The Effects of Home Language Practices on Academic Achievement of Simultaneous English Language Learners

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Elementary Education

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List of Terms

Bilingualism: the ability to speak and communicate fluently in more than one language.

Basic Interpersonal Communication (BIC): Language skills needed to interact in social situations

Code Switching: the choice on the part of the speaker to use two or more different languages in the same conversation (Hoff, 2005)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): Language skills needed for children to cope with the academic demands of school

Critical Period Hypothesis: The first few years of a child’s life marks the crucial and optimal time period for a child to acquire language.

Discourse Analysis: the study of how language is used in texts and contexts

English Language Learners (ELLs): Those who are learning English either simultaneously to one or more languages or learning English after already acquiring one or more other languages.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): the process of acquiring a second language.

Simultaneous ELL: Children who, from the ages of 0-5 years old, have been exposed to and are acquiring two languages at the same time (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2011)

Sequential ELL: Children who, after the age of 6, begin the process of second language acquisition with a well established first language (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2011)
ABSTRACT

The Effects of Home Language Practices on Academic Achievement of Simultaneous English Language Learners

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This research project focused on conducting an analysis of home factors that may influence language development and academic achievement among simultaneous English language learners (ELLs). Multiple sources of data were gathered for eight second-grade students from a small private school. Qualitative measures of data included home language surveys and interviews with select parents. Quantitative measures of data included students’ grades, test scores, and writing samples.

The results of this study confirmed some existing research findings that parent education, parent involvement, and applied use of literacy materials in the home are associated with high academic achievement. Data from this present study also revealed a possible association between how reading and writing is modeled in the home and the level of students’ enjoyment and frequency of engaging in these types of activities. There also appeared to be a distinct pattern among simultaneous ELLs in which parents reported a decline in motivation and language fluency of the simultaneous ELLs’ heritage language spoken at home.
The findings from this present study certainly raise questions regarding simultaneous language acquisition and whether this form of language learning is advantageous for students. This research study presents valuable information for both parents and educators concerning the impact of a simultaneous ELL’s home environment on their language development and academic performance. Furthermore, the results from this study have broader implications for challenging current second language acquisition theories and modifying current teaching approaches.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Language is an essential part of our everyday lives. We use language to communicate, to learn, and to survive. From infancy, communication is the main function of language. Children learn that the utterances they produce form words that carry meaning and they begin to discover the complex process of communicating and interacting with the surrounding world. As children grow and develop, communication continues to be essential for not only meeting needs, but for resolving conflict, expressing thoughts, and asking questions.

Language is embedded in a child’s process of learning, both formally and informally. In our schools, language is the means for both acquiring knowledge and socializing with peers. Essentially, there are two types of language related to learning. One is conversational language, which is language children use when speaking informally with their peers. This language is typically seen on the playground as students play and socialize. The second type of language that is related to learning is academic language. This type of language is formal language that students use when engaging in writing or classroom discussion. Children use academic language to negotiate meaning and construct new ideas. Those that learn how to use academic language to analyze, debate, and evaluate often are those who become positioned in society to have greater opportunity in higher education and the work force.

Language can analogously be thought of as a form of economic capital. This “linguistic capital” is a powerful means of survival on many levels in society - socially, economically, professionally, and politically. Without effective acquisition of language
and a lack of understanding regarding the role that language plays in our lives, children are automatically placed at a huge disadvantage and struggle to survive.

As the powerful role of language is understood, considering the strong implications for acquiring more than one language becomes more important. Globally there are many more people in the world who are bilingual or multilingual, than those who are monolingual (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1999). While English is a dominant global language, other global languages are emerging, such as Chinese, Russian, Arabic, and Spanish. Proficiency in more than one global language is certainly advantageous in the global market (Genesee, 2009).

In addition to the high global prevalence of bilingualism, there is also extensive research that has shown that there are numerous cognitive benefits to being bilingual (Bialystok, 2006; Poulin-Dubois, et al., 2011; Genesee, 2009; Krashen, 1992; Valdez & Callahan, 2011; Yazici, et al., 2009). For example, bilingualism has been shown to have positive impacts on learning additional languages, enhancing brain function during aging, increasing memory, developing better visual-spatial abilities, and even increasing creativity (Marian & Shook, 2012). In many cases, bilingualism can also contribute to providing more social, cultural, and employment opportunities. With the majority of the people in today’s world being bilingual or multilingual and the wealth of research conducted on bilingualism, cognitive advantages to knowing more than one language are clearly demonstrated.

In the U.S as well, bilingualism continues to be on the rise. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2012), 21% of students in U.S. schools speak a language other than English at home. From 1980 to 2009, the population of English Language Learners
(ELLs) has grown significantly from 4.7 to 11.2 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2012), therefore significantly changing the demographics in our schools. In 2009, approximately 10% of students in U.S. schools were identified as being an ELL. By 2025, that statistic is estimated to increase to 25% (TESOL, 2013).

There is, however, limited research available that focuses on simultaneous language acquisition, which is the process of learning both English and another language at the same time from 0-5 years old. In my own professional experience, I have observed a significant increase in the population of second-generation students who enter my classroom each year. In California alone, 48% of the ELL students in our school system come from immigrant families (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011). These second generation students are often prime examples of simultaneous language learners. A combination of my own experiences with simultaneous language learners and the fact there is such limited research on this population of students have led me to become interested in critically investigating language development among simultaneous ELLs.

Worldwide, there is evidence to support the concept that children are capable of being educated successfully in more than one language from a very early age (Bilingual Education & World Language Commission Report, 2010). However, startling U.S. statistics suggest that ELLs are not being supported or taught in ways that allow them to achieve success in school and, therefore, are being denied the opportunity to compete in our globalized society that exists today. For example, according to the International Center for Leadership in Education (2009), 85% of ELLs who enrolled in Kindergarten in the U.S. are being identified as being unsuccessful in school by the time they reach
middle school and/or high school. With Hispanic students being the largest proportion of ELLs in the U.S., only 53.2% of Hispanics graduated high school in 2009.

As we face the hard reality that exists in our schools, we are forced to ask the question, why are these students failing and what can be done to help ELLs be more successful in school? There are no easy answers or quick fixes to change the course of the ELL success rate in school. However, I believe that the first step in helping ELLs achieve greater academic success is to examine factors that contribute toward effective early language acquisition in the home.

While home language experiences may be diverse and different in each home, these early experiences undoubtedly shape children’s language acquisition and thus influence language proficiency upon entering school, thus impacting success in school (Bialystok, 2006). Native language, or mother tongue-proficiency, play an influential role in learning the second language, which is why it is critical to examine how children interact with language in the home (Yazici, et al., 2010). In addition to issues related to language proficiency, the mother tongue also influences the development of a child’s self-esteem and cultural identity. How children view themselves within their family unit in relation to the wider society affects processes of acculturation, assimilation, and in some cases can evoke feelings of marginalization, especially when there are gaps between the child’s home and school cultures (Cummins as cited in Yazici, et al., 2010). The influence of the home environment on language acquisition and literacy are significant and worthy of focus and attention.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, I have focused on home literacy practices as the primary factor to investigate how the various domains of literacy in a
child’s home impact simultaneous language development. The hypothesis for this research project was that home literacy practices can contribute toward enhancing language acquisition among simultaneous language learners and help them achieve academic success in school. In the following chapter, I will present a full review of literature and research related to bilingual brain development, second language acquisition theories, home literacy/ language practices that affect academic achievement, and models of bilingual education that exist in our schools.

This area of research is very complex and there are a number of variables that impact the process of language acquisition. However, as we move forward with a commitment to creating more equitable opportunities for ELLs, we as a society must be willing to abandon old ideas about language learning and remain open to new possibilities. This commitment will require a renewed focus on research in the area of early dual language development and, of course, that we remain hopeful that change is on the horizon. This research project is intended to become a part of the larger process of understanding how to help ELLs achieve academic success.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter is presented in two parts. The first part presents a review of major research and literature related to bilingual brain development, theories on second language acquisition, and differences in simultaneous language development in children. The second part discusses literature and research related to how home language experiences impact language development and academic achievement.

Theory and Discourse

Neurological Differences in Bilingual Brains

With regards to brain research, there have been many findings that illustrate significant differences between the brain functioning of monolingual and bilingual individuals (Sousa, 2011; McCardle & Hoff, 2006; Kovelman, Baker, & Petito, 2008). One of the differences that researchers believe exist between monolingual and bilingual brains is the number of linguistic systems in the brain. There is strong evidence to support the notion that young bilinguals develop dual neural systems for processing language. There is debate among researchers on the separateness of these two systems. Some argue that infants process language using a single set of rules and don’t acquire the ability to transfer meaning from one language to another until much later (Volterra & Taeschner as cited in Grosjean, 1982). However, based on current research, the idea of a unitary linguistic system has been widely contradicted by numerous researchers (Genesee, 2009; Poulain-Dubois, et al., 2011).

Another observable difference among monolingual and bilingual brains is the size of the corpus callosum, which is a thick bundle of nerves that connects the two
hemispheres of the brain. In a bilingual brain, the corpus callosum is larger and contains more neurons than in a monolingual brain (Sousa, 2011). The increased size of the corpus callosum can be explained by the fact that a bilingual’s brain shows increased brain activity in both the left and right hemisphere. Usually language is processed in Broca’s area, which is located in the left hemisphere. However, in the bilingual brain, language is often processed in the right hemisphere in the equivalent area to Broca’s (Sousa, 2011).

While research has shown that bilingual brains are capable of processing languages in both the left and right hemisphere, there has been additional evidence to suggest that the age of language acquisition significantly influences areas of language processing in the brain. In 1978, Genesee and colleagues (as cited in Grosjean, 1982) conducted a study in which they identified three groups of French-English bilingual adults. One group were bilinguals from birth, another group acquired a second language in early childhood (from the age of 4 – 6 years old), and the final group learned a second language after the age of 12. The subjects in each group participated in a French/English word identification task, during which time their brain waves were monitored. The findings of this research revealed that infant and childhood bilinguals have greater activation in the left hemisphere, whereas the adult bilinguals showed more activation in the right hemisphere. This finding suggests that adult bilinguals were using more of a holistic strategy of association and categorization to identify the words that were presented during the task. The infant and childhood bilinguals, however, were using a left hemisphere-based strategy of analyzing word semantics and possibly syntax to identify the words. Another explanation for this phenomenon in Genesse’s study can be explained by prior research that has shown that right-hemisphere processing was
generally associated with earlier stages of language acquisition and as bilinguals become more fluent, the left hemisphere usually becomes more dominantly involved with respect to processing and producing language (Galloway as cited in Grosjean, 1982).

Researchers are in general agreement that language areas of the brain diminish with age. This is evidenced by research conducted by Bloch, et al. and Hernandez & Li (as cited in Sousa, 2011) in which PET scans of 2L1 children revealed that the language activity occurs in the same areas of the brain as L1 children. However, among the participants who learned a language later in life, the PET scans revealed a significant spatial separation between the two language areas. These findings further support the notion that not only is there neurological differences between monolingual and bilingual brains, but that the age of language acquisition also impacts brain function.

However, while age of acquisition has been shown to play a role in neural organization of the linguistic processing and development, there is also evidence to show that the level of language proficiency has a significant influence on brain function in bilinguals. Wartenburger et al. (as cited in Kovelman, Baker, & Petito, 2008) conducted a study to examine the influence of both factors (age of acquisition and proficiency) on brain function. Wartenburger et al. conducted a study in which he examined gray matter density in the brains of three different groups. One group was identified as highly proficient bilinguals who acquired a second language at an early age. The other group was identified as bilinguals with low proficiency and also acquired a second language late, and the final group was monolingual. Findings indicated that both bilingual groups had greater gray matter density than the monolingual group. The highly proficient group had a greater amount of gray matter density than the group of bilinguals with low
proficiency. This suggests that both age of language acquisition and level of language proficiency significantly impact brain function.

An Overview of Second Language Acquisition Research

For years, theories on SLA have been developed to explain the ways in which second languages are acquired. These theories have provided frameworks for researchers and educators to develop a more in depth understanding of bilingualism. There are a variety of factors that influence the rate and degree to which language is acquired. Some factors that research has found significantly impact language acquisition include, but are not limited to age of acquisition, amount of exposure to second language (L2), motives for acquiring L2, cultural identity, and effectiveness of teacher and L2 teaching strategies (Richard-Amato, P., 2003). These variables illuminate the fact that SLA is an incredibly complex and elaborate process.

For decades, many different theories and models for language acquisition have emerged and influenced the paradigms of education. Chomsky (Hoff, 2005) is among the leading theorists within the field of SLA who has made significant contributions toward improving our understanding of how language acquisition occurs. The tenets of Chomsky’s view of language acquisition were that children were born with innate mechanisms that allow us to acquire language naturally. Chomsky believed that we possess a natural ability from birth to acquire language and that there are shared patterns that exist across languages (Hoff, 2005). Chomsky’s theory on language was instrumental in revolutionizing the way that we think about language.

Another major researcher in the field of SLA, Krashen, hypothesized that one’s first language plays an instrumental role in helping a person acquire language. Research
supports Krashen’s claim that the optimal time to learn a language is between the ages of 8 and 12 (Collier, 1987). After the age of 12, it becomes much more difficult to acquire a second language. Interestingly enough, this research is in direct conflict with the structure of most U.S public schools because children are not typically presented with the opportunity to learn a foreign language until they are in high school.

Another important aspect of Krashen’s theory is that language acquisition is more effective than language learning. Krashen proposed that acquisition of language can occur under two conditions. One condition is that the child receives comprehensible input in the L2. Krashen supports the use of a child’s L1 to support him/her in acquiring the L2. The importance of comprehensible input is related to Krashen’s input hypothesis, which places heavy emphasis on the importance of constructing meaning first as opposed to learning the rules of the language. (Krashen, 1992) The second condition that Krashen identified as being necessary for language acquisition to occur is related to his affective filter hypothesis. This hypothesis is related to the emotional aspect of language learning that inevitably influences an array of other areas such as motivation, confidence, and language proficiency. The premise of this hypothesis is that language acquisition can be impeded by negative emotions experienced during the process of learning the language. Essentially Krashen hypothesized that these negative emotions create a wall or a closed filter, therefore preventing the learner from obtaining the necessary comprehensible input that is required to learn the language (Krashen, 1982). When children have a low affective filter, this means that the child experiences low anxiety and more positive emotions related to learning the L2.
The psychological forces of acquiring language certainly warrant consideration with respect to understanding theories related to language learning. In 1980, Brown created what came to be known as the Acculturation Model. This framework illuminated the powerful role that acculturation lays on both language acquisition and fossilization. Theorists from psychological and cognitive schools of thinking generally agree that there is a critical period for acquiring language. However, Brown argued that the optimal stage for learning a language is directly influenced and intertwined with cultural learning (Brown, 1980). According to Brown, there are specific stages of acculturation that one experiences when they assimilate themselves into a new culture. The first stage involves feelings of euphoria and excitement because the culture is new and novel. The second stage ignites a sense of culture shock, or dissonance between the new and old culture of the person. The third stage is a time when some of the cultural stress is resolved and the person begins to identify with the new culture. Finally the fourth stage is representative of full acculturation and assimilation whereby the person accepts and becomes open to the customs and traditions of the new culture. Schumann (as cited in Brown, 1980) points out that even after assimilation, both the actual and perceived social and psychological distance between the two cultures has a strong impact on language acquisition, language maintenance, and fossilization or loss of language.

In 1965, Chomsky drew an important distinction between performance and competence: competence refers to the speaker’s knowledge of the language and performance refers to the speaker’s applied use of the language. While this concept became widely accepted within the field of SLA, a group of researchers (Tarone, Gregg, & Ellis as cited in Fulcher, 1995) argued that competence or knowledge of language
varies according to the context in which it is used. Therefore, the idea of being knowledgeable or proficient in a language cannot be generalized from one situation to another because competency is variable. A simple analogy is that a person can be very knowledgeable or competent with speaking English at home or with friends, but in a given subject such as social studies, a child’s language skills and abilities can be dramatically different from their daily discourse and use of the language in other contexts or environments. This model of thinking about language acquisition is important to consider with respect to simultaneous language acquisition and bears important implications to consider because while a child can possess basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in two languages, once they enter school, they will only receive further language instruction in English. Therefore, the child may possibly maintain BICS in both languages, but only obtain cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English.

As these theories on language learning have evolved and developed, applied linguists within various different fields of language have contributed to these frameworks for understanding language by focusing on discourse analysis. Discourse theory is an umbrella term that refers to the overall ways in which we use language to communicate and negotiate meaning through conversation (Hoff, 2005). The basic premise of discourse theory is that there is a natural order of syntactical development that occurs through engagement in conversation (Hatch, 1981).

While this theory certainly provides valuable insight related to the ways in which context affect language usage and the ways in which we negotiate meaning, this theory is limited because it remains focused on acquiring language through conversation. Hatch
(1981) identified six areas within discourse theory that remain to be key areas of focus for researchers: syntax in the context of discourse, syntactic organization in written/spoken discourse, classroom discourse, cohesion within a sentence, large and small speech events. All of these areas have important implications such as increasing comprehensibility of language, improving teacher pedagogy, increasing students’ academic language proficiency, enhancing knowledge of underlying structures of language, and ultimately helping students access language that will allow them to active citizens and advocates for their community.

_Fundamental Differences in Simultaneous English Language Acquisition_

Although the research on differences between simultaneous and sequential learners is limited, there have been various studies conducted that have reached consistent conclusions that there are some fundamental differences with respect to language acquisition for these two groups of learners. For example, research presented by McCardle and Hoff (2006) revealed consistent evidence across many research studies that monolingual and bilingual infants perceive speech differently. For example, research conducted among infants 4 – 5 months old revealed an interesting finding that monolingual infants attend to speech patterns in their native language faster than bilingual infants (Nazzi et al. and Bosch & Sebastian-Galles as cited in McCardle & Hoff, 2006). However, findings from this research also showed that bilingual infants orient faster to an unfamiliar language compared to monolingual infants. These findings suggest that perceptual flexibility may occur for a longer period among bilingual infants.

Other research suggests that the rhythmic patterns of a language may play a role in phonological processing among bilingual infants. This is evidenced by the research
that showed that infants as young as 2 months old were successfully able to discriminate languages from two different rhythmical classes (as cited in McCardle & Hoff, 2006), but were unsuccessful with distinguishing between two languages that were in the same rhymical class (Nazzi, et al. as cited in McCardle & Hoff). Long term consequences of simultaneous language acquisition among two similarly rhythmic languages and two opposing rhythmic-patterned languages would need to be further investigated to determine the effects of this phonological phenomenon seen at this early stage of language development.

Callan (2008) conducted a critical review of eight different studies that examined language abilities among groups of bilingual and monolingual children. Five of those eight studies involved specifically comparing 2L1 and L2 learners. The analysis of these different studies concluded with 100% consensus that the 2L1 participants developed language similarly to their monolingual counterparts. With regard to rate of acquisition, there were no significant differences between these two groups of learners. Within the area of vocabulary development, 2L1 learners were equivalent to the L2 group only when their lexicon was factored for both languages. However, with respect to English acquisition, the 2L1 learners’ lexicon was slightly lower than the L2 group.

Paradis (2008) conducted a study in which fifty participants were divided into two groups. One group consisted of children age 6, who were identified as 2L1 learners. The second group was comprised of children that were the same age, but identified as L2 learners. Participants were given three different measures of their language proficiency in either their home or their school. The instruments used were the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), Test of Early Grammatical Impairment (TEGI), and the
grammaticality judgment (GJ) probe. The results of these various tests revealed several findings. One finding was that the 2L1 group of children exhibited faster rates of language acquisition than the L2 group. This finding contradicted research by Meisel (as cited in Paradis, 2008). A second finding from this study was that 2L1 children exhibited higher accuracy in the area of morphology than those in the L2 group. Children who had 2L1 and L2 were acquiring English morphology at similar rates. These findings also contradicted previous research by Meisel (2007), which stated that bilingual language acquisition is slower than L2 learners.

Prior research has shown that L2 learners may take 2 – 5 years to acquire BICS and more than 5 years to acquire CALPS to the same level as their L1 counterparts (Cummins, 1989). These studies that target developing an increased understanding of language acquisition for 2L1 learners support the idea that 2L1 learners are not disadvantaged in terms of their language development and do not require the same length of time as L2 learners to achieve language proficiency that is equivalent to native English speakers (Callan, 2008).

In a longitudinal conducted by Hammer, C., Lawrence, F., and Miccio, A. (2007) there is additional evidence to support early bilingualism. The purpose of this particular study was to determine the effects of language on literacy in childhood. This study examined the literacy progress of two groups of children. One group was monolingual children (English Only) and the other group was 2L1 learners (Spanish and English). Outcomes of previous studies revealed inconsistent relationships between language and reading outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate if there were different outcomes on literacy development between these two groups of children.
Researchers monitored and assessed these children’s language using several different instruments over a period of two years. The outcome of this study indicated that there were no significant differences with respect to the rates at which these two groups acquired language. However, the study did reveal that children identified as 2L1 learners did have higher English skills than the monolingual group and the monolingual group did have higher Spanish skills than the 2L1 learners (Hammer, et al., 2007).

The results of this study contradicted research that was previously conducted by Head Start FACES, which had not observed any positive impact of bilingual children’s language abilities on early reading outcomes. In part, this difference can be explained by the fact that this study was more comprehensive, as the assessments they used not only quantitatively assessed these students’ language progress, but they also observed qualitative changes over a longer period of time than they had in other previous studies. An additional key finding that this research indicated was that 2L1 learners’ language growth was not only equivalent with respect to rate of language growth, but also that this language growth during the preschool years can have positive reading outcomes in Kindergarten. This was evidenced by the fact that both groups of children who participated in the Head Start program demonstrated strong language growth and therefore had a strong start when beginning Kindergarten (Hammer, et al., 2007).

These studies help raise educators’ awareness about the influence of dual language exposure on bilingual language acquisition and further inform educators on the positive benefits. Based on this review of literature, it is evident that bilingualism does not necessarily slow language development or put children at a disadvantage with regards to “being behind” their monolingual peers.
Factors that Influence and Support Bilingualism

Influence of Literacy and Home Language on Language Acquisition

The influence of bilingualism on a child’s development is certainly important and worthy of investigation, especially as our nation continues to be transformed into a multilingual and multicultural nation (Bialystok, 2006). Children come from increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and it is important to learn about the ways that their early language experiences in the home impact their journey in our school system (NCTE Policy Brief, 2008). Moll (1992) coined these home experiences as being “funds of knowledge.” This wealth of home literacy experiences contributes toward a child’s “cultural capital” and therefore impacts their language development and their success in school (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

It is also important to acknowledge and recognize the disparity that exists among social classes. Research continually shows that children from lower socio-economic statuses have a number of obstacles to overcome which include, but are not limited to: poor nutritional habits, greater family instability (due to economic hardship), residing in unsafe neighborhoods, having parents with little formal education, less guidance at home (due to parents having to work), and fewer educational resources in the home (Hochschild, 2003; Gratz, 2006).

Research has shown that there are various home factors that impact young children’s literacy development. Early language skills related to reading, writing, listening, and speaking are learned long before children enter school (Lesaux, Geva, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2008). Teale (1986) conducted a study among twenty-two different homes where he observed home literacy experiences. One of the findings that
emerged from his study was that merely the presence or absence of literary materials is not what makes as strong an impact. Therefore, he conducted qualitative analyses that examined the specific ways in which families engaged with literacy. The following domains of activity mediated by literacy were identified through Teale’s research: daily living routines, entertainment, school-related activity, work, religion, interpersonal communication, participating in information networks, teaching/learning literacy. Although variation may have existed within the domains, the significant finding from this research challenged us to look beyond parents’ income, occupation, and education and instead consider how parents rear their children… because that is what really matters (Teale, 1986).

Research on home literacy illuminated a significant finding that “home is where children learn much of their literacy skills” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). While variation in how these home literacies take form, it is critical that parents take an active role in supporting their children at home. Some examples of home literacies include, but are not limited to magazines, comics, storytelling, posters, music, games, computers, film/television, and books. As we raise our awareness of literacies that exist in the home, it is equally important to consider the gaps that exist between these home literacies and school literacies. These gaps can potentially have a significant influence on academic achievement. Evidence from research conducted in Canada shows that high levels of competence in the home language put children at a greater advantage than their bilingual peers who have not developed their home language skills in the same way (Genesee, 2009).
In a longitudinal study conducted by Reeder & Shapiro (1993), 67 three and four year-olds were assessed over a three-year period to determine if literacy in the home environment impacted a shift from contextual dependence to linguistic dependence. To illustrate this concept, consider the following example regarding the question, “Can you swim a length?” This sentence contains a linguistic component that allows a person to comprehend meaning from the phrase without requiring the presence or context of a swimming pool. However, in the case of very young children that lack the literacy exposure in the home, Reeder and Shapiro found that these children don’t make the same linguistic connections as the children that come from backgrounds with more literacy exposure in the home. Participants’ literate experiences and knowledge were assessed using various measures, which included Shapiro’s Home Literacy Environment Index, Clay’s Concepts About Print, and Downing’s Linguistic Awareness in Reading Readiness battery. Participants were divided into two subgroups: low and high literacy. Results over a three-year period demonstrated that the high literacy group demonstrated linguistic dependence up to a year earlier than those in the low literacy group. The conclusion drawn from this data suggests that early experiences with literacy impact the pragmatic process of language and comprehension from a very young age.

In addition to examining the influence of literacy on language acquisition, it is also important to understand the effects of home language(s) on a child’s language development. Language transference is an important factor to consider with respect to analyzing the role that home language plays in a child’s overall language development. Some languages have a higher degree of transference. For example, English and Spanish share a number of common cognates and thus the degree of transfer is high. When one
language is considered to be useful in facilitating language transfer, there is positive transfer between the two languages. When there is a great deal of interference between two languages, there is negative transfer (Odlin, 1987).

Another form of transfer that is often observed among bilingual children is the process of code switching. This should be distinguished from the term code mixing, which implies a sense of confusion between two languages. When speakers engage in code switching, there are a number of social and communicative factors that influence this deliberate process (Hoff, 2005). Code switching between two languages is often not fully understood and therefore discouraged. However, extensive research on this topic consistently shows that code switching can actually promote language transfer (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2011; Genesee, 2009). Cummins (2007) supports the concept of children using their native language to reinforce and enhance their second language. This idea is further supported by Krashen’s theory (1992) of ensuring that children have enough comprehensible input in order to build proficiency in their second language. Code switching can help as oppose to hinder children’s language development and should not be seen as language confusion (Genesee, 2009).

A child’s identity and motivation are also critical factors that affect language development. English language acquisition among bilingual children is often strongly impacted by the degree to which the child assimilates in U.S. culture. In a longitudinal case study conducted by Ro (2010), language acquisition among three second-generation Korean students was closely analyzed. The focus of this study was to examine the influence of home factors on the children’s literacy practices and also to observe these
children’s process of negotiation that occurred between learning English and maintaining their heritage language.

Several key conclusions were drawn from this research study. One conclusion was that the greater linguistic community plays a powerful role in the language development process. In the case of the three subjects from this study, it became increasingly difficult for them to maintain language proficiency, both oral and literacy, in their heritage language (Korean). Another conclusion noted, was that the level of engagement at home with the heritage language plays a key role in language maintenance. In this study, parents were not consistent with using the language in the home and at times, would even code-switch between English and Korean. This contributed to the decline in these children’s usage of Korean, but actually facilitated communication in English. A final conclusion from this study revealed that motivation to acquire language is significantly impacted by the opportunities to engage in meaningful and authentic communication. In the case of this study, students developed a stronger motivation to learn English because it was the language that they used the most in various different contexts of their lives.

The major implication that Ro’s study has with regard to bilingualism is that in order for children to develop high levels of proficiency in two languages, it takes more than family resources or family value of language, but rather the value of bilingualism from an entire community (Portes & Schauffler, 1994). In communities where there are bilingual maintenance programs combined with a greater value of bilingualism and biliteracy on the part of the larger community, children have a greater likelihood of achieving greater proficiency in both languages.
In addition to examining home factors that influence literacy and language development, it is important to identify home factors that are associated with high academic achievement in school. In a case study conducted by Hine (2009), ten Puerto Rican high school students between the ages of 14 and 19 were selected as participants. These students were enrolled in a gifted program and demonstrated high academic achievement in school. Hine collected data from surveys and interviews with both the students and parents to examine emerging patterns, themes, and traits that were associated with each family’s home environment and high academic achievement. The findings from this study revealed eight factors that were a common thread in all the families who participated in the study. The eight factors that were identified by parents of all participants in the study as being home factors that influence academic achievement were: press for achievement, press for language development, high educational/occupational aspirations, strong family support system, family bond, optimistic outlook, discomfort with cultural stereotypes and extracurricular involvement.

Within some of these identifiable home influences, Hine (2009) found that there were specific behaviors or actions in the home that consistently demonstrated how achievement and language development were supported in the home. For example, press for achievement was evidenced by a number of parent behaviors including parent concern for academic progress, offering help with homework, establishing realistic goals, providing praise/encouragement, monitoring time spent on homework, and showing interest in school topics. There were also a number of ways that parents emphasized language development in the home. These included parents reading aloud to their
children, encouraging reading, showing concern for correct language usage, and encouraging bilingual proficiency.

Saville-Troike (1984) conducted a correlational study that sought to examine patterns with what really works with regard to teaching English. Nineteen ELLs of varying ages between grades 2 – 6 participated in this study. Participants represented a range of seven different languages, had very little prior exposure to English, had well-educated parents, and had obtained literacy in their native language. Academic achievement was primarily defined by student performance on a standardized test that was administered to participants in this study. Interviews were also conducted to gain a more qualitative perspective of certain independent variables (home language experiences and personality factors) that impacted their language development.

The results from this study were broad and diverse, which certainly is a conclusion that speaks to the variability in language learning. There were however, five key findings in this study that have broader implications to language learning and academic achievement. First, vocabulary acquisition in English played a vital role in students’ oral language proficiency. Second, conversational English proficiency did not impact students’ acquisition of academic language proficiency. Third, focus on grammar and syntax in the early stages of language learning made little contribution to meeting students’ needs to construct meaning and communicate information. Fourth, while socialization played a role in language learning, students needed more than social interaction with peers in order to acquire academic language for school purposes. Fifth, there was a significant correlation between high achievement and the opportunity to learn content in their native language.
Parenting styles at home have also been shown to have an impact on achievement in school. A cross-ethnic comparison study conducted by Park (2001) examined the relationships between parenting styles and academic achievement among eight Korean students’ families. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used to identify examine the variables associated with parenting styles of each participating family. There were a number of conclusions drawn from this particular study that have strong implications to consider with respect to this current study’s efforts to focus on the home influence on student academic achievement.

Some of the conclusions drawn from Park’s (2001) study that apply to the research being conducted in this present study were as follows: First, authoritative parenting had the most significant influence on student achievement compared to other parenting styles and parenting behaviors. Second, quality of parent-child interactions were identified as more influential than the quantity of parent-child interactions. Third, parent involvement that is reactive as opposed to proactive does not generally have a positive impact on academic achievement. Fourth, student achievement patterns are generally established early on and are not likely to vary over time.

In a study conducted by White & Kauffman (1997), several factors were analyzed with regards to completion of high school. The factors that were focused on in this study were language usage, generational status, ethnicity, length of time in the U.S, and social capital. One finding that came from this study revealed that there was an association between lower drop out rates in high school and having high parent involvement. With parents who were present, monitored their child’s schoolwork, and engaged in regular conversation with their child, the dropout rates were consistently lower, regardless of
ethnicity. Native born students and compared to immigrants who have been in the U.S. for less than six years also had lower drop out rates. This finding seems to support Brown’s acculturation model, as well as the importance of the process of assimilation. One of the conclusions drawn from this piece of data is that students are more likely to complete high school, in part because there is a greater value or investment placed on education due to the fact that the child was raised in the U.S. from either birth or a very early age.

The SLA theories reviewed in this chapter, combined with early research on simultaneous language learning provide a framework for this present study which will focus on examining home factors that influence academic achievement among simultaneous ELLs.
CHAPTER 3

Methods

This research project focused on conducting an analysis of home factors that influence language development among simultaneous bilingual children. The project investigated the hypothesis that home literacy practices can positively influence language acquisition among simultaneous language learners and thus increase academic success in school. Surveys on home background and literacy practices were gathered and interviews with select parents were conducted. This researcher also collected data to qualitatively assess language skills in school and to examine a possible relationship between student academic performance and language experiences at home. To ensure a comprehensive analysis of home factors influencing academic achievement in simultaneous ELLs, multiple sources of data were gathered and analyzed.

Setting

The school is a private, non-denominational school located in Southern California in Los Angeles County with students enrolled in Kindergarten through fifth grade. The area served by the school is primarily residential and comprised of a large majority of families in the middle and upper socioeconomic range. Two parent households are the norm with most parents employed in professional occupations.

During 2011 – 2012, the student enrollment was 150 students (68 boys and 82 girls). The school’s diverse population of students includes, but is not limited to the following ethnicities: Caucasian, Hispanic, Russian, African-American, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American. A high percentage of students are bilingual and while most speak English at home, many students speak another language at home as well.
There is no school-wide adopted program to support ELLs and all classes conduct instruction in English. The school has no formal process of assessing ELLs’ fluency levels using the CELDT or any other formal measure of assessment. Students’ ethnicity and language background is obtained during the enrollment process when students commence attendance at this private school, but the information is not used to track ELLs’ achievement or draw comparisons to their monolingual peers. There are also no paraprofessionals such as a title 1 coordinator, reading specialist, or speech and language therapist. Students with special needs who require more than the school has to offer generally work with the school administration and the classroom teacher to obtain support from outside resources.

Participants

During the 2011 – 2012 school year, a total of 18 students were enrolled in this researcher’s first grade class. Eighty-three percent were identified as ELLs. All students were fluent English speakers and would likely be identified as initially fluent English proficient (IFEP) in the public school system. Approximately 67% of the ELLs that were enrolled in this researcher’s first grade class were simultaneous ELLs. Of the eighteen students previously enrolled in this researcher’s first grade class, only thirteen reenrolled in this school and were therefore those thirteen students were given the opportunity to be included in this study.

The participants in this study consisted of eight second-grade students enrolled at a private school in Southern California. Student information was gathered by a survey designed to ascertain background information about the students and their language experiences at home. (See Appendix A for survey) Using these returned surveys, two
simultaneous bilinguals with similar home background experiences were selected to be case study subjects in this investigation. It was critical that primary case study subjects selected for this study possessed homogenous experiences, in order to limit variables that might have influenced language development and literacy skill development. Parents were asked consent to use survey responses, current second grade writing samples, current grades, and 2011 – 2012 Stanford Achievement Test results.

**Procedures**

*Home Language Survey*

First, parents of all 13 students received an introductory letter from this researcher with an attached survey (see letter, Appendix B). The survey was sent home by each child’s current classroom teacher in his/her weekly class folder, which contains announcements, graded work, etc. that parents are asked to read and review. Attached to the letter was a form granting permission for the researcher to use their child’s records in this study and for their child’s work to be released to this researcher to analyze and use for the purposes of this study (see permission form, Appendix C).

Of a total of the 13 surveys and permission forms that were distributed, eight were returned. This researcher analyzed the data from the surveys and identified two simultaneous ELLs to use as case study subjects. Homogeneous patterns in home literacy practices and language experiences influenced the selection process of subjects in order to allow for equitable comparison.

The surveys that were distributed to parents to gather data on students’ family/language background and home literacy practices were adapted from research conducted
by Shapiro (1992) and Teale (1986). The questions on the survey were designed to gather specific information about how students engage with language and literacy in the home.

**Student Sample of School Writing**

Once subjects were identified, this researcher gathered additional sources of data to gain a more in-depth view and understanding of each subject’s participant’s language skills. Samples of student writing from second grade (2012-2013) were gathered for all eight students whose parents granted permission for their work to be used for the purposes of this project. The samples that were collected came from each student’s current classroom teacher. Rough draft samples of students’ narrative and expository writing were collected. All writing student work samples were rough draft writing and therefore were not revised, corrected, or graded by the child’s teacher. This researcher reviewed each student’s writing and analyzed the samples for quantity of the writing written, spelling/grammar errors, sentence sophistication, and other areas related to the quality and structure of the students’ writing. The primary objective in analyzing students’ writing was to observe patterns or observable differences between the writing of simultaneous ELLs and monolinguals.

**Test Scores**

Beginning in Kindergarten, students at this school site take the Stanford Achievement test, which assesses student knowledge in the following areas: grammar, spelling, comprehension of sentences/passages, word reading, phonics, listening skills, science, math (computation and problem solving), and social studies. This researcher analyzed student test scores for all eight participants whose parents provided permission for this researcher to use their data for this project. The objective behind analyzing student test
scores was to illuminate any patterns that existed among various subgroups in this researcher’s class (monolinguals, sequential ELLs, and simultaneous ELLs).

**Parent Interviews**

In addition to analyzing each subject’s test scores and writing samples, this researcher conducted interviews with two parents of those students who were identified as case study subjects. Parents with whom the interviews were conducted completed separate permission forms giving consent for data from the interviews to be used for the purposes of this study (see consent form, Appendix D). This researcher developed an interview protocol designed to gather additional information regarding each child’s language history, family background, and home literacy practices (see interview protocol, Appendix E). The questions related to language history primarily focused on obtaining additional information on each child’s preschool education and also to understand the motivation and factors that influenced parents’ decision to raise their child with learning two languages simultaneously.

The second section of the interview protocol obtained information regarding the level of parents’ language proficiency in each of the languages that the parents speak. There was also a question that asked about the preference of language that siblings use in the home. The rationale in asking these questions was to gain a broader perspective on language usage and language preference in the home, as these were considered possible factors that can affect simultaneous language development.

The final section of questions during the interview centered on gaining information related to recreational activities that are language embedded at home and after school. Since quality of home language experiences and parent involvement with
monitoring their child’s academics are factors that influence academic achievement, it was worthy to investigate for the purposes of this project. A secondary purpose in conducting the interviews was to clarify any questions that this researcher had with regards to the responses provided on the surveys. Parents who participated in the interview were also provided with an open-ended question at the end of the interview to add any additional information that they felt was important and valuable to include. For the parents that were not selected for interviews, but participated in completing surveys, this researcher sent a note thanking them for their participation and informing them that all necessary data for the study had been collected.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of home factors influencing academic achievement in simultaneous ELLs, multiple sources of data were gathered and analyzed. Results from these different assessments are reviewed and presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4

Results

The following chapter includes an analysis of multiple sources of data gathered for the purposes of investigating the hypothesized relationship between home literacy practices and academic success among simultaneous ELLs. These sources of data used in this study include a survey, writing samples, test scores, grades, and parent interviews.

Home Language Survey

Sixty-two percent of parents who were given surveys completed and returned the home language survey. The survey was designed to gather information on student language/ family background and home literacy practices. Based on language background for the eight students whose parents completed surveys, one was bilingual in Spanish and English and five were bilingual in Russian and English. Two of the eight students were monolingual. Therefore, the survey data for these two monolingual students was excluded from this portion of study on the basis that this researcher was focused on investigating home factors associated with bilingual students. One parent identified their child as being a simultaneous English learner; the rest identified that their child learned English as a second language. Only two of the six bilingual students received formal education in their home language. Parents identified fluency levels for their children in different areas of their home language proficiency (See Figure 1).
### Figure 1: Please identify your child’s fluency level in the language (L1) that is spoken at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oral Fluency</th>
<th>Literacy Level</th>
<th>Writing Proficiency</th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Somewhat fluent</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Somewhat fluent</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>Not proficient</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey results yielded less variability in student fluency levels in English. All students were native-born in the U.S., and therefore, have received instruction in English since Kindergarten. Figure 2 illustrates students’ fluency levels in English, as identified by parent participants.

### Figure 2: Please identify your child’s fluency level in English (L2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oral Fluency</th>
<th>Literacy Level</th>
<th>Writing Proficiency</th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Very fluent</td>
<td>Very proficient</td>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other important data gathered from the survey included information identifying language usage in the home with family members as illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5. Based on the results from this survey item, a majority of mothers and fathers consistently engage in dual language communication in the home. Grandmothers and grandfathers were reportedly not using English in the home, but were speaking to the child in their home language regularly. Two out of three of those students with siblings use their home language to communicate with one another in the home as illustrated in Figure 3.
Figure 3: Please identify the number of siblings your child has and provide the ages of each sibling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Siblings</th>
<th>Age of Brothers</th>
<th>Age of Sisters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Who speaks English to your child and how often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Grandmother</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
<th>Uncle</th>
<th>Aunt</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Who speaks additional languages to your child at home and how often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Grandmother</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
<th>Uncle</th>
<th>Aunt</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to obtaining information on language proficiency and usage in the home, the survey items were also designed to gather information on parents’ occupations and the
level of education achieved in school. Parent education and occupation are factors that research has shown can influence children’s education. All participants’ mothers had achieved an education that exceeded high school education. Three mothers had a BA degree, two had obtained a Master’s degree, and one had a doctorate. All but two mothers earned their education degree in the U.S. and all but one mother reported speaking more than one language (See Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Please indicate mother’s highest level of education achieved, occupation, and languages spoken.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Attended School in U.S.A.</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Languages Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>Industrial Engineer</td>
<td>Spanish, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>English, Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>Family nurse practitioner</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>No (Russia)</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>No (Russia)</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Stay at home mom</td>
<td>Russian, German, English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ fathers’ were all high-status careers. All participants’ fathers had achieved an education that exceeded high school education. Four had a BA degree, one held a Master’s degree, and one had obtained a PhD degree. All but one reported speaking more than one language (See Figure 7).
Figure 7: Please indicate father’s highest level of education achieved, occupation, and languages spoken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attended School in U.S.A.</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Languages Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Software Engineer</td>
<td>Farsi, French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>English, Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Software engineer</td>
<td>Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Owner of pharmacy</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Professional tennis player/ coach</td>
<td>Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>No (Iran)</td>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>Real Estate Specialist</td>
<td>Farsi, Spanish, English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A final component of the surveys was to gather information in various domains related to home literacy practices. These domains included literacy materials available, activities, technology, and quality of language exposure in the home. These areas and domains were adapted from two sources: one was a home literacy index developed by Shapiro (1992) and the other source was a home literacy practice questionnaire adapted from Teale (1986).

With respect to presence of literacy materials in the home, there was little variability among the home literacy environment of participants. There was a strong presence of books in the homes of all families surveyed. This is evidenced by the fact that all families had over 50 adult books and over 50 children’s books in their home. All students have and use a computer, paper/ pencils, and writing/ drawing materials in the home. Five out of six participants have and use coloring books/ crayons in the home. Two out of six participants have and use a chalkboard/ whiteboard in the home, as shown in Figure 8.
Figure 8: Please indicate the number of adult books and children books in your home, as well as which of the following materials are in your home and used by your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another area that the surveys were designed to assess were literacy and writing activities that students engage in at home (See Figure 9). A majority of participants’ parents reported taking infrequent trips to the library (0-1 time per month). Only one parent reported taking their child to the library 3-4 times per month. Four of the six students are frequently read to aloud at home (4-7 times per week). All parents identified their child as viewing reading as an enjoyable activity, but according to parent survey responses approximately half the students enjoy writing.
Figure 9: Please identify the following information – the number of monthly library trips, weekly read aloud time at home, time spent watching T.V., how often your child engages in reading/ writing at home, and whether or not reading/ writing are enjoyable activities for your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Monthly Library Trips</th>
<th>Weekly Read Aloud Time</th>
<th>Daily Time Spent Watching TV</th>
<th>Is reading a choice activity/ enjoyable?</th>
<th>Is writing a choice activity/ enjoyable?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1-2 hrs</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>30 min. or less</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-6 times</td>
<td>30 min. or less</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>30 min. or less</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>30 min. – 1 Hr.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>30 min. or less</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student use of technology in the home was also addressed. Most students watch an average of 0-1 hours of TV per day, as shown in Figure 9. All students use a computer at home, although the purposes for using the computer did vary to some degree (See Figure 10). Only one parent reported student use of the computer for reading. Three reported that students use the computer for writing. All students play educational games and 50% of participants use the computer to search the Internet, use a word processing program/ power point, and play games for fun.
Figure 10: Please identify in what ways your child uses the computer at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Computer Use for Reading</th>
<th>Computer Use for Writing</th>
<th>Educational Games</th>
<th>Games for Fun</th>
<th>Search Internet</th>
<th>Communicate with Friends/Family</th>
<th>Word-processing or Power Point</th>
<th>i-Photo or i-Movie</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey results related to the amount and quality of language exposure in the home were also analyzed, as illustrated in Figure 11 and 12. Five out of six parents reported that their children see them reading on a daily basis. However, only half of parents reported that children see parents writing on a daily basis. This result paralleled the results earlier described that this group of students enjoyed reading, but not all students enjoyed writing (See Figure 11). One consistent finding from the surveys was that all parents began reading aloud to their child at 0 – 2 years old.
Figure 11: **Parents modeling reading/writing in the home compared to students' frequency and enjoyment of reading/writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seeing Parents Reading</th>
<th>Does your child enjoy reading?</th>
<th>How often does your child read?</th>
<th>Seeing Parents Writing</th>
<th>Does your child enjoy writing?</th>
<th>How often does your child write?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>3-4 times weekly</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>1-2 times weekly</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>3-4 times weekly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3-4 times weekly</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>3-4 times weekly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Please identify the following ways that your child has been exposed to literacy and language practice in the home – age that your child began being read aloud to, how often/how long dinner conversations occur, and regular topics that are a part of dinner conversations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age Children Began being read to</th>
<th>Dinner conversation occurs regularly</th>
<th>Topics for Dinner Conversation</th>
<th>Amount of time for typical dinner conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 1</strong></td>
<td>0-1 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, friends, news/current events, event planning</td>
<td>10-20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 2</strong></td>
<td>0-1 years old</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>School, work, relatives, event planning</td>
<td>5-10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 3</strong></td>
<td>0-1 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, work, event planning</td>
<td>10-20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 4</strong></td>
<td>1-2 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, work, news, event planning</td>
<td>20-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 5</strong></td>
<td>0-1 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, work, friends, relatives, news/current events, event planning</td>
<td>20-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 6</strong></td>
<td>0-1 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, work, friends, relatives, news/current events</td>
<td>20-30 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five out of six parents reported that dinner conversations occur regularly: most common topics for dinner conversation included school/ work, friends, and event planning. Another consistent finding from the surveys was that all parents began reading aloud to their child at 0 – 2 years old (See Figure 12).

*Student Sample of School Writing*

Second grade writing samples were collected for each of the students whose parents granted permission for them to be used for the purposes of this study (See Figure 13). Data pertaining to Student 4 was excluded because parent permission was not obtained. Writing samples from two monolingual students (Students 7 and 8) were included in this portion of the study for the purposes of comparison among simultaneous, sequential, and monolingual students. One sample of rough draft writing was selected for each student, which was not corrected or formally graded by the teacher. The writing sample was analyzed for distinct features and components of the students’ writing such as word count, spelling/ grammar errors, and number of complex/ compound sentences used in student writing. Use of punctuation was not focused on in any of the writing samples. (See Appendix F for representative exemplars from the writing samples)

Since the student participants were not all enrolled in the same classroom for second grade, the type of writing samples that were available for this researcher to select from varied. This researcher selected writing samples that were representative of writing that was student-created and not based on a prompt and contained the above mentioned attributes that this researcher was interested in analyzing, including length of writing and complexity of sentence structure.
Five of the students in this study (Students 2, 3, 5, and 8) were previously identified as gifted and therefore enrolled in a second and third grade combination class (Classroom 2-3G). The writing samples collected from the second-grade gifted classroom were narrative stories, in which students self-selected a topic idea and wrote a creative story. The remaining three students (Students 1, 6, and 7) in this study were enrolled in a regular second grade (Classroom 2). The writing samples collected from the regular second grade classroom were samples of expository writing; in which students wrote a paragraph about information they learned about polar bears. Figure 13 shows a summary of the data collected from each student’s writing.

Figure 13: Second-Grade Writing Sample Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Word Count</th>
<th>Spelling Errors</th>
<th>Grammar Errors</th>
<th>Complex Sentences</th>
<th>Compound Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>0/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>5/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/15</td>
<td>0/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>3/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/6</td>
<td>0/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/8</td>
<td>1/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1 ELL</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>3/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Missing data for Student 4
While some of the data appeared inconclusive in certain areas, there are a few differences and patterns that are illuminated by this data. One difference that is evident is that all bilinguals in this group averaged a lower word count (average = 99) than the monolingual students represented in this group, with an average word count of 129. There were no observable differences between the amount of grammar and spelling errors among all students. There was a somewhat of a range in students’ usage of complex and compound sentences, but there did not appear to be a pattern represented in this data.

Grades

Figures 14 and 15 provide an overview of each student’s grades for second grade. Fourth quarter grades are not represented because the grades for that quarter have not been given yet. Based on the evidentiary support of these figures, all students in this study achieve high grades. In comparison to the traditional letter grade system, a VG (Very Good) would be considered to be an A and a G (Good) would be considered to be a B. None of the students received an S (Satisfactory) or lower.

Figure 14: Reading and listening comprehension grades for quarters 1, 2, and 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>READING &amp; LISTENING COMPREHENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quarter 1 (R/L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>G+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>G+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>VG-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 15: Writing and vocabulary grades for quarters 1, 2, and 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Quarter 1 (W/V)</th>
<th>Quarter 2 (W/V)</th>
<th>Quarter 3 (W/V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>G+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>VG-</td>
<td>VG-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>G+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>VG</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>VG</td>
<td>G+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>VG</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>G+</td>
<td>VG-</td>
<td>VG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Test Scores**

Student Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores from the previous academic school year (first grade) were collected from parent participants who provided permission for this data to be used for the purposes of this project. The SAT scores were evaluated and analyzed on various levels. First, this researcher examined and compared each student’s complete battery, national percentile, and grade equivalent. Figure 16 displays the scores in each of these areas. Students 1-6 were bilingual students. Scores for Student 4 were omitted because parent permission was not obtained to use this student’s test scores in this study. Based on this data, the monolingual students scored higher in all three areas than the bilingual students.
Figure 16: Comparative Analysis of Student SAT Scores – Complete battery, national percentile, and grade Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student 1 Simult.</th>
<th>Student 2 Simult.</th>
<th>Student 3 Simult.</th>
<th>Student 4 Simult.</th>
<th>Student 5 Sequential</th>
<th>Student 6 Simult.</th>
<th>Student 7 Monolingual</th>
<th>Student 8 Monolingual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete Battery</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Percentile</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Equivalent</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Average Battery Scores for ELL students = 321.8; Monolingual Students = 358
* Average National Percentile for ELL students = 85.1; Monolingual Students = 90.8
* Average Grade Equivalent for ELL students = 3.7; Monolingual Students = 4.0

In addition to examining students’ complete battery scores, national percentile, and overall grade equivalent, additional sub-sections were analyzed. These areas included: reading comprehension, vocabulary, language, spelling, and listening comprehension. Figure 17 provides a comparative overview of each group’s average scores in the above-mentioned areas. The objective behind analyzing student test scores was to illuminate if any patterns existed among simultaneous bilinguals compared to monolingual students. Based on averages calculated in each area within listening, reading and language arts, there were no distinguishable patterns or significant differences in the scores of these two groups.
Interview

The parents who completed the surveys had the option to participate in an interview. Four of the eight parents surveyed granted permission to be contacted for an interview. Two parents were selected to participate in an interview based on the criteria that their child was a simultaneous ELL, as that is the primary focus of this research project. The other two parents who were willing to be interviewed were parents of monolingual children. Therefore, they did not meet the criteria for interview selection. The information gathered from parents during the interviews was used to formulate a case study on each of these students, as discussed in the following sections.
Case Study: Student 1

Student 1 was a male aged 7. He was born in the U.S. and is considered to be second-generation because his mother and father are both U.S. immigrants. Based on initial survey results, the mother of Student 1 considers English to be his second language. Student 1 was raised from birth speaking predominantly Spanish, which is his mother’s native language. His father communicated with him primarily in English, which is the father’s second language. The father’s native language was Farsi although the language that his mother and father use to communicate with one another is English.

During the first section of the interview, the mother of Student 1 was asked questions concerning her son’s language history and educational background. The first series of questions in this area focused on obtaining more detail of her son’s preschool education. Student 1 began attending preschool at 2.9 years old. The parent of Student 1 described her son’s preschool experience as helpful to preparing him for Kindergarten. The preschool that he attended conducted instruction exclusively in English. However, there was a teacher assistant who spoke Spanish fluently and helped explain things to Student 1 from time to time. So, while his preschool education was formally conducted in English, Student 1 was able to use his native language to support his acquisition of English.

During the interview, the mother of Student 1 was asked to identify factors that influenced her decision to raise their child as bilingual. The mother of Student 1 conveyed three reasons that influenced her motivation to teach her child her heritage language. One reason stated was that she wanted to instill a sense of cultural identity in her child. A second reason that motivated this mother to teach her child two languages
was that she viewed language learning to be easier from a young age. She was confident that English would naturally become a language that her son would learn and become comfortable speaking after he began formal schooling. However, she viewed teaching her son Spanish at a later age to be a more difficult task. This is why she chose to raise her son to be bilingual from an early age. A third factor that the mother of Student 1 identified as a reason for promoting bilingualism in her home is that she wanted her child to be able to communicate with his grandmother, who has very limited proficiency in English. The mother mentioned how difficult it is for both herself and her children to communicate with her husband’s family, who speaks predominantly Farsi, a language that she and her children don’t speak. She stated during the interview that she wanted her son to be able to comfortably communicate with her family.

The second section of the interview protocol obtained information regarding the level of parents’ language proficiency in each of the languages that the parents speak. The parent of Student 1 identified a preference with communicating in her native language. She alluded to feeling that she has limited proficiency in English in speaking, writing, and reading. She emigrated to the U.S. from Cuba at age 25 and while she possesses the ability to have conversations with people in English, she feels she does not communicate in English at the same level of comfort and proficiency that she has in Spanish.

During this section of the interview protocol, the mother of Student 1 described the preference of language that siblings use in the home. In the case of Student 1, who has an older sister, they prefer to speak in English. The mother of Student 1 described a decline in her son’s motivation to engage in language using his heritage language of
Spanish. Even at home, when the mother speaks to her son in their heritage language, Student 1 often responds by speaking in English. Another factor that this mother reported as being a contributing factor to her son’s decline in speaking Spanish is partly due to the fact that when school work is completed at home, English is the language that is used. She referred to this as taking time away from speaking Spanish.

The final section of the interview centered on gaining information related to recreational activities that are language embedded at home and after school. Student 1 does not attend an afterschool program, but does participate in a range of different activities to keep him active and busy. These activities include taking lessons in tennis, karate, and skateboarding, which are all conducted in English.

Once after school activities are finished, the mother of Student 1 described the structure of their weeknight schedule. Student 1 eats dinner with his family, finishes homework, prepares for bed, and watches TV. The mother of Student 1 commented during the interview that video games are not permitted in their home. With respect to TV interests, Student 1 sits together as a family and watch The Voice. Student 1 also shares an interest with his father in animals and science. He and his father enjoy watching the National Geographic channel in the evenings when time permits.

Case Study: Student 2

Student 2 is a male aged 7. He was born in the U.S. and is also identified as a second-generation child. The parents of Student 2 immigrated to the U.S. at ages 15 and 16. Student 2 is considered to be a simultaneous ELL because he was raised from birth speaking predominantly Russian, but had some exposure to English in the home prior to attending preschool.
The first section of the interview protocol was designed to gather additional information on the child’s language history and educational background. During the interview the mother of Student 2 was asked to describe in more detail her child’s preschool education. Student 2 began attending preschool when he was 2.9 years old. The preschool he attended was a Russian daycare. This daycare conducted instruction in both English and Russian. Student 2 was both encouraged and permitted to use both Russian and English in this setting. During the interview, the mother of student 2 did feel that this academic setting helped prepare Student 2 for an English speaking Kindergarten. The mother did state during the interview that if she had the opportunity to do anything differently, that she would have spoken more English with him at home just prior to starting Kindergarten in order to help him feel more confident and acquire more English. She recalled that the first few months of Kindergarten were a little difficult, primarily because he was entering an English only academic setting and did not have the support of his previously acquired language skills in Russian. According to the mother he adapted quickly, although this was an area that the mother of Student 2 identified as being challenging with respect to her son acquiring English.

During the interview the mother of Student 2 was asked to identify factors that influenced her decision to raise her child as bilingual. This mother stated that one reason for teaching her child both English and Russian was that she wanted to instill a sense of cultural identity in her son. The Russian language is tied to their cultural heritage and according to this mother, she and her husband valued the importance of their son understanding and feeling a part of their family heritage. The mother of Student 2 also made a comment during the course of the interview that she believes knowing two
languages is something that will be more likely to help her son in the future, as opposed to hinder him. A second reason that motivated this mother to teach her child two languages from such a young age was to ensure that he would develop proficiency in their heritage language. This mother was confident that her son would acquire English in school, but felt that it was important for him to develop his Russian language skills early on. A third factor that the mother of Student 2 identified as a reason for promoting bilingualism at home was that she wanted her son to be able to communicate with his grandparents, who primarily only speak Russian and have very limited proficiency in English.

The second section of the interview protocol obtained information regarding the level of parents’ language proficiency in each of the languages that the parents speak. The parent of Student 2 identified with feeling equally comfortable in both languages. She did state that she reads a great deal more in Russian, therefore she feels more comfortable with reading Russian. She spends more time writing in English however. She stated that writing in Russian requires much more deliberate thought and is harder for her now that she is not immersed in the language as she was before.

In addition to learning about the parents’ language preferences, this mother was also asked to describe the preference of language that siblings use in the home. Student 2 has a younger brother, with whom he speaks primarily in Russian. During the course of conversation about language preference, the mother of Student 2 described a general decline in motivation on the part of her son to speak Russian at home. For example, when the parents of Student 2 speak Russian at home, Student 2 often chooses to respond to the parents in English. However, he does choose to engage in conversation in Russian with
his younger brother in order to teach his younger brother how to say things in the Russian
language. At times the mother has observed that it is difficult for Student 2 to translate
from English to Russian, but he is comfortable with asking his parents for a translation
when he needs to. The mother of Student 2 stated that teaching his brother in Russian is
the only capacity through which he shows motivation or desire to use Russian at home.

The final section of the interview centered on gaining information related to
recreational activities that are language embedded at home and after school. Student 2
still attends daycare at the same place that he attended preschool. During the afterschool
program, students complete their homework and engage in enrichment activities such as
drawing lessons, calligraphy, etc. Parent of Student 2 commented that last year, the
homework was not as time consuming and there was more time for enrichment activities.
This year, homework takes longer and there is not as much time left for the enrichment
activities offered at this daycare. With respect to language, both Russian and English are
spoken at the afterschool daycare, but when the staff provides assistance to the students
with homework, the students and staff only speak English. Therefore, English is the
dominant language spoken in the after school program.

Once after school activities are finished, the mother of Student 2 described the
general structure in their weeknight schedules. They eat dinner as a family, finish
homework, prepare for bed, and watch T.V. The mother of Student 2 noted during the
interview that video games are not permitted in their home. Student 2 gravitates toward
non-fictional programs such as aircraft carriers or ship designing. Student 2 has a strong
interest in building and designing, a quality that may or may not be influenced by the
interests of his parents, as his father is an engineer and shares the joy of building and designing things.

Since the interview was open-ended in nature, there was an opportunity for the mother of Student 2 to provide this researcher with any additional information that she felt was relevant to her child’s language acquisition and development. During the course of the interview, the mother of Student 2 expressed concern regarding the challenge that she faces with helping her son maintain his heritage language, Russian, in spite of the decline of motivation from Student 2 to use these language skills consistently at home. This mother also stated that Student 2 is enrolled in a Russian school that meets on Saturdays. The Russian school provides Student 2 with the opportunity to receive formal education in his heritage language. The mother of Student 2 expressed hopes that her son will continue to develop his language skills in Russian and be able to speak the language comfortably.

The quantitative and qualitative data collected through the surveys, work samples, test scores, and interviews provided relevant information pertaining to the home factors that influence language acquisition and academic achievement among simultaneous ELLs. These results are further discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The results of this study confirm this researcher’s hypothesis that there are indeed a number of home factors related to language and literacy that are associated with academic achievement among simultaneous ELLs. Throughout the following chapter, numerous aspects of the present study are interpreted and discussed. These areas include an analysis of this study’s results, limitations, implications, and conclusions.

It was noted in Chapter 4 that based on home language survey responses, Student 6 was the only student who was identified by her parent as being a simultaneous ELL. However, based on further investigation through the interviews conducted in this study, combined with the knowledge that this researcher has as their former teacher from 2011-2012, five of the six ELL students in this study did in fact have exposure to English prior to entering Kindergarten. In the case of four of the five Russian-speaking students, they all attended the same Russian daycare, which conducted preschool instruction in both English and Russian. However, in the case of all these ELL students, their heritage language was their dominant language from birth.

A possible explanation for why the parents in this study did not identify their children as being simultaneous ELLs may be attributed to the definition provided on the survey for being considered a simultaneous ELL. It is also possible that parents of these students equated language learning with formal schooling. Therefore, the parents did not identify their children as being simultaneous language learners because formal English instruction did not commence until these students enrolled in preschool. However, it is important to note that with the exception of Student 5, all the ELL students in this study
did have simultaneous exposure to English and their heritage language from birth. The parent responses provided on this survey area a clear indication that the child’s dominant language was considered by these parents to be their child’s true native language.

Home Language Surveys

One result that was supported by responses on parent surveys was that the home language fluency of ELLs declined as students achieved greater proficiency in English (See Figures 1 and 2). This was further confirmed by responses from parents who participated in interviews by stating that students developed a preference for using English more than their home language. It can be inferred based on prior research that this result in preferring English is caused by the need that students feel to assimilate. The function and role of the language is also a key factor because English is so widely valued and used in a variety of contexts, whereby students likely learn that their home language has limited usage and therefore they are less motivated to develop those language skills.

A final observation concerning the results with language fluency is that there appears to be an association between amount of formal language instruction and L1/L2 fluency levels. Most students in this study were identified as being very proficient in English. Given that students are instructed at school exclusively in English, this suggests the notion that formal language instruction can influence language development among bilinguals.

The group of students and parents who participated in this study possessed a number of similar attributes, which appear to be associated with high academic achievement. One attribute was all parents who participated in this study held high status occupations, had achieved high levels of education, and were identified as being of
middle to high socio-economic students. All students in this study attend private school and have been raised in a home environment that emphasizes the importance of a formal education. Evidence of these factors support prior research studies that have demonstrated a relationship between these factors and academic achievement in school.

Another factor that other research has shown to be an important factor associated with academic achievement is the quality of language and literacy experiences in the home. Results from the survey demonstrated that all students represented in this study have a variety of materials, such as books, technology, etc. which they use to engage with for literacy development or writing purposes. The survey questions related to literacy materials did not provide parents with the opportunity to specify what language the literacy books were available in. In addition to the presence of literacy materials, parent responses indicated a range of ways that they support language and literacy in the home. These include, but are not limited to reading aloud to their child, engaging in conversation at the dinner table, and being active participants themselves in the reading and writing process. Therefore, instilling a sense of relevance and meaningfulness in how reading and writing play an important role in the lives of these students.

Another finding that emerged from the surveys was that nearly all the parent participants indicated that they model reading at home. However, the results were less consistent with modeling writing. Interestingly, a similar pattern emerged with parent responses concerning their child’s enjoyment with writing. Figure 11 illustrates the parallel results between the frequency of parents modeling writing in the home and the child’s enjoyment of writing. Further research and investigation in this area is warranted, but these preliminary findings suggest that there may be a relationship between the
modeling process and the child’s willingness to participate in the process of reading and writing themselves.

Test Scores

Based on the data collected from student test scores, there appeared to be a noticeable difference among monolingual and simultaneous ELLs in the complete battery scores and national percentile (See Figure 16). However, the results were not observably different among these groups when examining the following subareas: reading comprehension, vocabulary, language, spelling, and listening comprehension (See Figure 17). The variance competence model discussed in Chapter 2 offers a possible explanation for this phenomenon. This model of language acquisition has shown that language competence among ELLs varies depending on the context in which it is being used. Since the complete battery scores factor in performance on all areas of the test, we can conclude that monolinguals and simultaneous ELLs represented in this study may vary in language competence in content areas such as math, science, and social studies. It is possible that the ELLs represented in this study do not have the same levels of CALP as their monolingual peers, as evidenced by the variance of their complete battery scores.

Interviews

There are several conclusions that can be drawn based on the interviews conducted for each case study. First, both students attended a preschool in which they received instructional support in their home language. This finding is highly suggestive of the importance in providing students with the opportunity to use their home language to support the acquisition process of an additional language. Research previously
discussed supports the notion that a person’s L1 can be used to aid L2 language acquisition.

A second result that emerged from the parent interviews was the prevalence of parent attitude toward bilingualism. Although it was not one of the objectives in this study, the interviews demonstrated that both these parents valued bilingualism and viewed it as an advantage for their children. It would be interesting to investigate this concept further to determine the degree to which parent attitude toward bilingualism impacts their child’s academic achievement in school.

A third conclusion that is drawn from the data gathered in the parent interviews is that bilingualism is tied to both a cultural identity and a means for preserving communication between generations. In the case of both case study students, their grandparents had limited English proficiency. Therefore, one of the motivating factors to teaching their children to speak their heritage language was to ensure that they would be able to communicate with relatives who don’t speak English. In addition to family communication, both parents identified strongly with their heritage, and they believed that teaching their children their heritage language would help instill a sense of cultural identity in their children.

A final conclusion based on these case studies is that consistent structure/routine in the home combined with high parent involvement is associated with high academic achievement. In the case of both students, they were described as having active life styles with minimal exposure to TV and video games. Parents in both households were actively involved with monitoring their child’s homework and engaging in regular conversation
and dialogue about their child’s life. These are all factors that prior research has demonstrated as correlated with academic achievement.

Limitations of the Study

Research on language acquisition in children is difficult to measure and quantify results in measurable terms that can be applied and generalized to other contexts. In the case of bilingualism, there are a number of uncontrollable factors that influence language development (McCardle & Hoff, 2006). While this study did involve selection of participants that were homogeneous, it allowed for many factors such as parent education, socioeconomic status, and age to be ruled out. However, it was impossible to account for all factors that influence language development and English acquisition in the group of students that were represented in this study.

Another limitation of this study was that there was a lack of generalizability due to the small sample size represented in this study. With a larger pool of participants, chance variation would have been reduced and therefore the findings of this study would have been more generalizable to other contexts. It also would have been preferred to have a greater degree of opportunity to conduct a more in depth comparative analysis between simultaneous ELLs and monolinguals.

A final limitation of this present study is that participants were selected using convenient sampling. Therefore, the context in which the participant pool came from was limited to one school. The validity of this study would have been increased if participants were selected through random sampling in different contexts.
Implications for Future Research

The premise of this study began with considering the conditions and current obstacles that language-minority students face in our schools, whereby they are placed in a difficult predicament of needing to “catch up” to their monolingual peers in areas such as language and literacy (August and Shanahan, 2008). However, research in this area poses the question of whether or not simultaneous ELLs are at a greater advantage than sequential ELLs. Results and findings from this present study cannot conclusively answer this question. However, the simultaneous ELLs represented in this study were high academic achieving students and at this stage of language development, no differences in academic achievement between bilinguals and monolinguals were apparent. Given that there is such limited research in this area, the implications for further study and investigation are very important.

Students in this present study were identified as being successful in school, as evidenced by their high academic achievement in school. Based on the evidence provided through parent interviews, findings from this study suggest that ensuring that students have dual language support early on in their education may contribute to increasing language acquisition rate. This is valuable information for both parents and educators because it raises awareness concerning previous research, which has also shown that languages are mutually reinforcing and help aid language development. Therefore, the broader implications of this conclusion is for policies and approaches to language learning in our school be revised. It is unlikely that there is one program or approach that will effectively meet the needs of all ELLs. However, our school system should not remain complacent with the current methods and structure for teaching ELLs.
A final important implication of this research is that this research draws attention to the fact that ELLs possess unique and complex learning needs (NCTE Policy Brief, 2008). ELLs cannot be viewed as one large homogenous group. This study is one small example of how simultaneous ELLs enter our school system with enormous funds of knowledge and a wealth of language capital. The expectations and teaching approaches should be different for simultaneous ELLs, as they are not at the same stage of language acquisition as a sequential ELL who knows another language, but possesses limited English proficiency. This finding has great implications for changing the tracking system of ELLs. Further investigation and research is required to determine how simultaneous ELLs continue to progress with their language growth. As this study found, there also appears to be a decline that often occurs with the child’s heritage language. Further study and investigation is required to determine how this decline impacts the child’s language development.

Concluding Remarks

This study has contributed to the existing body of research in the area of bilingualism in three key ways. One, this study focused on a specific group of ELLs and examined the possible relationships that exist between home language and literacy and academic achievement. The second contribution made by this study is that it confirmed findings that have previously been demonstrated through other research studies. And finally, the third contribution made has been to illuminate lingering questions that will hopefully launch more research and investigation in this area bilingualism.

Clearly early childhood bilingualism has been shown to have numerous cognitive benefits. While there are a number of theories and frameworks that have been developed
to understand bilingualism, there is limited research on how the academic achievement of simultaneous ELLs differs from sequential ELLs. However, studies such as this present study become stepping-stones on a longer journey of research, exploration, and discovery to understanding how home language and literacy truly impact the language learning process for simultaneous ELLs.
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APPENDIX A

Survey Questions

Child’s Name: ____________________________________________________________
Birthdate: _______________________ Born in U.S.A: YES NO

Parent’s Name: __________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________________________________________________
Email: _________________________________________________________________

Language Background:
1. Does your child speak another language in addition to English?
   YES NO

2. What language(s) in addition to English does your child speak?
   _________________________________________________________________

3. Please circle one statement that reflects how your child acquired English:
   a) English was my child’s first language
   b) English was my child’s second language
   c) My child learned English and another language at the same time from birth
   Circle all that apply.

Who speaks English to your child?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brother(s)</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others?</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Who speaks the other language(s) to your child?

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<td>Mother</td>
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<td>Brother(s)</td>
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<td>Grandmother</td>
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<td>Grandfather</td>
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<td>Uncle</td>
<td>Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others?</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle your child’s level of fluency when speaking this other language.
VERY FLUENT  FLUENT  SOMEWHAT FLUENT  NOT VERY FLUENT

Does your child know how to read in this other language?
YES  NO
Please circle your child’s level of proficiency when reading in this other language.
VERY PROFICIENT  SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT  NOT VERY PROFICIENT

Does your child know how to write in this other language?
YES  NO
Please circle your child’s level of proficiency when writing in this other language.
VERY PROFICIENT  SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT  NOT VERY PROFICIENT

Has your child received any formal education in this other language?
YES  NO
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please circle your child’s level of fluency when speaking English.
VERY FLUENT  FLUENT  SOMEWHAT FLUENT  NOT VERY FLUENT

Please circle your child’s level of proficiency when reading in English.
VERY PROFICIENT  SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT  NOT VERY PROFICIENT

Please circle your child’s level of proficiency when writing in English.
VERY PROFICIENT  SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT  NOT VERY PROFICIENT

Family Background:
If your child has siblings, please indicate the ages of each sibling:
________________________________________________________________________

Did you attend school in the U.S.A.? Please indicate yes or no. If no, please specify where you attended school.
Mother: ________________________________________________________________
Father: _________________________________________________________________

What is the highest grade or college degree you completed?
Mother: ________________________________________________________________
Father: _________________________________________________________________

What is your occupation?
Mother: ________________________________________________________________
Father: _________________________________________________________________
Languages spoken by parents (if more than one language is spoken by either parent, please circle the native language)
Mother: _________________________________________________________________
Father: _________________________________________________________________

Home Environment Activities and Literacy Practices:
Approximately how many books do you have in your home?
Adult books:
___ 0–10  ____ 11–30  ____ 30–50  ____ over 50
Children’s books:
___ 0–10  ____ 11–30  ____ 30–50  ____ over 50

How often does your child see his/her parents reading on a weekly basis?
_____ Never  _____ Rarely  ______ Sometimes  ______ Daily

How often do you or a member of your family bring your child to the library on a monthly basis?
_____ Never  ____ 1 time  ____ 2 times  ____ 3–4 times  ____ over 4 times

How often is your child read to, at home, on a weekly basis?
_____ Never  ____ 1 time  ____ 2–3 times  ____ 4–6 times  ____ Daily

At what age did you begin reading to your child?
____ 4+ years  ____ 3–4 years  ____ 2–3 years  ____ 1–2 years  ____ 0–1 year

How often does your child watch T.V. each day?
____ 30 min. or less  ____ 30 min. – 1 hr  ____ 1–2 hrs  ____ 2 hrs or more

Is reading an enjoyable activity for your child?
___________________________________________

Is writing an enjoyable activity for your child?
___________________________________________

In what ways is writing used in your home: (Please check all that apply)
_____ Charts or checklists
_____ Bulletin board (family messages)
_____ Writing letters/sending E-mails (to communicate with friends/relatives)
_____ Work or School related activities
_____ Writing stories or poems
_____ Record keeping
_____ Keeping a Journal/ Diary
_____ Religious activities
_____ Other (please specify) _______________________________________

How frequently does your child observe parents writing on a weekly basis?
____ Never       ____ 1 – 2 times       ____ 3 – 4 times       ____ 5 – 6 times       ____ Daily

Please check which of the following items are in your home AND used by your child:
____ Writing/ drawing materials
____ Computer
____ Paper & Pencils (something to write with)
____ Whiteboard and dry erase board (or chalkboard & chalk)
____ Coloring book and crayons

Does your child use a computer for reading? YES      NO
Does your child use a computer for writing? YES      NO

Please identify which of the following describe specifics on how your child regularly uses the computer. Please check all that apply.
____ Educational games
____ Games just for fun
____ Search Internet
____ To communicate with friends/relatives
____ Word Processing
____ PowerPoint
____ i-photo/ i-movie (or similar program)
____ Other (please specify if not listed above) ______________________________________

Does your family eat together as a family and engage in conversation at the dinner table?  
(Circle one)       YES (always)       SOME TIMES       NO (rarely)

If your family does engage in conversation, what are typical topics of conversation at your dinner table? (Please check all that apply)
____ School
____ Work
____ Friends
____ Relatives
____ News/ Current Events
____ Event planning (upcoming sports/ recreational plans)
____ Other dinner table topics not listed above: ______________________________________
Approximately how long are your family dinner table conversations?

_____ 5 - 10 min
_____ 10 - 20 min
_____ 20 – 30 min.
_____ Over 30 min.

Please indicate if you would be willing to meet with Mrs. Tran for a short interview. In this interview you will be asked to describe more fully your use of language and literacy at your home.

_______ Yes, I would be willing to participate in an interview.
_______ No, I would not be willing to participate in an interview.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!
Please enclose in the attached envelope and seal it. You may give your completed survey to Gina at the front office. 😊
Dear Parents,

I am presently completing my Masters degree in the Language and Literacy program and California State University Northridge. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis project. The focus of my study is to learn more about the various factors that influence language development in children. I would greatly appreciate your help and assistance with this project by completing the attached survey. The survey is designed to gather background information about your child, family, and literacy practices at home. Your answers to these questions will help me gain a more in depth understanding of what factors influence language acquisition in children.

I am requesting permission from you to use your child’s data in my educational research study. Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Parent and student identities will be kept completely confidential and responses will not be linked to any individual. No one other than myself will know your individual answers to this questionnaire.

If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the attached survey as best you can. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please place the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope that is addressed to me and then seal the envelope. The envelope can be returned to either your child’s classroom teacher or Gina (the school secretary). All surveys will be kept in the sealed envelope and put in my school mailbox. I would also request that you complete the attached consent form to allow me to use the information you provide, as well as some of your child’s classwork and test scores for the purposes of my research project.

If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me at (805) 223 – 0484 or michelle.berkley@yahoo.com.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this important endeavor. Your time and involvement is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Tran
(Your child’s first grade teacher)
APPENDIX C

California State University, Northridge
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

SURVEY

An investigation of home literacy & language practices that influence language development in simultaneous English language learners

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM
Researcher:
Michelle Berkley-Tran
Department: Elementary Education
Telephone Number: (805) 223-0484
Email Address: michelle.berkley@yahoo.com

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Nancy Prosenjak, Professor
Department: Elementary Education
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
Telephone Number: (818) 216-9767
Email Address: nancy.prosenjak@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to explore factors at home that influence academic achievement in English Language Learners (ELLs) who learn two languages simultaneously from birth.

SUBJECTS
Inclusion Requirements
You are eligible to participate in this study if you are the parent or guardian of a student who is currently enrolled as a second grade student at Woodcrest and was formally enrolled in Mrs. Tran’s first grade class.

Time Commitment
Participating in this study by completing the survey will involve 5 – 10 minutes of your time.

PROCEDURES
The following procedures will occur: First you will complete a survey about your child’s language background, family information, and home environment. Next you will return the completed survey in the provided envelope addressed to Mrs. Tran and turned in to Gina at the front office.
Please check all that apply:

☐ I grant my permission for Mrs. Tran to use my child’s data from the survey in her educational research project regarding language development. I fully understand that the data will be kept completely confidential and will be used only for the purposes of her research study.

☐ I voluntarily consent to Mrs. Tran using other sources of data about my child in her study. Other sources of data would include journal entries and writing samples.

☐ I grant permission for Woodcrest School to allow Mrs. Tran to have access to my child’s Stanford Achievement test scores from last year, as well as test scores and grades from my child’s current teacher. I fully understand that this data will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of her research study.

☐ I do NOT grant my permission for Mrs. Tran to use my child’s data in her educational research project regarding language development.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include possible discomfort with answering questions related to your child’s background or home language experiences. To minimize these risks, participants may skip any questions that they are not comfortable with answering. This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.

BENEFITS
Subject Benefits
The possible benefits you may experience from the procedures described in this study include positive feelings associated with the knowledge that by providing information about your child’s language experiences that you are contributing toward research in an important area within education. You may experience feelings of positivity or happiness that your child is experiencing success in school that is directly influenced by your efforts and involvement at home.

Benefits to Others or Society
Due to the fact that there is limited research in the area of simultaneous language development, your participation in this study can contribute toward developing awareness among educators and researchers with regard to the influence of home environment on language development.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION
The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT
Compensation for Participation
You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.
CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data
All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

Data Storage
The completed surveys will be stored in a locked file box, along with other research data including researcher notes.

Data Access
The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you or your child.

Data Retention
The researcher intends to keep the research data for approximately 5 years and then it will be destroyed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.
If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT
You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Participant ___________________________

Researcher Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Researcher ___________________________
APPENDIX D

California State University, Northridge
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

INTERVIEW

An investigation of home literacy & language practices that influence language development in simultaneous English language learners

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:
Michelle Berkley-Tran
Department: Elementary Education
Telephone Number: (805) 223 - 0484
Email Address: michelle.berkley@yahoo.com

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Nancy Prosenjak, Professor
Department: Elementary Education
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
Telephone Number: (818) 216-9767
Email Address: nancy.prosenjak@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to explore factors at home that influence academic achievement in English Language Learners (ELLs) who learn two languages simultaneously from birth.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements
You are eligible to participate in this study if you are the parent or guardian of a student who is currently enrolled as a second grade student at Woodcrest and who is identified as a simultaneous English language learner.

Time Commitment
Participation in a short interview with Mrs. Tran will take approximately 20 - 30 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you.

PROCEDURES
The following procedures will occur: You will be contacted to schedule a brief interview with Mrs. Tran at time that is convenient for you. During the interview, you will be asked several
follow up questions related to the survey and additional information about your use of language and literacy at your home.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include possible regret that you did not have an opportunity to disclose enough information or that you disclosed too much information to your child’s former teacher. It is possible that you may encounter discomfort with answering questions related to your child’s background or home language experiences. To minimize these risks, participants may decline to answer any questions that they are not comfortable with answering.

This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.

BENEFITS
Subject Benefits
The possible benefits you may experience from the procedures described in this study include increasing your own knowledge about your child’s language development and the influence of his/her home environment on both languages that they speak. You may experience feelings of positivity or happiness that your child is experiencing success in school that is directly influenced by your efforts and involvement at home.

Benefits to Others or Society
Due to the fact that there is limited research in the area of simultaneous language development, your participation in this study can contribute toward developing awareness among educators and researchers with regard to the influence of home environment on language development.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION
The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT
Compensation for Participation
You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Subject Identifiable Data
All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

Data Storage
Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed at a later time by Mrs. Tran. The audio-recordings and transcripts from the interview will be stored in a locked file box, along with other research data including researcher notes and participant surveys.

Data Access The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

Data Retention
The researcher intends to keep the research data for approximately 5 years and then it will be destroyed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.
If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT
You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep.
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

Participant Signature __________________________________________________________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Participant __________________________________________________________________________

Researcher Signature __________________________________________________________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Researcher __________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E

Parent Interview Questions

Language/ Education Background:
Did your child receive preschool education?
If so, where?
What was the language of teacher?
What was the language of children in the class?
Can you describe one literacy activity that occurred at preschool?
Do you feel your child’s preschool experience helped prepare him/her for Kindergarten?
Please tell me why or why not.

From the time your child was born, what impacted your decision to teach your child these languages from birth?

Have you encountered any challenges with teaching your child two languages simultaneously?

Family Background:
You indicated on the survey that you speak __________________ and __________________.
Could you describe your level of proficiency in these languages?
Speaking?
Reading?
Writing?

I notice from the survey you completed that ---(child’s name)---- has _____ siblings.
What language does ___________ and his/her siblings typically use to communicate?

Home Environment Activities and Literacy Practices:
Does your child attend after school care?
What types of activities does your child participate in?

Tell me about how your child spends his/her day from the time that he/she comes home from school until bedtime.

I notice that you indicated on the survey that your child watches ____ hours of T.V. What kinds of programs does your child typically watch?

Is there any additional information that you feel is important to add or inform me of?

NOTE: During the course of the interview I may ask parents to clarify answers from the survey if any responses were incomplete or not clear.
On the survey, you stated __________________. Can you tell me more about that?
Polar bears primarily eat seals. In the winter, polar bears give birth to about 3 cubs, and they take care of them and teach them how to hunt. Sometimes polar bears stalk seals and when they get close to the seal, then in a swift bite, it bites it head.
A polarbear can swim and hunt at the same time. Nothing could kill a polar bear upset humans.
Once upon a time, there was a rover. The rover was very very fast. The rover flew to the moon. It came back with moon rocks. Then the rover flew to Mars. It came back with samples of Mars's rocks. Scientists took the rocks. One of the scientists decided to do an experiment. He put one of the rocks in a special oven. He put the oven to 400°F. The rock got very hot. It started to expand. Then the rock exploded. After that experiment, the rover flew to Pluto. It brought back some ice for the scientists. The rover went to Venus. It collected some of its rocks. Then the rover came back to Earth. Then the rover flew to Mercury. It collected some more rocks. Then the rover flew back to Earth. It gave the ice, rocks, and other stuff to the scientists. One of the scientists decided to do another experiment. He put the ice into a freezer. The next day the scientists came back to their lab where the freezer was. There was a giant ice cube. The scientists...
were shocked that a piece of ice could break a freezer. Then the rover flew to Jupiter and Saturn and collected gases. It flew back with the gases and gave them to the scientists.

The End

Student 2
Narrative Writing Sample
(Pg 2)
Once upon a time, there was a cartoonist. He was a nice monster. Leroy is his name. Leroy was a cartoonist. He made cartoons that were funny. Often, Leroy would make his cartoons look like the real world. He was actually a genius. Leroy's cartoons were always full of life. The cartoonist's artwork was something special. Leroy was the evil type of cartoonist. He made his cartoons come to life. The cartoonist made his cartoons come to life. He made his cartoons come to life. The cartoonist made his cartoons come to life. He made his cartoons come to life. The cartoonist made his cartoons come to life. He made his cartoons come to life.
Once upon a time, a young girl was playing outside. Then all of a sudden, a witch popped up from behind a bush. The young girl was very scared so she ran as fast as she could. She ran past people and shouted "Help me! A witch is chasing me! Help! Help!" as loud as she could so they could hear her. But the witch ran faster and faster and then the witch caught up with the girl. The girl was so scared that she started to cry. As soon as the girl got to her house, she shut the door as fast as she could. The girl locked the door and the witch couldn’t get in.
Polar Bears are the biggest land predators. We have to protect them.}

Only humans can hurt polar bears. We can help them by saving ice.
Once there was a polar bear named Mala. She hunted seals all the time. She had a cub named Shannon she rode on Mala. They went out with her cub Shannon to teach her how to hunt. Mala and Shannon's only predator was people. Mala could swim 10 miles without taking a breath. Polar Bears are on my favorite animal list.
Once upon a time, there was a monster named Gordon. Everyone always laughed when he tells them his name. And when he was asked something, he always told someone.

The monster always laughed. Gordon hated that. One night, Gordon was fast asleep in his bed. So the bed broke. Then he was growing, and soon he was too big for the bed. So he didn't even know he was in such a deep sleep. He didn't even know he was laughing.

The monster always laughed, and when he tells them his name, everyone always asked someone something.
He grew two inches taller and I think, finally be stopped at two hundred and fifty-two feet and sixteen feet wide. Under, I thought your Godzilla's shrinking down to his normal size. Not at all, said Frank, you're still funny. Don't you think my name is funny too? His normal voice, said Frank, is normal, and I think my name is funny too. He was Frank, his best friend. They walked away.