewhat, but he continued to maintain that language could be studied independently from the use to which it was put. Language, in his view, at that time was an instrument used to express meaning. Chomsky in recent years has abandoned many of his early assumptions as he began to examine the importance of the creativity of human language. In contrast to the Bloomfieldian school of linguistics which had neglected the concept of creativity in relation to language, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) had insisted upon its importance.

More recently, theories which guide practice in the field of speech-language pathology have evolved from behaviourist and psychological theories of language acquisition, through educational and sociolinguistic domains to recent considerations of anthropological and ethnographic research. Anthropological theories, unlike psychological theories, have always maintained that human behaviour cannot be understood adequately without reference to the cultural and social context in which it occurs. "The invisibility of the culture in psychological theory—which originates with its base in monocultural studies—is a major contributor to the current predominance of nativist theories of child development" (Harkness, 1980 p. 11). These nativist theories of development are based upon psychological studies with primarily monocultural foci and are therefore "inadequate for the description of both individual and group differences." (Harkness, 1980, p. 8). Therefore if human behaviour, which includes language, is to be 'understood adequately', then 'culture' must be made 'visible' by being considered in the relevant theories.
Theories of Second-language Acquisition

The task of sifting through theories which may or may not have potential to guide practice has become daunting. If, for example, we now consider the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching alone, we see that this field also lacks one agreed upon model or theory and is influenced by many theories. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) have counted "at least forty theories of second language acquisition, more if one includes theories of other kinds of language development" (p.227). It might be argued that the effects of having many theories on which to base practice upon are not all negative. However, with so many theories it seems impossible for the teacher or practitioner to find consistent and common rationale to guide their practice.

Many of the studies to which Larsen-Freeman and Long refer miss certain element in their theories and experimental designs. For example, although Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) use the term "ultimate second language attainment." (p.315) they do not define what this actually might be. Educators who have "ultimate second language attainment" as a goal for their students surely need to know the nature of this ultimate goal as their students progress through the bilingual learning experience.

Again in the field of second language learning there are no theories which have as their focus a definition of language learning that is broad enough to accommodate issues of diversity and variety. The theory presented in this discussion takes this broader stance and uses the concept of "communication" rather than language per se as the object of study. Larsen-Freeman and Long acknowledge that they "have not reviewed the research literature in the acquisition of specific skills such as reading or writing", nor have they "probed in depth acquisition of all linguistic systems [italics added]" (p.xiv). As long as researchers continue to separate the language domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing, pragmatics, social contexts etc.) and continue to evaluate these domains as separate entities removed from the real world, intervention or teaching methods cannot be expected to improve.
Also if we continue to view language in monocultural and fragmented ways there is a risk of perpetuating the separation and isolation of the languages and culture because each culture will be locked into its own semiological system (Ellis 1993). Teachers need to have theoretical or instructional knowledge of not only vocabulary and grammar but knowledge to expose the semiotic systems to their language-learning students, both cross-culturally and intertextually. With knowledge of the semiotic system of the language a student may be learning, higher levels of comprehension and expression, such as humor, myth and language awareness can be accessed, and as a result greater proficiency in the knowledge and use of that language facilitated.

**A Social, Semiotic Research Model Defined**

In order to explain the model outlined in this chapter the terms *semiology*, *sign* and *signification* require definition:

"Semiology" is a general science of which linguistics is a branch. Sausser conceived it as "a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life" (1994, p. 15). It studies both non-verbal and verbal signs and "enjoys a most respectable tradition among both philosophers and linguists". (Sebeok 1994, p.107). Semiotics is defined in the dictionary of philosophy as "the study of a) the nature and kinds of signs, b) what they mean, c) how they are used, and d) how they produce the intended effect or communicate the intended meaning." (Angeles, 1992, p.271) Manning and Cullum-Swan emphasize the broad perspective of communication taken by semioticians:

Although semiotics is based on language, language is but one among many sign systems of varying degrees of unity, applicability and complexity. . . . Social semioticians see social life, group structure, beliefs, practices, and the content of social relations as functionally analogous to the units that structure language. By extension of this semiotic position, all human communication is a display of signs, something of a text to be "read." (1994, p. 466).
The "sign" in semiotics is defined as "anything that represents (stands for, signifies, indicates) an object (or a relation or an activity) to someone who understands it or responds to it". (Angeles, 1992, p.274). Danesi says that "Signs -- any mark, bodily movement, symbol, token, etc. used to convey thoughts, information commands etc. . . are the basis for human thought and communication (Sebeok, 1994, p.xi.). Signs signify something and "signification" can be defined as "the meaning of something" or "the act of giving meaning to something." (Angeles, 1992, p.276)

However the important concept in semiotics is that "sign" and "signification" cannot be conceptualized as separate entities but rather it is the correlation between them and within them that is paramount. Therefore, as Roland Barthes explains, there are in fact three rather than two, components to a sign within a semiological system:

. . . any semiology postulates a relation between two terms, a signifier and a signified. This relation concerns objects which belong to different categories . . . We must here be on our guard for despite common parlance which simply says that the signifier expresses the signified, we are dealing in any semiological system, not with two, but with three different terms. For what we grasp is not at all one term after another, but the correlation which unites them. There are therefore, the signifier, the signified and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms. (Barthes, 1972, p.121).

It was important in this study, to provide an opportunity to experience and observe those correlations and not to miss them by focusing too narrowly on, for example, analysis of the preschool children's language development as separate from all their other experiences. For, as Saussure points out "Any linguistic entity exists only in virtue of the association between signal and signification. It disappears the moment we concentrate exclusively on just one or the other [italics added]." (1994, p.101).

Therefore, a semiotic model is presented here (Figure 1) as a framework for expanding upon the traditional view of linguistics, shown in the shaded box, to encompass a much broader view of communication which includes social and cultural contexts. This social semiotic model of communication not only addresses all aspects of spoken language in any culture, including "register" but also includes visual language in all forms, such as dress,
rituals, music, art, and texts. The model is meant to be interpreted as a matrix, not a hierarchy, with the semiological plane running through all communication activities. With this model practitioners, even though focussed at any given time on one of those areas, (texts for example), cannot lose sight of the relationships a particular area has with, and within, the other domains.

Figure 1. Social Semiotic Model of Communication

COMMUNICATION

Humans have SEMIOTIC SYSTEMS operating within their Society/Culture
A Semiotic system is comprised of Signifier (image: e.g. word, picture, object) + Signified (concept: e.g. message/meaning) = SIGN
(i.e. the associative total of the signifier and signified)
Humans are capable of interpreting signs at both the first order or literal level and at the second order or mythical/metalinguistic level.

LANGUAGE
in Social/Cultural Settings
(studied mostly in anthropology, ethnography, sociolinguistics)
e.g. Dress/Food/Rituals/Dance/Music/Visual Arts/Ethics
and includes REGISTERS and TEXTS

Traditional Linguistics has been concerned with content, form and use of language. (Semiotics - structures and processes on the first plane of language)

Psycholinguistics, Metalinguistics: (language awareness)
has been concerned with 1st and 2nd language acquisition
Language pathologies.
(Semiotics - structures and processes on the second plane of language)
The social and bi-directional nature of language.

The social and cultural aspects of this communication model have been mentioned previously. However, there is another important assumption underlying this model which is that language has an "ontological" base. This means that language is based in existence, experience and reality. It is one human's attempt to transmit that experience to another through interaction that is at the source of most language behaviours even from birth. An infant with limited adult interaction does not develop language as demonstrated in the story of "Genie" (Curtiss 1977) and in the case of a Japanese brother and sister discovered in 1972 having suffered "extreme social isolation and... complex deprivation" (Fujinaga, Kasuga, Nuchida & Saiga, 1990, p.39). The latter study showed that although the children's chronological ages were 5 years and 6 years respectively. "The sister could utter 3 to 10 indistinct words, and the brother made no attempt to communicate"(Fujinaga et al, 1990, p.42). Even though with subsequent changes to their environment resulting in increased nurturing and stimulation, the authors of the study found

that their physical and motor development or recovery has preceded smoothly, whereas their linguistic and cognitive functioning has continued to show such weaknesses as defective functioning of internal speech (Vygotsky 1962) and poor ability to deal with abstract, linguistic subjects. (Fujinaga et al. p. 39).

The bi-directional nature of language, therefore, must be considered of paramount importance in the development of any model of communication.

In this study I wanted to examine part of the model (Figure 1) which seemed most relevant to my particular work with families whose home language is not English. As stated previously, many of these families are also learning English as a second language. Often the children are enrolled in the daycares at such an early age that English becomes their first language. These children are fully immersed in English from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., while their mothers may only have the opportunity to learn English once a week at night school.
Consequently many children learn to speak English at a faster rate and more accurately than their parents. Lily Wong Fillmore (1991) suggests that these families are "at risk" because the children and their parents may not ever develop equal language proficiency. This inequality of development means that higher level discourse skills may not be available within the parent-child interactions. For most parents who speak both home language and English well this does not prove to be a problem and oral language continues to be the main system to allow parent and child to communicate at both concrete and abstract levels. However, for parents with limited English who do not have the same opportunity to learn English at the relatively rapid rate that their children may be doing in preschool or school, the vast opportunities of engaging in rich discourse and storytelling may be restricted.

While Figure 1 shows a broad and encompassing model of communication, the following diagram (Figure 2) details the semiotic relationships, (i.e. between books, children and parents), which formed the basis of this study, an intervention setting within the broader framework. The part of the model (Figure 2) presented for this setting and the study argues that in order for parents to maintain a close bond with their children they must share common semiological knowledge which includes a common language. In Figure 2, the first order semiological system on the left side of the diagram represents the literal plane, while the area to the right indicates the second order semiological system or mythical plane. This second order system arises when "That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system becomes a mere signifier in the second" (Barthes 1973, p.123). Barthes gives the example of a bunch of roses (1973, p.121) in the context of a man presenting the roses to a recipient, a woman. At the literal, or first order of interpretation the roses are SIGN A, the associative total of the concept flower and the image rose. At the second order or mythical level of interpretation the roses become merely a signifier for something beyond a flower. What is signified is the concept of love or passion. The bunch of roses is the same bunch of roses but at the second level they become, as Barthes describes, "passionfied" roses or SIGN B.
Figure 2 shows that, in this study, SIGN A is shown to be the activity of "Book-sharing" which is the associative total of the Signifier A, "a book", and the Signified A, "parents attention, care and love" for their child. At the second level the activity of "Book-sharing" becomes merely Signifier B. What is "signified" now by book-sharing at this second or mythical level is the shared experiences and language of the parent, child and author, resulting in the understanding of the content or message of the book which I have classified here under the term “SIGN B = STORIES”.

The intervention strategy in this research, that is the Preschool Library, is an attempt, to observe parents interacting with their children. It is also an attempt to observe whether the concept of book-sharing can move from the first to the second order system even though the books may not be in the same language as that used by the family. It is in the second order which, it is hypothesized here, could be a catalyst for communication maintenance, and in particular home language maintenance, between parents and their children. It is also here wherein links between school and home could be established.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{SEMIOTIC SYSTEMS} & \text{Sign-Signification Planes} \\
\hline
\text{First-Order Semiological System} & \text{Second Order Semiological System} \\
& \text{Communication maintenance?}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Signified A} & \text{Signified B} \\
\text{Parents' attention, care, love for child} & \text{Parent, child, author share experiences through pictures, common language, texts} \\
\downarrow & \downarrow \\
\text{Signifier A} \Rightarrow \text{SIGN A = BOOK-SHARING} & \text{SIGN B =} \\
\text{BOOK becomes} & \text{SIGN B = STORIES} \\
\Leftrightarrow \text{INTERVENTION} \Rightarrow & \text{BOOK-Sharing: (Preschool Library)}
\end{array}
\]

**Figure 2. Part of theoretical model upon which the Preschool Library was based.**
**Theory subconstructs**

Within this model there are three subconstructs regarding communication that were also a major consideration in the formulation of the model of communication, especially in relation to texts\(^{10}\), which require further definition:

First, language and literacy are best learned in contextually meaningful situations. Hill and Parry call this a "pragmatic model" in their research into literacy and describe the social character of a text (1992, p.442). Language has evolved because of social reasons. Therefore "a particular reader approaching a particular text must have a reason for doing so, even though it may remain unconscious and unarticulated and this affects how the text is understood" (Vacca & Vacca, 1993, p. 447). For example, a child may bring a book to an adult to share because he or she likes the pictures or simply to get some attention.

Secondly, text is viewed as a social instrument, readers and writers as embodying social identities and literacy skills and involving social interaction. The social interaction in this model being that not only of the children engaged with the books but also with their family members, their parents in particular. Prizant and Meyer state that "the most critical social-communication experiences for most children occur in their interactions with family members both when they are learning the language system and as they expand their communication mastery." (1993, p.56)

Thirdly, the relationship of text to context is the register. The register is the manner in which text (including spoken language) is formed in response to the situation in which it is being used. For example, in Canadian culture, the “register” of the language used in a letter to a friend is likely to be very different than the language used in a letter for a job application. Therefore, in order to study language and communication we must not only be aware of the form of language but most importantly explore how its rules are patterned towards social ends (Halliday & Hasen, 1989) in its registers. Books and stories can create an awareness of

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\(^{10}\)The term *texts* here refer to picture story books as well as those with actual written text.
many different registers for young children and their parents, especially those learning more than one language.

The model for this study is a social-semiotic model which attempts to make reference to the cultural and social context in which communication occurs. It provides a framework within which the process of book-sharing between parents and their preschool children can be viewed.

The intervention strategy, a preschool library, was organized to provide opportunities for parents to: a) connect with books (the first order semiological system) and, then by learning with their children in interactive and social ways, b) gain knowledge about the pictures and stories (the second order semiological system).

Alfred North Whitehead has stated that when a culture loses its mythic level that same culture dies (1927 p.88.). It is posited here that if a family could be considered as a culture in itself, then without a mythic level of language function a family could similarly "die" in terms of the relationships and interactions within it. By providing parents with books from different cultures to share with their young children they might, through interaction with the texts, develop on-going bilingual language proficiency, and thus better develop and maintain the second order, mythological semiological systems which mediate between parents and their children in the communication process.
CHAPTER THREE

Method

... teacher research is rooted in the subjective, lived experiences of particular classrooms and is intended first and foremost to contribute to the personal and individual growth of the teacher researcher. (Wells, 1994, p.25)

Since the inquiry driving this research was initially connected with issues of best practice, not just for myself, but for the field of both speech-language pathology and early childhood education, it was important to design a study that would be reflexive, and such that theory could be fed back into practice at the field level as "... research conducted by teachers leads quickly to informed changes in pedagogy." (Fleischer, 1994 p.94)

Therefore, the research followed qualitative methods not only because "The qualitative case study is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education" (Merriam, 1988 p.xiii) but because a qualitative approach would allow a research stance that would allow my experiences to be part of the relevant data.

This chapter will explain teacher-researcher relationships within the field and how these relationships guided the research design from its inception. It will also expand upon the rationale for the choice of research design and outline the methods employed to collect data.
Philosophy, Context and Relationships: Grounding the research.

"... we acknowledge and respect the child's culture and first language. We recognize the parents' primary role as caregivers and also endorse their role as the number one teacher of their child's first language." (McMurter 1992 p.79)

These words, written by Judy, the teacher who was supervisor of the Preschool exemplifies the philosophy of that same preschool for which this project was designed. It is apparent, on reflection, that knowing the teacher both as a colleague and friend, gave me an understanding of her own beliefs and values regarding cultural and linguistic diversity. Over many years, Judy's interactions and observations of the families within the community, gave me insights into that community through her perceptions. The result of this dialogue helped determine the necessary prerequisites to the positive outcomes of this project for the participants which were:

That the research would ideally be located in a preschool whose teachers:

- Gave all languages and cultures, equitable status.
- Welcomed parents into the preschool on a daily basis.
- Honoured parent choices.
- Valued the home language of the children
- Chose materials and curricula that moved beyond a token acknowledgment of cultural diversity.
- Used books as an integral part of each day's activities.

It could be argued that because of my relationship with Judy and her preschool for the many years prior to the development of the research project, and because the same preschool philosophy shaped the design of the research, that the outcomes would have been more significant if the research had been located in an unfamiliar environment. However, since the
research design was dependent upon my active participation in the preschool program, to begin as an "unknown" and to then build rapport with new colleagues would have taken more time than this project allowed. As Fleischer explains "... there is no single truth situated outside the self, waiting to be discovered, but a world in which meaning is something that is created... dialogically and socially." (1994 p.106). The dialogic and social nature of the relationship already in place between the researcher and some of the participants was therefore considered a benefit rather than a hindrance to the outcome. The interaction in which we engaged produced, as

in Bakhtin's view, words... constantly formulated in a social dialogue; it is the constant interaction of individuals' multivoiced words with the stable words of authoritative discourse that allows individuals to develop viable perspectives on the world. (Fleischer. 1994. p.112)

Also, one aim of the project was that it should result in positive experiences for all the participants and I felt this could best be achieved in an already existing supportive environment. If a positive experience for the participants was one of the outcomes then the research could discuss the aspects of that experience which might support future action-research projects and practical program implementation decisions.

**Diversity in the Preschool**

The other critical prerequisite for the location of the project was the need for a wide diversity of languages and cultures amongst the families. This was important because it reflects the reality of many schools and childcare centres in Vancouver.

I knew from past experience that in this preschool there had been, over the years, consistent enrollment of children from families with many different languages. In some years there had been almost as many languages as there were families. In this preschool in spite of the diversity amongst parents, connections between them were encouraged:
We encourage friendships not only between the children, but among the preschool parents. In our case, such connections are not easily made because there are 15 different languages among the 30 families... (McMurter, 1992 p.79).

There have been programs that have attempted to support home language. Cummins (1980 p.9) describes programs such as the Edmonton Ukrainian-English Bilingual Program (Canada); The Manitoba Francophone Study (Canada); The Rockpoint Navajo Study (U.S.A.); The Sodertalje Program for Finnish Immigrant Children (Sweden) which address homogenous language groups. For teachers with few resources, providing curricula, interpreters and materials in languages other than the national one in an equitable way is easier within a homogeneous language group. Also, the programs cited here were designed for school-age children and not three to five year olds attending daycares and preschools in an inner-city area where often supervisors and parent boards struggle each month to meet their budgets. Money to pay for additional resources is currently extremely limited. The limited resources available for early childhood educators in many areas of Vancouver and particularly in the inner city results, as they have told me, in a high level of frustration. The frustration stems also from lack of knowledge about how to provide relevant program curricula and materials in an equitable way for all children, especially when there is such diversity within their programs. This frustration is more widely reflected across Canada in the report *Paths to Equity* (Bernhard et al, 1996) which states that although the majority of daycare centres surveyed (n=77) had developed either implicit or explicit policies regarding racial and cultural diversity (p.15), one third of early childhood graduates did not feel prepared to work with diverse populations upon graduation (p.69). This was the situation existing in many childcare centres in Vancouver when this research began.

**The Project Enhanced by "Surprises"**

The preschool was, at the proposal stage of the project, located in a Neighbourhood House, a simple storefront building on a busy main street. However, a month prior to the
beginning of the project the Neighbourhood House, including the preschool, moved to a brand new building a few blocks away. Apart from the new physical environment designed with "families, community and diversity" in mind, the move had three unforeseen but extremely positive impacts on the project itself:

First, Judy became supervisor of both the preschool and the newly created daycare. I had worked with Judy previously when she was the preschool teacher in old building and although still very much involved with the project this meant I would not be working alongside her in the classroom as often as originally planned. Instead I would be collaborating with two new teachers, unknown to me, and I could no longer be sure of the totally "supportive environment" referred to earlier because I did not know the new teachers' prior knowledge, assumptions or philosophy regarding parent involvement and language issues or they mine. Only through the process of the project itself would these emerge.

Secondly, one of reasons these particular teachers were hired for the preschool was because one spoke Vietnamese and the other Cantonese. Interestingly, this decision was influenced to some degree by the project itself and made by Judy because she felt the project would be enhanced by the presence of bilingual teachers and this certainly turned out to be the case.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, because of community corporate involvement in the new building, there was a substantial amount of donated money suddenly available, some of which was put aside for the needs of the preschool and daycare. As a result, instead of only ten new books as in the original proposal, we had over 120 new books to use in the project. Not only was the quantity significant, as will be explained later, but because I was invited to participate in the selection of the new books, there was a degree of control over the criteria for the selection of the books too.

The significance of these three unexpected factors cannot be underestimated as they added to the richness and depth of the inquiry.
The House: A Community Within a Community

As I began to design the research in order to take account of the philosophy of the preschool, what emerged was that the preschool philosophy was influenced by that of the Neighbourhood House Association itself which serves the larger community. It was through my early discussions with Judy, prior experiences in working with the community, and the rationale for qualitative research that I perceived that if my method of research was not in keeping with a broader community vision then a degree of dissonance would have been created.

The philosophy of the Neighbourhood House can be seen in the following Association of Neighbourhood Houses' diversity and mission statements as they appear in the 1994-1995 annual report:

Diversity Statement:
- We are children, youth, adults and seniors of all races, all religions, all cultures, all abilities, and all economic levels.
- We speak many languages.
- We are men and women of all sexual orientations.
- We value diversity.
- We endeavour to reflect the diversity of our neighbourhoods in our membership, our Boards of Management, our volunteers and our staff.
- We respect all our neighbours.
  We expect that all who come to our Houses, and all those who provide and receive our services, will extend the same respect to all those they meet here. Therefore, we will act to promote the inclusion of all in our Association and in our community.

Mission Statement:
We are a volunteer-driven, community service agency. Our mission is to make neighbourhoods better places to live. Our goal is to enable people to enhance their lives and strengthen their communities. Our challenge is to work with communities to develop innovative programs and services to meet the needs of a diverse population." (Annual Report of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses 1994-1995.)

11 The preschool supervisor
The Research Design Explained

Once the location for the research had revealed its potential for the study then the qualitative case study research design was agreed upon both by the teachers and the director as being compatible with their philosophy. The term qualitative case study has been used interchangeably with fieldwork, ethnography, participant observation, exploratory research and naturalist inquiry. The definition chosen for this study is the one Merriam describes as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit." (Merriam 1988 p. xiv). This study encompasses all of the above-mentioned phenomena to varying degrees and under one roof in that:

- THE PROGRAM is the Preschool Library Project within the preschool program.
- THE INSTITUTION is the Neighbourhood House.
- THE PEOPLE are the children and adults involved.
- THE PROCESSES are not only those of language maintenance and loss but also the process of book sharing within families.
- THE SOCIAL UNITS are the families and community.

The main reason for designing a qualitative study is that, in contrast, most positivist research has been available only to a body of professionals for which the research was designed and therefore most likely to "enhance the ideological and economic advantage of their class" (Reason 1994 p.329) rather than the participants in the research. Positivism refers to the empirical study of phenomena, especially human phenomena and the belief held by some people that human phenomena can be studied using the methods developed to study non-human natural objects, such as planets, plants and cells. The criticism of this form of research stems largely from a "disillusionment with the quantitative methods that have for so long held the dominant position in most of the social sciences" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, p.1).
Why a Preschool Library?

Qualitative research involves naturalistic inquiry during which the researcher usually avoids manipulating the research setting. In this study, however, a library within the preschool was established for all the families. The rationale for this, it should be remembered, was based on the semiotic model described in Chapter Two and it was hypothesized that some kind of intervention was necessary to observe parents interacting with their children and whether the first order of the sign could take on significance on a higher order or mythical level. This intervention is based on the type of teacher-research based on phenomenological principles and would provide an opportunity to create an environment which could be incorporated into the families’ daily life in order to depict, to evoke what phenomenologists such as Heidegger and Gadamer have called "the life world" - that palpable, sensual, kaleidoscopic, mysterious reality that constitutes our material rather than merely intellectual existence. . . (Knoblauch & Brannon. 1988. p.17.)

In this case it is "action", that is the action of the families interacting with books, the teachers and each other, that is given priority. "When action is given analytic priority, human beings are viewed as coming into contact with, and creating their surroundings as well as themselves through the actions in which they engage. Thus action, rather than the human beings or the environment being considered in isolation, provides the entry point into the analysis" (Wertsch 1991 p.8).

Reflexivity: A Way to Construct Local Theory

The study was designed with reflexivity as a key component. Reflexivity is the recognition that we are part of the social world we study and, rather than trying to eliminate the effects of the researcher within the study, those effects are part of the inquiry. "By including our own role within the research focus and systematically exploiting our participation in the world under study... we can develop and test theory (Hammersley &
Atkinson, 1983 p.25). The researcher becomes the "research instrument par excellence" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.23.)

Also this method would avoid "tourism" (Silverman, 1993, p.5) or exploitation of the participants by "moving beyond curiosity to systematic analysis" (Silverman, 1993, p.205).

Participatory action research has two objectives: "One aim is to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a group of people... the second aim is to empower people at a second and deeper level through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge for the benefit of their members" (Reason, 1994, p. 328). This process is described as conscientization (Friere, 1972, p. 16). It seemed that this would allow the creation of an ethnography in the way that Van Maanen describes ethnographies as "portraits of diversity in an increasingly homogeneous world." (1988, p. xiii). This meant that the process may help us, as a community of learners together, to construct a local theory and so it was important that the analysis "display the intricate ways individuals and groups understand, accommodate, and resist a presumably shared order" (Van Maanen, 1988, p. xiv), the 'shared order' in this case being the processes of majority language acquisition and the phenomena associated with family book sharing in this process.

Methodology

The "House"

On December 10th, 1994, I was present when the new Neighbourhood House was opened by Michael Harcourt, then the Premier of British Columbia. It was an important occasion for this community and important for me because, by sitting next to the many people who had been part of the construction and seeing some of the families who would use the building and resources, it helped me to understand the role the House played in the community. The result of this huge community effort was a structure which had incorporated into its design, materials and furnishings, themes that reflected the vision of the association.
Data Collection

The participatory part of the research took place between January and June (inclusive) 1995. The teachers and I discussed which of the preschool programs would be most appropriate for the design of the research. The Tuesday/Thursday morning group was selected mainly on the basis of the time I could be available in the classroom as I was still working part-time as a speech language pathologist. This created some unique role-switches for me in the course of the study which will be explained in Chapter Five.

The qualitative data was collected through observations and fieldnotes taken on a daily basis. Other data consisted of interviews; taped transcripts; photographs and videotapes. Because of the difficulties inherent in being an English-speaking, monolingual, immigrant researcher communicating with parents and children while they were progressing through different stages of bilingualism or multilingualism, my challenge was to "render analysis useful and understandable" (Roman 1993 p.304) to them. Therefore photographs and a videotape of events throughout the project were seen to be the most immediate and useful way of providing meaningful documentation to them at the end of the book-sharing project.

Some quantitative data was collected regarding the frequency of book sharing between parents and their children; the numbers of books borrowed and a rating of the books by the children.

As my role as "immersed field worker" (Roman 1993 p.283), that is as observer-participant, it was decided by the teachers that I would begin the "field" part of the research simply by "helping out" in the classroom until the time came when we all agreed that the parents, children and teachers had become familiar with me and my presence in the classroom. We also needed to allow time to arrange parent interviews, which began in February instead of January. Consequently the start of the Preschool Library (the book-sharing part of the project) was delayed until March 28th.
Chronology of events:

January

- 3rd: I began the process of "helping out" teacher V. in both the morning and afternoon preschools for the first day but then limited my involvement to the Tuesday/Thursday morning group. This 'helping out" included preparing art activities, serving snack, supervising the washroom and beginning to read many of the "old" books. Judy had a specific way of introducing new books and we had decided not to introduce them until the children had settled into their new preschool "home" and we were closer to beginning the preschool library. This delay in the library allowed more time for me to get to know the children and teachers (see Chapter 5).

I also began to make daily fieldnotes, which continued every preschool day for a total of 48 days.

- 14th: Judy and I selected over 120 books, two copies of each, from a local children's bookstore. I sorted the books into plastic zip lock bags which I hoped would protect them on their frequent journeys between home and preschool. I also made pictorial library cards by photocopying the cover of each book and gluing it to a 8"x11" card. I thought that by having pictures of their books on the library cards the children might take a more active part in the sign in-out process because they could find their own library cards by matching the pictures.

February:

- 7th: Judy and I had lunch with JR. from Finning Tractor, the company which donated the money for the books. The meeting was to explain the project in more detail because he had expressed an interest.
9th: The three teachers and I presented the project to the group of parents in English and via interpretation in Vietnamese and Cantonese\textsuperscript{12}, to ensure that everyone knew what the project involved and to make it evident that participation was voluntary.

16th: I conducted the first parent interview prior to the start of the Preschool Library. The interview was an hour in length but took over 9 hours to transcribe. Because of this experience I had to make the decision to keep the interviews shorter or the preschool library would never begin. We also began to introduce some of the new books to the children either at circle time, snack time or when they were playing outside.

\textit{March -}

14th: The first teacher's conference was held, taped and transcribed. I completed the last of the 14 parent interviews.

28th: The PRESCHOOL LIBRARY began and the sign out process was videotaped. Parents were encouraged to share the books their children had selected at the end of the morning. Teachers were available to interpret the stories and encourage parents to “read the pictures” if they did not read English.

\textit{April}

26th: The second teachers' conference was held to record observations and comments about the progress of the project.

28th: Judy took over the sign in-out procedures of the library for the day.

\textit{May:}

Participation in preschool continued. I collected more photographic and video documentation for feedback to parents at the end of the project.

\textit{June:}

8th: I conducted the final parent interviews. This was "Parent Day" when the parents chose a book to take home.

\textsuperscript{12} Families with other languages were given the option of speaking with interpreters but they told us they knew enough English to understand the project. One mother asked her husband to come and interpret before she signed the consent form.
- 17th: Community Festival - I was invited, because of the project, to be one of the children's story tellers. The other story teller was the local librarian.

- 26th: The children rated their favourite books by putting happy face stickers on the library cards. This was the final day for the preschool library.

- 29th: To celebrate the end of the project a pot-luck lunch was held for all the families. Representatives from Finning Tractor were present and a viewing of the video was premiered. Frog finger puppets were given to each child to go with the book "What Made Tiddalik (a giant Australian frog) Laugh". Preschool finished for the summer.

- 30th: I conducted the final parent interviews and teachers' conference.

July:

- I completed transcripts of all interviews and returned them to parents for reading\(^{13}\) (stamped addressed envelopes enclosed for their return) together with a book and a copy of the video, donated by the Finning Company, for each preschool child. (N.B. The books were to have been presented at the final pot luck lunch but did not arrive in time.)

Issues of Validity and Reliability

"Reliability refers to the extent to which one's findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated will it yield the same results?" (Merriam. 1988. p.170)

It is understood that exact replicability of the study would be impossible not only because of the difficulties in finding a similar location but because each researcher brings his or her own held position to the research. In this report of the findings I have tried to define clearly my role and status within the program, the theory and assumptions behind the research and an audit trail outlining the exact methods of data collection.

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\(^{13}\) Most interviewees indicated that they could either read English sufficiently or could call on the services of family members or friends who could translate.
**Internal validity**

In order to address the issue of internal validity, that is how to ensure that the findings match reality, Merriam's six basic strategies were employed in the data collection:

1. *Data Triangulation:* multiple sources of data were used to confirm the emerging findings. These sources were in the form of daily field observations, fieldnotes, parent and teacher interviews, ratings of the books by the children, library card comments, video and photographs.

2. *Member checks:* the transcripts and fieldnotes were taken back to the participants to check the accuracy of my observations and perceptions.

3. *Long-term observation* at the research site: data was gathered over time to increase the validity of the findings.

4. *Peer examination:* I asked colleagues (the teachers in the study) to comment on the findings as they emerged.

5. *Participatory mode of research:* To some degree, the research was participatory in the early stages in that the supervisor/teacher of the preschool and the director of the House were consulted in conceptualizing the study.

6. *Researcher's biases:* I have, throughout the research, attempted to clarify my own assumptions and theoretical orientation from the beginning not only in this text but to the participants in the study.

   These strategies provided the perspectives I was interested in rather than "truth per se" (Merriam, 1988 p.168) because it was important to

   ... understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behaviour in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what [was] happening. (Merriam, 1988, p. 168).

The following table (Table 2) presents a detailed list of the data collection methods:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA TYPE</th>
<th>HOW COLLECTED AND/OR MONITORED</th>
<th>WHEN COLLECTED AND/OR MONITORED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOOKS</td>
<td>Library card sign in/out</td>
<td>Mar-June Twice weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titles of books</td>
<td>Library card sign in/out</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's requests/preferences</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of books-strategies</td>
<td>Observation/participation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for book selection</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of extended family members</td>
<td>Parent report</td>
<td>During library sign-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's rating</td>
<td>Sticker on library cards</td>
<td>End of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>Observation/video</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/child use</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Beginning and end of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/child use</td>
<td>Parent report</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/teacher use</td>
<td>Observation/video</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home v preschool</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILIES</td>
<td>Parent interview/report</td>
<td>Beginning and end of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language choices</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Parent report</td>
<td>Beginning and end of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 maintenance/loss</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learning</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational communication/transmission</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of book sharing</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of the books</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Beginning and end of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of the project</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>End of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of book sharing</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
<td>Beginning and end of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Parent report</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2. Classification and Methods of Data Collected in the Preschool Library

**External validity**

I have taken the more practical view of external validity than the traditional sense of generalization of the findings because "... critical researchers reject the traditional notion of external validity. The ability to make pristine generalizations from one research study to another accepts a one-dimensional, cause-effect universe" (Kinchełoe and Mclaren 1994, p.151). Since the working hypothesis has taken into consideration only local and community-specific conditions, results are impossible to generalize. However, the text offers "reader or user generalizability" (Merriam 1988, p.177) in which the reader can extract that information which applies or does not apply to his or her own situation.

**The Interview Process**

Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first. The spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and report or code the answers. Yet, interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings. (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p.361)

As previously shown, interviews were incorporated into the research design as a means of data triangulation, but, as stated above, this was a more difficult task that it seemed
at first especially when in some instances I had to rely on interpreters and "... thus [became] vulnerable to an added layer of meanings, biases, and interpretations..." (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 367).

**Interviews and Interpreters: Validity in Question**

But how does one interview if one doesn't speak the language?... Many authors emphasize the importance of language competence in ethnography, and they also note that new problems are introduced when one must rely on an interpreter. Yet the literature is eerily quiet on the subject. (Agar, 1980 p. 103).

The linguistic diversity of the families created some of the most challenging aspects for the interviews in the study. Most parents spoke some English but for the initial interviews particularly I relied on the services of two volunteer interpreters accessed through the local Health Department. For those parents who did not speak much English I found on numerous occasions that my assumptions about interviews and interpretation were wrong: I was wrong, for example, to assume that because someone had volunteered as an interpreter they would have equal proficiency in both languages. I was also wrong to assume that transcribing interviews via an interpreter would be a similar experience to that in a one-to-one interview. One of the issues that made it was so different was the issue of transcription. I agonized over this. How should I best transcribe the interviews in which an interpreter was participating? Did I need to make the interpreter's presence explicit in the transcription? I questioned whose voice was really responding? Was it really the parent's voice or the interpreter's "gist" of what the parent said? I struggled each time to try to judge how much of the interviewers' own views were transmitted during each interview. Sometimes, depending on the relationship I had with the parent, I discovered that it was a more pragmatic and meaningful for us to communicate through simple English words and phrases supplemented by demonstrations and gestures, than it was through an interpreter whom I didn't know and
from whom I could not ensure accurate interpretation. When the parents and I were engaged in the interview one-on-one we seemed to put more effort into making meaning for each other than when an interpreter was participating. Examples of this will be given in Chapter Five.

Certainly, one could argue that the interpreting difficulties call into question the validity of the findings. To address this problem I have made every attempt to omit data that are questionable in this way or I have used quotes with this caveat. The issues were so complex that to be both experiencing and examining them at the same time was daunting. However, the result of this experience forced me to completely re-examine my own practice of using interpreters in my profession as a speech-language pathologist.

In addition, the discovery of these problems demonstrates the reality that the challenge of language barriers presents in this community. In the 1995 study by Bernhard et al., 49% of the 19 early childhood educators surveyed in Vancouver (and 43% of 169 surveyed from programs across Canada) cited language barriers to be the most challenging aspect of diversity in their programs. If this challenge is to be addressed then we need to look beyond the apparently simple and perhaps expensive solutions, such as hiring interpreters. When we involve parents as active participants in the preschool programs we can begin to remove those barriers by using the activities of the preschool as a catalyst for communication.

**Diversity and Ethical Considerations**

In March 1995, at the beginning of the Preschool Library, I had already been working as a "teacher" in the preschool for two months. This is how the other teachers presented me and how the parents and children viewed me when they were presented with the idea for the research. This mode of presentation was important "because after one's presentational self is "cast" it leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has a great influence on the success (or failure) of the study" (Fontana & Frey 1994 p. 367). My role as a teacher was a factor in building trust and rapport with all the participants.
The method of research, who I was, and the details of the study were made as explicit as far as possible to all the families in the preschool. The Cantonese teacher interpreted our words to the Cantonese families while the Vietnamese teacher took aside the Vietnamese families to explain similarly. All the other families reported that they knew enough English to understand the project and consent forms. It could be argued that the consent forms should have been translated into the different languages represented by the families. Even if this could have occurred we may have then assumed that every participant was literate in his or her home language, which would have created another set of issues. This way, at least by giving an oral presentation of the consent contents, we could be assured that every family was aware of its rights to withdraw or complain if necessary.

The final issue was how to represent the findings to the families, knowing that many, particularly the extended family members at home, could not read or understand English. Therefore, it was decided that each family would receive photographs of their choice and an hour-long video showing excerpts, not only of the project but of the children and their friends in the preschool.
CHAPTER FOUR

Rationale for Choosing Books
in an Intervention Setting

"When parents and children read stories together, they learn about
themselves and gain a deeper understanding of one another."
(Taylor & Strickland, 1986, p.8)

In the initial stages of this study the choice of books for the intervention setting was
decided based on the social-semiotic model described in the previous chapter. The review of
the literature revealed that books, in addition to providing a setting for observing parents
interacting with their children, also afford many other benefits. However, careful
consideration was needed regarding content, design, and complexity of the written text, in the
development of criteria for the books selected. For example, how could I ensure that the
books would be of interest to the preschool children in the study? Would their parents
consider the books suitable for their children? Why did the process to select the books result
in a Preschool Library (described in Chapter 4) comprised mostly of texts in English, given
that this was a linguistically diverse population? Could the books function as transcultural
messengers and at the same time value each family's home culture? This chapter will
describe the criteria for book selection and the rationale behind the use of stories from
different countries.
Why Books?

The Literacy Value of Books

It appears that the literacy perspective is the one perspective most researched and documented in the literature. Because this field is so vast and complex it lies beyond the scope of this paper to address fully. However, the positive relationship between the amount of exposure to books experienced by children in the preschool years and positive academic outcomes (Blatchford, 1990) in the school years is important to acknowledge because this positive relationship was one of the main reason books were chosen as the medium for interaction.

Although much of the linguistic research has focussed on children from majority language, middle class homes, the assumption was made in this study that ALL children, regardless of culture, would benefit from book-experiences in the same kinds of ways, providing the literature selected did not devalue their own language and culture.

The Transcultural\textsuperscript{1} Value of Books

The most significant challenge in the selection of books for a linguistically diverse population of preschool children and their families was that of deciding what kinds of books would be best for this project. My initial decision, when I wrote the proposal for this study, was that a transcultural approach would allow for cross-cultural awareness, the assumption being that this awareness in itself would be one way to impart implicitly or explicitly, the philosophy of honoring all cultures. However, as the research progressed and colleagues reminded me of the more prevailing multicultural perspective, I began to doubt that the books could really "honor" each family's culture if they were not written in each family's home language. As a result I went in search of books in other languages both in the local library

\textsuperscript{1} In this paper the term “transcultural” is used synonymously with the term “cross-cultural.” It has been used to denote a model in which there is an intermingling of cultures rather than a separation of cultures. The analogy of a tapestry can be used for the transcultural model whereas a mosaic can be used for the multicultural model.
and through Vancouver's Early Childhood Multicultural Services (ECMS) One important
criteria for book selection was that I needed to find two copies of each book, one to remain in
the preschool and one to go home with each child. I also looked for books in each language
represented by the families. It was during this search that I determined that the transcultural
model was the most feasible approach to this project. This was because, in my search for
books for a multicultural approach, I discovered the following facts.

First, the local library had some books in other languages, notably Vietnamese,
Spanish, and Cantonese. However, most of these books were written for adults or school-age
children. The content did not seem appropriate for preschool children. The library did not
have two copies of each one, in any case.

Second, although there were hundreds of books in other languages available in the
ECMS library, there were not enough to provide the preschool with two copies in each
language. Therefore, if I had pursued this line of thinking and followed the multicultural
model the result would have been that some families would have access to books in their
home language while other languages such as those spoken in the Philippines (e.g. Tagalog
and Igarot) would have no representation whatsoever.

Third, it was impossible to be sure which languages would actually be represented in
the preschool given that this was a new building, and was sustaining new enrollment. The
teachers could only speculate on which languages we would require.

Fourth, to have books translated into other languages would have taken a great deal of
time and money. Even if it were possible there would have to be translations in four or five
languages for each book.

Taking these factors into consideration I also experienced the overriding sense that
the multicultural approach seemed only to perpetuate the separation of and discrimination
between cultures. This was not a process I wished to perpetuate. So I returned to the idea of
using transcultural stories and chose books for the preschool library that seemed more likely
than those suggested by the multicultural model to act as transcultural messengers. This
rationale for the use of stories from many cultures was supported by Peseschkian who stated, "As bearers of tradition stories are representative of culture." (1986, p.30). If this is true then by reading different stories a person can get a glimpse of different cultures. Peseschkian expands upon this notion of transcultural awareness when he states that the contents of these stories provide reassurance for people who are members of the culture represented in the story, while simultaneously demonstrating other models of thought and concepts to people whose culture is not represented by the story. Peseschkian is an Iranian-German psychotherapist and has used Oriental stories as tools in his work. In addition to promoting transcultural awareness, he has something significant to say in regard to the positive effects transcultural stories can have in counteracting prejudice. Peseschkian’s idea, cited here, was a major factor in shaping the rationale for making this study 'transcultural':

... the painful awareness of prejudice in our own time can be counteracted with transcultural stories. One learns to know foreign ways of thinking and perhaps even adopts them for himself. One should remember that stories don't necessarily represent the currently accepted forms of society. But even if they are anachronisms, they can broaden one's mind by stimulating one's thoughts, challenging existing ideas, and introducing new and unknown concepts. (1986, p.30)

It was exciting to envision a preschool program that had, as part of the curriculum, the potential, through books and stories, to act as an early counteraction to prejudice.

The Language-learning Value of Books

Given that for many families, learning to speak English is a prime reason for sending their child to preschool (Bernhard et al, 1995), and that the most positive outcome for these children would be proficiency in both their home language and English, then it appeared that the study needed to respect the parents' wishes (i.e., that their children learn English) but also find ways to allow the dialogue in home language to continue. If we had made the assumption that parents wanted their children to have books in their home language (the multicultural model) then we would have not met this need. The idea of encouraging
parents to interpret the stories in their own language seemed a much more naturalistic way of valuing the two (or more) languages used by any one family and would allow the parents to decide how this might be done, how much and when. This way of interacting with books is demonstrated in the following example as a natural reading process developed by parents themselves:

The Garcia family also has found its own way of sharing books. Books are read in English and Spanish. Raphael, who is six, listens to the stories with his little sister Maria who is two. When their mother, Carmen, begins reading the story of Hester the Jester, she begins to read in English. Raphael and Maria listen to their mom and they ask her questions about the story. Carmen answers them and then she continues in Spanish as she reads them a translation of the story. It is family time and the children enjoy listening to their mother as she reads and talks to them in the English and Spanish of their bilingual home. (Taylor & Strickland, 1986, pp. 7-8)

The example here is of a family in which the mother is proficient both in English and Spanish. In the study described in this paper however, the parents were at varying levels of English proficiency. It was hypothesized that the process of book-sharing like that of the Garcia family, since it was devised by the family members themselves, would therefore be natural and easy for other families to carry out. The idea was to make the process fun and least demanding on parents' time so that all families would engage in book sharing more frequently as a result because: "When parents read to children, they do not deliberately set out to give language lessons. Nevertheless, all kinds of lessons about language (speaking and listening, reading and writing) do occur." (Taylor & Strickland, 1986, p.17).

The Cognitive Value of Books

Further support of using books for this project came from the knowledge that books would also impact on the children's general cognitive development in positive ways. It is assumed that all the perspectives discussed in this chapter are interdependent and have an impact on each other and this is especially true of language and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). This is because "Language is the vehicle that allows human beings to think and be
thoughtful... Helping learners to be thoughtful with texts means engaging them in cognitive and metacognitive thinking activities... From a cognitive perspective, students need to know how to produce and interact with texts in order to discover, organize, retrieve, and elaborate upon content." (Vacca & Vacca, 1993, p. 13). It was assumed that providing opportunities for children to interact with texts, learn how to hold and take care of books, could be a first step in this process.

Research has also demonstrated the positive effects upon intellectual growth and general education, for children who engage in early bilingual reading (Titone, 1985).

The Value of Books to Families

In considering the perspectives described previously, this discussion now returns to issues of family interaction and maintenance of relationships. Many studies have involved parents in early literacy experiences with their children (MacCarry, 1989; Gabert, 1988; ). Robson and Whitely (1989) examined the influence of a regular book-borrowing service designed to enable and encourage parents to read to their children. Although there were no statistically significant differences between control and experimental groups on a reading test there was an unexpectedly high level of parental interest. It is this "interest" that was hoped could be fostered in this project not how well children perform eventually on reading tests. Taylor and Strickland best describe the process that this project was designed to encourage when they state "Whatever happens during the day, sharing storybooks brings the family together." (1986,p.3)

Criteria for Book Selection

Establishing the criteria for book selection was an unexpectedly challenging task, a challenge that other authors had faced previously. Johns, Harvey and Glickman-Kind (1991) also reported challenges in their selection and purchasing of books for a project designed to encourage parents with limited literacy to use books with their young children.
Other authors have offered suggestions for choosing books to read with children. (Morrow, 1989; Cullinan, 1989). Some of the criteria we established were similar to their suggestions and so they have been credited to those authors. However, their suggestions were made for parents who could "read the text" of the books. We could not make this assumption and needed further criteria in order to meet, as closely as possible, the language needs of all the parents, including those who could or could not speak and read English. The criteria were agreed upon by the preschool supervisor, Judy.

**Initial criteria for selection of books for the Preschool Library.**

1. *Two copies of each book must be available.* This was to ensure that one copy of each book would remain in the preschool for the children in this and other classes while the second copy would be used exclusively in the preschool library.

2. *The majority of stories and pictures must be representative of cultures from around the world,* but not necessarily of those presented by the families of the preschool. The rationale for this criterion was based upon practical and theoretical reasons. The practical reason being that it was impossible to obtain books representing each family's culture. The theoretical reason was that, as discussed elsewhere in the paper, if other cultures could be represented in the stories and made explicit to the parents and children this would demonstrate to those same families that all cultures were honored and respected.

3. *Pictures, where possible, should be explicit enough to be 'read' without having to rely on text* for interpretation. This criterion was considered to be one of the more critical in the selection of the books for without explicit pictures the books would be much more difficult for the parents to 'translate' into their home languages.

4. *Artwork should be appealing and of good quality,* that is, not "cartoon-like". This was an interesting criterion because its origin lay in Judy, the supervisor's, notion that, in order for the adults to be interested in the books they had to appeal to the adult mind too. Variations in the artwork was one way to make preschool books intriguing for adults.
5. There should be a range of text difficulty because the families are at different stages of English proficiency and the needs of English speaking families must also be considered.

6. The books should be developmentally appropriate (Cullinan 1989). The rationale for this criterion originated in the literature review. 'Developmental appropriateness' however, is difficult to define and in this situation this criterion acted more as a guideline when discussing appropriate books with librarians and staff in the book store so that time would not be wasted reviewing books that were clearly written with school-age children in mind.

7. The language should be interesting, with rhythmic words and phrases (Cullinan 1989). The rationale for this criterion was based on the knowledge that preschool children from an early age respond to repetition and rhythm even before they, necessarily, understand the words. By providing books with repetition and rhythm in the body of the text this natural process could be facilitated especially for those children learning English simultaneously with their home language.

8. The stories should be "condensable". That is to say the stories plus the pictures should lend themselves to being shortened by the teacher or parent to match the interest level of the children without losing the sense of the story itself. On repeated readings, more information could be added. The rationale for this relates partially to time constraints and levels of complexity. All the teachers including myself, have encountered situations in which time limitations, level of audience comprehension or attention has dictated the length story that can be told. Those stories which can be shared in a short period of time are often much more effective in capturing preschool-children's attention initially. Once the attention is there, on repeated readings, the children can bear to have more details added but the scaffold must be there initially, the structure of that scaffold having: a beginning, a middle and 'The End'.

At the end of the project the children were asked to rate their favourite books and this rating is documented in Chapter 5. It is interesting to compare the children's favourite books
with the criteria we adults established. In certain aspects the adult notion of what children prefer differs to the children's actual preferences. Appendix B shows a table which lists the most popular books. Popularity was rated based on the number of times it was borrowed, that is chosen by the children themselves, from the Preschool Library.

If establishing the criteria for book selection was one of the most unexpectedly challenging tasks of this project, spending over $800 on books was one of the unexpectedly exciting tasks of the project. I had already researched the catalogues of multicultural books available through various distributors and none had seemed suitable for this project. A local bookstore specializing in children's books seemed to offer the most choice. The array of books was dazzling and so going into the store with definite guidelines was a benefit because it made the selection process more efficient. Although I have always had a passion for books myself, I had never been involved in the purchase of such a huge number of books. The personal thrill of being involved in this cannot be underestimated.

The criteria were not absolute but became a guide to the selection of the books because the teachers also wanted to include some books previously found to be popular, like "The Three Little Pigs" and song books like "Five Little Ducks". Some of the latter books met very few of the criteria but, from the teachers' reports, were traditional favourites with all children. This presented the opportunity to compare the "old favourites" with the newer stories in terms of popularity (discussed in Chapter 5.).
CHAPTER 5

The Language Mountain

_She went on to tell me that sometimes learning English was "like a mountain" with her children running up it very fast learning English quickly while she (gesturing a plodding action) is following much slower. She said she wanted to shout to them to slow down, "Stop! I'm your Mother! But I'm coming!"._

(Excerpt from fieldnote (FN) Day 11 page 2)

This mother of three girls explained that the reason the children seemed to be "running up the mountain" was because she knew that children learn languages faster than the adults who do not have the same opportunity to pick up the language. She also explained that her ten year old daughter tells her not to speak English because it "is not good English." "Speak Mandarin!" her daughter tells her. (FN Day 11, p.2)

There continues to be public and political rhetoric which contends that minority-language immigrants in Canada do not want to learn English and that legislated multiculturalism creates an environment in which immigrants are not required to learn English at all. This study demonstrates that parents of young children do want to learn English but frequently their only opportunity to learn it is through their children, who learn the language much faster than their parents. Some of the children become embarrassed by their parents' relatively limited proficiency.

This chapter gives representative examples of comments and events that expand on the metaphor of the Language Mountain. It also demonstrates the powerful effects book-sharing has on families, especially when home language is honoured and encouraged and when the parents' desire to learn English "with" their children is respected and fostered.
Documenting the Journey to the Language Mountain

It would be impossible to include, in this document, all 30 transcripts, 48 daily fieldnotes and the transcriptions of the three teachers' conferences compiled during the project. Therefore, representative samples are quoted from the fieldnotes and interviews to provide insight and background into the languages spoken by the families and the participants' views about language and books.. These quotes have been organized in a such a way as to provide evidence and support for the statements which precede each section. To make it easier for the reader to differentiate between quotes taken from fieldnotes and quotes extracted from the transcriptions, the quotes from fieldnotes are in italics while quotes from transcriptions of the interviews are shown in boxes. A sample transcription is given in Appendix A.

All book titles mentioned have been bolded and underlined. These books have been listed as technical references in Appendix G.

At the beginning of the project consents to participate in the Preschool Library were obtained from all 17 families attending the preschool. An example of a consent form is given in Appendix C. One family had two children, a brother and a sister, in the same class. Twelve\(^{15}\) parents were interviewed and questioned about the length of time they had lived in Canada, the nature and frequency of book-sharing in the home, the home languages, and their hope for their children's bilingualism. All parents responded positively to the idea of borrowing books from a preschool library.

Table 2 gives a summary of the parents' responses to the questions asked during the first interviews and an introduction to these 12 families attending the preschool. Examples of the questions used to guide the initial interviews are given in Appendix D. Examples of the final interview questions are given in Appendix E. Although all 17 parents agreed to be part of the book-sharing project, some had only limited time available and were unable to

\(^{15}\text{Although all the children borrowed the books from the library not all the parents had the time to be interviewed as they were working and it was thought that a representative sample could be gained by interviewing those 12 parents who did have the time.}\)
take part in the interviews. Eleven different languages are represented within this preschool. The diversity of languages increases to 13 if the languages of grandparents are considered in the total. The language count includes two families who left the preschool early in the project; one family spoke Tamil and Sinhalese and the other family spoke Amharic. A Croatian family joined the preschool part way through.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent's name*; country of origin; length of time in Canada</th>
<th>Child's name*</th>
<th>Frequency of book-sharing during a typical week</th>
<th>Home language spoken by the parents</th>
<th>Children's main language at home</th>
<th>Parent's hope for their children's future language use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yuen (Mom): China. 12 years in Canada</td>
<td>Fung:</td>
<td>A few times in Mandarin</td>
<td>Mom speaks Mandarin/Cantonese/ English. Dad speaks Cantonese/English English only. Dad speaks Afrikaans and English</td>
<td>Mandarin / Cantonese/ English</td>
<td>Learn Mandarin, Cantonese and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Janine (Mom): Canada</td>
<td>James:</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Parents speak Tagalog but only English used in the home</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Learn English and French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ptom (Dad): Philippines 9 years in Canada</td>
<td>Eileen:</td>
<td>Every night. Eider sister reads to younger daughter</td>
<td>Parents speak Igorot/English Cantonese only at home</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Expect their children to speak only English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mary (Mom): Philippines</td>
<td>Jennifer:</td>
<td>Every night.</td>
<td>English/some Igorot</td>
<td>Learn Igorot and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ann (Mom): China 4 years in Canada</td>
<td>Lee:</td>
<td>Every evening</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Learn Cantonese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. KT (Mom): Vietnam 5 years in Canada</td>
<td>D. and L. (Brother and sister)</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Vietnamese and English but use more English</td>
<td>Learn Vietnamese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. L. (Mom): Vietnam 12 years in Canada</td>
<td>Dang:</td>
<td>None Older brother reads in English</td>
<td>Vietnamese and English</td>
<td>Learn Vietnamese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Le (Mom): Vietnam 16 years in Canada</td>
<td>Jon:</td>
<td>At bedtime. Three times a week. No books in home language.</td>
<td>Vietnamese and English</td>
<td>Learn Vietnamese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hong (Mom): Vietnam 7 years in Canada</td>
<td>Thanh:</td>
<td>Every night for 30 minutes before sleep.</td>
<td>Vietnamese and English</td>
<td>Learn Vietnamese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sarah (Mom): Canada</td>
<td>Anna:</td>
<td>Everyday. More than three books a day</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Learn Chinese or French or Spanish/English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pei (Mom): Cambodia 6 years in Canada</td>
<td>Soon Choi:</td>
<td>Sometimes No books at home Watches TV</td>
<td>Cambodian/ Vietnamese/ Cantonese/Mandarin/ English</td>
<td>Learn Vietnamese/ Cantonese/ Mandarin/ English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Summary of home languages and frequency of book sharing as reported by the parents interviewed at start of the project.
*Pseudonyms have been used whenever the parents were able to choose these pseudonyms for themselves and family members. However, this was not possible for all parents because even with an interpreter it was difficult to explain the concept of a pseudonym and the reasons why this was desirable. For those families abbreviations have been used. One family wanted their real name used.

A high percentage (70%) of the preschool children were able to speak their parents' language at home. Their proficiency level in home language was impossible to estimate partly because of their developmental level and partly because I did not know their languages. Of the remaining families, although the children could sometimes understand their parents' first language, the children most frequently chose to respond in English. This caused few problems for the parents who could speak English. However, some parents with limited English proficiency reported that their children's reluctance to speak in their language created a barrier to communication. The following quote from one parent demonstrates this phenomenon, described previously as the English Displacement Effect (Palij, 1990), and gives an indication of the difficulties this mother may face in the future as she raises her two children:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sue:</th>
<th>In English only? O.K. Are there any times that you have difficulty communicating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KT:</td>
<td>Sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes I don't understand what the children are talking---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue:</td>
<td>O.K.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KT:</td>
<td>---and sometimes when I talk Vietnamese they say &quot;Sorry I don't know&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lines 112-118, First Interview)
**Exploring the Language Mountain with Books**

This part of the chapter documents first the observations or outcomes which emerged as unexpected in the study. Following the discussion of these observations and outcomes, I have provided evidence of phenomena which were expected to occur in support of the original semiotic model of book-sharing. Some of the quotes have preambles or comments about them. Others have been left to stand by themselves in support of the statement which heads each section. The language, vocabulary and structure of the sentences are as they were transcribed from the original audiotapes.

**Encountering the "Unexpected " on the Journey.**

**Parents know the value of home language maintenance.**

In my work with families in this community I had encountered only a few parents who thought it was important to speak their home language with their children. Therefore it surprised me to discover that many of the parents in this preschool knew how important it was for their children to maintain their home languages in order to keep members of their families connected. As my relationship with the families developed over the six months, conversations about different languages increased and we laughed at my attempts to speak words in their languages. In conversations with the parents, many of them knew that their children had the innate capacity to learn more than one language. Some parents regretted their children were not learning the home language.

*I am talking to Fung’s mom and her new baby. Mom tells me that the baby has been saying that she is sad. I asked (jokingly), was she[the baby] saying that in Mandarin, Cantonese, English or Baby language. Mom said "Baby speak in baby language but she listen in three language." (FN Day 36, p.1.)*

In the transcription below, "Igorot" refers to a language spoken by indigenous people living in remote northern mountain areas of the Philippines. Because most Filipinos speak
Malayo-Polynesian languages, such as Tagalog and Cebuano, a speaker of Igorot would be unlikely to find other speakers of this language in the lower mainland of B.C. or elsewhere in Canada. This quote is another example of a parent’s regret because her daughter is not learning the home language.

Mary: O.K., yes I know, I think it's coming to me. Like my parents usually make a voice tape---
Sue: Oh yes?
Mary: ---some of those voice tapes---
Sue: Yes, uh-huh
Mary: ---so they do it in Igorot.
Sue: O.K.
Mary: So when we listen to it [Jennifer] says "What are they saying?". So I said you just have to sit down and listen and I have to listen to it and then I'll tell you.
Sue: Uh-huh.
Mary: So like she doesn't understand. She wants to know what they are saying.
Sue: And she doesn't understand.

[At this point I added a written question on the transcript I returned to Mary which asked:] (Your voice sounds sad here. Why?)

Mary’s written answer was:
We would want [Jennifer] to be able to communicate with her Grandparents in Igorot.
(Lines 148-162, First Interview.)

There are strong feelings of embarrassment and pride attached to language.

I noticed Hong reading the . . . book to [her daughter] Thanh in Vietnamese. I watched for a while until she saw me and then she suddenly stopped reading, looked down and away from the book. (FN Day 4, p.1)

Ptom: . . . You know like what do you call this? I don't have the confidence to talk. I always turn my back right away because I don't want to talk English before the first time I came here.
Sue: Right
Ptom: You know because I'm really intimidate, you know, low self-esteem and things like that.
Sue: Yes. Were you worried about making mistakes?
Ptom: That's true. Yes, that's true. (Lines 221-228, First Interview).
**The children seem to know about languages.**

I wanted to know what the children thought about other languages so I began to talk specifically about their languages. The following quotes show that the children had strong, if not always accurate perceptions, of other languages.

*I told Fung how wonderful it was that she could speak three languages, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. She said "No! Four! Mandarin, Cantonese, English and Chinese"... Anna [whose home language is English] said "I know another language. I speak a little bit of Spanish at home." (FN Day 7, p.3.)*

I asked Anna's mom the next day to confirm if their family did, as Anna had reported, speak Spanish at home:

*She laughed and said they didn't but Anna had a Spanish baby-sitter when she was younger [she is only 3 years old now]... mom said they had always talked about people having different languages. (FN Day 8, p.2)*

*Eileen told me that she was Tagalog and Grandma corrected her by saying "No Tagalog is a language." (FN Day 27, p.2)*

---

**Sue:** ---do you tell them[the stories] in Vietnamese? Do you translate?

**Hong:** Yes I translate.

**Sue** You translate?

**Hong:** I read in this part and then I translate. My son [eldest child age six] like that.
My son tell me "Mommy read for me I can't hear. Change[to] Vietnamese [then] I understand."

Sue: Does your six year old feel good about speaking two languages?
Hong: Yes.  
( Lines 287-293, First Interview.)

The children show their passion for the books.

Lam was one child whose enthusiasm for learning was really ignited by the books. He always wanted to be the first to choose. If he was undecided he would walk around the books that were spread out on the bench and picked up the bags to examine them closely. When he was sure about the book he wanted, it seemed nothing could persuade him that another choice might do:

. . . in fact he has been so into this whole project right from the word go because he loved that book Brown Bear Brown Bear. When he went to choose his book and it wasn't there, he was devastated that first day. He went round all the books saying "Bear? Where bear?" When the book was returned the following Tuesday I saved it for him . . . He did not leave it alone for one second. He tried hiding it on a shelf and watched it so no-one else was likely to get it. (Second Teachers' Conference p. 10.)

Thanh's mom is telling me that Thanh liked the book so much that she didn't want to come to school today because she would have to give the books back. (FN Day 36, p.1).

Many of the examples of the children's or parents' comments about specific books can be cross-referenced with the library cards. For example, on May 16, 1995 the book Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? was signed out to Thanh. On its return Thanh's mother answered the question 'How many times did you read it ?' by saying "Many times. She love this book." (written record on the library card).

Interpreter:  (laughs at one mom's comment then explains)
And when they go to bed her child would put his book in the pillow because he was afraid that it would get lost. . . (100)
(Lines 129 -130  Final interview with Le, My, and L.).
The children are becoming quite adamant about which books they want to take home. Some even want to reserve their favourites for the next day!!! So I have to write their name on the card for the next day's library. D. became very tearful when he discovered that the dinosaur book he wanted for the next day was still on loan to Z. However, once I had written his name on the card to reserve it for next day he happily chose another. (FN Day 33, p.1)

I didn't like it. I love it! (James' comment on the Five Little Ducks library card, June 13, 1995)
The children do not seem to be getting tired of the books (even if I am sometimes!). Their enthusiasm astounds me!!! When we went outside today they loaded me up with about ten books to read to them outside. (FN Day 32, p.1)

Certain books are more "special" than others.

I was surprised by the way certain books became icons for the children. Some children carried their current chosen books as they might do a favourite stuffed animal. Other children brought me the same book to read over and over again, never tiring of it. One such book, Rainbow Goblins, written and illustrated by the Italian writer and artist Ul de Rico, was one of the most popular books, even though the text was linguistically advanced for preschool children. The artwork was extremely colourful and captivated the children's imaginations. I read it many times to them and in many different ways. Sometimes, depending on the attention level or age of the children, I could read the story in its entirety. At other times I read the pictures in a short version of the story while the children shouted out the name of a colour and we all pretended to drink the colours of the rainbow imitating the actions of the goblins in the pictures.

I watched Anna's mom explaining the story [Rainbow Goblins] to Thanh's mom [in English]. Anna's mom told me that some of the parents don't like it. I asked if it was because it was too scary and she said no, it was because the words were too difficult. (e.g. "prance"). I asked if, regardless of the words [whether] they could still get the story from the pictures and she quickly said "Oh, yes!"
(FN Day 31 p.1).
Lam was very adamant about having *Abiyoyo* although it had been signed out already. He kept saying "No way!" when I tried to suggest other books. (FN Day 37 p.2)

[The] children's faces and voices indicated absolute delight when they discovered that the "surprise" I had hidden under the cloth was the *Rainbow Fish* book. (FN Day 11, p. 3)

Fung told me that she had read *The Rainbow Fish* in Mandarin. Mom confirmed this later. I forgot to mention that on Tuesday she showed me her sweater with a fish in many colours on the front. She told me it was Rainbow Fish... she wore it again today. (FN Day 25, p.2)

**The children learn to handle and take care of the books.**

In my fieldnotes, in conversations with the teachers, and on the video too, there is evidence that shows a relationship between the children's love of the books and their ability to use them with care and respect.

One thing that did strike me as being significant was the expert way the children had begun to handle the books. Lam especially was very adept at choosing a page then turning the book around to show the (video)camera in the same manner as the teachers do when they show the children the stories. Lee too did this. They also turn the pages very carefully and deliberately as if looking for very specific parts of the book or as if they don't want to miss a page. (FN Day 26, p.2).

In all, 52 books were taken home twice weekly over the six month project for a total of 323 borrowing events. The fact that not one book was lost or destroyed was evidence that the children had taken upon themselves the responsibility for book ownership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sue:</th>
<th>We didn't lose one book!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janine:</td>
<td>You didn't lose one book? Oh really!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue:</td>
<td>Yes. I mean I just—--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janine:</td>
<td>Well James was very—-it was important to him to take care of the book and to keep the bag with the book. (033)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lines 97 - 101, Final Interview).
... still I think the children are doing a remarkable job of looking after the books. It's very rare they come back without the zip lock [plastic] bag. (FN Day 37, p.2)

In the final teacher conference the teachers were asked for comparisons between the children in the project group and the other children attending the other preschool classes.

Teacher JU said that the children in the project group had a respect and caring of the books (014). "A physicalness with the books that the rest didn't. There wasn't that love and friendship and treatment, appropriate treatment of books. They [the books] didn't seem to be honored in the same way. . . and the notion of the plastic bag maybe was an example there that books are to be protected and taken care of". (Final Interview with the teachers, p.1).

Teacher PH. said that the children in the project were "more interested in books than the other children. We can see this very clearly."(050).(Final Interview with the teachers, p.1).

The parents appreciate the books and especially the artwork in them.

[Teacher] PH. went on to say "They (the parents) told me 'I don't know that you [the teachers] have so many many colourful book, as beautiful book at this school and we can use it now with the children at home' and they appreciate that. ( Second Teachers' Conference p.3)

Ptom: But for the grown-ups I get a surprise because Oh this thing come from this place. (076)
I didn't even know that. The goblins, I didn't even hear of a goblin at all.--- since I read the book. Very interesting though.
(Lines 206-213, Final Interview)

I had a long talk with Anna's mom this morning. She told me (again) how wonderful she thought the storytelling project was. She mentioned the quality of the books and also said that the interesting part for her was seeing the children take "ownership" of the books. She added "So often it is the parent who controls which books come home and which books are read. ]FN Day 37 p. 1)

Dang said "My Mommy like this one. [Rainbow Goblins]. The drawings so good." (FN Day 43, p.1)
[The art was just wonderful. (Sarah's comments on the Here Comes the Cat library card, 30 March, 1995).

Sarah: . . . I don't know, I'm perennially cheap so I don't go out and buy really nice books all the time so the books we have around the house are second-hand or you know, often second-hand so they don't have quite the nice visuals---(082). . . or such nice hard cover books with really beautiful visuals.

(Lines 169-174, Final Interview)

The researcher becomes "The Book Lady".

Over the six months my knowledge about children's books increased much more than I had expected. Not only did I learn about the nature of children's books and children's preferences, I also learned to read the stories in ways to capture all the children's attention, regardless of their level of English proficiency. I also learned that reading at circle time is a different process than reading one to one with a child. When sharing a storybook at circle-time I found the book selected was much more effective at capturing every child's attention if the children had some prior knowledge of that book. Sometimes all this entailed was mentioning the new book as they came in to hand in the their library books. At other times I would use the one to one book sharing to go through the book with them in small groups or individually prior to reading it at circle time. Circle time reading did not have the same intimacy as the one to one which the children demanded from the adults. One to one book-sharing also allowed the level of linguistic complexity of the story to be adapted by the adult to match that of the child. I also discovered that the quieter children were much more willing to experiment with words and language in a one to one book sharing experience with me than at circle time.

The children perceived me not only as a "teacher" but as the "Book Lady". This perception, which I did not anticipate, began to reveal itself about halfway through the project when I was "playing house" with some of the children:
Jon pretended to phone me to ask me to visit again and she shouted across the room as she spoke into the phone "SUE, COME TO MY HOUSE AND BRING YOUR BOOKS." (FN Day 22, p.2.)

[Teacher JU] said "If we were to ask the kids what Sue was all about it was her books and her love of books and it was more like we were sharing something of you. I'm not even sure if they think they were the preschool books... Sue was the book lady". (Final Teachers' Conference, p.2.)

When the teacher said the library was finished [J.] said "But I want it! I want it!" Then D. asked [Teacher VI where Sue was and when VI told him that Sue couldn't be there that day he then asked "She went to buy more books?" (Final Teachers' Conference, p.5)

The "Expected" is revealed on the journey

There are reflections on the negative effects of home language loss.

Teacher VI. mentioned that Chinese teenagers are having problems talking to their parents because they[the children] don't know Chinese. They use very simple language with them like "Mom go there", "Dad do this". (FN Day 6, p.1).

[Eileen's] Grandma asked me "How are you today?" in Tagalog which I imitated and she taught me how to say "Fine" in response. She told me how she tries to speak to her grandchildren in Tagalog and even though they understand it they won't speak it. She shrugged in frustration. (FN Day 27, p.2).

Books connect children with each other.

Three year old Anna, whose home language was English, enjoyed the Indian story of The Rabbit Who Overcame Fear. She demonstrates in this quote how the children liked to take the new vocabulary and practice it with the other children.

I heard Anna explaining the new story... to someone when the preschool library was being set up. She said "Sue what was the name of the thing that fell down?" I told her "Mango" and she used the word immediately to continue explaining the story. (FN Day 24, p. 1).

I heard M. chanting Brown Bear twice today: once[while] playing with the wiggly glue and once at book time. Lam found the second Brown Bear book when he saw M.
had it and together, one who speaks Vietnamese and the other who speaks Cantonese, they went through the whole book together in English, having a great time. It was a delight to watch them. (FN Day 30, p. 1).

**Books promote a "closeness" between children and their families.**

The three teacher conferences, which were recorded on audiotape, were invaluable in providing the teachers' perspectives of events occurring in the preschool. In this example the teacher confirms that other members of the family were involved in the book-sharing. It also demonstrates that they were making use of the pictures to tell the story, just as the teachers and I had encouraged them to do.

[Teacher] VI then said (062) "... at the very beginning of the project the uncle read the story but now the uncle, some shift change or something like that and he has no more time to read the story. They all live together at the same house, Grandmom, Grandad, Mommy, Daddy, Uncle, Auntie in one house, and now the grandparents... read her the story but I think they just read her the pictures".
(Second Teachers' Conference, p. 2.)

Many of the data, including photographs (see Figure 3) and videotapes, demonstrate the physical closeness that book-sharing brings to families. The parents also confirmed not only their ability to engage their children in the books but that the children engaged their parents in the act of book-sharing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sue:</th>
<th>Did he (Dad) ... read?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pei:</td>
<td>No he just has---he not had the time. Sometime he work two job... and just one week, one day or two day he stay home...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue:</td>
<td>Yes. Did Soon Choi show him the books... when he stayed home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pei:</td>
<td>And Soon Choi teach him sing the <strong>Five Little Ducks</strong> (042)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lines 101 - 109, Final Interview.)

I tried[with the video camera] to focus on each family group and [I] noticed how close they all were around the book. On reflection I thought how traditional storytelling alone (i.e. without a book and with the story-teller in front of the group) does not provide this closeness and intimacy... But with books one can almost guarantee...
that closeness will occur by the very nature of book sharing. All the parents and their children were touching, holding, cuddling and talking as they shared the books. (This contrasted significantly with the passive gazes on the faces of the children when I showed them the video of Where’s Spot? They were silent for the most part when the TV was on). (FN Day 42, p.1.)

Some of the parents commented explicitly on the closeness they gained with their children through the books.

| Ptom: See what you do is really very, very hard work and interesting you know... it helps us[parents]gain a closeness with the kids as well. (127) |
| Lines 317-320, Final Interview. |

[Teacher] PH said that the other thing that she was happy about the project is that the parent spends time at home and [with] the book we supply. That is a good time for them to come close and break down the barrier between them because the child go to the Canadian school and the parents have to work and may worry about the job or whatever, but at least they have a book. (250). (Second Teachers' Conference, p.7.)
Figure 3 Books promote a "closeness" between children and their families
Figure 3 continued.
It is valuable to have bilingual Teachers.

Teacher PH. said "... the parents feel trust for the teachers because they speak two languages and therefore know about Canadian culture and their home culture. P. said they feel "safe" with the teachers because of this. (Second Teachers' Conference p.13.)

Sue: Was it a good idea to have someone there to explain it in Vietnamese?
KT: Yes.
(Lines 339-344. Final Interview.)

The teachers have strategies for valuing home language and culture.

It was interesting to hear [Teacher] JU say that she will leave out the lion's headdress for the children to use for the rest of the year to dance in once the teachers have introduced it [for Chinese New Year]. (FN Day 6, p 3.)

The teachers and I communicated not only verbally but through the fieldnotes and in this example I asked JU why she did not store away the props. She wrote, "A child's vocabulary for the new vocabulary may come later. By leaving the props out the child can use them and speak about them when he/she is ready/interested." (FN Day 6, p. 3 JU's written response)

When H. had difficulty understanding that he needed to give a piece [of cake] to each child before he could sit and eat his own, [Teacher] JU quickly told his mom to explain to him in their own language (Amharic-Ethiopian) what was required of him. (I thought this was another way of valuing home language in a very practical way). (FN, Day 7, p. 2.)

I heard teacher J. telling (one of the two English-only children) how to say "Hello" in Cantonese. (FN Day 23 p.1.)

[Teacher] JU went on to say that "So we can talk to them [the children] about dinosaurs in English, the parents can tell them so much more about dinosaurs in first language. They need that(233). If you think about all your English language kids here, when you speak to them you give them a lot more detail than you give your ESL
children. Well the ESL children have to be taught at home so one of the things that has to come out for encouraging home language is that I'm saying to the parents 'You[the parents are] the most important teacher at this point. (228) All we're giving is the vocabulary in English for the concepts that you really need to develop at home'. That's why by coming in and seeing what the theme is they can extend it at home. (Second Teachers' Conference, p.7.)

The transcultural nature of the books is demonstrated.

She [Sarah] talked about how fascinating it was her to learn how other cultures "Create maps of their world with stories, each place having a special story of its own" (FN Day 37, p. 1)

[James'] mom told me that he really liked this book [Abiyoyo] because it was from his Dad's country [South Africa]. (FN Day 39, p.1.)

I [Sue] am beginning to find themes that go across all cultures: rainbows, stars, fish, animals, trees, nature. . . water, babies, school, grandparents, school. (Second Teachers' Conference, p.12.)

[Teacher] PH. said she was telling me about all the different stories from the different countries having a similar "root" or origin (556). She mentioned again the story of the frog [What Made Tiddalik Laugh?] and the connection with the Vietnamese legend of the Frog. She speculated that perhaps many of the Vietnamese parents know the same story of the Vietnamese frog [God of Water]. (Second Teachers' Conference p.11.)

Sue: . . . if you were to buy a book now would you have a different way of thinking about it or looking at it?
Janine: Well kind of um—maybe think about trying to find books that are written by different people from different countries. Like, I like that idea.

(064)
(Lines 157-160. Final interview.)

. . . the story today was Tiddalik (Australia) and [Teacher] JU pointed out on the map[of the world] where Tiddalik was from and where some of the families [attending the preschool] were from.(FN day 36, p. 2.)
Parents read the books and pictures in their home language.

I showed her (the mother) the box of books and she selected Carl Goes Shopping (no written text). The baby watched closely as I told mom the story. She said "Nice book. Good story." I left the book with mom to go back to the office. When I returned she was reading the story in Cantonese to her two year old. (FN Day 22, p.2.)

Interpreter: (032) She's saying that her child really liked it [the book]. He looked at the pictures (Tingalayo) the first time and liked it but then when mom translated it into Vietnamese what the story was he really loved it.
(Lines 76-78, Final Interview with Le, My and L.)

Hong: I just learn [the story in] English and then I interpret for her Vietnamese (061)
(Line 107 Final Interview.)

Pei: I tell the story for---to him is for Cantonese, my husband tell to him in Vietnamese (020)
Sue: So the books, the book you could use in three languages?
Pei Yes.
(Lines 69-70, Final Interview.)

[Teacher] PH. said that one mother told her that she knew her son would learn English at school so she read the story in her mother [tongue] and she uses the story we supply to teach him Vietnamese and PH. said this project made her very happy.
(Second Teachers' Conference, p.8.)

Sue: Would you have liked more books in Vietnamese?
Interpreter: They didn't feel that the [written] words were important (219)... so they said with the pictures you could tell the story.
(Lines 215 - 221 Final interview with Le, My, and L.)

Parents practice English with their children.

I noticed especially how the parents chanted "Brown Bear" along with their children (at circle time). (FN DAY 35 p.1.)

[Teacher JU told me that "Today the parents said Brown Bear, Brown Bear louder than the children!!"(FN Day 36, p.2.)

... one mom said that "this (book) is too simple. I'm not learning anything from it". she said "I want more words". (Second Teachers' Conference p.12.)
The parents themselves acknowledged that the books had helped improve their English skills:

Interpreter: So they learned more English as a result of the books because they were reading the books for their children... and translating them. (086)
(Final Interview with Le, My and L.)

Sue: Would it have helped to have had some books in Vietnamese and English in the story?"
Hong: I never borrow Vietnamese books... If I don't read the English book I forgot (146)... I want to keep learning English.
(Lines 189-200 Final Interview.)

KT: Sometimes I don't know the words English then I----
Sue: Ahh You don't know the words in English?
KT: Then I look in dictionaries.(149)
(Lines 105-107, Final Interview.)

The children's bilingualism emerges

Although I had no way of objectively measuring the amount of home language the children were using in the preschool, the fieldnotes document that, apart from the first day when the children were not observed using their home language, the preschool experience did not discourage their emergent bilingualism.

Children did not use their home language to each other the first day. (FN Day 1 p.2.)

I noticed today that some of the children (Fung [Cantonese], Jon and Dang [Vietnamese]), were using their home language more to the other children, not much, but just when they wanted to explain something or ask a question. This happened most when they were putting on their coats. (FN Day 2, p. 1-2.)

Sue: I remember you [Ptom] saying that they [your children] understand it [Tagalog] but they don't speak it.
Ptom: They don't speak it... but now they sort of having fun with it like they want to know some our language like if they[hear]something 'Can you say it in Tagalog?' O.K. when we translate it in Tagalog they talk, sort of
caught it somewhere they can pronounce it. (086) (Lines 227-232, Final Interview.)

I noticed A. speaking Cantonese to [Fung] at snack time, something I had not observed her doing before. She had usually only spoken to [Soon Choi] in Cantonese. (FN, Day 21, p.1)

I spoke with some of the children very briefly at snack time and retold Time Flies about a bird in a dinosaur museum. It took me about 30 seconds to give this brief rendition of the tale. At noon library time that was the book Dang wanted. He was one of the children who listened to the story at snack time. I think again this demonstrates how important it is to discuss the books and stories with the children at any time not just because we want them to stay interested in books [but] because it gives them consistent vocabulary-grammar-sequencing models for them to imitate which is important for their language development. [It also] provides a basis to develop critical thinking and discussion skills; predicting, comparing, reasoning which are so important for learning. (FN Day 37, p 3.)

[Teacher] VI told me after the field trip that M. and Lee were talking all the time in Cantonese. They discussed all they saw in their home language. I wondered how much of the experience was enhanced for them by being able (or permitted) to do this and just how much would have been lost for them without this kind of interaction and experience sharing. (FN Day 40, p1.)

**Book-sharing increases at home.**

Appendix B shows the number of times the books were borrowed and some of the parents' and children's comments. It is included in order to demonstrate the types of responses to the two main questions I asked the children and parents when they returned the books each day. These two questions were: "How many times did you read the book?" and "Who did you read it with?". Obviously, when the children gave me a "number" it was impossible to know how accurate this was, especially since one or two of them loved to exaggerate. For example when L. was asked how many times she had read Here comes the Cat she replied, "A thousand and ten with mom, myself and D.[brother]". However, all the responses demonstrate that not only were the children beginning to use sophisticated language (for example, hyperbole), they were also learning many concepts (such as number concepts).
Also the responses clearly demonstrate that books going from the school to home gave the families increased opportunities for repeated readings of those same books and involved other family members. Even the parents who indicated at the beginning of the project that book-sharing was not an activity in which they engaged at all, found themselves sharing the books with their children.

*J's Dad said that he had read the book "a few times". This is a change from the beginning[ of the project] when he said he had no time to read the books with his son.*

(FN, Day 28, p.1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpreter:</th>
<th>The fact that they wanted to have their books with them and wanted to read the books was very different than what it had been before they started on the project. (097)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Lines 126-128 Final interview with Le, My, and L.)</td>
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</table>

| Sue: | So you found you were reading about the same number of books [at the end of the project as in the beginning]. |
| Janine: | Uh-huh. Maybe a little bit more sometimes because he would bring the book home and he'd say "Read it to me" you know... He'd want me to read it over and over so he could say he read it a lot of times |
| (056) |
| (Lines 141-146 Final interview.) |

| Interpreter: | Before you [Sue] open your library she [mom] went to [local library] |
| KT: | Yes. Two times a week" |
| Interpreter: | And then now you open your library she's everyday she read a book for children... everyday. |
| (Lines 218-228. Final Interview.) |

| Sue: | ... were you reading books more...? |
| Ann: | More time is good. |
| Sue: | You spent more time... reading books? |
| Ann: | Yes. |
| (Lines 96-101, Final Interview.) |
Children and their parents reach the mythical level of the books and find lessons to learn from them.

At the end of the morning I told Fung about [her] Dad's predicament with the fishing [that he didn't catch any]. Fung said 'The turtle will have to help him find the fish. GO LOOK OVER THERE!' (These were the exact words in the story of Nanabosho. It is about a turtle, before turtles had shells, who helps a Native fisherman to find fish by directing him to a different part of the river. In return for the turtle's help the man picks up a rock and paints it for the turtle. He then teaches the turtle to pull his head and legs in when he is in danger). I was astounded that Fung could take a story and use it in a problem-solving context like this. (FN Day 37,p. 3.)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sue: Do you think your children learned anything from the stories? (Interpreter explains what I said to the parents in Vietnamese and interprets the parent's response)</th>
<th>Interpreter: So her child with the Rainbow Fish really liked the story and asked well why did the fish not feel lonely and then why did he give out his stripes to the other fish---</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue: Uh-huh. Interpreter: ---and so he understood about feeling lonely and sharing the stripes---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue: About sharing ---the scales. Interpreter: Oh scales? Sue: It was scales. Yes. The Rainbow Fish had beautiful scales and none of the other fish had them---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter: Oh. Sue: . . . Did Dang learn anything?&quot; Interpreter (076) Just about how much he really liked the book--- . . . and wanted to bring it everywhere with him and then wanted to know more about the story. (Lines 95-113 Final interview with Le, My, and L.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Ptom: Sometimes they [the children] get emotional because sometimes when they see in the picture, somebody got hurt then they get to feel like they also get hurt too. Sue: Yes. Ptom: Emotional, especially sharing things--- Sue: Uh-huh Ptom: They get to know what is sharing looks like and feels like and want to be---and how it feels to be left alone---sometimes left out that kind of thing. (022) (Lines 81-87 Final Interview.) |
Sarah: . . . I'm beginning to think that maybe I should spend a bit more money on really quality books because the quality of the stories---it's just I like that myth you know (083). . . and a lot of ones you get cheaper aren't so much myth but kind of watered-down fairy tales that have lost that sort of essence. (Lines 174-179, Final Interview.)

Families with English as their home language feel supported too.

Sue: Why do you think he liked that one (The Rainbow Goblins) particularly?
Janine I think it was an imagination kind of one and it was really colourful pictures and he likes pictures and then he paints, he kind of uses the colours and things.
Sue And so it kind of transferred right into his artwork?
Janine Yes.
(Lines 52-56. Final Interview.)

The books provide a bridge between home and school.

[Teacher] PH. said that she felt the project gave the parents and teachers a chance to be ' . . . close together' (090) (Second Teacher's Conference, p.3.)

Sue What did you especially like about this project?
Janine: Well I really liked the idea of the children---of knowing what he was reading at school---and it's very hard to get any information out of him about the preschool so I felt it was like a bridge and something that by the way, we could talk about what he was doing in the preschool through the books he was reading. (Lines 168-176. Final Interview.)

At story sharing time even J's Dad who has told me in the past that he has no time to read, listened while [Teacher] PH and I both told him and J. the story together. This worked well because PH didn't know the story and so she interpreted my words as I spoke them. It was a very good way to do it. [J's Dad] along with J. laughed as we went through it. They took it home. (FN Day 25, p. 2)
The children learn English and develop concepts through the books.

Dang becomes a book critic

On May 18, 1995 more video recording of the project took place. In one excerpt Dang returns his book and when asked why he wants to rate the book with a sad face he replies "It's not funny". Then he says "Know what book I like?" He goes over to the other books and gets Tingalayo I begin to sing the song "Tingalyo, come little donkey come" and Dang says "Yeah it's funny."

Later on in June when he returned the Rainbow Goblins which his mom had chosen to take home on Parent's Book Day, when he said "My Mommy like this one. The drawings so good" I made a comment in the fieldnotes:

Dang’s ability to express something like this in English, keeping in mind that his mom speaks Vietnamese to him at home and he is only in preschool two mornings a week. . is remarkable because he can express real ideas and concepts, not just social language. (FN Day 43, p.1.)

Lam discovers the concept of "SAME"

At snack time I found two copies of The Carrot Seed (one a board book and the other a paperback) and two copies of Here Comes the Cat (one hard cover with just the shadow of the cat on the front and the other a paperback). The children were really interested as we compared the two versions of each story. They even noticed the difference in the colour of the carrot (one was orange and the other dark pink). Then we got into a discussion about what was dark and what was light pink and we looked at the cup baskets and compared them and some of the children noticed the colours on their own clothing.

As a spin-off (I believe), Lam, when it came time for him to choose a book, spent a long time picking up the school [copy] of the book and then the same book in a bag, running over to me and asking "Same?" I would reply "Yes Lam you are right, they are the same". Later instead of asking me, he would just pick up the two books and state "SAME" as if he had truly discovered the meaning of the word and concept. (FN Day 38, p2)
D. Learns about authors and illustrators

I also read *Rainbow Goblins* (again at their request) and they all joined in with shouting out the colours as the goblins drank them. When I pointed to the self-portrait of the author at the end of the books and asked the children who they thought he was D. remembered and said "The man who wrote the words". "And---?" I said. "Draw the pictures" he added. I added that the story came from Italy. (FN Day 44, p.1.)

There are many examples of emerging literacy.

Twice a day the children watched me writing their names and the date, drawing happy faces if the children and parents liked the book or sad faces if their comments were negative. The children also watched while I wrote the number of times they had read the books. Many of them wanted to do this themselves and they insisted on either writing their names, writing the number of times they read the book or simply drawing a happy face. Out of the 332 faces drawn there were only five "sad" faces. One of these was because Anna's mother had chosen *Caps For Sale* and Anna had not wanted that particular book. "I didn't like it because I didn't choose it. Mom liked it." were her comments (library card, June, 13, 1995) Another sad face was recorded by Dang who thought one book, a version of the *Three Little Pigs*, was "not funny" (library card comments, May 13, 1995) The third sad face was recorded by Soon Choi's mother who did not like the pictures in *Goodnight Moon*. The fourth sad face was recorded by James' mother who thought the morals in *The Best of Friends*, a story from India, were too explicit (James' however, had recorded a happy face for this book). The fifth sad face was recorded by one child who first drew a happy face for the book and then, wanted to draw a sad face: "I put a sad face because my mom hit me and is mad with me all the time." (Library card comments, May 9, 1995). In this example a four year old was able to communicate her own feelings through a preliteracy activity. There were numerous other examples of the children's emerging awareness of the significance and importance of the printed words as the following examples demonstrate:
...and later on she [Eileen] wanted to watch me write my notes. I was out in the playdough room and she said "I got paper at home. Paper is for writing. Writing is for colouring". (FN DAY 10, p.2.)

I was clearing up the books and finishing my notes and they [Thanh and Jon] asked to help. I reached for a pencil and Jon asked me what the journals were. Thanh looked at the writing on one and said "Are these letters?" Both children seemed so interested to get a pen like me and write that I thought it was the perfect "teachable moment." To me it seemed that here were these two children totally engaged in an experience of books and literacy and asking for the opportunity to expand on it by writing for themselves. I gave them pens and Thanh said "I can write my mom's name" and she did. Then Thanh said "Write my brother's name," and he spelled it out for me. Jon copied onto her paper too. Then I wrote the ABC to Z while we sang the ABC song. I was amazed at how well both children were writing! (FN, Day 27, pp. 1-2.)

In the preschool Jennifer (who has Igorot as her home language) brought me a book to read for her. I said to her, noticing the two different languages in the book. . . "Oh this book is in English and---" "Chinese" Jennifer finished the sentence for me. I think this demonstrates that some of the children are becoming very aware of differences in text and it's relationship to the spoken word. (FN Day 37, p 2.)

Parents connect transculturally with each other through
the culture of books

Sarah: I mean I guess it was interesting to me because I didn't know what the scope[of the project] was... or what the plan really was in the beginning. and (laughs) I don't know if I understand that much more[now] but it was just a really vital, lively thing to do you know... and to have all those people involved with a similar pool of books.---That's really neat because we're not all off in our own little cubby holes reading whatever, you know---(111)

Sue: So you found it connected parents as well as---

Sarah: Yes

Sue: ---parents and children?

Sarah: Yes and I found that having one pool [of books] gives us sort of like, it's more of a fertile learning situation because we have similar things to exchange... It's sort of like that's what I find difficult communicating across cultures is that we have different background experiences and cultural expectations so having this similar pool of books gives us some kind of mutual culture. (117) . . .
You know something we [parents] can come together on.  
(Lines 213-235. Final Interview.)

*She [Sarah] said that it was wonderful for her to see the same books in the preschool going home with the children and then noticing the same books being read by other parents in the Neighbourhood House or just in the community in general.  
(FN Day 37, p. 1.)*

**The parents feel positive about the project.**

The parents became very involved in the project too and some considered the book-sharing to be just part of their children's preschool experience:

*[Teacher] VI then added "Not so many Chinese parents came and told me anything about the library or the books but I can tell they are happy, they are happy to have the books, to have the library but they just feel that it's just a storybook but I don't think they think about your project." (Second Teachers' Conference, p.3.)*

Interpreter:  ... They'd like to thank you [Sue] because they really enjoyed seeing their children learn new things and become interested in new things and learn the stories (445).

(Lines 340-341 Final interview with Le, My, and L.)

Janine:  I think it's a great idea. I hope that they keep doing it next year because I really liked the idea (076). And I think, we do go to the library and it did make him excited about books---.

(Lines 186-188, Final Interview.)

Sue:  Did you like taking the books home?  
Hong:  Yes I did.  
Sue:  Why?  
Hong:  I want to learn more and my children learn more. (laughs) (115)

(Lines 162-165 Final Interview.)

Interpreter:  She said the project very good and keep going (324)

(Line 395. Final Interview with KT.)

Ptom:  ... when you're having fun like the two little pigs or the three little horse and then "Oh, that's not the right word it's the three little pigs"---
... so it means the kids are listening more carefully... they just pretend they're listening but they don't... but this sort of thing they really listen... because they
Conversations with the Children Tell their own Stories

This chapter would not be complete without giving an impression of the interactions which I experienced with the children every day during the library signing in and out process.

The quotes which follow are examples of only two of the many hundreds of interactions which took place over the six months. They were audiotaped on the last day of the preschool library, 22 June, 1996 and demonstrate the richness of the conversations and the non conscious learning which took place.

James returns his book  (i.72)

(Soon Choi shouts "I got it!" He found James' card . . . for him.)
James: (whispered) Happy, happy, happy, happy.
Sue: Happy, happy, happy, happy?
James: Yes (whispered)
Sue: That's a lot of happys. O.K. and why did you like that one?
(In the background Jennifer notices the picture coming off one of the[library] cards).
Jennifer: Have to glue this. Have to glue this one. Sue, Sue!
Sue to James: You like the T-rex?
Sue to Jennifer: Yes I know it's broken
Sue to James: O.K. and how many times did you look at that one?
Jennifer: Sue we have to glue this
James: (can't hear him on tape)
Sue (repeats James' comment)
Twice and twice together. Did you like the drawings in it?
Jennifer: Sue oh Sue! Sue!! You know this has to get glued!

D. just hanging out around the books(105)

Sue: Oh here's Jennifer. Why don't you give that (fruit for snack) to [Teacher]VI?
D. (who had been looking at all the [library] cards).
Somebody choose the fish. The boy choose the fish.

Sue: Which fish book?
D: The long fish.
Sue: The long fish? You mean *The Little Boy and The Big Fish*? Do you mean that one?
D: No.
Sue: Which one? Do you mean the story?
D: No the fish give other people the thing.
Sue: The fish gave the people the---?
D: Can I borrow it?
Sue: Oh I see. The tuna fish. [Watercress Tuna and the Children of Champion Street]
D: Yes, I choose that.
Sue: Did you like that one? Yes it's kind of funny. It's like a magic tuna and he has all the different things coming out of his mouth---and then they had a party didn't they?
D: Yes they play in the night.
Sue: Yes they were dancing in the night time. Wow!
D: I--know.
Sue: You know that story?
D: Yes.
Sue: Wow!
D: I wish you have nothing.
Sue: You wish I had nothing? From the book?
D: Yes.
Sue: What would you wish for if you had something coming out of the tuna?
D: I wish I could fly up the sky.
Sue: You wish you could fly up to the sky?
D: Yes
Sue: Wow!
D: And I can come back.
Sue: And you can come back like Starman [The Night Call] in his boat?
D: No.
Sue: No? Just flying?
D: Yes.
Sue: All by yourself?
D: Fly like—like a bird.

I have in this chapter, striven to give an impression of the many different voices that expressed feelings and opinions about the books and stories in this project. The quotes represent only a small portion of the many comments and conversations that were collected and the hundreds more which were not documented. It was difficult to sift through,
categorize and select these few quotes and create a final document without it seeming somehow "unfinished" or "incomplete": There was a sense that, by omission, a voice might not be heard. For the researcher though, who may hold the ideal that all voices should be heard equally, it is an ideal that is impossible to realize given the limitations of structure, time and resources.

The claims drawn from the analysis of the data in this chapter are discussed in further detail in the conclusions in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

This research project was initiated in order to answer questions which arose specifically from the field of speech-language pathology. The questions related to issues of providing culturally sensitive assessment and early intervention practices in relation to young emergent bilingual children with communication disorders in Vancouver. The search for answers to these original questions was an experience for the researcher which was likened to a journey and which, using the metaphor of The Language Mountain, resulted in findings which represented the researcher's understandings and interpretations of local patterns of language use occurring in families whose home language was other than English.

The literature about language and bilingualism crosses many disciplines and indicated that although there were many theories of language development, the theories were diverse. There was limited knowledge however, about how children learn or do not learn the language of their parents. The paucity of knowledge about the process of bilingual development in preschool children was even more evident within the Canadian context. The literature did nevertheless, produce evidence which suggested that if speech-language pathologists are to provide appropriate advice to minority-language families, then greater understanding about the nature of patterns of language use which exist within those families, is critical.

The questions which were originally posed were: firstly, whether a speech-language pathologist could gather information about minority-families' language use locally; secondly what process should be designed to capture that information; and, thirdly, whether the information gathered would lead towards a greater understanding of local patterns of language use which could contribute to knowledge in the field.

In this chapter, answers to those questions are discussed through the findings under four main areas; the Families, the Process, the Books, and the Data. Finally some
suggestions are made for practitioners working in similar ethnolinguistically diverse environments within the field of early education and early intervention.

The Families

The Families were Central to the Research

Given that the belief in the importance of the family in the development of the young child is held as a tenet of best practice in my work as a speech-language pathologist, it was a belief that was also held central to this study. This perspective was significant in guiding the design, not only of the semiotic model used as a basis for the research, but also in the choice of research methods. It helped shaped decisions on where to locate the research and who to engage in the research process. The idea of the preschool library emerged from this same notion of families as being central. Although the library was designed as a way for the researcher to gather information, equal importance was given to promote, if possible, positive outcomes for all the participants, especially the children and families.

The acknowledgment of the families' pivotal role continued throughout the study to the final day when a potluck lunch was organized to celebrate the Preschool Library and to present copies of a video of the preschool children taken at various times during the six months of the study, to each of the families. A copy of What Made Tiddalik Laugh was presented to each of the children at this time also to acknowledge their participation in the study too.

Involving Parents in the Preschool

In the early stages of the project, it was difficult always to arrange the preschool day so that all the parents would have some time to share the books with their children and learn the stories. We thought that it might be easier for the parents to learn about some of the books by listening with their children to the stories at circle time, which was usually mid-way
through the morning program. Following discussion with the teachers in April, Judy suggested that circle time moved to 11.30 a.m. until noon, so as to accommodate the parents' schedules. The outcome of this simple change of schedule facilitated more parental participation.

Another effective strategy which was useful to encourage parental involvement was to show parents one or two books at the time their children were returning their books to the library each morning, or shortly after the children had gone into the preschool. Many times I sat with individual parents or small groups of parents, in the comfortable waiting area outside the preschool, showing them a new book, explaining a story or reading a story to the younger siblings. This situation seemed to be a non-threatening setting for the families. Sometimes there were opportunities to sit with the parents downstairs on the big couch. Talking with them by the fire was a natural, social setting in which we could learn together.

**Interpreters**

Discovering the challenges arising through the use of interpreters (discussed in Chapter Three) was significant. By both experiencing those difficulties and stating them, I hope to have made evident the reality that exists in this community. Resources are limited there are communication difficulties because parents are from diverse cultures and still involved in the process of learning the majority language. Early childhood educators too comment that "The greatest challenge is to communicate with parents in their native language and to transmit the centre goals and philosophy to them." (Bernhard et al. 1995. p. 19).

If these challenges of limited resources and limited communication are to be addressed, then we need to look beyond the apparently simple and perhaps expensive solutions, such as hiring interpreters. By involving parents as active participants in the preschool programs we can begin to remove those barriers because we will be able to use the activities of the preschool as a form of communication. By creating more shared experiences through this involvement, we will be able to pool, not just the teachers' resources and
knowledge, but also those of the families. The cycle of language barriers preventing parents taking part in the program and thus creating more barriers might then be broken.

**The Process**

**Gathering Local Knowledge: Field Worker as Researcher**

The findings from the study demonstrated that it was possible for me, a speech-language pathologist working in the location of the study for many years, to gather local information about patterns of home language and majority language use operating within families who have preschool children.

My prior knowledge about the area of the city in which the study was located proved to be an asset for reasons discussed below. Without this prior knowledge, I believe it would have been more difficult to obtain sufficient resources for the study's implementation. For example, because I worked for the local Health Department, I knew how to quickly access interpreters through the volunteer department. I was also familiar with the many daycares and preschools in the area which allowed me to make comparative decisions about the criteria for selection of the research site.

Most significant in producing the many positive outcomes of this study, which are discussed later, was the presence of Judy, both friend and colleague, who was the supervisor of the preschool. Her collaboration and support was invaluable to me during this research. She briefed me about the needs of the families and provided relevant background information about the preschool program. She also made me aware of the philosophy of the Neighbourhood House Association, described in Chapter Three. This information was important in facilitating the acceptance of the proposal by the director of the House. That same philosophy helped shape the research design. Judy was an advocate for the project from the beginning, both to the teachers and to the director of the Neighbourhood House. Judy's advocacy created an atmosphere of trust for all the participants and a sense of
teamwork with the teachers. Judy also collaborated with me in the determination of the
criteria for the types of children's books chosen for the Preschool Library. Also, my many
discussions with her about the study resulted in her making a decision to employ bilingual
teachers. These teachers were an invaluable resource, not only because they could explain
the project to the Cantonese and Vietnamese parents in their own languages, but they could
also interpret many of the stories for the families when necessary. This reduced the need for
additional interpreters.

I discovered that my understanding of the interests of young children and the ways in
which they communicate was another asset that my prior knowledge brought to the study.
This understanding has developed through many years of working one-to-one, and in small
and large group settings with preschool children and their parents, often in daycares or
preschools. This previous experience facilitated the ease in which both the children and I
communicated with each other, and my understanding of both children and childcare
facilities also allowed me to adapt easily and comfortably to the preschool milieu. The
implications of this finding for future research is that, should this research study be
replicated, then a high priority must be given to finding researchers who have experience in
working closely with children and their families, preferably within early childhood settings.

Research Stance

This project demonstrated that although I initially defined my research stance as a
participant observer, and an "immersed field worker" (Roman 1993 p. 283), my role evolved
as the research progressed so that, upon reflection, my role might be more aptly described as
"bricoleur". Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.2.) use this term bricoleur and cite Levi-Strauss'

Certainly I found I needed to be adept at performing a lot of different tasks. These
tasks included helping the teachers to prepare artwork, selecting and purchasing children's
picture books, interviewing, transcribing audio tapes, operating video cameras, editing
videotapes, writing field notes, reading stories, arranging teacher's conferences, making signs for the preschool, preparing volunteer interpreters, and counting to ten in Tagalog, Mandarin, Croatian, Cantonese, Igorot, Tamil, Sinhalese and Vietnamese. Knowing phonetics, I was able to write the words down as they sounded which helped in me to recall them at other times. My role also evolved into the "Fish Story-Teller" at the local festival.

Denzin and Lincoln further describe the *bricoleur* as a person who:

... understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those people of the study. The *bricoleur* knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications... The product of the *bricoleur*’s labor is a *bricolage*, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under study. (1994, p.3)

This paper or "creation" has been written in a way as to represent my, the *bricoleur*’s, images, understanding and interpretations of the phenomenon under study and to create a means by which the voices of the participants can be heard.

**Review of the semiotic model for research design**

By exposing children and their parents to books it was speculated that children and parents would develop a medium for continued communication maintenance. If children could become close to their parents through the physical act of book sharing then other learning, including language learning with their parents would be enabled.

The findings from this study suggest however, that the movement from the first order system, the literal plane, to second order system or mythical plane, shown in Figure 4, is not necessarily unidirectional. In this study this movement between systems might be better described as being *bi-directional*. The evidence for this stems from the observation that the children's interest in the books initially was not because it brought them closer to their parents, at least not at the beginning of the project. They simply appeared to enjoy the books because the teachers aroused their interest in them. However, the children's passion for the
books was reinforced possibly because the children learned very early on that whenever they took a book home it resulted in more time spent with their parents demonstrated by the increase in book-sharing at home. By having a positive experience with their parents through the books, whenever the children subsequently returned a book it seemed that they were ever eager to repeat the experience. Therefore, in reviewing the semiotic model for this research design a two-way arrow has been added between the boxes showing first and second order semiological systems. It indicates the potential bidirectionality of the process which seemed to be operating in this study.

![Semiotic Model](image)

**Figure 4. The Semiotic Model for Research Design, Revised.**

It is impossible to answer whether the intervention setting itself promoted maintenance of the home language between parents and their children because of the other variables which also aimed to promote language maintenance. However, the claim can be
made that using books written in English did not interfere in this process since the children who were using home language at the beginning of the study continued to use home language at the end of the six months.

The Potential of "Requisite Variety"

Only variety can destroy variety
(Beer, 1996, p.280)

One of the challenges encountered by many practitioners in the field of early childhood education and intervention is how to cope equitably with diversity in the face of dwindling resources to support our work. Translated materials are expensive. Books in other languages are not readily available to most parents. One possible solution to this can be found in the field of cybernetics called Requisite Variety.

The Law of Requisite Variety states that whenever a "manager" has to cope with diversity, there has to be created a balance between homogeneity and diversity. There needs to be sufficient diversity, that is requisite variety, to manage diversity, but not at a one-to-one correlation. Nature is an example. Nature is not totally diverse. It is clustered into species and types.

Requisite variety must be there: it does not have to exist on the raw count of items, but the purposive and systematic assemblage that is identified as a system must be capable of proliferating requisite variety. Otherwise the system goes out of control. (Beer, 1966, p. 280)

Beer cites as an example of requisite variety a police officer trying to control a traffic jam through a network of roads. The traffic does not move because the police officer cannot provide the requisite variety. The jam clears because the motorists themselves have reduced the variety or diversity in their efforts to detour around the traffic jam.

This model of a Preschool Library seems to be another example of the law of requisite variety in action. I discussed earlier in this paper the reasons why it was impossible
to provide enough books for the Preschool Library, which would represent languages of all the families (the multicultural model). It would have been possible for some books to be obtained that had texts in a few of the languages such as Cantonese and Vietnamese. However, books with texts in some of the less common languages, or those with no written equivalent, such as Igorot and some Native North American languages would have been impossible to obtain. Translations of the books would have cost money and time. Had the Preschool Library comprised of books with texts representing only a few of the families' languages, it would have created a situation of inequity. Instead, the transcultural approach to the design of Preschool Library created *requisite variety* to meet the diversity without destroying the diversity. That is, there was sufficient diversity of books and strategies for using the books to meet the needs of the wider diversity presented by the families.

**The Books**

**Criteria for Book Selection**

All of the criteria determined at the beginning of the project for book selection, and italicized and underlined throughout the discussion in this section, were helpful in selecting appropriate books for this particular study. The original criteria are reviewed here and the relevance of the criteria to the outcome of the study discussed.

It was important to have *two copies of each book* so that one copy was simultaneously available to the preschool children in the classroom and also to the children in the other classes. The second copy of the book was kept separately in the large Preschool Library box and could be borrowed by the families and taken home. Not all the books were introduced at the beginning of the project in order to give time for the teachers to present each book, whether at circle time with or without the parents present, or to small groups of children at other times. Through this strategy the children became familiar with the story before it was added to the Preschool Library. Because each new book was introduced by the teachers with enthusiasm and excitement, the children too became enthusiastic and excited
about the new books. Frequently, the new book was the one that the children wanted to borrow first, when it was time for them to take a book home.

Those books which had pictures which were clear and explicit enough to be "read" without having to rely on the text for interpretation were popular with all the families, whatever their level of language proficiency. The popularity of these picture books with the children was, I believe, because the children could "read the pictures" independently. By using the pictures alone, the children were able to follow their sequence and meaning without missing too many details. *Where's Spot?* and *Here Comes the Cat* were good examples of these types of books.

The complexity of the language in the text ranged from no text at all in books such as *Time Flies*, through books such as *Here Comes the Cat* with the same phrase repeated on every page, to *Rainbow Goblins* which comprised of long complex sentences and uncommon vocabulary. This wide range of text supported both the children's language development as they moved from single words to simple phrases. For example, one boy who spoke Vietnamese enjoyed reading *Here Comes the Cat* at the beginning of the project. He would often repeat the phrase on each page, filtered through the syntactic structures of his interlanguage:

"Heres Come the Cat" he consistently said, as each page was turned.

However, as his language progressed these simple phrases challenged him no longer and he insisted on listening to more complex stories. The parents too could find levels of text which suited their needs.

The teachers and I found that most of the stories could be condensed. The main factor for 'condensibility' lay not in the book but in our own ability to shorten the story while still maintaining its essential elements. This took practice but it was a useful skill when at times the teachers needed to explain a story quickly to a parent. I found this to be the case too,

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16 The term *interlanguage* is used to describe "a language which integrates aspects of first and second language used by a second-language learner while learning a second language." (Garcia and Baker, 1995, p. xv).
when, for example, a number of children all wanted stories read to them and I had only a short time to do so before the next activity.

The original criteria stated that "the books should be developmentally appropriate". This is one criteria that I think I would restate to say that the books should reflect the interests of preschool children. I suggest this change because not all books which were written for this age group were popular with the children. The books which had photographs in them depicting everyday activities of children such as jumping in puddles or playing on a swing, which were more documentary than narrative, did not seem to interest them. The only books with photographs which were popular were those depicting babies or animals.

The language of the books was very important in capturing the children's attention and interest, especially in the early stages of the project when many of the children had little English. The books which had rhythmic words and phrases, a core vocabulary and lots of repetition, in my opinion, were essential to have in a library such as this because of the consistent patterns of language which the children could practice. Books like Brown Bear, Here Comes the Cat, Freight Train, as well as the three most popular song books, Five Little Ducks, The Wheels on the Bus and Tingalayo were consistent favourites of the children at the start of the project.

The stories from other cultures and countries were acknowledged and appreciated by the parents and provided a means of implicitly honoring and respecting other cultures and languages by explicitly stating from which countries the stories originated. However, because the stories from other countries were mixed in with the regular preschool books it afforded an opportunity to observe children's preferences over the broader range of books, which is how the Where's Spot? found its way into the final rating.

One other finding was that as the teachers and I became more familiar with books from other countries, we discovered themes or topics that seemed to be common to many cultures. These themes included fish, frogs, stars, rainbows, babies, and water. The themes
were not immediately apparent to us. It was only by reading the books and stories from other countries over time, that these themes were recognized.

It was also interesting to discover that a number of books which I thought were perhaps Canadian or American in origin, unexpectedly turned out to be from other countries. This was true of both *The Rainbow Fish*, *The Little Boy and the Big Fish*, both from Switzerland, and *Gorilla* which is from Belgium. This resulted in a larger selection of books from other countries than originally planned.

There will be critics who might argue that the examples of children's books cited here do not truly represent the "culture" of the country from which they originate and therefore cannot be considered as presenting information which could be interpreted as 'transcultural.' However, my answer to this criticism is that, to varying degrees either explicitly or implicitly, a book from another country introduces the reader to different perspectives of the world, different ways of describing things, and different values and attitudes. One example of this difference of perspective is demonstrated through the artwork of Russian artist, Vladimir Vagin, in the book *Here Comes the Cat*. One parent said, as I recorded in the fieldnotes on day 24, *that she had never seen a Russian book before and commented on how the artist's perceptions of the world were different (from our Western perspective). (p.1).*

Certainly Vagin's mice were longer and leaner than the round, cuddly versions commonly depicted in children's books in Canada. This is only one example of the subtle ways books can expose families to other world views. The teachers and I always made a point of discussing where the books came from and we showed the children where the country was located on a big map in the preschool. This led to discussions about where parents were from and where grandparents lived. It was exciting to observe the children enthusiastically engaging in these discussions.

So, while many of the 'transcultural' books may not explicitly depict the culture or country from which they originated, this was not the original intention. The intention which was realized, was that the books from other countries provide a framework for discussion.
about other countries with the children. It was also a way to implicitly honor and respect all cultures equally. The books from other countries also, unexpectedly, revealed themes and symbols which occur in many cultures around the world.

The *artwork was important* both for capturing the interest of the adults reading them, especially for me, since I had to read them over and over again with the children. It is difficult to be precise about how many books I read to children in that six month period but estimating a minimum of 20 books throughout each morning over the 48 days is approximately 960 readings. This estimate could be higher because sometimes the children insisted that I read the same story many times. Having had this depth of experience I would certainly agree with Cullinan (1989) who says that books should be interesting enough to be enjoyed by the adult who is sharing them. Good artwork certainly contributes to this interest.

One of the original criteria was that the pictures should be of high quality and not "cartoon-like." However, the most popular book, that is the one borrowed most frequently and rated as favourite by the children was *Where's Spot?* This story was about a puppy playfully hiding from his mother. It was one of the preschool books which was not from another culture, although certainly the theme of animals and the mother-child dyad seems to cross many cultures. The pictures in the book were cartoon-like. However, the book did meet three of the original criteria: firstly, the main elements of the story could be gleaned from the pictures alone and secondly the words were repetitive and the phrases had consistent syntactic forms with a core vocabulary. For example on most pages the mother dog asked questions such as "Is he behind the door?" "Is he under the bed?" in answer to which the children loved to shout "No!" The children could interact with the book by lifting the flaps to find the puppy Spot. *Where's Spot* was enjoyed by all the children, no matter what stage their language development had reached.
**The Children's Book Preferences**

As a way of obtaining information about the popularity of individual books as rated by the children, all the library cards on the final day of the library, were spread out over the floor and the children instructed to put a happy face sticker on the one book they liked the best. *Where's Spot?* received three stickers, *Rainbow Fish* and *Raven* received two stickers each and the books which received one sticker each were: *I Can Blink, Here Comes the Cat, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do you See, Goodnight Moon, The Best of Friends, The Wheels on the Bus, Tingalayo* and *Five Little Ducks*.

On Day 46 of the study, prior to the happy face poll, the children had also taken part in a letter writing activity to thank the Finning company for donating the money to buy the books. In this task they were asked to name their three most favourite books which I wrote down on a prepared note. A final tally of the books named by the children showed that *Rainbow Fish* and *Rainbow Goblins* tied with *Where's Spot?* as the most frequently named books\(^{17}\). This happened in the same week in which *rainbows* had been the theme for the preschool. In the fieldnotes that day I made a comment on the potential power of linking themes and children's book preferences. On Day 38 I also made an observation, recorded in the fieldnotes, that books with a school theme were very popular. When I discussed this with the teachers, I discovered that the children had selected these books during the same week that some of the parents were registering their children for kindergarten which was to start the following September. In the fieldnotes I speculated whether the children chose these particular books that day in order alleviate feelings of anxiety they may have had about going to the "big" school. Peseschkian (1986, p.27) in his work in the field of psychotherapy, describes those stories which project the needs of the listener onto the story, as providing a *mirror function* for the listener. There were many similar examples of instances when a book or story seemed to meet the emotional needs of the children. One such example was Lee,

\(^{17}\)Out of 15 children who participated in the letter-writing activity, 6 named Rainbow Fish, 4 named Rainbow Fish and Rainbow Goblins and 5 named Rainbow Goblins. A total of 7 children named books with a rainbow theme.
who had difficulty separating from her mother in January and cried nearly every day. Her favourite book, which was also a song book, was the Wheels on the Bus, and we had shared this many times. On day fifteen I made the following note

_Earlier in the morning I noticed [Lee] crying a great deal. . . . I drew a bus with all the babies on [it] (the other children were telling me what to [draw] on the bus, wheels, windows, doors etc.). When we started to sing "The Wheels on the Bus" and all the babies crying WAA! WAA! WAA! Lee began laughing._

(FN Day 15, p.1)

These findings suggest that children can develop strong preferences for certain books and that these preferences can be influenced by various factors such as the creation of new contextual and theme related links to the books or changes in the emotional needs of the child which may create a link to books which reflect their emotional needs at any given time.

Another significant finding was in regard to the length of time the children had access to the books. Almost sixty books were made available to the children over the six months that the preschool library operated and these books were shared with the children many times by the teachers and the parents. This pool of books remained the same, except for the addition of a few new ones over the same period. I observed that whenever teachers borrowed different books from the local library related to a particular theme or project, the children did not show the same level of interest in the outside library books as they did for the books in their own Preschool Library. These findings suggest that perhaps children need books to be accessible to them over a much longer period than is usually allowed by libraries, if the children are to develop their strong attachments to and preferences for individual books. For, as Pawl states:

_When books come into one's life in the context of human warmth, nurturance, and relevance to one's own interests and needs they maintain this quality forever. It is not only the characters in the book that engage our shared humanness — the book itself becomes a companion._ (Pawl 1991, p.9).
The Data

Analysis of the data in Chapter 5 generated a number of claims about the study which will be discussed in further detail here. These claims have been reorganized and underlined in the following section.

It was anticipated that there would be comments made by participants which reflected the negative effects of home language loss. However, the number of these comments were relatively few perhaps because the children were still young and the families had not yet experienced any barriers to communication with their children. Also many of the parents knew the value of home language maintenance and had already taken steps to ensure their children continue to speak the home language.

The books connected children with each other. This was demonstrated every day whenever the children sat down and shared books with one another. Even children with different home languages and little English enjoyed chanting the words in English together.

The nature of book-sharing promoted a physical closeness between all parents and their children, regardless of their home language or cultural background. This was frequently demonstrated throughout the project, whenever a parent sat down to share a book with their child in their arms.

I did not anticipate the many times the words pride and embarrassment were used in my notes to describe the feelings of participants in relation to language use. This indicated that language is attached to people at deep and emotional levels.

I had also not anticipated how knowledgeable the children would become about languages even though their perceptions were inaccurate at times. They began to use the names for languages and one mother, whose home language was English, told me that her daughter had started to imitate the intonation of the Cantonese-speaking children in her play with words.
Although I had anticipated that the children would probably enjoy the books, I was unprepared for their unrestrained enthusiasm and passion for the books. They learned the routine of the library very quickly and at sign-out time the teachers had to literally hold them back and let only four at a time come to chose books or fights would ensue over who wanted which book.

It was intriguing to observe the way certain book became more "special" than others to some of the children and how the children expressed this. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, one book became "special" to a child because it was from his father's country. A different book was so special to another child that she pretended the fish on her T-shirt was the fish in the story. Another child hid his book to be sure no-one else would borrow it.

Alongside the children's passion for the books evolved their ability to handle and take care of the books. The evidence for this was demonstrated by the fact that not one book was lost and by the way the children showed their concern if a book was ripped, which they often helped to repair. They showed concern if they even misplaced the plastic bag in which the book was kept. It was as if the children saw the plastic bags somehow as part of the books themselves. Even the library cards became things to care about and frequently the children would inform me whenever a picture was becoming unglued and would offer their help to fix them.

Many of the parents at various times during the study made comments about the books or showed in various ways that they appreciated the books and often commented positively upon the artwork, the colours or design of the books. Their appreciation of the books and the artwork in them helped, I believe, to transmit positive feelings about the books to their children.

The value of having bilingual teachers is discussed elsewhere. Having bilingual teachers participating and it was one way to demonstrate to the families that other languages were valued. The teachers commented that some parents did not want them to use their first
language with their children because it might hinder the children's ability to speak English. However, in these few cases the teachers explained to the parents the value of bilingualism and how their children were quite able to learn two or more languages. Some of the other comments made by the supervisor, Judy, centered around the level of English proficiency of the teachers, and she commented that it would be important to ensure that the bilingual teachers could also provide the children with good models of English.

The fact that the teachers already had strategies for valuing home language enhanced the project because it meant that we, as a team, did not have to invent too many new ones. Strategies such as counting in different languages, teaching social greetings in other languages, showing the children texts in other languages, having taped stories and books in other languages, musical instruments from other countries, posters from around the world, clothes from other cultures in the dress-up corner, cooking utensils from different countries in the house corner, and many more strategies, all which enhanced and reinforced the transcultural nature of the study.

The three main outcomes of the book-sharing project which the Preschool Library was designed to promote were that firstly, parents would be encouraged to read the books and pictures in their home language. This activity began at the start of the project because the teachers explained the project to the parents and encouraged them to read to their children in their home language. Sharing books in their home language did not appear to be a difficult task for the parents and seemed to be a natural process in which to engage.

Secondly, it was demonstrated that the parents practiced English with their children. Many parents commented that this was the only way they could learn English. At least two of them mentioned that they liked to consult the dictionary whenever they came across a word they did not know. On the video there is a excerpt of some of the parents chanting "Brown bear, brown bear what do you see?" just as expertly and as loudly as the children.

Thirdly, and most importantly perhaps, given that children tend to lose their home language during the preschool years once they enter an English-only environment, the
children's bilingualism continued to emerge. To observe a child of three or four years old speaking Cantonese to her friends one minute and then turning shortly after to speak in English to a teacher is, in my opinion, truly a wonder to behold. This may sound like hyperbole, but there are no other words to capture this astonishing ability to learn languages which these children had. This phenomenon is captured on the video when I ask Fung, who is four years old, to ask another little girl, who is three years old and, as yet, speaks little English, how many times she read her book. In the video, Fung turns and speaks to the other girl in Cantonese. The other girl holds up one finger and Fung turns back to me and says "one time." I then ask Fung to ask her who she read the book with. This called for more complex language than the previous question, so Fung turns to the other girl and simply says "Grandma?" Or, as another example, what of Soon Choi who could speak to the Vietnamese teacher in Vietnamese, the Cantonese teacher in Cantonese and to me in English. He is also captured on the video practicing the Mandarin he learned one weekend. These children's abilities and the resulting language skills are too precious to lose, since trying to learn a second language later in life is a more difficult task.

Another outcome of the project was that book sharing increased at home. The children's accounts of the number of times they shared the books with their parents are not held as absolute truths, especially since some of the children did like to exaggerate while others were only beginning to develop number concepts. Most of the parents, however, did report that they read more books to their children during the project than they did prior to the start of the project.

I was not sure how I would know when children and their parents reached the mythical level of the books. However, when parents started to report on the empathy the children had with certain characters or that the children began to understand how various protagonists were feeling, it was an indication that the stories were being used other than at a literal level.
It was important, given that the major focus of this study was towards minority-language families, that families whose home language was English felt supported too. The evidence that they were supported came from their positive comments about the books and the project. One of these parents made the comment that the books in fact, helped her connect with the minority-language families. Her comment indicates that the parents connected transculturally with each other through the culture of books.

The obvious benefits to the children were that the books gave them additional opportunities to practice language. The books helped them to learn English and develop concepts and provided them with opportunities to develop initial literacy skills.

Without the book-sharing project there might have been fewer occasions for the parents to participate in the preschool program. The fact that many parents came into the preschool to sit in circle time, and the fact that they engaged in their children's experiences and began to know about the things their children were learning, is evidence that the books provided a bridge between home and school.

This study produced one final outcome which was not anticipated by me. This surprise was that I, as the researcher, became "The Book Lady," to not only the children, but to many of the staff too. The final manifestation of this phenomenon was when I was asked by the other staff at the Neighbourhood House to take part in the community festival as a one of the "story-tellers." I picked fish as my theme and as "The Fish Storyteller" I marched in the parade, wearing "fish" regalia, to the community centre where the local librarian and I entertained groups of children with our books and stories.

The Practitioners

Knowledge gathered: guiding practice

The third question which was asked at the beginning of the research (in Chapter One) was, having gathered knowledge about patterns of language use within minority-language
families, whether it would be useful in guiding the practices of other speech-language pathologists working with similar populations.

The literature review describes some of the more current ideas about bilingual language development for it is important to understand what is typical against which to evaluate what is not typical. A critical issue for many minority-language families whose children may have been referred for a speech and language assessment is which language should be used with their children. There are few consistent policies about this. The only consistent policy statement found in the literature is that bilingual families should be given service by a practitioner who speaks their language. The reality in the field currently is that most times this is not possible. This unsatisfactory and paradoxical situation is described by Anderson:

> It is imperative that monolingual speech-language pathologists understand that the best possible scenario for such children [preschool children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds] is to have services provided by a bilingual speech-language pathologist (ASHA, 1985). Since there are few bilingual professionals in the field, monolingual clinicians are frequently faced with the challenge of working with these children. (Anderson, 1994, p. 115).

The findings from this research suggest that making assumptions and generalities about language use from one family to the next is not useful as a basis for practice among speech language pathologists working with minority language families. This fact holds true even when two different families' country of origin or language are the same. In this study each family had its own distinctive language profile and language expectations. In effect, *each family had its own culture*. This was demonstrated in the example of Ptom and Mary, parents who participated in the study. Both these parents were born in the Philippines. However, although their country of birth was the same and they both spoke English well there were no similarities regarding home language use. Their needs and expectations differed significantly. Ptom spoke Tagalog but did not expect his children to learn it. Mary,
on the other hand, wanted her children to learn their home language, Igorot, in order for the
cchildren to be able to understand the audio tapes sent by their grandparents living in the
Philippines.

Chapter One discussed the risks faced by children who do not speak the language of
their parents. Assanand (1989) summarizes this process which can create communication
barriers between parents and children whenever children do not learn the language of their
parents and parents do not reach a level of majority-language proficiency to allow them to
communicate with their children:

Communications break down fast when parents think and speak in their own language
and their children think and speak in English. Where they think they understand each
other, it is very often found that the communication is very superficial. (1989, p.60)

The literature suggests that it is not sufficient for speech-language pathologists to
simply acknowledge that bilingualism is a fact of life for many of the families with which we
work. Much work needs to be done to create ethnographic approaches to assessment and to
find ways to inform families about the risks of home language loss and the benefits of
bilingualism. Barrera (1993) suggests that even children with significant physical and
cognitive limitations in bilingual homes should not be denied the opportunity to be bilingual:

It has been the experience of this author that 3- and 4-year olds, even those with
communication disorders and mental retardation, have been able to develop second
language proficiency at a rate and to a level commensurate with their first language
development. . . .Children with disabilities should not be deprived of a language
because of the misinterpretation that they cannot handle two. Actually this
misinterpretation is most often used to support the exclusive use of English, which is
already the second language for many children. There is no research to indicate that
learning a second language requires skills beyond those necessary to learn a first.
(Barrera, 1993, p.477).

Early childhood educators and interventionists too, need to inform parents of the
benefits and risks involved when two or more languages are likely to be used in the home.
and to advocate for bilingualism and try to work with parents
... to try to mitigate the harm that can be done to children when they discover that differences are not welcome in the social worlds represented by the school. Parents need to be warned of the consequences of not insisting that their children speak to them in the language of the home. Teachers should be aware of the harm they can do when they tell ... children to speak English at home, and that [parents] should try to use English when they talk to their children. (Wong Fillmore, 1991, p.345)

However, there is one caveat to this "one-size-fits-all" philosophy which advocates, without question, that all parents speak their home language to their children. If, as this study is suggesting, each family is a culture in its own right, then only by engaging the families in discussions about language use, can sufficient information be obtained from which to create a detailed profile\(^{18}\) of the languages used in the families, by whom and to what degree of proficiency. The discussions and resulting home-language profile can then be used as a base from which parents and practitioners can make decisions collaboratively, about which language to speak with their children.

**Local bilingualism towards a world view of bilingualism**

Qualitative research methods have been criticized because of problems establishing external validity. This means that it is difficult to generalize the findings of these types of studies to other subjects and other settings. In this paper I have avoided making general claims about some of the findings, pointing out on many occasions that this was local research to be fed back to the community at the local level.

However, there are issues about the education of minority-language children which require a wider perspective. So that the focus of this study does not become too narrow and lose sight of the global picture, these broader issues will be stated here.

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\(^{18}\)See Appendix Six for the home language profile used in this study adapted from Williams and De Gaetano (1985).
Politics, policy and policy makers.

A monolingual perspective is often, unfortunately, a consequence of possession of a powerful "language of wider communication", as English, French, German, Spanish and other such languages are sometimes styled. This linguistic myopia is sometimes accompanied by a narrow cultural awareness and is reinforced by state policies which, in the main, elevate only one language to official status. (Edwards. 1994. p.1).

Linguists now "do not generally think that different languages are intrinsically stronger or weaker in some survival-of-the-fittest-arena, but they do recognize that the fortunes of languages are inexorably bound up with those of their users". (Edwards. 1994. p.9).

It is known that many cultures around the world have experienced language loss as a result of colonialism and conquest. British Columbia has a long history of racism (Ashworth, 1979) as do other Canadian provinces. "Indigenous children were taken from their homes, deprived of their culture and language and forced to be assimilated through "training" in residential schools run by churches and government. These schools still operated in the 1960s"(Bernhard et al, 1995 p.9). This practice had a devastating impact upon the families, especially because they lost their language, the medium in which to transmit knowledge between generations within an almost exclusively oral culture (Williams & Marcuse, 1995). The process of this language loss, while similar to that of immigrants in that parents have lost their ability to communicate with their children in their own language, differs because of its more explicit sociopolitical causes. For this reason and the fact that language loss is such a vast topic, it therefore lies beyond the scope of this paper to address in more detail. What is acknowledged here is that the impact of language loss, for indigenous people, has had extremely negative impacts on families in their abilities to parent their children and to transmit intergenerational knowledge. (See Edwards, 1992, for a description of sociopolitical aspects of language loss).
The literature has already stated that bilingualism is a reality for the majority of people in the world. This study showed that children in this study, just like children in many parts of the world, were in the process of learning to speak more than one language simultaneously. Knowledge of the majority language is important because:

If you want to have your fair share of the power and resources (both material and non-material) of your native country, you have to be able to take part in the democratic process. . . The main instrument for doing this is language. . . If you live in a country with speakers of many different languages, you have to share at least one language with the others, in order for a democratic process to be possible. And if the language most widely spoken by your fellow citizens . . is NOT your mother tongue, you belong to a linguistic minority in your country That means that you have to become (at least) bilingual in order to participate. In a democratic country it should be the duty of the school system to give every child, regardless of linguistic background, the same chance to participate in the democratic process. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.43)

It has been argued throughout this paper that bilingualism benefits every child. What is also argued here is that for young minority-language children in Canada, bilingualism is a necessity for many if they are to maintain a close connection with their parents.

It is possible to achieve, if the main principle is followed which seems to hold across different situations: support via all institutional measures [for] the language which is otherwise less likely to develop in the cognitively demanding decontextualized register. This language which otherwise does not get the chance is, for the minority-language children, their mother tongue. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1995,p.55)

In the U.S.A., Federal Bilingual-Education Policy advisors are now saying that monolingualism is a "problem" because "declining American influence in a shrinking world has forged a national consensus on the importance on foreign language study." (Lyons, 1995, p.9). It is unfortunate that it is only through politics and economics that bilingualism has come to be more valued. However, as Lyons goes on to point out, if foreign-language study programs were introduced into schools across the country now, it would be "well into the 21st century before a significant portion of our children left school bilingual." The wait
would have to be this long because it takes a long time, with current methods used in the
schools, to learn another language. Lyon's suggestion to increase the numbers of bilingual
students in the schools is:

Time could be turned to our advantage, however, if we were to conserve, develop, and
capitalize on the language skills of minority language students in our schools. . . The cost of further developing the already substantial native-language skills of our language minority students is marginal. The payoff, however, is big and relatively immediate — the production within a generation, of millions of bilingual, biliterate Americans. (Lyons, 1995, p. 10)

If this new direction towards bilingualism, which is being taken in Canada's neighbouring country, is similar to the direction in which Canada is moving, then we need much stronger policies in place which ensure that children do not lose their home language before they reach school age. This goes back to the argument which suggests that early childhood educators must not only provide parents with information about the benefits of bilingualism but also honor, support and encourage home language use within early childhood programs. Practitioners in all disciplines who work with families and young children at any level, must also encourage and support home language maintenance whenever possible. If the home language is not supported, then the danger is that the majority language will quickly become the language of choice for the children.

Joshua Fishman reflects an somewhat idealistic notion of the importance for maintaining ethnolinguistic diversity in our world when he discusses Whorf's third theory, a theory "that champions ethnolinguistic diversity for the benefit of pan-human creativity, problem-solving and mutual cross-cultural acceptance." (Fishman, 1982, p.1). Perhaps if we begin with the youngest of those humans in our midst, this idealistic notion may have a chance to be realized.
Final Comments

The findings from this study have been and will continue to be shared with the parents and with those who work in an early childhood milieu. It is hoped that the interpretation of the process can be made by readers of this paper which will assist in giving options for program and policy development that promote continuance of communication in the language of choice, between parents and their young children in preschools. It is also the hope that those same readers will take on the responsibility of providing parents with the relevant information to help them make that choice. This model of book-sharing and the benefits afforded to families seems to present the possibility of a wider application, perhaps to involve families whose home language is the majority language but who have limited access to books. The relation of this kind of early literacy experience to health, social and academic outcomes could also be explored through such a model.

It is also my hope that the findings from this study will encourage early childhood teachers, early intervention practitioners and those of us working in the field of communication, whatever it might be, to use books, books and more books with ALL children from ALL cultural and ALL linguistic backgrounds. This study has demonstrated that a preschool centre does not need to have books in every language in the world. It would be impossible and expensive to do so. No a child care centre needs to have a sufficient or requisite variety of books and accompanying strategies for valuing home language and culture, to meet the needs of MOST of the families, including those families whose only opportunity to learn language is through their children. We must support both the children and the parents on their journey up the Language Mountain towards bilingualism, as long as it is their choice to travel that way.

George Saunders stated a conclusion at the end of his study which reflects my opinion regarding this study:

It is hoped that as a consequence of this study] other parents who speak languages other than the dominant language of the community will be encouraged to pass on
their languages to their children. This can only mean enrichment for the community, the parents, and the children. (1982, p.245)

Finally, for those of us who study language it will continue to be important to design research which does not take language out of the context in which it is used, since "There can be no meaningful linguistics without attention to context." (Edwards. 1994. p.ix)

This study has been one field worker-come-researcher's attempt to travel to The Language Mountain and thereby avoid, to some extent, the traditional pitfalls encountered by excavating small chunks of The Mountain to take back to the laboratory for microscopic examination. The claims drawn from the analysis of the data could be viewed perhaps as a 'first draft' of a 'Language Mountain Map': an attempt to chart trails leading up its craggy, and at times slippery, sides in an effort to understand it better within its own domain.
APPENDIX A
Example of Transcription
Interview, through an interpreter, with three mothers whose first language is Vietnamese.

[Name of] Preschool Story Telling Project
January to June 1995
Sue Wastie
Simon Fraser University

Dear My,
Please read this transcription and make any corrections or changes as necessary. If you want to write comments all over it please do so. If you or any one else in your family have any other comments about this please add those too and return to me as soon as possible. If you need to ask me any questions please phone me at home 732-8770.

******
Once again thank you so much for taking part in this project. Please write your address below so that I can send you a copy of my final writing, probably some time in January 1996.
It has been a wonderful experience for me to work with you, your children, the teachers and everyone at the Neighbourhood House. I wish you and your family all the good fortune for the future.

From Sue

Name ___________ Address __________________________
Postal Code _______________ tel: ______________________

Final Interview number: 11(2)

Interviewer: Sue =S
Interviewees: [real name] L, My and Le
Interpreter = Donna
Date: 1995 June 30
Place: [name of ] Neighbourhood House Preschool. In parent area just outside the preschool room.
Time: 12.05 to 1 p.m.
Length of Interview = 55 minutes
Transcription Time = 90 + 130 mins (3.6 hours)

Pseudonyms
Please check these names and change them if you wish.
[real name] = My S__________ Sister = Mina
[son] = Lam
S [to interpreter] So this is our last interview. I interviewed the parents before the project, and so now we did the Preschool Library so I'm just trying to get their feedback about what they thought about it.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

S And you know what? They gave me a beautiful pen yesterday as a present. It was really nice of the parents).

[Interpreter explains to parents]

S So I wanted to ask each mom if they knew what their favourite, what their children's favourite book was out of all the books that went home.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

I can't hear on the tape who says what because often everyone is talking at the same time.

The answers were

**Rainbow Fish**

S Rainbow Fish? Ahh that's a very popular one[015] yes

This is going to help pick books like for next year.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

**Tingalayo** was the next book named.

S That was [Dang]'s. He liked that one I know he liked that one.

The next one was **Happy Birthday Sam**

S Happy Birthday Sam. Yes he [Lam] really liked that one and early on he liked Brown Bear, Brown Bear. He didn't want to let that one go. O.K. Um Why do you think they liked those books particularly?

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

S Was it the pictures or------

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

S ---the song.

I [032]She's saying that her child really liked it. he looked at the pictures (Tingalayo) the first time and liked it but then when mom translated into Vietnamese what the story was he really loved it ----

S M-mm

I ----because he understood the story,[034]

S Uh-huh that's good. O.K. because that's what we were hoping for.

I Yes

S And I'd like to know what your favourite book was. You know all the books that went home did you have a favourite one that you liked?

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

I She said they're all good so----(laughter and chatter at this time) they liked them all!!
S: You liked them all. Why? Why did they like the books?
What drew you to the books?

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I: Well when my child looked at it and could understand it and liked it then I liked it---
S: Uh-huh
I: --- if my child liked it.[047]
S: Uh-huh. O.K. Well that's good. Do you think your children learned anything from the stories?
I: [Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
So her child with the Rainbow Fish really liked the story and asked well why did the fish not feel lonely and then why did he give out his stripes to the other fish---
S: Uh-huh
I: ---and so he understood about feeling lonely and sharing the stripes---
S: About sharing---the scales
I: Oh scales?
S: It was scales. Yes. The Rainbow Fish had beautiful scales and none of the other fish had them--
I: Oh!
S: And all the other fish wanted one but he wouldn't share. So it was about sharing.
I: So it was scales huh?(to the parents who confirmed this)
S: Yes about sharing. Anybody else? Did Danny learn anything?
I: [076]Just how much he really liked the book----
S: Uh-huh
I: --- and wanted to bring it everywhere with him and then wanted to know more about the story.
S: All right wonderful. Um did you learn anything from the stories?
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I: [086] So they learned more English as a result of the books because they were reading the books for their children.
S: And translating them?
I: And translating them.
S: OK
I: Yes
S: That's great. O.K. Um did you notice you notice any changes in the children during the project? You know did they change? Did they want more books? Did you read more?
[I: Laughs at one mom's comment then explains] And when they go to bed her child would put his book in the pillow because he was afraid
that it would get lost---

S (Laughs)

I ---so he would put it in his pillow [100]

S (Laughs) We put them in bags (explaining to Interpreter) so each
book had it's own little bag to go home and we didn't lose one book---

I Is that right?

S ---in three months.

I WOW!

S We didn't lose one.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

I They wanted to read the next book and they knew that if they
wanted to get another book they had to bring back the old book---

S (Laughs)

I -----So that gave them good motivation not to lose the first book.[107]

S They were very upset if they couldn't find it or if they'd forgotten it
because it meant that they missed one opportunity to read a new book.

I Yes

S We had over sixty books.

I Oh! [Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

S Did you and your child read more books before or during the project?
I'm trying to get an idea of if the amount of reading went up during the
project. Before they used to go to the library to look at the books but t
hey didn't bring them home so much more reading after than before[118]

S Do you think you'll continue to do reading, book reading, after the
project?

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

I Yes they said that they think they will go to the library.

S And take the books out now?

I Yes

S Will you choose books in a different way? You know because
sometimes when you go to the library you don't know what a good
book is or a not so good book. I was just wondering if you have a better
idea of a good book versus a book that's not so good.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]

I Yes they understand better what's a good book.

S What would you say a good book was?

I It has to have pictures?[138]

S Pictures. Good pictures. Yes. Because we tried to get some really nice
ones, a hard cover with nice art work in and some of them were like
thirty dollars each---

I Uh-huh

S So they would be expensive to buy but because we had a donation
from Finning
we could buy (books) and we got two of each one----

I Ahh!
S  See so that one stayed in the preschool---
I  Ahh!
S  ----and one went home. And I'd like to know was that important you
    know what the children were learning in school because these weren't
different to the ones we did in the preschool.
I  Ahh!
S  So it was making that connection between school and home.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  They think it was a good thing that they would understand what
    was being studied at school.
S  So it made a connection?
I  Yes
S  Did you feel more connected with the preschool?
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  Yes
S  Did you feel more connected with the other parents at all? Did you talk
    about the books? Because some of the moms said what was nice about
    reading the books when they saw another mom reading it they could go
    and say "OH I know that story" and then talk about the story.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  Yes when they met they would talk about it
S  Uh-huh OK These books ----we tried to choose books from different
    parts of the world so this one is First Nations, Aboriginal, Pacific North
    West and then this one is sort of Mexico and this one is from Italy
I  Ahh
S  Just to show the difference but this was an example of the really
    nice kind of artwork and pictures that we had but even though the text is
    you know it didn't really matter you could tell what the story was about
    (from the pictures). But we tried to pick the stories from around the
    world and I wondered if that was significant, if you knew that what
    importance that was for the children to know? Because they knew
    because I would always say (for example) "this man (Author
    of Rainbow Goblins) comes from Italy and he wrote the story" you
    know and to give them an awareness of other countries.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  [201]They did notice it and they thought it was good and I said
    "Why is it good?" and they said well it's good for the children to
    understand about differences---
S  Uh-huh
I  ----and to be able to differentiate between different areas of the world.
S  Mmm
I  So they thought that was a very good thing to do[204]
S  I tried to look for books in different languages. There were some
    but they didn't have nice pictures---
I  Mmmm
S ---and so I felt it was more important to have good pictures rather than to have not so good pictures and have it translated. Would you have liked more books with more Vietnamese?

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I They didn't feel that the words were important---

(N.B. I asked the interpreter on her copy of the transcript if she meant the written words here. She wrote on the transcript after reading it "Yes") [219]
S Uh-huh
I ---So they said with the pictures you could tell the story.
S OK well that's what we were hoping.
I So I said would you have liked more Vietnamese stories and they said "NO I don't think that's important"
S The pictures were more important?
I The pictures were more important.
S Because it's really difficult for example to get this one translated would cost a lot of money and yet, I mean there's space to write it in but then I think it's nice to tell your own story sometime.

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S And the other thing is that a lot of the parents said they liked the English because they like to learn the English.

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S And the other thing we thought was that if the parents could be involved in books in preschool when the children get to school they'll be more chance to be involved in the books at school when the more difficult books come home.

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S Because all the research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education the children do better in school.

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S So if the children can know they can bring things back and share it with their parents they seem to do better. it's the sharing that's important.

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S Did you learn anything about your children? I'm, looking at your relationship with your children now. Was there any change in that? Did the books help or not help? Did you learn something about your children that you didn't know before?

[Intpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I One area that they found ---it was hard to make--- I don't have all the vocabulary for all the words---
S Uh-huh, uh-huh
I ---but one thing that they noticed was---I said "For example maybe you didn't know-- understand how much your child liked dogs but after you read a couple of books you realized that he really liked dogs"
something like that ---
S  Uh-huh
I  --and they said that what they did realize was how many new
animals they learned about--
S  Oh.
I  And I said "Did you know that your child didn't know about those
animals?"
S  Oh.
I  And they said "No we didn't know they didn't know but then as we
started to read the books and explained it then they understood it
better"[289]. So it hasn't quite got at the relationship part---
S  Yes OK but maybe I can with my next question and I've kind of
digressed a bit from this (list) because I don't get a chance to ask it but
books are different from TV. TV the children sit very passively and
watch, and I've got them on video watching TV. But with a book you
have to get very close and I believe the children like the books because
it gives them closeness with their parents and with the little ones and
the book means more than just the story. It means" hey I've got
mom's attention. I've got her love." So I just wondered if that was---
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  Yes they did notice that and they think it is important
S  Uh-huh, uh-huh. Because with the TV the children don't speak and
so it doesn't help with their language development and maybe you
could explain that my job is a speech language pathologist because they
might not know that. But in terms of language development,
vocabulary, being smart and thinking, the books do far more than the television.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I  Yes they agree and they said like with these books now my
children know these stories[337]
S  Yes, yes. And what I've found is that they can relate--like from the
Rainbow Goblins we looked at Rainbows you know the colours and
Five Little Ducks you can do counting and math and so from one story
you can get a lot of different concepts.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S  Yes and what was interesting about Rainbow Goblins because I
couldn't explain the difference in these two colours because they
were both blue, so we talked about light blue and dark blue and so
we started to talk about light pink and dark pink and the different
shades of colours so it---
I  Ahhh
S  ---you know we did this at snack time and the conversation was just
so rich---
I  Ahh
S  --around that.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S Yes and then when we compare books and we talk about this one is thin and this one is thick. This one's hard and this one is soft. And then we talk about like the difference in the pictures. And I didn't even pick this out but someone said "This is a pink carrot and this is an orange carrot".

(Everyone laughs)
S The children knew that and I didn't even think about that.
[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I So you found that was very good for them to be able to make those kinds of differences?
S Yes and well it's just a way to talk.
I Yes
S You know and for the children who speak different languages the books connected the children so if one spoke Cantonese and one spoke Vietnamese they could both read Brown Bear Brown Bear or Tingalayo and sit and read it together.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S But we also encourage them to speak their home language with the teachers so that they learn two languages. English and Vietnamese; Cantonese and English you know so that they'll be bilingual.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S So this project is all about connections and making connections: children to children; and parents to parents; and parents to children through books.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S Rather than keeping everybody separate.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S Do you think it helped? Do you think this helped? And do they have any other ideas or suggestions that I can tell the teachers or when I write my paper. Can they, you know write down any ideas?

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I They said "I think that's every thing"
S Well maybe ---I'd just like to thank them for taking part because I couldn't have done the study without the parents taking part in this obviously and I think it's going to be very very important for other people to hear about this project.

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
I Yes. They'd like to thank you because they really enjoyed seeing their children learn new things and become interested in new things and learn the stories.
S Well thank you and I didn't know the stories. When I started this I didn't know the stories either so they taught me about the books they liked. I think that's the important thing the children really knew the books they liked.
I Ahh
S It wasn't me saying "Read this and read this" it was "I want this one I want this one".

[Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese]
S And the teachers were saying that the teachers associated me with books and when the library finished and I wasn't here, one of the children said "Where's Sue?" And the teacher said "She's not here today she couldn't come. And he said "Has she gone to buy more books?"[466]

I (laughs) [Interpreter explains what I said to parents in Vietnamese] Everyone laughs.

S So I was the books lady, definitely. I was the book lady at the end. Well thank you so much and thank you for coming today. That was wonderful.
Thank you.[473 tape ends]
APPENDIX B

Table showing the number of times each book was borrowed including some of the parent's and children's comments.
(as recorded on the library cards.)

N.B. Books marked with an asterisk* were the books chosen specifically for their cross-cultural theme or were from other countries.
(P) indicates a parents comment. All other comments were those of the children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Book</th>
<th>Number of Times borrowed</th>
<th>Children's/parents' Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown Bear</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mommy read it one time. I read it ten times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Many times. She love this book.(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two times. With my mom and my daddy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Little Ducks</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I didn't like it, I love it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than ten times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Showed ten fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of Friends * (India)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>My daddy read it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I liked it -really!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, with my dad two times again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Fish* (Switzerland)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(I) really liked it. 3 times a day -morning, afternoon and bedtime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four with Mommy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M(baby sister) liked it.(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(I asked&quot; with mom?&quot; J.pointed excitedly to Dad and said)No,No! Dad!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven * (Native North American)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mommy read it too. My dad show me how to hold it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I loved it.(P) .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I love it. I read it once, mom and me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodnight Moon</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mom didn't like the pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four times. Vietnamese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No time to read it.(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Twice times every night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Too small for me. Eight times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Every night with dad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Copies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here Comes the Cat <em>(Russian/American)</em></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Goblins* <em>(Italian)</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinosaur Dream</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tingalayo*(song book)* <em>(Caribbean)</em></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop. Go</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can do it</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Birthday Sam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheels on the Bus <em>(songbook)</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What made Tiddalik Laugh* <em>(Australia)</em></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorilla* <em>(Belgium)</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the Wild Things are</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Here Comes the Cat**: A thousand and ten with mom, myself, D(brother). Yes, she really like it. Really funny! (P) It was interesting to see art from different cultures. (P)
- **Rainbow Goblins**: I like the pictures. Long story, still not finished. (P) I loved it, I even fell on the ground. My mommy like this one. The drawing so good. Two times with sister. (P)
- **Dinosaur Dream**: Two more. Four times.
- **Tingalayo*(song book)* *(Caribbean)***: Two times with mommy. I like that book. I want it again. She sing this song every day with her mommy. (P) Two times. Daddy read it.
- **Stop. Go**: Two times-my dad. My grandpa. I was sad when I lost it. (Found later). Many times.
- **I can do it**: Two times with grandma. Two times with mommy and baby. I think it's wonderful. (P) It was twenty two times.
- **Happy Birthday Sam**: Two times a day. Three times with mom. She pretend the story. Twenty. with you (to sister). Mom one time. Even I read it myself.
- **Wheels on the Bus *(songbook)***: My daughter only understand the Cantonese, look at the picture. (P) Many times she sing by herself. (P)
- **What made Tiddalik Laugh* *(Australia)***: Grandma and grandpa in Cantonese. (P) Two times me, myself. One time mom, one time dad.
- **Gorilla* *(Belgium)***: I loved it 'cos my mom and dad liked it. We have this at home. I really like it a lot. (P) He read half English, half Vietnamese. I don't know story. (P) M. (Sister) read it several times. (P)
- **Where the Wild Things are**: About six times.
Abiyoyo * (South Africa) 6 Teacher, my brother want that book. Six or seven. It's from his papa's country so he really liked it.(P) More difficul*. (P)

The Rabbit Who Overcame Fear * (India) 11 Showed four fingers. No time to read.(P) With daddy one time (child). No two times (dad corrects child).

Freight Train 8 All family. Two times. Dad in Chinese. Ten times with mom.

The Giving Tree 5 Two times with mom. One time with mom.

The Doorbell Rang 7 My mommy read it. My daddy read it. Uncle W. Father too read Cantonese. Four times.

The Little Boy and The Big Fish * (Switzerland) 9 Many times. More than three. One time with my uncle. Two times with mommy.

The Three Little Pigs 9 (Didn't like it) Not funny. Twenty two times...three time with mommy. My dad and my mom and mom and my sister too. Two nights.


Nanabosho * (Native North American) 3 One. Dad. Four times every night. Sister said I read it two times

Love You Forever 4 Five or six times I read it one time with my dad. Four times. Oh Cantonese, (My)English not good. (P)

Little Babies 3 Five times. Two times. The book was great!

Cleversticks* (Chinese) 3 Dad read it. Complicated. She lose interest.(P) Dad one time. Cantonese.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who Hides in the Park* (Native North American)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No times. I like it but my mom said she will read it and then she don't read. One time with mom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion Dancer * (Chinese)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>One time. Daddy read that already and my daddy know now because she read it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimmy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Seven Times. My mom read only once. I read it a lot. Six times. Four times my mom and my dad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Can Blink</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I read it lots of times. Mommy and me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watercress Tuna and the Children of Champion Street* (Native New Zealand- Maori)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I don't know but a lot of times I like it but I like more words so I can learn English.(P) I read in Vietnamese too. One time. My grandpa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I eat it</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>One time with her cousin. Cantonese.(P) I put sad face because my mom hit me and is mad with me all the time. Four or five times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night Call</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>One time. My mom like that Five times. My dad read it. Two times with my brother D..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Flies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>One time. My mom like that Five times. My dad read it. Two times with my brother D..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where's Spot?</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>This is a new book. No-one has read it and I'm the first. Four times. My baby. Many times with Dad. Ten times. Dad. mom. Cantonese and Vietnamese. Five times. I show grandma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Engine That Could</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I did at my grandma's two or three times. She (daughter) teach me. (Mom).(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Reading Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The Carrot Seed     | 10     | Oh lots of times.  
                  |         | More than three times.  
                  |         | Dad many times. Mom one.  
| Caps for Sale       | 8      | I didn't like it because I didn't choose it.  
                  |         | Mom liked it. (Mom chose it)  
                  |         | (Sister) read it one time.  
                  |         | I read it one time. (What language?)  
                  |         | Like you. (English)  
                  |         | Three times. Daddy.  
| Carl Goes Shopping  | 2      | Good book.  

Hello, my name is Sue Wastie. I am a speech language pathologist (speech teacher) who has worked in Mount Pleasant for 15 years. I have worked with Judy McMurtner, your preschool teacher, for five years. I am interested in how parents talk with their young children. Recently parents, who are learning English, have asked Judy and I many questions about their children who are learning to speak English in preschool. These questions are difficult to answer. Every family is different. We would like to know what happens when children learn English. Do they learn the family's language too? We wanted to talk to you about these things.

We would also like your help to choose stories for the preschool. You can learn the stories with your child. You can choose which stories you would like to learn and the language you would like to use.

**This is what will happen:**
- You can help the teachers choose some stories.
- You can have talks with Sue (with interpreter if necessary) about learning English.
- You can learn the stories that your child learns in the preschool.
- Sue will collect information for the project through talking to you, and watching the children in the preschool.

I may use video and/or tape recorders sometimes. You can change your mind later if you don't want to be part of the study. It is important for you to know that the decision to take part in this project is yours.

Please sign the consent form on the next page if you would like to be part of this study.

From
Sue Wastie

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19 The information in Appendix C(i) and (ii) was presented to parents via an interpreter where necessary}
APPENDIX C(ii)

Informed Consent given by
Parents of children enrolled in the Mount Pleasant
Neighbourhood House Preschool
Story-Telling Project

Studies carried out by Universities in Canada need consent forms signed by people taking part. This is to make sure that everyone understands what is going to happen.

CONSENT

1. I agree to take part in this project and I am doing this voluntarily.
2. I understand that the organizer of the project is Susan Wastie (Sue) who has the support of Judy McMurter (Judy), the preschool teacher and that they will work together with the parents on this project. The Director of the Neighbourhood House has given Sue permission to do this project.
3. When Sue has completed her writing a copy will be sent to me at my home address. I can contact her at any time by phoning 732-8770.
4. As part of the project I will take part in:
   - A meeting with the teachers, Sue and other parents in January 1995
   - A talk with Sue (with an interpreter if necessary) at the beginning of the study, once during the study and again at the end of the study.
   - Story telling and sharing activities both in the preschool and at home.
5. I also give my consent for my child ______________ to participate in the study at the preschool from January to June 1995. I understand that Sue will observe my child during this time and that she may ask him/her questions about the stories and learning two languages. Sue will also explain to my child who she is and give him/her the choice of listening to the stories or not.
6. I understand that Sue will not use our real names or the name of the preschool in the final writing.
7. After the project has been written I understand that all materials, including observation notes, audiotapes, videotapes and computer disks containing any identifying information will be destroyed to keep things confidential.
8. **I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time.**
9. If I have any complaints about Sue or the project, I can contact Dr. Robin Barrows, Dean, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., telephone number 291-3148.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guardian 1 (signature)</th>
<th>Guardian 2 (signature)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name_------------------</td>
<td>Name_------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address_---------------</td>
<td>Address_---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter Required_</td>
<td>Language_------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness_---------------</td>
<td><em>date</em>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position_-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Questions for Parents
Mt. Pleasant Neighbourhood House
Story-telling project
Initial Interview

Sue Wastie

Before Interview:
1. Go over consent form with parent and explain purpose of the interview. Explain any items that are unclear. Give them another chance to have interpreter present.
2. Ask parent to choose a pseudonym for themselves and child.
3. Ensure tape recorder is plugged in and recording.

Begin Interview by saying:
"I am interested in the choices parents make about what language to speak with their children and why. Parents have asked the teachers about this too. We don't have those answers. We are concerned when children give up speaking their home language and how this affects family relationships. We need your help to find out what matters to parents in the children's early years so that we can help other parents to make the best choices. We also want to pass your knowledge about these things to other preschool teachers so that they can provide the best possible programmes for every child.
Thank you for your help with this.

Use home language profile to map language.

How would you describe your feelings about speaking _________? Which language do you prefer to speak?

What is important to you about your language?

What has your experience been in having two languages spoken in the home?

What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of having two languages?

When you think of learning another language, what is your most pleasant experience?

What is your worst experience?

How do you think it will be for _________? Will he keep speaking _________? Why? Why not?

What will you do about this?
**Story-telling**

How important do you think stories are in children's lives? why?
How often do you tell stories to __________________________ now?
Who tells these stories mostly?
What kinds of stories do you tell now?
What do you think of the idea of parents being involved in the preschool this way?

Do you have any books in your own language at home?

Do you have any stories to pass on to------------------in your own language/
Stories that perhaps your parents told you/

How important are these stories to you? why?

Have you any other ideas about learning another language that you would like to add?
Anything I haven't thought about?

What has this conversation made you think about? Has it changed anything for you?
Questions for Parents.

( Please arrange a time with Sue to talk about these things. Thank you.)

What was your child's favourite book?

Why do you think he/she liked it?

What was your favourite book? Why did you like it?

Did anything surprise you about the books or the project? If so what?

Do you think your child learned anything from the stories? If so what?

Did you learn anything from them? If so what?

Did you notice any changes during the story telling project?
  In your child?
  In you?
  In your family?

Did you and your child read more books before or during the project (or same)?

Who was involved in book reading at home?

What was(were) the language(s) used at home to share the books? (Were there changes in your child's use of home language or other languages?)

Do you think any differently about books after the project than before? If so, how?(For example has it changed the way you choose books for your child? Can you tell a "good" book from a "bad" book? If so did you know this before the project?)
What did you like about this project?

What didn't you like?

Do you think a preschool library like this is a good or bad idea? Why?

Will you continue to read books to your children after the project has ended. How will you do this?

Do you have any other comments or recommendations that you would like to make to other parents or teachers?
## APPENDIX F

### HOME LANGUAGE PROFILE

**LANGUAGE(S) USED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person(s)</th>
<th>Only L*</th>
<th>Mostly L*</th>
<th>Equal L* and English</th>
<th>Mostly English and some L*</th>
<th>Only English</th>
<th>Other (Specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
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<td>Maternal Grandparents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paternal Grandparents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary caregiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>(if different from above)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood friends</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School friends</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L* = Language(s) ________________ specify non-majority (English) language(s) used in the home.

Comments:  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  

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20 Adapted from Williams and Gaetano, 1985.
APPENDIX G
TECHNICAL REFERENCES
Children's story books cited

Stories by Place of Origin

AUSTRALIA


BELGIUM


INDIA


ITALY:


NATIVE AMERICAN


NEW ZEALAND (MAORI)


RUSSIA/U.S.A


SOUTH AFRICA
New York, NY: Macmillan

SWITZERLAND


**Song Books**


**Traditional**


**Books with Repetitive/Rhythmic Text.**


**Picture-only Books**

Other


Video

References


Pawl, J. (1991) *A Book is a Child's Companion*. Adapted from an address to the American Library Association in *Zero to Three*, 12,1 p.9.


