

# Reading Aloud to Bilingual Students: Examining the Interaction Patterns Between Pre-service Elementary Teachers and Bilingual Children in the Context of Small Group Read Alouds in Maintstream Classroom Settings

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**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
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READING ALOUD TO BILINGUAL STUDENTS: EXAMINING THE  
INTERACTION PATTERNS BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE ELEMENTARY  
TEACHERS AND BILINGUAL CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF SMALL GROUP  
READ ALOUDS IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM SETTINGS.

Dissertation  
by

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **READING ALOUD TO BILINGUAL STUDENTS: EXAMINING THE INTERACTION PATTERNS BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AND BILINGUAL CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF SMALL GROUP READ ALOUDS IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM SETTINGS.**

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Federal legislation now requires that all children participate in large-scale, statewide assessments in English in an effort to increase accountability and bolster student achievement (Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004; Hass, 2002). Students labeled as “English language learners” (ELLs) consistently score dramatically lower on English language and literacy assessments than their native speaking peers (Au & Raphael, 2000; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). Additionally, most mainstream teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the linguistic challenges that ELLs face in classroom settings (Lucas & Villegas, 2011).

Reading aloud to bilingual students, specifically using components of a shared reading model (Holdaway, 1979), potentially provides an avenue for meaningful language and literacy development. While a corpus of research exists about reading aloud with English-speaking students, there has been limited research on its use with bilingual students in classroom settings. Drawing on a sociocultural theoretical framework (Gee, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), the Output Hypothesis of second language acquisition (Swain, 1985), ethnographic perspectives (Heath & Street, 2008), action research (Stringer, 1999) and discourse analysis (Bloome et al., 2008), this qualitative study examined the practice

of four pre-service elementary teachers reading aloud English texts (fiction, expository, and poetry) to small groups of bilingual students across four grade levels. The research was conducted to study pre-service teachers' language and literacy teaching practices and pre-service teacher-bilingual student interaction patterns in read aloud contexts to better understand their potential for bilingual student language and literacy learning.

Additionally, the study provided beginning teachers with professional development geared towards helping pre-service teachers to meet the unique language and literacy needs of bilingual students.

It was found that pre-service teachers consistently strived to develop students' word knowledge and support text comprehension. In doing so, teachers utilized a variety of teaching practices and linguistic patterns of interaction during read alouds which varied across teachers. The argument is made that these various teacher moves and discourse patterns led to qualitatively different types of interactions and affordances for bilingual student learning. Implications for mainstream classroom teachers and teacher education programs are provided.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

### **Introduction and Background**

The United States experienced record immigration in the past decade leading to an ever more diverse society (Capps et al., 2005; Crawford 2004). This influx of immigrants has increased the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in today's public schools and has led to a significant and consistent rise in the number of children in the United States negotiating the use of two or more languages on a regular basis (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2011), the number of school aged children who speak a language other than English at home has doubled from 1980 until 2009 and now represents 21% of the population. In the state of Massachusetts, over three-quarters of school districts enroll English language learners (ELLs) or students in the process of acquiring English and have a first language other than English and 21% of students between the ages of five and seventeen in the commonwealth speak a language other than English at home (Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

This transformation of demographics in American schools has led to a substantial number of limited English proficient (LEP) children. LEP is a term used in federal legislation and refers to ELLs who are beginning to intermediate in their English language proficiency (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). The United States Census definition of limited English proficiency includes all children who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than "very well" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The ELL population is the fastest growing population of public school students in the United States

(Capps et al., 2005). It is estimated that 19 percent of school-age children, or one of five, comes from an immigrant family and more than one third of these children are LEP. The proportion of ELL students continue to increase as the United States attracts more citizens from beyond its borders and as birth rates increase in linguistically diverse households (McKay & Wong, 2000).

The population of ELLs in schools represents a linguistically and culturally diverse population. The most common primary language spoken is Spanish although school officials report that there are nearly 460 languages collectively spoken across the United States (Kindler, 2002). Many of these students have left war-torn countries while others have immigrated in order to secure a better economic future for themselves and their families (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Another group of ELLs includes those born in the United States to immigrant parents. Most immigrants have settled in five states which include California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois; however the states with the fastest growing population of bilingual learners are dispersed across the country (Capps et al., 2005). These students not only differ in their native languages and places of origin and settlement, but also in their family economic status, prior formal schooling, and levels of oral and written proficiency in their first and second languages (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

It is important to recognize that ELLs and LEPs are developing their intellectual capacities through the use of multiple languages and should therefore not be described merely by the level of their English proficiency (Brisk, 2006; García, Kleifgen, Falchi, 2008). As García et al. (2008) points out:

When officials and educators ignore the bilingualism that these students can and often must develop through schooling in the United States, they perpetuate inequities in the education of these children. That is, they discount the home languages and cultural understandings of these children and assume their educational needs are the same as a monolingual child (p. 6).

For the purpose of promoting greater awareness of the needs and lived realities of this student population, I will use the term “bilingual learner” in this research study to describe students at varying levels of English proficiency who negotiate each day using two or more languages. The most widely used term in the literature is “English language learner (ELL).” Other terms commonly found in the literature include language minority students, limited English proficient (LEP), English as a second language (ESL), culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), language-minority, and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These additional terms are most often used in reference to children whose native language is not English and who come from homes in which English is not the predominant language of communication.

This study examined the interaction patterns and teaching practices of pre-service teachers during the context of shared reading (Haldaway, 1979) with small groups of bilingual learners in mainstream classrooms by investigating the following questions:

**What is the nature of the interactions between bilingual students and pre-service teachers during the context of small group read alouds?**

- How do pre-service teachers’ and bilinguals children’s conversations relate to and extend from the texts these participants use?
- What sense are bilingual students making of text during read aloud contexts?

I sought to understand what teaching practices and linguistic patterns of interaction pre-service teachers utilize in read aloud contexts and how they impact language and literacy learning opportunities for bilingual students. Additionally, I was interested in helping pre-service teachers learn to teach this population of students. Many teachers struggle to educate bilingual students due to the difficulty and complexity involved in teaching students whose language, cultural traditions, and values differ from that of mainstream American classrooms (Hakuta, 2001). Little empirical research has investigated teacher-bilingual student interaction patterns in the context of small group read alouds. Therefore, it was important for studies such as this one to be conducted.

### **The Problem**

The shift in demographics of American schools has also been accompanied by low levels of literacy achievement in a large population of bilingual students and an overrepresentation of this group in special education, remedial reading programs, and vocational tracks where teachers tend to hold low expectations for students (Au & Raphael, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Fitzgerald (1995) points out significantly high drop-out and grade retention rates among language minority students, especially Hispanic students with drop-out rates nearing 40%. These problems are complex and have multiple causes. Low levels of English language proficiency create challenges in schools for bilingual students including impaired social relations, lack of inclusion, and low-levels of academic achievement (Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, & Kwok, 2008). Oral proficiency is also associated with English literacy skills, which is directly related to

academic success in schools (August & Shanahan, 2006). Some of the difficulties with high drop-out and grade retention rates also stem, in part, from mandatory testing requirements used to measure school accountability under No Child Left Behind (2001). The scores of such exams are used to make high-stakes decisions which often turn into negative consequences for bilingual students, their schools and teachers.

Federal legislation now requires that all children participate in large-scale, statewide assessments in English in an effort to increase accountability and bolster student achievement (Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004; Hass, 2002). Students designated as “ELLs” consistently score dramatically lower on language and literacy assessments than their native speaking peers as would be expected from a population still working to gain academic English proficiency (Au & Raphael, 2000; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). For example, García (1992) pointed out that there is a two-to-four grade level achievement gap between native English speaking and Hispanic students. The average 4<sup>th</sup> grade 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading score for ELLs, 191 (out of 500), was 13.6% lower than the national average (221) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). ELLs comprised the lowest scoring category of students, scoring lower than the lowest income schools, all races/ethnicities, and students with disabilities. This remained true for both 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade scores, with the gap further widening between ELLs and the national average as well as all subgroups.

Low levels of literacy achievement pose a serious problem for bilingual learners as there is reciprocity between learning to read and reading to learn (Anderson & Roit,



1996). Literacy becomes the gateway to pursuing all other subject areas. In fact, research reveals that children who experience reading difficulties fall further behind in school as the acquisition of content area subject matter increasingly relies upon the ability to read independently (Stanovich, 1986). It is important to recognize that many bilingual learners struggle to achieve literacy for a variety of reasons which are not always caused by lack of fluency in English (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). The literacy development and academic achievement of these students is a complex issue and unique to each child. Factors that impact development are multi-faceted and include (a) prior schooling experiences, (b) age upon entering U.S. schools, (c) language and literacy proficiency in both native and target language, (d) family cultural practices surrounding literacy, (e) learning ability, (f) cultural factors, and (g) current school policies and teaching practices (Brisk & Harrington, 2007). Nonetheless, teachers face the challenge of simultaneously building students' literacy, developing their written language, and facilitating English language development.

Many students identified as bilingual learners are enrolled in a variety of specialized programs with ESL and bilingual teachers, such as self-contained bilingual, sheltered content area instruction, or self-contained English as a second language classrooms (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). However, as Lucas and Grinberg (2008) point out, political oppositions to the use of languages other than English, the passage of No Child Left Behind (2001) requiring that LEP students be tested in English, and the cost savings associated with placing ELLs in mainstream classes, are all factors that have contributed to significant numbers of ELLs being placed in mainstream classrooms with teachers who

may have little knowledge or preparation for working with this student population. This is particularly salient in states that have passed anti-bilingual initiatives including California, Colorado and Massachusetts. To the detriment of bilingual learners, providing students with instruction primarily in English does not help them close the gap with native English speaking peers in their academic achievement (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). Moreover, in a meta-analysis, Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005) found that all types of bilingual education programs were preferable to English only instruction.

Opponents of bilingual education make the assumption that immersion offers students a more effective way of learning English by not sacrificing English instructional time, explains Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005). However, it is often taken-for-granted in many mainstream classrooms, which presumably *immerse* students in the English language, that there is ample language to be learned. Unfortunately, research reveals that there is a dearth of language found in typical classrooms and the majority of it is teacher dominated (Anderson & Roit, 1996; Newkirk, 1992). Researchers have found that bilingual students typically have limited opportunities for extended discourse with peers and teachers during classroom instruction. For example, Toohey (1998) noted that ELL students in a first grade classroom were given few opportunities to interact with more capable English-speaking peers. Instead, verbal interaction primarily occurred between students and the teacher. This left few opportunities for students to engage in more natural conversation, involving the usual give-and-take of interaction, such as those found outside the classroom and shown to contribute to L2 learning (Cook, 1996). Additionally, Anderson and Roit (1996) observed several grade 1-6 classrooms across the

United States with high percentages of ELLs and found that natural conversations about students' reading experiences were nearly absent from classroom discourse. Instead, reading instruction was teacher dominated and controlled through teacher-generated questions.

Teachers' talk tends to dominate most classroom discussion as exemplified by the language interaction that typifies discourse in most mainstream classrooms involving a three-part exchange in which the teacher initiates (I) conversation, usually by posing a question to only one student (Mehan, 1979). Then, the student provides a response (R) which elicits a brief follow up (E) or evaluation from the teacher (Cazden, 1988, Mehan, 1979, Hall, 1998, Hall & Walsh, 2002, Toohey, 1998). This IRE exchange model involves about 70 percent utterances from the teacher leaving little opportunities for students to engage in more meaningful, complex and extended discourse (Cook, 1996). Michaels and Cazden (1986) confirmed this three-part exchange in their study of "sharing time" in primary classrooms. They further noted that teachers' responses did not involve a focus on the vocabulary found in students' sharing narratives and lacked comprehension and appreciation for what students reported. In another study, Hall and Walsh (2002) found that during the three-part exchange, some students were afforded more participation time when the teacher followed up the exchange with additional questions. In sharp contrast, other students' contributions were completely ignored and they were not given many chances to initiate exchanges. This led to very different language learning opportunities for different groups of students.

Bilingual students, in particular, may struggle with this type of classroom interaction as parents and communities socialize their children into particular ways of communicating and relating with adults (Brisk, 2006). As such, bilingual students may come from cultures where they are not expected to answer questions of adults, are only asked questions when the adult does not know the answer, or when adults are assessing their knowledge. Classrooms that use the IRE model as the primary classroom participation structure may portray bilingual students as incompetent learners. Teachers are unlikely to recognize that students do not respond to known answer questions because they have not been socialized into this type of interaction in the home (van Kleeck, 2003). Thus, the assumption becomes that students do not know the answer which can lead to detrimental effects on children's achievement.

The IRE exchange also severely limits language learning opportunities as there is little language expansion or elaborated responses where teachers can reinforce children's language skills as well as model more sophisticated language. Students are given limited opportunities to talk through and experiment with their learning (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Second language learners need such opportunities as the act of producing language contributes to the process of learning a second language (Swain, 2003). Classroom discourse not only contributes to students' oral language development, but also influences both the content and process of students' learning. Bilingual students need frequent opportunities to hear and use meaningful oral language in classrooms (Gersten & Baker, 2000). Giving students access to communication in the classroom affords them the opportunity to gather linguistic data which is seen by many language theorists as a key

factor in promoting second language acquisition (Cummins, 1994). Additionally, bilinguals must develop higher level thinking skills and more sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures indicative of complex language and advanced literacy. However, with limited occasions to engage in meaningful and extended discourse in classrooms, such learning opportunities are severely limited. This study presents findings in subsequent chapters demonstrating how certain teacher moves and discourse patterns led to qualitatively different types of interactions and affordances for bilingual student learning.

### **Rationale and Purpose of the Present Study**

Reading aloud to bilingual students, specifically using components of a shared reading model (Holdaway, 1979), potentially provides an avenue for meaningful language and literacy development and achievement. Shared reading occurs when an adult reads aloud books that are appropriate for students' interest level but are above children's independent reading level. Shared reading differs from reading aloud as an instructional strategy because children are able to see and hear the text as it is read aloud which is important for students learning English as picture clues help make words and concepts concrete and connections more obvious and memorable for students (Florez & Burt, 2001). Through shared reading, teachers typically introduce or reinforce how print works, teach vocabulary, and teach and reinforce decoding and comprehension skills. Shared reading is a particularly useful strategy for children learning a second language because it involves language and literacy instruction within meaningful context. Furthermore, the learning situation during shared reading is motivating because high

interest stories are utilized within a reduced stress learning environment (De'ath, 1980; Elley, 1991).

Research has documented numerous benefits of reading aloud in classroom settings for monolingual students including building an interest in reading (Pegg & Bartelheim, 2011; Teale, 1984), vocabulary acquisition (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Elley, 1989; Swanson et al., 2011), developing listening comprehension (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, & Share, 1993; Swanson et al., 2011), developing decontextualized language (Dickinson & Snow, 1987), and building emergent literacy skills (Swanson et al., 2011; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Research also shows that early book reading experiences for monolingual students are linked to later language and literacy success (Bus, Van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995). The research on read aloud experiences is broad and includes a range of diverse practices and has been referred to in the literature by a number of different terms such as storybook reading, reading aloud to, reading aloud with, and book reading. However, the common thread of the phenomena is a fluent adult reader reading an appropriately selected text to a child or group of children.

While a corpus of research exists about reading aloud with English-speaking students, there has been limited research on its use with bilingual students in classroom settings. This may be attributed to the fact that much of the research on book reading has focused on family story book reading and not book reading between teachers and bilingual students (Barrera & Bauer, 2003). As Sulzby and Teale (2003) explain, parent/caregiver-child book reading research is complex and not only captures the frequency of story book reading in homes, but also documents differences between

parental story book reading styles and variability within and across social and cultural groups. For many linguistically diverse children, other types of literacy activities prevail in the home, such as reading and writing letters to the home country (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Book reading in the mainstream classroom may be a new experience for some bilinguals and a practice for which a dearth of research exists.

A handful of experimental studies have explored the effects of reading aloud on English language learners' vocabulary and language acquisition and suggest a positive impact on development. For example, two frequently cited studies, known as the Fiji Book Flood, (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981; 1983), examined the effects of shared reading on ELLs' language and literacy development. In both studies, children were randomly assigned to either classrooms with book flood programs, where they were exposed to large numbers of story books with the goal of increasing language competence, or classrooms where teachers were advised to follow the normal English teaching curriculum, the Tate Oral English syllabus, which did not have an additional component of reading aloud. Researchers measured reading comprehension, word recognition, and oral language and found that on all three language tests following the book flood programs, students showed significantly and/or dramatically superior performance in comparison to control groups.

Researchers have documented other successful school-based read aloud studies specifically targeting students who were learning a new language at school. For example, Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, and Share (1993) investigated whether listening to stories in the target language would have a positive effect on bilingual children's emergent literacy

skills, including listening comprehension and active use of the target language. In post-test measures, children in the experimental classes significantly outperformed control classes. In addition, teachers in the study developed positive attitudes towards using storybook reading as a bridge to learning academic language. In another study, Appel, and Vermeer (1998) examined the effects of accelerating immigrant Dutch (L2) children's vocabulary acquisition through an experimental program that included reading children's picture books and discussing "difficult words" with children. The goal was to increase immigrant children's Dutch vocabulary in order to reach the vocabulary levels of their monolingual Dutch peers across a four year time span. Scores from both receptive and productive vocabulary tests revealed that children in the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group. The researchers noted that the actual number of words acquired was not as high as expected but this most likely was due to the fact that not all schools followed the experimental program as directed.

The above studies are part of a larger corpus of research that illustrates the potential of reading storybooks to bilingual learners. In the regular classroom setting, where most of the talk is directed by teachers, bilinguals may feel unable to make sense of the language. However, reading aloud by pre-service teachers in a small group setting provides these students with a promising instructional strategy that allows them to receive comprehensible input and the opportunity to produce language output through engaging in meaningful conversations surrounding the content, ideas and illustrations in books which in turn can aid in language and literacy development (Allen, 1989).

Comprehensible input, a second language acquisition hypothesis put forward by Krashen



(1982), refers to language that is used with a learner that is one step beyond his/her current level of linguistic competence. Additionally, the face-to-face social interactions that occur between pre-service teachers and bilinguals during read alouds could create rich language learning opportunities for students that focus on meaning rather than form (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983). Pre-service teachers have opportunities to capitalize on students' responses by accepting, extending, helping to negotiate meaning, and elaborating on their ideas (Ghosn, 2004). Thus, books can provide a venue for language growth as students have the opportunity to talk about literature and use English in authentic ways with high quality, scaffolded language models.

Students learning English need to develop proficiency in what Cummins (1994) described as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills or CALPS. CALPS refers to language that is highly dependent on linguistic clues and independent of the immediate communicative context, such as in reading and writing. Skills associated with academic language include broad knowledge of words, concepts, language structures, and interpretation strategies (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Schleppegrell (2004) makes a distinction between language used during face-to-face interactions which has features including the context of everyday meanings, familiarity, and negotiation and that of the "language of schooling." The latter, "typically realizes contexts of information display, authoritativeness, and high degrees of structure" (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 74). Mastery of this more sophisticated language structure is directly related to the academic and reading achievement of bilingual students. Unfortunately, it is a challenge for many students who are not already familiar with this register to master it. For the most part, it must be

learned at school and research has documented that it can take upwards of five to seven years to reach native speaker mastery in cognitive academic language (Cummins, 1994).

Reading aloud has the potential to help children learn cognitive academic language. Through frequent engagement in listening to texts, students are exposed to CALPS and learn important skills related to its mastery, including summarizing, analyzing, extracting and interpreting meaning, and evaluating evidence in text (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Research has documented how critical the talk surrounding the text is in building academic language competence (McKeown & Beck, 2003). Thus, in this dissertation, pre-service teachers were taught the importance of discussing and connecting key ideas from the text and helping children make sense of what is going on in the story through discussions before, during and after read alouds.

Another critical component to academic success for bilingual learners is vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge is widely recognized as an important factor in reading achievement for students learning a second language and it also contributes to developing academic language (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003; García, 1991; Tabors & Snow, 2003; Proctor, Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005). Beyond vocabulary needed to socialize with their family and peers, bilingual students need to learn more sophisticated vocabulary to understand subject area knowledge and comprehend text (Brisk & Harrington, 2007). Researchers interested in promoting vocabulary development for bilingual learners have argued that students need explicit vocabulary instruction in order to increase their vocabulary knowledge (Nagy & Scott, 2000). Book reading has the potential to provide a meaningful context for fostering vocabulary

acquisition. In the professional development sessions provided in this study, pre-service teachers were taught how to explicitly teach vocabulary before, during, and after reading books to students. Additionally, they were encouraged to incorporate vocabulary instruction in meaningful conversations surrounding texts.

In addition to helping bilingual children learn language and vocabulary from text, the small group interaction proposed in this study may be beneficial for bilingual learners' language and literacy development. A strand of research has examined the benefits of small group storybook reading. For example, Clay (1991) introduced a procedure during shared reading that encouraged students to participate more actively in small group settings. The participatory nature of the small group setting allowed more opportunities for students to interact with one another and encouraged more engagement with text. The teacher was also able to directly draw on the personal experiences of all the students to develop a better understanding of the text. In another study, Morrow and Smith (1990) investigated children's comprehension of stories and their verbal interactions during storybook readings in groups of varying sizes. They found that children who heard stories read aloud in small groups performed significantly better on measures of reading comprehension than students who heard stories in a one-to-one setting and whole groups setting. Additionally, the small-group setting during read alouds generated more comments and questions as there were increased opportunities for children to interact with both the teacher and fellow classmates.

Bilingual students clearly benefit from structural opportunities that call for increased language interaction opportunities. An opportunity to interact with native

speakers is particularly advantageous for bilingual students as it helps them develop linguistic knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Pre-service teachers may also be able to better tailor how books are presented and discussed when working with a small group versus a large group leading to language interactions around the books that are more meaningful and connected to students' specific backgrounds and experiences. Moreover, in whole class read aloud settings, pre-service teachers must direct almost all of their talk and questions towards the entire class. Students who are learning English, especially newcomers who may have limited receptive language skills, may feel lost in a sea of talk. Small group settings allow pre-service teachers to attend to the unique language needs of each individual student which can lower the level of learning anxiety and encourage risk taking for students, both of which are proven to aid in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

Small group read aloud settings can also help to foster positive student relationships. Interpersonal relationships within classrooms have been found to impact classroom literacy discussions (Hadjoannou, 2007). Specifically, when students are able to form trusting and respectful relationships with their peers, they are more likely to contribute to literacy discussions (Brock, 2007). Reading aloud in a small group setting cultivates a classroom environment where students have the opportunity to work cooperatively and it provides a venue for students to ask others for opinions and ideas. Thus, students may be more likely to express themselves and contribute to book discussions.

Finally, literacy research in families where there are low levels of English literacy has demonstrated that there may be an absence of storybook reading or that these families read in ways that are markedly different from middle-class joint book reading dyads (Heath, 1983; Pelligrini, 1991; Teale, 1986; Yaden & Paratore, 2003). This has led to arguments that schools should import this practice of storybook reading into students' homes. However, as Yaden and Paratore (2003) point out, "interpreting the finding of the absence of storybook reading in particular as an absence of literacy interactions in general is based on an incomplete understanding of this data (p. 535)." Investigations reveal that despite an absence of storybook reading, a variety of literacy materials and routines permeate household and community life (Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986).

Unfortunately, much of these findings are often disregarded by family literacy programs, which are geared toward non-English speaking families and based on a deficit perspective. Implicit in the agenda is a concern to remedy the situation by making families and parents adopt the attitudes and teaching strategies of middle-class families and schools (Carrington & Luke, 2003). Although such programs may introduce families to literacy teaching strategies and materials that align closely with school curriculums, there is the potential to ignore other literacies that might be present in the home (Yaden & Paratore, 2003). As Taylor (1993) suggests, "we need to build meaningful connections between everyday learning and school learning (p. 551)." In other words, it would be more advantageous for educators to build upon and complement what families already do in linguistically diverse households instead of focusing solely on importing new and different ways of interacting around literacy in the home setting.

An alternative to placing the responsibility of teaching this potentially new or different literacy practice on bilingual families in home settings is to make space for reading aloud in schools. It has been argued that schools have a particular responsibility for including this literacy practice as part of the curriculum (Dudley-Marling, 2009). When we view book reading as a cultural practice, it is understood that in addition to helping bilingual children develop their language and literacy skills, we are also familiarizing them with a literacy practice valued in schools. Additionally, book reading is a literacy practice that helps introduce bilingual students to the United States culture thus making them bicultural. Anderson, Anderson, Lynch, & Shapiro (2003) explain that by including reading aloud in school curriculum, we are enabling children to learn a form of discourse that will help to prepare them to “participate fully in Western-style educational, financial, and political institutions... (p. 223). This research study aimed to make space for reading aloud in the school curriculum.

Another aim of this study was to help pre-service teachers learn to teach bilingual students. A small, but growing body of literature exists on efforts to prepare teachers to work with bilingual learners. In a published review of the literature, Lucas and Grinberg (2008) summarize the language-related experiences, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and skills all classroom teachers need to effectively teach bilingual learners. These include: contact with pupils from various language backgrounds, positive views of linguistic diversity and bilingualism, knowledge about individual pupils, and skills for designing effective instruction for bilingual learners. In addition, Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) describe the three specific types of pedagogical expertise mainstream

classroom teachers need for the effective instruction of bilingual learners: “familiarity with the students’ linguistic and academic backgrounds; an understanding of the language demands inherent in the learning tasks that students are expected to carry out in class; and skills for using appropriate scaffolding so that ELLs can participate successfully in those tasks” (p. 366).

Teacher education programs have made various attempts to prepare teachers with the skills and competencies described above, including instilling an inquiry perspective in teachers through action research and other types of research projects (Zainuddin & Moore, 2004; Bernhard, Diaz & Allgood, 2005), adopting comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to teaching pre-service teachers about bilingual learners (Commins & Miramontes, 2006) and training teacher education faculty to modify courses across the teacher education curriculum to better address the instruction of bilingual learners (Meskill, 2005; Costa, McPhail, Smith & Brisk, 2005). Some programs have explicitly tried to disrupt the prevailing deficit ideologies about bilingual learners through establishing empathy in teacher candidates (Dong, 2004), teaching pre-service teachers to advocate for educational equity (Athanasos & Martin, 2006; Meskill, 2005) and emphasizing the importance of culture in teaching bilingual learners (Pappamihiel, 2004). A particularly successful study used a service learning project where pre-service teachers spent extended time with recent Mexican immigrant children and their families (Bollin, 2007).

As the emerging literature suggests, efforts to prepare regular classroom teachers to work with bilingual learners must involve contact with these pupils in a multifaceted,

action oriented and well supported context. The design of my study supported these findings. The pre-service teachers in this study had the opportunity to meet regularly with small groups of bilingual children for the duration of their student teaching experience. Additionally, this dissertation sought to simultaneously expand and deepen pre-service teachers' learning about teaching language and literacy to bilingual students through regular meetings where pre-service teachers reflected upon their teaching and learning. During this time, pre-service teachers received help and support as they implemented language and literacy instruction to bilingual children in the context of small group read alouds.



## **CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature Related to Reading Aloud**

Reading aloud to children has been highly recommended in virtually all literacy pedagogical textbooks and scholarly sources for decades. This trend began in the mid-1980s, when *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission of Reading* (1985) recommended that parents should read to their children and discuss stories. Multiple community-based literacy programs and intervention models have been developed to teach parents and caregivers how to read aloud with children and to distribute books free of charge to disadvantaged families, schools, and communities. Two notable examples of such programs include *Reading is Fundamental* (RIF), the nation's oldest children's literacy organization, and *Reach out and Read* (ROR), a national book reading program developed as a result of First Lady Laura Bush's Early Childhood Initiative for Texas. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2008) has even developed a "Reading Checkup Guide" in consultation with RIF to help nurture children's emergent literacy skills and interest in reading. The popularity of this highly acclaimed literacy practice has been the impetus for reading aloud to occur almost daily, and in some cases more often, in most early childhood and elementary educational settings in Western countries (Blok, 1999). However, it should be noted that in the post No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era, where teachers feel pressured to help students meet NCLB requirements, there has been a decline in teacher read alouds in elementary classrooms (Wadsworth, 2008).

This review presents a broad overview of the research on reading aloud to children using a representative sampling of the literature spanning from the 1960's until

present day. This time frame represents an important historical period in the research and highlights current research movements. A review of reading aloud specifically with bilingual students is also included. This is an area that has been overlooked in published reviews of the literature on reading aloud. Since the empirical research on reading aloud includes a vast body of literature spanning decades of research, a focused approach was used to organize and consolidate the information. First, studies were selected that appeared in peer reviewed journals and were frequently cited in literature. Efforts were made to include a wide range of theoretical, methodological, and analytical perspectives by searching multiple databases, including the Educational Research Information Center and PsycINFO. Additionally, the references from collected papers were searched for additional research articles to explore.

To support the focused nature of this literature review, some exclusion criteria were established. These criteria were based upon the study's specific purpose, which was to examine the practice of pre-service teachers reading aloud in English to small groups of bilingual students in elementary classrooms. As a result, studies that focused on reading aloud to infants under the age of three and to children with language impairments, dyslexia, and developmental delays were all excluded. Additionally, studies focusing on infant-parent attachment security, social-emotional parent-child bonds, and affective quality of reading interactions in relation to book reading patterns and or children's language and literacy growth were excluded. Finally, studies where English Language Learners were read aloud to either at home or school exclusively in their native language were excluded from this study. While the aforementioned studies

are valuable, a more narrow focus allowed for a greater understanding of what the school-aged participants of this study may have experienced during book reading episodes in English at school.

This review encompasses three main areas of research: the *reader* component in reading aloud, the *listener* component in reading aloud, and the *text* component in reading aloud. A similar organizational scheme was utilized in Fletcher and Reese's (2005) synthesis reviewing the literature on book reading with infants and young children. Each section contains an explication of relevant research, including descriptions and findings, followed by an overall conclusion at the end of each section that highlights salient themes, strengths, and weaknesses in the existing research. Conceptual literature on reading aloud is woven in throughout the chapter. The review begins with a section that presents previously published reviews of the literature on reading aloud. Although each of these reviews approached the reading aloud literature with a different purpose, together they provide a cohesive overview of the trends in research as well as some promising future directions and implications for classroom teachers. Next, a section that outlines how my research fits within and expands upon the current knowledge base is provided. Finally, an overview of both a sociocultural framework of language and literacy development and the Output Hypothesis theory of second language acquisition which frame this study are included.

### **Major Reviews of the Literature on Reading Aloud in Classroom Settings**

Presented in this section is an overview of the major reviews of the literature on teachers reading aloud to children in school settings and the hypothesized influence of

this activity on both monolingual and bilingual children's language and literacy skills (Elley, 1991; Elley Cutting, Mangubhai, Hugo, 1996; Karweit & Wasik; 1996; Blok, 1999).

In the first of two reviews, Elley (1991) examined nine studies in which bilingual students were part of "book floods," or programs in classrooms where they were exposed to large amounts of high-interest, illustrated storybooks. In the experimental conditions, teachers used "shared reading" (Holdaway, 1979) methods and discussions during read alouds, which focused on the content of the books rather than language structures. Across all nine studies, students in matched control groups received the typical English language program, the Tate Oral English Syllabus, which consisted of structured, systematic instruction in English without a reading component. All studies were conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom settings in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia. There were minor differences in methodologies, the presentation of books, and the length of the projects across studies; however all included pre- and post-test measures of language and other related literacy skills in children learning English as a second language. Generally, results showed that students across all groups who participated in the book flood programs made gains in their second language (L2) skills and integrative measures of reading, listening, and writing. The review emphasized how children had made progress "incidentally from books rather than from planned sequential lessons in vocabulary and syntactic forms" (Elley, 1991, p. 402). Elley concluded that such rapid growth in oral language production, which transferred to competence in other related language and literacy skills, was the result of key instructional components.

Specifically, the author identified the importance of an extensive input of meaningful language from storybooks and a focus on meaning rather than form during text discussions.

In a related review of the literature on reading aloud to bilingual children in school settings, Elley, Cutting, Mangubhai and Hugo (1996) reviewed “book flood” programs implemented in elementary classrooms in the South Pacific, Singapore, Sri Lanka and South Africa. This review reported on many of the same studies reviewed in Elley’s (1991) previous synthesis, but expanded its scope by including additional research on book flood classrooms in New Zealand and Sri Lanka. These studies concluded that children who are expected to become literate in a language they rarely use at home benefit from classroom curricula that utilize shared reading methods with high quality texts. Specifically, these children show improvements in terms of language and literacy growth. The authors noted that shared reading accompanied with literacy related follow-up activities provides bilingual children with good language models and ample opportunities to engage in talking, listening, reading, and writing. Interestingly, the results of the Sri Lanka study showed that children who were enrolled in classrooms where teachers did not participate in shared reading training sessions had fewer gains in reading scores (Elley, Cutting, Mangubhai & Hugo, 1996). Thus, it appears that the presence of large amounts of books without teacher guidance on how to use texts is not as productive in terms of increasing children’s L2 language and literacy skills.

In conclusion, investigations of book flood programs globally verify their positive impact on bilingual children’s language and literacy growth. Moreover, Elley and

colleagues (1991; 1996) found that such programs improve students' attitudes towards reading, which are particularly important for bilingual children who may be struggling in their literacy development. Unfortunately, the aforementioned studies did not control for other variables which influence language and literacy growth, such as children's initial proficiencies in their first and second language and literacy levels. Thus, the contribution of such studies to the research on bilingual children and storybook reading is somewhat limited.

Another subset of the reading aloud literature reports specifically on studies of teachers reading aloud to monolingual students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in classroom settings. For example, Karweit and Wasik (1996) reviewed fourteen studies of primarily pretest-post-test-control group designs and made recommendations to early childhood educators about classroom book reading. The recommendations included the following: a) read to children in small groups, b) reread texts, c) include vocabulary instruction, c) present story information before and after reading, and d) limit questions during reading to those that focus on analysis of the story and predicting story events. The authors concluded that "few empirical studies have documented what events comprise story reading and the relationship between different story reading practices and the development of language and early literacy" (Karweit & Wasik, 1996, pp. 342-343). In other words, although many studies report on correlations between book reading and children's subsequent language and literacy development, few studies document what specific practices during read aloud events lead to growth in language and literacy skills.

A related review by Blok (1999) also examined reading aloud to young monolingual children in educational settings. However, Blok's review included only two overlapping studies found in Karweit and Wasik's (1996) review, and added eight others. Blok argued that his meta-analysis was more stringent in the study selection review process in that he only chose studies which provided adequate data for estimation of effect sizes and included control groups. Blok's review found that reading aloud to children in school settings has a stronger effect on children's language skills than reading skills. Although these results appear promising, the author noted how there are few available studies, most of which are poor quality, making it difficult to draw adequate conclusions about the potential of reading aloud to children in educational settings to improve language and literacy skills. Blok also noted that the current research base does not provide insight into the effects of various teacher reading styles, group sizes, or duration of read aloud programs.

### **Summary and Critique of Major Reviews of the Literature on Reading Aloud in Classroom Settings**

Collectively, the research reviews examining reading aloud to children in school settings reveal that reading aloud to children can have positive effects on both monolingual and bilingual children's language and literacy development. While these reviews consistently highlight the positive impact of reading aloud to children on their emerging language and literacy development, there are few studies that identify the specific aspects of reading aloud that promote positive child outcomes. Karweit and Wasik's review (1996) tends to be more valuable for practitioners in that it emphasizes

specific conditions of teacher-child read alouds, such as reading aloud in a small group, that more effectively benefit children. However, none of the reviews to date have included specific recommendations about what teachers should read to children in their classrooms. There was no mention in the reviews about the influence of teacher's text choice on children's responses to literature and their subsequent language or literacy development. Obviously the type of text, including language, structure, story grammar, and genre of books, would be important to examine in a thorough review of the literature on reading aloud in school settings. Additionally, the reviews lack specific information about the ways in which teachers read aloud to children. Correlations between reading aloud and children's language and literacy development are limited in the absence of insight into the specifics about how such competencies develop as a result of book reading.

Finally, the greater part of the studies examined in these reviews failed to take into account the interaction between the adult, the text, and the child. Storybook reading is recognized as a socially created practice; therefore looking at book reading in isolation is problematic in that it fails to account for the social context of book reading (Barrera & Bauer, 2003). As Martinez and Teale (1989) point out, children's learning from storybook reading "comes from participating in the construction of a complex text, one that includes both the language and ideas of the author and the comments, questions, and discussion about the book offered by the participants in the reading" (p. 126). Studying the adult, child, and text within the read aloud context allows for an investigation of the entire interaction that occurs and how it might contribute to children's understanding and



meaning making from text as well possible language and literacy growth (Martinez & Roser, 1985; van Kleeck, 2003). With this in mind, the next sections of this chapter examine empirical studies focusing specifically on the adult, child, and text contributions to the interaction that occurs during book reading. The adult component is considered to be the person reading the text, while the child component is considered to be the listener in the read aloud context. The text component is defined as the book that is read aloud by the adult in the read aloud context.

### **The *Reader* Component in Read Alouds**

This section of the chapter explores the *reader* component, or the role of the person reading the text, in read aloud studies. The first group of studies examines storybook reading as a means of improving both monolingual and bilingual students' language and literacy skills. In this group of studies, the adult reader augments book reading with instructional strategies aimed at increasing children's vocabulary skills. The second group of studies reports on reader-listener interactional patterns during read aloud events in homes and classrooms.

### **Book Reading as a Means of Improving Students' Vocabulary Skills**

Several studies have examined oral book reading and its impact on monolingual and bilingual children's vocabulary development. For example, Elley (1989) conducted a pair of studies that explored whole-class storybook reading as a source of vocabulary acquisition in native English speaking seven year-olds in New Zealand classrooms. In the first study, children listened to the reading of one book three times over the course of

a week with no definition or explanation of the target words heard during read aloud events. The goal of this study was to determine if vocabulary acquisition from stories was related to children's initial vocabulary levels. As such, children were grouped into four ability levels (low, low medium, high medium, and high) based on pretest vocabulary scores. Additional analyses were carried out to determine if target vocabulary word-related factors, including number of text occurrences, number of times each word was pictured in a story, helpfulness of the verbal meaning, importance of the word to the development of the plot, vividness, and likely familiarity of the concept for children, influenced vocabulary gains. Results showed that all children made vocabulary gains, with the lowest ability group making the most gains in new vocabulary knowledge. Further, Elley reported that words were most readily learned when there were strong context clues, they appeared multiple times in the story, and were illustrated in the text.

Elley's (1989) second book reading study was designed to address limitations in the first study, including a lack of a control group, lack of generalizability due to the use of only one book, and the lack of any measurement of long-term vocabulary gains. Furthermore, Elley (1989) was interested in determining if children would benefit from teacher explanation of target words during read aloud events. The experimental design included reading stories with and without explanations of unfamiliar words. When books included explanations of target words, teachers defined words in one of three ways: by using synonym phrases, role-playing, and pointing to text illustrations of target words. Across books, results demonstrated that reading with explanation produced the most gains in children's vocabulary. The vocabulary gains appeared to be permanent, with

only a slight decline in scores from the second post-test that was administered three months later. Similar to Elley's prior study (1989) vocabulary gains were associated with the number of times a word occurred in the text and whether it was illustrated in the story. Also similar to the first study, the lowest ability students made the largest vocabulary gains, while the highest ability group improved the least. An interesting finding from this second study was that children learned different numbers of words from the two books that were read, thus indicating that the types of books used during read aloud studies can affect children's vocabulary acquisition.

Robbins and Ehri (1994) sought to verify the results of Elley's previous work while also addressing some of the limitations they perceived within these studies. To do so, they utilized a more broadly defined and standardized vocabulary test, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), to determine children's initial vocabulary levels, instead of the targeted vocabulary knowledge measure used by Elley (1989) thus making their study more generalizable than Elley who based initial levels on knowledge of target words in the study. Children were grouped into low, middle, and high initial vocabulary levels and then randomly assigned to hear one of two stories read twice over the course of four days. Word meanings were not discussed during read aloud episodes. After hearing the text read the second time, children were administered a multiple choice vocabulary test with all three groups serving as controls for the vocabulary words in the book they did not hear. Consistent with previous studies, results indicated that hearing stories read repeatedly contributed significantly to children's vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, it was found that the probability of learning a new word from book reading was greater for

words occurring twice in a storybook as compared to words that only appeared once. In contrast to Elley's (1989) findings, however, Robbins and Ehri found that children with larger vocabularies learned more words than children with smaller vocabularies. The authors concluded that repeated readings and hearing unfamiliar words more than once in a story both contribute to children's vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, the authors pointed to their findings as an example of "the Matthew effect." In terms of vocabulary growth, this means that as children progress through their schooling, the gap between those with smaller and larger vocabularies continues to grow larger (Stanovich, 1986).

In another read aloud study aimed specifically at increasing bilingual children's vocabulary knowledge, Roberts and Neal (2004) examined the effects of storybook reading in conjunction with specific teacher-led, scripted vocabulary lessons on preschool children's vocabulary. The lessons were part of a larger *comprehension-oriented* sixteen week curriculum which was being compared to a *letter/rhyme* focused curriculum as a means of increasing several early literacy skills in bilingual learners. Children received instruction three days per week in small groups consisting of a variety of vocabulary and post-reading activities. Roberts and Neal reported that children who received the *comprehension-oriented* curriculum scored significantly higher than did the letter/rhyme children on measures of storybook vocabulary and print concepts. Correlations showed that children's initial levels of English proficiency were positively correlated with post-test vocabulary scores. Furthermore, even children with the lowest levels of English proficiency showed gains in pretest to post-test vocabulary measures. The authors concluded that book reading accompanied with selecting words that are important to

story meaning and providing “deep” (Roberts & Neal, 2004) exposure to those word meanings can result in positive improvements in bilingual children’s vocabulary acquisition.

Similarly, Appel and Vermeer (1998) conducted a study aimed at accelerating the language development of non-native speaking Dutch children in the Netherlands through an experimental program intended to speed up the acquisition of their Dutch (L2) vocabulary. The two to four hour weekly experimental program was inserted into the regular school curriculum and involved teaching target vocabulary words found in stories, reading stories, playing language related games, and listening to audiotaped books. A key component of the program was to teach comprehension of texts and the target vocabulary words within each book. The program was introduced in grade one and continued until students were in grade four with the goal of increasing children’s Dutch vocabulary by more than 1,000 words per year. The comparison and control groups were administered both pre- and post- curriculum dependent and independent tests yearly. The curriculum dependent tests were designed to evaluate if students had learned target words from the storybook program and included both receptive and productive picture vocabulary tests. Additional assessments were conducted in grades five and seven to determine if children sustained gains and to compare vocabulary growth with Dutch monolingual peers in grade seven.

Researchers found that children who participated in the experimental groups made gains of between 25-35% on post-test vocabulary (curriculum dependent) tests in grades one, three, and four which was significantly more progress than the control groups made.

The authors contended that the number of words that children acquired was not as high as they had expected. However, they pointed out that not all teachers followed the program as prescribed and that the post-tests were not designed to be sensitive to partial learning of new words. With respect to curriculum-independent tests, the bilingual children made significant progress over the control groups in their receptive and productive vocabulary. The authors indicated that this was evidence that the experimental program had a positive effect on children's vocabulary beyond just the target words that were introduced during read alouds. Children who participated in the program also showed significant gains in reading tests over the control groups both during the program and three years after the experiment. Finally, the authors compared the scores of the experimental groups to that of the comparison group on curriculum-independent standardized vocabulary tests. The authors explained that these receptive vocabulary tests made it possible to compare the experimental group with three reference groups, one of which had a similar ethnic background. Appel and Vermeer reported that the experimental group had acquired as many words as the similar immigrant children in the reference group but not as many words as the Dutch monolinguals in the reference group. The authors concluded that the program was successful in helping bilingual children to speed up the acquisition of their L2 vocabulary and enhance reading skills both in the short and long term.

### **Summary and Critique of Book Reading as a Means of Improving Students' Vocabulary Skills**

Vocabulary development is extremely important for children as vocabulary size has been correlated with reading ability and overall language development (DeTemple &

Snow, 2003). Also, having a richer vocabulary leads to greater comprehension, which in turn enables students to learn more words from reading (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).

Across studies, researchers have consistently found that both monolingual and bilingual children learn specific book related vocabulary from shared reading. However, research indicates that several variables affect the degree to which children learn new words.

It appears that adult mediation in the form of introducing words prior to reading, elaborating word meanings during readings, and providing vocabulary related activities after reading, results in more word learning than simply reading books without providing word definitions (Appel & Verneer, 1998; Elley, 1989; Roberts & Neal, 2004). For example, in Elley's (1989) experiment, children were assigned to contrasting conditions: reading with explanation and reading without explanation. It was found that children who heard stories with explanations of target words learned significantly more words than children who heard stories with no explanations of the words. Therefore, if teachers aim to improve vocabulary acquisition through classroom book reading, it is important to at least actively explain or define words during readings.

It is not entirely clear from the research which vocabulary teaching methods are most effective. A variety of strategies have been employed in experimental studies; these range from simply providing definitions or synonyms for the new words at the point they occur in the storybook to pre-teaching words and providing follow-up vocabulary related activities. Future research could explore which vocabulary instructional methods are most effective and for which populations of students.

It also appears that the number of times that children hear target words influences

word learning. Specifically, children's repeated exposure to words in the form of repeated readings and/or by hearing the target words multiple times within the same text results in higher rates of vocabulary acquisition (Elley, 1989; Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Unfortunately, many studies do not report on the number of times that target words appear in text. Thus, we have little understanding about the minimum amount of exposure to target words in books that is needed to result in gains in children's vocabulary levels.

Finally, there are conflicting results as to whether children's initial vocabulary knowledge affects vocabulary acquisition in read aloud intervention studies. For example, Elley (1989) found that children with low vocabulary pretest scores made the largest gains in vocabulary. In a discrepant finding, Robbins and Ehri (1994) reported that children with larger initial vocabularies learned more words than children with smaller vocabularies. Researchers elsewhere have argued that as children's vocabulary grows, they are able to learn words more easily because of their ability to form relationships and connections between old and new words (DeTemple & Snow, 2003). According to this theory, it seems plausible that children with larger initial vocabularies will learn more words. Alternately, the contradictory findings within the field could be more a function of the ways in which vocabulary is addressed during read alouds that ultimately impacts vocabulary acquisition for children at varying levels. For instance, it is possible that children with lower levels of vocabulary knowledge benefit more than their high vocabulary peers from having words explicitly defined and having their teachers provide vocabulary related activities before, during, and after read aloud



episodes. Many vocabulary studies do not report on children's initial vocabulary levels nor do they compare various teaching vocabulary methods for different ability groups. As such, future research should continue to explore the relationship between children's initial vocabulary levels and the ways in which children learn vocabulary from book reading.

### **Other Book Reading Studies Focused on Children's Language and Literacy Development**

Unlike the above studies which exclusively looked at vocabulary in monolingual and bilingual children, this section reviews studies aimed at improving a variety of bilingual children's language and literacy skills through book reading. For example, several experimental studies have examined the impact of dialogic reading on the expressive and receptive English language skills of both upper- and middle-SES native and bilingual two through five year olds (Kim & Hall, 2002; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Whitehurst, Arnold, et al., 1994; Whitehurst, Falco, et al., 1988; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Dialogic reading, which was developed by Whitehurst and colleagues, is built on the theory that language learning is enhanced when children practice using language, receive feedback regarding language, and experience appropriately scaffolded adult-child interactions during book reading contexts (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Dialogic reading entails several instructional principles during read aloud contexts which include the following: a) adults should ask children "what" and "open-ended" questions; b) adults should provide follow up questions in response to children's questions and comments; c) adults should repeat and expand upon what children have said; d) adults

should provide scaffolding for children's questions; e) adults should provide children with praise and encouragement during book reading; f) adults should follow children's interests during reading; and, g) adults should make sure children have fun during shared book reading experiences by encouraging turn-taking in talking and reading books. Results from studies evaluating the effectiveness of dialogic reading indicate that children in experimental conditions demonstrate gains in expressive and receptive vocabulary skills, both at the time of the experiment and at later follow-up (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003).

Another study, conducted by Kim and Hall (2002), evaluated the effects of dialogic reading with an older population of students (third grade) who were learning English as a second language. Specifically, the researchers were interested in evaluating the effects of dialogic reading techniques on bilingual children's development of pragmatic competence in a second language (English). The study was conducted in Korea and participants included four third grade students. Children engaged in interactive reading sessions in English twice per week for four months, following the same reading techniques developed by Whitehurst and colleagues (1994). After each reading session, children participated in role plays (pretend interactional situations) based on the contents of the books. During role play events, Kim and Hall (2002) observed and assessed children's language development. The authors noted several changes in bilingual children's second language development that they attributed to interactive storybook reading. The authors pointed out how both the number and the function of children's utterances during the role plays varied as a result of the particular books used during each

dialogic reading session. Specifically, books in which children were able to make more personal connections led to increases in talk during role plays following the book reading sessions. Also, the content and dialogue in particular books appeared to influence children's talk. For instance, the children in the study were all males and produced less language during role plays after hearing a story that contained a female character as a central figure in the book. In conclusion, it appears that interactive reading can provide positive outcomes for bilingual children's language development. However, the degree of its impact will vary as function of the particular texts read.

Other book reading interventions aimed at increasing bilingual children's language and literacy skills have been implemented in school settings. For example, Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, and Share (1993) were interested in increasing the language and literacy skills of Israeli kindergarten children who were learning a second language in Arabic language schools. The children's first language (L1) was a local dialect of Arabic which does not have a written form, and they were learning a literary dialect of Arabic (L2) in school for the first time. In the experimental condition, teachers read books to students in literary Arabic (FusHa) for fifteen to twenty minutes each day for five months. Teachers were instructed to introduce no more than three new words prior to each reading and to explain any difficult language during readings. Children in the control groups participated in a language development program that was used as part of the regular school curriculum. Children who participated in the book reading intervention significantly outperformed those in the control group on a post-test listening comprehension assessment and a picture-storytelling task. Specifically, they were better

able to draw inferential conclusions from the pictures and use causal relations when telling stories. The children in the experimental group also used more sophisticated vocabulary and a higher proportion of clauses than the control group during the storytelling task. In addition to these student level outcomes, the authors reported a dramatic and positive change in teachers' and parents' attitudes towards storybook reading as a result of the intervention. Feitelson and colleagues concluded that book reading is an effective means for improving the language development of kindergartners who are from disadvantaged homes where nonstandard Arabic is spoken without stigmatizing children's home language (Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, & Share, 1993).

In another study examining the effects of storybook reading in classroom settings on bilingual children's second language acquisition, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) examined the effects of implementing a "book flood" program in several fourth and fifth grade classrooms in rural Fijian schools. Children in the study, who were learning English as a second language in school settings, were randomly assigned to one of three groups which included a shared reading experience, a silent reading experience, or the standard curriculum (Tate Syllabus Oral English Syllabus Experience). Classrooms with children in the shared reading and silent reading groups were supplied with 250 high interest storybooks by researchers. The shared reading experience consisted of teachers reading high interest "big books" (oversized texts) repeatedly over several days. Discussion around text was encouraged by the teachers and on subsequent readings children were invited to "chime" in during read alouds. Follow-up activities included role-playing, word study, art work, and writing activities which were all centered on the

content of the stories. Teachers with children in the silent reading group were advised to display books around the classroom and to provide children with 20-30 minutes of time each day to participate in sustained, silent reading. Finally, the control group participated in the normal English teaching curriculum in which English language structures were systematically introduced and reinforced through repeated drills. Elley and Mangubhai (1983) reported that children who were part of the experimental groups (shared reading experience and silent reading experience) showed greater gains in their receptive English language skills. Follow up assessments were conducted one year later and revealed that children who were part of the book flood programs showed significantly greater gains than the control groups in both their expressive and written second language development. Additionally, the gains in second language development appeared to bolster scores in other areas including mathematics, general studies, and the Fijian Language Intermediate Examinations. The authors concluded that repeated exposure to high interest storybooks in classroom curriculums can lead to substantial improvements in bilingual children's second language development.

### **Summary and Critique of Other Book Reading Studies Focused on Children's Language and Literacy Development**

The studies in this category demonstrate both the short and long-term positive impacts of book reading on a variety of children's language and literacy skills. To study these effects, researchers adopted several different approaches to reading aloud, including dialogic reading, shared reading, and other less prescriptive techniques. Each of these is described in detail below.

The dialogic reading method places a heavy emphasis on adult language input and children's language production during reading events. Adults are encouraged to ask children questions about story content and to follow children's answers with additional questions (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Over time, children are encouraged to participate in more of the talk during book reading episodes (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Finally, children repeatedly participate in small-group, dialogic book reading across multiple readings of similar books; this helps to create a familiar routine with a predictable and supportive language environment that is particularly advantageous for second language learners and children who are more reluctant to participate during whole classroom book reading discussions (Kim & Hall, 2002).

Other studies in the category adopted less prescriptive methods for reading aloud. For example, Elley & Mangubhai (1983) encouraged teachers to utilize a "shared reading" method where they discussed text pictures, content, and a few key vocabulary words found in the stories. In another case, Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, and Share (1993) reported that teachers were instructed to define no more than three key vocabulary words from stories before reading and to explain any difficult L2 terms found in text during readings. Unfortunately, both studies lacked sufficient descriptions about the ways in which vocabulary words were introduced and provided little description about the specific ways in which teachers read the books. Thus, although they reported increases in bilingual children's language and literacy development, they did not provide much insight into the ways in which these skills developed. As Teale (1984) points out, "only by describing as completely as possible the dimensions of the activity can we hope to

understand fully how such experience [book reading] influences children's skills in and uses of literacy" (p. 114). Future research that gives more precise descriptions of teacher's read aloud methods and vocabulary teaching during book reading would strengthen studies of this nature.

Although these studies often lack sufficient details about the exact ways in which teachers read aloud during experimental conditions, they do provide hypotheses for the ways in which reading aloud may support children's language and literacy development. For example, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) claim that shared storybook reading is particularly effective for bilingual learners because it provides them with intrinsic motivation for language learning because the focus of input is on meaning rather than form. Also, interest is supported because language is presented in the meaningful context of a story rather than in isolated drill activities. Other authors have suggested that book reading provides an effective means for familiarizing children with literary language (Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, & Share, 1993). Wells (1982) and Cummins (1994) argue that book language poses unique challenges over oral language, and that reading aloud helps to bridge this gap.

Wells (1982) contrasts language input found in ordinary conversation with that of the literary language of book reading. Ordinary conversation provides children with a context where they can rely on shared knowledge and expectations of the listener and speaker to create meaning. Cummins (1994) adds that interpersonal cues, such as intonation, gestures, and facial expressions, support understanding during ordinary conversation. In contrast, written language that is found in storybooks relies on the text

to create the context. As such, children may be unfamiliar with the knowledge and background needed to understand text language. The language and structures of the text convey meaning which requires that children pay careful attention to storybook language in order to promote understanding (Wells, 1982).

### **Review of Reader-Listener Interactional Patterns During Book Reading**

The final section of the literature on the “reader” component in read alouds documents adult-child interactional patterns during storybook reading in homes and schools. For example, in a well-known ethnographic study documenting how children acquire and use language and literacy in their homes and communities, Heath (1982, 1983) examined parental language use during book reading activities in families across three different communities (described below), linking the differences in parental language use to children’s literacy learning outcomes.

One community Heath studied, mainstream, was comprised of middle-class citizens, parents emphasized books and book reading habits from a very early age. During book reading interactions in this community, adults typically questioned children about illustrations and events in the story. Children’s verbal and non-verbal responses to books were then expanded upon by adults. Adults also linked information from books to new situational contexts that children would encounter.

In the second community Heath studied, Roadville, parents also provided children with books and asked them text related questions during readings. They reminded children of story contents and encouraged children to make connections between story contents and situations in their own lives. However, a marked difference between the



book reading interactions across the two communities was the types of questions that parents asked (Heath, 1982, 1983). In the mainstream community, parents taught children how to answer questions that more closely matched the demands of learning to read in school contexts. Heath argued that mainstream children not only learned from books but learned ways to talk about books which was reflected in their success later in schooling. They had repeatedly practiced the interactional routines surrounding book reading that paralleled those of teacher-student interactions. Conversely, children from Roadville were unfamiliar with the types of questions that teachers asked because they had not been socialized into such question and answer techniques surrounding book reading interactions.

In the final community studied, Tracton, books were not a regular part of children's early experiences with literacy (Heath, 1982, 1983). As such, these children, similar to those in Roadville, were unfamiliar with the types of questions teachers asked during book reading contexts in school. Heath concluded that children are socialized into language and literacy patterns by their families and communities. Therefore, it is important for teachers to learn about children's home and backgrounds and the ways in which they learn literacy in order to better serve all students (Heath, 1982).

In another study examining adult-child interactions during book reading in the home, Wynn (2000) conducted a qualitative case study documenting the storybook experiences of a two year old Chinese girl and her family. Through interview data and observations of book reading transactions, Wynn concluded that adults in the family used book reading as a way to teach traditional Chinese values such as respecting the elderly

and working hard at school. To this end, the family chose books that centered on Chinese themes and augmented them with discussions and questions about Chinese values. Wynn (2000) also noted that the adults focused book reading discussions on meaning making rather than print. For example, Wynn (2000) noted that adults “adapted, extended, clarified, and disregarded written texts in the books they shared with her in order to construct more meaningful and relevant text with her” (p. 402). In other words, the focus of read alouds in this Chinese family was to make meaning for the child, which in turn required that the text be elaborated upon by adults. Finally, the adults in this study also alternated between Chinese and English depending upon the language of the text and the nature of the conversations surrounding the text. The author concluded that book reading is a socially and culturally mediated activity (Wynn, 2000).

Bus, Leseman, and Keultjes (2000) extend the Wynn (2000) finding by examining book reading in the homes of native-born and immigrant Dutch children. This study documented the ways parents and their 4-year-olds from three different cultural groups shared books (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000). The participants included native-born Dutch, first- and second-generation immigrants from South America (Surinamese-Dutch), and Turkish-Dutch parent-child dyads. The authors controlled for confounding effects of socio-economic factors by matching these variables across the groups in the study. A researcher visited the homes of the families and asked them to share a book with their child in a way that they felt was appropriate. A common finding across all cultural groups was that there was discussion surrounding book reading events that accompanied the reading of text, although it proceeded differently across cultures (Bus,

Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000). For example, Turkish-Dutch parents were less likely to initiate conversations during book reading. As a result, Turkish-Dutch children initiated more talk than their parents, resulting in lower cognitive demand conversations that emphasized naming and paraphrasing of text. On the other hand, Dutch parents initiated the most conversation with their children during book reading episodes, a practice that was associated with higher cognitive demand conversations such as making connections beyond the text. Results also showed that when parents were more interested in literacy, as revealed through interview data, parent-child dyad conversations surrounding text were more focused on the interests of the child and about making meaning from text. Bus, Leseman, and Keultjes (2000) reported that ethnic background in the study was more strongly related to recreational literacy than to informational literacy. This suggests that at least part of the variation in book reading interactions across cultures is related to the value that a particular culture places on reading texts for pleasure. Another major finding from the study was that when parents scored higher on a supportive presence assessment during book reading episodes, conversations surrounding text were related to the lives of the children or included discussion of relevant text background knowledge. Conversely, when parents scored lower on the supportive presence assessment, book reading conversations were more focused on low-cognitive demand utterances related to naming items in text illustrations and paraphrasing text. In this particular study, the Surinam-Dutch parents scored the lowest on supportive presence during book reading episodes and were considered to be more restrictive and discipline oriented with their children. Thus, this finding indicates that part of the variation in book reading across

cultures may be related to broader child-rearing practices.

In addition to studying variation in parents' utterances during book reading across cultural groups, researchers have studied variability within white, middle class homes (Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996). For example, Haden, Reese, and Fivush (1996) identified various styles or ways that middle-class mothers mediate during storybook reading and evaluated their effect on children's emergent literacy skills. The authors identified three different styles: describers, comprehenders, and collaborators. a) Describers (highest proportion of comments related to describing text pictures and naming text characters - was considered to be a lower-demand reading style); b) Comprehenders (highest proportion of comments related to making predictions and print knowledge - was considered to be high level of demand); and c) Collaborators (highest proportion of confirmations indicating that these mothers may had been most interested in eliciting children's commentary about stories). The authors reported that many of the stylistic differences remained fairly consistent across the 18-month time span of the study. It was noted that collaborators made the most significant change in style over time. The authors concluded that this was most likely related to children's changing contributions to book reading interactions over time. Interestingly, individual mothers did change their book reading styles across unfamiliar and familiar texts. In other words, different types of texts elicited different types of comments from readers during storybook reading interactions.

The other major finding from this study was that maternal reading style was related to children's later emergent literacy skills (Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996).

Overall, children of collaborators and comprehenders scored higher on several of the literacy assessments than did children of describers. It was hypothesized that the higher demand comments that collaborator and comprehender mothers made during book reading facilitated children's emergent literacy skills. The authors acknowledged that these findings should be interpreted with caution as there was a small sample of mothers and children in each stylistic group. Moreover, these findings do not consider the contribution of the children in their own literacy development. Obviously, children's responses during book reading impact their mothers' response styles, and in turn, shape their own pathways toward literacy development.

Another group of studies highlight teachers' interactional patterns and differences in book reading episodes across classroom settings (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Teale, Martinez, & Glass, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Cochran-Smith's (1984) pioneering work in this area was an ethnography exploring storybook readings over an 18 month period at a private pre-school school Philadelphia. She emphasized the qualitative nature of the interactions surrounding book sharing and highlighted the ways in which the teacher had to play the role of mediator between the texts and the children. Cochran-Smith's (1984) data revealed several ways the teacher negotiated book reading for children in order to help bridge the gap between the implied reader of texts and the children. For example, the teacher guided students to take on the expected understandings of authors of various texts. In instances where there was a mismatch between the authors and listeners, the teacher would augment or modify the text with narration to help bridge the gap. Cochran-Smith explained how the teacher continuously

had to monitor both the text (i.e., plot, language, and illustrations) and the sense that her students were making of the books. The teacher taught the children how to make what Cochran-Smith termed “Life-to-Text” interactions by using their background knowledge to help make sense of texts. The teacher also taught children how to make “Text-to-Life interactions,” which Cochran-Smith described as “centered around helping the children discover the meaning that a book’s message, theme, or information might have in their own lives” (1984, p. 173). Such interactions, which involved a variety of discussions and activities such as drawing and writing, were aimed at helping children apply information from texts to their own backgrounds and experiences. Cochran-Smith (1984) concluded that book reading in the preschool represented a socially constructed activity that was negotiated between the reader and listeners.

Another subset of the literature that highlights teachers’ interactional patterns during book reading contexts has identified particular sets of styles or ways in which teachers read aloud in classrooms contexts (Teale, Martinez, & Glass 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994). For example, Teale, Martinez, and Glass (1989) described the classroom storybook reading of two kindergarten teachers who read aloud four different books. The authors’ analyses revealed distinct differences in the reading styles of the two teachers and found that these differences persisted across the readings of the different texts. For instance, one teacher stopped and discussed the text much more than the other teacher. The focus of this particular teacher’s talk primarily centered on making text-based and reader-based inferences. On the other hand, the actual content and theme of the stories were rarely discussed. The authors concluded that this teacher was primarily interested in

using the text as a vehicle to teach the skill of making inferences. Alternatively, the second teacher made few interruptions to the actual reading of text. When this teacher did augment the text with narration, it was primarily focused on thematic aspects related to the central topic of stories. Based on these observations, Teale, Martinez and Glass (1989) concluded that the second teacher was mostly interested in making sure students understood the major theme of each story. Interestingly, the authors also interviewed both teachers about why they read books to their children and found that the teachers' responses supported the authors' own descriptions of their reading styles. The authors, similar to Cochran-Smith (1984), concluded that readings are "at once social, cognitive, and literary events" (Teale, Martinez, & Glass, 1989, p. 181). This descriptive study showed how this was manifest across two teachers and drew the conclusion that individual teachers have particular and consistent reading styles (Teale, Martinez, & Glass, 1989). The authors called for additional research examining the link between teacher read aloud styles and their effect on children's language and literacy skills and attitudes.

Dickinson and Smith (1994) answered this call and identified particular features of teachers' storybook reading and drew connections to multiple facets of children's literacy development. They studied twenty-five low-income classrooms and documented variation in teachers' talk about books. The researchers then examined correlations between the preschool teachers' reading styles and their students' scores on story retellings and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised. The findings, which involved a combination of qualitative observations and quantitative analysis, revealed

three distinct styles of book reading: 1) Performance Style, in which teachers limited discussion during readings but involved children in extended discussions of texts before and after readings; 2) Didactic Interactional Style, in which teachers invited children to respond to questions, repeat factual text information, and chime in during readings; and 3) Coconstructive Interactional Style, in which teachers had children predict, analyze, produce word definitions, and draw conclusions during readings.

To evaluate the long-term effects of teacher reading styles, language and literacy assessments were administered to children one year after the intervention (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Results revealed that students of the “performance oriented” style teachers performed significantly better on the PPVT-R than children who had been read to by “coconstructive interactional” style teachers, but that there were no differences in comprehension scores. In other words, it appeared that when children were engaged in extended analytical discussion before and after reading texts, their language development was enhanced. However, the authors noted that higher vocabulary scores for children of “performance oriented” teachers may also reflect teachers’ book choices. Most of the books used by “coconstructive interactional” style teachers were repetitive texts that allowed for children to chime in during reading. Such books contained limited vocabulary and minimal plots, which most likely limited children’s talk during book reading episodes. Another noteworthy finding is that children who were in classrooms where analytical talk (i.e., book predictions, talk about vocabulary, and analysis of characters and story events) occurred during book reading had better vocabulary and comprehension scores than children in classrooms with little analytical talk (Dickinson &



Smith, 1994). Thus, when teachers actively involve children in these types of discussions surrounding texts they promote children's language and literacy development.

### **Summary and Critique of Reader-Listener Interactional Patterns During Book Reading**

In conclusion, the studies in this category document adult-child interactions during book reading. During these interactions, adults scaffold or mediate book reading interactions with their children. Researchers have demonstrated a great deal of variation in the ways that parents and teachers share books with children. There are differences in the number, function, and content of parental utterances. Additionally, these differences are related to several factors including: a) culture; b) children's language and literacy levels; c) types of texts being shared; d) adults' assessments of children's understandings during book reading contexts; e) adults' rationales for reading aloud to children; and f) adults' familiarity with the texts being read.

The research in this category also highlights a differential impact on children's language, literacy development and school performance depending on the ways in which adults share books. However, in drawing this conclusion, there are several caveats to consider. First, a large proportion of the studies in this category were limited to only one or two researcher-arranged observations of book reading episodes in the home or school (Bus, Leleman, & Keultjes, 2000; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996). This limits the conclusions that can be drawn from such studies, as parents or teachers may have been influenced by the presence of researchers and changed their book reading practices accordingly. Additionally, while the goal of many of these studies was

to capture particular book-reading styles, it is possible that teachers or parents may adopt different styles over time or depending upon the books they read. Researchers who only capture book reading episodes in a single visit may be less likely to see variation in adult-child interactional patterns. Future read aloud studies that are aimed at documenting such patterns should consider multiple observations across time.

Another critique of the studies in this category is that only one researcher, Wynn (2000), explored adult interactions during book reading episodes with bilingual students. As Barrera and Bauer (2003) point out, “language and culture are inextricably related” (p. 264). As such, it would be beneficial to see the ways in which adult interactions are impacted by children’s bilingualism, as we have little understanding of the content or function of adult utterances during book reading episodes with bilingual children, especially in school settings. Future book reading studies should explore teacher-bilingual student utterances. Also, future studies could explore the link between adult interactions with bilingual children and children’s language and literacy development. Current studies linking adult interactional patterns with monolingual students’ language and literacy development may not be generalizable to bilingual students at varying proficiency who are in the process of developing a second language.

### **The *Listener* Component in Read Alouds**

This section of the chapter explores studies focused on the *listener* or the child/children listening to the text during read aloud contexts. Few studies have examined children’s contribution to the reading interaction during read alouds. Instead, research

has focused more on the role of adults during read aloud episodes (Fletcher & Reese, 2005).

A small strand of research examining children's verbal responses during book reading found variety in children's text related comments and questions and that bilingual children code-switch during read aloud episodes. Researchers use a variety of coding categories to capture child utterances during read alouds; however, they note similar types of children's utterances which include comments and questions related to: (a) story structure; (b) story meaning; (c) text print (letters, words, phrases, and sentences); (d) text punctuation; (e) text illustrations; and (f) world or general knowledge related to book content. Despite similar findings in the types of comments and questions across studies, there have been conflicting results as to which occurred most frequently. For instance, some researchers have demonstrated that young children primarily make comments or ask questions centered upon text illustrations (Danis, Bernard, & Leproux, 2000; Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989), while others have noted a predominance of meaning making utterances (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Martinez & Roser, 1985; Sipe, 2000; Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989). For example, children label pictures in illustrations or relate the events in text to their own lives. Finally, most studies indicate that children comment about text print and punctuation least frequently (Morrow, 1988; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990) during book reading interactions in the early years.

Research indicates that several factors influence children's verbal responses during book reading interactions. These include (a) children's age and/or familiarity with book reading; (b) individual child characteristics (e.g., personality and bilingual

competence); and (c) whether the text had been read repeatedly to the child. This next section summarizes the findings from studies that examine these factors.

### **Children's Age and/or Familiarity with Book Reading**

Several researchers have documented how children's verbal responses during book reading change over time (Heath, 1982; McArthur & Adamson, 2005; Moschovaki & Meadows, 2004; Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989; Wan, 2000). In the first group of studies, which are longitudinal in nature, researchers document home book reading interactional patterns with the same child(ren) over several months. For example, in a one-year home book reading study of seven middle and upper income, white, pre-school aged children, Yaden, Smolkin, and Conlon (1989) documented how children moved from a preponderance of questions about story illustrations to a greater amount of inquiries about story meaning. In their initial exposure to the story, children would frequently request the label or identification of characters or elements of the story in pictures during early reading episodes. During later reading episodes, some children focused more on words and phrases in the text itself. This could be related to the fact that they were enrolled in a university preschool setting and were most likely receiving print focused instruction.

In a related study examining book reading interactional patterns in the home, Wan (2000) noted how a two-year-old Chinese girl moved from physical responses to books as a toddler to "serious" questions about story content as a four year old. For instance, when the child was a young toddler, the researcher noted that she kissed the characters in the illustrations of her books (Wan, 2000). In contrast, when she was four and a half years

old, her mother shared a traditional Chinese story. During this read aloud episode, the child asked a question about whether girls could be emperors or presidents as the content of the story related to seven Chinese brothers and the emperor of China (Wan, 2000). As these two examples illustrate, the young girl participated in book reading events in different ways as she grew older.

In a final example, Heath (1982) reported how book reading episodes with younger children (infants) involved a series of dialogue cycles between the listener and reader that varied with age and were related to labeling text illustrations. Infants frequently interrupted story readings with nonverbal responses and vocalizations that were expanded upon by adult readers. When children were older (i.e., approximately three years old), they were expected to listen and wait for questions from adults and then respond appropriately. Older children also read to adults as opposed to only listening to adults read.

Changes in children's book reading responses over time were also observed in studies of classroom book reading. Moschovaki and Meadows (2004) observed how Greek kindergarten children's overall participation during classroom book reading increased over time. Specifically, children's comments transitioned to higher cognitive demand, as they made inferences, predictions, and interpretations about texts. Children also became more attentive during book reading episodes as demonstrated by a reduction in teachers' comments related to classroom management. The authors postulated that children participated more because they had learned what was expected and accepted

during book reading interactions. In other words, children had become socialized into the classroom routines of book reading discussions.

Children's language skills also continue to develop as children mature and receive instruction in school settings (National Reading Council, 1998). This could be related to changes in children's verbal responses during book reading across time. Heath (1982) demonstrated that young infants are limited to babbling and pointing during book reading interactions. As children become older and their productive language skills increase, they are able to contribute to book reading interactions in more substantial ways such as answering questions posed by parents. Additionally, in the study that explored Greek kindergarten children (Moschovaki & Meadows, 2004), participants most likely learned specific language associated with book reading such as making predictions or summarizing which could be related to increased participation across time.

### **Individual Child Characteristics**

Researchers have also reported on differences in same age children's responses to book reading. It has been hypothesized that variations are related to children's individual personalities and bilingual children's language competence. For example, Teale (1984) observed book reading events in the homes of same age monolingual children from low-income families in San Diego. Some children participated very little in book reading conversations while others echoed and read along with adult readers. For instance, in one example Teale (1984) provided, a mother and her 2 year old son read straight through a book without any pausing for child comments, questions, or other

interactions. In another family, Teale noted how a mother and two year old engaged in many conversations about the illustrations and text content.

Similarly, Yaden, Smolkin, and Conlon (1989) found individual differences in the types of questions that monolingual children asked despite a similarity in age. For example, the authors noted how one particular child asked several questions about words in the text. Other children focused more on ideas and events in the stories. Finally, in a case-study examining the shared reading interactions of three year old children and their mothers living in a low-income community, Morgan (2005) showed how monolingual children's responses to their scaffolding varied significantly. One particular child was the least responsive during book reading interactions despite a mother who demonstrated the most interactive reading styles. These studies demonstrate that children's personalities may be a contributing factor in their responses during book reading episodes.

Another group of studies in this category examined bilingual children's language competence in relation to book reading responses. Parent-child and teacher-child studies reveal that bilingual children code-switch as a natural part of storybook reading interactions (Laframboise & Wynn, 1994; Muysken, Kook, & Vedder, 1996) which is related to a number of structural, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic factors. For example, Muysken, Kook, and Vedder (1996) explored code-switching between Papiamento and Dutch in bilingual parent-child shared reading sessions. Researchers studied twenty-five bilingual adult-child dyads as they read three types of books (no text, a Dutch text, and a Papiamento text). It was found that children used more Papiamento

than Dutch during book reading events. The authors concluded that children's higher language skills in Papiamentu influenced their decision to code-switch more in that language. However, the same was not true for children with higher levels of Dutch language proficiency. The code-switching patterns for these children revealed that Papiamentu was still the language of choice even when the children knew more Dutch than their parents. This suggested that children were aware of their mothers' bilingual competence and may have preferred to communicate in the home language. Thus, it appears that bilingual children's decisions to code-switch during book reading are influenced by both the readers and listeners' levels of proficiency in the second language.

In another study exploring bilingual children's language competence in relation to oral participation during shared reading in a classroom setting, Laframboise and Wynn (1994) observed four bilingual children participating in shared reading of big books with their English only speaking teachers. Two of the target students in the study were in what is referred to as the silent period in their level of proficiency in their second language, English. The silent period is a period of development for second language learners where they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the second language (Krashen, 1985). The students' participation during classroom book reading included using body language, selecting responses from several choices offered by teachers and other students, echo reading and singing, and limiting participation to instances where the students knew they could successfully answer questions. Two other target students, who were more proficient in English, frequently code-switched and acted as translators for students with more limited English proficiency. The authors concluded



that in addition to students' English language proficiency, students' oral participation during reading events was influenced by students' personalities and the language and cognitive scaffolds that were offered by teachers and other students in the classroom (Laframboise & Wynn, 1994).

### **Whether the Text had been Read Repeatedly to Children**

A unique strand of research has examined the effects of repeated readings on children's verbal interactions during book reading. These studies demonstrate that children's comments and responses either increase or decrease across readings (Martinez & Roser, 1985; McArthur & Adamson, 2005; Morrow, 1988; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990). For example, low-ability English speaking children participated more during repeated readings than middle and high ability English speaking children (Morrow, 1988). The opposite was found for high-ability children; their comments and questions decreased as a result of repeated readings. It may be that low-ability students need additional readings to understand story content and contribute to book related discussions. If so, repeated readings of storybooks can serve as an important feature of book reading to foster the language skills of lower achieving students.

It has also been noted that the content of children's utterances differs according to level of exposure to a given story. For example, Martinez and Roser (1985) reported that children focused more on clarifying story events in early readings and on constructing and elaborating the meaning of texts in subsequent readings of the same books. Children's responses to repeated readings also revealed that in instances where they

discussed a particular aspect of a story repeatedly, more in-depth comments and questions were made in additional readings of the same text (Martinez & Roser, 1985).

The conclusion of these studies (Martinez & Roser, 1985; McArthur & Adamson, 2005; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990) is that initially children listen more to story content and ask clarifying questions. However, as children become more familiar with the words, illustrations, and story content across readings, they are able to focus on multiple aspects of the text including discussing story meanings in more detail. The authors suggest that these changes reflect the fact that adults scaffold instruction in book reading contexts. In subsequent readings, the experts (the adult readers) begin to step back and the novices (the listeners) gradually take over more responsibility for leading book reading discussions, which leads to greater participation from children.

### **Summary and Critique of the *Listener* Component in Read Alouds**

A common finding across all the studies in this section is that children respond play an active role in read aloud episodes. Moreover, the rate and content of children's participation changes across time and as children grow older. It is unclear what accounts for these changes, although several possibilities have been hypothesized including a change in children's cognitive or language function as a result of age or the influence of school instruction, and their familiarity with book reading routines and interactions.

A number of child factors play a part in interactional patterns. These include children's age, familiarity with book reading, personalities, language competence, and amount of previous exposure to a given book. In light of these findings, it is necessary to keep in mind that book reading to children cannot be viewed as a uniform literacy

practice across different homes, classrooms, adult-child dyads, or age groups. This is particularly important when conceptualizing children's literacy backgrounds. It is not enough for educators to make general claims that a child has or has not been read aloud to. As Teale (1984) points out, simplistic claims about quantity of books read or the amount of time spent reading in families miss the importance of the nature of the activity itself and what children might gain from this activity.

Most of the studies, descriptive in nature, have not described how children's behaviors and characteristics during reading impact their language or literacy development. It could be surmised that children who participate more during read aloud events stand to gain more from this literacy practice. Also, the types of responses children make (i.e. a focus on illustrations versus a focus on print) likely impact the types of language and literacy skills that they gain from read aloud interactions. Heath's (1982) work provided important suggestions about how children's responses to print in their early years impact their literacy development later in the preschool years. Future research should include measures of children's language or literacy skills and/or descriptions of children's literacy development in addition to exploring children's responses to texts.

This literature underscores the important contribution, in the form of "scaffolding", that adults make to the read aloud context and how this influences children's responses during read alouds. However, obviously there is a reciprocal influence of each participant (reader and listener) on the other's comments, questions, and rate of participation during read alouds. Pellegrini and Galda (2003) highlight the

fact that the social context of book reading is transactional and jointly constructed by its participants. As such, future research needs to investigate children's influence upon adults in the read aloud context as this has been mostly overlooked in the literature.

Lastly, like the majority of the participants in read aloud research, many of the children in these studies were younger, middle-class, and in reading dyads with their mothers. Reading aloud and other literacy related activities are a common occurrence in many middle class homes. It is important to include investigations of read alouds with children from a variety of homes or backgrounds and with different read aloud partners, including fathers or other children. It would also be advantageous to explore how older children in upper elementary schools respond to books, especially given the fact that responses to literature change across time and with age.

### **The *Text* Component in Read Alouds**

This section of the chapter explores studies focused on the *text* component, or the book that is read aloud. Martinez and Roser (1985) point out that reading aloud to a child involves three components - the child, the adult, and the story. While there has been considerable research focused on the child and the adult in the read aloud context, there has been relatively little attention on the influence of the text. There is evidence from a growing number of studies on book-reading interaction that there are differences in children's and adults' engagement and participation according to the nature of the text, including its genre and format (Elster, 1998; Moschovaki & Meadows, 2005; Neuman, 1996; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody, 1990; Shine & Roser, 1999). This next section summarizes these findings.

Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, and Brody (1990) examined the extent to which mothers' teaching strategies and children's participation during read aloud episodes varied as a function of text genre (i.e., narrative versus expository). The researchers observed 13 low-income mother-child dyads in their homes for nine reading sessions over the course of a ten week period. Mothers' teaching strategies were coded on the basis of high, medium, and low mental demands as well as on their use of metalinguistic verbs. Children's utterances were coded to capture talk that related a word or idea from the text to an external referent, book-relevant responses to mothers' questions, and whether the children initiated book-relevant talk. Results revealed that the genre of the texts affected mothers' teaching strategies. Specifically, the expository genre elicited significantly more mothers' teaching strategies and use of metalinguistic verbs than did the narrative texts. Moreover, children's participation during read aloud events was greater around expository texts than around narrative texts. Pellegrini et al. (1990) hypothesized that because narrative books are typically unified by a "linguistically explicated theme," adults may need to interact less with children to hold their attention as they present the theme in the text. Conversely, expository texts require adults to play a more active role in supporting children's learning and participation, most notably through concept and vocabulary development.

In a similar study focusing on the impact of text genre on children's and parents' patterns of interaction, Neuman (1996) examined 41 low-income parent-child dyads as they read three different text types (highly predictable, episodic predictable, and narrative) in a twelve week intervention study. In contrast to the methods of Pellegrini

and colleagues (1990), children's and adults' patterns of interactions were coded as one unit. Results indicated that interactions around highly predictable texts involved significantly more chiming in and feedback to the rhymes and rhythms of the texts, whereas narrative texts involved a greater emphasis on reconstructing the events of the story and making connections with and beyond the text to children's lives. Unlike the finding in Pellegrini and colleagues (1990), the narrative genre in this particular study resulted in more cognitively challenging talk as parents attempted to help children understand the text and link it to something in the child's world. It is important to note that these studies did not compare the same text types, which likely explains the difference in outcomes. In effect, when narrative and expository texts were compared, the expository genre produced more teaching, whereas when narrative and highly predictable texts were compared, the narrative genre elicited more teaching.

The literature has also examined how various text factors affect teachers' and children's utterances during book reading within classroom settings. For example, Shine and Roser (1999) described nine preschoolers' response patterns as they listened to particular types of text in a school setting. Students were read four text types including information, fantasy, realistic fiction, and poetic, with each reading happening two times in 45-minute reading sessions for four weeks. Content analysis of children's responses revealed that with information books, children incorporated both language and information from text during book discussions and connected personally to the texts through their knowledge of topics presented. During fantasy read alouds, children focused their talk on the characters and events of the stories as they attempted to interpret

the characters' emotions and debate and predict story plots. Moreover, children frequently made inferences during fantasy read alouds as they reconstructed texts. With the realistic fiction books, similar to fantasy texts, children focused their talk on the characters in the story. Finally, with poetic books, children identified and described the illustrations in the texts more than in any other text type. Children infrequently connected personally to poetic texts and instead were more focused on the rhythmic patterns of the language in the texts. Consequently, they often chimed in during readings and attempted to enact the poems through word play, sounds, and movement. This study provides evidence that text factors, such as characters, plot, and language of the text are important determinants that affect children's participation patterns.

In a more recent study, Moschovaki and Meadows (2005) examined children's spontaneous comments, questions and levels of cognitive engagement during read aloud contexts in 20 kindergarten classroom settings. Teachers read four books (two fiction and two information) to classes of 10-20 children. The authors reported that children made more connections between the texts and their own lives with information books; this is consistent with the results of Shine and Roser (1999). The authors explained that children most likely use text-to-life connections as a cognitive strategy to help them understand the ideas presented in information books. Alternatively, with fiction books, children made more chiming, recalling, clarifying, evaluating, and prediction comments. It may be that the fiction books used in the study did not include themes that interested children or connected to their lives, which in turn limited their ability to make text-to-life connections. In a separate study analyzing the same data set, Moschovaki and Meadows

(2005) categorized teachers' and children's comments according to high cognitive demand (sustained discussion requiring participants to analyze, predict, or reason), medium cognitive demand (not likely to sustain discussion and requiring participants to apply thinking skills of increased difficulty), and low cognitive demand (all participant utterances that focused on text illustrations or the teacher reading the text with no discussion). In general, teachers participated more than children in book reading discussions and most comments were of low cognitive demand. Also, teacher's high and low cognitive demand participation correlated with the same type of participation from children. However, there were differences in cognitive demand discussions across genre type. In particular, fiction books elicited greater low cognitive demand discussion, while information books produced more high cognitive demand discussion. This outcome is similar to that of Pellegrini et al. (1990) who found that adults played a more active role teaching concepts and vocabulary during the reading of expository texts. The teachers, like the mothers studied by Pellegrini et al. (1990), appeared to be more concerned with presenting the story line in fiction books and on child learning in information books. Thus, various text genres provide different learning opportunities for children in the read aloud context.

A final group of studies examined the influence of text on language interactions in bilingual parent-child reading sessions. Specifically, researchers explored children's and adults' code switching during book reading as it related to text type. Vedder, Kook, and Muysken (1996) studied Papiamentu speaking Antillean immigrant families in the Netherlands. Dutch is the official language of Netherlands and as such, it is a foreign



language to most Antilleans according to the authors. Researchers studied 25 bilingual adult-child dyads as they read three types of books (no text, a Dutch text, and a Papiamento text). Children ranged from five to six years old. Results indicated that that mothers and children used more Papiamento than Dutch during book reading events. Children used more Dutch than their mothers, which the authors identified as an intergenerational language shift. Code choice of the adult readers and children depended on both the language proficiency of the participants and the language of the texts. For example, Dutch text elicited more comments in Dutch than the Papiamento text; however the wordless text elicited the most Dutch in comparison to the other texts. This demonstrated that although the text was a factor in code switching, it was not the only contributing factor. Mothers' and children's language competence also played a role. Additionally, because the wordless text was a wordless book about numbers, the authors hypothesized that the mothers may have viewed counting as a more school-like activity and thus encouraged their children to use Dutch, which was the language of the larger school community.

Along related lines, Bauer (2000) explored the code-switching patterns of her bilingual (English and German) two year old daughter in repeated home storybook reading sessions with four different texts representing three genres (highly predictable, modern fantasy, and realistic fiction). The study was conducted in the United States and all four books were translated so that they could be read at least three times each in both English and German. The author concluded that three main factors influenced the child's spoken language choice in storybook reading. First, the child code switched very little

during highly predictable and patterned text. Similar to studies of monolingual children, the child chimed in frequently during readings of this type. Bauer (2000) postulated that her daughter was focused on trying to say the exact words in the text and focused on flow and rhythm of the text language, thus limiting her code switching between two different languages. Second, books that had more complex content or books in which her daughter was able to connect with personally elicited the most code switching. It was hypothesized that these types of books allowed more linguistic freedom for the child. Finally, overall the child's code-switching patterns revealed that she interpreted book reading to be a primarily English activity despite participating in much more code-switching during play activities. The author noted how this finding demonstrated the child's metalinguistic awareness. In conclusion, this study supports the finding in Vedder, Kook, and Muysken (1996) that text type will at least partially influence bilingual children's language use during shared reading sessions. As both studies demonstrate, other factors, such as language competence and participants' personal responses to text, also clearly affect book reading interactions.

### **Summary and Critique of the *Text Component in Read Alouds***

Storybook reading is a socially constructed literacy activity involving all three participants (i.e., reader, listener, and text; Pellegrini & Galda, 2003). Previous studies have failed to capture the importance of the text in the reading triad. In contrast, the studies reviewed in this section have demonstrated how text can affect both adults' and children's participation during book reading episodes (Moschovaki & Meadows, 2005; Neuman, 1996; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody, 1990; Shine & Roser, 1999).

Pellegrini and Galda (2003) note that the types of books that mothers read to their children are rarely described in the home read aloud literature, which leads readers to the assumption that texts are irrelevant when examining book reading contexts. However, when reading and writing are viewed as a socio-cultural practice, the text plays an important component in the book reading triad interaction. The aforementioned studies support the notion that the format and content of the text will influence the interactions of the participants in the book reading context.

We must also keep in mind that there are implied social relationships between the author of the text and the listener or reader. Bloome, Harris, and Ludlum (1991) explain that authors use various rhetorical and linguistic devices in text to structure such relationships. The text and the author assume a role of power and authority impacting interpretations and meanings gained by the listener in the read aloud context. Additionally, as MacGinitie and MacGinitie (1986) point out, the function, meaning, or intent of a text cannot be determined in isolation from the interaction among the text, reader and listener. Galda and Beach (2003) note how literary response researchers have “focused increasingly on response not simply as a transaction between texts and readers [or listeners] but as construction of text meaning and reader stances and identities within larger sociocultural contexts” (p. 856). Within this, language and culture also play a major role. The text never just exists in a literacy context; instead it will always alter it based on the personal experiences and pre-existing frameworks that its readers or listeners bring to the read aloud (Tusting, Ivanic, & Wilson, 2000). Given this dynamic interaction, there can be multiple meanings and interactions around texts depending upon

the sociocultural context. Consequently, a varied contextualization of a text, such as who is reading it, how it is being read, where it is being read, when it is being read, and why it is being read, will impact meanings and interactions during read aloud events.

When researchers attempt to highlight the contribution of variations in a single factor of the book reading triad, in this case the text component, they often poorly account for the influence of children and adult factors in the read aloud context. For example, many of the studies that took place in school settings failed to provide adequate details about how teachers presented the texts. However, it is unclear from this line of research how children's previous literacy experiences within their own social communities and the larger classroom contexts may have guided their responses to various text types. For example, children's familiarity with particular genres or the ways in which children were socialized into the classroom literacy community might reveal differences in the ways that children talk about different text types (Shine & Roser, 1999). Thus, strong conclusions about the ways in which specific text types affect read aloud interactions must take into account how variables such as adult reading styles, children's literacy experiences, and the impact of literacy socialization practices in classrooms.

Future research looking at the influence of text on read aloud interactions should include additional text factors, such as vocabulary levels. Van Kleeck (2003) highlights how book reading research describes books only in limited terms and fails to include a variety of measures of book complexity. Detailed descriptions about the ways in which adults help children cope with these various demands would also be important in future

studies. This would aid teachers and other adults in determining how to guide children when interacting with particular texts (Martinez & Roser, 1985). Finally, the participants in all of the aforementioned studies were of preschool or kindergarten age and the majority spoke only one language. Additional research should include older and more diverse populations of children.

### **Conclusion and Connection to Current Study**

Correlations between reading aloud and children's subsequent language and literacy skills are well documented. Current theory suggests that reading aloud familiarizes children with the nature of written language and exposes children to a large volume of language input (Wells, 2003). Read aloud studies have focused on the roles that adults, children, and texts play in the read aloud context. Research reveals that adults adopt varying styles when reading aloud to children, and that these styles elicit unique responses from children and impact their literacy development in different ways. Adults also act as mediators, scaffolding questions and comments during book reading events to support students' learning. Research has also documented that children respond in various ways to adults and texts. These variations in response are attributed to a number of factors including (a) children's familiarity with book reading; (b) individual child characteristics (e.g., age, personality and bilingual competence); and (c) whether the text had been read repeatedly to the child. Finally, researchers have postulated that different types of text are linked to variations in adults' and children's responses in read aloud contexts.

The current study differs from the majority of the studies on reading aloud in the literature in terms of its participants, scope, and focus. As a result, it fills gap in the literature in three unique ways. First, the majority of the existing studies on reading aloud have focused a younger population of monolingual, middle-class children. In contrast, this study also explores the impact of book reading on the literacy skills of an older elementary population of bilingual children from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Secondly, most studies in the literature are based on one-time observations of book reading events. Alternatively, the current study includes observations of repeated book reading over time. Additionally, this study draws on discourse analysis and a participatory action research component not typically found in other read aloud studies. As such, this study explores the interaction patterns in read aloud groups and was designed to help pre-service teachers expand and deepen their learning about teaching language and literacy to bilingual students.

### **Sociocultural Theoretical Framework**

Several experimental investigations of storybook reading presented earlier in this review have demonstrated the positive impact of this practice on children's language and literacy development (e.g. Elley, 1989; Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, & Share, 1993; Whitehurst et al., 1988). This has led many researchers and practitioners to view reading aloud as an intervention tool. As a result, there has been an abundance of read aloud programs created for parents and teachers with the goal of improving children's language and literacy skills. Unfortunately, many of these programs are rooted in a deficit perspective. Pellegrini (1991) explains that scholars working from a deficit perspective

imply that “children are at risk for failure because of something they lack, the unavailability of trade books in the home, or opportunities to participate in the literacy event, *par excellence*, the joint book-reading context of child and parent” (p. 380). Thus, interventions programs, designed to emulate middle-class reading models, are aimed at making up for lack of reading in the home.

Intervention studies that adopt a deficit perspective are informed by a cognitive-psychological model of reading. This model equates reading with a scope and sequence of discrete skill, “a fundamentally single, internal and thus fully portable, individual and determinable activity-that it is a finally-discoverable psychological process” (Freebody & Freiberg, 2001, p. 222). A hallmark in the thinking of cognitive-psychological reading theorists is that reading development is situated entirely in the mind of the reader. As such, these theorists have drawn connections between children’s existing knowledge and their subsequent reading development and performance (Stanovich, 2004). When reading development and achievement are viewed as strictly individualistic, deficits in families and children are highlighted and remediation becomes the focus of research and teaching.

Another defining characteristic of a cognitive-psychological model of reading is that literacy is viewed as an autonomous skill. Collins and Blot (2003) explain that an autonomous model views literacy as “a uniform set of techniques and uses of language with identifiable stages of development and clear, predictable, consequences for culture and cognition” (pp. 3-4). The assumption is made that a single dominant, Western conception of literacy can be implemented in any social and cultural context to produce the same gains in literacy (Heath & Street, 2008).

An alternative to the cognitive-psychological model of reading is a sociocultural theory of language, learning, and literacy. Read aloud studies conducted within this framework (e.g. Heath, 1982, 1983; Cochran-Smith, 1982; Wynn, 2000) capture the social and cultural context of storybook reading and how this influences both children's and adults' interactional patterns and text choices during book reading episodes. This work highlights how children construct meaning and develop literacy through participation in book reading events with particular participants, texts, and social environments. Sociocultural book reading studies have demonstrated that book reading practices vary between and within social and cultural groups and how this impacts children's language and literacy development (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000; Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996; Heath, 1982, 1983). The strength of these studies lies in their attempts to explore the interrelated aspects of adult, child, and text within the read aloud context. The social cultural framework with used for this study and it is described in further detail below.

### **Sociocultural Perspectives on Language, Learning, and Literacy Development**

A sociocultural perspective (Bloome, 1985; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Street, 1993) defines literacy as a complex set of social and cultural activities involving language (both written and oral) which are infused with "values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7). This perspective suggests that literacy cannot be viewed simply as reading and writing, instead people adopt different ways of interacting with print within different sociocultural contexts for different purposes (Gee,



2003; Street, 2001). In other words, there are multiple literacies that people engage in across various social contexts throughout their lives.

The recognition that there are multiple types of literacy and literacy practices is one of the central tenets of a sociocultural perspective. Multiliteracies involve different types of languages, uses, and symbolic systems that are embedded within larger social and cultural contexts (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996; Street, 2001). Gee (2001) argues that there are different patterns of vocabulary, syntax, and discourse connectors that make up different social contexts and identities in which literacy is always embedded. Thus, literacy necessarily varies across and within groups and contexts. The social contexts for reading are formed by specific members of a social group. The goal of learning becomes a mutual understanding of the reading task that arises in a particular social interaction with various members of the group at a particular time. For example, Heath (1982, 1983) described multiple types and uses of literacy and their significance for family and community members across three distinct communities in her well-known ethnography presented earlier in this chapter.

Heath's work (1982, 1983) illustrates the concept that people participate in multiple literacies within various discourse communities or social practices (Bloome, 1985; Street, 2001). Gee (1996) argued that when people learn and participate in literacy events, they are being socialized into "Discourses," which are "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, or other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts,' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that are used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network,' or to signal a

socially meaningful ‘role’” (Gee, 1996, p. 131). Discourses can be associated with various groups including cultural groups, professional groups, religious groups, school groups or any other identifiable social group with a specific identity. Gee (2003) explains that each Discourse carries with it a particular “identity” or “tool” kit that includes ways of talking, writing, acting, thinking, and interacting that are unique to each group. This construct of Discourses emphasizes how various literacies are created, impacted, structured, and utilized by the social, cultural, historical, and political institutions in which they are embedded (Barton & Hamilton, 2000).

Social groups or institutions are structured in particular ways that make them more or less socially powerful within the larger society. As such, literacy that is associated with more socially powerful institutions, such as schools, tend to support more dominant literacy practices including traditional or conventional models of reading and writing (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). When viewing literacy through a sociocultural lens, it is understood that dominant practices of literacy are “configurations of power and knowledge which are embodied in social relationships” that are part of schools and other socially powerful institutions (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 12). These dominant literacy practices are often more visible and influential than other types of literacies, including those that are part of people’s everyday lives. Perez (2004) explains that many children, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have developed specific language and literacy skills that are unique to their homes and communities. Many of these language and literacy skills are not valued in school-based settings. Unfortunately, when schools are unable to create bridges between home and school

literacies, many children are unable to meet the expectations and requirements of school-based literacy practices.

Researchers who view literacy from a sociocultural perspective are often interested in documenting literacy practices in children's homes and communities and then exploring the relationship between these literacies and more dominant forms of school literacy. For example, Bloome, Katz, Solsken, Willett, and Wilson-Keenan (2000), studied the relationship between family and community literacy customs and school literacy practices in a group of African American parents and children living in a public housing project in a large urban area in the South. The authors described an action research study where they examined a family literacy program that was developed in order to document how parents read aloud and told stories to their children in home settings as part of family and community life. The program was contrasted with that of more common family literacy programs which are based on traditional school-centered models of literacy. The authors found that although parents in the community enacted some of the more traditional school-oriented roles of classroom book reading, such as the adult as "teacher" in the read aloud context, they also transformed storybook reading into something that fit into their established ways of family and community life. The authors concluded that it is important to examine the ways in which educators and researchers attempt to use school-centered models of literacy outside of the home and how this impacts families and communities.

Considering literacy as a cultural practice is another key construct of a sociocultural theory of literacy. Bruner (1996) defined culture as the meanings people

make and assign to particular situations which are influenced by their histories, experiences, and actions. Literacy practices are infused with particular beliefs, values, norms, and expectations that are part of a given culture. The ways in which people learn and engage in literacy are based on their various cultural identities (Ferdman, 1991). Book reading is an example of a cultural literacy practice. The interactions surrounding book reading contexts are underpinned by family and community values around adult-child interactions and the uses and functions of literacy (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000). As a result, book reading interactions often proceed differently across cultural groups (Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000).

Although culture is considered a shared way of thinking, believing, acting, and judging, Bruner (1996) explains that culture is never stable. Instead, cultures are always in the midst of change as people try to make sense of new situations and events that arise. Consequently, literacy practices are fluid, dynamic, and historically situated (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices change as the lives and societies of people they are part of evolve and transform. For example, over the past twenty years advances in technology and globalization have allowed people to communicate more freely across time and space. This change has given rise to various forms of technical and multimedia literacy, known as “multiliteracies” (The New London Group, 1996; Luke, 1997). Larger societal institutions, such as schools and organized religion, also change and evolve over the course of history, which directly impacts the ways in which people use literacy. Finally, personal histories influence people’s literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton,

2000). For example, changes in an individual's school, job, activities, interests, and available resources all impact how that person engages in literacy across their lifetime.

In summary, a sociocultural framework views literacy as a set of social, cultural, and historical practices which explain the large variability in the types of literacy practices that exist across time, social settings, and cultural groups. Each type of literacy takes on distinct patterns and features which are embedded in social, cultural and historical contexts. Some literacies, such as those found in school settings, are more dominant than others. Many of these more traditional literacy programs have failed to be successful, especially for students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **Sociocultural Theory of Literacy Acquisition**

A sociocultural framework of literacy development rejects the cognitive-psychological notion that children become literate by progressing through various stages where discrete skills such as letters and sounds are learned and acquired once and for all. Instead, a sociocultural perspective defines learning literacy as “a change in how one participates in specific social practices within specific Discourses” (Gee, 2003, p. 37). In other words, children learn “social languages,” or particular ways of speaking, reading, and writing that are appropriate to the social and cultural contexts in which they live (Gee, 2003). Children acquire and develop language and literacy as members of particular social networks. These networks include their families, cultural groups and other communities where they hear and see language being used (Gee, 1996; Heath, 1982; Taylor, 1998; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1998). Therefore, the oral and written

language that children learn varies depending upon who the child is conversing with and the specific activity in which the language is embedded.

Through socialization, children learn and acquire specific literacy behaviors, values, attitudes, assumptions, and norms surrounding oral and written texts within the historically and culturally situated practices in which they are rooted. How children are socialized into literacy has been addressed in sociocultural studies of children's early literacy development (e.g. Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Compton-Lilly, 2003; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Taylor, 1998; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1998). For example, Taylor (1998) conducted an ethnographic study documenting young children's early literacy development in their homes. She concluded that the children learned ways of being literate and the social significance of literacy through everyday interactions with parents and family members who encouraged their participation in a variety of literacy activities.

The idea that children develop literacy through interacting with more literate adults can be derived from Vygotsky (1978), who is known for positing sociocultural theories of language and learning. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of learning through scaffolding from more experienced learners. He argued that children's learning or mental functioning originates in social and communicative interactions with more experienced members of the cultural group. Vygotsky (1978) further argued that children's learning occurs on two developmental levels. The first is described as the actual level of development which is the child's current level of development and knowledge. The second level, referred to as the *zone of proximal development*, is the

distance between the child's actual level of development and the potential level of development the child could achieve in collaboration with, or under the guidance of, more capable adults and peers within a socially mediated activity (Wertsch, 1991). Within learning activities, the interaction that occurs within this zone is considered to best facilitate children's development (Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development has often been referred to when describing book reading interactions between children and adults. For example, in a study of book reading episodes involving mothers and children, Pellegrini and colleagues (1990) found that mothers began with cognitively demanding utterances and then evaluated children's responses. If children responded appropriately, then mothers continued with higher level utterances. Alternatively, if children responded inappropriately, then mothers generated lower cognitively demanding utterances in subsequent interactions. Thus, the authors contended that mothers were analyzing the learning task and children's level of competence and providing instruction accordingly, which follows the notion of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

Mediation is another core component of the sociocultural theory of language that traces its roots back to Vygotsky and his followers (e.g., Wertsch, 1991). The central idea of mediation is that when learners encounter new learning experiences, they are always mediated or filtered through tools or artifacts that are part of the context. Wertsch (2007) explained that when novices, or children, first encounter a new cultural tool, such as language or text, social interaction and negotiation between the novices and experts occur. Within this negotiation process, ideas are proposed and clarified as cultural tools

contribute to and mediate the learning that is eventually taken over by the novice (Wertsch, 2007). In the case of reading aloud, texts act as one such cultural tool that mediates children's learning within the read aloud context.

### **Sociocultural Implications for Instruction**

A major goal of literacy instruction within a sociocultural model is to develop children's abilities to use oral language, reading, and writing for a range of purposes across a variety of settings. This begins with teachers recognizing that students come to classroom settings with a broad range of language and literacy skills that have been acquired through socialization in their homes and communities. Educators must take the time to learn about children's home language and literacy backgrounds. From this perspective, schools should create environments where children can participate in social interactions and literacy activities which build upon their prior knowledge and experiences in order to help them learn new literacy practices (Duke & Purcell-Gates, 2003; Perez, 2004). Gee (2003) stated that teachers may need to find "bridges" between children's primary Discourses and those that are favored by schools. For example, Au and Mason (1983) found that Native Hawaiian children had difficulty discussing texts in the turn-taking manner that was utilized in the classroom setting. After the teachers restructured reading lessons in a culturally responsive manner to allow for "talk story," an important narrative event in the Hawaiian community, children began discussing more texts and making logical inferences. The work of Au and Mason (1983) illustrated how schools can adjust their teaching practices to the cultural style of children's homes and communities in order to engage in more successful literacy instructional practices.



### **Sociocultural Framework: Connection to the Current Study**

In order to capture the nature of the linguistic interactions enacted by my participants and explore how these constitute meanings and conceptions of language and literacy for the participants, a sociocultural framework was used. The sociocultural lens highlights the socially and culturally constructed nature of read alouds and the interactions of participants within small group settings. I was alerted to the ways in which pre-service teachers, children, and texts impacted language and participation structures during book reading episodes. A sociocultural framework, with its expanded definitions of language and literacy, also highlights the ways in which teacher's and children's language and literacy backgrounds and experiences impact interaction patterns around texts.

A sociocultural framework is particularly relevant to this study given its emphasis on the literacy experiences of English language learners. Reading aloud is an example of a culturally based literacy practice that is valued in schools but may be unfamiliar to some bilingual children. Many immigrant children come from countries where storybook reading is not part of the cultural tradition (Meir, 2003). As such, this study afforded bilingual students the opportunity to learn and engage in a literacy practice that is valued by schools and has demonstrated positive outcomes for children's language and literacy development. However, in addition to learning a new literacy practice, the bilingual children were also learning a second language in the school setting. Hawkins (2004) points out that many bilingual students:

arrive at school from homes and communities where the language and literacy practices diverge vastly from those required by school, they also often do not have

basic competency in communicating in any variety of English, and may lack prior exposure to almost any practices (in any language) around text and print (p. 22).

Using a sociocultural framework in my study helped me to consider the ways in which this dominant, school-based literacy practice might be more closely aligned with children's home and community language and literacy backgrounds to better serve the needs of bilingual children.

As such, I advised pre-service teachers to learn about the language and literacy backgrounds of their students. I chose texts for reading aloud that related to children's lives and background experiences. Additionally, I encouraged pre-service teachers to structure questions and comments around text in ways that more closely align with the types of language participation patterns or behaviors that students encounter in their homes and communities. For example, if teachers ask more open-ended instead of known-answer questions, linguistically and culturally diverse children may be more inclined to participate during classroom book reading events (Meir, 2003). In the professional development for this study, I discussed ways in which pre-service teachers could model and scaffold book reading behaviors in ways that would help children make meaning from texts and learn literacy skills and could be implemented in other contexts. Finally, I emphasized to pre-service teachers that the ultimate goal of reading aloud was to help bilingual children become successful at listening, responding, and learning from books without rejecting the language and literacy patterns that were part of children's homes and communities.

### **The Output Hypothesis of Second Language Acquisition**

Extending from a socio-cultural framework of literacy, which assumes that all literacy development arises as a result of social interactions between individuals, researchers have concluded that second language learners experience more success in developing linguistic knowledge when they have opportunities to interact with and produce language in the presence of native speakers or more advanced second language speakers (Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Swain, 2005). Specifically, the comprehensible output hypothesis proposes that children learn language by producing language, either spoken or written, in meaningful contexts (Swain, 2005).

Swain's interest in language output evolved in the context of a series of studies she carried out in Canadian French immersion programs (Swain & Lapkin, 2004). In these programs, and in a number of other similar programs in the United States, students enter school in kindergarten and receive all or part of their education in a second language; this provides a rich source of comprehensible input. Swain noted that while the immersion students acquired native-like reception and reading comprehension skills, they typically developed less adequate skills in their production of language and writing skills in the second language. She noted that students who were enrolled in such programs actually produced much less language than their peers in classes taught in their first language only. Moreover, when students did produce language, few of their linguistic errors were responded to by teachers or peers. In instances where errors were attended to by teachers, the responses were not conducted in any systematic way. This led Swain to hypothesize that encouraging students to produce language, and particularly

accurate language, is necessary in order for students to progress in their second language competence.

Swain (2005) proposed three important functions of output which lead to opportunities for language acquisition. The first function, *noticing*, refers to the notion that producing language causes learners to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge. When learners come to the realization that they do not know how to produce certain linguistic forms, production may prompt them to notice “something they need to discover about their second language (possibly directing their attention to relevant input)” (Swain, 2005, p. 474). In other words, the noticing function plays a consciousness-raising role that can generate new linguistic knowledge or consolidate existing knowledge for learners (Swain, 1995). The second function, *hypothesis testing*, refers to the idea that through noticing gaps in their linguistic knowledge, second language learners may assess their knowledge of the new language system. Through such analysis, learners can then generate and test alternative forms of production. Trying out new language forms and structures allows learners to fill in the gaps they notice in their linguistic knowledge and modify their speech during output. The third tenet of the output hypothesis, *the metalinguistic or reflective function*, refers to the notion that when speakers try to solve a problem in their output, it may prompt them to consciously reflect on the new language system. Second language learners may also use linguistic knowledge to reflect on language produced by others. Swain (2000) purported that this reflective process can aid in the acquisition of new language. This reflection process also makes the acts of noticing and hypothesis testing more explicit to second language learners.

Swain (2005) explained that this third metalinguistic or reflective function of the output hypothesis originated with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, which emphasized interaction. Vygotsky's (1978) idea of mediation as a tool for learning directly connects to Swain's theory of output. Language, a psychological tool, serves to mediate between the speaker and the completion of a task (Swain, 1998). Speech, specifically in dialogue internally and with others, serves as a cognitive tool in attaining knowledge. Swain asserted that, "dialogue provides both the occasion for language learning and the evidence for it" (Swain, 1998, p. 320).

Swain and Lapkin (1998) examined dialogue as both a means of communication and a cognitive tool when they studied two adolescent French immersion students working together on a jigsaw task requiring them to write a story in their second language based on a set of picture cards. Language learning was tested qualitatively by means of reviewing transcripts and looking for evidence in dialogues of "language related episodes" (LREs). Swain and Lapkin (1998) defined LREs as "any part of a dialogue where the students talk about language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (p. 326). Findings revealed that dialogue during the story reconstruction served as both a tool for communicating and L2 learning. For example, students discussed vocabulary choices and questioned grammatical features while writing. Through collaboration in dialogue, students helped each other learn and apply language rules to new contexts. The researchers also compared pre-tests (based on pilot study transcripts) and post-tests containing relevant multiple-choice language items that corresponded with language related learning episodes in dialogue transcripts.

Evidence showed that students were able to correctly answer test questions on post-tests that related to language learning episodes during the jigsaw task. In addition, the number of LREs significantly increased post-test scores. However, researchers also noted considerable variation in how pairs of students performed the task which led to diverse occasions for second language learning. Swain and Lapkin (1998) recommended future studies that include student interviews to elicit perspectives about what aspects of collaboration students find appealing or unappealing and conducive or non-conducive to second language learning.

To summarize, in addition to comprehensible input, learners need opportunities to produce language. Through this output students can recognize gaps in their second language knowledge and, on the basis of this, try out new language. Specifically, producing language can, “stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate language production” (Swain, 2000, p. 99). The analysis for this dissertation is situated in this framework of second language acquisition.

### **CHAPTER THREE: Methodology**

This study was conducted in order to determine how bilingual students and pre-service teachers experienced and made sense of language and literacy teaching and learning within the context of small group read alouds. I was also interested in examining the ways in which this literacy practice could help pre-service teachers learn to meet the unique language and literacy needs of bilingual students. The following questions guided this research:

#### **What is the nature of the interactions between bilingual students and pre-service teachers during the context of small group read alouds?**

- How do pre-service teachers' and bilinguals children's conversations relate to and extend from the texts these participants use?
- What sense are bilingual students making of text during read aloud contexts?

This chapter will begin with an overview of the methodological influences that were used to explore the above stated questions including ethnographic, discourse analysis, and participatory action research methodologies. Next, the research design for the study is described including: the design and description of small group read alouds and professional development meetings with pre-service teachers, the research setting, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, the chapter addresses the integrity of the research study which focuses on the role of the researcher's assumptions and biases and issues of credibility and reliability in the research process.

#### **Ethnography**

Ethnography, an approach to qualitative research, originated in the discipline of anthropology in the early twentieth century (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Within the

discipline of anthropology, culture plays an important role. As such, ethnographic research is primarily concerned with describing culture or aspects of culture for a given group of people (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). A growing interest in the role that culture plays in literacy teaching and learning led to the creation of ethnographic approaches to literacy research during the 1960's and 1970's (Florio-Ruane & McVee, 2000). A number of seminal ethnographic language and literacy research studies, such as Heath's ethnography of communication in three different communities, have enhanced our understandings of how dimensions of culture affect literacy learning (a description of this study is found in the literature review of this study).

This study views language and literacy through a sociocultural lens. As such, I understand that literacy practices take on distinct patterns and features which are embedded in larger social, cultural and historical contexts. In order to research literacy as a social practice, Heath and Street (2008) advocate for ethnographic studies that focus “on the everyday meanings and uses of literacy in specific cultural contexts...” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 103-104). Within the field of ethnography, there are various definitions and interpretations of *culture*, although they all focus on the shared understandings (i.e. beliefs, values, practices, perspectives, knowledge, language, norms, rituals, material objects, and artifacts) and ways of understanding that are characteristic of a particular group (Chambers, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Ethnographers also recognize that culture is always building and shifting, as opposed to static or bounded, within social settings as people use different language and types of literacy (Heath & Street, 2008).

This qualitative study drew on ethnographic methods in order to capture, through



participant observation, the beliefs, values, and meanings (*culture*) of language and literacy that were held and shared by pre-service teachers and bilingual students within the context of small group read alouds. Through close examination of the ways in which pre-service teachers and bilingual students engaged in reading and listening to text in small groups, I sought to understand the patterns of interaction that occurred between pre-service teachers and bilingual students in the read aloud context. Additionally, an ethnographic perspective, which focuses on interactions between members of a particular group, helped me to understand the ways in which pre-service teachers conceptualized language and literacy teaching and learning.

In attempting to understand the shared meanings of my participants, I took into account that individuals engage within larger societal contexts while working within their distinct cultures. The small group read alouds in this study took place in larger classrooms, schools settings, and the community. These larger contexts, with their historical and political forces, certainly influenced language and literacy patterns and parameters within small group contexts. Eisenhart (2001) argues that “individuals are not free to choose for themselves any view of the world,” instead they are “constrained by their culture and the enduring social structures that culture mediates” (p. 215). The ethnographer presents an “analysis of the myriad inferences and implications of the embeddedness of behavior in its [local] cultural context” (Muecke, 1994, p. 192). In studies of language and literacy, ethnographers attempt to uncover patterns of language and literacy that are associated with the larger context of classrooms and schools and situate them with those that are learned as “groups develop their own expertise and

identity-making” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 19). In this study, I focused on the ways in which pre-service teachers and bilingual students displayed and valued language and literacy teaching and learning in small group reading contexts and attempted to link this to broader forces that might have shaped their understandings.

### **Discourse Analysis**

In addition to adopting ethnographic methods in this study, I drew on discourse analysis. Discourse analysis allowed me to focus on the interactions between pre-service teachers and bilingual students that occurred around texts in small group read aloud contexts. Discourse analysis studies in language and literacy involve back and forth movement between the study of language within a particular context and the investigation of overarching issues which affect the educational context (Gee, Michaels, & O’Connor, 1992). Gee, Michaels, and O’Connor (1992) point out the multifaceted nature of discourse analysis explaining that discourse studies “are conducted in a variety of different disciplines with different research traditions, and there is no overarching theory common to all types of discourse analysis” (p. 228). However, an overarching theme to all discourse analysis is the construct of discourse. In this study, I adopted the term *discourse-in-use* proposed by Bloome et al. (2008). Discourse-in-use focuses on the ways in which people utilize language in a particular context “in response to the local, institutional, macro social, and historical situations in which they find themselves” (as cited in Bloome et al., 2008, p. 3). In this study, I focused primarily on a micro level approach to discourse analysis. Bloome et al. (2008) refer to the analysis of relationships between local literacy events and broader cultural and social processes as “micro and

macro level approaches” to discourse analysis. Micro level approaches to discourse analysis highlight “face-to-face interactions, the immediate situation, and local events” (Bloome et al., 2008, p. 20). In the case of this study, micro level discourse analysis involved examining the face-to-face language and interactions that occurred between participants within the specific context of small group read alouds. This analysis was then layered with a macro level approach to discourse analysis which focused on broader “social, cultural, and political processes that define social institutions, cultural ideologies, and all that happens within and across them” (Bloome et al., 2008, p. 20).

Previous research studies adopting discourse analysis have drawn attention to the ways in which “people use language and other systems of communication in constructing language and literacy events in classrooms with attention to social, cultural, and political processes” (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris, 2005). For example, Michaels (1981) examined the discursive norms and practices of sharing time in a first grade classroom. Through her analysis, Michaels linked children’s speech events during sharing time to their ethnocultural backgrounds. She then described the educational consequences for children whose language and literacy backgrounds differed from those of the classroom teacher and the school-based narrative event of sharing time. In another study applying discourse analysis methods, Cazden (1988) examined language in a variety of classroom settings and documented how larger social and cultural issues impacted teaching and learning. Thus, researchers applying both micro and macro level discourse analysis have broadened our understanding of language and literacy teaching and learning.

## **Action Research**

Action research is frequently utilized in social settings, such as schools and classrooms, where people are interested in change with the intention of improving the quality of the situation or social reality (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Stringer, 1999). The main purpose of the researcher within action research studies is to understand a situation and engage in an attempt to change the situation through collaborative efforts with participants (Winter & Munn-Giddings, 2001). Action research can help people better understand themselves, increase the awareness of problems, and raise commitments to improve a particular situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In the current study, I investigated the phenomenon of small group read alouds with bilingual students and aimed to help pre-service teachers improve the language and literacy teaching methods they implemented during these literacy events. Specifically, I wanted to help pre-service teachers implement teaching methods that were considered to be good pedagogical practices for bilingual students. In order to facilitate this process, I met bi-weekly with pre-service teachers so that together we could discuss and reflect upon their teaching. Given this agenda, action research methodology, using ethnographic forms of data, informed my study.

Unfortunately, the action research component of this study was compromised due to scheduling and time constraints. Each pre-service teacher followed a schedule unique to their own classroom setting thus limiting their availability to meet for the study and specifically limiting the potential times when they could meet together as a group. Additionally, pre-service teachers were required to meet as a group bi-weekly with their

Boston College field placement supervisor further limiting availability for study meetings. The voluntary nature of the pre-service teachers' involvement in this research study also limited the acceptable obligations that the study could impose upon the participants as the participants and their supervisor felt strongly that their primary responsibility at the school was to fulfill their requirements for their full-time field placements. Due to transportation issues and scheduling conflicts, it was not feasible for pre-service teachers to meet during non-school hours. Consequently, I was only able to meet with pre-service teachers for approximately 25 minutes during their lunch break at five points, or approximately every other week, during the data collection period. Ideally, we would have met more frequently and for longer periods of time in order to work collaboratively to investigate and bring about changes to pre-service teachers' read aloud practices with bilingual students.

### **Identification and Selection of Participants**

I used a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling in this study. At Boston College, undergraduate students who are majoring in education must complete a one semester full practicum experience which is designed to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Education as written in the Regulations for the Licensure of Education Personnel. There are a total of approximately 44 pre-service teachers completing full practicums each semester in grades K-6. I met with the director of the Office of Practicum Experiences, who oversees the practicum experience placement of students in Boston College Partnership Schools, to assist in identifying a potential school site and pre-service teachers to participate in the study. She provided me with a list of

students who would be completing their full practicum experiences in elementary schools that contained ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic diverse student populations during the time frame of my study. From this list, I became interested in a group of pre-service teachers who were all placed at the same school as I wanted to ensure that my pre-service teacher participants would be able meet together as a cohort in order to foster a sense of camaraderie and collaborative learning during the bi-weekly professional development meetings included in my study design. Due to varying school schedules and transportation issues, most pre-service teachers would be unable to travel away from their school sites, making it necessary to focus recruitment efforts on pre-service teachers all placed at one school site.

After identifying a small group of pre-service teachers at one school site that matched my criteria, I contacted the building principal and explained the project in order to obtain permission to conduct my research at the school site. I then contacted the pre-service teachers via email to inform them that they had been selected based on their field placement assignments and provided information about the project. See Appendix H for an example of the recruitment email. In the initial contact with students, I briefly explained the study and gave potential participants the opportunity to ask questions about participating in the study.

I recruited a total of 5 pre-service teachers of which 4 agreed to participate in my study. I then contacted their 4 cooperating teachers and let them know that the pre-service teachers who had been assigned to their classrooms to complete full practicum experiences had expressed interest in being part of the research project. I provided

classroom teachers with information about the study and asked their permission to complete the project in their classrooms. Once the teachers agreed to allow the research to be conducted in their classrooms, I asked each teacher to recommend 4 bilingual students from their classrooms to be participants in the research. Presumably, the classroom teachers had access to information about students' language proficiency levels and literacy levels. Ideally, the goal was to have students at varying levels of English proficiency in each read aloud group. Also, if possible, I wanted some children in each group to share the same language background. The following inclusion criteria were given to the cooperating teachers when I asked for recommendations of bilingual students:

1. The student is officially designated as an English Language Learner by the school/district or the student is a bilingual learner who is proficient in English, but who speaks another language/dialect fluently at home with parents, family members, or guardians.
2. In the case that there are not 4 bilingual students in the classroom, the teacher will be advised to recommend additional students who socialize well with the bilingual student(s) and would serve as good models of English during small group read alouds.
3. Students who are comfortable speaking to each other and or the pre-service teachers who are participating in the study.

The 4 classroom teachers each recommended a group of bilingual students. I then contacted the parents/guardians of all nominated children via mail. Per the recommendation of classroom teachers, some Spanish speaking parents received the letter written in their native language. I explained that their child was nominated to participate in the study and provided information about the study.

### **Human Subjects Review Process**

The Boston College Human Subject Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved my proposed study prior to recruiting participants and collecting data. This process involved a review of all recruitment and participant selection information and procedures and email drafts, letters, and forms used in this study. All participants were informed of their rights as human research subjects, including their rights to confidentiality and to withdraw at any point during the study. Additionally, pre-service teachers were given informed consent documents and children were given child assents forms prior to participating in the read aloud groups. These documents outlined the purpose of the study, the requirements for participation, the potential risks and benefits of participating, and procedures for confidentiality and withdrawal. All participants signed the forms and were given copies to keep.

### **Description of Sample**

#### **Pre-service Teachers**

Four pre-service teachers comprised the sample for this study. Two were undergraduate students and two were graduate students. Three pre-service teachers were



female, and one was male. All of the pre-service teachers were recruited from the Boston College Lynch School of Education, with two completing their undergraduate requirements in the teacher preparation program and two completing requirements in a master's level program. One of the two graduate level students had completed her undergraduate degree in the Lynch School of Education while the other participant received his undergraduate degree from a different institution. Each of the four pre-service teachers were completing their full practicum teaching experience at a different grade level ranging from first through seventh. The participants in this study represent the majority of the teacher candidates in the Boston College teacher preparation program in that they were all White, mostly female, middle to upper class, monolingual English speakers. Table 1 outlines the key characteristics of the four teachers selected for this study.

**Table 1**

*Pre-service Teacher Participants*

<b>Participant:</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Major:</b>	<b>Level:</b>	<b>Full Practicum Teaching Placement (Grade Level):</b>
Katrina	White	F	Early Childhood	Undergraduate	1 <sup>st</sup>
Kay	White	F	Elementary	Undergraduate	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Carl	White	M	Elementary	Graduate	5 <sup>th</sup>
Madeline	White	F	Moderate/ Special Needs	Graduate	7 <sup>th</sup>

Note all names are pseudonyms.

### **Bilingual Students**

There were four student participants at both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade levels and three participants at both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade levels (14 total). Student participant demographics are outlined in Table 2 below. Ideally, I had aimed for four student participants in each read aloud group, totaling 16 students across the four groups. However, one student at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level withdrew from the study after participating in only two read aloud sessions as he moved and left the school and only three of the four students recommended by the classroom teacher for recruitment at the first grade level were granted parental permission to participate. Eleven of the fourteen students enrolled in the study were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs) by the school district and were enrolled in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms where they studied English as a second language as well as science, mathematics, history/social studies, and language arts. At least two of the three students at the fifth grade level who were not officially designated ELLs spoke another language at home. The fifth grade classroom teacher reported that she had limited background information on one of these three as he had recently relocated from an out-of-state school without any prior records. Students' English language proficiency levels according to the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) are found in Table 2 below. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2011) explain that "federal and state laws require that English language learner (ELL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, English, as well as the progress

they are making in learning English” (MEPA section, para. 1). In order to meet these requirements, school districts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts administer the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) which consists of two assessments measuring ELLs’ reading, writing, listening comprehension, and speaking in English. The bilingual students’ language levels in this study ranged from a 3 to a 5 according to the MEPA. A level 3 bilingual student is able to communicate using basic English at school although language errors can sometimes interfere with communication and understanding (MEPA Performance Levels, para 3, 2011). A level 4 bilingual student is usually fluent in English at school and most communication is free of errors and easily understandable (MEPA Performance Levels, para 3, 2011). Finally, a level 5 bilingual student is considered to be fluent and easily understandable with no errors in communication. For a more complete and detailed description of MEPA language performance levels please reference the following document:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/mepa/pld.html>. It should also be noted that all student participants at the seventh grade level were in a Special Education Classroom setting and were diagnosed with specific learning disabilities according to their classroom teacher.

**Table 2**

*Bilingual Student Participants*

<b>Participant:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b>	<b>Native Language:</b>	<b>Second Language Proficiency Level (English) according to the MEPA:</b>	<b>Grade Level:</b>
Peter	Male	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	4	1 <sup>st</sup>

Andy	Male	Cambodian	Khmer	3	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sonya	Female	Dominican	Spanish	4	1 <sup>st</sup>
Maggie	Female	Dominican	Spanish	5	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Justin	Male	Dominican	Spanish	3	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Cara	Female	Taiwanese	Chinese (unknown dialect)	5	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Dorotha	Female	Russian	Russian	5	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Shadi (withdrew from study after moving out of state)	Male	Haitian	Unknown (no record from previous school)	Unknown (no record from previous school)	5 <sup>th</sup>
Raimond	Male	Haitian	Haitian creole	4	5 <sup>th</sup>
Charlotte	Female	Haitian	Haitian creole	Not officially labeled ELL- English language level unknown	5 <sup>th</sup>
Paulina	Female	Haitian	Haitian creole	Not officially labeled ELL- English language level unknown	5 <sup>th</sup>
Andre	Male	Haitian	Haitian creole	3	7 <sup>th</sup>
Kato	Male	Guatemalan	Spanish	4	7 <sup>th</sup>
Efina	Female	Mexican	Spanish	3	7 <sup>th</sup>
Ace	Male	Dominican	Spanish	4	7 <sup>th</sup>

Note all names are pseudonyms.

### **Site**

The site for this study was the “Albert K-8 School” (pseudonym) located in a socioeconomically and racially diverse neighborhood in a major city. The school serves over 700 students from grades K-8. Albert K-8 educates a diverse population of students. According to school indicators for enrollment, the racial makeup of the school was 29.1% African American, 12.8% Asian, 42.2% Hispanic, 1.3% Native American, 12.4 % White, and 2.2% other. In addition, 51.7% of the students had a first language other than English, 37% of the students were identified as Limited English Proficient, and Special Education students represented 18.7% of the school population. The school was an academy school for a local symphony and as such, students received weekly instruction in music and had opportunities to learn an instrument or perform in a chorus. According to the Annual Yearly Progress Report under No Child Left Behind, the school was not making “Adequate Yearly Progress” in Language Arts or Math for any of the subgroups except for Asian/Pacific Islanders in the subject of Math. The language arts curriculum in the school was a commercialized reading series with a scope and sequence program which focused on building students’ phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills using novels and trade books (literature).

### **Pre-service Teachers’ Prior Teaching and Educational Experiences**

The pre-service teachers in this study had varying experiences reading aloud with bilingual students. Katrina, who was pursuing an undergraduate elementary education degree, was the most experienced. She indicated that she had participated in the Read Aloud Project and Trainings (described below) during three prior field work experiences

at Boston College. Kay, who was also pursuing an undergraduate elementary education degree, participated in two Read Aloud Projects and Trainings. Carl, a graduate student in elementary education, did not attend Boston College as an undergraduate and therefore did not participate in any Read Aloud Projects or Trainings as an undergraduate student. He did however participate in one Read Aloud Project Training as a graduate student prior to participating in this dissertation project. Finally, Madeline, a graduate student pursuing a degree in secondary education, did not participate in any Read Aloud Projects or Trainings at either the undergraduate or graduate level. All pre-service teachers completed education course work in language arts, reading, and other content areas with at least a partial instructional emphasis on meeting the language and literacy needs of bilingual learners. It should be noted that pre-service teachers' trainings and course work varied given that there were both undergraduate and graduate students in this study. Also, instructors varied across pre-service teachers' prior courses and read aloud trainings. Therefore, previous read aloud trainings and course work were not considered data sources for this study.

The Boston College Lynch School of Education (BC LSOE) has paid extensive and explicit attention over the past several years to preparing teachers to successfully teach bilingual students. As one of a number of efforts aimed at helping pre-service teachers to work effectively with bilingual learners at all levels of English proficiency in mainstream classrooms, BC implemented a Read Aloud Project (RAP). The project was bolstered by a state requirement for pre-service teachers to demonstrate the use of appropriate instructional strategies to shelter language and content for bilingual learners.

The Read Aloud Project is now a required component of pre-practica field experiences for all Elementary and Early Childhood Program pre-service teachers. The RAP requires that pre-service teachers read aloud a fiction or informational text to a bilingual learner each time she or he visits a school site during their field placements, which are typically once a week for ten weeks. Working either one-on-one or with a small group that includes at least one bilingual learner, the Read Aloud Project session is designed to take 20 to 40 minutes with the same pupil(s) each week. Teacher candidates are required to read aloud plan and implement before-, during- and after-reading vocabulary and comprehension strategies. The Read Aloud Project exposes Boston College education students to the many challenges encountered by bilingual learners and their teachers while helping them develop effective instructional practices to employ with bilingual learners.

The read aloud trainings are part of the field-based Read Aloud Project created through the collaboration of teacher education faculty and Practicum Office staffing the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Mandatory Read Aloud Program training sessions for pre-service teachers are offered during the first few weeks of each semester and vary in content depending upon the number of pre-practica field experiences pre-service teachers have already completed. Since there are three required pre-practicum field experiences, each successive pre-practicum is referred to as P1, P2 and P3. The P1 training explores the purpose and basic implementation of the Read Aloud Project. The P2 training focuses on book selection, the development of vocabulary for bilingual learners and also contains a Read Aloud demonstration conducted in a language other

than English. Finally, the P3 training concentrates on the teaching and modeling of comprehension strategies and language objectives. Each two hour training is conducted by Title III <sup>1</sup> doctoral students and or a professor who serves as the Title III Project Director at Boston College (a National Professional Development Grant awarded to the Lynch School of Education at Boston College in order to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to work effectively with bilingual learners/English language learners). For more information on the Read Aloud Project and Read Aloud Trainings, please see the Boston College Title III website: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/title-iii/resources/readaloudresources.html>.

## **Study Design**

### **Time Frame**

In this dissertation study, four pre-service teachers who were completing their full-practicum experiences read aloud to small groups of three or four bilingual students from their classrooms twice per week for ten weeks. During this time, I met bi-weekly with pre-service teachers and we worked collaboratively in order to help them better meet the language and learning backgrounds of their bilingual students (see section on professional development). The organizational structure of full-practicum experiences at Boston College requires pre-service teachers to work in classrooms with a cooperating teacher for one semester, or approximately 15 weeks. As such, this study took place for the majority of their full-practicum experience. Reading aloud for 10 weeks also

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<sup>1</sup> Under the guidance of Prof. María Estela Brisk, the Boston College Lynch School of Education developed a Teaching English Language Learners certificate program and was awarded a United States Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition Title III National Professional Development Grant.



provided a long enough time frame to represent a range of experiences that lent insight into the interactional patterns of pre-service teachers, bilingual students, and texts.

### **Group Configuration**

Utilizing a teacher-led small group read aloud design (as opposed to a teacher-led “whole class” design) is well supported in the literature. For example, Clay (1991) found that the participatory nature of the small group settings during book reading events allowed for additional opportunities for students to interact with one another and encouraged more engagement with text. In this context, the teacher was also able to directly draw on the personal experiences of all the students in the group in order to develop a better understanding of the text. In another example, Dickinson, Cote, and Smith (1993) compared classroom variables to determine whether certain contexts, including teacher-led small group and large group instructional times, were more conducive to the use of rich and varied vocabulary by teachers and students. It was found that teacher-led small group time was most conducive to cognitively rich conversations between teachers and students. Morrow and Smith (1990) designed a study that investigated children’s comprehension of stories and their verbal interactions during storybook readings in groups of varying sizes. They found that children who heard stories read aloud in small groups of three performed significantly better on measures of reading comprehension than students who heard stories in a one-to-one setting and whole groups setting. Additionally, the small-group setting during read alouds generated more student comments and questions due to the fact that there were increased opportunities for children to interact with both the teacher and fellow classmates. Finally, in Brock’s

(2007) exploration of bilingual students' literacy learning in a classroom setting, she reported that the bilingual student felt less confused and more knowledgeable about literacy within in the context of small-group activities. The student also reported that social mediation, in the form of interacting and asking questions of his peers, during small group instruction contributed significantly to his literacy learning. Thus, my study design supported the findings that interactional patterns in small group literacy instructional contexts have the potential to be more optimal for student learning.

There were two read aloud groups with four bilingual students per group and two with three bilingual students per group. Ideally, each read aloud group would have had four bilingual students, however, as one participant did not complete the recruitment process and one student moved away during the project, there were two groups that did not meet this goal. In the literature on cooperative learning, Cohen (1994) suggests that four or five students per group is the optimal size for facilitating group discussions and interactions. Having four students per group also responded to the call by other researchers to examine the possibility of somewhat larger "small-groups" than have been previously utilized in book reading studies examining group configurations (Morrow & Smith, 1990). Finally, given the realities of today's classrooms which contain larger class sizes, it is not realistic for teachers to be able to read one on one with students despite evidence of the effectiveness of this practice. Thus, examining the possibility of reading aloud to small groups responded to the realities of today's classrooms.

### **Repeated Readings**

In addition to small group size, my study design incorporated the use of repeated readings of texts; however, some lengthy books were read over two sessions and were not repeated due to time constraints in bilingual students' classroom schedules. Studies that have examined the impact of repeated readings in one-to-one book reading contexts with low-ability students reveal that these students make more comments and ask more questions than high or middle ability students when they are repeatedly read texts (Morrow, 1988). Thus, it appears that repeated readings can help prompt responses from particular students. Also, read aloud literature investigating the effects of text on vocabulary development supports the instructional practice of repeated readings (Elley, 1989; Eller, Pappas, & Brown, 1988; Leung & Pikulski, 1990; Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Repeated readings may be particularly beneficial for bilingual students as they give students "access" to text. In other words, repeating books offers bilingual children familiarity with the language, content, and illustrations of texts.

### **Description of Read Alouds**

In the professional development provided for this study, I gave pre-service teachers research-based general recommendations and guidelines on how to read aloud to bilingual students (see section on professional development). Additionally, as described earlier in this chapter, all but one of the pre-service teachers had received prior professional development related to reading aloud to bilingual students. My intention was not to provide students with strict guidelines that they were expected to follow as I wanted pre-service teachers to be able to draw upon and use their professional

background knowledge and experiences in planning and implementing the read alouds. In other words, I did not provide pre-service teachers with a formulaic read aloud script that they were required to implement. Instead, I wanted pre-service teachers to use their best judgment, based on an understanding of their particular bilingual students' language and literacy needs. I also suggested to pre-service teachers that they use the read aloud context for building and extending the language and literacy skills that students were learning in the regular classroom setting, which varied across teacher and classroom. A strong consensus exists in the literature that bilingual students benefit from instructional contexts where teachers connect new learning and past learning and build repetition and redundancy into instruction (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gibbons, 2002). In general, pre-service teachers were instructed to read aloud a children's text in an interactive manner utilizing components of a shared reading method (Haldaway, 1979). During shared reading, the teacher sits in close proximity to students and reads alouds a text showing the illustrations. Additionally, pre-service teachers were instructed to plan and actively engage bilingual students in before, during, and after reading instructional discussions about the text, comprehension, and vocabulary stemming from the content of the texts. See below for a summary description of the practices that pre-service teachers implemented during small group read alouds. It should be noted that the prominence of these practices varied across teachers and texts.

Vocabulary:

- Teachers introduced between 3-5 vocabulary words from texts before reading.

- Teachers reviewed and extended the meanings of words during and after the reading of texts.
- Teachers modeled how to figure out the meanings of unknown words in texts.

Comprehension:

- Teachers modeled and engaged students in a variety of comprehension strategies before, during, and after the reading of texts in order to facilitate comprehension.
- Teachers monitored students' understandings of texts through questioning.
- Teachers supported students' comprehension of texts by explaining or paraphrasing text events, concepts, and illustrations.
- Teachers connected texts to students' background knowledge and personal experiences in order to enhance comprehension.

Other Language Features:

- Teachers modeled and engaged students in activities geared towards facilitating students' understandings of rhyming words, metaphors, similes, and other poetic techniques (i.e. personification, repetition, alliteration, and imagery).

**Texts**

A total of twenty commercially available children's texts were selected for this study. To begin the selection process, I consulted several textbooks and research articles written about choosing texts for bilingual learners (Brisk, Burgos, & Hamerla, 2004; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2001, 2002 a, b, c, d; Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2002, 2006). The objective was to select a variety of texts widely recognized as appropriate for bilingual learners. Five different text titles were utilized in each of four different grade

levels. Gee (1996) argues that children do not learn to read “once and for all,” but instead learn to read particular types of texts in ways that are appropriate for the social and cultural context in which they are embedded. As such, children must learn to read a wide range of genres for a wide range of purposes. With this in mind, a goal of the read aloud sessions was to model for bilingual children interactions with a range of texts for a range for different purposes. Therefore, each grade level contained a combination of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry text selections.

All text choices reflected the types of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry books that students encountered in the classroom through their daily Language Arts curriculum entitled *Making Meaning* (2003). The *Making Meaning* curriculum provided a list of alternative texts that were not read during the regular classroom language arts lessons. In negotiating the text selections, it was requested by the classroom teachers in the study that the chosen texts come from a published list of alternative texts provided by the language arts curriculum at each grade level. Therefore, I attempted to accommodate this request by carefully cross referencing the lists provided in the *Making Meaning* (2003) curriculum with the lists in the textbooks and research articles written about choosing texts for bilingual learners. The sections below outline additional selection criteria that were applied for the representative books from each genre category (nonfiction, fiction, poetry).

*Nonfiction Texts:* In most cases, the books selected in this category were about topics with which students were already familiar. I attempted to find books that linked to science and social studies topics and units of study students encountered in the classroom.

For example, at the seventh grade level, students were studying about the Civil Rights Movement, so a non-fiction text about President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was chosen for reading aloud. Additionally, I followed guidelines suggested by well-known researchers in the field of bilingual reading education (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002c; Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006), which included choosing nonfiction texts that contained a) illustrations and graphics to support text, b) accurate information, c) accessible language and vocabulary, and d) a clear and well organized layout. A final consideration in this category was the length of the text. Read aloud sessions typically lasted between twenty and thirty minutes. Therefore, it was necessary to avoid texts that were excessively lengthy.

*Fiction Texts:* All the texts selected in this category were written about familiar topics and or topics that were of high interest to participants in the study. Brisk, Burgos, and Hamerla (2004) recommend that bilingual students have the opportunity to interact with texts that contain topics related to linguistic, social, economic, cultural, and political factors in their own lives. Additionally, Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002b) suggest that teachers find books that “speak to diverse cultures, language groups, and lifestyles” (p. 58). Utilizing such texts helps to capture bilingual children’s attention and interest during read aloud sessions. Therefore, at least one fiction text at each grade level contained a text with content and illustrations reflective of a variety of languages and cultures. For instance, at the third grade level, a book about an immigrant child’s first experiences learning to speak English at school was utilized. Additionally, the fiction books had numerous colorful illustrations that could serve as a basis for introducing

vocabulary and supporting comprehension. The language of the texts was generally written for proficient bilingual students as there were no beginning language learners in the study.

*Poetry:* I adopted Vardell, Hadaway, and Young's (2002d, 2006) criteria for making poetry selections, including poems that a) contained familiar topics and or linked to topics or units of study in the classroom; b) contained accessible language and vocabulary; and c) contained either rhyming verse or had a strong rhythm in order to promote oral language development. For instance, poems about families and school were chosen for reading aloud. Also, in most cases, the poems selected provided accompanying illustrations to support language and comprehension.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the texts I initially chose were considered to be potential read aloud texts. Pre-service teachers were encouraged to make changes to the final text selections based on the unique needs of the bilingual children in their small reading groups. Final text selections were approved by the primary investigator and classroom teachers in the study. Pre-service teachers participated in a learning session specifically focused on how to choose texts for reading aloud to bilingual children. During this meeting, pre-service teachers were encouraged to think and reflect upon what happens when different types of texts are utilized in read aloud sessions and how various reader and text factors impact bilingual children's learning and participation during read aloud sessions. Pre-service teachers were also provided with a handout (see Appendix A) at this meeting that was developed for pre-service teacher candidates at Boston College for use when reading aloud with bilingual students and included a variety of genres. The



book selection checklist, based on research assessing the suitability of reading materials for bilingual students, considers factors such as bilingual students' language proficiency, first and second language literacy, cultural background, and general and specific background knowledge when choosing appropriate books for learners. The final list of books read aloud in this study can be found in Appendix B of this dissertation.

### **Professional Development Meetings with Pre-service Teachers**

The professional development for pre-service teachers was intended to help them develop appropriate skills and dispositions to work successfully with bilingual children in the read aloud contexts and beyond. I met with pre-service teachers for approximately 25 minutes during their lunch break at five points, or approximately every other week, during my data collection. Therefore, teachers were given only minimal preparation on each topic related to teaching bilingual students which was intended to augment their own background knowledge and experiences from previous teacher preparation course work and field experiences.

All the content for our meetings came from existing research on language and literacy development for bilingual students and related literature about reading aloud to bilingual students (see Appendices C, D, E, F and G for lists of relevant research consulted for each meeting). The content and agenda for each meeting came from five main sources: (a) my ideas and notions about knowledge that was important and necessary for pre-service teachers to participate in the project; (b) salient themes and ideas that emerged from my written reflections created after observing weekly read alouds; (c) pre-service teachers' ideas and questions related to reading aloud with

bilingual children; (d) content from courses, read aloud trainings, and professional development related to teaching language and literacy for bilingual students that I had previously taught and or attended<sup>2</sup>; and (e) my prior experiences training and observations of Boston College pre-service teachers conducting read alouds (I worked for the Title III grant at Boston College and participated in work related to training and observing education students implementing read alouds in their pre-practicum field placements). For example, in the first meeting, I covered the topic of text selection for bilingual students as I knew this was something that pre-service teachers would be required to do during the project. The content for a subsequent meeting, number four, came about after carefully examining read aloud transcripts and determining that pre-service teachers needed guidance on how to facilitate bilingual students' use of extended language during read alouds. How to use non-fiction texts and teaching language structures within read alouds were discussed at other meetings as these were topics suggested by the pre-service teachers. The bulleted list below outlines the topics that were discussed at each meeting (see Appendices C, D, E, F, and G for Bi-Weekly Meeting Reports detailing the topics and information discussed at each professional development session).

Meeting #1:

- The importance of getting to know your bilingual students

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<sup>2</sup>I was a course instructor for an undergraduate methods course *Teaching Reading* required for all education majors at Boston College. I taught *Teaching Reading and Writing in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms* in the Boston Public School District.

- Setting up an environment that encourages and supports bilingualism in the read aloud context
- The importance of repeated readings for bilingual students.
- How to choose texts for reading aloud to bilingual students

Meeting #2:

- The importance of teaching vocabulary in the read aloud context
- How to introduce and teach vocabulary in the read aloud context
- The importance of connecting with students' prior/background knowledge and experiences

Meeting #3:

- The importance of using non-fiction texts with bilingual students in the read aloud context
- How to choose non-fiction texts for reading aloud to bilingual students
- How to read aloud non-fiction texts to bilingual students
- Academic Language

Meeting #4:

- Read aloud questioning and discussion techniques that facilitate bilingual students' use of extended language in the read aloud context
- The importance of teaching comprehension in the read aloud context
- How to teach comprehension in the read aloud context

- Helping bilingual students to make personal connections to text during read alouds

Meeting #5:

- The importance of teaching text organization patterns (structures) in the read aloud context
- How to teach text organization patterns (structures) in the read aloud context
- Teaching Content and Language Objectives in the read aloud context

During meetings with pre-service teachers, I showed and discussed pre-service teachers' transcripts and/or videotaped excerpts of read aloud groups in order to prompt their thinking and talking about strategies for effective implementation of read alouds for bilingual learners suggested by research. I also presented both theory and research on topics in addition to providing suggestions for how and when to implement various strategies. Furthermore, I distributed selected reading materials (articles and handouts) related to teaching language and literacy to bilingual students that pre-service teachers could use as references and tools to help in their planning and teaching (see Appendices C through G for lists of articles with bibliographic information distributed at meetings and information about handouts that were distributed at meetings). I also created "Bi-Weekly Meeting Reports" (Stringer, 1999) that were distributed to students after every meeting. The meeting reports contained the following information: (a) a summary of what was discussed at each meeting; (b) an agenda that outlined "next steps" for pre-service teachers; and (c) suggestions for how to implement strategies that were discussed

during the meetings (see Appendices C, D, E, F, and G for copies of the five Bi-Weekly Meeting Reports distributed to pre-service teachers in this study.). Due to the limited amount of time available for discussion at each meeting, the thought was that pre-service teachers would be able to use the handouts, articles, and meeting reports as a way to continue to build their knowledge about reading aloud to bilingual students outside the context of the bi-weekly meetings. Also, these materials were intended to be used as useful tools for pre-service teachers when planning their read aloud sessions. Importantly, the overarching goal of the professional development was to work collaboratively with pre-service teachers in order to build professional knowledge about good pedagogical practices to utilize with bilingual students and not to mandate specific teaching practices. Importantly, pre-service teachers were encouraged to adapt suggestions and strategies to meet the individual language and literacy needs of their bilingual students.

### **Data Collection**

I collected data from read aloud observations (audio and video taped transcripts of read aloud groups, field notes, and conceptual memos) and reports from bi-weekly meetings with pre-service teachers. An additional source of data included samples of student generated writing produced in the read aloud context. An outline of the data sources and frequencies is provided in Table 3.

### **Observations**

I observed each pre-service teacher conducting 10 read alouds over the course of 10 weeks. The observations took place four times per week for a total of 10 weeks. By

observing read aloud events across time, I was able to capture consistently occurring patterns and themes in book reading events. Also, by observing multiple read alouds, I gained an understanding of how my participants were making sense of this literacy practice within the context of small groups. During the observations, I sat in close proximity to the small groups being observed and took notes. A digital recorder was placed next to the small groups in order to audio record read aloud sessions. Verbal interactions related to each book reading events, including discussion preceding and following them and the actual reading of the texts were recorded. A video camera was placed nearby on a tripod to record read alouds in order to identify interactions that may not have been captured by audio tape, although an in-depth analysis of read aloud videotapes was not conducted for this study.

### **Book Reading Fieldnotes**

Field notes were also written during book reading observations. The purpose of the field notes was to supplement and augment the book reading transcripts and conceptual memos that were created after each book reading observation. In my field notes, I included notations of nonverbal interactions (gesturing, pointing, facial animation, and body movements), information about the text (bibliographic information, number of readings, students' prior familiarity with the text), and other non-audible factors affecting the interactions. I also noted any parts of conversations surrounding texts that might have been inaudible or difficult to re-create in a transcript of the audio-taped observations.

### **Conceptual Memos**

Conceptual memos were created after each book reading observation. The memos were written for the purpose of reflecting on observational data and allowing for further interpretation. Memo writing helps the researcher begin to elaborate on findings and contribute to the first draft of the final completed analysis (Charmaz, 1995; Heath & Street, 2008). The memos followed a format suggested by Heath and Street (2008). For example, each memo contained general information about the book reading observation including the date, time, participants, and site of the observation. Additionally, the memo contained three columns including a) problems and setbacks (any unexpected occurrences such as student absences or interruptions of read alouds by scheduled school events); b) overview (brief description of the read aloud event); and c) patterns, insights, and breakthroughs (in this section I recorded thoughts, insights, trends, patterns, and questions in relation to the observation).

### **Student Generated Writing**

I collected and analyzed all writing that students produced during read aloud episodes. Students produced writing during nine of the 40 read aloud sessions.

### **Reports from Bi-weekly Meetings with Pre-service Teachers**

A secondary goal of this study was to facilitate pre-service teachers' development as language and literacy teachers of bilingual students. In action research studies, Stringer (1999) suggests that immediately following meetings with participants, the primary investigator should construct a meeting report. Meeting reports provide a

detailed summary of the events that took place during the meeting and an agenda that outlines what “next steps” the participants will take. I created reports at the conclusion of each meeting with the pre-service teachers. These reports served two main purposes. First, they were distributed to pre-service teachers to form the basis for actions that could be taken to improve their instructional practices for bilingual students. Secondly, the reports were used as data sources in my study. In order to generate these reports, I used audio and video taped transcripts from my bi-weekly meetings with pre-service teachers.

**Table 3**

*Overview of Data Sources and Frequency*

<b>Data Source:</b>	<b>Participants:</b>	<b>Frequency/Timeline:</b>	<b>Totals:</b>
Audio and video taped transcripts, fieldnotes, and conceptual memos from book reading observations of small group read alouds	4 pre-service teachers and 14 elementary students	Twice per week for 10 weeks	40 small group read aloud observations
Student generated writing samples	14 elementary students	9 read alouds	9 sets of student writing samples
Reports from meetings with pre-service teachers	4 pre-service teachers and primary investigator	Bi-weekly for 10 meetings	5 meeting reports

**Data Analysis**

The primary data sources for this study were transcripts based on audio and video recordings of 40 small group read alouds with accompanying hand written field notes. From the audiotapes, video recordings, and field notes, all audible comments and salient non-verbal aspects of interactions between pre-service teachers and students during book



readings were transcribed. The transcription process also involved cleaning up the speech of pre-service teachers in order to make their comments as readable as possible. To do this, speech dysfluencies, repetition, and repair found in pre-service teachers' utterances were erased. Bilingual students' utterances represent the actual talk they produced in read aloud groups. The transcriptions were then cross-checked with the videotapes and my observation notes. The final transcriptions represent several passes using audio and video recordings of read aloud groups and my hand written notes.

In the transcript extracts, the actual words of the written text being read aloud are shown in quotation marks and the talk of the teachers and children is preceded by their pseudonyms and colons (i.e. Katrina:). Salient non-verbal or other pertinent information of interactions are shown in brackets (i.e. [Teacher is pointing to the text illustration.], [Student interjects.]).

After completing the transcription process, data analysis for this study began with multiple readings of the data (transcripts of book reading observations, book reading observation field notes, conceptual memos, student writing samples, and bi-weekly meeting reports) in order to identify codes, themes, and categories (Heath & Street, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Heath and Street (2008) recommend that ethnographers reread data and write and review conceptual memos on a daily basis in order to begin identifying patterns. The multiple readings included extensive note taking about potential themes and categories for organizing the data as well as recording interpretive comments.

After noting tentative themes and patterns, I identified salient portions of read aloud transcripts that resonated with those themes and patterns (Coffey & Atkinson,

1996). For example, “developing word knowledge” emerged as a core theme in my conceptual memos. I then searched all read aloud transcripts for representative instances of pre-service teachers introducing, reviewing, or discussing vocabulary words. From here, I coded the remaining read aloud transcripts with this core theme. After carefully reading and re-reading through transcript episodes that were demarcated as “developing word knowledge,” I created an additional set of core themes that reflected patterns of the ways in which pre-service teachers introduced and reviewed words in the read aloud context. I then color-coded these themes as I re-read each transcript. The next step in the data analysis was to collapse some themes in order to define larger categories. For example, developing the category “making learning connections” involved combining “making connections to personal experiences,” “making connections to background knowledge,” and “making intertextual connections.” The following episode taken from a read aloud transcript was identified in my initial coding as an example of a pre-service teacher “developing word knowledge” within in the read aloud context.

Carl: Does anybody know what the word lather means?

Charlotte: Lather.

Shadi: No.

Carl: Okay. So it has to do with like soap and lathering, like, so the actual definition that I found in the dictionary was foam or a froth made from a detergent or soap when it’s stirred or rubbed in water. **So kind of like when you like soap with your hands, or when you brush your teeth the toothpaste kind of lathers.**

The entire passage was then coded “the use of a dictionary definition to introduce a vocabulary word” Additionally; the bolded text was also coded “making connections

between a word and bilingual students' background knowledge and personal experiences.”

Once I settled on my themes, I consulted my committee members who were experts in the field of literacy and second language development, the literature on best practices for supporting bilingual learners' vocabulary development, and the meeting notes from the professional development provided for this dissertation study for analysis. Following completion of thematic analysis, I returned to transcripts of read alouds and re-read them in order to find exemplars. I also attempted to look over time and across texts to see if these factors may have impacted pre-service teachers' vocabulary development practices. It is important to note that the final extracts presented in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation represent the typical teaching patterns present in the read aloud context as well as some interesting but more infrequent patterns.

I also drew on discourse analysis as a strategy to analyze the data collected in this study. Discourse analysis provided a methodological tool that helped me to attend to the words and phrases that pre-service teachers and bilingual students used during book reading observations and how my participants used language to take part in the social, cultural, and intellectual exchanges that took place during book reading events (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, Stuart-Faris, 2005; Bloome et al., 2008; Rogers, 2004). I utilized both micro and macro level analysis. Although my discourse analysis focused largely on micro-level processes, I was mindful of the relationship of language and literacy practices in small groups to the broader sociocultural contexts in which they were situated. These broader contexts included the Boston College teacher-training program, district

curriculum, and classroom and school contexts where the small group read alouds occurred. This dual-level attention broadened the understanding of language and literacy practices and learning that occurred in the context of small group read alouds.

*Pre-service Teacher-Bilingual Student Interaction Patterns:* I began by identifying the overall teacher and student talk but then looked more discretely at the interactions and content of this talk to identify linguistic patterns and to uncover the content of pre-service teachers' and bilingual students' talk. Specifically, I was interested in determining how pre-service teachers and bilingual students were co-constructing meaning from text and words during their conversations (Bloome et al., 2005; 2008). I broke each transcript into an individuals' turn at talk and used this as the unit of analysis to look more discretely at the language and literacy focus of the exchanges, topic control, turn taking, question types utilized (i.e. referential vs. open-ended), and how the pre-service teachers and bilingual students worked together to create language and literacy learning opportunities during read aloud episodes (Bloome et al., 2005, 2008).

After generating initial findings drawing on discourse analysis of my transcripts, I then juxtaposed these against data in my observation notes and conceptual memos. I also engaged in several lengthy discussions with my dissertation advisor in order to help clarify and refine my thinking. The research on classroom literacy discussions was particularly valuable in helping me to better understand and label the discourse moves and patterns in my data (Cazden, 1998; Gibbons, 2006; Goldenberg, 1993; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Michaels, 2008; Nystrand, 1997; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). Finally, in the last analytical step, the findings in my data were interpreted in light of my theoretical

framework (sociocultural) and theory of second language development (Swain's Output Hypothesis) which underpin this study as well as relevant research on reading aloud and bilingual language and literacy development. The overall findings drawn from discourse analysis were then compared and contrasted with the patterns and themes from my observation notes, conceptual memos, and professional development meeting notes. The results of my final analysis are presented in chapters four and five.

*Bilingual Student Writing Samples:* Writing samples from the read alouds were collected and photocopied from bilingual learners. Writing samples were analyzed for their content and the unit of analysis was each word. Specifically, I was looking for examples of vocabulary words that had been previously introduced by pre-service teachers in the read aloud setting. For example, Sonya produced the following written text during a read aloud session:

Sonya's written response: I want to be a *veterinarian*.

Her writing contained the word *veterinarian* which had been previously introduced in the read aloud context by the pre-service teacher Katrina. Additionally, I looked for evidence of other types of literacy learning and comprehension of text. Finally, I also attempted to analyze when and why evidence of particular language and literacy learning were represented in students' writing. For example, pre-service teachers' writing prompts and the texts utilized in the read aloud context inevitably influenced the content of students' writing. It should be noted that bilingual students' writing was slightly revised for the purpose of readability in this dissertation study.

### **Integrity of the Study**

This section outlines my positionality and issues of reflexivity and validity in relation to this research study.

#### **Positionality**

The ethnographic perspective underlying this study included participant observation as a means for gathering information. As such, participant observation was used for the purpose of providing a detailed description and analysis of pre-service teachers' reading aloud and bilingual students' responses. The action research component of this study also relied on gathering information about the setting (small group read alouds) in which my participants conducted their work (teaching) as the details of these observations become the basis for opportunities to engage in conversations and action plans for helping pre-service teachers improve their instruction in order to meet the instructional needs of bilingual learners. My role during these book reading events was that of observer-as-participant. Alder and Alder (1994) describe this role as one where the researcher interacts minimally with the participants but their identity and presence is known. I sat in close proximity to the small reading groups and engaged in active listening and recording of field notes. I did not interject during book reading events. Cochran-Smith (1984) made the point in her ethnography exploring book reading events in a preschool classroom that there is no way to clearly assess the impact of the participant observer on the actions and interactions of the read aloud participants. However, being visible during observations multiple times per week over a period of

several weeks helped to ensure that the participant behavior patterns I observed were consistently occurring patterns and minimally influenced by my presence.

It is recommend that researchers “interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Thus, it was important for me as the researcher to be aware of how my experiences and subjective views impacted the research process. I used reflective memos and journaling throughout this study as a way to acknowledge my own identity, assumptions, and biases in this study. These memos and journals addressed how my positionality may have influenced my observations and meetings with pre-service teachers. Additionally, when I conducted my data analysis and subsequent reporting, I guarded against turning my own voice into an authority in my texts. I aimed to bring the voices of my participants to the forefront in order to understand how they experienced language and literacy teaching and learning within the context of small group read alouds.

### **Reflexivity**

Reflexivity in qualitative research is the “process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Reflexivity acknowledges that the researcher impacts the entire research process including the questions asked, the interactions with participants, and the conclusions drawn during the interpretive research process. Rossman & Rallis (2003) note that research data are always “filtered through the researcher’s unique ways of seeing the world - his lens or worldview” (p.35).

Consequently, an important process in qualitative research is to make a researcher’s

assumptions and biases clear. The goal is to reveal how we might impact interactions with participants and findings and what efforts are made to limit this impact.

My interest in the experiences of pre-service teachers reading aloud to bilingual learners stems from my desire to help bilingual learners achieve literacy success in classroom settings. I acknowledge, however that I never had to experience issues of negotiating culture and language within the expected norms of classrooms and schools like the bilingual participants in my study did on a regular basis. Additionally, I have not personally been confronted with racism or linguicism in the classroom. I recognize that as a white, middle-class, women researcher with native English proficiency, I am in a position of privilege. I am unable to offer unique personal understandings of the experiences of learning literacy in a second language. However, in my position as a researcher, I am using this study as a way to contribute to the language and literacy development of my bilingual participants. Additionally, I included an action research component in order to help pre-service teachers meet the unique learning needs of bilingual children.

### **Validity**

Validity in the field of qualitative research refers to research that is “plausible, credible, trustworthy, and, therefore, defensible” (Johnson & Christensen, 2000, p. 207). In other words, validity is concerned with the extent to which others can be confident in your findings. Maxwell (1992) identifies three categories for validity within qualitative research: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity. I will provide a brief discussion of each and how it relates to this study. I will conclude with a



paragraph discussing additional issues of validity in relation to the participatory action research component of this study.

*Descriptive validity* refers to the “factual accuracy” in the account of the experiences of participants within the research study (Maxwell, 1992). In order to achieve descriptive validity in this study, I audiotaped and videotaped then transcribed book reading observations verbatim and also audiotaped and videotaped bi-weekly meetings with pre-service teachers. In addition, I personally attended all recorded book reading observations allowing me to better describe events that could not fully or accurately be described with audio data alone. Pre-service teachers also read over bi-weekly meeting reports, in order to clarify and verify the events of the meetings and proposed instructional goals for future read aloud events.

*Interpretive validity* refers to accurately portraying the meanings attached to participants in the events they engage in during the research study (Maxwell, 1992). More specifically, it refers to “the degree to which the research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood by the qualitative researcher and portrayed in the research report” (Johnson & Christensen, 2000, p. 209). During bi-weekly meetings, pre-service teachers we participated in dialogue about the observations so that I could share my interpretations of read aloud events with pre-service teachers. This allowed pre-service teachers to clarify my interpretations.

*Theoretical validity* refers to the degree to which the phenomenon or theory arrived at from the research fits the data (Maxwell, 1992). In this study, I collected data

over the course of several weeks and observed multiple read alouds conducted by each pre-service teacher. This represented a sufficient amount of time in the data collection in order to build confidence that the patterns of teaching and learning that I observed and interpreted were valid and represented an accurate portrayal of language and literacy teaching and learning.

Validity in participatory action research studies is measured in two ways including the degree to which participants are willing to act upon the changes that are part of the research study and “whether or not the actual solution to a problem arrived at solves the problem” (Greenwood & Levin, 2000, pp. 96-97). Thus, in this research study, I analyzed book reading transcripts and field notes to find evidence of the impact of the implementation on pre-service teachers’ instructional practices in read aloud settings. Additionally, I examined my data sources in order to determine if pre-service teachers’ newly acquired pedagogical methods were influencing bilingual students’ participation and responses during book reading events.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Developing Word Knowledge Pre-service Teacher Practices**

The overarching goal of this dissertation project was to study pre-service teachers' language and literacy teaching practices and pre-service teacher-bilingual student interaction patterns in read aloud contexts in an effort to understand their potential for bilingual student language and literacy learning. Simultaneously, I provided professional development for pre-service teachers related to teaching language and literacy to bilingual students. This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of data collected from observations of teacher led small group read alouds that occurred bi-weekly over the course of ten weeks. Overall, my analysis indicates that pre-service teachers consistently strived to develop students' word knowledge largely in service of supporting text comprehension through a range of teaching practices. However, there was variability across teachers and not all practices were consistent with theory and research related to teaching vocabulary to bilingual learners and the professional development provided in this dissertation project (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Carlo et al., 2004; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Nagy, 1988; Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009). This chapter will present the various vocabulary teaching practices that were observed in the read alouds. I draw on transcripts of teachers' and students' discourse during read alouds to illustrate the findings. To situate these findings, the chapter begins with a review of the guiding theoretical framework (sociocultural) of this study, which was discussed in detail in chapter two.

### **Sociocultural Theory of Language Development**

From a sociocultural theory of language development, in which this study is grounded, children acquire and develop their native language(s) as members of a particular social network such as their families, cultural groups, or communities where they hear and see language being used and talked about in certain ways (Gee, 1996; Heath, 1982). As such, all children come to school with a considerable amount of linguistic knowledge which is deeply rooted in their affiliations with social and cultural groups (Valdes, Bunch, Snow, & Lee, 2005). However, for many of these children, the “language of schooling” represents new types and ways of using language (Schleppegrell, 2004). As Gee (2001) explains, there are different patterns of vocabulary, syntax, and discourse connectors that constitute and are connected to specific social activities, such as school. In order to be able to learn and participate in the school setting, children must learn to use the language of schooling. Even second language learners who are proficient in their conversational language many not be proficient in academic language required to participate in a school setting (Cummins, 1994). This presents serious challenges for bilingual students given the fact that language is the primary means through which concepts are presented in classroom settings (Gibbons, 1991). Thus, a major role for classroom teachers of students who may not be competent in the language that is valued in school is to help and support them in learning this new discourse while simultaneously understanding and valuing their linguistic backgrounds (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

In the context of this dissertation, I argue that one way in which pre-service teachers supported students’ language development and text comprehension is through

developing their word knowledge or vocabulary in the context of read alouds. A lack of vocabulary knowledge is an example of one of the unique challenges that second language-readers face (Lenters, 2004). The link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is widely recognized (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; Proctor, Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005). Research has also documented that a lack of word knowledge adversely affects the reading performance in children who speak a second language despite having strong vocabulary knowledge in their native languages (García, 1991). In another example, Droop and Verhoeven (2003) reported that although second language learners had adequate decoding skills, their lack of vocabulary knowledge significantly and negatively affected their comprehension development over time. As these studies demonstrate, vocabulary knowledge plays an important part in oral fluency and comprehension for bilingual learners (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002). Therefore, focusing on developing vocabulary is one potential way to foster bilingual children's language and literacy development. With this in mind, the following section reports on the findings related to pre-service teachers' vocabulary teaching practices. Part One of this chapter is divided into four sections including: (a) which words were introduced and reviewed, (b) when words were introduced and reviewed, (c) types of word introductions and reviews, and (d) instructional strategies to augment word introductions and reviews.

### **Which Words were Introduced and Reviewed**

The literature suggests several systems for choosing words for explanation during book reading. The professional development provided for pre-service teachers in this

study included the Three Tier method for selecting words based, in part, on the work of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002). In this method, instruction is focused, in most instances, on Tier Two words which are described by Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002) as “words that are of high frequency for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains” (p. 8). These are words that are less likely to be learned through conversation and are more characteristic of written language. In the case of bilingual students who may have limited vocabulary knowledge in their second language, instruction might also include Tier One words which consist of common or basic words that rarely require instruction for native speakers. Finally, Tier Three words, whose frequency of use is quite low and are specific to certain subject areas, should be taught when the need arises. In the case of this dissertation study, where pre-service teachers read non-fiction selections, I also suggested that Tier Three words be taught when they were needed to build background and support comprehension of the text. In the professional development provided for this study, I also recommended that pre-service teachers consider the background and experiences of their learners when choosing words for instruction. Specifically, I suggested that pre-service teachers choose words that would help students better be able to describe their own familiar life experiences and could be linked to other words or concepts already known (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). Finally, I advised pre-service teachers to choose words that were part of the prior knowledge needed to understand texts and words that would help students develop a deeper understanding of the books they read aloud (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004).

While it is impossible to know from examining read aloud transcripts alone why pre-service teachers chose specific words, it is possible to speculate on the rationale for word choice. My analysis indicates that the words pre-service teachers selected for instructional focus varied across genre types with the most common choices being Tier Two and Three words that were directly related to the plot, theme, or main idea of fiction and poetry texts and Tier Three content words from non-fiction texts. Across all genres, pre-service teachers occasionally chose to review words within the read aloud context that had been previously introduced in the regular classroom setting and bilingual students' word inquires. The propensity for pre-service teachers to choose mostly Tier Two and Tier Three words central to the main ideas and content of texts is consistent with the literature related to teaching vocabulary in read aloud contexts and may have reflected the professional development provided for this dissertation project. Additionally, all the aforementioned word choices reflect a pre-service teacher instructional emphasis on supporting comprehension or helping students make sense of the context in which the words appeared. It should be noted pre-service teachers most likely considered more than one factor when deciding on an appropriate word choice for instruction. For example, a Tier Two word may have been chosen both for its high utility for learners and because it was important for comprehending the text being read. The following section reports on the patterns that emerged related to word choices.

### **Tier Two and Three Words Directly Related to the Plot, Theme, or Main Idea of Texts**

My analysis indicates that in most cases, pre-service teachers chose to pre-teach words in the genre fiction that were found directly in the text and central to the plot, theme or main idea of the book. These word choices are supported in the literature as they are important for helping students understand stories (Kuhn & Stahl, 1998). These word choices also helped to support bilingual students' comprehension of the context in which the words appeared. The following examples are typical pre-service teachers' word choices.

Before reading the text *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head* (Lasky, 1995), Carl introduced the words *senseless*, *plumage*, and *slaughter* to his fifth grade bilingual students. The text is about women who started the Audubon Society in Massachusetts around the turn of the century because they wanted to protect birds that were being killed in order to use their feathers for decoration on females' hats. The words *plumage*, *slaughter* and *senseless* [killing of birds], Tier Two words, were all closely tied to the central plot of the story. In a like manner, the words *career* and *career day*, which Katrina introduced before reading the text *Career Day* (Rockwell, 2000) to her first grade bilingual students, were Tier Two words and central to the main idea of this story. This text was about a group of kindergarten students who took turns introducing family member's careers during career day in their classroom. In the aforementioned examples, such word choices helped build students' background knowledge needed for comprehension of the text in addition to building students' word knowledge.



Pre-service teachers frequently paused during the reading of fiction texts to introduce Tier Two words that were central to the main ideas or themes of books. Again, it appeared that teachers were interested in helping students understand parts of the text in which the words appeared. Thus, this practice served to promote text comprehension in addition to helping build students' word knowledge. For example, Katrina introduced the word *utensils* while reading the text *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (1987). The Tier Two word *utensils* directly related to the central plot of this text which was about two characters who learned similarities and differences between their cultures most notably the ways in which they ate with different utensils. In a similar manner, Carl introduced the word *immigrant* while reading the text *A Picnic In October* (Bunting, 2004) which centered around the theme of the emotional impacts of immigration.

Choosing to introduce words that connected to the main ideas and themes of texts was also evident in the genre of poetry. For instance, Katrina introduced the word *lonely* after reading a poem that depicted life for a child with no siblings. Similarly, Carl introduced the word *safety* after reading a poem about a football player who played the position of *safety* for his school football team. Finally, Kay's word choice, *supplies*, reflected a focus on choosing a word that was directly related to the main idea of a collection of poems in the text entitled *School Supplies A Book of Poems* (Hopkins, 2000). This text featured a selection of poems that all focused on various types of school *supplies*.

Choosing words that were not found directly in the text but were integral to the overall themes of the text was another observed pattern, found primarily in Madeline's

read alouds to her seventh grade bilingual students. This practice is consistent with the literature on using read aloud contexts to support students' vocabulary development and text comprehension. For example, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) point out that instruction focused on these types of words helps to both build students' vocabulary and enrich the understanding of literature. Madeline introduced the words *segregation*, *racism*, *discrimination*, and *integration* to her seventh grade bilingual students before reading the text *White Socks Only* (Coleman, 1996) which is a historical fiction story that took place in the South during the Civil Rights Movement. The aforementioned words were not actually found in the text, although they clearly related to the main themes of the text. It should be noted that these words are most likely considered Tier Three words. Madeline's bilingual students were already familiar with these words as the class had been studying a Civil Rights unit in the classroom and the regular classroom teacher had previously introduced the words to support content instruction. In another example illustrating how word choices reflected a direct relationship to the plot, theme, or main idea of a text but were not found directly in the text, comes from Madeline's word introductions before reading *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993). The pre-service teacher introduced the words and concepts *World War Two*, *Pearl Harbor*, *internment camp*, and *barracks*. All four terms were important to the theme or topic of the text which was about Japanese Americans who were sent to an internment camp after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

### **Tier Three Content Words in Non-fiction Texts**

Research supports development of Tier III words for bilingual students, also referred to as *academic language*, as this helps students learn and comprehend specific subject matter (Krashen & Brown, 2007). In my analysis, I determined that all pre-service teachers introduced Tier III words that were needed for building knowledge and conceptual understanding of non-fiction texts while reading aloud. As mentioned previously, this was a suggested practice in the professional development provided for this dissertation project. This is suggestive that the professional development may have impacted pre-service teachers' word choices. The following examples depict the practice of introducing Tier III words while reading non-fiction texts.

Kay introduced the words *fire weed* and *smoke jumpers* while reading *Fire Friend or Foe* (Patent, 1999) which reflected Kay's focus on Tier Three content words needed to understand the content of the text. Similarly, the words *legacy* and *ambassador*, which were introduced during a non-fiction short story about President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, reflected Madeline's focus on choosing Tier Three content words needed to support comprehension of text events about President Kennedy's life. Finally, the words *migration*, *seasons*, *winter*, *spring*, *summer*, and *fall* were all introduced in the reading of *Four Seasons Make A Year* (Rockwell, 2004) to Katrina's first grade bilingual students. This realistic fiction text was about a little girl who described changes in her natural world and activities on the farm as the seasons changed in the Northeast throughout the calendar year. These Tier Two and Tier Three words were central to the main ideas of

the text and helped to support students' learning of text content. A description of how these words were introduced will be provided in a subsequent section of this chapter.

### **Reviewing Words in Read Aloud Sessions that were Previously Introduced in the Regular Classroom Setting**

I also found that pre-service teachers periodically chose to review words that had been previously introduced in the regular classroom setting. The practice was demonstrated across all teachers although it was most frequently observed in Kay's read alouds. This practice is consistent with literature emphasizing that bilingual students require frequent encounters with words in diverse and meaningful contexts to promote comprehension (Beck et al., 1982; Carlo et al., 2004; Proctor, Uccelli, Dalton, & Snow, 2009). The example below exemplifies this practice.

Kay: "Mama let me strike the matches and when all the candles were lit she fell silent. She was remembering. She was seeing another tree in a faraway place where she had been small like me (Say, 1991, p. 21)".  
[Teacher is reading directly from the text.]

Kay: What's that word? What's that vocab word that we learned? She was remembering. She was seeing another tree in a faraway place.

Maggie: Oh.

Kay: What vocab word is that? We learned that on Monday and Tuesday.

Dorothea: *Imagine*.

Kay: Imagining. Very good.

Kay paused while reading and reiterated the event in the text. She then prompted students to provide a word, imagine, which had been previously introduced in the classroom setting to describe the event that had just occurred in the text. Similarly, the practice of

choosing to review a word that had been previously introduced in the classroom setting is exemplified below.

Katrina: “The bees and butterflies are gone. Many birds fly away too” (Rockwell, 2004 p. 15). [Teacher is reading directly from the text.] Let’s use our background knowledge. I know we talked about this. Remember when birds go away from the fall, what that’s called? Peter.

Peter: I know, I know. Umm, going away.

Kay: Yep, lots of birds fly away for the fall. Where do they go?

Peter: Spring.

Katrina: They don’t go to spring. They go somewhere –

Peter: Warm.

Katrina: Warm. They go somewhere warm. And what’s that called, Sonya?

Sonya: *Migrate*.

Katrina: *Migrating*. Good. The birds migrate in the fall. Remember when we read our play about where my animal friends are and some of us read it in guided reading?

Peter: Yea.

Katrina: Because hummingbird and goose flew away from the forest because it was getting cold. They went somewhere warm.

In this example, Katrina reminded students to use their background knowledge and she prompted them for the word, *migrate*, which had been previously introduced in the classroom setting, to describe an event that had happened in the text. She also reviewed what happens when animals *migrate* through her questioning and comments in the segment. Finally, Katrina made an intertextual connection between an event, *migrating*, that had occurred in the current text they were reading and the same event that happened

in a previously read text. Thus, students were able to hear multiple examples of this word across varied contexts.

### Student Word Inquiries

Occasionally, bilingual students would inquire about the meanings of words in the read aloud context. On such occasions, pre-service teachers always paused and provided students with word explanations. Students most likely inquired about the meanings of unfamiliar words because their lack of word understandings was disruptive to text comprehension. The decision for pre-service teachers to introduce these words, again, reflected a focus on helping students make sense of text. The practice of introducing student word inquiries is depicted below.

Kay: “We sell corn, squash and *bouquets* of summer flowers at our roadside stand” (Rockwell, 2000, p. 12). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.] So they grew plants and crops and things to sell at a stand on the side of the road.

Sonya: What’s *bocant* (phonetic)?

Kay: *Bouquets*, those are when you have a bunch of flowers together. So it’s not one, one flower isn’t a *bouquet* but if you have lots of them together in a vase or holding them that’s a *bouquet*. Does that make sense? When you have more than one flower it’s a *bouquet*. But they have to be picked.

Sonya: But I thought they were more than one flower when they say flowers.

Kay: That’s true but sometimes you’ll say a *bouquet* of flowers because you’ll be holding them. Sometimes, have you ever gone to the grocery store and you see the flowers at the grocery store? Have you seen flowers in a grocery store that they sell? Those are *bouquets* because they come in groups.

Sonya: Like or when you get married.

Kay: Or when you get married, yep, a lot of times brides will hold a *bouquet* of flowers. That's a *bouquet*. Does that make sense?

Peter: In a bag.

Kay: I guess sometimes they can be in a bag. I haven't seen that. But does that make sense what a *bouquet* is? [The students are nodding their heads to indicate that they understand.] Big group of flowers. Good.

Similarly, Kay chose to briefly define the word *choir* after a student inquired about its meaning during the read aloud context.

Kay: "Ready to sing your poems? I ask my *choir*. 'Uno, dos, and tres'!" (Herrera, 2000, p. 31). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.]

Justin: *Choir?*

Kay: *Choir* is a group of people who are going to sing....

In the above example, Justin indicated that he was unfamiliar with the word *choir*.

Consequently, Kay chose to explain the meaning of the word, reflecting the practice of introducing student word inquiries.

### **Summary and Conclusion of Pre-Service Teacher Word Choices**

Pre-service teachers chose to introduce a variety of words in the read aloud context, many of which were suggested in the professional development provided in this dissertation and were consistent with the literature related to teaching vocabulary. Most commonly, pre-service teachers selected Tier II and III words that came directly from the texts they read and were central to the main idea, plot, or content of books. One particular pre-service teacher, Madeline, chose words that were not found directly in the texts she read but were related to the overall themes and plots of the books. Choosing such words enabled pre-service teachers' word introductions and reviews to serve

multiple purposes including building students' background knowledge for the text, reviewing and extending comprehension of text, and building word knowledge. Pre-service teachers also introduced bilingual students' word inquiries and words that had been previously introduced in the classroom setting. It appeared that pre-service teachers interrupted readings and chose to introduce the aforementioned words in service of helping bilingual students understand content in which the words appeared. Finally, there was variation across genres in the types of words that pre-service teachers selected for instructional focus. For example, pre-service teachers typically introduced Tier II words during fiction texts and Tier III words during non-fiction texts. This speaks to the fact that some genre types may be better suited for teaching particular types of words depending upon the linguistic cues present in the text.

### **When Words were Introduced and Reviewed**

In my analysis, I found that there was variability across pre-service teachers related to when vocabulary words were introduced. For example, pre-service teachers did pre-teach vocabulary before reading, however this practice ranged from one teacher, Madeline, who pre-taught words before every text to Katrina, who pre-taught vocabulary before only two texts. Carl and Kay pre-taught words for three of their five texts. The pre-teaching of new vocabulary occurred almost exclusively in the *before* reading phase of reading number one as opposed to the *before* reading phase of reading number two for all pre-service teachers (each text was the focus of two read aloud sessions). The *before* reading phase reading number two frequently consisted of reviewing or clarifying the meaning of words that had been previously taught during reading number one.



Consequently, the *during* reading phase in some cases became the main focus of vocabulary instruction and in other cases, it was a space to build on words previously introduced in the before reading phase of read alouds.

There are conflicting views in the literature related to the best approach for building students' vocabulary knowledge. One view focuses on *incidental learning and wide reading* while another is *teacher direct instruction*. The view of *incidental learning and wide reading* contends that students learn a great deal of words incidentally through verbal contexts, with the largest contributing factor being written text for school age children (e.g., Eller, Pappas, & Brown, 1988; Elley, 1988, 1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985;). Therefore, it is recommended that children listen to storybooks and read widely as these methods have the potential to substantially build children's word knowledge base. The argument put forth in this view is based, in part, on the assumption that students will learn words naturally from context. However, researchers have demonstrated that there is little evidence to support the notion that teachers should rely on text context as a primary means of developing students' vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Biemiller, 2001; Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003). Research has demonstrated that students who have lower levels of vocabulary knowledge are less likely to learn vocabulary from context (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006). In the case of read alouds specifically, it has also been found that children with smaller initial vocabularies are less likely to learn words incidentally through listening to stories (Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995). While at the same time, research has shown that children with initially smaller vocabularies have the potential to make significant gains in

word knowledge when teachers include the explanation of words in the read aloud context (Biemiller, 2004; Elley, 1989). As mentioned earlier, the participants in this dissertation project, all bilingual children, despite a having a significant amount of linguistic knowledge in their first language, had lower levels of English language proficiency. Therefore, it was recommended in the professional development provided for this dissertation project that pre-service teachers include teacher direct instruction of vocabulary before, during, and after read alouds through reading with word explanations and reviews.

There is also debate in the literature as to whether words should be introduced prior to reading texts versus during the actual reading of texts. From a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy development, students learn words from seeing and hearing them in context. In activities that decontextualize word learning, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, students are learning school based practices which do not necessarily generalize to other practices. Many researchers also find the practice of pre-teaching vocabulary problematic for a variety of reasons. Freeman and Freeman (2003) point out that many bilingual students have difficulty applying vocabulary knowledge from pre-teaching once they encounter the words in text. Another potential pitfall for bilingual students related to word knowledge is the issue of concepts and the words we use to label concepts (Freeman & Freeman, 2003). They explain that students might be able to memorize the definition of a concept through pre-teaching vocabulary but then not actually understand or learn the concept. Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) also point out that introducing words which are closely related to the comprehension of the

story may be best introduced during the context of reading in order to help support comprehension of the text. In this manner, students are not required to put comprehension on hold while they attempt to retrieve word meanings that were previously taught.

In a contrasting view, pre-teaching vocabulary before reading is a researcher-recommended practice for bilingual students in particular who need teacher support to help build language and content background for the text (Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003; Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Gibbons (2002) points out that before reading is a crucial time to introduce bilingual students' to the linguistic, cultural, and conceptual knowledge of the text as well as to activate prior knowledge. When pre-teaching vocabulary involves building background for the text and making connections to prior learning, it can play a powerful role in developing bilingual students' language and supporting meaning making from the text (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Another impetus for pre-teaching vocabulary is the fact that it provides students with more exposure to words. A clear consensus that exists in the literature related to teaching vocabulary is that students need frequent encounters with words to help them build initial understandings of words and to help foster a deeper level word learning (Baumann & Kameenui, 2004; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). A clear finding that emerged across all the vocabulary studies presented in chapter two was that students learned more words when teachers provided mediation in the form of introducing words prior to reading, elaborating word meanings during readings, and

providing vocabulary related activities (Appel & Verneer, 1998; Elley, 1989; Roberts & Neal, 2004). Bilingual students in particular struggle with depth of word knowledge even for very basic words, thus making pre-teaching vocabulary a useful way to increase the amount of exposures students have with new words (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005; Proctor, Uccelli, Dalton, & Snow, 2009). Therefore, the professional development provided in this study advised pre-service teachers to introduce approximately three or four words from the text before reading.

It was also suggested in the professional development for this dissertation project that pre-service teachers pause *during* the reading of texts to review/clarify/extend meanings of the words and then, if time permitted, discuss the vocabulary words *after* reading. This suggestion is based on research demonstrating how successful storybook reading programs for bilingual children utilizing *before*, *during*, and *after* reading vocabulary instruction improved word knowledge for students (Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). Moreover, the more general research on vocabulary teaching and learning highlights the argument that students need frequent encounters with words in meaningful contexts to promote both an initial understanding of words and a richer, deeper level understanding of them (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003). My analysis indicates that pre-service teachers rarely focused their vocabulary instruction across all three read aloud contexts (*before*, *during*, *after*) of a text. In fact, of the forty read aloud transcripts reviewed, the practice of introducing words from the text *before* reading, reviewing/clarifying/extending words *during* reading and then reviewing words *after* reading, occurred on only one occasion.

This was most likely due to the fact and pre-service teachers did not always have time to repeatedly read texts. Instead, they would chose to read part of the text during reading number one and the rest of the text during reading number two. Therefore, words that were pre-taught during the first reading did not always come up in the text until the second reading. Additionally, teachers only had about 25-30 minutes to complete each read aloud which meant that they did not always have time to engage students in *before*, *during*, and *after* reading vocabulary and comprehension activities and discussions especially on the days when they read longer chunks of text. There were several occasions where teachers introduced one or more words *before* a reading then reviewed/reinforced/clarified the word meanings either *during* or *after* reading the text. Finally, I found that all pre-service teachers introduced some words in reading number one, albeit *before* or *during* the reading of the text (no words were ever introduced during the *after* reading context of reading one or reading two) and they always reviewed at least some of these newly introduced words from reading number one at some point during reading number two. Thus, bilingual children were exposed to most target words more than one time across repeated text sessions.

### **Summary and Review of When Words were Introduced and Reviewed**

Only some pre-service teachers used the *before* reading phase to introduce vocabulary words. It may be that contradictory teaching and word learning philosophies were playing out across pre-service teachers. For some pre-service teachers, such as Madeline, teacher direct instruction before reading included an explicit focus on words and their meanings. Other teachers, such as Katrina, appeared to focus more on

contextualized word learning during readings that was aimed at improving students' comprehension. Secondly, nearly all pre-service teachers reviewed or clarified the meanings of words in the second reading of the text that had been previously introduced in the first reading. This demonstrates that despite potentially different word learning and teaching philosophies, all pre-service teachers exhibited an understanding of the importance of repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts to help facilitate bilingual students' comprehension of words. This was a major focus of the professional development provided for this dissertation project and is consistent with the literature on developing word knowledge in read aloud contexts. The following section reports on the various ways in which pre-service teachers introduced and reviewed words in the read aloud context.

### **Types of Word Introductions and Reviews**

In the professional development provided in this study, suggestions for how to introduce and review words were based on recommendations from two successful read aloud programs that were specifically designed to enhance vocabulary and comprehension knowledge for bilingual students learning a second language in school settings as well as other research-based methods for teaching word meanings during book readings (see Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Elley, 1989; Biemiller, 2004; Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009 ). It should be noted that there is a dearth of evidence available about what constitutes effective vocabulary instruction specifically for bilingual children and what does exist yields findings that are consistent with native speakers (Shanahan & Beck, 2006). Therefore,

many of the suggestions I provided in the professional development stemmed from what is considered effective vocabulary instruction for both bilingual and native speakers. I was cautious to give pre-service teachers more general suggestions on how to teach vocabulary using children's literature as opposed to mandating specific ways in which the practice should be enacted. I was cognizant of the fact that pre-service teachers were professionals who brought their own knowledge and experiences about teaching from course work and previous field experiences as well as an understanding of the specific needs and experiences of their bilingual students. Consequently, I encouraged pre-service teachers to introduce and review words in original ways they felt would best meet the needs of their particular bilingual students.

In my analysis, I determined that there was variability across teachers in their word explanations and reviews and while some practices were more consistent with theory and research, others were less consistent. Some, but not all of these practices, reflected instantiations of the professional development provided in the study. In addition, many of the word explanations appeared to be in service of helping students to understand the context in which the words appeared, in other words, to support text comprehension. It should be noted that in nearly all word teaching episodes there were no discernible differences in patterns of word introductions and word reviews. In other words, teachers had the propensity to use the same methods whether they were introducing or reviewing a word. Therefore, the patterns of word introductions and word reviews laid out in the subsequent section of this chapter will not be separated according to word introductions vs. word reviews. The remaining sections of this chapter describes

six patterns that emerged regarding the ways in which pre-service teachers introduced and reviewed words during read aloud episodes. These patterns included: (a) providing student friendly definitions, (b) providing dictionary definitions, (c) providing synonyms, (d) providing definitions tied closely to the text, (e) the use of teacher message parallelism, and (f) students choosing and defining their own words. Pre-service teachers also augmented their word introductions and reviews with a variety of instructional strategies which will be discussed in a later part of this chapter.

### **Providing Student Friendly Definitions**

The most common method observed across the majority of pre-service teachers for introducing and reviewing words in the read aloud context was the use of what appeared to be student friendly definitions. The professional development recommended the use of student friendly definitions when explaining words. Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) describe student friendly definitions as those which contain words that are already familiar and understandable to children and when necessary contain embedded examples in the definitions. Additionally, it was suggested in the professional development that pre-service teachers rely on their knowledge of their bilingual children's individual levels of first and second language proficiency when creating student friendly definitions to ensure that word meanings were accurate and comprehensible (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004).

The use of student friendly definitions to pre-teach words before reading is depicted in the following examples. The first example is taken from Kay's read aloud of a poetry text entitled *School Supplies a Book of Poems* (Hopkins, 1996).



Kay: And I wanted to show you the *appearance* of a poem. Does anyone know what *appearance* means? [The students do not respond.] *Appearance is the way it looks.* When you write a poem when you're a poet you can write it anyway that you want. You have *freedom* to write whatever way you want. And that's one of the words. [The pre-service teacher holds up a post-it-note with the word *freedom* written on it.] *Freedom. That means that you're free to make your own choices.* So remember how when we were writing the letters I said you have to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and you have to use punctuation. Right? In a poem, you're free to do whatever you want. So see the way this author wrote this poem? [The pre-service teacher holds up the page in the text with the *Eraser* poem.] He just wrote "*The Eraser*" poem again and again and again but cut off one letter each time to make it shorter and shorter and shorter so it looked like a triangle. So that by the end it just says "t" we don't even have a full letter. And you know what? The first one is a complete sentence but is anyone after that a complete sentence? [The pre-service teacher is pointing to the words and phrases on the page in the text.]

Maggie/Cara: [Maggie and Cara shake their heads to indicate no.]

Kay: No....

In the above example, Kay provided her third grade students with what appeared to be student friendly definitions for the words *appearance* and *freedom*. She also provided students with an example of *freedom* by calling students attention to the physical appearance of the poem. Providing examples of words is a recommended strategy for bilingual students (Hernandez, 2003). Similarly, the use of what appeared to be a student friendly definition is found in the excerpt below from Katrina's read aloud.

Katrina: *A career is a job. Career Day. So career day is something sometimes schools have where people from different jobs come in and talk about what they do every day. A lot of parents or grandmas or aunts and uncles come in and talk about what they do at work every day because that's their career. So it's Career Day. It's by Ann Rockwell and pictures are by Lizzy Rockwell.* [The pre-service teacher is holding up the text and points to the title as she explains the meanings of the words.]

In the above example, Katrina introduced the terms *career* and *career day* to her first grade bilingual students before reading the text *Career Day* (Rockwell, 2000). Katrina's bilingual students were most likely already familiar with the term *job* and the idea of work, thus these definitions could be considered student friendly. Katrina also pointed out the words *career* and *career day* on the text cover as she explained the meanings of the words. This practice was helping her young bilingual students to learn about the relationship between oral and printed language, an important part of learning how to read and write.

Pre-service teachers also used student friendly definitions when explaining the meaning of words during the reading of texts. In these instances, pre-service teachers would barely interrupt the flow of a reading and provide a quick, student friendly definition which suggests that pre-service teachers were interested in helping students to understand the context in which the words appeared. McKeown & Beck (2004) point out that it is neither practical nor necessary to always provide rich, extensive definitions for words that are encountered in the text as this is a time consuming practice. This is especially salient for words that are not central to the comprehension of the text or can be easily explained with brief explanations. The following examples depict the practice of teachers briefly stopping and defining words with what appeared to be student friendly definitions.

Katrina: “When it’s time for Nicholas to introduce his visitor he says, ‘I bet you’ve all bought groceries at the Friendly Farm Market. Guess what,-my father is *manager* of that store’” (Rockwell, 2000, p. 23). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.] *Manager of the store means he owns the store and he helps the customers when they’re buying things, when they’re buying groceries and food.*

“Today it’s Mr. Cisco’s turn to introduce his special visitor. He says, good morning everyone, I’d like you to meet Professor Alcorn. He’s my teacher at college. Hey, I never knew that grown-ups had teachers too” (Rockwell, 2000, p.25). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.]

In the above example, Katrina briefly paused while reading *Career Day* (Rockwell, 2000) and provided a student friendly definition for the word *manager* to her first graders.

Similarly, the use of what appeared to be a student friendly definition during a reading of the text *The Upside Down Boy / El niño de cabeza* (Herrera, 2000) is shown below.

Kay: “as she plays symphony music on the old red *phonograph*” (Herrera, 2000, p. 21). *A phonograph is what they used to use to play music. Kind of like we have CD players now.* “I think of Mama, squeeze my pencil, pour letters from the shiny tip like a skinny river” (Herrera, 2000, p. 21).

This example illustrates how a pre-service teacher barely interrupted the flow of the text and briefly provided what appeared to be a student friendly definition for the word *phonograph* for her third graders. It should be noted that in the aforementioned examples, where pre-service teachers paused briefly while reading to introduce words using student friendly definitions, the target words had not been previously introduced and pre-service teachers did not review these word meanings at a later point in the read aloud context. It appeared that this practice was more in service of supporting students’ comprehension of text. In other words, the brief pauses to explain words with student friendly definitions were to help kids understand the immediate context in which the words appeared.

### Providing Dictionary Definitions

In my analysis, I determined that not all the word definitions provided were considered to be student friendly. The use of dictionary definitions was a practice unique to Carl's word introductions and reviews and is exemplified in the examples below.

Carl: So before we start there are a few vocabulary words that I picked out that I thought might be good for us to go over before we actually start reading it just so that you can kind of keep an ear out for them when you hear them. Does anybody know what the word *lather* means?

Charlotte: *Lather.*

Shadi: No.

Carl: Okay. *So it has to do with like soap and lathering so the actual definition that I found in the dictionary was foam or froth made from a detergent or soap when it's stirred or rubbed in water. So kind of like when you soap with your hands or when you brush your teeth, the toothpaste kind of lathers.* [Teacher holds up a sheet of paper and points to the word and its definition while reading it aloud.]

Similarly, in the next excerpt, we see a dictionary definition given for the word *hitched*.

Carl: Have you ever heard of the word *hitched*, like to hitch something?

Charlotte: I heard, I heard it before but I don't know the definition.

Carl: Okay. *So to hitch is to harness. Sometimes like to harness an animal to a vehicle or to fasten or tie sometimes temporarily sometimes using a hook, a rope or strap like hitch like a trailer to a car or a truck...*

In the above examples, Carl held up a piece of paper which listed *lather* and *hitch*, along with other words, and their dictionary definitions and pointed to the sheet as he introduced the words for his students. He then distributed the handout to students before reading the text. The practice of using dictionary definitions is not supported in the literature on helping children learn the meanings of words due to the fact that dictionary definitions often contain features that inhibit children's understanding of what a word

means (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002). For example, one salient feature of both of the dictionary definitions given above is that they contained words, such as *foam*, *froth*, *harness*, *temporarily*, *fasten*, and *strap* which may not have been familiar to bilingual students. It should be noted that Carl did augment both dictionary definitions shown above with exemplars which helped to contextualize word learning. Additionally, Carl typically reviewed words during the actual reading of texts that he chose to pre-teach and would augment these reviews with strategies that are more consistent with the literature for building bilingual students' word knowledge. However, the practice of providing dictionary definitions still persisted even in such word reviews.

### **Providing Synonyms**

The use of synonyms to define words was a common pattern observed across most teachers. Although providing synonyms did allow pre-service teachers to provide a quick starting point for understanding words, it was not a useful method for building bilingual students' deeper understandings of word meanings and therefore was not a recommended practice in the professional development provided for this study. As Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) explain, students need to understand both the similarities and differences in words and the roles they play in order to build students' language knowledge. The practice of providing a synonym to define a word is found in Kay's word introduction of the word *foe* shown below.

Kay: But for right now we're going to read a book about fire and it's called *Fire. Friend or Foe*. Does anyone know what *foe* means? Friend or *foe*. And I'm thinking that these words might be opposites. ...So if I was to say maybe the opposite of that, friend or *foe*, what might *foe*

mean if they were opposite words? Maybe like an opposite of a friend? Maggie.

Maggie: The opposite of friend is like being mean.

Kay: So friend or foe so maybe like keep going. Go ahead.

Maggie: When like for example Miss Goffey said about the clubs whoever hates people.

Kay: Oh, so it could be like, Justin, instead of the opposite of a friend it might be a what? Maggie, thank you for...

Cara: Maybe like a disaster. Like this is a friend and this is a natural disaster. [The pre-service teacher points to two pictures on the cover of the text. One shows a forest that is green and thriving and the other picture shows a forest that has been burned by a wildfire.]

Kay: So if in this [picture] fire was a friend it would be like a happy thing [The pre-service teacher points to the picture on the text cover where the forest is green and thriving.] and if it was like this it might be our enemy because it might cause a lot of problems. [The pre-service teacher points to the picture on the text cover which shows a forest that has been burned by a wildfire.] So I would say foe might mean an enemy.

In the above example, Kay prompted students for a synonym, *enemy*, to define the word *foe*. A potential pitfall of providing synonym definitions is that students may not understand the meaning of the synonym. In the case of using *enemy* to define *foe*, this problem occurred. The transcript below is taken from a later point in Kay's read aloud of *Fire Friend or Foe* (Patent, 1998) and illustrates how one of her students was unfamiliar with the synonym, *enemy*, which Kay used to previously define the word *foe*.

Kay: So *friend* or *foe*. What does *foe* mean again? [The pre-service teacher points to words on the title page of the text.] Dorotha?

Dorotha: The opposite of *friend*.

Kay: The opposite of *friend*. Which could be a what? Good thinking, thank you, Dorotha. Justin?

- Justin: Opposite of *friend*, umm. [There is a long pause and the student is unable to answer the question posed by the teacher.]
- Kay: So if a *friend* is someone who helps us, a *foe* might be someone who hurts us. So is a fire something that helps us? Or something that hurts us?
- Cara: It's an *enemy*.
- Kay: An *enemy*.
- Justin: What's an *enemy*?
- Kay: Kind of like when you have an *enemy* like when you have someone who's kind of the opposite of your *friend* meaning that someone who is really not that nice to you and someone you really don't get along with.
- Cara: Like a bully.
- Kara: Maybe like a bully.

In this example, Kay assessed or monitored students' understanding of the previously introduced word *foe* right before she began reading the text. As mentioned above, one of her students, Justin, did not know the meaning of the word *enemy*. Fortunately, in this situation, Justin asked the teacher what the word *enemy* meant. In some cases, bilingual children may be hesitant to speak up and ask for help when they do not understand something due to their cultural backgrounds and norms. Thus, simply providing synonyms to define words in the absence of additional knowledge about word meanings can be problematic for students.

### **Providing Definitions Tied Closely to the Text**

Pre-service teachers frequently introduced and reviewed words through the use of text content. In these instances, pre-service teachers would pause while reading and use

specific text context (characters, plots, events) to provide word explanations. This practice is consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of vocabulary instruction that utilizes both a definition and context and was suggested in the professional development provided in this study (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Carlo et al., 2004; Graves, 2006; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Additionally, it demonstrates a pre-service teacher focus on defining words in order to support text comprehension.

The practice of providing a definition tied closely to the text is depicted below.

Carl: “Huge populations of birds from egrets to pheasants to owls to warblers were being *slaughtered* for hat decoration- none were spared” (Lasky, 1995, p.3). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.]

Carl: So all these birds were getting *slaughtered*. Just killed.

Charlotte: Killed, to kill or butcher. [Student is reading from a word sheet that lists the word and its definition.]

Carl: They were all getting killed so that people could put them on top of their hats.

Raimond: Like cars running over them they just go run in the street, pick it up, put it on their hat and stuff it and stuff.

Carl: Yea, they just killed all these birds. None were spared.

The example above demonstrates how Carl used the text context to explain the definition of the word *slaughtered* for his fifth graders while reading the book *She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head* (Lasky, 1995). He explained that *slaughtered* in this context meant “killing birds”. The word introduction also allowed Carl to reiterate one of the main ideas of the text which was about birds getting killed for hat making. Thus, this practice also served to support students’ comprehension of the text.



Similarly, the example below illustrates the practice of using the text context to explain the phrase *the years have melted away* from the text *Tree of Cranes* (Say, 1991).

Kay: “So plenty of snow to make a snowman papa said. Let’s make one together. And like the snowman we made many *years have melted* away now but I will always remember the day of peace and quiet. It was my first Christmas” (Say, 1991, p. 29). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.]

Kay: So it was Christmas, Cara. And I’m going to read this line again. It says...” and like the snowman we made, many *years have melted away* now” (Say, 1991, p. 29). What does that mean? How is that like a snowman? “And like the snowman we made, many *years have melted away* now” (Say, 1991, p. 29). Huh? Dorotha.

Dorotha: Maybe the snow melted away.

Kay: Oh, so kind of making a comparison saying the snowman melted away and just like that years have kind of melted away. What does it mean *years have melted away*? Dorotha that was an excellent, excellent answer. Yes, Cara? It’s confusing Maggie.

Cara: Like when the years go pass.

Kay: Oh, so I think you might be saying that you know what? Just like the snow kind of melted away, the years have kind of melted away, meaning Maggie they’ve passed. So a lot of years have passed. So do you think he’s a little boy writing this story? So he’s a little boy during this story but when he wrote this, do you think he was a little boy? [The pre-service teacher points to the character in the text illustration.]

Cara: Oh, so he’s talking about himself?

Maggie: No.

Kay: Well it says “and like the snowman we made *many years have melted* away now but I will always remember the day of peace and quiet” (Say, 1991, p. 29). [The pre-service teacher points to the words in the text as she reads them.]

Maggie: Um, it’s something about I remember.

Kay: So he’s saying, “I.” [The pre-service teacher points to herself.]

Cara: Oh!

Kay: So if he's saying, "I" it's probably about him. You know what? Let's see if we can read about him. [The pre-service teacher turns to the back of the text and begins reading the author's note.]

In this example, Kay paused while reading and used the text to help explain the phrase *the years have melted away*. She began by re-reading the text to call students' attention to the phrase. She immediately brought students into the deriving meaning making process by asking students what the phrase could mean. Dorotha's answer revealed that she had interpreted the word *melted* in a literal sense. In the teacher's response, she added on to the student's answer and explained how the snow melting away was related to the meaning of the phrase. Kay then proceeded to ask the question again and the second student to respond, Maggie, correctly explained the meaning of the phrase. In Kay's response to Maggie, she explained the meaning of the phrase. Immediately following the phrase introduction, Kay prompted students, through questioning, to see the connection between the phrase's meaning, the years have passed by, and the main character and events in the story line. As with all the aforementioned examples where students provided word definitions tied closely to the text, the focus of this word introduction was to simultaneously help students understand the content being read and build students' word knowledge.

### **The Use of Teacher Message Parallelism**

Introducing less likely known words (Tier Two words) alongside of more familiar words was a subtler way of introducing words that emerged during many of pre-service teachers' read alouds. Message parallelism appeared to be different from the practice of

providing synonyms previously described in that pre-service teachers did not ask students for word meanings nor did they use terminology such as “this means” when utilizing message parallelism. In other words, it was a less direct and more subtle method of introducing word meanings. Consistent with the literature on making classroom talk comprehensible for bilingual children, message parallelism helps bilingual children to see the equivalencies, or parallelism, in meanings between familiar and unfamiliar words (Gibbons, 2002). A study that compared teaching scientific content with everyday language prior to scientific language proved to be beneficial in helping students to learn science content (Brown & Ryoo, 2008). The practice of message parallelism is exemplified in the following example from one of Kay’s read aloud sessions.

Kay: We have done diagrams with different things maybe we were *comparing*, *contrasting* stories or types of stories and the most recent one we did was *comparing* the natural disasters. So we talked about how were they the *same* and how they were *different*. Some people did tornadoes and earthquakes or volcanoes but what I want to do is I want to *compare* myself to the boy in the story.

Kay utilized the less likely to be familiar terms *comparing* and *contrasting* alongside the more familiar terms *same* and *different* in the segment above. Similarly, the use of message parallelism was also utilized in the excerpt below from one of Carl’s read aloud sessions.

Carl: so what this [referring to the text.] said was, we’re *banning* it. It’s a law in the United States you *can’t bring in* feathers from Europe.

Above, Carl used the message parallelism to help students comprehend the less likely to be familiar term *banning*. In a like manner, Katrina used message parallelism to help

students see the equivalencies between *utensils* and the words *knives* and *forks* in the example below.

Katrina: Look at all those *utensils* she has to use, *knives and forks* [Teacher points to the picture of *utensils* in the text illustration.]

The practice of using message parallelism in the aforementioned examples supported students' comprehension of the new terminology. In addition, the latter two examples also served to support students' comprehension of text due to the fact that pre-service teachers reviewed important events from the story in the same context as introducing words.

### **Students Choosing and Defining Their Own Words**

The practice of allowing students to choose and define their own words is the final type of word introduction and review described in this chapter. This practice required that students play a much more active role in the word learning process which is consistent with the research on helping students learn word meanings (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006). I found that this practice was not a common occurrence in the read aloud context. In fact, it was primarily found in just one pre-service teacher's, Madeline's, word introductions. The example below depicts the practice of students choosing and defining their own words.

Madeline: Yeah. All right. So I want you guys to think about baseball vocabulary. So we just even said a bunch of different vocabulary words.

Kato: Left field, mid field.

Madeline: Pitching, throwing. Yes, can you think of *positions*?

Kato: First base, second base, pitcher, catcher, umpire.

Madeline: All right. I want you to think of one vocabulary word. Like probably maybe your favorite thing to do when you play baseball and I want you to either write, explain it in words and if you can't explain it in words, I know it's sometimes hard with sports, you guys can draw a picture. Okay? So I'm going to give you like three minutes. And then we're just going to share out real fast. [The pre-service teacher passes out whiteboards and students begin drawing and writing definitions for various baseball related vocabulary.]

This excerpt is taken from Madeline's read aloud of the text *Baseball Saved Us*

(Mochizuki, 1995). The segment began with the students and teacher briefly discussing baseball and students' experiences playing baseball. Madeline used the word *positions* (label) to give students a label for the concepts (i.e. left field, mid field) they were discussing. This practice is important especially for bilingual students who may understand a concept itself but be unfamiliar with the label for the concept (Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003). Madeline went on to introduce a vocabulary activity that required students to brainstorm their own words and provide definitions either in the form of a picture or writing. This practice is motivating for students in that they have the opportunity to choose their own words and define them which makes word learning more personalized, a factor that increases the likelihood that students will remember a word (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006). She also gave students multiple options for how they could present their words to the group. It should be noted that this group of bilingual students had very low second language literacy levels and were all diagnosed with learning disabilities thus allowing them to draw pictures in addition to writing words gave students the opportunity to feel successful. In the segments below, two of Madeline's bilingual students share their words and definitions.

Madeline: So Kato, talk to us. What's your vocabulary word?

Kato: *Pitcher.*

Madeline: All right. Show everybody the picture of the *pitcher*. Just show. So what did you say a *pitcher* did? [Kato holds up his white board which has a picture of person throwing a ball.]

Kato: A pitcher is someone that hit a people and strike them out.

Madeline: Anyone know what a strike is?...

The next example, similar to the above segment, shows another student in the group introducing her word, *throwing*.

Madeline: ... Efina, can you show us what you have?

Efina: *Throwing.* [Efina holds up her white board which has a picture of a person throwing the ball.]

Madeline: *Throwing.* Nice. So can you tell us what *throwing* is?

Efina: Throw the ball.

Madeline: Can you show us? [Efina demonstrates with gestures how to throw a ball.] Yeah. All right. Who throws the ball in baseball?

Kato: Pitcher, catcher, 2nd, 3rd, 4th.

Madeline: Right...

By allowing students to choose and introduce their own words and their meanings, students' opportunities to produce language are increased. Increased opportunities for output help bilingual students in the language learning process (Swain, 2003). There is the potential that the practice may lead to erroneous explanations of word meanings. However, in the case above, the pre-service teacher followed up each student word explanation with additional questions and or prompts for students to perform a gesture,

which helped the students to clarify and add additional information to their original definitions.

Similarly, the practice of allowing students to produce their own definitions was present in Madeline's word introductions *before* reading the text *Zathura* (Van Allsburg, 2002). She had four separate pieces of paper and each one had a word written on it. She had her students pass the papers around and each take a turn adding a meaning, association, or idea that came to mind after hearing/seeing each word. She then had students share their responses with the group. Again, the focus was on helping students to generate their own word meanings and play an active role in word learning which is consistent with the literature on supporting students' vocabulary development (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006).

### **Summary and Conclusion of Types of Word Introductions and Reviews**

Pre-service teachers displayed a range of practices when introducing and reviewing words which varied across teachers. These practices included providing student friendly and dictionary definitions, providing synonyms, providing definitions tied closely to the text, the use of teacher message parallelism, and allowing students to choose and define their own words. The majority of these practices were consistent with the literature on what is known about effective instructional methods for building students' word knowledge in the context of storybook reading and many of these practices appeared to reflect the professional development provided in this dissertation project. My analysis also suggests that many of the word introductions and reviews were in service of helping students to understand the context in which the words appeared as

teachers frequently provided definitions tied closely to the text and reviewed or explained text events during word explanations and reviews.

Some practices observed, such as the use of dictionary definitions, were not consistent with current research and theory and evident in only one pre-service teacher's read aloud episodes. In many of these word teaching episodes, the practice was augmented with strategies that are more consistent with the literature on building bilingual students' word knowledge. It is possible that the use of word lists and their dictionary definitions typified instruction that the pre-service teacher experienced in his own schooling and or witnessed in various field placements prior to student teaching. In fact, Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) claim the use of dictionary definitions are "synonymous with vocabulary instruction in many classrooms" (p. 32). Thus, it is possible that this practice merely reflected what the pre-service teacher experienced in his own educational experiences, a phenomenon known to inhibit teacher change and learning in the field of education (Lortie, 2002).

Finally, it should be noted that in most cases pre-service teachers strived to bring students into the deriving meaning making process during word introductions through questioning students about word meanings. However, ultimately, most bilingual students played a passive role in learning new words. Only one teacher, Madeline, engaged students across multiple read alouds in word learning activities that required them to play an active role such as choosing, defining, and introducing new words. Allowing bilingual students to play a more active role in word learning is facilitated by teachers abandoning the typical role of the expert who imports knowledge into the passive student. Instead,



students work to construct their own knowledge. Moreover, through bilingual students' word introductions to classmates, word learning becomes a social and collaborative activity. Unfortunately, this type of language learning environment is not typical in many classrooms and the infrequency observed in this study may reflect the practices pre-service teachers observed in their own schooling experiences and or their multiple field based experiences throughout their teacher education.

### **Instructional Strategies to Augment Word Introductions and Reviews**

My analysis from read aloud transcript data indicates that pre-service teachers used several instructional strategies to augment their word introductions and reviews provided during read aloud sessions. These strategies worked to support both students' comprehension of words and text. Similar to the various types of word introductions and reviews described in the previous section of this chapter, there were variations across teachers in strategies utilized to augment word introductions and reviews. Additionally, some strategies reflected instantiations of the professional development provided in the study. Finally, most teachers did not limit their instructional strategy to any one particular type, instead employing multiple strategies simultaneously to develop word knowledge. In this section of the chapter I present a range of observed dominant vocabulary instructional strategies including: (a) the use of word cards or sheets, (b) the use of learning connections, (c) the use of text illustrations, and (d) the use of gestures.

### The Use of Word Cards or Sheets

The use of word cards or sheets to augment word introductions and reviews was a strategy frequently observed across all pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers would use them to record and display target words and their definitions. This practice helped support students' comprehension of words as providing visual material to supplement auditory information helps to make language comprehensible for bilingual students and can be used by students to help recall words and their meanings at a later point in time (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). It was also a recommended practice in the professional development provided for pre-service teachers. Exemplars of this practice are shown below.

Madeline: So and then I have two more words so if *segregation* is on this side and we're putting *integration* on this side. Right? [The pre-service teacher holds up word cards with the words *segregation* and *integration* written on them. She then places the two word cards on opposite sides of the table in front of students.]

Andre: Yes.

Madeline: Have you guys ever heard of the word *racism*? [The pre-service teacher holds up a card with the word *racism* written on it.]

Kato: Um-hum. When you call somebody something not nice.

Madeline: Right. Something mean that hurts. So *racism* is the belief that one race is superior or better than another one. But we all know that that's not true.

Kato: Like the Ku Klux Klan.

Madeline: A very racist clan. And we have those pictures [of the Ku Klux Klan] up...

Madeline: So racism. So that would go by segregation. Right?... [The pre-service teacher places the racism word card underneath the segregation word

card on the opposite side of the table where the integration word card is placed.]

The above excerpt depicts the practice of using word cards to augment the explanation of the target words *integration*, *segregation*, and *racism* before reading the text *White Socks Only* (Coleman, 1996). In this particular example, the word cards, which contained the target words and their definitions, were used to help students see the dichotomy between the meanings of the various terms. It should be noted that this particular method of vocabulary instruction, teaching through opposition, is supported in the literature as it helps students to see the contrast between words and sets up boundaries of word meanings (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Powell, 1986). Madeline then distributed the word cards to students and asked them to listen for events in the story that matched the target words. Each student in the group was responsible for explaining how their target word corresponded with major text events. Thus, the word cards helped student to recall the meanings of the words at a later point during the reading of the text. Similarly, the use of a word sheet to augment word introductions is shown below.

Carl: ...so I have a little handout for you guys and this has... [The pre-service teacher holds up word sheet.]

Charlotte: Can I hand it out?

Carl: You sure can. Please hand it out. [Student distributes the word sheet to the rest of the students in the group.] So this just has a couple of vocabulary words at the top, muscles and tendons. And then I talked about three kinds of muscles in here and then at the bottom are different facts about muscles. And we're going to go through all of this in the book but this is kind of just like and outline for us, kind of like a little organizer.

Charlotte: Cool.

Paulina: Tendons, three kinds of muscles. [Student is reading directly from the word sheet.]

Carl: All right. So let me know if you have any questions as we go. So this is called *Muscles* by Seymour Simon.

The example above depicts the practice of utilizing a word sheet. The sheet Carl provided for his students listed the words *muscles* and *tendons* and their definitions. It also named three kinds of muscles and provided descriptions of them. Finally, the word sheet listed four facts about muscles taken directly from text content. Carl frequently referred to the sheet during the reading of the text. Additionally, his students also used the word sheet to help them recall target vocabulary and their definitions. The following exchange shown below between Carl and one of his bilingual students illustrates this phenomenon.

Carl: What did we learn today?

Charlotte: I learned what *tendons* are because I always hear but I never know what it is. Doctors talk about it.

Carl: Right. Doctors do talk about it. So what is it?...

Charlotte: It's the stuff that's attached to your bone....

Carl: And what does it do? Right. It's attached to the bone. And then it also attaches to what?

Charlotte: It's like tissue. It feels like tissue. [Student is feeling her arm.]

Carl: What's it attached to? It attaches your bone to what? Think of *tendons* as like a connector.

Charlotte: It's like a rope thingy.

Carl: So what does it connect to? It connects your bones to what? One side connects to the bone and one side connects to?

Charlotte: Umm. [Pause-student is unable to answer the question.]

Carl: It connects your bones to muscles. [The pre-service teacher points to Charlotte's study guide and reads the definition listed for the word *tendon*.]

The above example demonstrates a student's use of a word sheet to help recall the meaning of a target vocabulary word. The word *tendon*, which had been previously introduced before reading the text, was a key concept discussed throughout the book and was listed and defined on the word sheet Carl had distributed. In the exchange above, Carl used Charlotte's word sheet as a resource to help her recall the meaning of the target word. Thus, the word sheet served as an additional resource to support students' vocabulary development.

### **The Use of Learning Connections**

I found that the use of learning connections to augment word introductions and reviews was a strategy that was utilized in only a small number of word introductions and reviews, most notably at the third and seventh grade levels. The learning connections fell into two categories including (a) connections to bilingual students' background knowledge/prior learning, and (b) connections to bilingual students' life experiences. This practice helped to support students' comprehension of both words and text and was recommended in the professional development. Making connections is consistent with the literature on helping to facilitate students' understanding of word meanings (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003). Additionally, connecting words and concepts to students' prior knowledge can increase motivation and facilitate comprehension of new material for bilingual students (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). The practice of connecting to bilingual students' background knowledge/prior learning is exemplified below.

Madeline: If *segregation* means separate what do you think *integration* means?

Ace: Together.

Madeline: Yes, amazing. All right. So *integration* is removing all barriers and placing groups of people together. And when did that happen because of what? What do you think?

Efina: I don't know.

Madeline: I know you know. What do you think?

Efina: I think it would be wrong.

Madeline: So what are we reading about? All the wrongs. Right?

Efina: Yeah.

Kato: *Segregation*. Civil rights.

Madeline: And how people fought to stop *segregation*. Right?

Ace/Efina/Kato: Yes.

Kato: Martin Luther King.

Efina: Efina is doing a lot of good research on Martin Luther King.

Kato: I'm doing about Jackie Robinson.

Madeline: Jackie Robinson. Also, what did he *integrate*? What did he help *integrate*?

Kato: Baseball.

Madeline: Sports. Right? Awesome....

This particular example illustrates the practice of making connections to background knowledge/prior leaning. Madeline discussed the previously introduced word, *segregation*, and introduced the new word, *integration*. She helped students to make intertextual connections by asking them what they were reading about in the classroom and how it connected to the words *segregation* and *integration*. Then, through the use of

questioning, she prompted students to see how the historical figures Martin Luther King and Jackie Robinson they had been researching in the regular classroom worked to *integrate* in society. Thus, she helped students to see examples of *integration* which connected to their background knowledge and prior learning. The learning connections also helped to build background knowledge for the text which supported comprehension for students.

Pre-service teachers also made connections to students' personal lives during word introductions and reviews. This practice is depicted below:

Kay: Okay. So the teacher came over and asked him a question and he didn't know how to answer in English and he said *my tongue was a rock*, what do you think that means? Do you know?

Dorotha: [Student nods her head to indicate no.]

Kay: No, Maggie, what do you think?

Maggie: Um, I think he meant like um like, maybe his tongue got hurt like a rock like it's an avalanche.

Kay: His tongue got hurt?

Maggie: Well I mean it kept still.

Kay: It kept still. So you think he couldn't say anything? *His tongue was still like a rock* because he didn't know what to say to the teacher. Have you ever known what you wanted to say but had difficulty saying it in English? Thumbs up if that's ever happened to you? [All students put their thumbs up.] You know in your head exactly what you want to say but then when it comes to trying to say it in English, it's really hard to you just get a little bit quiet. Very good. And I can use an example of when I traveled. I've actually gone to the Dominican before and when I went there some people were speaking Spanish and I didn't know how to speak Spanish *so my tongue kind of felt like a rock too*. There were things that I wanted to say and questions that I wanted to ask but I didn't know so I just kind of sat there quietly.

The exchange above, where Kay explained the phrase *my tongue is a rock*, illustrates the practice of making a connection to students' personal lives. Kay asked the students, who were all learning English as a second language, if they had ever had a similar experience to the main character in the text who was unable to say something in English and had become silent. Kay then went on to explain the meaning of the phrase and the event that had just occurred in the text by connecting to children's personal experiences of becoming silent when they were unable to say what they wanted to in the English language. It is important to note that this particular example also demonstrated the pre-service teacher's awareness of students' bilingualism. Additionally, the pre-service teacher reviewed a text event when making the learning connection which supported students' comprehension. Similarly, Carl used a personal connection to help clarify students' misunderstandings of a word's meaning in the segment below.

Carl: "The membership in Boston continued to grow and the meetings were always *lively*" (Lasky, 1995, p.21). What does that mean, meetings were *lively*?

Raimond: On TV?

Carl: Well, not live. Not that the meetings were live, like live TV.

Paulina: They always had meetings all together?

Carl: If a meeting was *lively*, Raimond, when you guys, when you and all the boys come in to class in the morning, it's really *lively*, like there's a lot of excitement and noise. So the meetings were *lively*.

In this particular example, Carl paused after reading a segment of the text and asked students if they knew the meaning of the word *lively*. Students' incorrect answers indicated that they were not familiar with the meaning of the word. Carl went on to define the word by providing an example of *lively* which connected to Raimond's



personal experience of entering the classroom each morning. In the latter two examples presented in this section, the connections that pre-service teachers made to students' personal lives were centered around the bilingual children's everyday experiences in the classroom and school. Research suggests that teachers associate new vocabulary with students' daily experiences (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). This provides students with more sophisticated language to describe their familiar situations and use language in meaningful ways.

The final example presented demonstrates a pre-service teacher simultaneously augmenting a word review with connections to students' background knowledge, prior learning, and personal lives. It is taken from Kay's read aloud session of the text *The Upside Down Boy/ El niño de cabeza* (Herrera, 2000). This text tells the story of a native Spanish speaking boy who struggles with understanding English words during the course of his first school days in America. The phrase, *upside down boy*, had been previously introduced in the first reading of the text and students were confused about its meaning in the second reading of the text.

Justin: He [the main character of the text] felt funny because he was jumping *upside down*. He just wanted to touch the earth from the trampoline.

Kay: Justin, tell me what you mean.

Justin: He was jumping *upside down*.

Kay: Jumping *upside down*? Where?

Justin: In the playground.

Kay: In the playground?

Justin: When he jumps up everybody is sitting and then when he sits down everybody is playing.

Kay: And do you know what is happening during that part, Justin? I don't know if you caught this because I didn't even really catch this until like the third time that I read it. When the first bell rang he thought it was time to eat so he ate his lunch. And then when the second bell rang he went to recess but everyone else did the opposite. So it would be like when we come down here for lunch he would have gone outside and played and then when we would go outside and play, he would come back in and eat lunch. He did the opposite of what he was supposed to do.

Maggie: He did the antonym.

Kay: He did the antonym. Oh my goodness, Maggie. I'm so happy that you remember that. You must have been working really hard on your homework. Does anyone remember anything else from the story? I love the details. You've done a really good job.

Maggie: I don't know how he jumped up in the sky because I would think it was a big trampoline.

Kay: But you know what, Maggie. We talked about that and we talked about how him feeling *upside down* had a lot to do with the way he was feeling. He felt all mixed up. He felt *upside down*. He felt like everything was different. So a lot of it had to do with it...

Maggie: In his imagination.

Kay: Kind of like in his imagination but it was more like the way he felt. Remember when I think it was Miss Guppie was talking about yesterday how sometimes we have *expressions*. We have things where we don't mean exactly what we're saying but it's to describe the way we're feeling. Right? Like if you were to say, "My mom is going to kill me. I lost my jacket. My mom is going to kill me, Justin. I lost my jacket." It doesn't mean my mom is really going to kill me.

Kay: It means...

Dorotha: An expression.

Kay: It's an expression. It means that she's going to be really upset with me.

The segment above began with Justin recalling how the main character from the text felt funny because he was trying to jump *upside down*. Through a series of questions meant

to clarify the student's remark, Kay determined that Justin was confused about the event that took place in the text. Justin had comprehended the literal meaning of the phrase or expression, *upside down*. He thought that the text character was jumping upside down on a trampoline on the playground in order to touch the "earth". It should be noted that it is very common for bilingual children to be confused by expressions and idioms which are sayings that cannot be translated exactly (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The pre-service teacher then went on to clarify the meaning of the phrase by giving examples that related to the child's personal experience at school of eating lunch and going out for recess. Later in the transcript, illustrates another student, Maggie, who also appeared to have understood the literal meaning of the expression. She wondered how the character could have jumped up into the sky and assumed it must have been a big trampoline. The teacher again clarified the meaning of the phrase *upside down boy* and in this process she introduced the word *expression*. In her introduction of the word *expression*, she helped to active students' prior knowledge by reminding them of an earlier discussion with their classroom teacher, Miss Guppie. She also gave them an additional example of an *expression* to help reinforce the meaning of the word. Finally, her learning connections helped to support students' comprehension of text as she reviewed a main event that had occurred in story plot.

### **The Use of Text Illustrations**

I found that all pre-service teachers consistently relied on text illustrations to augment their word explanations and reviews. This instructional strategy was suggested in the professional development and it is consistent with the literature on helping students

build word knowledge during storybook reading (Elley, 1989, Coyne, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 2004). This strategy also helped to support students' comprehension of text as pre-service teachers typically reviewed story content when discussing text illustrations in relation to words. The practice of using text illustrations to augment word explanations and reviews is depicted below in an excerpt from Carl's read aloud of *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* (Mitchell, 1993).

Carl: Very good. "Momma wrapped me in a blanket while daddy went outside and hitched the horse to the wagon" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 11). . . *Hitched*. So *hitched*?

Paulina: *Hitched* is to –

Charlotte: Harness an animal to a vehicle to fasten or tie. [Student is reading from a word sheet that lists the word *hitch* and its definition.] I think he went like this to make the cart go. [The student makes a gesture to indicate "whipping" a horse.]

Carl: When you *hitch* it that's when you –

Paulina: Usually hook ropes.

Carl: The hook, right. So they connected it.

Charlotte: So then they *hitched* the animal to the horse.

Carl: Well the whip is just to get them to go. But the *hitch* is actually, see how they, see how they put this harness on the horse here? [The pre-service teacher points to the harness in the text illustration.] See we've got the harness here but then down here is where they actually connected this part. [The pre-service teacher points to where the horse is *hitched* to the cart in the text illustration.]

Charlotte: So the horse can't run away.

Raimond: They fastened it too.

Charlotte: And also, not only so he can't run away but also –

Paulina: For the cart to go with it.

Carl: Yea, yea. The horse is going to pull them into town.

In the above example, Carl reviewed and clarified the meaning of the word *hitched* using the text illustration to augment his explanation. The segment began with Carl pausing the reading and asking students if they recalled the word as it had been previously introduced. From here, the students and the teacher worked together to review the definition of *hitch* and Carl pointed to the illustration to indicate how and where the horse had been *hitched* to the cart. The segment finished with Carl supporting students' comprehension by previewing the next event that occurred in the text.

In another example, Madeline used the text illustrations to augment her review of the word *racism* during the reading of the text *White Socks Only* (Coleman, 1996).

Madeline: Then we all made predictions that she was going to get into trouble. Right? Because it was “whites only”. [The pre-service teacher points to the text illustration which shows the main character of the text, a little black girl, drinking from a water fountain that has a sign attached to it with the message “whites only”.]

Kato: See, she gets beat up in the next page.

Madeline: Right. She thought it was white socks [referring to socks you wear on your feet]. Look! *Racism*. [The pre-service teacher points to the text illustration which depicts the little black girl about to get attacked by a white man.]

Kato: The belief that one race is superior or better than all others. [Student is reading aloud the definition off of a word card for the rest of the group.]

Madeline: Right. So who thought they were superior to all other races?

Kato: White people.

Madeline: Right. So we have the sign, “Whites Only”. Right...[The pre-service teacher points to the text illustration which shows the main character of the text, a little black girl, drinking from a water fountain that has a sign attached to it with the message “whites only”.]

The above example demonstrates the use of a text illustration to augment a review of the word *racism*. The pre-service teacher pointed to text illustrations which were examples of *racism* playing out in the text content. Again, the use of text illustration helped to make the word meaning more comprehensible for bilingual students while at the same time supported their comprehension of text events as the discussion students had related to the text illustration reviewed a major event in the story line.

### **The Use of Gestures**

The use of gestures to augment word introductions and reviews was another practice frequently observed across all pre-service teachers. This practice was recommended in the professional development as a useful strategy to augment word explanations and is consistent with the literature on helping bilingual children acquire English vocabulary (Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Rousseau, Tam, & Ramnarain, 1993). In addition, the gestures also helped to support students' text comprehension as teachers used them to help review and explain events that had occurred in the text. The following examples illustrate this practice.

Ace: *Potato eyes?* [Student is confused by the phrase in the poem.]

Madeline: So why do you think *potato eyes*? Good question, Ace. Where does the teacher first see Maria? Think about it. Maria's like hiding through the supermarket. Peeking through different things. She keeps waving and then ducking. [The pre-service teacher is waving and ducking.] Right? She calls Maria little *potato eyes*. [The pre-service teacher points to her eyes.] Where do you think she finally sees Maria? Around what vegetable?

Efina: The potatoes.

Madeline: The potatoes. Exactly. Efina. Awesome. So you could you see it kind of?

Ace: Yes.

Madeline: Let's try to envision it. Let's say the potatoes are all stacked up. [The pre-service teacher is using gestures to demonstrate stacking potatoes.] Right? And then Maria is peeking through this little hole. [The pre-service teacher is using gestures to demonstrate peeking.] Wouldn't it look like her eyes are kind of potatoes? [The pre-service teacher is pointing to her eyes and squinting.] Can you see it? Can you see it, Ace? If she's peeking through little holes in the potatoes? [The pre-service teacher is using gestures to demonstrate peeking.]

Ace: Yes.

Madeline: All right. Good, awesome question. You guys are doing fabulous. All right.

This segment began with Ace's inquiry about the meaning of the phrase *potato eyes* during the reading of a poetry selection. The teacher used a combination of several gestures and actions to accompany her explanation of the phrase. The gestures supported both comprehension of the phrase *potato eyes* and an event that had just occurred in the poem. Thus, students' comprehension of the text was also aided through the use of gestures. Likewise, the next exemplar illustrates gestures being used to augment the explanation of the word *contracting* while reading the text *Muscles: Our Muscular System* (Simon, 1998).

Carl: All right. So check out this picture here. [The pre-service teacher points to the text picture.] So we've got an arm that's straight and then an arm that's bent. [The pre-service teacher demonstrates bending his arm.] See when the arm is bent you see that biceps right there? [The pre-service teacher is pointing to the text and his arm as he bends it.]

Raimond: I see the muscle. It's small.

Charlotte: It's getting bigger.

Carl: Bigger, so it's *contracting*. So here's what they say, "muscles move your body by *contracting*. When a muscle contracts it shortens and that moves the bones to which it is attached" (Simon, 1998, p. 10). [The pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.] So when this guy's flexing like lifting something up

Raimond: Flex.

Carl: Flexing and you're, say I went to like pick up this pencil and I'm picking it up, the muscles, the muscles, right here, see how the muscle right here, how it's getting fatter? [The teacher uses gestures to demonstrate *contracting* by bending his arm and picking up a pencil.] Right, Raimond? You see it's getting fatter? That's how it's getting shorter, so it's getting fatter as it gets shorter, the muscle is *contracting* and getting shorter. [The pre-service teacher points to his arm muscles getting bigger and smaller as he demonstrates *contracting*.] Think of like a bungee cord.

In this particular example, gestures, in combination with text illustrations were utilized to help explain the term *contracting* for Carl's bilingual students. It should be noted that this particular non-fiction text contained an abundance of academic language, or specialized words unique to the school context and specialized content areas (Krashen & Brown, 2007). The use of gestures was a powerful way to help students see how *contracting* actually worked in addition to understanding its meaning.

Similarly, the following exchange illustrates the use of gestures to augment Kay's word review.

Kay: ...Remember that vocab. word [*echo*]? Yes, Cara.

Cara: Uh, you make owling sounds.

Kay: You could make owling sounds and that might be something important because a friend who is just going owling might not know what to do so we can tell the friend when you go you have to be very quiet when you get into the woods so you don't scare the owl away and they when you think there might be an owl you make an *echo*. What kind of motions did they use with their hands to make an *echo*? Do you remember Dorothea? Our definition for the word was when you say the



word it keeps on going. [The pre-service teacher holds up word card and makes gestures with her hands to indicate a sound that keeps going.] That was kind of definition we had so when you say the word it kind of comes back to you and you can hear it [The pre-service teacher makes gestures with her hands to demonstrate the sound coming back.] and what did the character in the story do to make the *echo*? You can show me if you want.

Dorotha: Umm, put hands over her mouth. [The student puts her hands out and then puts them over her mouth to demonstrate the gesture that was depicted in the text illustration.]

Kay: Put the hands over the mouth. Can everyone show me how they did it in the story? Show me, use your hands. [The pre-service teacher and the students use gestures mimicking how the character in the story made an echo.]

Maggie: They put their hands uh outside of their mouth. [Student is using gestures to demonstrate how to make an echo.]

In this particular example demonstrating the use of gestures, the teacher in addition to using gestures herself; also had students demonstrate a gesture. Blachowicz & Fisher (2006) point out that bilingual children may need to participate in physical movement in addition to hearing word meanings in order to help internalize English vocabulary. In the above example, the use of gestures to review the word *echo* also mimicked the text illustration which helped to reinforce both comprehension of a text event and the meaning of the word *echo*.

### **Summary and Discussion of Instructional Strategies to Augment Word Introductions and Reviews**

In conclusion, I found that pre-service teachers frequently augmented their word introductions and reviews with several strategies to help make words and texts more comprehensible for bilingual students. In most cases, pre-service teachers used a hybrid of vocabulary teaching practices, or multiple methods to introduce and augment word

reviews. The propensity for pre-service teachers to use a combination of strategies was particularly important as the bilingual students in their groups most likely had a wide range of language proficiencies and content knowledge. Using a repertoire of strategies helped to ensure that students had more than one way of taking in information and making sense of the new words.

The suggested practice of connecting to students' background knowledge, prior learning, and personal experiences was employed in a relatively small number of vocabulary teaching episodes. This practice is particularly salient for bilingual children who may have limited background and cultural knowledge needed to understand new words and texts in English (Brisk & Harrington, 2007). It is unclear if this finding was related to the fact that pre-service teachers may have had limited background information about their bilingual students which would have made it difficult to connect to their personal experiences or background knowledge, or if it was related to a need for additional professional development support in this particular practice. In either case, the practice could have been employed more frequently in an effort to engage bilingual students in word learning. However, given the length of discussion and time required to make these connections, even if the practice had been utilized frequently, it would have remained a minority of the observed practices as many word introductions were brief explanations during readings in service of improving text comprehension.

Additionally, pre-service teachers demonstrated many practices supported in the literature for *introducing* words, however, they rarely moved beyond providing word-meaning information even in the context of word reviews. Introducing word meanings

is only the first step in helping bilingual children learn the meanings of words. The professional development provided emphasized a breadth and depth approach to building bilingual children's word knowledge. Pre-service teachers were encouraged to have students use newly learned words in the regular classroom setting, to expand word definitions, to give more and different examples of words, and to help children make connections to newly introduced words. It is entirely possible that pre-service teachers provided more in-depth follow-up word instruction in the regular classroom context as reviewing words that were previously introduced in the classroom setting in read aloud contexts was evident. As mentioned earlier, it may be that pre-service teachers' word introductions primarily focused on achieving comprehension of the texts being read aloud. As such, a focus on in depth vocabulary teaching was not an instructional priority for pre-service teachers. Finally, perhaps the read aloud instructional context does not provide the space needed for in-depth word development unless there are multiple readings of a text or time for follow up vocabulary instruction after readings. In other words, books provide a rich body of words and meaningful contexts in which to introduce them but too many interruptions to books in the form of in-depth word development may ultimately compromise understanding and meaning making from texts which should remain the ultimate goals of any text rendering.

Finally, all the word introductions and reviews presented in this chapter were couched in a type of interaction between pre-service teachers and bilingual students. A sociocultural perspective of literacy presents learning as a social and cultural process that occurs in the context of human relationships (Gee, 2003). Consequently, student-

teacher interactions affect how and what students learn in the context of literacy instruction. Although the vocabulary instructional strategies or methods that pre-service teachers employed during word development were significant, viewing them independently from the social context in which they occurred obscures the nature of teaching and learning that occurred in the read aloud groups. As Bartolome (1994) points out, much of the debate regarding academic achievement for minority students is “constructed in primarily methodological and mechanistic terms dislodged from the sociocultural reality that shapes it” (p. 173-174). In the next chapter of this dissertation, I will present teacher-student interaction patterns linking them to the affordances they provided bilingual students in terms of language and literacy development and how they worked to socialize students into particular school-based literacy practices.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Pre-service Teachers' Interaction Patterns During Read Alouds**

This chapter reports results on the analysis of interaction patterns that occurred between pre-service teachers and bilingual students during pre-service teachers' development of word knowledge and comprehension of texts in small group read alouds. I was primarily interested in the analysis of classroom interaction patterns in this dissertation study as theoretical insights and research have shed light on its link to language and literacy learning and opportunities for students to participate in classroom discussions with both monolingual and bilingual children (Gutierrez, 1994; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009). Through carefully examining teachers' and students' language use, it was possible for me to determine both the quantity and quality of students' output and how this was impacted by exposure to different patterns of teacher discourse in the read aloud context. The use of the lens of teacher "talk moves" as an analytical framework for interaction that occurred during reading aloud in bilingual children's second language provided insight into both pre-service teacher learning about second language development and the development of bilingual students' literacy skills in L2. Since my work is informed by sociocultural theories of language and literacy learning, discourse analysis is well suited to the questions that emerged from my theoretical frameworks. I draw on transcripts of teachers' and students' discourse during the read aloud context to illustrate the findings.

My analysis indicates that there was a range of linguistic interactions that emerged across teachers used to support student engagement and interaction around

vocabulary words and texts. In general, the teaching episodes were socially interactive in nature and underlaid by the normal turn taking found in conversations and the shape of at least some of these interactions were unique to school settings. The most prominent interaction patterns found were the Initiation-, Response-, Evaluation (IRE) interaction sequence (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979; van Kleeck & Woude, 2003) with repetition of students' answers which has been widely documented in the monolingual language development literature. During these interaction sequences, in addition to evaluating students' answers, pre-service teachers would usually repeat the content of students' remarks. Another common pattern was IRE plus pre-service teachers' expansions of bilingual students' responses. Here, pre-service teachers would evaluate then expand upon students' answers. There were a smaller number of occasions when interaction patterns shifted away from the standard IRE sequences and contained alternative teacher "talk moves" (Michaels, 2008), student generated writing and self-initiated oral language output. This shift in linguistic patterns, which was more prominent during comprehension than vocabulary discussions, created greater affordances for language and literacy learning including extended bilingual student discourse and more rigorous, high level thinking about words and texts (Hall, 1998; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Nystrand, 1997; O'Connor & Michaels, 1993; Swain, 1985; Wells, 1993).

I argue in this chapter that the most common interactional pattern observed in the read aloud context, IRE with teacher repetition of student answers, reflected a simple recitation style of teaching that led to mostly single word or single clause type responses which constrained linguistic output from bilingual students. While this type of

interaction is suggested for language development in early stages of second language acquisition, it may not provide the opportunities that developing bilingual students at higher levels of L2 proficiency need to advance their language. Additionally, even modifications to this sequence, IRE plus pre-service teacher expansions and word elicitations, where teachers provided productive language and literacy scaffolds, ultimately limited bilingual student output opportunities needed to further support language development. It was primarily in the instances when pre-service teachers diverged from IRE sequences in the read aloud context and linguistic interactions contained alternative teacher talk moves and student generated writing and self-initiated oral language output that bilingual students produced more extended (number of words per student turn) and higher quality language (more sophisticated vocabulary) discourse.

The chapter is organized into four sections. Each part presents teacher-student linguistic patterns and the effect of these patterns of interaction on the quality of bilingual students' talk over the course of vocabulary and text discussions. In the first part, I will present and discuss pre-service teacher interaction patterns which limited more extended student output including IRE and "IRE plus teacher expansions and elicitations". In the second section, interaction patterns that afforded students more opportunities to produce language output are presented. In the third section, I report the analysis of students' self-initiated output in the read aloud context. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I present student writing during read alouds and link this to increased opportunities for student output and learning.

### **The IRE with Repetition of Students' Answers Pattern of Interaction**

The use of IRE with repetition of students' answers was a prominent linguistic pattern observed across the majority of pre-service teachers' word introductions and reviews. For instance, this pattern is depicted below during a vocabulary introduction teaching episode before reading a text.

Carl: Then *segregation*, have you guys ever heard of the word *segregation*?

Paulina: I think it means to separate.

Carl: Yea, to separate, exactly. And then unconscious. Do you know what that means?

In this linguistic interaction, pre-service teachers began sequences by polling bilingual students' knowledge about a word or phrase. On most occasions, students were expected to raise their hands in order to respond to the teacher inquiry. The teacher would then nominate a student to respond and they would supply an answer. In the final phase of the three part exchange, pre-service teachers would repeat and evaluate students' responses. In nearly all cases, the teacher repetition and evaluation would mark the end of the instructional sequence and a shift to a new word or topic would proceed. The following transcript of Kay's word introduction provides another example of the IRE sequence with a repetition of a student's answer.

Kay: Ok, and then what about the word *clearing*? This is one of our vocabulary words this week. Yes?

Maggie: When there is an open space.

Kay: An open space. Good. So this is probably the easiest since we went over it, right? So I'll leave these words out and when you hear them, give me a thumbs up when it comes up in the text...



Kay began by polling her third grade bilingual students about the meaning of the word *clearing*. Maggie provided a response which was then repeated and evaluated by Kay in the subsequent sequence of the interaction pattern. After this, similar to Carl, the discussion of the target vocabulary ended after Kay repeated and evaluated her bilingual student's response.

Pre-service teachers also frequently asked comprehension questions about texts that followed a similar sequence of posing a known-information question, followed by a student response and finally a teacher evaluation, which led to only limited responses in bilingual students. An example of this pattern is shown below.

Madeline: Do you guys remember the line of this whole story?

Kato: Segregation.

Madeline: Segregation. Right.

In the excerpt above, Madeline asked students if they had recalled the main idea of the text. Kato responded and Madeline both evaluated and repeated the student's answer. Notice how Kato's response contained only one word and he was the only student afforded an opportunity to participate in the exchange.

There were times when pre-service teachers opened the floor for additional students to participate in interactions within the IRE sequence. For instance, pre-service teachers would pose questions such as "what else" or "who can add on" to indicate that more responses were indicated. On these occasions, pre-service teachers solicited and accepted multiple answers to questions presented within the IRE sequence. This pattern was frequently observed across all teachers during vocabulary and comprehension

teaching episodes. During these interactions, pre-service teachers communicated to bilingual students that there was not one and only one correct answer to a question, but multiple possible answers and that multiple students were expected to participate in word and text discussions. This slight variation of the IRE interaction pattern (i.e. a series of IRE patterns) worked to produce additional language output for bilingual students in that more than one student was able to participate in each conversation. However, these patterns of interaction still resulted in circumscribed opportunities for language use in individual students as seen in the example below.

Madeline: What's a hero, Efina?

Kato: Superman.

Madeline: Good. Good connection, Efina?

Efina: Saves someone.

Madeline: Saves someone. What do you think, Ace, what do you think a hero is? What do you think a hero does?

Kato: To help people.

Madeline: Good. Can you add on to that, Ace?

Ace: War.

Madeline: A war hero, yea. Because they were in war at that point.

Efina: To give love.

Madeline: To give love. These are great.

In the transcript excerpt above, Madeline inquired about the meaning of the word *hero* during the reading of the text *Jack Becomes a Hero* (John F. Kennedy: The Making of a Leader, 2005). Notice how Madeline nominated every bilingual student in the group to

participate which communicated to students that there was more than one possible answer. She also utilized the phrase “add on” as a way to signal to learners that she wanted more than one student to participate in defining the word. Note however that the tight teacher control over the discussion still limited bilingual student output.

Another example from Katrina demonstrates an instance where multiple possible responses were elicited from students during a verbal exchange about the season fall.

Katrina: They [the text] talked about fall. Let’s go over what happened in the fall? What happened? One thing that happened in fall, Andy?

Andy: The leaves changed colors.

Katrina: The leaves changed colors. What else happened in fall, Sonya?

Sonya: Halloween comes.

Katrina: Halloween happens in fall, that’s another thing that happens in fall. Peter, another thing?

Peter: Birds go away.

Katrina: And birds go away. They migrate. Very good. And one more thing that the book showed us. Remember, Andy, you pointed out the big yellow school bus?

Andy: [Student nods his head to indicate “yes.”]

Katrina: Children start school in the fall, September. So let’s see what happens next.

Here, Katrina nominated Andy to respond first and then used the phrases “what else,” “another thing,” and “one more thing” to communicate to other students in the group that more possible answers could be provided (i.e. IRE with multiple slots for responses).

Notice how in Katrina’s response to Peter, she provided a recast of the student’s response that contained a previously introduced vocabulary word, *migrate*, which was a productive

language scaffold. However, like the previous example, student output in brief focused mainly on recalling literal information from the text which did not afford the student an opportunity to produce more meaningful output hypothesized to lead to second language development (Swain, 1985).

To summarize, in both of the preceding examples, every bilingual student in the group was able to participate as pre-service teachers nominated more than one student to respond and remained on a single topic for a longer period of time thus allowing multiple students to demonstrate their learning and understanding of target vocabulary words and concepts from the text which is necessary for building background knowledge for overall comprehension texts. For instance, Madeline's conversation with her students resulted in eleven student turns of talk and Katina's had nine student turns. Significantly, however, teachers continued to fall into the pattern of posing known-information questions and evaluating students' answers, both characteristic of the IRE pattern of interaction, which resulted in restricting bilingual students' language output and learning opportunities.

On occasions where bilingual students were unable to produce an answer, pre-service teachers typically provided a response for the student. This excerpt is taken from the read aloud of *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Friedman, 1984) and depicts Katrina supplying a response for her students after an unsuccessful inquiry was posed about the meaning of a previously introduced vocabulary word.

Katrina: Remember what utensils were, Sonya, what I told you? What are utensils?

Sonya: I forgot again.

Katrina: It's okay. They are different things you eat with like a fork and a knife and a spoon and chopsticks are all eating utensils.

Notice how Katrina supplied the definition of the word *utensils* for Sonya. The teacher could have tried to determine if the student did not understand the question or did not know the answer. If the student did not know the answer, Katrina could have directed Sonya to the text and used words and illustrations to help her figure out the meaning of the word. Arguably, the pre-service teacher was less focused on helping students figure out the meaning of words independently than providing definitions for them which resulted in limiting bilingual students' language output.

Along the same lines, in my analysis, I found another common variation on the IRE linguistic pattern of interaction in which pre-service teachers asked another student to respond when the original student called upon was unable to produce an answer to a question. This practice served as an implicit evaluation of the original students' answer. To illustrate this practice, following is an instance where Kay asked for a word definition and the first person she nominated to respond is unable to produce an answer.

Kay: Echo, do you know what that means? That's ok if you don't. Maggie?

Maggie: Um? [There is a very short pause and the pre-service teacher calls on another student to answer the question.]

Kay: Dorotha?

Dorotha: Echo means like you are saying it and like... [There is a short pause.]

Kay: So you are saying it and it's kind of hard to explain but what happens?

Dorotha: Yea, and it like goes.

Kay: It keeps going kind of, ok. And then what about the word clearing?

In the exchange above, the original student who was nominated by the teacher appeared unable to respond to the teacher inquiry about the meaning of the word *echo*. Kay almost immediately called on another student to respond to the question posed, which served as an implicit form of an evaluation and halted Maggie's opportunity to participate in the word discussion. This resulted in leaving the original pupil behind in the learning process while another student was given access to an opportunity to produce language, although, the pattern of student responses were generally brief. Kay then repeated the question and the sequence ended with a repetition and evaluation of Dorothea's response. The teacher then moved on to discussing a new word instead of returning to the original student, Maggie, to see if she had gained anything from Dorothea's response which resulted in little opportunity for additional student output.

There were also instances where bilingual students provided responses that were considered to be incorrect or incomplete by pre-service teachers during interactional patterns. In these episodes, teachers commonly supplied the appropriate response they were seeking. Again, this demonstrates pre-service teachers' emphasis on providing language input as opposed to scaffolding or supporting students' language output in that there was few instances of assisting students in figuring out the meaning of unknown words. The excerpt below characterizes this trend.

Madeline: You guys ever heard the word meteor before?

Kato: Yea, shooting star.

Madeline: ...You said shooting star, I like that, Kato, but it's kind of a little bit different. They're [meteors] big rocks. Did you guys learn about space or anything in science yet?

This excerpt from my transcript began with a typical pre-service teacher question in which Madeline asked her students if they had ever heard of a word. This signaled to her students that she was seeking the meaning of the word. In the next part of the exchange, Kato responded to the question. In the final part of the exchange, Madeline evaluated the student's answer, which she considered only partially correct, and then supplied her own response to the originally posed question. In this exchange, Kato was not provided with an additional opportunity to elaborate which may have yielded the answer Madeline was seeking while also allowing for greater language output.

As I have argued in all the aforementioned examples, in the context of IRE interactions, students were not provided opportunities to produce more extended discourse. In fact, most students' replies were only a few words and students were given just one turn at talk per interaction sequence. Swain (2000) argues that bilingual learners need opportunities to produce language in order to "push or stretch" their linguistic abilities as they create form and meaning when interacting with others in dialogue. These more extended dialogue opportunities were not provided in IRE sequences. Instead, students were providing isolated definitions of words and prescribed answers to lower level, literal comprehension questions during IRE sequences. Most students' responses were correct and thus it would have been easy for teachers to assume that students understood the meanings of words and their relationships to the texts and basic information presented in texts. However, without opportunities for extended language where students can be prompted to make connections or elaborate further on responses, it will be difficult to determine if students understood the overall meanings of text and more

in-depth understandings of words (Anderson & Roit, 1996). In the next part of this chapter, I present variations to the IRE sequence that afforded bilingual students more opportunities for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and scaffolded language interactions (Wells, 1999). However, they still limited opportunities for engendering extended student discourse and higher level thinking about words and text.

### **The “IRE Plus” Teacher Expansions Pattern of Interaction**

A variation of the standard IRE pattern included an immediately following expansion of students’ remarks or a word elicitation by pre-service teachers. I termed these linguistic patterns as “IRE Plus”. The first of these was the IRE plus teacher expansions. This was a common discourse pattern found across all pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers would poll students about text events and then accompany their evaluation of students’ responses with an elaboration or expansion of students’ comments. On the one hand, this interaction pattern provided bilingual students with appropriate models of language to assist or scaffold students’ language development and support text comprehension. On the other hand, it did not provide students with opportunities for extended language output. To illustrate, I provide an instance where Katrina expanded upon a student’s response about a text event.

Katrina: What is he [main character in the text] afraid to eat with because he’s never used them before?

Peter: Chopsticks.

Katrina: Right, chopsticks. He’s never used them before. He’s afraid he’ll look silly using them and then if he’s hungry because he can’t eat, he’ll act like a bear. So he’s afraid to ask.



Here Katrina monitored students' comprehension by asking a question about an event that had just occurred in the text. Peter provided a response which was repeated, evaluated and expanded upon by the teacher. Katrina's expansion served to reiterate and explain a text event. These expansions worked as scaffolding for students as they provided teacher models of language that were at least a little bit ahead of learners language proficiencies which is an important factor for second language development (Krashen, 1985). Significantly, however, the bilingual student's output is still limited to one word, *chopsticks*. Likewise, a student provided only a brief response in the following similar exchange.

Kay: So we're talking about cutting down forest to create cropland. What's cropland? Does anyone know? Cropland. We talked about crops before. Dorotha?

Dorotha: Where there's a lot of seeds.

Kay: Where there are seeds and they are growing crops. Right. Crops are things that they might need to eat.

Again, the teacher expansion served to model extended language and supported student comprehension of text but couched within the IRE sequence, resulted in minimal student output.

### **The "IRE Plus" Teacher Word Elicitations Pattern of Interaction**

Another form of language scaffolding, teacher word elicitation, was found occasionally across all pre-service teachers but most notably in Katrina's read aloud discussions. Teachers used at least two techniques to directly elicit words from students. First, Katrina typically provided students with the beginning sound or letter of the word

she was attempting to elicit from students. Second, other pre-service teachers would elicit a vocabulary word to complete their own utterance. The following transcript documents an interaction sequence in which Katrina utilized a word elicitation

- Katrina: What was he doing with his pencils? What's it look like he's doing?  
[The pre-service teacher is pointing to a page in the text where a character is using pencils to practice eating with chopsticks.]
- Peter: He's, he's using the pencil so it can be like chopsticks.
- Katrina: So he's, *it starts with a p-*
- Peter: Practice.
- Katrina: Practice. Yep, he's practicing with the pencils.

In the above sequence, Katrina asked students to describe a character's actions in a text illustration. The pre-service teacher expected the students to provide a previously introduced vocabulary word, *practice*, in their response although she did not explicitly ask for the target word. Peter responded to the teacher inquiry but his answer is considered incomplete by Katrina as it did not contain the target vocabulary word. Katrina went on to prompt the student by saying "*it starts with a p*" and Peter provided the elicited word. Katrina then validated his response. An interesting finding is that a few minutes later during the same read aloud, Peter used the word *practice* in his self-initiated output.

- Peter: I want to eat with chopsticks. [Student interjects.]
- Katrina: Maybe one day.
- Peter: But I *practiced*.
- Katrina: You practiced with chopsticks at home?
- Peter: [Nods his head to indicate "yes."]

Katrina: Very cool.

This transcript reveals a similar finding documented in a study by Lyster and Ranta (1997) which investigated various types of teacher feedback on student language errors and learner uptake. The authors found that teacher elicitations were the most successful technique for eliciting language uptake in bilingual learners in comparison to other types of teacher feedback.

The following transcript provides another example of a pre-service teacher elicitation. In this example, Carl elicited completions of his own utterances.

Shadi: She was, Sarah was a little child and the father was still his age and they were going to their house and they were *making* crops.

Carl: They were making crops *or-* ?

Shadi: Growing crops.

Carl: Who was growing crops? Do you remember Shadi, *the-* ?

Shadi: Sharecroppers.

Carl: Some of the sharecroppers were...

Here, Shadi provided a summary of an event that had occurred in the text. In his utterance, he used the word *making* which is considered by the pre-service teacher to be everyday language, less sophisticated language, or not context appropriate language. Carl utilized an elicitation to prompt Shadi to use the word *growing* which was the language of the text under discussion. Carl then went on to use another elicitation to draw from Shadi the previously introduced vocabulary word, *sharecroppers*. The sequence ended with Carl validating the student's response by repeating it.

The IRE plus teacher word elicitation pattern of interaction worked as a scaffold to push bilingual learners to produce higher levels of language output. This resulted in at least one instance where a bilingual student was then able to incorporate the target word (e.g. “But I *practiced*”) in his own productive language at a later point in the read aloud context. Lyster and Ranta (1997) point out that when students actively draw on their own resources to produce language (as opposed to teachers recasting language where students are less actively engaged) it may trigger their hypothesis about how the target language works contributing to future uptake.

It appeared that teachers’ assessments of students’ zones of proximal development were informing decisions to elicit the vocabulary words. Notably, pre-service teachers utilized elicitation after they had previously introduced unfamiliar words to students. Thus, it may be that pre-service teachers assumed students were able, with support, to utilize the new vocabulary in their productive language. Despite the fact that bilingual students were afforded an opportunity to produce higher levels of language as a result of teacher word elicitation, the overall nature of the communicative tasks resulted in limited participation (e.g. one or two word utterances) where learners reproduced known-information. Wong-Fillmore (1985) argues that the practice of teachers asking low-level questions requiring one-word answers is problematic for second language learners; especially those at more advanced levels of L2 proficiency, as only the teachers are afforded opportunities to practice speaking the new language.

### **Summary and Discussion of IRE Patterns of Interaction**

In the course of vocabulary and comprehension instruction in the read aloud context, pre-service teachers typically utilized the well-documented IRE exchange and IRE plus teacher expansions and word elicitations. IRE interaction patterns were potentially useful in helping pre-service teachers determine bilingual students' background knowledge and to assess newly introduced words as well as to monitor and assess students' comprehension of texts. It could also be argued that pre-service teachers were helping to socialize bilingual students into school-based language tasks and cultural rules for displaying knowledge through requiring students to verbally display their knowledge and produce word definitions during IRE sequences. Researchers have noted that in some cultural groups and communities, adults refrain from known-information questions (Heath, 1982, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Thus, there is a disadvantage in school settings for children who are not familiar with this "school" pattern. Van Kleeck (2003) argues, a predominance of IRE interactions in book reading events could potentially improve students' ability to display their knowledge "as well as the teacher's image of the child as a competent learner" (p. 278). In addition, Schleppegrell (2004) points out, producing oral definitions is a common linguistic, school-based task required of students in school settings and research has demonstrated that second language learners' ability to produce higher quality definitions in their L2 is related to opportunities to practice giving definitions (Snow, 1990). IRE patterns in the read aloud setting did provide students with practice and feedback with this skill.

The IRE plus sequences provided opportunities for teacher modeling and scaffolding of language and comprehension strategies (e.g. modeling self-questioning techniques to assist readers in monitoring comprehension while reading). Teachers' expansions are compatible with Krashen's (1985) view that learners need input that is a little ahead of the learners current level of language ability ( $i + 1$ ). Pre-service teachers' input closely matched students' messages and teachers provided students with feedback that validated their contributions. The teacher expansions demonstrate the notion of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Wertsch, 1991) and conversational scaffolding originally identified by researchers studying first language acquisition during book reading events (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). The pre-service teachers accepted the starting point where students were in their language development but then provided them with higher levels of language in an expanded form to help further their development. This type of expansion of children's verbalizations during book reading events is one of the key components of *dialogic reading* (Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, et al., 1988; Kim & Hall, 2002), a shared picture book reading intervention which has been found to have produced significant gains in both monolingual and bilingual children's expressive and receptive language skills.

Despite the potential value of providing scaffolded language and comprehension assistance, in the form of teacher expansions and elicitations, the fundamental limitation of the IRE sequences in the read aloud context is that this pattern of interaction rarely allows opportunities for bilingual students to practice extended discourse which is needed for communicative competence in a second language. To begin with, the questions posed

during these interaction patterns are “known-information” (Mehan, 1979) inquiries in that the teacher had a specific, formulaic response in mind. This question form only allowed for very restricted responses and therefore limited opportunities for students to present multiple perspectives and relate words and text events to their own lives and experiences which have been shown to increase bilingual student participation (Thornburg, 1993). For example, consider the following student’s response to the teacher’s overall question, “Grown-ups have careers, which is another word for-, Yes, Sonya?” The student, Sonya, replied, “job,” a brief, one word reply. The IRE pattern of interaction did not provide the space for extended interactions between teachers and students which are important for second language acquisition. It has been argued that during interactions between native speakers and second language learners, speakers participate in negotiation of meaning as they work to understand each other which is important to second language acquisition (Long, 1996).

The IRE sequences also typically shifted in topic after pre-service teachers’ expansions and elicitation limiting the amount of talk students produced about any one given topic under discussion as is illustrated in the example below:

Carl: Then *segregation*, have you guys ever heard of the word *segregation*?

Paulina: I think it means to separate.

Carl: Yea, to separate, exactly. And then unconscious. Do you know what that means?

The above example illustrates how the final evaluation in the IRE sequence often preceded a shift to a new topic or word, in this case, the teacher asked for the meaning of another word, *unconscious*. This rapid-fire question and answer sequence is particularly

problematic for bilingual students who may need additional time to understand teachers' language and process information presented (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The challenge for teachers is learning how to balance the need to rapidly build vocabulary (and overall language acquisition) with time to process language and information.

Finally, the majority of these interactional sequences involved students bidding for the opportunity to respond to pre-service teachers' questions or pre-service teachers randomly nominating one student to provide a response which restricted successful student participation from the rest of the students present in the small group read alouds. The following excerpt characterizes this practice.

Kay:        So we're talking about cutting down forest to create cropland. What's cropland? Does anyone know? Cropland. We talked about crops before. Dorotha?

Dorotha:    Where there's a lot of seeds.

Kay:        Where there are seeds where they are growing crops. Right? Crops are things that they might need to eat.

The pre-service teacher nominated one student, Dorotha, to respond to her inquiry about the meaning of the word cropland. As such, the opportunity to produce language was only available to this one student and Kay only had access to what this one child in the group knew about the word. The remaining students were usually quiet and passive. Thus, it was impossible to determine in many of the interactions if all students were familiar with or had learned the words and concepts under discussion. This problem is also found in whole class instruction where the context for developing language is even more heterogeneous. This speaks to the fact that teachers should be taught ways in which they can promote more language among and between students.



In conclusion, an emphasis on comprehensible input alone is not consistent with the literature arguing the need for both language input and output when creating classroom conditions that support second language learning (Swain, 1985). As described earlier in chapter two of this dissertation, learners need opportunities to produce language output as it can (a) build language fluency, (b) signal gaps in learners' language knowledge, (c) provide opportunities for learners to test or try out various language expressions to see if they work, and (d) trigger feedback from pre-service teachers about the comprehensibility of students' language (Swain, 1993). With this in mind, the remaining part of this chapter will illustrate alternative linguistic patterns observed during read alouds that emphasized both comprehensible input and more opportunities for students to produce language output than found in IRE sequences.

### **Alternative Linguistic Patterns of Interaction Increasing Opportunities for Student Output**

Although IRE and IRE plus teacher expansions patterns were dominant during book reading episodes, my findings indicate that pre-service teachers occasionally utilized alternative "talk moves" (Michaels, 2008) or interaction patterns that were productive scaffolds for bilingual students' increased language output during vocabulary and comprehension teaching episodes. The remaining sections of the chapter is subdivided into three parts, each highlighting a different language pattern utilized within teacher-bilingual student interactions to support increased student engagement around vocabulary words and texts. These various interaction patterns include: (a) the Revoicing Talk Move, (b) the Explicate Reasoning Talk Move, (c) Pre-Service Teachers' Use of

Referential Question and Open-Ended Questions, and (d) Allowing Students to Use Native Languages During Read Alouds.

### **The Revoicing Talk Move**

In my analysis, I found that two pre-service teachers, Carl and Kay, occasionally used the “revoicing move” (Michaels, 2008; O’Connor & Michaels, 1993; O’Connor & Michaels, 2007) in response to students’ comments in the read aloud context. In this linguistic interaction, there is a shift in the final move of the IRE sequence from adjudicating a student response to revoicing/recasting students’ responses which was preceded by the discourse marker “so” as way to verify or clarify students’ remarks. The teacher recasts contained more coherent language and the elimination of errors in syntax typically found in the bilingual students’ original remarks. For instance, consider the following exchange where Carl asked his student about an important event that had occurred in the text *A Picnic in October* (Bunting, 1999).

Carl: Why doesn’t little Tony want anybody to watch? [The book character is blowing kisses to the Stature of Liberty in a text illustration.]

Raimond: Because maybe he thinks other people will think he’s crazy by doing that.

Carl: So he’s embarrassed maybe? Raimond, so you think he’s embarrassed? He doesn’t want people seeing him blowing kisses to the Statue of Liberty?

Raimond: I think he feels embarrassed because he did that but he shouldn’t feel embarrassed.

Carl: Why not?

Raimond: Because of that independence he came to the country and without that he wouldn’t come to the country.

In this segment, Raimond provided a response to the teacher's comprehension question. In Carl's response to Raimond's answer, he used the discourse marker "so" and revoiced the student's remark recoding the student's everyday language (i.e. crazy) with more sophisticated or context appropriate vocabulary (i.e. embarrassed). Notably, the teacher's revoicing also results in Raimond's follow-up response in which he produced additional language utilizing the new vocabulary word, *embarrassed*. In the next turn of the sequence, Carl asked Raimond to explicate his reasoning ("why") which afforded Raimond the opportunity to back up his claim with supporting evidence. His response provided a possible rationale for the character's actions. The sophistication of Raimond's response should also be noted. It contained Tier II language (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002) of the text (e.g. *independence* and *freedom*) and it demonstrated his ability to make inferences about text as the book did not explicitly state the character's motives for his actions. Had Carl simply evaluated Raimond's responses in the above sequence instead of revoicing and asking him to explain his answer, the bilingual student would not have had the opportunity to produce the extended discourse and more rigorous, high level responses that he did.

Similarly, in the example below, we see another instance where Carl utilized the revoicing move resulting in more extended student output.

Charlotte: Because maybe the police, well since you said police friends that's okay but if it wasn't a police friend, right, maybe it would be hard to find one because the police will think it's nonsense because they think it would be okay but it's going to be hard....to get the ladies in because most people like the bird fashion.

Carl: Oh, so you think it's going to be hard to get the people to stop using the birds on their hats?

Charlotte: Yea, because they like the birds.

In the above sequence, Charlotte began by making a prediction during the reading of the text *She's Wearing a Dead Bird On Her Head!* (Lasky, 1995). Carl revoiced the student's remark ("So you think it is going to be hard to get the people to stop using the birds on their hats?") and provided a more coherent rendering of the student's original response. This afforded Charlotte another turn in the sequence in which she accepts (i.e. yea) the teacher's interpretation of her response and produces additional language. Importantly, Charlotte provided a rationale (i.e. because they like the birds) for her prediction in her follow-up response.

Another pre-service teacher, Kay, also utilized the revoicing move in some of her interactions with students as depicted below.

Maggie: I need to add something from Cara's.

Kay: Okay.

Maggie: When they burn the trees it's the same that you can't breathe because trees have oxygen and they make us breathe.

Kay: Oh, so you're thinking back to when we learned about rainforests and how if we get rid of the trees it kind of eliminates some of the oxygen that we have. So you're saying if we burn down all those trees with fire, there's not going to be a lot of oxygen left. Is that what you're talking about?

Maggie: Yea.

Kay's students were asked what they know about fire as a way to activate their prior knowledge before reading the text *Fire Friend or Foe* (Patent, 1998). Immediately before this episode, another student in the read aloud group, Cara, had commented about how fire can destroy forests. The segment began with Maggie informing the teacher that

she wished to “add” onto her classmate’s previous comment. Maggie added on to a student’s earlier comment about how fire can destroy trees. In her comment, she made a connection between what the group was discussing and her background knowledge about the consequences of destroying trees in the rainforest. However, her message was incomplete in that she leaves out key information (e.g. getting rid of trees in the rainforest). It appeared that Kay considered Maggie’s response to be incomplete and ill formed. Therefore, in response to Maggie’s comment, Kay used the discourse marker “so” to begin a restatement of the student’s idea. In this restatement or recast, Kay verified the message that Maggie produced in the earlier turn of the sequence, supplied the missing content information, and modeled correct English usage in the process. It should be noted that in this particular example, the potential for additional student output in the revoicing move was unrealized. Although Maggie was afforded another turn in the linguistic interaction where she accepted the teacher’s interpretation of her comment, she did not produce additional language.

The affordances provided by the use of the “revoicing” move in terms of student output and participant structures are significant. Interaction patterns containing the revoicing move went beyond the standard IRE sequence and changed the fundamental shape of the interactions by replacing the evaluation move with a revoicing move which afforded students the opportunity to accept, reject or further elaborate on their message. By contrast, the teacher evaluation in an IRE sequence usually signaled an end of the discussion to the student who was then left to wait for another teacher inquiry before providing additional output. The revoicing move opened another slot that provided an

opportunity for an extended student turn. Note in the previous exchanges how Raimond, Charlotte, and Maggie were afforded two turns to talk as opposed to participating only once as characteristic of the traditional IRE exchanges. The revoicing move positioned students as legitimate participants who were capable of producing knowledge in the interactional sequences. O'Connor and Michaels (1993) explain that when students assent to teachers' recasts during revoicing moves, the student gets credit for the contribution in a way that is not true of the reformulations that take place within the IRE sequences.

Significantly, the revoicing move both recasts bilingual students' ill formed and non-comprehensible messages in a more target like form and serves to clarify the meaning of bilingual students' messages. The teacher recasts can provide implicit feedback to bilingual students that their messages are ill formed and non-comprehensible and provide the higher level discourse that students need to learn to be academically successful in the classroom. Long (1996) hypothesized that such feedback during interactions can have a positive effect on second language development as it can potentially lead bilingual students to modify or refine their output accordingly in the future. In the aforementioned examples, phrases such as "...so you think...?" and "Is that what you're talking about?" which accompanied teacher recasts served as clarification requests which helped the pre-service teachers and bilingual students negotiate meaning. It also afforded bilingual students with lower levels of proficiency the opportunity to have their contributions made public for the rest of the group in a clear manner. This more academic teacher discourse provided prospective language models

from which other students in the group could learn. Take the case of Maggie, who frequently volunteered to participate in the read aloud setting but often produced messages that were intelligible and incomplete as demonstrated earlier.

Maggie: When they burn the trees it's the same that you can't breathe because trees have oxygen and they make us breath.

Kay: Oh, so you're thinking back to when we learned about rainforests and how if we get rid of the trees it kind of eliminates some of the oxygen that we have. So you're saying if we burn down all those trees with fire, there's not going to be a lot of oxygen left. Is that what you're talking about?

Maggie: Yea.

While it appears that Kay understood that Maggie was using her prior knowledge about burning trees in the rainforests and relating it to a discussion in the read aloud group about the text *Fire Friend or Foe* (Patent, 1998), this understanding was most likely difficult for the other students to extract from Maggie's original utterance. The revoicing move utilized by Kay refined Maggie's message in order for both Maggie and the teacher to arrive at an understanding of one another and a coherent rendering for the rest of the group. This demonstrated to students that pre-service teachers were interested in taking the time and effort to understand their contributions as opposed to simply evaluating them.

A potential limitation of the revoicing move for bilingual student language development is that it does not give bilingual students the language support they need to independently repair their messages. Bilingual students benefit from opportunities where teachers help scaffold, through questioning and calling explicit attention to errors in

language production, students' production of the target language (Gibbons, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

### **The Explicating Reasoning Talk Move**

Interaction patterns containing a talk move prompting bilingual students to explicate their reasoning or provide evidence to support claims (Gibbons, 1991; Michaels, O'Connor, Hall, & Resnick, 2002; Michaels, 2008) was a recommended practice in the professional development provided in this study as a way to help bilingual students extend their comments. This talk move was present occasionally across all pre-service teachers, although its prominence varied. In these linguistic interactions, pre-service teachers would begin by posing a question and students would respond similarly to the first part of the IRE sequence. However, instead of simply evaluating students' responses in the third part of the exchange, alternatively, teachers would prompt or scaffold students for evidence to justify their responses by using phrases starting with the words "why" or "how". Students would then provide evidence in the form of text language, pictures, and reasoning to support their claims. Interactions patterns with a similar talk move have been utilized successfully with students from diverse backgrounds during text based discussions (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001; Goldenberg, 1993). Requiring students to explicate reasoning provided students with additional opportunities for language output and scaffolded a particular type of language practice highly valued in school settings. Moreover, it was a productive scaffold for helping bilingual students to cite appropriate evidence from the text and to make the link between their evidence and



claims explicit. The following examples illustrate interaction patterns where students were prompted to explicate their reasoning during a text discussion.

Carl: So do you think these ladies like birds?

Paulina: Yes, they love birds.

Carl: Why do they love birds?

Paulina: I think they like birds because they don't want the ladies with the hats that have dead birds on top of them to wear them because they're killing the birds to do it to put the decoration on top of their hat.

In the above interchange, Paulina responded to an inferential comprehension question about the motives of characters' actions in the text. In the next turn of the sequence, Carl asked Paulina to explicate her reasoning ("why") which afforded Paulina the opportunity to back up her claim with supporting evidence from the text (i.e. "I think they like birds because they don't want the ladies with the hats that have dead birds on top of them to wear them because they are killing birds to do it..."). Providing explanations for answers to questions has been found to have a positive influence on student learning with monolingual students (Pressley et al., 1992). Had Carl simply evaluated Paulina's response instead of asking her to explain her answer, the bilingual student would not have been afforded an additional turn to talk in the sequence and the opportunity to produce more extended discourse.

Closely examining the episode below shows Madeline asking her student to explicate her reasoning for an answer provided in the read aloud context.

Madeline: How about you Efina? What you are you thinking? Who does this remind you of?

Efina: Martin Luther King Junior.

Madeline: Martin Luther King Junior. Why?

Efina: Umm, when there was signs “white only” and he did a speech that they had to be together.

Madeline: Yea, right. They had to be what? Integrated? Right?

Efina: Yea.

Here, Efina was able to produce three turns of talk in the sequence and in one of these turns, she produced more extended discourse (.”Umm, when there was signs “white only” and he did a speech that they had to be together”). Madeline began by asking Efina to make a connection between the main themes, events, and vocabulary of the text they had read and other events or figures they had been studying in the regular classroom. Efina provided a response in which she named a historical figure she had been researching during a unit of study on the Civil Rights Unit in the regular classroom. In the next sequence of the interaction, Madeline validated Efina’s response by repeating it, but then requested that Efina explicate the reason for her response by asking, “Why?” Efina then attempted to explain the connection between an event in the text (a little black girl in the text sees a “whites only” sign) and a speech delivered by Martin Luther King Junior focused on integration. Efina’s response is partial in that she leaves out some words to better explain the connection between the text event and her response but nonetheless it demonstrated the ability to make a claim, and , in response to Madeline’s query, attempt to explicate the link between her claim and textual evidence. The teacher responded to Efina’s connection utilizing a vocabulary word, *integrated*, that had been introduced before the reading. Madeline then monitored Efina’s understanding of the word *integrated* by asking, “right?”

Bilingual students also demonstrated their ability to provide evidence in the form of text content and illustrations as revealed below.

Sonya: And that one is, that's winter. [The student is pointing to an illustration of a tree depicting winter in a text illustration.]

Katrina: How can you tell that this one's winter and not that one? [The pre-service teacher points to another tree depicting summer in a text illustration.]...

Sonya: Because, because if it's winter they have no leaves on it and the trees sleep.

Katrina: And the trees sleep, yea.

In this segment, Katrina prompted her student to provide evidence to support a claim when discussing the word or concept *winter* while examining a text illustration. This sequence began with Sonya making a claim about a text illustration. Katrina responded to Sonya's claim by asking her to replicate her reasoning (*how can you tell*) as to why the tree in the text illustration depicted the season of winter. Sonya responded to the teacher's inquiry by providing rationale, in the form of textual evidence, to support her claim. The sequence ended with Katrina repeating and validating Sonya's response.

Similarly, a student used text illustrations to support a claim in the following excerpt from Kay's read aloud.

Kay: We said before it's [*clearing*] an open space. Do you think that might be right?

Dorothea: Yea.

Kay: How can you tell?

Dorothea: Because I see on the picture that it's an open space there. [The student points to the text illustration which shows a clearing in a wooded area on the page.]

Kay: You see the open space in all of the trees? It comes to a clearing?

Dorotha: Yea.

Kay's use of the phrase "*how can you tell*" prompted her bilingual student Dorotha to use evidence from the text, in the form of an illustration, to cite evidence in support of her earlier response about the meaning of the word *clearing*.

The analysis of the above interaction pattern in which teachers' talk moves worked to scaffold students' efforts to explicate their reasoning demonstrates how students were afforded the opportunity to produce more and higher quality language output. For example, in each of the segments above, students had both more turns to produce talk and turns that produced greater amounts of language in comparison to student output during the IRE talk sequences. As an illustration, the sequence below shows how Efina had three turns to produce language.

Madeline: How about you Efina? What you are you thinking? Who does this remind you of? ...

Efina: Martin Luther King Junior.

Madeline: Martin Luther King Junior. Why?

Efina: Umm, when there was signs "white only" and he did a speech that they had to be together.

Madeline: Yea, right. They had to be what? Integrated? Right?

Efina: Yea.

Although the shift in proportion of teacher and student talk is noteworthy, more important, is the nature and quality of this talk. Prompting students to explicate their reasoning resulted in students, all of whom were bilingual students and some of whom also had special needs, producing evidence to support claims, which is an important type

of argument structure found in rigorous classroom literacy discussions which support reading comprehension (Chin, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001; Goldenberg, 1993; Nystrand, 2006). Take the case of Sonya's response where the evidence she provided (e.g. "because if it's winter they have no leaves on it and the trees sleep") echoed the content of the text which stated "...everything that grows in the earth is having a long winter rest" (Rockwell, 2004, p. 29). By asking Sonya to back up her answer (e.g. "how can you tell"), Katrina afforded her student both the opportunity to cite appropriate evidence from the text to support her claim and an additional opportunity to produce output.

### **Pre-Service Teachers' Use of Referential and Open-Ended Questions**

The nature and role of teachers' questions during linguistic interactions in the classroom has been found to affect the quantity and quality of discourse in both monolingual and bilingual classroom settings (Cazden, 1988; Goldenberg, 1993; Mehan, 1979; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Wells, 1993). For example, it has been argued that the majority of questions posed during the typical IRE sequence socialize students into "short, paradigmatic utterances that recite known information" (Boyd & Maloof, 2000, p. 164). As discussed earlier in this chapter, this is particularly problematic for bilingual children as they have fewer opportunities to produce output and develop communicative competence in their second language (Swain, 1985, Wong-Fillmore, 1985). By contrast, asking open-ended questions, or questions to which the teacher does not have a specific answer in mind, can lead to more engendered student talk and opportunities for students to construct knowledge instead of simply producing responses. Nystrand and Gamoran

(1991) in their work with monolingual students point out that such questions, “signal to students the teacher’s interest in what students think and not just -whether they know what someone else thinks or has said” (p. 264). In the context of the small group read alouds in this study, the default questions were “known-information.” However, there were some occasions when all pre-service teachers posed more open-ended and referential questions (i.e. questions in which the answer is not known by the teacher) as suggested in the professional development for this study, which led to significantly more student discourse and opportunities for students to demonstrate their literacy learning. To demonstrate the significance in the effect on the quantity and quality of bilingual students’ discourse when teachers posed authentic questions, consider the following exchanges taken from Carl’s read aloud of *Uncle Jed’s Barber Shop* (King, 1993) in which two different types of questions were posed by the teacher.

Carl: And did she get the operation or not?

Paulina: Yes she did. Not yet though.

Carl: Okay.

In this segment, Carl posed a known information question about a text event and one student, Paulina, correctly responded to the known-information question producing minimal output. At a later point in the text, the following exchange occurred between Carl and his students.

Carl: So how do you think Uncle Jed felt being 79-years old and finally being able to have his dream come true to open a barbershop?

Paulina: I think he felt like he was really happy that he believed in himself and he could have done it and he did do it, he overcame his dream, he did his goal.

Charlotte: And he was happy about his family being there with him.

Carl: So his family was there and he was able to realize his dream and accomplish it?

Paulina: He overcome his dream and accomplish his goal.

Charlotte: And he was happy he was able to cut everybody's hair.

In contrast to the previous example, Carl utilized a referential question in the above segment. This resulted in Carl's students producing significantly more output (e.g. Paulina produced 6 words in response to the known-information question and 33 words in response to the referential question) in which they incorporated higher level vocabulary and demonstrated higher-level inferential comprehension where they activated their prior knowledge of the text to interpret a character's emotions. In Brock's (1986) study of the effects of various types of questions on English as Second Language classroom discourse, it was found that students learning English produced significantly longer and more syntactically complex language in response to teacher posed referential questions. The use of a referential questions also disrupted the asymmetrical teacher-student relationship usually reflected when students produced answers to pre-service teachers' known-information questions in read aloud contexts. Thus, students were able to generate their own knowledge as opposed to the teacher prescribing an answer.

The following examples present another two contrasting transcripts, this time utilizing both a known-information question and an open-ended question. They are taken from Kay's reading of the text *Fire Friend or Foe* (Patent, 1998).

Kay: ...And does anyone remember what I told you about the fire weed?  
Cara?

Cara: It can survive a fire.

Kay: It survives a fire.

Note how Kay's known-information question positioned her bilingual student to reproduce only the particular information the teacher was interested in transmitting.

Alternatively, below, Kay posed an open-ended question asking students about what they learned from the previous read aloud of the same text. It should be noted that this more open-ended review type question was commonly asked by all pre-service teachers before their second rendering of non-fiction and realistic fiction texts.

Kay: What did you learn?

Maggie: That when the trees were in the meadow when they grow they block the light but they also needed fire to like there will still be a meadow.

Kay: Oh, so you're talking about how when we had trees in the meadow we said that sometimes it's sad when the trees burn down but sometimes in the meadow they needed to burn the trees so that the meadow could still exist. Because what would happen if they didn't burn any of the trees, Maggie?

Maggie: It would turn into a forest.

Kay: Um-hum. Excellent remembering, Maggie.... Justin, what do you remember?

Justin: I remember they got to burn the trees because they probably could have a tunnel that has water and then stuff and it's gets water in and if they don't burn the tree it turns into a forest and then there's no water and then everybody would be thirsty....

Kay: Excellent remembering Justin. So you're saying that maybe if the trees took over where there was a brook of water, then there wouldn't be any water for them and they might need water to drink. ...Excellent remembering, Justin...Cara, do you remember anything from the story?

Cara: That if there's too many trees that the Native Americans can't see the animals.



Kay:        So sometimes they burn down the trees for hunting so that they could see better. Really good.

In this stretch of classroom discourse, Kay's students produced significantly more output (e.g. Cara produced 5 words in response to the known-information question and 14 words in response to the open-ended question), echoed language of the text (e.g. "meadows," "forest," and "Native Americans") and demonstrated their ability to remember key concepts and information presented (e.g. "if they don't burn the tree it turns into a forest and then there's no water") from the previous read aloud. Examining Kay's responses to students' comments, reveals that she frequently revoiced students' answers (e.g. "So you're saying that maybe if the trees took over where there was a brook of water, then there wouldn't be any water for them and they might need water to drink") for the purpose of clarifying and summarizing, thus making students' output more intelligible and coherent for the rest of the group. It is also interesting to note that instead of evaluating Maggie's comment, Kay asked her the follow up question "Because what would happen if they didn't burn any of the trees?". In Maggie's response, she demonstrated learning of a previously utilized vocabulary word, *forest*.

In the next section of this chapter, I report on findings from the analysis of students' self-initiated output. The exchanges presented below bear resemblance to the aforementioned linguistic patterns in that students were authors of their own ideas and produced more and higher quality discourse than in traditional IRE and IRE plus sequences commonly found in the read aloud context.

### **Students' Self-Initiated Output**

I argue in this part of the chapter that when students self-initiated or made spontaneous comments or interjections during read aloud episodes, they were typically comprised of higher quality and more extended discourse than when they responded to teacher posed questions. When students self-initiated output, they would interject with comments and questions while teachers were discussing or reading texts. Student questions usually focused on the meaning of words as presented in the previous chapter of this dissertation (“student word inquiries”). The majority of students’ self-initiated comments fell into four categories including (a) labeling text illustrations, (b) making connections to personal experiences, (c) making connections to background knowledge, and (d) making predictions about text events.

The teachers across all read aloud groups made it clear to students that their self-initiated comments and interjections were welcomed or acceptable and not considered to be disruptions during read aloud events. This is significant as Krashen (1982) hypothesized that when a learner feels anxious or embarrassed about speaking English, they may put up an “affective filter” that inhibits them from taking advantage of meaningful language input. Notably, all bilingual students in this study produced a variety of questions and comments about texts and words, although its prominence varied across both read aloud groups and individual bilingual students. It is impossible to determine for certain why some bilingual students produced more self-initiated output than others during book reading. Read aloud studies with monolingual children have found that students’ individual personalities impact both the amount and type of

comments they make during read aloud settings (Teale, 1984; Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989). Bilingual students' levels of English language proficiency may have also impacted their participation. It may be that some students' oral language proficiency inhibited their ability to produce a more significant amount of self-initiated output. This has been documented in another read aloud study examining the oral participation of bilingual students during classroom reading events (Laframboise & Wynn, 1994).

Teacher's classroom management styles across read aloud groups also appeared to impact the amount of self-initiated output produced by students. Brisk (2006) contends that classroom management can be a source of tension for bilingual student-teacher communication patterns because of cultural differences across students and teachers. For example, one particular teacher, Kay, allowed the least amount of "off topic" talk to occur within the read aloud context. This may have caused some students in her group to be less likely to interject with comments and questions in the event their output would be considered "not acceptable" according to the teacher's boundaries for what would be considered appropriate talk within the read aloud setting. Alternatively, Carl, allowed much more "off topic" talk to occur during read alouds. Notably, his students produced a significant amount of self-initiated output. Katrina's first graders also frequently interjected during read alouds and the majority of these comments were about text illustrations. Other read aloud studies have reported a similar finding that younger children primarily make comments regarding text illustrations (Danis, Bernard, & Leproux, 2000; Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989). It may be that Katrina's younger

students interjected more frequently during book reading events because the text illustrations played a significant role in her read aloud sessions.

For example, while reading the text *Four Seasons*, one of Katrina's students commented, "Now I see the trees have no leaves on," while pointing to an illustration in the text depicting the season of winter. Students would also relate information depicted in text illustrations to their personal experiences during self-initiated output.

After examining a tree portraying spring in a text illustration, Sonya made a connection to her personal experience of seeing a similar tree in the park.

Sonya: I saw, when I went to the park I saw blossoms on trees. [Student interjects while the group is examining a text illustration.]

Katrina: ...When did you go?

Sonya: It was near my house.

Katrina: Was this recently? Did you go last week or a few days ago?

Sonya: When there was no school.

Katrina: So last week when there was no school. And what season are we in?

Sonya: Spring.

Katrina: Spring and that's when all the blossoms are on the trees. That's why you saw blossoms on the trees at the park too because it's springtime.

In Sonya's spontaneous comment, she demonstrated her ability to link information presented in the text illustration and a previously introduced vocabulary word, *blossoms*, to her personal experiences. Notice how Katrina's response, a follow-up question, helped to facilitate additional turns for Sonya to produce output.

Older bilingual children of varying language proficiency levels in this study (e.g. third, fifth, and seventh graders) were more likely to produce meaning-making comments

in which they connected texts to their background knowledge. Connections to background knowledge are significant given the fact that research has demonstrated the importance of background knowledge for reading comprehension in second language learners (Droop & Verhoeven, 1998; García, 1991). An example of a seventh grade bilingual student making a connection to his background knowledge about the Holocaust, a topic that was being studied in the regular classroom setting, is seen in the example below taken from a read aloud of the text *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993).

Madeline: *“None of these immigrants from Japan or their children who were American citizens were ever proven to be dangerous to America during World War II”* (Mochizuki, 1993, p.1).

Kato: Almost like the Holocaust. They took them away. [Student interjects while teacher is reading the text.]

Madeline: Right. They never showed them any danger.

At a later point in the same read aloud, Kato made an additional spontaneous remark in which he connected the text to his background knowledge.

Madeline: *“We got to eat with everybody else too but my big brother Teddy ate with his own friends”* (Mochizuki, 1993, p.5).

Kato: I think they didn’t treat them that bad like Hitler did. [Student interjects while the teacher is reading the text.]

Examining Kato’s comments reveals his ability to draw on his background knowledge of the Holocaust and relate it to one of the main events of the text, the United States’ imprisonment of the Japanese during World War II. Also, note how Kato’s responses are longer than the typical one or two word utterances produced by bilingual students in response to pre-service teacher questions posed in IRE sequences.

Similarly, a student from Carl's read aloud group, made a connection to her background knowledge during self-initiated output during the reading of the text *Muscles: Our Muscular System* (Simon, 1998).

Carl: Okay and muscles in your mouth are moving.

Charlotte: Yea, your embouchure. [Student interjects while the teacher is explaining a concept from the text.]

Carl: Your embouchure, very good. That's right, you play the saxophone so you know about that.

Charlotte: Yes.

Here, Charlotte drew on her background knowledge and personal experience of playing a musical instrument and made a connection to the information being presented in the text. Notice how her answer contains a Tier III word, *embouchure*. Also, it is important to recognize that Carl's knowledge about his student helped him be able to respond to her comment.

Lastly, bilingual students across all read aloud groups made predictions about what text characters would do in the future during read alouds of fictional stories. Making predictions has been positively associated with learning during reading events (Anderson, Wilkinson, & Mason, 1991) and was a reading strategy emphasized that pre-service teachers model during read alouds. To illustrate, I provide an instance of one of Kay's students making a prediction during a reading of the text *A Tree of Cranes* (Say, 1991).

Maggie: I think she's gonna make a little party. [Student interjects during the reading of the text.]

Kay: Oh, a little party. For what? What would she be celebrating?

Maggie: Um, the New Year's.

Kay: Oh, seven days before New Year's. She might be celebrating something Maggie. You might be right. Let's find out.

In this example, Maggie made a prediction about the previous actions of the character in the text in her self-initiated output. The teacher responded with a follow-up question prompting Maggie to add on to her response. Thus, Maggie was able to produce an additional turn of talk in the exchange.

The following transcript provides another example of a bilingual student's self-initiated comment predicting an event that would occur in the text. Following the comment is a lengthy exchange in which all the students in the group share their thoughts and ideas about what will happen next in the story.

Carl: So now we pick up and they just started the bird society or their bird club and they called it the Audubon Society.

Raimond: And they want the police to get in the group so people could listen to them because everybody listens to the police but I think it's going to be hard. [Student interjects while the teacher is reviewing text content.]

Carl: You think it's going to be hard?

Raimond: I think it is going to take time to make the police come back in the group.

Carl: Good.

Raimond: And the police will help them get birds off people's hats and sue the person making, going to court.

Carl: That's a good prediction. So Raimond thinks that the police are going to get the people in trouble for making the hats.

Raimond: Because I think that one of them have one cop friends that can help them do, make birds off people's hats.

Charlotte: I disagree.

Carl: Oh, do you?

Charlotte: Because maybe the police, well since you said police friends that's okay but if it wasn't a police friend, right, maybe it would be hard to find one because the police will think it's nonsense because they think it would be okay but it's going to be hard....to get the ladies in because most people like the bird fashion.

Carl: Oh, so you think it's going to be hard to get the people to stop using the birds on their hats?

Charlotte: Yea, because they like the birds.

Raimond: But they would listen to the police and if they don't listen, they'll give them a fine.

Carl: What do you think, Paulina? Last comment and then we're going to start reading.

Paulina: I think they're going to, those ladies that want the people to stop killing the birds to make decorations for the hat and stuff for fashion they're going to try to stop them by like...they could like start putting up signs and stuff and talking to the police about that stuff and the police would get involved and all that stuff to make them kind of start.

This exchange began with Raimond's spontaneous comment predicting a text event which spurred another member of the group to share her predictions. It is significant that all of the bilingual students' talk in this transcript represent more extended output than found in any of the IRE exchanges I observed in this study. Also note how Charlotte responded to Raimond's comment and made use of his utterance and idea in her response (e.g. "I disagree" and "well since you said police friends that's okay"). At a later point in the exchange, Raimond counters one of Charlotte's responses (e.g. "But they would listen to the police and if they don't listen, they'll give them a fine"). Thus, students' interactions with one another were helping them to make sense of text and produce



additional language as they sought to provide rationales for their predictions (i.e. “Because I think that one of them have one cop friends that can help them do, make birds off people’s hats.”). It is interesting to note that at a later point in the same read aloud another spontaneous student comment, “See Raimond was wrong about the police,” prompted a debate about the degree of police involvement in halting the bird feather trade. This highlights the fact that self-initiated student output can represent content that is salient and important to students and motivate them to make meaning from text. In this case, the students were invested in the outcome of the story because they had made predictions about the text at the outset modeling the process good readers use while engaged with text.

In conclusion, students’ self-initiated output and teachers’ follow-up responses which moved beyond simple evaluations, provided students with greater opportunities to produce language than were present in IRE exchanges. Second language researchers have argued that increased opportunities for bilingual students’ self-initiated output leads to the use of more complex cognitive language functions and the ability to make full and flexible use of the second language leading to greater learning opportunities in L2 (Damhuis, 2000; Swain, 1995 ). Importantly, in the read aloud groups in this dissertation study, bilingual students’ self-initiated output resulted in students producing extended discourse and making meaningful connections with text (e.g. “Almost like the Holocaust. They took them away” and “when I went to the park I saw blossoms on trees”). Students were afforded the opportunity to choose the topics they wished to discuss and construct their own knowledge about text events. It is important to consider the question: Did

students self-initiate because they had the capacity (i.e. language proficiency) to produce more language or did they produce more language because they self-initiated? Also, it is noteworthy to consider the role of the text in students' self-initiated output. It may be that when students are able to make meaningful connections to text topics (i.e. holocaust, muscles) or something controversial (i.e. feathers in fashion) they are more motivated to produce self-initiated output. This would speak to the importance of pre-service teachers making a good topic choice to begin with in selecting texts for reading aloud. This in turn could increase the likelihood of students producing self-initiated comments during read aloud sessions.

Finally, the role of the teacher in promoting students' self-initiated output in the read aloud context is significant. Differences in teacher responses to students' spontaneous comments across reading groups in this study underscore the importance of teachers responding in ways that encourage and promote student talk. Noteworthy is the fact that, at times, pre-service teachers' responses to students' self-initiated comments invited students to extend their thinking (e.g. "For what? What would she be celebrating?") or clarify their responses (e.g. "Was this recently? Did you go last week or a few days ago?") leading to greater opportunities for students to produce language. In contrast, when pre-service teachers simply evaluated students' self-initiated remarks (e.g. Right. They never showed them any danger"), the opportunity for additional student participation was stifled as in IRE exchanges documented in the read aloud context. Finally, although students were afforded more opportunities for extended discourse, alternation between teacher and student turns remained common. Similarly, Chin,

Anderson, and Waggoner (2001) found that teachers had only moderate success in giving students control over turn taking in their study of the implementation of Collaborative Reasoning, an alternative form of dialogue to traditional recitation in classroom literature discussions. It may be that teachers still felt the need to be “in control” of discussions as was common in IRE exchanges in the read aloud context. Additionally, the bilingual students in this study may not have been familiar with dialogue that was not tightly controlled by teachers. Therefore students may have found it difficult to take an active role in initiating more turns during text based discussions.

### **Allowing Students to Use Native Languages during Read Alouds**

Allowing bilingual students to use their native languages was a practice that was suggested in the professional development and is supported in the literature on helping bilingual learners to achieve literacy in English (Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003; Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002). Only one pre-service teacher, Kay, allowed students to use their native language as part of an introduction for a bilingual book entitled *The Upside Down Boy/ El niño de cabeza* (Herrera, 2000). Although, it was utilized primarily in an effort to allow students to “show off” their Spanish speaking skills to the rest of the read aloud group and not necessarily to facilitate comprehension and vocabulary learning. Before reading the text, Kay had two native Spanish speaking students help introduce new words and phrases found in the book to the other bilingual third grade students in the group. The example below depicts this practice.

Kay: Ok, we are going to read this book, *The Upside Down Boy*. Before we even start, can you give me a thumbs up if you speak Spanish? [Justin and Maggie put their thumbs up.] Justin and Maggie, I'm going to need your help when I'm reading this story because Justin I don't speak Spanish. I never took it in high school. I don't really know a lot of Spanish and there's a lot of Spanish in this book. Okay? So I'm going to need you to help me. Some of the phrases that I saw that are in Spanish, the first one is? [The pre-service teacher opens the book to p.7 where the phrase *Buenos días* is written on the page. She pulls off a post-it-note with the phrase written on it and shows it to Justin and Maggie]

Maggie: Buenos días.

Kay: Buenos días. [The pre-service teacher shows the post-it note to Justin.]

Justin: Buenos días.

Kay: Can you tell me what that means?

Maggie: Um hello.

Justin: Hello. [The pre-service teacher sticks the post-it-note down on the table facing the students.]

Kay: Alright, Justin, can you do the next one for me because I don't know what these words mean. I saw this in the story a few times. [The pre-service teacher turns to page in the text where the phrase *¿Dónde estoy?* is written on the page and takes off a blue post-it-note with the phrase written on it. She holds it up for Justin to read.]

Justin & Maggie: ¿Dónde estoy?

Kay: Oh Justin, what does that mean?

Maggie: Where am I?

Justin: Where.

Kay: Maggie, we're going to give others a chance. Okay?

Justin: Where am I?

Kay: Is that what it means?

Justin: [Justin nods his head yes to indicate "yes."]

Kay: It means “where am I?” [The pre-service teacher holds up the post-it-note for Dorothea and Cara to see.] So Dorothea, Cara and I need to learn from Maggie and Justin because this is going to be a little bit difficult for us.

In this particular example, Maggie and Justin, who were native Spanish speakers “taught” the rest of the group the meanings of several Spanish phrases from the text. The practice of allowing Maggie and Justin to use their native language as a resource for helping other students demonstrated to them that Kay respected their language and likely had positive psychological effects on the students. Additionally, it helped the pre-service teachers learn words in the students’ native language and promoted multiculturalism in the read aloud setting. All the students in the group eagerly participated in the word introductions and later while reading the text, Kay allowed Maggie and Justin to read part of the book in Spanish aloud to the group. The students very enthusiastically participated in this activity. Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern (2003) explain that opportunities that allow students to read materials in their first language leads to increased enthusiasm and comprehension as well as providing affirmation that the bilingual students are capable readers.

The final section of this chapter presents student writing and links this to increased opportunities for students to use the read aloud context to produce higher quality and more extended discourse.

### **Additional Opportunities for Bilingual Student Language Output through Writing during Read Alouds**

Pre-service teachers, most notably Madeline and Katrina, frequently provided opportunities for students to produce writing connected to texts in the read aloud context. In these instances, pre-service teachers gave writing prompts, in the form of questions,

for students to complete after reading texts. Katrina typically provided her bilingual students with writing prompts which required them to make connections between the main ideas and themes of texts and their personal lives and experiences. For example, after reading *Career Day* (Rockwell, 2000), Katrina had her students write about a family member's career and what students envisioned for their own careers as adults. In the case of Madeline, she frequently provided writing prompts where she asked students to make both intertextual connections and connections between text themes and the curriculum they were studying in the regular classroom. Writing in the read aloud context afforded students the opportunity to produce more extended output.

In the first example of writing produced in the read aloud context, students in Madeline's read aloud group makes intertextual connections by responding to a writing prompt about how the Japanese Internment Camps depicted in the read aloud text *How Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993) were more alike or different from the Holocaust Concentration Camps described in a text *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Boyne, 2006) which students were reading in the regular classroom setting. Examples of bilingual students' writing<sup>3</sup> are provided below which are representative of the written responses produced in Madeline's group.

Andre's written response: It was more alike because they did not have a lot of freedom and they could [not] have lave [left] when every [whenever] they want to. And they did not chose [choose] to go there. [Student is referring to events in the text *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Boyne, 2006).]

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<sup>3</sup> Portions of bilingual students' writing in this study have been revised in bracket form for the purpose of readability in the study.

Kato's written response: They call them Jap like In the Holosoct [Holocaust] they call them Jew and They went to the Camp. like the Jappens [Japanese] were like Jail But In the contretasen [concentration] camp they were torterd [tortured]. [Student is referring to events in the text *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Boyne, 2006).]

After completing their written responses, Madeline had all students in the group share their written responses orally with the rest of the group. In the two examples above, Andre and Kato are able to produce output that is much longer than a single word or clause and more significant is the fact that both students are able to remember relevant aspects of both texts and appropriately link them together (e.g. “more alike because they did not have freedom and they could not leave whenever they want to. And they did not choose to go there”). It was Madeline's writing prompt that was instrumental in helping her students to use their new language (English) in connecting their ideas and knowledge from previous text experiences with new text in the read aloud group.

Providing written language experiences where students were required to make personal connections to text is presented in the next set of examples. After reading a portion of the text *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993), Madeline provided the following writing prompt:

Madeline's Writing Prompt: What healthy things do you do to get your mind off of something else? How does this connect to what the Japanese people did in *Baseball Saved Us* (Mochizuki, 1993)?

Kato's written response: [I] go outside because I will come [calm] down. It cont [connects] [because] he made [a] baseball field [field] to come [calm] people.

In Kato's written response, he was able to produce written output in which he expressed a way that he is able to get his mind off of something else (e.g. “I go outside...”).

Additionally, he was able to relate his personal experience to one of the central ideas of the text which was about how Japanese people imprisoned in Internment Camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor used baseball as a way of dealing with the emotional stresses of their living situation. After Kato recorded his response, Madeline also had him share his answer with the rest of the group as depicted below.

Madeline: ...And then I want you to share what you do with everyone.

Kato: Go outside.

Madeline: Because?

Kato: Because it calms me down.

In the above example, Madeline pushed Kato to extend his answer by saying “because”. Kato was able to refer to his written response to support his use of oral language successfully responding to the teacher’s inquiry. Peregoy and Boyle (2005) point out that writing helps students to clarify their thoughts. Additionally, writing gave students more time to think about and rehearse their responses before presenting them orally to the rest of the group. This is of particular relevance when dealing with bilingual learners.

The following example contains writing samples in which students again made personal connections to text in their written responses.

Katrina (says aloud orally): So just like these students in this book were playing dress up with the things they wanted to be when they grow up, I want you guys to write what you want to be when you grow up and then you can draw a picture.

Sonya (says aloud orally): I want to be an animal doctor.

Sonya’s written response: I Want to be a vetreren [veterinarian.]

Peter (says aloud orally): I like to cook.



Peter's written response: I will be a shef [chef.]

Andy (says aloud orally): I want to be a teacher.

Andy's written response: I want to be a teacher [.]

As seen in the exchange above, Katrina's writing prompt drew students' attention to an important event that occurred in the text. From here, she made the text relevant by connecting it to students' personal lives. The students' output demonstrated their ability to produce ideas that mirrored the events and experiences (e.g. expressing the type of career they would like to do when they grow up) of the characters in the text. Note that, in doing so, students used three words, *veterinarian* and *chef*, that were the language of the text and had been previously discussed during the read aloud context, but were not used by the students in their initial oral responses. It is possible that the time allotted for writing allowed the students to recall and correctly utilize the newly learned vocabulary and the task of writing itself probably prompted students to use more academic language. More time during writing activities also allowed students to use their "monitor" (Krashen, 1982) to access what they had learned rather than "acquired" (Krashen, 1982). Producing writing gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning of previously introduced words in a more meaningful way than simply providing the definitions of these words as was common in the IRE discourse pattern.

During some writing episodes, teachers also actively encouraged students to use previously introduced vocabulary words and relate them to story content. For instance, after reading the first part of the text, *White Socks Only* (Coleman, 1996), Madeline had

her students write a prediction about what would happen next in the text. She provided students with the following writing prompt:

Who is the main character in the story so far? Make a prediction about what will happen next using your vocabulary word and prior knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement.

Students had previously been assigned a particular vocabulary word related to the overall theme of the story. These words were presented to students before reading the text.

Students were then required to define the words as they related to events in the text while the teacher read aloud. Madeline read the first part of the text in which a young black female character has just taken a drink from a water fountain with a “whites only” sign during a time period when the South was very segregated. The example below is taken from a bilingual students’ written response and depicts a text prediction and usage of a previously introduced vocabulary word.

Kato (written response): I think she [the black female in the text who has just taken a drink from a water fountain with a “whites only” sign.] Is getting [going to get] arested [arrested] and will call her mom [.] that Is segregation.

In Kato’s prediction, he provided an example of segregation. Thus, his written response demonstrated an understanding of the previously introduced word, *segregation*.

Similarly, Carl also prompted his student to use a previously introduced vocabulary word in her writing in the example below.

Carl: “This particular morning I didn’t come down into the kitchen when Momma was fixing breakfast. Momma and Daddy couldn’t wake me up.” (Mitchell, 1993, p. 9)... [Pre-service teacher is reading directly from the text.]

Charlotte: There’s a thing we should write down.

Carl: Do you want to write something [on your graphic organizer]? I'll wait. What word could you use to describe Sarah right there?

Charlotte: Unconscious.

Carl: Very good.

In the example above Carl prompted his student to use the word *unconscious* which was a previously introduced vocabulary word. An excerpt from Charlotte's writing sample is found below and demonstrates Charlotte's usage of the word, *unconscious*, in her writing.

Charlotte (written response): One morning Sarah was *unconscious* so her mom and dad came upstairs and Sarah was sick.

In the example above, Charlotte used the previously introduced vocabulary word *unconscious* in her writing to successfully describe a text character. She also is able to produce written language that summarizes an important event in the plot of the text (e.g. "Her mom and dad came upstairs and Sarah was sick.") Again, by providing students with opportunities to produce writing, Carl's student was able to produce more language than in the IRE pattern and she was able to demonstrate her knowledge of both the text and her ability to connect a previously introduced vocabulary word to the text.

This final section of the chapter illuminates a pattern of interaction, providing opportunities for students to participate in writing during the read aloud context, that facilitated a different kind of learning for bilingual students not present in the common IRE discourse pattern. Students produced fuller and more complex responses in which they demonstrated their ability to produce language that was relevant to the text (e.g. "Her mom and dad came upstairs and Sarah was sick."), that connects to their personal lives (e.g. "[I] go outside because I will come [calm] down."), that connects previously

introduced vocabulary to text events (e.g. “One morning Sarah was *unconscious*”), that identifies and connects to main themes of texts (e.g. “ It cont [connects] [because] he made [a] baseball field [field] to come [calm] people.”), and finally, that makes intertextual connections ( e.g. “They call them Jap like In the Holosoct [Holocaust] they call them Jew and They went to the Camp.”). I argue then that this kind of interaction represented an alternative to the simple IRE form of recitation present during other interactions in the read aloud context because it facilitates both an expansion of students’ linguistic skills in a new language (English) and a greater understanding of novel words and texts presented in the read aloud context.

### **Summary and Conclusion of Pre-service Teacher-Bilingual Student Interaction Patterns**

This chapter presented a range of patterns of interactions that were documented in read aloud groups each resulting in different implications for student participation and learning. The most common interaction pattern found during vocabulary and comprehension instruction across the read aloud groups was the IRE sequence and modifications of this sequence which emphasized comprehensible input, including teacher expansions and word elicitation. The teacher scaffolding during IRE expansions, word elicitation, and recasts provided bilingual students in this study with language that was beyond their current level of second language development and is compatible with Krashen’s view ( $I + 1$ ) that interactions with more capable peers (i.e. pre-service teachers) drives language development. It is important to recognize that more talk in read aloud contexts is important but without the introduction of more complex

language concepts from teachers, it will not result in bilingual students' language development. The challenge for teachers is to have a good enough sense of learners' proficiency levels in order to push the outer border of their linguistic zones of proximal development, striving for both more language and richer language as input and for output.

Despite the opportunities for comprehensible input provided during IRE sequences, this pattern of interaction ultimately resulted in limited opportunities for producing bilingual student language output and participation. Although, arguably, it may have worked to socialize students into a particular type of participation structure (e.g. the ability to display knowledge) commonly found in classrooms and a particular type of language and literacy learning (e.g. being able to recall and produce vocabulary words and their definitions) that may ultimately serve students well in a school setting. As Gee (2003) explains, part of learning language is also about learning a particular type of "Discourse" which involves specific ways of using language "in service of enacting meaningful socially situated identities and activities" (p. 35). Given the fact that IRE is compatible with the traditional goals and participation structures of school then pre-service teachers could have been helping students learn to "do school". However, if the goal becomes to teach bilingual students more powerful language skills, then pre-service teachers' uses of alternative patterns of interaction opened up greater possibilities for students to hear and use language more extensively and rigorously.

The patterns of interaction presented in the latter sections of this chapter, including (a) the Revoicing Talk Move, (b) the Explicating Reasoning Talk Move, (c)

Posing Referential and Open-Ended Questions, (d) Bilingual Student Self-Initiated Output, and (e) Providing Opportunities for Students to Write in the Read Aloud context resemble what the literature suggests is important in facilitating bilingual students' language development in that they helped produce increased student language output and opportunities for learning not present in typical IRE linguistic interactions (Gibbons, 2006; Michaels, 2008; Nystrand, 2006; Swain, 1985). It was during these alternative interaction patterns that pre-service teachers followed up students' responses with a different move that as Dudley-Marling and Paugh (2010) argue has the potential to "transform a student who previously appeared incompetent into a person who is academically successfully" (para. 6). Notably, students were able to cite evidence to support their claims, to produce language relevant to texts, make meaningful connections with and across texts, and produce higher levels of language output (e.g. utilize previously introduced vocabulary words and language of the text). This more substantive engagement with texts was made possible by additional moves of the pre-service teachers which transformed the learning possibilities present in the IRE model.

A discussion of the IRE paradigm and alternative talk moves which support bilingual students' use of extended language were discussed in the professional development provided for this dissertation. This was performed at the same time that I informed pre-service teachers that I had observed predominantly IRE interaction patterns thus far. However, in general, pre-service teachers continued to be wedded to the standard IRE sequence and modifications of this which focused on comprehensible input despite the potential effectiveness of providing opportunities for increased student output

during read aloud discussions. There are several plausible explanations for this phenomenon.

First, linguistic interactions focused on language output seemed more likely to occur when the initial move by the teacher did not involve a known answer question (e.g. “I want you guys to write what you want to be when you grow up”) During these times, bilingual students were in the position of having or producing knowledge in addition to the teacher. However, these alternative types of questions were infrequently asked during read alouds. It may be that a focus on student output represents a departure from some pre-service teachers’ epistemological framework of teacher as knower depositing or transmitting knowledge into passive students. This belief is difficult to disrupt and has been and continues to be nurtured by many teachers’ experiences in schools (Lortie, 2002). Pre-service teachers are used to discourse structures where the teacher is in charge of dialogue and student learning. This type of discourse may also increase when pre-service teachers are working with bilingual learners and perceive them to be lacking in language proficiency.

Secondly, this epistemological stance seemed to be particularly apparent in vocabulary teaching episodes during read aloud dialogue. In Alvermann’s, O’Brien’s & Dillion’s (1990) study on the analysis of discussions of content reading assignments, they also noted that the majority of interactions around defining terms were considered to be recitation like. In the read aloud groups in this study, developing word knowledge appeared to be a primary focus for pre-service teachers which could explain the predominance of IRE exchanges. Also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, many

teachers did not move beyond providing definitions of words. In instances when the IRE pattern was present in these vocabulary teaching episodes, it appeared that pre-service teachers were simply “giving” students words and their definitions. This stands in contrast to a more sociocultural framework that suggests you learn the words you need to participate in certain cultural practices (Gee, 1996). It may be that pre-service teachers were more likely to default to IRE patterns due to the fact that they did not typically provide more interactive word learning instruction where students were encouraged to engage in conversations about words in relation to their own lives, experiences, and background knowledge. Alternatively, it may be that the dominant IRE pattern of interaction observed in the read alouds prevented pre-service teachers from engaging students in more interactive word learning. In either case, there appeared to be a link between the types of vocabulary teaching practices present in the read aloud context and pre-service teachers’ linguistic patterns of interaction.

Finally, pre-service teachers may have had a lack of knowledge about second language learning, a common phenomenon among pre-service mainstream teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Moreover, the time constraints imposed by school schedules and the developmental levels of teachers may have also contributed to the fact that IRE sequences were more dominant in read aloud groups. One can also speculate about whether longer and more in-depth professional development geared towards helping pre-service teachers learn to meet the unique language and literacy needs of bilingual learners would have increased the proportion of non-IRE and IRE plus sequences during read alouds. These factors will be discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation.



## **CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions and Implications**

This research project examined pre-service teachers' vocabulary teaching practices and patterns of interaction while reading aloud English texts (fiction, expository, and poetry) to small groups of bilingual students in classroom settings. The study was conducted in order to study pre-service teachers' language and literacy teaching practices and pre-service teacher-bilingual student interaction patterns in read aloud contexts in an effort to understand their potential for bilingual student language and literacy development. Additionally, I wanted to determine if this practice, in combination with professional development sessions geared towards helping pre-service teachers learn about effective read aloud practices for bilingual students, could help beginning teachers learn how to meet the unique language and literacy needs of this growing population of students in today's schools. To that end, I investigated both pre-service teachers' instructional practices and the linguistic interactions between pre-service teachers and bilingual students found across read aloud groups and texts.

I collected data in the form of audio and video recordings of forty read aloud sessions and five professional development sessions and student writing samples from read aloud groups. I performed a close linguistic reading of read aloud transcript discussions and content analysis of student writing samples. Drawing on my theoretic framework (sociocultural), a theory of second language acquisition (output hypothesis), and research and theory related to best language and literacy practices for bilingual learners, I found that teachers consistently strived to develop students' word knowledge and support text comprehension. In doing so, pre-service teachers utilized a variety of

practices and linguistic patterns during read alouds which varied across teachers. Some practices and interaction patterns were more supportive and others less supportive of language and literacy learning for bilingual students.

The results make the case that the pre-service teacher patterns of linguistic interactions and vocabulary teaching practices during read alouds provided both possibilities and limitations for language and literacy growth in bilingual students. In the following sections, I summarize my conclusions along with suggestions for making read alouds and classroom instruction more supportive of language and literacy growth for bilingual students.

### **Vocabulary Teaching Practices**

All pre-service teachers introduced and reviewed Tier II and Tier III vocabulary words that they believed were central to the main ideas and plots of texts utilizing a variety of teaching strategies. Bilingual students in this study utilized some of these newly introduced words in both their oral language uptake and writing during read aloud sessions as a consequence of pre-service teachers' vocabulary teaching practices. These results demonstrate both pre-service teachers' abilities to understand at least part of the language demands inherent in the learning task of listening and discussing books, which is a necessary component of promoting language development for bilingual students (Lucas & Villegas, 2011), and the potential for book reading as a venue for helping students learn new words. The most productive vocabulary teaching practices pre-service teachers engaged in to varying degrees, supported by theory and research on addressing the vocabulary needs of bilingual students, included: (a) the use of student friendly

definitions; (b) the use of text content and illustrations to contextualize word introductions and reviews; (c) bilingual students' active involvement in choosing and defining words; (d) the use of teacher message parallelism; (e) the use of gestures and word cards; and (f) making connections between words and students' background knowledge, personal experiences and other texts (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Carlo et al., 2004; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gibbons, 2002; Graves, 2006; Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; McKeown & Beck, 2004).

Despite demonstrating several best-practices for supporting vocabulary development in bilingual learners, I found that pre-service teachers could improve upon the practice of reading aloud to bilingual learners by engaging them in a more active role in word learning and providing greater opportunities for in-depth discussions of words. Blachowicz, Fisher & Watts-Taffe (2005) suggest that bilingual students need “opportunities to actively engage with new words through acting out, talking with others, or answering engagement questions...” (p. 20). The pre-service teachers in this study only occasionally moved beyond simply asking students the meaning of words or presenting the definitions of words. These practices were helpful for providing necessary background knowledge for both pre-service teachers' instructional planning and bilingual students' understanding of texts; however, they did not afford bilingual students the opportunity to actively engage with words.

In future read alouds with bilingual students, I suggest that pre-service teachers not only include an instructional emphasis on best-practices for introducing words but

also on practices that *actively* involve bilingual students in using and thinking about words in a more in-depth approach to vocabulary instruction. After reading texts, pre-service teachers ought to provide opportunities for students to discuss words, write about words, relate words to bilingual students' background knowledge and personal experiences, and allow for all students to get involved by responding to peers' comments about words and their meanings (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Finally, pre-service teachers should consider the read aloud as a place to model for bilingual students how to figure out word meanings from text context, fostering an important skill for future independent reading.

### **Interaction Patterns**

Overall, I found a range of interaction patterns across teachers used to support student engagement and interaction around vocabulary words and texts in the read aloud setting. Importantly, certain teacher and student moves led to qualitatively different interactions with different affordances for bilingual students' language and literacy learning. The most prominent interaction pattern was Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequences in which teachers would repeat (recasts) and or expand (expansions) upon bilingual students' responses. Although, teacher recasts and expansions were important teacher scaffolds for bilingual students' language development and text and word comprehension, couched within the IRE structure, they typically did not lead to extended or higher quality student output in the read aloud setting. Alternatively, when pre-service teachers diverged from the IRE sequence and utilized alternative patterns of interaction, supported bilingual students' self-initiated output, and provided opportunities

for students to respond in writing to texts, bilingual students produced more extended and higher quality language output.

Still, the IRE pattern of interaction dominated during the read alouds observed for this study. There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. One is that the IRE sequence may have been the default interaction for most pre-service teachers given their own schooling experience. It has been argued that teachers tend to teach in the ways in which they have been taught (Sarason, 1996; Lortie, 2002). As mentioned in chapter one, the IRE pattern of interaction dominates most classroom discussions (Cazden, 1988, Mehan, 1979, Hall, 1998, Hall & Walsh, 2002, Toohey, 1998). As such, the pre-service teachers in this study most likely encountered this type of interaction pattern throughout their schooling and quite possibly in their prior field experiences and university course work. Thus, utilizing alternative ways of participating in read aloud discussions might have been met with resistance by the pre-service teachers in this study.

Another potential contributing factor to the predominance of IRE sequences is that teachers had a limited amount of time to conduct read alouds due to schedule constraints imposed by their school and classrooms. Because the bilingual students in their groups needed more time and opportunities to demonstrate vocabulary, comprehension, and conceptual learning in their second language, pre-service teachers may have frequently utilized simple checks for vocabulary and comprehension in the form of IRE linguistic patterns to make sure students understood words and texts. Additionally, pre-service teachers needed to spend time clarifying bilingual students' misunderstandings about words and texts. Consequently, there may not have been time

to engage throughout books in the more in-depth kinds of teacher talk moves and literature discussion techniques supported by the literature (Hall, 1998, Hall & Walsh, 2002; Michaels, 2008; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Nystrand, 1997; O'Connor & Michaels, 1993) in which the teacher can generally assume that the children understand the vocabulary and concepts in texts and can thus build upon them. Instead, teachers may have been primarily focused on making texts, language, and concepts comprehensible, thus limiting time and space for more extended and sophisticated student output. In other words, the art of teaching during the read aloud groups became a balancing act for pre-service teachers: introducing, monitoring, and clarifying students' understandings of vocabulary, comprehension, and concepts of the text but also extending and engaging students' understandings of vocabulary, comprehension, and key concepts.

In future read alouds, pre-service teachers need to find a greater balance between providing ongoing scaffolding in the read aloud context while simultaneously utilizing discussion techniques that enable bilingual students to assume more control over conversations and produce additional output. Anderson and Roit (1996) argue that text based discussions for bilingual students need to move away from teacher-controlled, teacher-questioning sessions to opportunities for "lively and realistic conversational practice about reading and language" (p. 306). This will require not only introducing teacher candidates to Krashen's input theory (1985) but also the importance of comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) for language growth. This also suggests that story book reading for bilingual students should include multiple re-readings of texts across

several days in order to provide teachers and students additional time to both understand and extend learning conversations about words, texts, and concepts.

A third explanation for the fact that pre-service teachers frequently utilized the IRE structure and did not provide more in-depth vocabulary instruction during read alouds is that the pre-service teachers in my study were *learning* how to teach. Researchers report that most pre-service and practicing teachers have had little or no preparation in how to effectively educate bilingual students in mainstream classrooms (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). The teachers' goals appeared to be helping children comprehend text and words at a surface level rather than to use the read aloud context as a vehicle for developing bilingual children's language. The pre-service teachers in this study likely did not have fully developed theories and pedagogical practices in supporting language development in bilingual learners stressing the importance of both comprehensible input and output in second language acquisition and moving beyond just teaching vocabulary. As such, pre-service teachers may have been demonstrating their developing teaching skills along a learning curve. Despite the professional development provided in this dissertation project and other broader efforts to change the curricular content as well as structures and processes of Boston College's teacher education program to better prepare teachers to work with bilingual learners, this study highlights the fact that pre-service teachers need a significant amount of time, training, and support to implement valued practices with bilingual learners.

Finally, the professional development provided for this dissertation project study included only a small number of brief sessions about how to support language and

literacy development for bilingual learners as such its reach may have been limited in terms of helping pre-service teachers move away from a predominance of IRE sequences and support more extended discourse in bilingual learners. Michaels and O'Connor (2011) point out that the challenge in helping teachers think about language as a “ tool” “so that teachers can pick up the tool, practice using it, and see resulting changes in discussions” (p. 20). To address this issue, pre-service teachers would benefit from both extended and action research based professional development where pre-service teachers and educators or university researchers with considerable knowledge about language can work together to analyze both read aloud transcript and video data in order to develop a stronger understanding of the ways in which particular teacher discourse moves open up text conversations and lead to greater student learning and output. Future pre-service teacher read aloud professional development and trainings should incorporate such an agenda.

### **Additional Implications for Classroom Practice**

Several implications for improving read alouds and instruction for bilingual students in mainstream classroom settings can be drawn from the findings of this study. First, they confirm the need for students to be provided with multiple opportunities to be engaged in meaningful interactions in their second language during book reading episodes. To make interactions meaningful, teachers need to help students make connections between words and texts and their personal experiences, interests, and background knowledge. Pre-service teachers such as Madeline consistently encouraged her learners to relate the main ideas and vocabulary of texts she introduced to students’



background knowledge and units of study in the regular classroom setting and then had students share these insights with others. This resulted in her students producing self-initiated output where they too connected the meanings of words and topics of texts to what they had already learned. Katrina followed up her young bilingual students' self-initiated comments connecting text content and words to personal experiences with questions and prompts that helped them to extend and clarify their thinking leading to the production of additional language. Hall (2000) notes that, "motivating learners to make connections between their own and other's background knowledge and experiences and to share these connections with each other promotes their extended engagement in the interactions" (p. 294). Extended engagement in interactions promotes both the comprehension of text and vocabulary words and language learning.

Second, teachers should provide additional time and opportunities for students to participate in writing activities connected to texts. Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002) explain that writing helps teachers develop a better picture of students' comprehension of text. As shown in this study, bilingual students used more extended language and demonstrated higher levels of text comprehension in their writing where they produced language that was relevant to the text and connected themes and ideas from texts to their personal lives, background knowledge and other texts. Students also utilized previously introduced vocabulary in their written responses. By allowing students to share their written work orally with the rest of the read aloud group, pre-service teachers fostered students' oral language development as well which supports literacy development.

Third, teachers need to make space in read aloud contexts for students to produce self-initiated comments about texts and words. An important consequence of students' self-initiated output in this study was that bilingual students had more opportunities to talk (i.e. more turns in dialogue) and produced extended responses to texts (i.e. moving beyond one or two word phrases) than on occasions when they were responding to teacher posed questions about words and texts. This requires that teachers adopt a new role, moving them away from "the traditional source of knowledge to a coaching role..." (Damhuis, 2000, p. 249). In this new role, teachers use students as sources of knowledge and value and accept their responses while simultaneously moving away from a predominance of known-information questions. It also requires time for students to feel both comfortable with speaking and to have ample opportunities to think about words and texts, express their thoughts, and initiate output themselves in the read aloud context.

Fourth, mainstream classroom teachers should consider reading aloud bilingual texts and making them available in classroom libraries for students to access independently. This practice was observed infrequently in this study, with only one instance observed across all read aloud groups. In this particular instance, Spanish-English bilingual students in the group taught other peers the meanings of several Spanish phrases and read aloud portions of a text in Spanish. The only time any native language other than English was used across all 40 read alouds occurred when a bilingual text was read. This suggests that use of bilingual books may be an effective scaffold for monolingual teachers to draw on students' native language which is a recommended literacy practice for bilingual learners (Brisk & Harrington, 2007; Ernst-Slavit &

Mulhern, 2003; Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002). Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern (2003) point out several cognitive and affective benefits of bilingual texts for bilingual learners and their monolingual teachers including supporting biliteracy, supporting text and vocabulary comprehension, encouraging multiculturalism in the classroom setting, and helping teachers to learn words in students' native languages.

Most importantly, teachers need to reflect on the ways in which their discourse patterns impact how and what students learn in the read aloud context. Nystrand (2006) argues that "what counts as knowledge and understanding in any given classroom is largely shaped by the questions teachers ask, how they respond to their students, and how they structure small-group and other pedagogical activities" (p. 400). For example, when pre-service teachers in this study diverged from IRE sequences and utilized alternative patterns of interaction, students were afforded greater opportunities to produce more and higher quality discourse. One potential way for both developing and practicing teachers to study their own teaching practices is through employing discourse analysis. Demo (2001) suggests that teachers videotape, watch, transcribe, and analyze a portion of their classroom teaching (Record-View-Transcribe-Analyze). In this analysis, teachers should focus on the types of questions they ask, students' responses, teacher comments, and communication patterns across different types of classroom activities (i.e. student-to-student, small group cooperative activity, whole class lecture, etc.). This process can help teachers gain insight into the types of teacher and student discourse and classroom activities that promote interaction and opportunities for bilingual children to engage in dialogue which is needed for language growth (Demo, 2001; Long, 1996; Swain, 1985).

Ideally, this Record-View-Transcribe-Analyze (Demo, 2001) process should be carried out over time to help teachers see patterns in both teacher and bilingual student language.

Finally, this study highlights the issue that there is insufficient time within the regular curriculum for students to produce language. Although small group read alouds provide this opportunity, their reach is limited and they need to be part of a larger effort aimed at providing additional types of opportunities for output (i.e. students using more and extended language) needed to produce substantial language growth in bilingual learners. This means that teachers need to work across the school day and curriculum to have students both hear and use language extensively. Consequently, schools and classrooms may need fundamental curricular transformation. A critical question for educators and curriculum developers to consider is: How do you create a curriculum that is language rich and responsive to all learners' range of needs and abilities?

### **Implications for Teacher Education**

As I have argued elsewhere (Mitchell, Homza, & Ngo, in press), an important implication for teacher education programs is that the principles of second language learning and teaching need to be infused across teacher education programs and not just in pre-service teachers' field placement experiences or in a specifically-designed optional methods course about working with bilingual learners. Specifically, learning about how language develops and can be nurtured across content areas needs to become a prominent feature in course work required for pre-service teachers. Some recent efforts have included this kind of infusion across language and literacy course work in teacher

preparation programs; however despite this progress, there remains more to be accomplished in terms of coherence and comprehensiveness in those contexts.

Another important issue for schools of education to consider is the amount of support and guidance needed from university personnel as pre-service teachers participate in field based experiences with bilingual learners. Lucas (2011) points out that many teacher educators “need to build their own relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (p. 10) in order to help educate pre-service teachers. Schools of education need to ensure that pre-service teachers are supervised in the field by university faculty that are knowledgeable about how to effectively meet the needs of bilingual learners in mainstream classrooms.

### **Future Research**

This study reported on teachers’ linguistic patterns of interaction and teaching practices while developing bilingual students’ vocabulary and comprehension in read aloud contexts. Specifically, I highlighted the affordances that various teacher moves and strategies create for bilingual students’ language and literacy development. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to link specific teacher practices and discourse patterns in read aloud contexts to bilingual student learning. An important question for future research to consider is: What is the relationship between teacher-bilingual student interaction patterns and bilingual student learning during read alouds? This type of research would allow us to determine specifically what kinds of interactions lead to growth in both bilingual students’ language and literacy. This research would also

provide teachers with a broader understanding of the potential benefits of book reading in a classroom setting for bilingual children.

I argued in this dissertation the importance of bilingual students' self-initiated output and role of teachers' responses to this student output in creating opportunities for children to produce higher quality and more extended discourse within the read aloud context. I also noted how the role of the text may have been a contributing factor motivating students to produce more self-initiated output. Along the same lines, the text which was a bilingual Spanish-English book, likely played a role in Kay's decision to have her students use their native languages in the read aloud context. Such text choices may also have the power to automatically take teachers out of the role of "source of knowledge" and place additional value on student output in the learning process. Future research might explore the influence of text on bilingual children-teacher interaction patterns in classroom book reading. These findings could augment the research on helping teachers choose books for reading aloud specifically with bilingual learners.

Finally, although the analysis for this study focused primarily on the effects of pre-service teachers' linguistic patterns and vocabulary teaching practices on bilingual students' language and literacy development during book reading contexts, I also think it is important to consider whether and to what degree the practice of reading aloud to bilingual children enhanced pre-service teachers' pedagogical expertise to better address the specific needs of bilingual learners. Zeichner observed that "research on the preparation of teachers to teach underserved populations should pay special attention to the preparation of teachers to teach English language learners because almost no research

has been conducted on diversity in teacher education” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 747). Toward this end, future research should explore how various types of field-based projects aimed at preparing teachers to work effectively with bilingual students fulfill their intent. If schools of education want to meet the challenge of preparing effective teachers of bilingual learners, field-based activities focusing specifically on bilingual learners are a necessary component of any program. However, more research is needed to determine the best approaches for supporting pre-service teachers outside the university setting as they learn to teach bilingual students in school and classroom contexts.

### **Limitations**

This study was conducted with a small sample of pre-service teachers and bilingual students in a specific context. As such, the results and findings may not be wholly generalizable or applicable to other populations and settings. However, as Schofield (1990) argues, the job of qualitative researchers is to provide adequate details and descriptions in a study based on careful and consistent evaluation in order to support researcher conclusions. In this study, the built in constructs of validity and the detailed descriptions of the context and participants of my study (described in Chapter 3), allow for other researchers interested in studying a similar context to recognize and understand important similarities and differences between the situations. The findings of my study can contribute to the knowledge-base on reading aloud to bilingual students and preparing pre-service teachers to work effectively with bilingual learners in mainstream classrooms.

### **Final Thoughts**

I had hoped that the majority of pre-service teachers' interaction patterns in this study would have led to increased, higher quality language output in bilingual students. However, despite the fact that this was not always the case, I still believe it is worthwhile to read aloud to small groups of bilingual children in classrooms settings. Perhaps most important was the fact that this research project gave both pre-service teachers and the bilingual students the opportunity to practice going beyond the IRE interaction pattern, moving all participants to the outer borders of their Zones of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Pre-service teachers had the opportunity to implement practices and talk moves that led to increased language output in bilingual students and bilingual students were provided opportunities to practice producing higher quality more extended discourse.

Significantly, this dissertation project also gave pre-service teachers, all of whom were considered to be middle class, white, and monolingual, an in-depth opportunity to interact with multi-cultural, bilingual students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) assert that pre-service teachers need to spend time working with bilingual children in schools and classrooms to help them become familiar with this population of students in order to “disrupt prevalent immigrant stereotypes and apply what they are learning about linguistically responsive teaching in their pre-service courses” (p. 370). Equally important, it afforded the bilingual students in this study additional opportunities during their school day to interact with teachers who were



advanced speakers of English. This is particularly salient as these children attended an elementary school with a large population of students who were learning English. Second language researchers have argued that bilingual children need direct and frequent contact with advanced speakers in order to acquire higher levels of English language proficiency (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Scarcella, 2002). As such, classroom teachers must find both the space in the daily curriculum and the resources to provide this type of small group language and literacy instruction for their bilingual learners. The design of this study, which utilized pre-service teachers as a resource for helping classroom teachers is one potential option for schools to consider. Brisk and Harrington (2007) point out that tutors from neighboring colleges who possess both background knowledge in working with bilingual learners and are supervised by university faculty can provide valuable instruction for bilingual learners and serve as a resource for helping classroom teachers get to know their students better. Another potential option is to elicit tutors from the local community to serve as small group instructors for bilingual students in classroom settings. I hope this study adds to a small but growing body of research in the areas of teacher preparation and book reading with bilingual students that researchers can continue to build upon.

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## Appendix A

### Read Aloud Book Selection Checklist<sup>4</sup>

Adapted From:

- Freeman, S., & Freeman, D. (2006): <http://www.taraconference.org/handouts2006/freemansDeveloping%20Academic%20Language%20for%20Success.htm>.
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Question	Check
<b>Are the materials authentic?</b> Authentic materials are written to inform or entertain, not to teach a grammar point or a letter-sound correspondence.	
<b>Is the language of the text natural?</b> When there are only a few words on a page, do these limited-text books sound like real language, something people really say? If the book was translated, how good is the translation?	
<b>Is the language level appropriate for my students?</b> Think about the language descriptor levels and where approximately your students are. Try to pick texts that are more challenging than your students can read independently, but comprehensible with your assistance. Think also about the number of difficult vocabulary words and sentence structures used. Make sure the language is at a level that will be accessible to your students.	
<b>Is the text predictable?</b> (If not, you may need to build background knowledge to help make the text predictable for your students) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For emergent readers – Books are more predictable when they follow certain patterns (repetitive, cumulative) or include certain devices (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration)</li> <li>• For developing readers - Books are more predictable when students are familiar with text structures (beginning, middle, end), (problem-solution), (main idea, details, examples, etc.) and books are more predictable when students are familiar with text features (headings, subheadings, maps, labels, graphs, tables, indexes, etc.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Is there a good text-picture match?</b> A good match provides nonlinguistic visual cues and has the pictures in a predictable place in the text.	
<b>Are the materials interesting and/or imaginative?</b> Interesting, imaginative texts engage students – things about your students' interests in particular.	
<b>Do the situations and characters in the book represent the experiences and background of your students?</b> Culturally relevant texts engage students and will help your students participate in a discussion with you about the text.	
<b>Is the content age-appropriate and meaningful to my students?</b>	
<b>Is the book cognitively demanding?</b> Students' language levels will not always match their cognitive abilities. Be sure to help your students develop language and higher-order thinking skills while reading aloud.	
<b>Is this book a good fit with the other books you've read?</b> Be sure to pick a variety of books (fiction and non-fiction) from different genres and authors, but try to make as many connections between the different texts as possible.	
<b>Is this book or text passage the right length for my students?</b>	
<b>Can this text be a pre-view or review of a text that has been or will be used in class?</b> Talk with your CT and decide if you should use this time to prepare the students to be more successful with texts encountered in class.	
<b>Does the book lend itself to a curriculum theme?</b>	
<b>Do my students have or can I provide the necessary background knowledge for comprehension?</b>	
<b>Is the level of abstractness appropriate?</b>	
<b>Is the text complete in itself? Or has the author assumed a lot of information and inferencing skills?</b>	
<b>Does the book match the students' needs and/or educational goals?</b>	
<b>Does the book lend itself to a follow-up activity?</b>	

<sup>4</sup> Created by Kara Mitchell for the Boston College Read Aloud Program sponsored by the BC Practicum Office and Title III Grant. Funding provided by the United States Department of Education through the Office of English Language Acquisition National Professional Development Grant PR Award No. T195NO20071.

## Appendix B

### List of Read Aloud Books

<b>Text Titles:</b>	<b>Genre:</b>	<b>Grade Level:</b>
Rockwell, A. F. (2000). <i>Career day</i> . New York: Harper Collins Publishers.	Fiction	1 <sup>st</sup>
Hoberman, M. A. (1993). <i>Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers: A collection of family poems</i> . Boston: Joy Street Books.	Poetry	1 <sup>st</sup>
Rockwell, A. F. (2000). <i>Four seasons make a year</i> . New York: Walker.	Realistic Fiction	1 <sup>st</sup>
Friedman, I. R. (1984). <i>How my parents learned to eat</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin.	Fiction	1 <sup>st</sup>
DePaola, T. (1975). <i>Strega Nona: An original tale</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.	Fiction	1 <sup>st</sup>
Patent, D. H. (1998). <i>Fire friend or foe</i> . New York: Clarion Books.	Non-Fiction	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Yolen, J. (1987). <i>Owl moon</i> . New York: Philomel Books.	Fiction	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Hopkins, 2000. <i>School supplies a book of poems</i> . New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.	Poetry	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Herrera, J. F. (2000). <i>The upside down boy/El niño de cabeza</i> . San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.	Fiction	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Say, A. (1991). <i>Tree of cranes</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin.	Fiction	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>A jar of tiny stars: Poems by NCTE award-winning poets. (1996). (1st ed.)</i> . Honesdale, PA: Wordsong, Boyds Mills Press, Inc.	Poetry	5 <sup>th</sup>
Bunting, E. (1999). <i>A picnic in October</i> . San Diego: Harcourt Brace.	Fiction	5 <sup>th</sup>
Simon, S. (1998). <i>Muscles: Our muscular system</i> . New York: Morrow Junior Books.	Non-Fiction	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lasky, K. (1995). <i>She's wearing a dead bird on her head!</i> New York: Hyperion Books for Children.	Fiction	5 <sup>th</sup>
Mitchell, M. K. (1993). <i>Uncle Jed's barber shop</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.	Fiction	5 <sup>th</sup>
Soto, G. (1995). <i>Canto familiar (1st ed.)</i> . San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.	Poetry	7 <sup>th</sup>
Mochizuki, K. (1993). <i>How baseball saved us</i> . New York: Lee & Low.	Fiction	7 <sup>th</sup>
Editors of TIME for Kids (2005). <i>John F. Kennedy: The making of a leader. Time for kids biographies</i> . New York, NY: HarperCollins.	Non-Fiction	7 <sup>th</sup>
Coleman, E. (1996). <i>White Socks Only</i> . Morton Grove, IL: A. Whitman.	Fiction	7 <sup>th</sup>
Van Allsburg, C. (2002). <i>Zathura: A space adventure</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin.	Fiction	7 <sup>th</sup>

## Appendix C

### **Summary of Bi-Weekly Meeting #1 with Pre-service Teachers:**

1. Discussed the importance of getting to know your bilingual students' backgrounds (Brisk & Harrington, 2007).
  - a. Basic information, prior schooling, cultural information, language & literacy levels in both home language and English if possible.
2. Discussed benefits of allowing bilingual students who speak the same languages in groups to clarify and/or discuss books in native languages.
  - a. Supports bilingualism.
  - b. Validates home language/culture.
  - c. Can aid in students' understanding of text.
3. Discussed "repeated read alouds" and why they are beneficial for ELLs/bilingual learners.
  - a. Gives bilingual kids more access to the text. When students have heard the language & content of the story repeatedly, it aids in comprehension and language development.
  - b. Morrow (1988)- evaluated children's responses to story readings in school settings and found that repeated readings resulted in more interpretive responses, more responses focusing on print & story structure.
  - c. Can introduce more & different vocabulary, can review previous day's vocabulary (McGee & Morrow, 2005; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, Vaughn, 2004).
  - d. Students with weaker vocabulary are less likely to learn new words from stories so need to increase the chances that they will by repeatedly reading stories and reviewing vocabulary (Robbins & Ehri, 1994).
  - e. Can also re-read texts back in the regular classroom or have them available for students to read independently after you have read them aloud.
4. Discussed how to choose texts for reading aloud to ELLs/bilingual learners (also see Read Aloud Book Selection Checklist).

<b>Text Factors:</b>	<b>Reader (Listener) Factors:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the story or topic of the text connect to topics of lessons, classroom curriculum, and background knowledge of students (content accessibility)?</li> <li>• Is the language of the text accessible?</li> <li>• Is the visual layout of the text accessible (illustrations, graphics, and visual aids)?</li> <li>• Consider the text format and layout (structure/organization).</li> <li>• Utilize many different genres of texts so that students become familiar with various text structures and organization.</li> <li>• Could the text supplement regular classroom textbooks (extend concepts, offer additional explanations, and utilize simpler language and vocabulary)?</li> <li>• Are there bilingual books available (supports biliteracy)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of listeners?</li> <li>• Maturity level of the listeners?</li> <li>• Backgrounds of the listeners (family, culture, language, and knowledge)?</li> <li>• Interests of listeners?</li> </ul>

5. Discussed “weekly meeting reports” which will be created and distributed after each meeting
  - a. Meeting reports provide a detailed summary of the events that took place during read aloud bi-weekly meetings.
  - b. They also provide an agenda that outlines what “next steps” pre-service teachers and I will take in the read aloud project.
  - c. Will send pre-service teachers the report either over the weekend or beginning of the next week...can be used for evidence for PPA-plus (required document for state licensure in the state of MA).
  
6. Discussed topics for future meetings.
  - a. Teaching vocabulary during read alouds.
  - b. Teaching comprehension during read alouds.

c. Teaching language through read alouds.

**Next Steps:**

1. Pre-service teachers will try “repeated read alouds” of texts when time permits either during observations or back in the classroom.
2. Pre-service teachers will allow students to clarify or discuss texts in their native language if they have more than one student who speaks the same language in their group and he/she feels this would aid in students’ learning.
3. Pre-service teachers will use information provided in handouts to choose non-fiction and poetry texts to use for read aloud observations and other read alouds in the classroom.

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**Note: Italicized articles were distributed to pre-service teachers at this meeting.**

## Appendix D

### **Summary of Bi-Weekly Meeting #2 with Pre-service Teachers:**

1. Discussed the importance of teaching vocabulary:
  - a. Aids in reading comprehension
  - b. Aids in the development of decoding skills (fluency)
  - c. Supports oral language development
  
2. Discussed vocabulary teaching methods within a read aloud context that are particularly beneficial for bilingual learners (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009):
  - a. Repeated interactive readings (students actively participate by using and defining the words) (focus on 3-4 “Tier 2” words which can be defined or associated with already known “Tier 1” words or in the case of expository texts- also include “Tier 3” words) (refer to “good questions to ask yourself” on meeting handout).
  - b. Monitoring students’ understanding of the words for the purpose of adaptive & responsive instruction
  - c. Repeated exposure to the words (especially across multiple readings and outside of the read aloud context)
  - d. Helping kids understand the words in the text & other multiple contexts (engage students in conversations about the words in relation to their own lives & background knowledge).
  - e. Have bilingual students practice using the words orally and/or in writing.
  
3. Discussed Breadth and Depth in vocabulary learning (Bilingual students typically lack word depth).
  - a. Keep in mind that vocabulary learning occurs along a continuum from not knowing the word to having a deep understanding across multiple contexts; multiple forms of the word...want to aim for this!

- b. How?...Review words on day #2 of the read aloud and back in the classroom, expand definitions, give more and different examples, and try to have kids make more connections between the words and their own lives and background knowledge (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, Vaughn, 2004)
4. Discussed a general outline for how to introduce and teach vocabulary across multiple read alouds (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004).

**Day 1: Preview the Story and Vocabulary:**

- Introduce the story (will discuss at the next meeting) & 3-4 vocabulary words.
- Display the vocabulary words & their definitions.
- Ask students to listen for the words during the read aloud (although comprehension is the overall goal of the reading).
- Stop during story to review the words and clarify/extend the meanings.
- Review story and vocabulary words after the reading (main story events-encourage students to use new vocabulary words when discussing the content of the stories).

**Day 2: Reread the Book to Focus on Vocabulary and Extend Comprehension:**

- Review meanings of the words from Day 1.
- Ask students to listen for the words (ex. “Thumbs Up”).
- Stop and briefly explain meanings during read aloud.
- After the reading...have students give their own definitions so you can assess vocabulary learning (can have students write sentences or give oral definitions).
- Extend comprehension (will discuss at the next meeting...i.e. graphic organizers).

5. Discussed how to select words to teach:
  - a. Tier Method (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).
  - b. Additional questions to consider:
    1. “Will learning the words make students better able to describe their own familiar life experiences because the words or knowledge can be linked to other words or concepts [they are already familiar with] (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004, p. 722)?”

2. “Will learning the words facilitate a deeper understanding of a specific context within a story that can also be linked to the students’ own knowledge or life experiences” (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004, p. 722, 725)?”
3. What does the word bring to the text or situation? (Beck et. al, 2002)
6. In a response to a pre-service teacher question, discussed teaching “past tense” verbs within a read aloud context. This lead into a brief discussion about teaching “language structure” within a read aloud context. This is something we will discuss in further detail at future meetings.

### Next Steps:

1. Pre-service teachers will try to incorporate the suggested vocabulary teaching methods discussed at the meeting, with a particular focus on the following:
  - a. Making more connections between students’ lives and backgrounds and the words they are teaching.
  - b. Assessing students’ word knowledge either orally or in writing.
  - c. Reviewing words from read alouds in the classroom.
2. Pre-service teachers may plan to teach “language structure” (i.e. past tense verbs) within a read aloud context.

### References

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**Note: Italicized article was distributed to pre-service teachers at this meeting.**

## Appendix E

### **Summary of Bi-Weekly Meeting #3 with Pre-service Teachers:**

1. Discussed the importance of using nonfiction texts with ELLs/bilingual students:
  - a. Helps to develop “Academic Language”.
  - b. Gives students more experience and practice with the use of nonfiction texts (less commonly used in the classroom).
  - c. Helps prepare students for high stakes testing.
  - d. Provides an avenue for supplementing content area instruction found in content area subject textbooks which can be confusing, boring, have more difficult vocabulary/readability formulas, and unfamiliar text structure.
  - e. Nonfiction picture books can be colorful and appealing to students which can motivate listeners.
  
2. Discussed the variety/types of nonfiction read aloud texts available (i.e. picture books, journals/diaries, concept books, life-cycle books, etc.). Pre-service teachers are encouraged to see me if they need help choosing additional nonfiction texts for use in their classrooms.
  
3. Discussed various options for reading aloud nonfiction texts:
  - a. Cover to cover read aloud (may not be the best choice for this type of text).
  - b. Participatory or interactive reading- students actively participate during the read aloud by helping to read the text or staying actively involved in activities related to the text...leads to higher levels of motivation and comprehension.
  - c. Caption/browsing read aloud- teacher reads only parts/excerpts from the text such as captions or certain paragraphs/pages.
  - d. Reread the same way on day #2 as day #1 OR provide a brief review of day #1 on day #2 then read a new part of the text on day #2.
  - e. Spend all of day #1 building students’ background knowledge/language/vocabulary needed for the text then read aloud the text on day #2, repeat the reading back in the classroom.
  
4. Discussed a suggested way for reading aloud a nonfiction text including before, during, and after teaching methods and their purposes:

- a. **Introducing (Prereading or Before reading)-Nonfiction Texts:**
    - i. VIP step! It is important to have a good introduction as the academic language & new content concepts in expository texts are particularly challenging for students. See handouts for ideas to use specifically with nonfiction texts (Anticipation Guides, Reader Generated Questions, Directed-Listening-Thinking Activity, Word Splash, Gist). Can also introduce other graphic organizers (i.e. Venn-diagrams, K-W-L Charts, Time Lines, Flow Charts, Text Structure Maps) at this time.
    - ii. Build background knowledge.
    - iii. Build overall meaning of the text.
    - iv. Introduce vocabulary.
    - v. Preview text graphics & illustrations.
    - vi. Set a purpose for listening.
    - vii. Motivate the listener.
  
  - b. **During-Reading of Nonfiction Texts:**
    - i. Monitor comprehension.
    - ii. Engage in background knowledge.
    - iii. Teach and model good reading strategies.
  
  - c. **After-Reading of Nonfiction Texts (Follow-Up):**
    - i. See handouts for ideas to use specifically with nonfiction texts (Follow-Up). May also complete graphic organizers, write in learning logs or journals, and participate in text discussions (i.e. Think-Pair-Share).
    - ii. Help students to comprehend what you have read.
    - iii. Tap into students' affective responses and deeper cognitive understanding of material read aloud (literal understanding is not enough, need to move to interpretive & applied questions).
5. Briefly discussed a “packet” of teaching activities designed for use with nonfiction texts that was provided for pre-service teachers at the meeting (Category IV Course Materials).
  6. Reminded pre-service teachers to let me know what nonfiction texts they would like to use for their read alouds in order for me to check them out of the library.

7. Discussed the definition of “Academic Language”... “Language used in the school and textbooks to address content area, is explicit, sentences are well formed and use complex structures, and vocabulary is domain specific, i.e. specialized for each content area (Brisk & Harrington, 2007, p. 154).”

#### Next Steps:

1. Pre-service teachers will try to incorporate the suggested nonfiction teaching methods discussed at the meeting.
2. Pre-service teachers may plan to use one or more of the activities provided in the packet handout during their nonfiction read alouds.
3. Pre-service teachers will let me know what nonfiction texts they would like to read aloud.

#### References

- Brisk, M., & Harrington, M. (2007). *Literacy and bilingualism: A handbook for all teachers*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Category IV Course Materials (*Teaching Reading and Writing in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms*).
- Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. (2004). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP Model (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
- Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. (2002). *Literature-based instruction with English language learners K-12*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Peregoy, S. & Boyle, O. (2005). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL*. Boston: Pearson.

## Appendix F

### **Summary of Bi-Weekly Meeting #4 with Pre-service teachers (Read Aloud Project):**

1. Discussed the importance of asking open ended questions and inviting students to extend their comments during read alouds (Distributed pp. 21-25 “Modeling Through Questioning” from: [Gibbons, P. (1991) *Learning to learn in a second language*. Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann.]
  - a. Helps to develop “Academic Language”.
  - b. Gives students opportunities to practice their oral language skills.
  - c. Gives students opportunities to hear more sophisticated language and vocabulary.
  - d. Extends comprehension.
  
2. Discussed using the read aloud context as a good place to teach and practice using reading comprehension skills (in addition to monitoring students’ comprehension) & how to go about teaching reading comprehension in a read aloud setting through the use of Think Alouds.
  - a. Helps students understand that reading should make sense.
  - b. Helps students to learn, think, and reflect on their reading.
  - c. Model aloud how “good or effective” readers think and monitor while reading.
  - d. During a think aloud, discuss how, when, where, and why the strategy is used during reading.
  - e. Have students give additional examples (coach students as they use the strategy).
  - f. Debrief with your small group (asks students to share their examples).
  - g. *Verbal & Procedural Scaffolding* (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008) *Teach, Model, Practice, Apply*.
  - h. Choose strategies that students are struggling with and/or are being taught in the classroom.
  
3. Discussed the importance of helping students discuss story content and ideas in relation to their own lives and experiences. This may be difficult for bilingual students in texts that are written for mainstream culture (may need to prompt



student thinking and choose texts that relate to students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.)

- a. Helps listeners remember what they have read.
- b. Sets a purpose and keeps listeners engaged.
- c. Helps students understand how characters feel and the motivation behind their actions.

### Next Steps:

1. Pre-service teachers will ask more open ended questions and extend students' comments during read alouds.
2. Pre-service teachers may plan to teach reading comprehension strategies during read aloud contexts.
3. Pre-service teachers will continue to encourage their students to make "Text-to-Self" connections.

### References

- Beck, I., & McKeown, M. (2001). Text talk: Capturing the benefits of read-aloud experience for young children. *The Reading Teacher, 55(1)*, pp. 10-27.
- Gibbons, P. (1991). *Learning to learn in a second language*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gibbons, P. (2006). *Bridging discourses in the ESL classroom: Students, teachers and researchers*. New York: Continuum.
- Hickman, P., Pollard-Durodola, S., & Vaughn, S. (2004). Storybook reading: Improving vocabulary and comprehension for English-language learners. *The Reading Teacher, 57(8)*, pp. 720-730.
- Klesius, J., & Griffith, P. (1996). Interactive storybook reading for at-risk learners. *The Reading Teacher, 49(7)*, pp. 552-560.
- Wasik, B., & Bond, M. A. (2001). Beyond the pages of a book: Interactive book reading and language development in preschool classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93(2)*, pp. 243-250.
- Williams, J. (2001). Classroom conversations: Opportunities to learn for ESL students in mainstream classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 54(8)*, pp. 750-757.

## Appendix G

### **Summary of Bi-Weekly Meeting #5 with Pre-service Teachers:**

1. Discussed the importance of teaching text organization patterns (structure) and how to do it through read alouds (see attached meeting handout).
2. Discussed the importance of teaching content and language objectives through read alouds (see attached meeting handout).
3. Discussed examples of language objectives.

### **Next Steps:**

1. Pre-service teachers will try to incorporate teaching text organization and language objectives into their read alouds.

## **Meeting #5 Handout (Text Organization Patterns/ Teaching Content and Language Objectives Through Read Alouds):**

### **1. Importance of Teaching Text Organization Patterns (Structure) Through Read Alouds:**

- Awareness of text structure is important because readers use this knowledge to store, retrieve, and summarize what they have read (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
- Helps students structure their own writing.
- Need to explicitly teach students the different types of text structure found in texts (Literary structure/story grammar, Descriptive, Listing, Causation/cause & effect, Response/problem & solution, Comparison/compare & contrast, Organizational features of content area text books).
- Particularly important for older ELLs who have reached literacy in their home language prior to immigration as research suggests that different cultures structure texts in different ways (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

### **2. How to Teach Text Organization Patterns When Reading Aloud:**

- Point out and teach story elements in fictional texts.
- Provide outlines for students that include story elements and teach students how to use them.
- Point out main text structure used by the author and words associated with that pattern in expository texts.
- Ask students to look for examples of patterns and signal words in the texts you read aloud; then record them on chart paper.
- Illustrate examples of text structures on chart paper before/after reading aloud.
- Use graphic organizers or visual structures (semantic maps) to help students identify the content in texts and the relationships among concepts.
- Point out headings, subheadings, boldface terms, charts, diagrams, and questions in expository texts.
- Have students make and check predictions based on headings, subheadings, and boldface terms in expository texts.

- Have students turn headings, subheadings, and boldface terms into questions before reading aloud expository texts.
- See attached handout for chart of Text Types and cognitive demand on ELLs.

### 3. Teaching Content and Language Objectives Through Read Alouds:

#### i. Content Objectives:

- Concepts and/or Skills (seeing this)
- Reading Comprehension Strategies (discussed last week)

#### ii. Language Objectives:

- Vocabulary (seeing this)
- Word-level language structure ( see table below for examples)
- Sentence-level language structure (see table below for examples)

Word-level language structure:	Sentence level language structure (grammar):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiar English morphemes (smallest English grammatical units). (ELPBO: R.2.13a)</li> <li>Distinctive features of words, letters, parts of words, and whole words. (ELPBO: R.2.3e)</li> <li>Cognates</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject-verb agreement</li> <li>Noun-adjective placement</li> <li>Formation of plurals</li> <li>Formation of different sentence types (interrogative, declarative, imperative, exclamatory)</li> <li>Formation of different tenses in English</li> <li>Words and phrases that signal chronology in a text (such as after, finally). (ELPBO: R.3.Text Interpretation a) or causation (ELPBO: R.3.4d)</li> </ol>

## References:

- Brisk, M., & Harrington, M. (2007). *Literacy and bilingualism: A handbook for all teachers*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. (2004). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP Model (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
- Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. (2002). *Literature-based instruction with English language learners K-12*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2003). *English language proficiency benchmarks and outcomes (ELPBO)*. Malden, MA. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark.pdf>.
- Peregoy, S. & Boyle, O. (2005). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL*. Boston: Pearson.
- Schifini, A. (1994). Language, literacy, and content instruction: Strategies for teachers. In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (pp. 158-179). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

## Appendix H

### Recruitment Email Distributed to Pre-service Teachers

Dear XXXX,

I am writing to let you know about an exciting dissertation read aloud research project that is being conducted this spring at the XXXXXXXXX School. The read aloud project involves reading aloud children's texts to a small group (4 students) of ELLs/bilingual students from your classroom every other week for ten weeks. The read alouds would include before, during, and after discussions about text and comprehension/vocabulary instruction stemming from the content in the texts. Only one text would be used per week as the second reading you conduct would be a repeated reading. The texts have been chosen from the school's language arts curriculum entitled "Making Meaning." Additionally, you and three other full practicum students placed at the school would meet bi-weekly with me for approximately 30 minutes in order to enhance your knowledge and pedagogical skills for working with ELLs/bilingual students. The content of the meetings will stem directly from your teaching and we will collaborate together on topics for discussion and reflection. This study is being conducted in order to understand if reading aloud contributes to the language and literacy development of ELLs and bilingual students. Additionally, the study aims to help pre-service teachers learn to teach this population of students. Data collection for the project would include observing and audio/video taping your read alouds. You will be compensated for your participation in this research with a copy of all texts that are used during the read alouds. Because we recognize that you are being asked to do something

extra this semester, we will revise your practicum requirements and will negotiate with you and your supervisor to find ways in which the project can fulfill some of your requirements for student teaching, including meeting the PPA-Plus standards required for state licensure. *Please be assured that the outcome of this research project will have no impact on your practicum grade whatsoever and if you choose to participate, you may also choose to withdraw from the project at any time during the semester.*

In addition to enhancing the support that you will receive around the dynamics of teaching English Language Learners, participation in this read aloud research project will be something that you can share with potential employers in the future. You will also be contributing to important bodies of research related to teaching ELLs/bilingual students and their language and literacy development.

The practicum office, your Inquiry instructor, your supervisor, your cooperating teacher, and the XXXXXXXX School principal all support the project and look forward to working together with you to create a community of learners around helping to support ELLs and bilingual students' language and literacy development and your growth as a pre-service teacher. Therefore, we will all be collaborating together in professional ways to ensure that the project is successful in meeting the needs of everyone involved. Our intent is to help and support you, a specially selected candidate for this research project, as you embark on this exciting time in your professional career.

Thank you for considering being a part of this project. I look forward to hearing from you on or before 1/4/10. Please do not hesitate to contact me or director of the Office of Practicum Experiences at Boston College with any questions or concerns. I will

be in touch in the near future with details regarding a time and place for us to meet together with the other full practicum students placed at the XXXXXXXX School to discuss the project in more detail.

Sincerely,

Sarah Ngo