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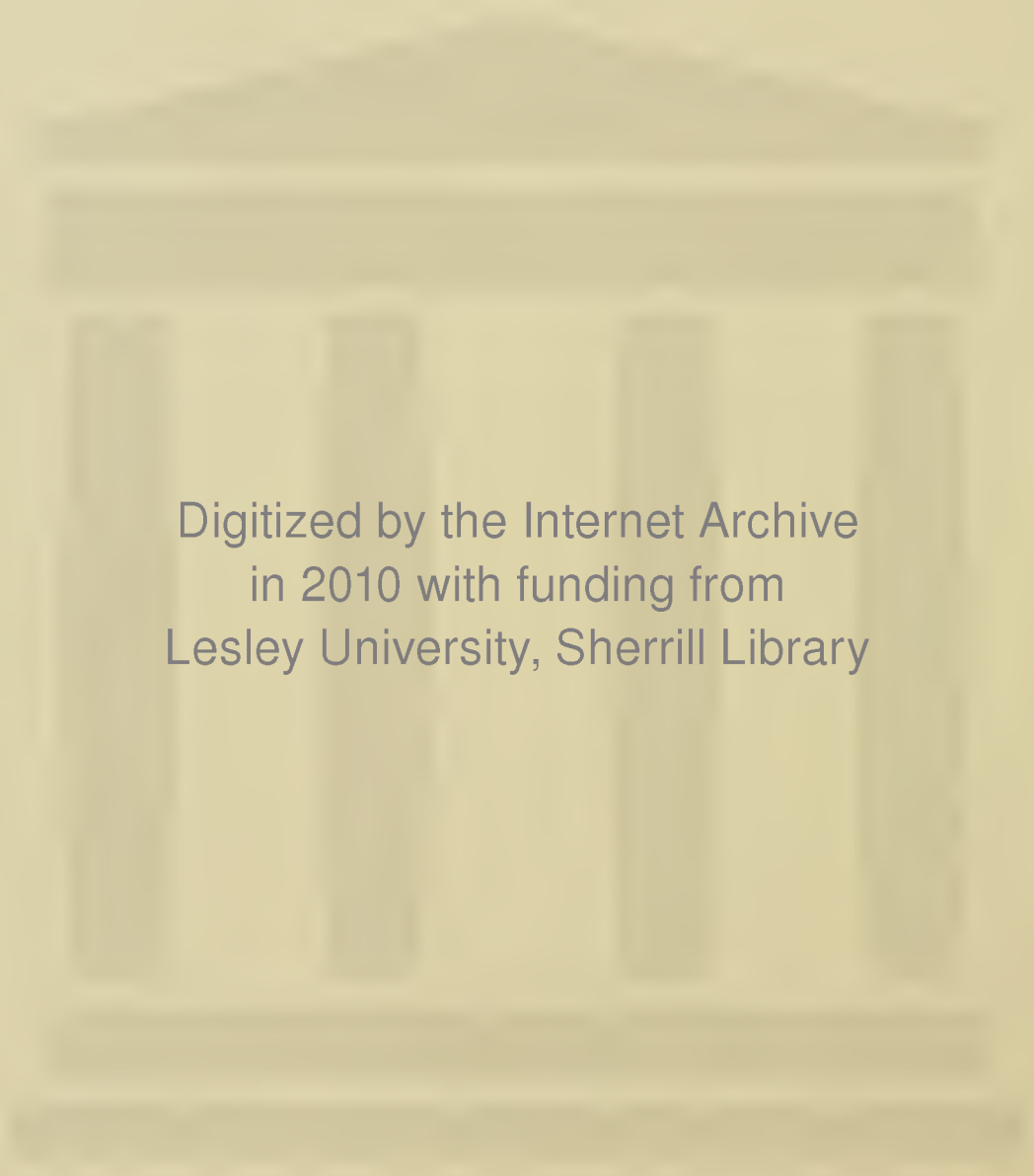
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*Home Environment Factors Influencing Literacy Development:
A group of Brazilian Immigrant
Head Start Children*

A Dissertation

submitted by

Sharon C. Switzer

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Lesley University
February 27
2003**

DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

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Dissertation Title: HOME ENVIRONMENT FACTORS INFLUENCING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: A GROUP OF BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT HEAD START CHILDREN
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Degree for which Dissertation is submitted: Ph. D. Degree in Educational Studies

Approvals

In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the literacy practices embedded in the home environment of a group of 5 Brazilian Head Start children. It elucidates the difficulties and challenges of immigration that influenced their home environments and describes the literacy practices embedded within these home environments. In this qualitative study approximately 60 home visits were conducted to observe the focal children in their daily home environment. Following protocols used by Teale (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1996), observed literacy events were coded for social domain, participant structure, and literacy event type. Because Portuguese was the home language of these children, these literacy events were also coded for language used, i.e. Portuguese, English, or Bilingual (Portuguese and English combined). Data derived from observations of literacy events revealed that the greatest frequency of literacy events occurred in the domain, entertainment; and the greatest frequency of participant structure of literacy events was the focal child alone. It was also observed that both the level of English proficiency of the participants, as well as their length of time in the United States were related to the frequency of literacy events in the home. Portuguese language interviews conducted revealed themes centered on lack of access to resources of the mainstream culture, feelings of loneliness and vulnerability due to their limited English proficiency; and confusion about the U. S. mainstream culture and mores. Implications emphasize the need for care to avoid bias and assumptions regarding Brazilian immigrants; the need for support services, English language classes, native language books. While this research focuses on a group of Portuguese speaking Brazilian immigrants there may be implications for other immigrant populations as well.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Preface

The first time I saw Brazil, I was a young wife and mother, on leave from my teaching career, and awaiting the arrival of my second child. Brought up in a suburb of a large Midwestern city, I had been surrounded by a community of sameness. Sameness in our white skin, sameness in our food experiences (we were almost all descendants of German immigrants), sameness in our middle classness, and even sameness in religion with my parochial school classmates. We all lived in two-bedroom houses, which all of our clever parents managed to convert to three as the second, third, and sometimes fourth child arrived. As I grew into adulthood in the midst of this sameness, I began to hunger to experience the differences in the world that I had read about. I toyed with the idea of becoming a missionary partly out of my desire to experience life in another world, to learn another language, to visit other places, and to see the world from a different vantage point than I had ever known.

All of these latent desires had led me, along with my husband, to move our family to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As I descended the stairs of the airplane onto the tarmac that first day, I was filled with excitement. I had prepared for months for this move, reading every book and article I could about Brazil. With my years of studying Latin and French in school, I foolishly believed that the tapes and books I had been using would have me speaking Portuguese by the time I arrived in Brazil. What an awakening I had. Here I was, achieving what seemed the dream of a lifetime, and as I went through Brazilian Customs at the airport, I had no idea what people were saying to me. Amazingly, when I spoke the words and phrases I had memorized so well, the customs officials responded as

if they could understand me perfectly well, but I could not understand one word that anyone spoke to me.

That first day in Brazil took me from the height of anticipation to the depth of horror at my own ineptitude. That was the beginning of a life-changing event for me. I had suddenly been thrust into a world in which I was like a child learning to speak. And yet, because this was a fulfillment of a dream, I was determined not to seek refuge in the American enclave in Brazil, where I could use my twenty-three years of experimenting with words to express my every thought, idea, and feeling in the most perfect way that a lover of the English language could. Instead, I chose the humbling experience of trying to express myself through my limited Portuguese vocabulary; and I acquired a new reverence for gestures, intonation, facial expressions, and plain old pointing, to say what I needed to say.

Eventually, I learned to speak and understand Portuguese very well. And although my three years of Portuguese study and daily usage in Brazil could not compare with my twenty-three years of English study and daily usage, which I continued in my home while in Brazil, my ability to communicate gave me access to many of the benefits and pleasures of life in Brazil.

After returning to the U.S. to live, I continued to cherish my memories of Brazil. My home was filled with mementos, artwork, musical instruments, clothing, samba records, slides and photos, and cookbooks from Brazil. These souvenirs from my life there allowed me to continue to savor the delicacies of Brazilian life, while living in the United States. I developed a new career in the field of early childhood education which allowed me to parallel my professional interests with the development of my own

children. First, as a family day care provider I concurrently obtained a Master's degree in that field. After this I spent several years working in preschool settings, first as a teacher and then as a program director. I found ready opportunities to incorporate my memories of Brazil and introduce cultural awareness into the early childhood and elementary school setting, by introducing activities, slide shows, cuisine, music, and samba dancing into the mainstream curriculum.

Over the years, I sought out Brazilians so I could speak in Portuguese again, and I continued to write letters to friends there. My family even hosted a Brazilian exchange student once. But Brazil was changing, and by the early '90's, there was already a growing population of Brazilians in the Boston area where I lived. It was at this time that I began to work with Brazilian immigrants, offering outreach services, home visits, English as a second language instruction, and family literacy programs.

At the same time, as I continued my work and studies in early childhood and family support programs, I saw the need for greater understanding of what happens when immigrant families from other cultures and speaking other languages bring their young children to America to live. Thus, it was this convergence of a lifetime of experiences as a teacher, as a mother, and as a lover of Brazil that led me to choose to investigate the ways that the home lives of five Brazilian immigrant families might influence the literacy development of the young children in those families. This dissertation will document and describe that research, and what I learned from it.

Introduction and Problem Statement

An increasing body of evidence has accumulated over the past two decades documenting the influence of the home environment in helping children to acquire the skills necessary for learning to read and write. This evidence supports the notion that the beginning of children's literacy and language development occurs through oral language interactions with the adults around them (Bissex, 1980; Chall and Snow, 1982; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Taylor; 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

For example, parents, in playing and talking with their children, provide valuable language and pre-literacy experiences for them (Butler and Clay, 1987; Dickinson, 1994; Larrick, 1982; Morrow, 1993). Researchers have also found that children who have had abundant opportunities to use language were better readers when they were in school than children who lacked such experiences. Typical situations which supported reading and language development included having several siblings, having frequent contact with many members of an extended family, and being included in family outings with parents or other adults (Chall and Snow, 1982). Hildebrand and Bader (1992) found that, in addition to playing and talking to their children, parental activities specifically related to print, such as those involving letter- and shape-recognition, as well as family excursions to the library, were correlated with higher literacy measures. Apparently the presence of conversational partners who can model the conventions of spoken language as well as a diversity of occasions that stimulate linguistic interactions are significant to literacy development.

These research findings have been based on studies conducted with children who were exposed to only one language, that of the mainstream culture. Purcell-Gates and a

team of six research assistants conducted a series of in-home observations of literacy practices in twenty families over a one-year period (1996). Only low-SES participants who spoke English in the home as a first language were included in the study. At present it is not known whether those findings can be applied to children from homes in which the primary language and culture differs from the mainstream. It is also unknown what other factors, such as those related to the immigration experience and adaptation to American culture may have on the developing language and literacy of those children.

Using comparable data-collection and coding techniques as Purcell-Gates, through in-home observations, I examined the instances of literacy events occurring in a group of five Brazilian immigrant families with children enrolled in a home-based Head Start program on a small island off the coast on New England. In addition to these observations, I interviewed the parents in these families, to learn more about their experience of immigrating to the U.S. and how they perceived these experiences may have affected their children's development.

Statement of the research questions

The goal of my research, therefore, was to document and describe the communicative practices in the homes of a group of low-income Brazilian ESL (English as a second language) families who are immigrants to the United States and who have young children enrolled in a home-based Head Start program¹ in a rural island

¹Home-based Head Start programs, as opposed to Center-based Head Start programs, deliver services to families during Home Visits with families and regularly scheduled group activities and parent meetings throughout the year. Home-visits consist of story reading to the Head Start child, by the parent or by the Home visitor with the parent present, as well as a related art or craft activity to encourage Home visitor-parent-child discussion. Group activities may include field trips with parents and children to community landmarks, e.g. fire station, police station, etc.

community in Massachusetts. Two central research questions framed the data collection and analysis for this study: (1) What are the in-home communicative practices of this group of Brazilian immigrant Head Start families? And (2) What cultural and socio-economic factors might influence these communicative practices?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of my study has been to learn about the literacy-related activities observed in their homes and to come to a better understanding of what other factors may influence the language and literacy development of this group of immigrant children. In so doing I have attempted to extend the research of Teale (1994) and Purcell-Gates (1996) who studied the uses of print in the homes of low-income English speaking families with children. The research participants in my study, as Head Start participants, were also low-income. However, there were three major differences in my study: (1) None of the families in this study spoke English as their first language, and in some cases, they did not speak English at all. (2) While Teale (1994) and Purcell-Gates (1996) focused on the uses of print in the home, my study examined other communicative practices, such as dramatic play, conversations, television, and music as well. (3) Purcell-Gates, et al, based their research solely on in-home observations. In my research, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the parents in order to gain some understanding of their view of the literacy development of their children.

The ultimate goal of this study has been to develop insights related to teaching young children from low-income, limited English proficient, immigrant families. This

has included exploring the socio-cultural-economic challenges and barriers in their lives as well as how their literacy-related experiences at home might influence the methods of supporting the literacy development of these children, both at home and at school.

Limitations and delimitations

There were limitations of this study due to 1) the voluntary nature of the subjects; 2) that my observations recorded the home factors relating to the communicative practices of participants, but were not videotaped; and 3) limitations due to self-reporting by participants during the interviews.

First, since participants were volunteers in a study related to their children's development, they might be more interested and more likely to value and support their children's language and literacy development than those families who did not elect to participate. It cannot be assumed that these families reflect the experiences of other Brazilian immigrant families or that the results of this research can be generalized to a larger population.

Second, although I conducted a total of approximately 60 home visits during a six-month period in which I was present for 1-2 hours per visit, this represents a small amount of time, selected by the parents, in which I was allowed into their homes. These observations may or may not reflect the typical daily routine which takes place regularly in the homes.

Third, the information obtained through the parent interviews was reported by the parents themselves. While I guaranteed confidentiality, and maintained an accepting and

nonjudgmental demeanor as much as possible during these interviews, it must be remembered that they are seeing their lives through their own perceptions within the cultural context of their own experiences. There is also the possibility that the informants wanted to impress me or that their recollections of events was faulty. It is unknown to what extent such information represents the true beliefs and attitudes of the participants.

In addition the focus and scope of this study was delimited by the fact that it was restricted to Brazilian Head Start families on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, a tourist resort in the summer and an isolated rural community during the non-tourist season. People who choose to live year-round in this area face unique challenges related to a shortage of affordable housing and seasonal work. It is unknown to what extent these Head Start families, who are participants in a home-based Head Start program reflect Brazilian Head Start families from center-based programs, off-island (the local term used to refer to the mainland) from Brazilians in home-based Head Start programs in urban and non-resort localities, or families not associated with Head Start or other organized preschool programs. Some, but not all of the participants, also attended private preschools, either part or full-time. Thus the amount of exposure to teachers and other children from the U.S. mainstream culture differed from child to child.

Nevertheless, I immersed myself in the lives of these families for a period of six months. During this time I conducted approximately 60 home visits for between one and two hours each, a total of approximately 90 hours of observations. I lived in the community in which they lived during this period so that I could experience island life, with its pitfalls and delights, just as they did. During the course of the research I became a friend of these families, and our relationship continues to this day.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of my study has been to document the home and environmental influences relating to the language and literacy development of a group of Brazilian immigrant children from a Head Start Program on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

In the following sections, I will provide a review of the literature pertinent to this study, a detailed discussion of the methods and procedures used, and a detailed summary of learnings from this research. In the final chapter I will summarize the implications of the findings in this research, as well as discuss implications for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research study has been to document and describe the communicative practices in the homes of a group of low-income Brazilian ESL Head Start children, and to explore the cultural and socio-economic factors that may influence these communicative practices. In this chapter I will provide a review of the literature that informed this study in order to relate that literature to my research. I have divided the literature review into three discussions concerning literacy development (1) the contextual nature of language and literacy development, (2) language/literacy development of young children, and (3) the home and environmental influences relating to children's literacy development.

The Contextual Nature of Language and Literacy Development

Introduction

Language and the skills associated with its symbolic representation in print, literacy, grow and develop out of a context that includes culture, history and socio-economic influences. Paulo Freire emphasized the critical connection between language and the socio-cultural and historical context in which communication takes place. "The language that we use to talk about this or that and the way we give testimony are, nevertheless, influenced by the social, cultural, and historical conditions of the context in which we speak and testify" (Freire, P. 1998, p. 58). Language influences and constitutes the spoken context of communication, even as the context of communication, including its social, cultural, historic, and economic aspects, influences language. It is this critical

connection between oral language or its printed expression and the context in which they take place that is the foundation for the belief that language and literacy, indeed, all learning arises from, and is dependent on, the context. It is for this reason that my study of the literacy practices of a group of Head Start Brazilian children examines the home context, as well as the cultural, historical, and socioeconomic background of the families in which they live.

What does literacy mean? It is more than decoding and answering comprehension questions. Recent literature sets it in a larger sphere. Street defines the concept of literacy practices as both the behaviors and the understanding associated with reading and writing. Literacy events, defined as occasions in which literacy is an integral part, are any incidents in which literacy practices take place (Street, 1987; Street, 1997; Barton, 1998). However, Grillo uses the term *communicative practices* to define the “social activities through which language or communication is produced” (Grillo, 1989, p. 15.). Grillo, then, views literacy as one type of communicative practice within a larger social context, de-emphasizing both reading and writing (together or separately) as the sole indicators of literacy. It is clear that recent trends in research have focused on understanding the broader context in which literacy develops.

Although some of the efforts have focused on writing alone, there has also been research which examined writing in the context of everyday usage (Heath, 1982). Anthropological methods focusing on “naturalistic” studies of writing have included techniques such as ethnography, taking life histories, and participant observations (Camitta, 1997), situating the learning of writing squarely in the arena of everyday needs and usages of writing.

Cultural Identity as Context for Literacy

The context in which literacy occurs has gained importance in our understanding of literacy's relationship to social, economic, and cultural influences. Context has now become a central component in the area of linguistic analysis (Street, 1997), and the need to study literacy practices in this light has also been gaining credibility, decreasing the traditional emphasis on the separation of oral and print-related modes of communication.

Oral communicative skills are generally considered the foundation for literacy development, and they develop within the context of the home in which they arise. Culture embodies the beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, biases, behaviors, and differences between groups of people (Holdaway, 1979). Because we are so dependent upon others for our survival in our infancies, our ideas, thoughts, and values are shaped by the culture of those with whom we live. We are "cultural beings" by nature (Ferdman, 1990). Our behaviors, our values, and our traditions reflect those of the community in which we live. The literacy practices embodied in cultural practices are disseminated from generation to generation. This is what defines our culture.

In the United States, where there are many cultures, we must recognize that literacy and literacy acquisition differ from one community to another (Purcell-Gates, 1995). Researchers of family literacy (Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1986) document that language and literacy practices are transmitted from generation to generation within the cultural context of each family (Akroyd, 1995). To me, literacy is connected to print which, in turn, rests on oral communication. This is because the words represented in print are from the oral language of the writer and reader. The meaning carried by the printed word was developed in contextually-based oral communication. These oral and written activities

form a continuum of communicative activities with baby's early language at one end and higher levels of reading, writing, and speaking at the other.

Heath points out the cultural nature of literacy practices that many assume to be “natural.” She argues that the “literacy events” to which people are exposed, and the understanding of these events, must be understood in the context of the socio-cultural background of the participants (Heath, 1982). Moreover, since literacy practices are embedded in culture, they are also riddled with messages of power structures (Street, 1997).

The culture of the individual relates to personality, skills, talents, experience, and character and comprises what I call an *interior culture*. Beyond that individual culture is the family which transmits the wider culture of the ethnic, historic, and class group. This is impacted (sometimes in conflict) by the larger dominant culture and its institutions of media, commerce, school, workplace, judicial and political systems.

While exploring how literacy fits into the culture of individuals' lives, it is also important to remember the influence of existing social institutions, and how these institutions provide a context for behavior. Barton refers to this larger context as “the ecology” of written language (Barton, 1998, p.42). He also refers to the “two senses of historical change: that of the individual's growth and development; and that of the whole culture over a longer time period.” These changes affect the literacy practices of the different groups, so that the present is a culmination of past experiences, practices, and processes of change (Barton, 1998), both within and outside of the subgroup, affecting the individual culture. Each of these levels affects the other as institutional practices are

disseminated to subgroups and individuals, who respond by internalizing, modifying, or rejecting the institutional practice.

Context of literacy includes the participant's identity, role, location, culture-specific principles of social interaction (such as the role of taking turns in communication and conversation while reading stories), and culture-specific modes of linguistic organization and speech, all of which reflect the participant's views and beliefs (Mcnaughton, 1995). According to Mcnaughton, "the participation patterns and the focus of the interactions when books are read to children in families carry meaning about social and cultural identity. Together these forces activate learning, and define and channel development" (Mcnaughton, 1995). By examining literacy practices within the context of the home and culture of the family, I am following well-established practice in the field of literacy research.

Influence of Context on Learning, Development, and Language Acquisition

Bronfenbrenner (1979) and others have promoted the view that all human development occurs in a context which includes the social and cultural systems in which the individual is situated. Language, first spoken and then written, is embedded in a social context (Wertsch, 1985). Speech is, by its nature, a social activity, a two-way process that involves both the roles of speaker and listener. Language reflects the social need of a group to define its life as a group. Culture is the result of community members' "collective efforts to create a social way of life," and all members of the group are "inherently situated in a sociocultural context" (Wertsch, 1991) which both influence and is influenced by language.

Learning takes place in the context of a situation or an activity. With the assistance of others who stimulate, guide, and support our learning, we create knowledge by internalizing, reflecting upon, and sharing our experiences. We develop literacy in the same way. Purcell-Gates showed that what children learn about the nature and function of print before school is defined by the values of their culture. It is through interactions with print in the home that children come to know the form and use of written language in their culture. They learn the purpose of print, the places and times it is used, and they learn that it symbolizes meaning. They can produce print and meaning themselves (Purcell-Gates, 1997). In homes where the culture of the home does not support the use of print and print materials, Purcell-Gates found that rather than using them for their intended purposes, the pencils had become guns or fishing poles and the paper fashioned into kites, hats, and so forth. In other words, the materials had been used to fulfill the social functions already present in the home rather than to introduce new functions (Purcell-Gates, 1997). So, the home environment may determine the need for and the uses of the customary tools for printed communication.

In examining the home literacy practices in a group of children who speak a language other than English and who are being reared in a cultural different from that of mainstream America, there may be observable differences in literacy practices, participant structure, and language usages. There may be a difference in the world view of these families as well as their cultural practices. Their life experiences may have predisposed them to engage in literacy practices that may be different from those of mainstream middle class Americans.

Whorf theorized that the language people speak influences their perception of the world. He talked about the differences in understanding of time and punctuality among differing cultures, pointing out that many languages do not contain a western concept of time. Some languages, like that of the Hopi Indians, contain neither past nor future tenses of verbs. All ideas are expressed in present tense only (Whorf, 1956). He later changed his strong interpretations to a weaker hypothesis: culture influences, but does not determine.

Sapir later attempted to define the interrelation between language and the cultural information of those who speak it. He pointed out that Nawatl, the language of the Aztecs, contains only one word for snow, whereas most Eskimo languages contain many words for snow. The need to communicate about life in the context of an area of abundant snowfall has led to the creation of language that communicates the intricacies of ideas pertaining to snow. Since there is little need to communicate about snow in South America, there was little need for the Aztecs to develop language about snow (Sapir, 1929).

Now known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the principle of the interdependency of language and culture in the strong version is not universally accepted; in fact, there are strong arguments against its validity. The weak version of the hypothesis states that the language of any particular culture in which people are reared influences the thinking of those individuals, which in turn creates the basis upon which the patterns of a particular culture develop. The question that remains is, how do we know that it is not the culture that forms thoughts and language, rather than the other way around? The truth is that each language in the world possesses its own unique concepts that are inaccessible to

nonspeakers. Researchers such as Durante (2001) and Philips (1983) among others who hold this principle of reflexivity contend that language and culture are constantly shaping each other.

The nonverbal communication that accompanies speech is also culturally bound (Holdaway, 1979). Birdwhistell studied nonverbal communication extensively in the 1960's. He claimed that only about 35% of the message in conversation is conveyed verbally and the other 65% is non verbal (Birdwhistell, 1974). He found that nonverbal features that may affect communication include distance between participants, posture, intonation, facial expression, eye contact, and duration of the interaction. All of these may influence the nature and reception of any verbal message. He observed that kinesics (body movements) along with facial expressions convey a nonverbal message, for example a disgusted turning away from someone. Kinesics may indicate messages of conflict, confusion, hostility, intimidation, openness, or a host of other thoughts and feelings. Moreover, culture is transmitted not only through the gestures and intonations that accompany speech but also through traditions such as chant, melody, rhythms, rhymes, and art forms such as poetry, dance, and drama (Holdaway, 1979).

Summary

All learning takes place within the context of a situation or activity. Children's language and literacy develop within the home environment, beginning with non-verbal and oral interactions and later progressing to reading and writing. During the child's emergent literacy phase, the family's culture has a significant influence on the child's literacy development. Moreover, children observe the uses of print in their home from a very early age, and grow up with an understanding of the literacy practices of their

family, which reflect the literacy practices of the wider socioeconomic group of which their family is a part.

Literacy is linked to the institutions and settings in which it is developed. Reading and writing are constructs of wider social, economic, political, and cultural processes. Thus, language (as well as music, dance, art, and other modes of exchange) is influenced by—and influences—the cultural context in which it exists. It is, therefore, important for educators to understand the cultural context of Brazilian and other immigrant children as they develop their language and literacy skills.

Language/Literacy Development of Young Children

Introduction

If we accept the tenet that language and literacy develop, not as isolated skills, but as part of a broader context and culture, then the question that is likely to follow is: what are the ways that language and literacy develop within that context? In recent years the concept that literacy is an emerging process that occurs gradually and continually, from birth, has taken hold. This is an important concept, and it is one which has formed my study of the literacy practices observed in the homes of five Brazilian immigrant families. Furthermore, the acquisition of a second language parallels that of the first. It is important, therefore, to discuss this emerging process of language and literacy, as well as that of second language acquisition.

It has been said that language is the mirror of the mind (Chomsky, 1975). If that is true, then the more we understand about language the more we will be able to understand about the workings of the mind. Understanding the nature of how and why we develop language opens a door into the way we develop knowledge and understanding of

ourselves and the world around us. Language provides us with the capacity for rational thought. It is this language that gives us the ability to navigate the waters of the lives that we live in our many worlds.

According to Pinker, language is a natural instinct in human beings. Having a language is, of course, part of what it means to be human. Language is the most accessible part of the mind and thus is fascinating to people as a means to gain deeper understanding of human nature (Pinker, 1995). Despite the achievements of current brain research and the strides that have been made in mapping what each particular area of the brain does, language itself and how a child learns it have not been completely explained (Pinker, 1995).

Language learning seems to be a compound of both nature and nurture. The central reason why babies learn a first language is to communicate with other people who play some important role in their immediate environment (for example, feeding them). In their first year of life, even before they can understand or produce words, babies exhibit clear sensitivity to the meanings of nonlinguistic aspects of communicative situations such as facial expressions (smiling), gestures (pointing), tone of voice, and so on. The meanings of words are learned by linking the meaning of a particular situation (for example, adult dresses baby for a walk) with the word that the adult usually produces in that situation (for example, "We're going for a walk now.") Thus, the child's extra-linguistic knowledge plays a crucial role in making the linguistic input comprehensible. Gradually, as the child is exposed to more comprehensible input, s/he will begin to try out words in these situations (for example, "walk"), and the adult will delightedly respond and amplify the child's utterance, thereby providing both feedback as to the

appropriateness of the utterance, as well as more linguistic input to the child (Cummins, 1981).

Theory and Research in Language Acquisition

As language learners, normal children begin by relying on one-way communication while they develop comprehension skills. Researchers (Hakuta, 1974; Ervin-Tripp, 1973) have found this phenomenon also in children learning a second language.

There has been and continues to be a great deal of interest in understanding the process of second language acquisition, and if it parallels first language acquisition. Theorists have attempted to “describe” not only what is learned and when, but also “how” the language develops in a learner, and “why” the process may differ from one person to the other (Rutherford, 1982). There have been different approaches to developing theories of second language acquisition with some researchers conducting large experimental studies bent on proving or disproving hypotheses. Others have taken a sociological approach. Furthermore, theories may overlap in some parts, yet contradict each other elsewhere. However, most of these theories can be classified into three major views on language acquisition. They should not be considered mutually exclusive although their major proponents may often present them as such:

1. *Behaviorists* claim that acquiring a language is nothing more than habit formation. This is partly true since quality and quantity of reinforcement by the environment influence language learning and it is true that behaviorism can explain some of the more routine aspects of language. However, language goes

far beyond imitation, otherwise children would not be able to produce new combinations of words and sentences they have never before heard.

2. The *innatist* position says that we are biologically programmed for language and that language develops the same way other biological functions develop. Chomsky is the best known proponent of this theory. He claims that children are born with a special ability to discover the language system for themselves. It is in fact unavoidable and cannot be prevented; the language “mental organ” will function just as automatically as any other organ; the learner (acquirer) has no reason for acquiring the language; he does not choose to learn (acquire) under normal conditions, any more than he chooses (or fails) to organize visual space in a certain way -- or, for that matter, any more than certain cells in the embryo choose (or fail) to become an arm or the visual centers of the brain under appropriate environmental conditions (Chomsky, 1975). Originally, Chomsky referred to it as the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Nowadays, it is better known as Universal Grammar (UG), a set of principles common to all languages. What children have to learn is the way their own language makes use of these principles. The fact that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with remarkable rapidity does suggest that human beings are indeed specially designed to do just this.
3. The *interactionist* view holds that language develops as a result of interaction between the child and the environment. Language adapted to the capability of the learner is a crucial element in language acquisition. In such situations the

speaker subconsciously uses the grammar rules s/he has acquired, to convey the message.

There has been a great deal of psycholinguistic research focused on how people acquire, or learn, languages. Brown (1973) at Harvard and Slobin (1971) at Berkeley, among others, undertook large-scale investigations of young children's behaviors as they learned first languages. These researchers were looking for evidence of Chomsky's "mental structure," for uniformities in the verbal behavior of language learners. They followed two- and three-year-old children and their parents around for several years using tape recorders to catch natural exchanges in all kinds of situations and found striking evidence that some learning behaviors are common to all children no matter what language they are learning.

Brown (1973) found that when children learn grammatical morphemes², they learn them in the same order, and that order is not related to how often the children hear the structures or to whether their parents reward them for producing correct structures.³ Slobin (1968) found that children learning Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian first learn grammatical markers that come after nouns and verbs, and then those that come before the nouns and verbs.

² A morpheme is a unit of linguistic structure - lexical morphemes are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, which are generally free morphemes and which are classes where new words can easily be added to the language ('open classes'). Grammatical morphemes have specific syntactic functions, are of a limited number, and are not easily added to the language ('closed classes').

³ Brown found that the order of morpheme development tended to occur in the following order: 1) present progressive - (aux + ing), 2) the preposition "in", 3) the preposition "on", 4) plural inflections - e.g. "s", "es", 5) past inflections on irregular verbs, 6) possessive inflections (e.g. the dog's ball), 7) uncontractible copula (is, am and are), 8) articles (the, a, an), 9) past inflections on regular verbs (e.g. "ed"), 10) regular third person forms (e.g. "s" as in "She rides well"), 11) irregular third person forms (has, does), 12) uncontractible auxiliary forms (did), 13) contractible copula (e.g. 's and 're), 14) contractible auxiliary forms (e.g. 'd)

These and numerous other regularities that have been found in the developing speech of children have led many psycholinguists to support Chomsky's thesis that the human brain is more than just a receptacle that parents and teachers fill with phrases and sentences. The structure of the brain guides the way young children learn and internalize the language they hear around them. Language acquisition is now believed to be an interaction between the child's innate mental structure and the language environment, a "creative construction" process (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982).

The idea that we all acquire language in only one way may not be fashionable in the age of individual variation. There is, after all, very good evidence that people differ in many ways, and these variations affect the acquisition of knowledge in general (e.g. left and right cerebral hemisphere preference, difference in cognitive style). Yet it appears that there are some things we all do the same, and some functions we acquire in the same way. The visual system, for example, is structured similarly and develops similarly in everyone. Chomsky (1975) suggests that we have common cognitive interactional and social strategies in terms of language acquisition.

Language as Precursor to Literacy

In a literate culture, preparations for literacy are evident in early language development. It is important to emphasize this point because, historically, learning to speak and learning to read have been seen as very different activities. This has been one aspect of the more general divide between written and spoken language (Barton, 1998). The work of Dickinson and Beals (1994) and other researchers suggests that literacy seems to have roots in oral language and symbolic play such as dramatic play and make-believe (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994). Young children learn to do amazing things with oral

language. All they need are opportunities to produce language in situations that are meaningful to them, to be understood, to be part of conversations, and to have a model of the language to learn from. Conversations with adults or older siblings provide (1) a chance to learn language, (2) a chance to learn how to learn language, and (3) an available “expert” talker who undoubtedly, if unknowingly, provides the means to achieving the first two things (Lindfors, 1987). It is for this reason that I have deemed it necessary to examine the participant structure of the literacy events observed in this study. With whom children are interacting is equally as important as what literacy activities with which they may be engaged.

Children are not entirely dependent on parents and other adults to develop literacy-related oral language skills. Many activities that, at first glance, might appear to be mere play with little developmental value, are in fact learning events for children. Pretending is one example of a way in which children can develop literacy-related oral language skills, creating and acting out a story of their own invention. As they engage in the talk of pretending, children not only use language to enhance their imagination (Pelligrini and Galda, 1994), they also learn how to use language by imitating what they have heard; experimenting with and creating words, and attempting to generalize rules of language and apply them to their play. This pretend play, referred to as dramatic play in the context of the preschool classroom, has much in common with reading. Objects used to create imaginary situations in play become symbols for the real ideas in the child’s mind, similar to the way that print is another symbolic representation of words and ideas. Thus, children’s dramatic play is an important precursor to literacy.

As children begin to develop an understanding of spoken language and engage in the communication practices of their culture, they also develop an awareness of language as a device to question and inquire about the world (Barton, 1998). This process, which is referred to as language acquisition, occurs in the context of social interactions (including conversations and other communications) within the family, and continues developing during the preschool years as children's use and understanding of language, reading, and writing become more sophisticated (Tabors, 1997).

According to Kolb (1984), all learning is an experiential process, and everything we experience forms a knowledge base to which we relate new experiences and within which we develop new learning. Similarly, Vygotsky has offered the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development as the distance between what a child has learned through experience and what the child can learn with scaffolding and/or stimulation by an adult or older learner. These theories, taken together, suggest that learning takes place when the acquired knowledge or experience of the learner is challenged, stimulated, or scaffolded in some way (Vygotsky, [1934] 1986). A third concept that parallels and adds to this frame for learning is Freire's idea of Praxis as the intersection of reflection and practice (experience) to stimulate a new understanding of the world. Thus, Freire adds *reflection* to our understanding of how we develop new knowledge (Freire, 1986).

By aligning these three ideas, we have a sequence in which learning is acquired through the experience of the learner, which is scaffolded by another person, and is also reflected upon by the learner. Through these three intertwined processes, the learner arrives at a newer and deeper understanding. This newer understanding is the experience upon which further scaffolding, reflection, and new learning will take place.

The beginnings of children's speech originate in their interaction with a more competent adult, usually a parent (Vygotsky, [1934]1986). Conversations and other verbal exchanges between children and their parents or caregivers encourage the development of language, while "joint book reading between young children and their parents supports the development of the skills necessary for learning to read" (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994, p.23).

The shift toward a perspective that emphasizes emergent literacy rests upon two primary sources: developmental theory (primarily the work of both Piaget and Vygotsky), and interactive reading theories, which are currently being expanded to include reading and writing (Teale and Sulzby, 1994). The paradigm of literacy as a developmental process beginning with children's early language development is embedded in Vygotsky's view of the early genesis of higher mental functions. During the second year of life, the natural and the social lines of development (including language) come together to form a single lane of growth. The entire psychological development of the child can be seen as an emerging process which intertwines perception, memory, attention, and learning and which transforms the child's thinking into higher mental processes. For Vygotsky, higher mental functions are not a direct continuation of corresponding elementary functions that originate in human biology. Instead, they constitute a new type of formation that is refined in the crucible of social life with the intervention of gestures, symbols, and especially language. These communicative skills serve as mediators of action in socially meaningful contexts (Vygotsky [1930-1935] 1978) and provide the cognitive tools for the child to derive meaning from his/her experiences of the world.

The child begins to use language not only for communication with others, but also as a tool of thought, a means to direct his or her own attention and behavior. It is at this point, when children internalize the cultural tool of language and rely on it to structure their own thinking, that human development differs from the development of other animals. The resulting reorganization of thought and language allows all higher mental functions to emerge. Vygotsky's theory suggests that, at first, language and cognition develop separately (Vygotsky, [1934] 1986). Vygotsky ([1934] 1986) regarded the inner dialogues or "self-talk" of the child, which are responses to experiences of the world, as the seat of human consciousness. Because the human mind is formed through the internalization and transformation of social interactions, it is permanently imbued with its social origins. Vygotsky underscored that the central purpose of speech, from the moment of emergence, is communication, social contact, and the influence of surrounding individuals (Vygotsky [1934] 1986). Only later does speech become an individually applied tool for governing one's own thoughts and behaviors (Berk and Winsler, 1995).

By contrast, Piaget ([1926] 1930) viewed language as a secondary emergent phenomenon, an outgrowth of the sensorimotor activity involved in infants' and young children's independent exploration of the physical world. He saw "self-talk" as a symptom of the preschooler's immature, egocentric, nonsocially adapted thought. In Piaget's view, "self-talk" served no positive adaptive purpose in the life of the young child.

There is mounting evidence of a relationship between emerging literacy abilities in children and the emergence of talk about one's own mental states, words, and the difference between the words one utters and the meaning one intends to communicate

(Torrance and Olson, 1985). For example, a longitudinal study that examined the talk of children when they were 3-1/2 years old found a relationship between the number of verbs they used that referred to language (e.g., tell, ask) and mental states (e.g., think, want) and the children's early literacy development two years later (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994).

Children's ability to think about language (meta-language) and talk about it in a literate manner also can be seen in the way they define words. When asked for definitions, children can respond by mentioning characteristic actions or functions (e.g., A house - "where you live," a car - "you go places in it"). Such definitions are called informal definitions and are characteristic of younger children (Snow, C. 1990). Words also can be defined by using a copula (is, are), placing the item being defined in a superordinate class, and providing additional distinguishing information. For example, a dog can be defined as follows: "It is [copula] a kind of animal [superordinate] that..." (Lancy, 1994).

Young children's language develops through language interactions with the adults around them. In playing and talking with their children, parents provide valuable language and pre-literacy experiences (Butler and Clay, 1987; Dickinson, 1994; Larrick, 1982; and Morrow, 1993). In situations where mothers must work outside the home or are otherwise unable to fulfill around-the-clock caretaking roles, young children are often "cognitive apprentices" to siblings or other older children. However, Rogoff's evidence suggests that older children, compared to parents or other adults, are less effective tutors (Rogoff, 1991).

On the other hand, some researchers posit that typical situations that support reading and language development in children include having several siblings, having frequent contact with many members of an extended family, and being included in family outings such as library visits with parents or other adults (Chall and Snow, 1982). In addition to oral interactions such as playing and talking to their children, parental activities focusing on letter- and shape-recognition also correlate with higher literacy measures (Hildebrand and Bader, 1992). According to Schickendanz, children who acquire literacy knowledge and skill before entering first grade are likely to have had a rich history of skillfully mediated literacy experiences (Schickendanz, 1999).

Researchers also found that children who had many opportunities to use language were better readers when they were in school. Purcell-Gates suggests that the preschoolers who begin to construct knowledge about the forms and concepts of written English and its alphabetic nature begin formal literacy instruction in school with schemata for literacy, which puts them at an advantage over their peers who have yet to begin this learning (Purcell-Gates, 1996). Thus, while there are a variety of different emphases to emergent literacy in this research, there is a general agreement on the importance of home language and literacy development.

Emergence of Literacy

As part of learning to speak and learning the communication practices of their culture, children gradually use language to communicate on a broader range of topics in a wider variety of contexts. They use language, among other things, to demand, inquire, and comment on themselves and their surroundings (Barton, 1998).

As children gain skill in communicating in ways that meet the demands associated with certain uses of literacy, they also begin to read languages in a new way—they begin to distance themselves from language and reflect on it. Instead of simply talking in order to attain some desired end, children begin to reflect on the activity of talking (Dickinson and Beals, 1994).

Children develop knowledge about the nature of their oral language and bring their grammatical and phonological awareness into practice as they develop literacy skills. This linguistic consciousness is present long before the mastery of oral language and it continues to influence written language knowledge as well as oral language (Clay, 1998, Mattingly, 1972).

Literacy-enriched play environments are valuable in developing linguistic awareness. Such settings allow children to practice literacy behaviors and language in ways that make sense to them, and may facilitate children's creation of stores of meaning as well as skills in negotiating, meeting, and practicing various registers of speech. These linguistic skills are transferable to other literacy situations, such as reading and writing. However, literacy-rich play environments alone do not facilitate linguistic awareness or the entire emergent process of literacy development. The practice of littering a child's environment with print, without the conversations to provide practice and reflections on the communicative activities, may have little impact on children's emergent literacy.

Research indicates that, during the emergent literacy period of the preschool years, children learn the significance of print as they experiment with it (Goodman, 1984). They also learn that print can be used in many different ways, (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984) and they learn about the relationship between print and speech (Dyson,

1982; Dickinson and Beals, 1994; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). Depending on their experience they may also learn the specialized syntax and lexis of print common to particular genres, such as fairy tales, thank you letters, catalogues, and so on (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984; Purcell-Gates, 1996).

A literate society is one in which print is recognized as the communicative device of choice for education and commerce. Print transcends time and space and enables stories to be preserved and disseminated at a later time and over any distance. Literacy is now considered to be associated with a distinctive form of social organization—a literate society—which employs the use of print to disseminate ideas (Olson, 1984). Because of the pervasiveness of print in commerce, education, and entertainment in a literate society, it is of the utmost importance for all the members of that society to be literate if they are to function successfully in that society.

Information in books is conveyed through words and syntax in the form of print. Since the content of the text may be new to the reader, he or she can only acquire the new knowledge using language, and as children gain skill in communication and understanding of the connection between language and books, they also begin to read in a new way. They begin to reflect on their language and on how they might adjust their talk to acquire what they want (Dickinson and Beals, 1994). Print awareness is a general term used frequently today to include the visual features of print, letter and word knowledge,

as well as some concepts about print or how books work.⁴

The emergent literacy perspective implies that children will learn about the nature and forms of written language (print awareness) according to the functions they see print fulfilling in their lives (Purcell-Gates, 1997). Awareness of print is an emerging literacy skill that occurs in young children long before they begin to read. It encompasses a developing understanding that print exists in many forms within the child's world, and as children become familiar with items of print, concepts of the nature and uses of print begin to emerge. It is a useful concept for parents in homes, caregivers in child care and preschools, teachers in the first two years of school, teachers giving extra help in literacy learning, as well as researchers and theorists. A forward thrust of learning can occur when adults provide opportunities for children to notice literacy events through their own interest in and use of print in their environment. Purcell-Gates, in a study of emergent literacy, found that the literacy success of low-SES children is affected by the frequency and type of print use in the home. In homes where adults use print in a variety of ways, children develop an understanding of the nature and function of print, most often through direct mother-child interactions involving the printed word (Purcell-Gates, 1996).

The emergent literacy stance challenges the notion that learning to write must follow learning to read (Lancy, 1994). In fact, the roots of learning to read and write are in learning to speak, and more generally in children's early development. Advocates of whole language (Goodman, 1989) and emergent literacy (Teale and Sulzby, 1986) state

⁴ *Concepts of print* refers to all the concepts related to how print is organized and used in reading and writing tasks. Concepts about print includes awareness that print carries a message; that there are conventions of print such as directionality (left to right, top to bottom); that there are differences between letters and words, between upper and lower case letters; that punctuation also carries meaning; and that books have some common characteristics (e.g. author, title, front/back). These concepts about print are fundamental understandings that support reading acquisition.

that reading and writing develop together and utilize the same mental processes involved in learning to use oral language.

Emergent literacy proponents view reading and writing as interrelated and challenge the notion that learning to write must follow learning to read. In fact, by applying the emergent literacy paradigm we can assume that children probably acquire the use of literate forms like storytelling, letter writing, and menu reading by engaging in these activities, and not from “training” in a set of decontextualized skills that are unrelated to the communicative goals of these activities.

On the other hand, some believe phonetic decoding is more important than lexical knowledge (children's understanding of words) for reading (e.g., Ehri, 1991; Kamberelis, 1992). Still other theorists and researchers have suggested the plausibility of a multiple access model of word recognition wherein phonemes, morphemes, and lexical units are processed almost simultaneously during reading (Juel, 1991; Perfetti, 1985; Sulzby and Teale, 1991).

Reading demands a lot from children’s oral language resources. In everyday conversations, children do not need to rely strictly on words to communicate or interpret information, because gestures and intonation also provide considerable information. Also, people engaged in conversations often share considerable knowledge about the topic, reducing the amount of new information that must be communicated. In contrast, once children move beyond picture books, information in books is presented only through words and syntax. Furthermore, the content may be new to the reader; he or she must acquire new knowledge using only what is presented on the page.

The relation between reading and writing appears to differ according to age of child. Researchers who have studied literacy development in preschool and early primary school children find only a minimal relationship between reading and writing (Juel, 1988; Pellegrini et al, 1991), whereas in older children, during the primary school years, the relation is stronger. This issue is clouded to the extent that measures of reading and writing for the preschool child can be called into question if they are not derived from a theory of literacy development. Although reading and writing may appear to develop initially as separate processes, Vygotsky ([1930-1935]1978) suggests that early writing, like drawing, begins as first-order symbolization and only later becomes-second order symbolization, like reading⁵. Other related theories, such as context-specific approaches to cognition, posit that neither reading nor writing develops in isolation from the other (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994).

Like early language and awareness of print, children's early writing is based on the writing of the adults around them. In the view of Pellegrini and Galda, joint story reading activities, where children learn to attend to meta-linguistic verbs, is the primary way that parents promote reading (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994). Writing, however, is driven by the child's growing capacity for symbolic representation, a capacity nurtured in verbal interactions with one's parent/caretaker and symbolic play with peers (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994). The connection between reading and writing is not yet fully understood. Goodman found that almost all the subjects responded that they could write, yet they responded differently when asked whether they could read (Goodman, 1994).

⁵ Drawing, as a first order symbolization, represents the idea or the image in the mind. However, writing as second order symbolization utilizes a code of written symbols which represents the sound image of speech which conveys the image in the mind. See *Thought and Language* by Vygotsky for further discussion.

Perhaps this response reflects differences between what they are required to read and what they are required to write. Maybe it signifies that, when writing, they control the text, whereas in reading, they do not. It might suggest that reading is deriving *meaning* from print while the writing that Goodman's subjects reported might have been merely the physical act of copying. However I see writing not as copying but as a communicative activity in which the written text is intended to be read.

Summary

It has been my purpose in this section to describe the process of literacy as developing from the time that language begins to develop in infancy. As children develop their ability to communicate through the interactions with the adults and caregivers around them, they begin to internalize the structures and conventions of the language spoken around them. At the same time as they develop their ability to communicate effectively in that language, they are creating the foundations for the ability to communicate through the symbolic representations of that language. Children acquire the concept of symbolic representation of ideas through pretend play first. Later they apply this same concept to scribbling, drawing, and then to print. In literate societies children learn the importance of print through their activities surrounding print in their interactions with the adults around them. Thus, the literate activities of reading and writing can be viewed as resulting from an emerging process of language development that began at birth and developed through communication and play to reading and writing.

Home Influences Relating to Children's Literacy Development

Introduction

A growing body of research literature supports the concept of literacy learning as a holistic phenomenon taking place in the home, in the community, in child care, preschool, and school environments, and culminating in literacy acquisition over time. As was previously discussed, the beginnings of literacy development occur within the context of the home during children's early years. It has also been shown that children's experiences with language and print at home are of particular importance for success in school (Schickendanz, 1999; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Sulzby and Teale, 1991; Clark, M, 1984; Cochrane-Smith, 1984). During the preschool years, children acquire and use spoken language, which is the precursor to print. Then they begin the shift from representing objects in speech (called a "first-level symbol system" [Vygotsky, 1978]) to representing oral speech with written symbols.

In-home Practices Affecting Literacy Development of Children

The emergent literacy paradigm has brought to the forefront the pivotal importance and impact of the home and family on children's literacy. This has led to a great deal of interest in the types and amounts of literacy-related activities occurring in the home of preschoolers and how these might influence children's developing literacy, with an emphasis on situations in which literacy experiences take place within the routines of daily life rather than in school-like contexts created in the home (Auerbach 1995).

Thus, a study of the language and literacy development of young children needs to take into account the home environment because this is the context in which the

language and literacy development of these children is taking place. This also means that, in examining the homes of children whose culture and traditions are based in those of Brazil, it would also be important to understand some of the history, culture and traditions of that country. Finally it also means that the convergence of a Brazilian home environment with the American culture which exists beyond the confines of the home may further influence the language and literacy development of those children.

According to Heath, “literacy events” are situations in which talk revolves around a piece of writing (Heath, 1983) or, alternatively, communicative situations “where literacy has an integral role” (Heath, 1984), and such talk may differ from one family to another, and from one culture to another. In my research I observed the in-home literacy events, and by that I mean a set of activities that contribute to the literacy development in children, such as reading, writing, singing, drawing, copying, etc.

Parent-child relationship and literacy development

While research into home influences has addressed a comprehensive range of forms of involvement in children’s learning and development, there has also been a strong interest in the type and amount of parental participation in early language and literacy development (Cairney, 1989; Teale, 1986). In their study of symbolic play, linguistic verbs, and early literacy, Pellegrini et al. found evidence that supports the theory that the relationship between young children and their parent or child-care provider is the foundation for their early literacy development (Pellegrini et al, 1991). Parent-child activity that promotes literacy and language development in children involves more than simply reading to children. It involves conversation at the children’s level, and activities that encourage richness of language; it means playing with children,

listening, talking, and singing with children. The more that adults talk with children about the stories they read, the more the story reading helps the child's language development. (Schickendanz, 1999).

Mealtime conversations have been found to be an especially interesting and rich source for observing content-embedded literacy events because they are more naturalistic and contain more free-flowing language exchanges than most other activities (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994). The length and frequency of these narratives can then be coded in order to get a sense of the amount of extended discourse the child listened to and participated in.

In Dickinson and Beals' research (1994), links between early experiences and kindergarten literacy appeared for child-constructed language environments (time spent pretending) when children were three, but more adult-determined environments showed linkages when children were four (mealtimes variables). These findings suggest that the younger children might not have been able to enter fully into the relatively complex adult-constructed dinner table language environments. In contrast, when pretending, these children controlled the complexity level and could fully exercise their emerging language abilities. Four-year olds, on the other hand, appeared to benefit from exposure to challenging adult-constructed discourses.

Older siblings or other relatives do, in some cases, provide alternate pathways to literacy. Many young children watch a great deal of television, but that is not a likely pathway to literacy unless it is within a context of extended discussion and activity with an adult or older child. While it has been suggested that symbolic play is an important pathway to representational competence, some children may gain their competence

through constructive play, drawing, or music (Wolf, 1988; Pellegrini and Galda, 1994). On the whole, however, there has been little research on children who achieve conventional literacy without the benefit of home storybook reading, so knowledge of alternative pathways is meager (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994).

In my research I examined both the types of literacy events in which the focal child was observed, but also the individuals with whom that child was engaged in that literacy event, if any. The family members, whether they are parents or siblings, are likely to have an influence of the developing literacy of young children.

Frequency of literacy events

In other instances, literacy events in the home were examined for the frequency and the types of activities (Teale, 1986; Purcell-Gates, 1996) in which literacy events were embedded. Print-embedded family activities were observed to occur in several domains: (1) daily-living routines, or literacy related to the practices of everyday life, such as writing shopping lists, reading recipes, paying bills; (2) entertainment, or literacy related to activities for pleasure and relaxation, like reading a novel, reading the TV guide, reading labels and information on a videotape; (3) school-related activity, or literacy related to school, as in homework and reading, (4) religion—reading the bible or using prayer books, (5) interpersonal communication, like writing letters, or sending greeting cards, (6) information networks, such as telephone books or calendars, and (7) teaching/learning literacy, as in teaching the alphabet to a child (Teale, 1986). In my research I used these same social domains to further the understanding of the purpose and intent of the literacy events observed in the homes of the participants in my study.

A study by Hildebrand and Bader found that of seven pre-kindergarten children, those with the higher emerging literacy measures had parents who provided more alphabet books, alphabet blocks, cards, and shapes; more trips to the library; more story-reading to the child; more stories on tape or on records; and more discussions of TV shows (Hildebrand and Bader, 1992). Children with lower emerging literacy skills were given proportionally more gifts other than books, and watched more hours of television per week.

Literacy activities at home vary according to socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Low-SES families do demonstrate literacy activities, but often not the conventional middle-class storybook reading (Anderson & Stokes, 1984; Goldenberg, et al, 1992). In contrast, the majority of literacy activities for the middle- SES families fell within the literacy-learning, storybook-reading, and entertainment categories (Purcell-Gates et al, 1995).

The idea of reading readiness, as evidenced in the curricula of schools and pre-schools and in publishers' materials, affects people's thinking about literacy development in two particularly significant ways. First, it leads them to conceptualize the early childhood period (and the behaviors of the children during this period) as the precursor to reading or writing, implying that only after the child has mastered the various subskills of reading-readiness does the real part begin. Secondly, it tells teachers and parents that learning to read and write begins in a school-like setting where these readiness skills can be taught. Thus, materials designed for use with young children in home, school, or school-like settings are inevitably modeled on formal, sequenced, direct instruction (Teale, 1986).

Whether it is a narrative being co-constructed by the participants, a story that is part of a family's oral tradition, or a story read from a book, storytelling as a literacy event provides a great opportunity for children to learn about language (Barton, 1998). Story reading in particular provides the opportunity for children to observe reading strategies and infer processes of storytelling. In relation to the book, the child may observe things such as directionality, following the words of a story, and turning the page (Barton, 1998). Thus, the interactions surrounding parent-child story reading are important to the child's development of print awareness. The participants may access prior knowledge of their own experiences to bring understanding to the text (life to text interaction), or they may relate the story to the child's life, inviting the child into a conversation about the story to bring understanding to the child's experiences in life (text to life interaction) (Smith, 1988).

Observations and diary reports of everyday activities show that children, regardless of SES, have many opportunities to learn about print. These include talking about the print encountered through daily routines such as grocery shopping, reading and writing letters, and reading entertainment magazines, bulletins, brochures (Baker, et al, 1999), road signs, food packages, prayer books, and Bibles. However, the presence of print and print-related items alone is not enough. Children also need to be taught the uses of those items (Purcell-Gates, 1997).

According to Dickinson and Beals (1994), children who experience regular family talk around the dinner table and have opportunities to use narrative and explanatory speech patterns have an advantage in learning to read. It follows, then, that children probably acquire the use of literate forms like storytelling and their knowledge of the

appropriate register for storytelling through their interaction and experience with those forms in their environment. These oral language skills and representational skills are then transferred to reading and writing, respectively.

Summary

Language develops through communicative activities of infants and young children with the adults, caregivers, and older children with whom they are in contact. Children's cognitive development is facilitated by their ability to use language to conceptualize and reference their ideas. Literacy, which includes both reading and writing, is the result of an emerging process that begins with language development.

Because emergent literacy is a process that starts at birth and continues during the early developmental years, the home environment and the communicative activities which take place among the family members in that environment have a profound effect on this developmental process.

Thus, emergent literacy as the model of literacy development in children is a new paradigm that recognizes the influence of the context of communication in the home, both verbal and written as being the predominant in children's developing literacy. Research supporting the influence of the home on children's success in school has given rise to a variety of "family literacy programs" which are intended as interventions to change the family's dynamic in order to influence successful school outcomes for children. A key factor in the effectiveness of these family literacy programs, however, is their flexibility in adapting to the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic needs, as well as the educational needs of the participants.

Summary of Relevant Literature

Chapter 2 has presented selected literature that examined the factors related to the language and literacy development of young children. The chapter was arranged into three sections. The first section dealt with the contextual nature of the literacy development. The literature indicates that language development and literacy development occur in a context that includes the cultural and socioeconomic background of the individuals.

The second section focused more specifically on the language and literacy development of young children. In this section I showed that the literature on language acquisition and emergent literacy demonstrates that language is a precursor to literacy, and that both develop through the communicative interactions that a child has with adults and older children around them in their daily lives. The work of Chomsky who has identified language as an innate instinct, common to all human beings explains the existence of language. Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development provides an understanding that language is fostered through interactions with adults who scaffold language and learning for young children. Research has provided evidence to the strategic importance of parents and other caregiving adults in the development of children's awareness of print and narrative. This has given rise to a new paradigm of literacy development, emergent literacy, which has situated the literacy development of children squarely in the midst of the home and family.

The third section examines what research has shown to be the ways that parents provide the setting for the emergent literacy process to take place. Analyses of the types and frequencies of literacy events facilitated by parents in the home have shown that

those from the mainstream culture are more likely to be successful in the U.S. mainstream schools.

The literature provides support for the view that language and literacy develop within the context of the home, the family, and the community. Because of the importance of understanding this holistic view of language and literacy, particularly as this relates to the language and cultural differences of the participants in my study, methods of qualitative research, which were used, can be shown to be most appropriate.

Chapter III: The Challenge

When Dominant and Nondominant Cultures Interface

Freire labels our tendency to consider our own culture superior to others' as intolerance (Freire, 1998). Since power lies in the hands of the dominant group, the members of the non-dominant culture have to overcome the intolerance of the dominant culture at the same time that they are striving to change the circumstances of their lives that deny them access to that power.

The ideological model of literacy (as opposed to the autonomous model) assumes that the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded (Street, 1984), and that literacy is a political act which cannot be separated from the rest of life (Street, 1984). This ideological model of literacy focuses on the context in which reading and writing are formally taught, and is structured by the social and political power holders of the particular culture. Educational institutions are governed by organizations (whether religious, governmental, or political) which control the content and process of the system. This power can lead to a form of social control that limits education to certain groups (Graf, 1979).

Research findings repeatedly show that there are family practices that support children's literacy learning and that prepare them for the type of learning experiences they will have in the classroom (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Taylor, 1983; Tizard and Hughes, 1984). Such practices are often found in families that are part of the dominant culture. Parents who are members of that culture are often unaware of the ways in which they prepare their children for success by teaching them the skills that they believe led to their own success (for example, Hancock and Gale, 1996).

The communicative practices of the dominant culture are often different from those of non-dominant families. These practices, both verbal and non-verbal, are generally the currency of school instruction. Those who do not recognize or understand the meaning and nuances of these practices find themselves excluded. “If we hope to extend access to literacy to all of our people, we must recognize and legitimize the culturally bound nature of literacy and literacy acquisition” (Purcell-Gates, 1994, p.50).

Roberts found that conversations between parents and children differ according to socioeconomic status (SES). Middle-SES mothers typically use language that is more directive toward the child (Roberts, 1993). Reger, in his study in Hungary, also found that mothers speak to their children differently depending on social class, and he noted that higher-SES mothers used more complex and varied language when speaking to their children (Reger, 1990). Heath also found that the low-SES parents of “Trackton” did not elicit questions from their children and they did not ask questions of their children, thereby curtailing language interactions (Heath, 1983).

Children from lower socioeconomic status may not be linguistically or behaviorally prepared for dominant culture schools which have been designed for middle SES dominant culture children. This does not imply that non-dominant lower SES children are inferior in their capacity to learn. What it does mean is that preparation and support for such children is needed in the school system. The school makes use of a standard dialect that is frequently not used by speakers of nonstandard dialects. It is also important to note that classist and racist stereotypes and prejudices may inhibit the success of these children, even with early support. In looking at the context of lower SES

non-dominant culture children it is important to examine the child's context, including health care, child care, nutrition, housing, and protection from violence.

Another caveat relates to the American propensity for equating low SES with poor preparation for school. According to Souza-Lima, the basic assumption underlying literacy practices in Brazil is that literacy is bound to the cultural and social development of individuals, but not to their economic development (Souza-Lima, 1997). This is not necessarily true in the United States, where lower income level is generally associated with poorer academic performance. Teachers of Brazilian immigrants and those from other cultures need to be aware that, although their students are economically poor, they are not necessarily poorly educated and their families do not necessarily fail to support their children's emergent literacy and school success. In fact, many of these families who are members of the working class in the United States may have been low middle class or middle class in Brazil. In addition, the dominant culture schools themselves create barriers for children with non-dominant culture and/or low SES backgrounds.

Cummins and Danesi also noted that the standardized tests employed by educational institutions are designed to reflect the experiences and values of white, middle class, dominant students (Cummins and Danesi, 1990). These tests are only a measure of academic aptitude for dominant middle class whites. For non-dominant students, such tests merely indicate how much exposure they have had to typical white middle class experiences and values.

Heath found that families from two different communities held very different concepts about early childhood that affected the way adults related to children and what adults expected of children. Children naturally learned the ways and customs that would

enable them to navigate and succeed in their community; however, these ways and customs did not necessarily enable them to succeed beyond their community (Heath, 1983). This would seem to indicate that children from non-dominant cultures who fail to succeed in school may do so because they do not understand or know how to navigate the unfriendly waters of the dominant school system.

Success Beyond School

Studies of non-dominant homes show those homes to be literate environments (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Teale, 1986; Taylor, 1983), though the literacy activities that occur may be different from those found in dominant homes.

Literacy is the key to power. In Brazil, a country where in the 1960's the vast majority of school-age children and parents were illiterate, Paulo Freire undertook to provide major widespread reforms to literacy programs so that this vast unempowered population could learn social and political responsibility and overcome the obstacle of illiteracy that prevented the development of a democracy, allowing them to take control of the power structure in their lives (Freire, 1998).

These literacy programs were so successful that they have been modeled throughout the world. According to Freire, all education is a political act because, by becoming literate, people engage in analysis and understanding of the dynamics of power in society through "critical consciousness." In so doing, people arm themselves with the knowledge and conviction to speak out for change. This dialogic interaction between the dominant and non-dominant culture can only take place when members of both cultures

are equally literate, and such dialogue will lead to “cultural synthesis” (Freire, 1997, p. 160).

In the United States, studies have shown that the struggle for power is evident in Hispanic ESL students (Sola and Bennett, 1985); and that, as they begin to learn English, they also become interested in the power structure (Rockhill, 1997). However, the pernicious effects of racial and ethnic stereotyping by members of the dominant class create an atmosphere which limits access to that power for non-dominant families (Purcell-Gates, 1997).

The more educators know about the culture, background, language, and abilities of individuals in family literacy programs, the more they will create effective programs (Shanahan, Mulhern, and Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). This can be said of other educational programs, as well. By recognizing differences in culture, socioeconomic background, education, and language, and by adjusting programs accordingly, the more likely we are to reach the students.

Auerbach recommends a variety of practices that are culturally sensitive to students. She states that the schools need to take the initiative in reaching out to parents who feel it is inappropriate to contact the school. Schools should also provide information regarding school policies in the language of the students and their parents. They should create liaisons with resources in the community that are members of the students’ culture. They should use newsletters to communicate with parents, involve parents in developing agendas for meetings, train parents to act as liaisons or interpreters for other parents, and involve all educational staff in learning about the minority community (Auerbach, 1997). I might add that these activities need to be done in the language of the students and their

parents. In short, school administrators and educators should make all necessary accommodations to help parents feel comfortable communicating with school personnel. This might mean providing child care, providing meals or refreshments, or eliciting the support of the church when it is a pivotal part of the life of those families. In my own experience, I have found that the church may yield a strong influence in helping to forge school and family alliances among Brazilians.

Schools have a culture of their own, and that culture is shaped by the regulations and policies that govern the teaching and learning in the school or district. This school culture inevitably reflects the values and interests of the dominant culture to which the school policymakers belong. Based on the preferences of the dominant culture, schools typically expect children to possess a certain level of mastery and comfort with the English language. Children who lack this familiarity with English, either because there is little scaffolding of language (Vygotsky, [1934] 1986) at home or because English isn't spoken there, need assessment instruments that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate (Tabors, 1997). Without such instruments, it will be difficult to understand and respond to the academic needs of these students.

Cummins suggests that a school culture that demonstrates a willingness to collaborate with community resources and remains open to cultural diversity creates a climate of empowerment for students (Cummins, 1989). Tabors recommends a stance that acknowledges the social, cultural, and linguistic context of the home, and notes that parental involvement is particularly important for children whose home language is not English (Tabors, 1997).

Educators need to acknowledge the disabling effects that racial and ethnic stereotyping produces in attitudes and policies that restrict access and “blame the victim.” They must decide whether they are willing to challenge this structure. If educators are committed to empowering students, they must decide what form their challenge will take (Cummins, 1989). It is also essential to teach those without power the rules of the dominant culture so that they can more easily participate in it (Delpit, 1995).

The gatekeeper to the dominant culture is the school system. By facilitating success for some children and not others, schools in effect control access to the dominant culture. If the cultural practices of society define who is literate and who is not, those who control literacy practices control who will be admitted into the sacred sanctum of this literate society (Gee, 1990; Cairney, 1995).

Literacy Begins at Home

In the home of the preschool child he or she begins to understand and experience the function and form of print as it is used there (Teale and Sulzby, 1994), through early attempts at writing and drawing, storytelling, and story listening. Children see print in use; they observe and hear it being read; they see older children and adults producing print through writing, and they begin to produce their own writing and to read their own writing.

Those in the home who are expert in the uses of literacy—parents, older siblings, and other family members—model and introduce these uses to children. It is they, rather than the reading teacher at school, who create situations such as dinner table conversations and interactive bedtime story rituals where children can observe, practice, and reflect on their experiences of language and literacy. When literacy is viewed as

emerging within and shaped by the varieties of social contexts in which children grow and develop (Sulzby and Teale, 1991), the influence of the home and family, rather than the school, is seen as the primary force. Literacy development is multifaceted, requiring growth in oral discourse skills as well as print-related abilities, and it occurs in the home as well as in preschools and schools (Pellegrini and Galda, 1994).

Parents can facilitate the development of print awareness by being alert, and when they see that children are interested in letters and words, they can provide opportunities for them to learn more about them in informal playful settings rather than formal school-like lessons. Middle-class parents are often keenly aware of the skills necessary for children to succeed in mainstream schools, and they are likely to seek every opportunity to prepare them. Therefore middle-income parents may be more likely to engage in this playful orientation than are lower-income parents (Baker, Serpell, and Sonnenschein, 1995). Where parents were formerly encouraged to replicate drill and practice as in classrooms, the better informed parents now know what goes on in the classrooms today, such as, guided reading, whole language, emphasis on inferential thinking, and other activities that situate literacy development in a broader context. However other families can be taught similar skills and schools can help them. Krol-Sinclair documented that changes in literacy environment can increase English literacy and language proficiency for parents as well as children, and thus increase the incidence of shared literacy at home, such changes also increase understanding about classrooms and classroom literacies (Krol-Sinclair, B., 1996).

A number of studies support a strong link between a home environment rich in literacy activities, literacy practices, and literacy events and children's acquisition of

school-based literacy. Practices such as shared reading, reading aloud, making print materials available, and promoting positive attitudes toward literacy in the home have been found to significantly improve children's literacy learning (Clark, M, 1984; Cochrane-Smith, 1984). According to parental reports obtained by Burns and Collins (Burns and Collins, 1987), gifted kindergarteners who were early readers had had more home exposure to discussions of letter-sound correspondences, letter names, and word identification experiences than did those who were not early readers.

Types of literacy experiences in middle-SES families are geared toward school readiness. Middle-income parents reported reading stories to their children more frequently, using flashcards to help children learn words, hearing children read, having books and magazines in the home, and having children experiment with the creation of words and sentences using flashcards (Baker et al, 1999).

Different beliefs and attitudes affect the types of literacy activities parents facilitate for their children. Most families use ABC books (though less often than other types of books) and reading is seen as a set of skills to be cultivated. But families have different perspectives toward children and parents engaging in conversation about the print encountered in daily routines, or children practicing writing letters seen in various places (signs, newspapers, books) as offering alternative ways to cultivate reading skills. These different perspectives affect the kinds of literacy opportunities parents make available to their children (Baker et al, 1999).

Supporting Literacy in Families

The understanding of literacy as an emergent process that occurs first in the context of the home and family of the preschool child has led to the development of

family literacy programs whose purpose is to influence the home environment of children who are at risk for school failure. The approach is based on the hypothesis that if children from middle-class, white, dominant families are more successful in school than children from low-SES, non-dominant families, the solution is to change the interactions, the materials, and the activities engaged in by the latter families so that they will become more like the white, middle-class families. The danger in this type of program is that, in their enthusiasm to “improve” the home environment of at-risk families, educators often do not accept or respect the home cultures of the students. It is very important for educators working with families to support literacy to develop approaches that are culturally sensitive to the individuals and communities they are serving (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

In addition, Auerbach points out that focusing on the family as “the locus of change excludes consideration of social, economic, or institutional forces that may contain family life and impede literacy development,” (Auerbach, 1997) placing the entire responsibility for education on the family and removing responsibility for education from the school and the community.

There has been a great deal of interest in learning if and how family literacy programs might influence the developing literacy of children. Family literacy researchers are interested in exploring how participation in a family literacy program might favorably impact literacy development in children, as well as investigating which literacy practices and/or literacy events at home might support the development of literacy in children and other family members.

It is important for family literacy practitioners to understand the need for sensitivity to differences in attitudes, values, and experiences of the families they work with. Successful family literacy educators need to be familiar with the cultural backgrounds of the participants, including the challenges they face, the reasons they wish to be in a family literacy program, their past history and educational experience, and the aspects of their culture that could be misconstrued in our culture (Auerbach, 1989). Differences in expressing feelings in public, attitudes towards those in authority, value placed on relationships versus achievements, facial expressions, and eye contact when speaking, and differences in attitudes about personal autonomy or expressing one's opinion all are culturally based behaviors.

The English-literacy problem is often seen as a direct result of poverty, cultural deprivation, and disadvantage. Mainstream families do not have the problem; therefore the solution is to make disadvantaged families more like mainstream families (Grant, 1997). Needless to say, this approach is severely lacking in sensitivity. Moreover, it is rarely effective.

Culturally sensitive family literacy programs can significantly improve the school success of the children. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) found that the relationship between ten Mexican parents and their children's school improved as parents learned more about the school and its expectations for their children. Parents also felt more confident in communicating with teachers and, as parents spent more time reading and writing with their children, they used these times to share their cultural values and beliefs with their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). Latino families in Turlock, California, were grateful that the school-supported family literacy program promoted and enhanced their

relationship with their children by demonstrating to both children and parents that reading and playing games together, in any language, fosters a closer relationship between parents and children (Switzer, 1999).

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) have argued that the explanation for school failure is due not to the deficits of parents, but rather to the failure of schools to support families struggling to overcome the social, political, and economic challenges that prevent them from providing a supportive learning environment at home (Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Auerbach points out that many of the outcomes that the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) tracks as indicators of success (standardized test scores, parental help with homework, parental involvement with school functions, characteristics of healthy families) are culture-specific to white, middle-class norms and expectations (Auerbach, 1997). Their model presupposes that parents are at home with their children to watch television together, or play together, or help with homework. In reality, the parents may be working three jobs to support their children, and the children may be in the care of aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, or even older siblings. I myself was once enlisted to provide child care for a brief period while I was conducting a home visit. Expecting parents to help their children with homework assumes not only that the parents are available, but also that they are communicatively competent in standard English and that they have the educational background to understand the homework, to explain it to a child at the child's level, and to help the child in the language of the school. This same dissonance with culture of families has been observed in the federal Even Start Program, which requires the use of standardized tests for the adults that do not

take into account the socio-linguistic background of the adult participants (Fandell, 1997).

Because of these challenges, family literacy programs may need to provide transportation, child care, and bilingual teachers. Program personnel may need to assist students and families with locating housing or stores that sell nutritious foods, translating documents, immigration requirements, or conducting assessments for learning disabilities. Such a network of services would: (1) help educators to better understand the needs of students and their families; (2) help to alleviate some of the challenges and barriers faced by these families; and (3) facilitate more successful outcomes for learners.

Summary

There are many people who believe that in this culture there is only one way to educate people for success. This one way reflects the *mainstream* white middle class culture, since much research indicates that children from white middle class families generally succeed in such schools. However we must reflect that many children from such families do not succeed academically. Those who do succeed frequently fit into a certain mold – white, middle class family, living in a print-rich environment with parents who have the time, interest and ability to read often to themselves and their children.

Our educational system which reflects the American “mainstream culture” is grounded in the written word. This mainstream culture is not based on an oral tradition – it is geared, instead, to reading and writing. Our system is geared to the mainstream middle class student, the student from the culture of power. However the learning needs of others whose learning styles may be primarily oral, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, auditory (Gardner, 1991), or who come from homes that are culturally

diverse or linguistically different may not be supported by this system. Because power resides in the white American middle class, the power holders decide that the style of learning which is easiest for them and in which they can most easily excel should become the norm for everyone. There are some who believe that the class and power realities in America compound this problem (Freire, 1997; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Perkinson, 1968).

Thus, the challenge is multiple. The poor don't have access to the tools the power structure requires (computers, multitudes of print materials, parents and/or other adults who are available and experienced in reflection and dialogue). Instead the priority of their lives may be surviving homelessness and hunger rather than extending the educational experiences of their children.

Immigrants when they come to the U.S. are often in debt, and they frequently don't have the language to communicate their needs. In the case of some Brazilians, the subject of this dissertation, the availability of education has been a new experience. Some may question what has been the benefit of an education that has trained them in skills in which they cannot earn sufficient income in their native country to support their families. In addition many have suffered in their own country due to discrimination and lack of services for the aged, the disabled, and the poor.

In the U.S. the expectations and attitudes of teachers in public schools may include low expectations for academic success, while others may feel shock and anger at being held accountable for the failure of such immigrant children to achieve successful scores on high-stakes standardized state tests which teachers perceive as the problem of the immigrant child's lack of preparation, effort, innate ability, or motivation to learn.

There is an overarching lack of understanding of the complex challenges faced by immigrant students. These students may lack literacy in their native language. They may come from homes and families too busy working so that they may provide the essentials of life to their family here as well as in their native country. They may also be ashamed to find themselves displaced from a middle or higher class of profession in Brazil and the respect associated with it to the life of menial, unskilled labor because of their limited English proficiency. Carrying these burdens, they find themselves attempting to navigate a school culture that is not only the dominant mainstream culture of American society, but is viewed by many to be the leader of the entire world in intellectual, industrial, commercial, and even moral ventures. Some of the leaders of this mainstream American culture even believe themselves morally obligated to lead the entire world to follow their way of life.

Recently nativism and anglocentrism as seen in the so-called Unz initiative passed in Massachusetts and California. Based on this notion it is now illegal for teachers to teach in any language other than English in a public school. The value of past experiences and learning of immigrant students simply will not be heard and recognized until they have somehow managed to bridge the chasm of culture and language on their own.

The challenge that we face is:

1. to recognize the intellectual strengths of these students
2. to find areas in which those strengths can connect with the demands of the educational system of the dominant culture.
3. to build upon that strength as a bridge to construct new skills and learning – not to displace existing learning.

4. to provide the skills necessary to navigate the dominant culture while maintaining the richness and prior knowledge developed in their heritage culture.

This is the challenge that we must address when educating the many newcomers entering our schools from a myriad of languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds around the world. How can we build this bridge between prior knowledge and skills learned in a different language perhaps through a different modality of learning and make this connection to the new skills they must develop to successfully surpass the challenges not only of schools and high-stakes testing but, eventually, a whole world of success in all aspects of life, whether it be family, career, health, or home. In this dissertation, a study of the in-home literacy practices of a group of Brazilian Head Start children, I will attempt to identify the strengths of these families as well as the barriers of immigration that might impact building the bridge.

Chapter IV: Methods and Procedures

Introduction

Qualitative research has specific goals and techniques which make it appropriate for certain types of studies, particularly those which are related to the personal development of a group of people under study. Because such phenomena include a plethora of variables that influence participants in various ways and to varying degrees, it is the method of choice in such studies.

In the study of literacy development, the descriptive methodologies characteristic of qualitative research have increasingly become the methods of choice. Qualitative research is a type of research consisting of several methods of inquiry that are traditional to the fields of sociology and anthropology (Kirk and Miller, 1986).

Existing research supports the notion that literacy and language development occur in children through language interactions with the adults around them (Bissex, 1980; Chall and Snow, 1982; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Therefore, it is critical that researchers keep the study of literacy within the context of the everyday lives of the people around them (Szwed, 1981).

Qualitative research most effectively accommodates the complexities involved, taking into account the multiple everyday contexts and the diversity of literacy events that form a child's world. I believe that the many and varied influences of this holistic phenomenon can only be captured through qualitative techniques. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to explore the questions under study in this dissertation using qualitative methods. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry in which the researcher

attempts to learn the stories of a group of people. Frequently they are stories of hard-working, financially disadvantaged people with pride and dignity, despite the challenges they face (Bateson, 1984) because they are intrinsically worthy (Seidman, 1991).

Through interviews and in-home observations, I have attempted to learn the stories of my informants.

Through this research I have attempted to discover the significance of the events, incidents, and/or culture demonstrated or disclosed by the informants of my study.

My research has been guided by two central questions: (1) What are the in-home literacy practices of a group of five Brazilian immigrant Head Start families? and (2) What cultural and socioeconomic factors might influence these practices? The purpose of this chapter will be to describe the methods and procedures employed in this research.

While my initial concern was to develop research techniques sensitive to the unique complexities of the families, my primary goal was to develop ways of studying the literacy practices of the participating families in a natural setting. Techniques gleaned from existing literacy research guided but did not predetermine my approach. Szwed stresses the need for researchers to keep the study of literacy within the context of the everyday lives of people (Szwed, 1981). In this study it has been important to include the broader influences of family, community, school, and the major life stressor of leaving home and extended family to emigrate to a foreign country where the language and customs may seem strange and disorienting. Therefore, the selection of naturalistic in-home observations and interviews with adult family members were the predominant data-gathering methods, which furnished a holistic frame within which to view the literacy practices in the homes of these young children and the context of the family in which

those literacy practices were observed.

Data from a series of in-home observations and parental interviews comprised the study. This was done in order to learn about the types and frequencies of in-home literacy practices regarding the children in these families and to hear the parents describe their situations from their own perspective.

In conducting my research, I situated my observations and interviews in the naturalistic setting of the homes of my informants. In conducting this research my purpose was to use a naturalistic setting that is both comfortable and familiar to the participants. In order to further a deep understanding, my intent was to work with a small group of participants with whom I could maintain extended contact over a period of time (Merriam, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Employing a holistic approach to gathering data, my purpose was to learn about the answers to my questions in the real lives of my informants. There were no right or wrong answers nor even a single yes/no answer to any of my research questions. I chose to pursue those themes that appeared most relevant to my questions and most compelling to me personally (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is possible that other researchers would have elected to focus on other themes. The nature of the qualitative research requires that one must always be open to change the directions of a study if the data reveals a compelling new avenue to explore (Bateson, 1984).

Since qualitative research attempts to either verify existing theory or develop new theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the researcher will then refer to the theoretical frame as the data comes in and analysis begins. The theoretical frame is an aid to the researcher

in examining his/her results in the light of already existing research data, and may provide support to the validity of the study.

Stance of the Researcher

Following in the methods of anthropologists, I have attempted to immerse myself in the culture of five Brazilian Head Start families on Martha's Vineyard. My purpose was to understand these families through "an impulse of closeness" by relocating and living in their midst, while recognizing the inevitable "impulse of distance" (Bateson, 1984, p. 161), stemming from my inherent disposition as a person born outside of that culture. Due to this juxtaposition of identities, my role as researcher was one of participant observer. As I strove to enter the door of their lives and their culture, I was mindful that I was not born of their families and culture.

In employing qualitative methods the researcher who is the primary instrument of data collection and is integrally connected to the data needs to maintain an awareness that his/her training, knowledge, and characteristics are necessarily brought to the research through his or her unique perspective. This means that the researcher's ability to be responsive and sensitive to the whole context of the research study, including nonverbal cues, is paramount to the success of the project. It also means that the success of the project depends on the ability of the researcher to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the study as they become known (Merriam, 1988). The researcher needs to be able to view the data in a context in which the understanding of an observed situation can be expanded through other types of communication, such as allowing interviews to inform the observations and vice-versa (Merriam, 1988).

I approached this research from the multi-faceted perspective of (1) my own personal interest in Brazilian culture as described in Chapter 1, (2) a Ph.D. student conducting my dissertation research, and (3) a Head Start Research Scholar receiving funding from ACYF (the Administration of Children, Youth, and Families) to complete this research. These latter two perspectives carried with them certain responsibilities and requirements.

Ph.D. Student

As a Ph.D. student embarking on my dissertation research, I worked under the guidance of my doctoral committee and my advisor, who advised me as I proceeded with my work. Also, as a researcher from Lesley University, my research proposal needed the approval of the "Committee for Research on Human Subjects". The members of this committee had particular concerns because my study involved a vulnerable population of economically deprived immigrants, and that the study itself, in which I would be spending a great deal of time in their homes doing observations and interviews, could be very intrusive. The importance of safeguarding the interests, sensitivities, and rights of individuals, especially those from vulnerable populations, has been identified as an important ethical issue in qualitative research (Spradley, 1979). In order to ensure that these subjects would not be exploited in any way, the committee required that I create a "Consent Form" that would explain clearly what would be involved in the study. After some negotiation regarding the exact wording of the "Consent Form", it was approved by the committee.

The final consent form was presented to the participants in both Portuguese and English. A description of how this "Consent Form" was presented to the participants is

described in the "First Meeting with Participants" section of this chapter. The content of the form described the purpose of this project, the benefits of this project to the Head Start program, the duration of the project, the number of home visits, what I would do during these home visits, and that each family would receive a \$300 stipend at the conclusion of the home visits. The consent also described a proposed program of group meetings with family literacy activities. However, this latter proved inconvenient for most of the families, and was ultimately dropped from the data collection plan.

Following the description of the project, there was a list of participant rights regarding the project. This guarantee of rights included the option that they could stop or refuse any home visit without notice, that they could refuse to have their interview tape-recorded (one participant did refuse), that they would never be taped without their consent at the time, that they might listen to any tape recording, that they could leave the project at any time and for any reason, that strict confidentiality would apply to anything learned through observations or interviews, that their true names would not be used in any information disseminated about the project, and that they would be entitled to receive a project summary which would be disseminated to the Head Start program at the completion of the work. The full consent form, in English and Portuguese, is included in the appendix of this dissertation.

Head Start Research Scholar

ACYF offers research grants to doctoral-level graduate students "who form partnerships with Head Start programs in their communities to improve the quality and effectiveness of Head Start" (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999). According to ACYF, Head Start has a mission to serve as a national laboratory for

“expanding our knowledge in the field of child development” and that, as such, Head Start programs provide access to a “highly diverse population where research can be conducted in natural settings” (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999). As a prospective Head Start Scholar my proposal for research was guided by certain criteria. (1) The proposed research needed to be one which had “already been conducted in other settings and with other populations, but had never been conducted with a Head Start population” (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999). (2) The Head Start Research Scholar was required to enter into a partnership with a Head Start program for the purposes of conducting the research. As evidence that this had been accomplished the application for the Head Start Research Scholar grant was required to include (a) a letter from the Head Start program certifying that they had entered into a partnership with the researcher, and (b) a letter certifying that the application had been reviewed and approved by the Policy Council of the Head Start program (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999).

This meant that in addition to designing my research plan, I needed to find a Head Start program with a Brazilian population interested in my research and willing to collaborate with me. Initially, I contacted two Head Start programs with Brazilian families in the greater Boston area where I lived at the time. One was hesitant to collaborate on a research project. The second was interested, but the population was scattered across several towns and the director of that Head Start Program believed that they did not represent the Brazilian community. I, then, contacted the Head Start program at Martha's Vineyard Community Services and they were very interested in a

collaboration. I learned, further, that, as a home-based Head Start program, they would be ideally suited to a research project involving home visits.

Participant Observer

In my role as participant observer I was challenged to participate as much as possible in the lives and stories of the participants in order to come to a better and clearer understanding of their world, how they view their reality, and how they make meaning from it all (Bateson, 1984). At the same time, I was required to observe myself in the scene and recognize the personal issues that I might bring to understanding and interpreting the experiences I observed and the voices I heard.

As a participant observer, I have been drawn into the lives of the participants in ways that otherwise might not occur in a research project. Participants and their friends and relatives have plied me with questions about the schools, the government, and about my background. They have asked my assistance in translating, in making and taking English language phone calls for them, in applying for a post office box, and in applying for medical insurance. All of these activities have served to enrich my experience as participant observer and have added to my understanding of the challenges faced by these five Brazilian families as they attempt to navigate the American culture. Descriptions of some of my experiences as participant observer follow.

Translator and interpreter.

Because of the relationship we developed during the project, the families have asked for my assistance in several cases where they needed someone to translate documents or conversations. One of these concerned a letter from the State of Massachusetts regarding transfer of automobile insurance from an insurance company

that was closed by the state. I translated the document for this parent and referred him to a phone number provided where he could receive more information in Portuguese.

When one mother, Larissa, gave birth to a second child in December, I visited her at the hospital and brought a gift for her. At the hospital, what I had expected to be a short visit, turned into a much longer one. When hospital personnel realized that I spoke Portuguese, they immediately asked me to act as interpreter for them. They had several questions to ask her, and they also wanted to reassure her about the baby's health. They realized that their many questions and procedures caused her to worry that something was wrong with the baby, but they had not been able to reassure her that it was routine and that her baby was fine. We were all relieved when she finally understood this.

In another instance I set up an appointment and then accompanied one of the mothers, as her interpreter, to the local Community Action Agency to inquire about assistance for housing.

In a fourth instance I went to the office of a medical doctor to interpret during a medical exam for one of the mothers. Requests such as these indicate that a need exists in this community for skilled translators and interpreters for this disadvantaged, immigrant population.

Cultural broker.

Sometimes, in addition to translating from Portuguese to English, I found that American procedures and practices also needed to be interpreted and explained to families. During a visit to Maria's family, her parents asked me to translate a letter from the state government regarding their application for health insurance. This became an hour-long discussion in which I tried to answer some questions about social security,

taxes, and Medicaid. I also referred them to the appropriate social service agency for further assistance.

Providing assistance to others in the Brazilian community.

During my scheduled visits it was not uncommon for Brazilian friends of the participants to also ask my help in securing services or simply to ask me questions about my work and how they might be able to get into English classes. (There are waiting lists for all ESL classes here.) Whenever possible I provided the names and phone numbers of service providers able to assist them.

Facilitator for assistance with basic needs.

During another visit I learned that one participating family, who arrived from Brazil only a few short months ago, did not have any winter clothes and could not afford to buy any. I contacted Martha's Vineyard Community Services and a local church and explained the situation and the need for confidentiality. Within a few days both the parents and the child had winter coats.

Networker to Martha's Vineyard community.

Through my contacts with the Brazilian families, and the Martha's Vineyard Community Services staff, word about my presence on the island and my work with Brazilians has spread. Because of the steadily increasing population of Brazilians, community leaders are interested in taking steps to provide the outreach necessary to support this particular immigrant population as they and their children begin to integrate into the American culture. As an example of this interest, I met with the vice president of a local bank. Our purpose was to develop ways to better outreach the Brazilian community, and to make the services of the bank accessible and of value to the Brazilian

members of the Martha's Vineyard community. The connections I was developing with various organizations in the community eventually led to my being hired as the first English as a Second Language Coordinator for the elementary schools on Martha's Vineyard.

Facilitator for assistance with housing.

As previously discussed, housing is a major challenge for the year-round residents living on Martha's Vineyard. At her request, I took Nilza to the local community housing agency, as well as the Chamber of Commerce to sign up for the "housing list", a list of island residents with available summer rentals. I followed up with this by going over the list with her each week to determine which rentals interested her, and then I made the phone calls on her behalf. In every case, however, it turned out that the "house" for rent was, in reality, one bedroom in someone's house.

At my last visit to her home, Denise had excitedly told me about the house they were buying. A few weeks later, I tried to contact her for several days, at both her previous and her "new" residence to no avail. I finally found her and her entire family sharing a hotel room with her sister. Denise's sister worked for the owner of the hotel, who agreed to let the family stay for four weeks until the height of the tourist season started. Denise said that they had a place to rent for an additional two weeks after that. Then, she said she didn't know where they would go; and her baby was due in five days.

As we talked, Denise told me that a short time before they were to close on their house, the bank discovered a needed repair on the roof. The owner refused to make the repair and the bank withdrew the loan. Denise told me that a few days later, the owner placed the house back on the market at an asking price of \$40,000 more than their

Purchase and Sale agreement. She angrily told me that she believed that the owners were looking for a way to break the agreement so that they could take advantage of the wildly escalating housing market.

Island shuffler.

On Martha's Vineyard, everyone, not only Brazilians, is at risk for inadequate housing during the tourist season. Many residents resort to "tenting" for the summer (Allis, 2002; Rodriguez and Dedman, 2002). During the height of the tourist season housing also becomes scarce and expensive due to tourist demand, leaving many families in makeshift or shared quarters (Allis, 2002). Thus, housing also became a problem for me as researcher on this project. Although I had arranged for on-island summer housing, as well as a contingency plan, and another contingency plan, one plan after the other tumbled (more evidence of the dysfunctional state of affairs regarding housing). Then, I, too, became one of the "Island Shufflers." To become an "Island Shuffler" means changing mailing address, arranging forwarding of mail, transferring phone service, arranging for movers, and arranging for storage of belongings at the exact same time that a thousand other year-round island residents are doing the same thing. Only those who can afford to own their own homes are exempt from this.

For me, it also meant moving my files, my books, my data, and my computer in addition to my personal belongings, from one place to another, worrying that nothing would be damaged or lost. Then, after housing was found, I faced re-organizing; arranging a workspace; arranging storage for books, files, and other belongings that space would not allow; and finally finding things in the small room I came to inhabit. Although inconvenient, this experience also enriched my perspective as a participant observer,

allowing me to experience the same inconvenience, worry, and disruption of life that all of the participants in my project face every spring.

Preparation for Research

Relocated to Martha's Vineyard

In order to establish a relationship with the Martha's Vineyard community and to make myself most accessible and available to carry out the research, I relocated to Martha's Vineyard for the duration of the data collection for Year One of the project. Martha's Vineyard has its own island culture and the culture of the Brazilian families is embedded within this. I relocated for two important reasons. (1) Relocating has allowed me to maintain continuous contact with the families and the staff of the Head Start program, which would not have occurred if I commuted by ferry from the mainland to conduct the home visits. (2) It has also allowed me to have easy access to the families in the project; and to experience Island living as the project participants do, for example, shopping at the Brazilian store, meeting them with their friends in neighborhood shops, and participating, on occasion, in the Brazilian churches.

Martha's Vineyard is an island resort community, 23 miles long and 9 miles wide, off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts. The year round population of the six towns incorporated on the island is approximately 16,000 (Ward, 2002). During the tourist season, the number of residents is multiplied several times, and is responsible for the above-described summer housing shortage. The only year-round commercially operated access to the mainland is either by ferry boat operated by the Steamship Authority or one of several Cessna aircraft operated by Cape Air from Martha's Vineyard Airport. Food, gas, heating oil, clothing, and other items are all more expensive to purchase on the island

than on the mainland due to shipping costs. In addition, during the tourist season it can be extremely difficult and expensive to reserve a space for a car on the ferry for trips to and from the mainland.

Although housing is an ever present problem for many island residents, there are many jobs available at this time. The difference between conditions on the island from winter to summer is that in the winter, when there is little tourism, laborers employed by the tourism industry are without jobs. Although affordable housing is usually available during the winter, many families experience financial hardship, loneliness, and drug or alcohol abuse (Allis, 2002; Mazer, 1976).

Head Start Contact

Martha's Vineyard Community Services is the umbrella organization which sponsors a Head Start program, a day care center, a family center, a thrift shop, and many other services for children and families on Martha's Vineyard. The Head Start program is a home-based program in which Head Start families receive weekly visits from home visitors. During these visits, the Head Start home visitors provide services similar to those in a center-based Head Start program. The home visitors bring materials for art, music, and pre-literacy activities, such as making play-doh or collages, sorting colors and shapes, creating books with children, and many other activities. The Head Start home visitor, the parent(s) and the Head Start child participate together in these activities. There is also an opportunity to discuss parenting issues, and social service issues with the parents.

In addition, the Head Start program offers monthly field trips, such as a visit to the firehouse or a local landscape nursery, for Head Start families. Parenting groups are

also offered to parents on a monthly basis. As part of my orientation to Head Start, I participated in a field trip to the Edgartown firehouse. This allowed parents to become familiar with me and gave me an opportunity to observe a head start group activity.

Meeting with Head Start Staff

Within a few days of my arrival on Martha's Vineyard, I met with Debbie Milne, the director of the Head Start program at Martha's Vineyard Community Services. The purpose of the visit was to explain the scope of the project for the year ahead and discuss how to involve staff and parents. At this initial meeting, we decided that the next step would be to meet with the home visitors who work with the Brazilian families and to explain the details of the project with them and to develop a plan to begin.

The following week I met with these Head Start staff. One of these home visitors is Brazilian. The others were Americans and did not speak Portuguese. However, fluency in Portuguese is not required of all home visitors for the Brazilian families because some of the parents and children speak English to varying degrees. Head Start has only one bilingual home visitor, a Brazilian social worker, who includes in her caseload only those families who do not speak English at all.

I explained the purpose and scope of the project, including number of families needed, number of visits to be conducted, and that a stipend would be awarded to each family at the end of the project. The staff had many concerns and questions about the research. Maria, the Brazilian home visitor, seemed worried that the participants would be objectified by the research and/or by me, the researcher. The home visitors warned me that I might not really learn anything from the research and offered the following comments: (1) The Brazilians don't always tell the truth. Instead, they say what they

think you want to hear. (2) It is impossible to be unobtrusive in the home of a Brazilian. One home visitor commented that, "No matter how often you go, you will always be a visitor in their homes. They will never get used to you. You will always be special, and they always will want to go out of their way to show their hospitality and to show that you are welcome in their home."

The Head Start staff advised that the families who did not speak English would be more likely to participate if they knew that I would help them with translations of documents or phone calls or other problems requiring English during my visit. They also suggested that if the parents understood that not all of the visits had to be in the home, but could be during other activities outside the home, such as shopping, or banking, they would be more likely to participate. This would also be less disruptive to the families' usual routine; and it would allow me to observe a more diverse range of family interactions. I gladly accepted both of these suggestions.

We, then, developed a plan to introduce the project to the Brazilian Head Start families and to invite them to participate. Our strategy was to help relieve fears and concerns of the families to elicit their cooperation. We decided that first, the regular home visitors for the Brazilian families would tell them about the project, and the help I would be willing to give if they needed it. Second, I would accompany the regular home visitor to the next home visit of any family who had expressed interest. At that time, I would introduce myself and explain the project in detail, as well as the consent form. Families who chose to participate in the project would sign the consent form and we would schedule my next visit without the home visitor. All of my conversations were always initiated with the parents and children in my project in Portuguese. It is important

to note here that I only spoke English in those instances when replying to the parents or children who at times spoke to me in English.

Since we could not predict how many families would be interested, we decided that if more than five (the limit for the study) were interested, then we would select the participants by lottery. We hoped that there would be at least five who would be interested. In the end we had exactly five families who chose to participate in the project. One final suggestion was that I participate in a Head Start field trip to the Fire Station as previously mentioned.

Head Start Field Trip – Fire Station

Head Start offers several group activities for parents and several field trips throughout the year in addition to the weekly home visits, and this field trip, which was for all Head Start families, American and Brazilian alike, became my first contact with the Head Start families.

I arrived early with one of the American home visitors, Mary, and we began by setting up a space for us to meet with one of the firefighters. A short time later, Maria, the Brazilian home visitor, and two Brazilian families arrived together. Everyone sat together in a big circle on the floor. Maria and the Brazilians sat together in one place in the circle so that Maria was able to translate everything that the firefighter said to the children and parents. At first, she (the firefighter) did not seem to be aware of the Brazilian children raising their hands, wanting to answer her questions. Maria helped them get her attention, and after that the firefighter made it a point to include the Brazilian as well as the American children in the discussion. It is possible that because they were speaking in a different language she did not “hear” their words until she

became aware that they were not speaking English and she consciously focused on listening to them so that they would not be excluded.

Maria encouraged the Brazilian children to participate, because they seemed shyer than the other children. But once they knew that it was all right to jump into the cab of the ladder truck, they were happy to take their turns to sit at the wheel.

At one point, a grandmother of one of the Brazilian children noticed me, and said she thought she knew me. Then Maria introduced us, and we chatted about Brazil and the US.

This field trip gave me the chance to let my presence be known to the Brazilians, at least one of whom remembered me when I later went to his home. It also gave me the chance to overcome my own fears that I might find that my Portuguese was not as good as I thought it was. I was glad to see that my Portuguese was fine, and that I had no problem communicating with the Brazilian parents and grandparent who were present.

Project Recruitment

Following the meetings and field trip the Head Start home visitors explained the project to the Brazilian parents during regular home visits and asked the parents if they were interested in participating, as planned. Five parents expressed an interest in learning more about the project and possibly participating. As we agreed, I then accompanied each Head Start home visitor to her assigned families who had expressed interest in the project.

I met privately with parents from each of these families for approximately one hour to explain the project in detail. I explained what would happen during home visits, that we would arrange visits at a time that was mutually agreeable to both of us, that

during some visits I would interview the parents, but during most of the visits I would sit quietly and observe the children, and that some visits could take place in other settings that were part of the family's daily routine, such as shops, post office, etc.

I explained that I would be conducting a study to learn about how children learn at home when the language is different from the dominant language of the culture. I tried carefully not to offend or give parents the idea that their literacy level was being scrutinized or that they needed to show off their literacy activities for me and, therefore, did not use that term with them. I explained that I would visit the home ten to fifteen times during the period of the project. I also explained that the family would receive a stipend of \$300 for participating in the project, and that the funds were being provided by the Head Start Research Scholar Grant.

I explained the content of the consent form then gave it to the parent to read. I suggested that they take some time to think about it and sign it later to give them time to think over what might be an intrusive process for their entire families. Four of the five mothers signed immediately. One wanted to discuss it with her husband who was not present. However, she set an appointment for me to begin the home visits. At the time of this first meeting, all five of the mothers scheduled an appointment for me to return.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this section I will discuss the procedures for data collection employed in this study so that other researchers may conduct a similar study if they wish to follow this pattern of research, and also to provide a background for my research and greater understanding of my conclusions.

The data of my research included observations of the literacy practices in the day-to-day lives of the families in my study, as recorded in my field notes. Their voices were heard through the interviews, and the stories they told provide additional context and understanding to those field notes. Because the methods of data collection and analysis for in-home observations and for parent interviews differed, I will discuss the methods and procedures for each separately.

In-Home Observations

The field research procedures employed for the observations of this ethnographic study were similar to those used by Purcell-Gates (1996), Taylor (1983) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) in their studies of literacy practices within the home environment. Virtually all aspects of the daily lives of the families were of interest to me in the early stages of the research. It was my intention that by the setting of such broad boundaries the data-gathering process would not be distorted or restricted by any preconceived notions of literacy events in the home.

I conducted an average of ten home visits per family during the course of the study. Home visits lasted from one to two hours and were scheduled to take place at times when the parents could conveniently be available. Although I attempted to schedule home visits to accommodate the availability of the entire family, this proved to be impossible due to the varied schedules of the family members. The parents in the study all worked more than one job, frequently on swing shifts. Typically parents had arranged to alternate their schedules in order to ensure child care for the focal child. In one family, both parents worked every day and evening and the focal child was frequently in the care of his grandmother. During those home visits I recorded the

interactions between the focal child and the grandmother.

Because of this limited availability of parents, I chose to schedule home visits at the convenience of the parents. In some cases this meant that it frequently could occur only during certain hours of the day. However, during the course of the study, I was able to see families at several different times of the day and different days of the week, including week-ends.

Home visits for the purpose of observing literacy events involving the focal child extended over a period of six months. Field notes from these observations include maps and drawings of the setting showing the placement of the parents and children; descriptions of the activities taking place; a record of interactions indicating what parts of the conversations were in English or in Portuguese or both; description of who was present and/or involved in the activity; descriptions of the toys and books in use during the visit; description of the use and language of television viewed, if any; and description of the use, amount, placement, and types of printed matter in the home.

Following the procedures of other researchers who have studied uses of language (Heath, 1983) or literacy (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Taylor, 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; and Teale, 1986) in the home, I noted and recorded all materials in open view in the home that were related to literacy, including such items as books, printed notices, bills, signs, environmental print on household products, television guides, and writing materials. I also noted in my observations conversations that occurred about literacy related activities, such as an inquiry by the parent about what the child did in school that day. In addition, literacy events engaged in by family members on excursions outside of the home, such as paying bills by check, reading labels during grocery shopping, or

filling out a form to be on a waiting list for a post office box were also recorded.

Families were encouraged not to do anything “special” for the visit. In more than one case, the parents left the room or even the home, and used me as a child care provider, while they attended to other needs. I made no attempt to interfere with this, because I concluded that they would not have left me or anyone alone with their child unless they (1) trusted and felt comfortable leaving their child with me, and (2) did not find anything unusual about leaving their child in the care of a friend. In fact, I felt pleased that the parents trusted me and felt comfortable with me. Also, as I learned later through observations and interviews, these families were very accustomed to sharing care-giving responsibilities with extended family (relatives and friends), and I accepted this as a normal part of their culture.

One aim of the initial visits was to allow the families to become familiar with the research process and comfortable about my presence. When the family members no longer treated me as a visitor and I had ascertained that performance behaviors for my benefit had subsided, the subsequent field notes were treated as real data. Like, Purcell-Gates (1996), I found that it took from two to five visits, depending on the family, for this getting-acquainted period. As an observer in the home, my goal was to be unobtrusive, interfering as little as possible with the normal activities of the families during the observation periods. In my in-home observations I attempted to be the proverbial fly on the wall, hoping that the participants would either forget my presence altogether, or perhaps begin to consider my presence as “normal”.

Results for the in-home observations were derived from analysis of the data entered in Excel spreadsheets. This data was analyzed for types of literacy events,

domains, participant structure and language. My intent was to determine frequencies, means, and standard deviations for literacy events observed, and to examine this data for differences and similarities observed in these families. I, therefore, calculated sums, means, and standard deviation for events and domains, as previously coded. According to Sirkin (1999), measures of dispersion, or variability, i.e. standard deviation, enable us to see the clustering of scores among participants. The standard deviation gives an indication of the amount each score deviates from the mean. In other words, it indicates what would be considered an average amount of deviation from the mean in the sample.

Literacy Events

Building upon the work of Teale (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1996), I coded the literacy events by social domain. Both Teale and Purcell-Gates found that all the literacy events recorded could be categorized into the following domains:

1. daily living routines—shopping, cooking, paying bills, getting items repaired, traveling from place to place;
2. entertainment—reading rules for games, crossword puzzles, reading a novel, reading print on TV, reading movie ads;
3. school-related activities—school communications, homework, playing school, reading school lunch menus;
4. work—literacy for performing one’s actual job or for securing or maintaining a job;
5. religion—Bible reading, Bible study guides, reading pamphlets brought home from church or Sunday school, reading Bible stories, reading prayer books, singing hymns;

6. interpersonal communication—sending cards, writing and reading letters;
7. participating in an information network—reading to gain information;
8. story time—reading a story and/or book to a child, telling a story to a child, enacting a story to a child;
9. literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy—helping another person learn to read and write (other than homework).

The field notes were initially searched for literacy events in these domains. For example, an event in which a focal child brought out a dictionary to show to the researcher was coded as “showing.” In another event a child occupied herself by writing the names of family members on a pad of paper. This was entered into the field “writing.” An instance in which a child explained the close captions on a Pinocchio video was coded as “talking.”

However, a search was also conducted to find new domains. Since this is an ESL population emigrated from another country, one of the purposes of the study was to discover and document other literacy enhancing practices, which may be less common in English-as-first-language families than in these families.

Thus, I added four new domains: coloring (as in a coloring book or workbook), copying (letters and or words from a book or paper), singing, and showing (events in which the focal child "showed someone else" a print related article). I also added a domain "observed print items" in which I enumerated print items that were observable in the home during the visit.

Following the establishment of the codes, all field note data was coded according to domains. Each identified literacy activity was entered into a database indicating the

specific literacy event, as well as identifying the domain of that literacy event. Each event also was coded as to the language used (English, Portuguese, or mixed English and Portuguese), as well as the participant structure, such as focal child-mother, focal child - grandmother, etc.

Using the Excel spreadsheet, I calculated totals for domain, participant structure, and language for each literacy event involving the focal children. I then sorted the data, which I had originally entered chronologically by home visit. I sorted each spreadsheet using a primary sort for "domain" and a secondary sort for either "language" or "participant structure." This meant that each domain was automatically organized according to clusters of either the language use or the participant structure, as required. This allowed me to simply count the occurrences in each cluster and then enter them into a database for analysis. See figures A through C for illustrations of these spreadsheets.

Using SPSS data analysis software, I created two databases. In the first I recorded the total number of literacy events observed for each focal child. In the second I recorded the total number of domains of literacy events for each child. See figures D and E for samples of the SPSS data editor showing the data entered by case (focal child), numbered 1 through 5. Using SPSS, I retrieved the sums, means, and standard deviations for the data related to the domains and literacy events for each family.

Figure A: Portion of unsorted EXCEL database of literacy events for one focal child, Rosa. Events are listed chronologically by visit number.

Description of literacy events - Rosa											observed print item						
literacy event	V	lang	Participant structure	reading	writing	talking	choosing	coloring	drawing	singing	looking at	Play -ing with	on phone	copying	showing	domain	
food package	1	e														daily living	1
identify colors	1	e	fc+hsv			1										daily living	
parenting book	1	e														daily living	3
card game	1	p	fc+s									1				entertainment	
making necklace	1	e+p	fc+s									1				entertainment	
naming colors	1	e	fc+hsv+m			1										entertainment	
singing w/ fc while cooking	1	p	fc+s							1						entertainment	
threading beads	1	e	fc+hsv									1				entertainment	
watch	2	e	fc			1										entertainment	
birthday card	2	e														entertainment	
talking on telephone	2	p	s										1			interpersonal communication	1
decals/numbers and numerals	2	e														interpersonal communication	
telephone	3	e	s										1			teaching/learning	
telephone	3	e	s										1			daily living	
telephone	3	p	s										1			daily living	
telephone	3	p	s										1			daily living	
telephone book, menu	3	e+p	m+s			1										daily living	
telephone book, menu	3	e	m+s													daily living	
telephone book, pen, appointment book	3		m+s													daily living	2

Figure B: Portion of EXCEL database of literacy events for one focal child, Rosa. Events are sorted first by domain, second by language.

Description of literacy events - Rosa											observed print item											
literacy event	v	i	s	i	t	#	lang	Participant structure	read-ing	writ-ing		talk-ing	choos-ing	color-ing	draw-ing	sing-ing	look-ing at	Play-ing with	on phone	copy-ing	show-ing	domain
food package							c														daily living	1
identify colors							c	fc+hsv			1										daily living	
parenting book							c														daily living	3
directions for assembly							c														daily living	1
telephone							e	s										1			daily living	
telephone							c	s										1			daily living	
telephone book, menu							e	m+s	1												daily living	
telephone book, menu							c+p	m+s			1										daily living	
telephone							p	s										1			daily living	
telephone							p	s										1			daily living	
singing while making dinner							p	fc+m							1						daily living	
telephone							p	s										1			daily living	
watch							2														daily living	1
telephone book, pen, appointment book							3	m+s													daily living	2
naming colors							e	fc+hsv+m			1										entertainment	
threading beads							e	fc+hsv										1			entertainment	
counting toys							e	fc										1			entertainment	
demonstrated how to play							e	fc+r										1			entertainment	
dramatic play							e	fc										1			entertainment	
imaginative play with puppet							e	fc										1			entertainment	
play mail							e	fc										1			entertainment	
playdough container							e											1			entertainment	1

Figure D: Portion of SPSS data editor showing total number of literacy events by type of event for each focal child, numbered 1 through 5.

C:\Documents and Settings\Sharon\My Documents\SPSS\dissertation\literacy events.sav

	reading	writing	talking	choosing	coloring	drawing	singing	looking	playing	on_phone
1	5.00	3.00	17.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	.00	10.00	4.00	.00
2	1.00	6.00	24.00	.00	.00	9.00	7.00	7.00	.00	.00
3	4.00	2.00	19.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	.00	7.00	6.00	.00
4	1.00	3.00	21.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00	2.00	4.00	1.00
5	2.00	1.00	12.00	.00	.00	1.00	9.00	2.00	18.00	7.00

Figure E: Portion of SPSS data editor showing total number of literacy events by domain of event for each focal child, numbered 1 through 5.

C:\Documents and Settings\Sharon\My Documents\SPSS\dissertation\Literacy event domains.sav

	entertai	religion	daily_li	work_rel	teaching	interper	informat	storyboo	school_r
1	22.00	.00	.00	.00	28.00	.00	1.00	4.00	.00
2	22.00	.00	5.00	.00	22.00	3.00	.00	3.00	5.00
3	24.00	.00	8.00	.00	11.00	3.00	.00	.00	.00
4	13.00	1.00	1.00	.00	8.00	6.00	.00	.00	6.00
5	31.00	2.00	9.00	1.00	7.00	2.00	.00	.00	.00

Participant Structure

At the time of observations, I also had recorded the participants involved in each activity. In some cases, the child was involved in a literacy event alone, that is, the focal child was not interacting with anyone around the literacy event⁶. These configurations are labeled “focal child alone”. In other cases the focal child interacted with me, the researcher, in a literacy event. These are noted as “focal child with researcher”⁷.

Each coded literacy event entered into the database was also coded to indicate the participant structure for that event. The participant structures noted at the time of the observations consisted of the following:

1. focal child alone (with researcher as silent observer)
2. focal child and father
3. focal child and Head Start home visitor
4. focal child and Head Start home visitor and father
5. focal child and Head Start home visitor and mother
6. focal child and mother
7. focal child and mother and researcher
8. focal child and mother and sibling
9. focal child and researcher
10. focal child and researcher and ESL tutor⁸
11. focal child and sibling

⁶ In this configuration, the researcher was present, but only as a silent observer and did not interact with the focal child. No one else was present.

⁷ In this configuration, the researcher interacted with the focal child

⁸ Augusto's parents had a Literacy Volunteer of America tutor who came to their home to teach them English as a second language.

12. researcher and mother and father (in presence of focal child)
13. father alone (in presence of focal child)
14. father and researcher (in presence of focal child)
15. grandmother and family friend (in presence of focal child)
16. mother and father (in presence of focal child)
17. mother and researcher (in presence of focal child)
18. mother and sibling (in presence of focal child)

I suspected that the influence of a parent would be important whether the parent was interacting directly with the focal child around a literacy event or acting with another individual around a literacy event, but in the presence of the focal child. This is because children of three and four years old, the ages of the children in my study, would be likely to have access to adults in their home only if the parents were somehow involved in arranging or approving it. In the instance of a parent interacting directly with focal child around a literacy event, the parent might be scaffolding the child's literacy development. In the case of a parent engaged in a literacy event with someone else in the presence of the focal child, the parent would be modeling the literacy event as well as its importance.

Since the purpose of coding for participant structure was to have a better understanding of the ways in which language and literacy might be influenced by parents, siblings, and other adults in these households, I decided that the eighteen configurations for participant structure could be merged into six:

1. focal child with father
2. focal child with mother
3. focal child with sibling

4. focal child with other adult.
5. focal child alone
6. focal child with researcher

For example, the eight instances in which the mother interacted with the focal child or with someone else in the presence of the focal child (focal child and Head Start home visitor and mother, focal child and mother, focal child and mother and researcher, focal child and mother and sibling, researcher and mother and father in presence of focal child, mother and father in presence of focal child, mother and researcher in presence of focal child, mother and sibling in presence of focal child) could be merged into one category of participant structure called “mother with or in the presence of focal child”. Using this same logic, I merged the remaining categories involving “father”, “sibling”, and the myriad of adults who were sometimes present or involved with the focal child. I did not change “focal child alone” or “focal child with researcher”.

With the EXCEL databases sorted for participant structure, I calculated frequencies of the participant structure by domain and entered and the totals into the SPSS data editor for further analysis. Figure F shows a portion of this data editor.

Figure F: Section of SPSS data editor showing total number of occurrences of domains of literacy events by participant structure.

C:\Documents and Settings\Sharon\My Documents\SPSS\dissertation\domain participants.sav

	ent_alon	ent_rese	ent_mom	ent_dad	ent_sib	ent_othe	rel_rese	rel_alon	rel_mom	rel_dad
1	14.00	8.00	.00	.00	.00	8.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
2	4.00	1.00	2.00	16.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
3	14.00	1.00	6.00	4.00	.00	2.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
4	6.00	1.00	1.00	.00	5.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00
5	19.00	2.00	1.00	.00	7.00	2.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00

Language Usage

In this same EXCEL database the language in which the literacy event took place was also recorded with either “E” for English, “P” for Portuguese, or “E+P” for a bilingual mixture of English and Portuguese. Some events, such as silently coloring, drawing, or activities involving printed numbers, did not have a language recorded. In cases in which these activities also included talking, the language was recorded for the activity “talking about” a literacy event. Thus children might silently draw or color and then explain what they had created in English, Portuguese or a mixture of both English and Portuguese. The event, “coloring” would not be coded for language use. However the event, “talking about” the coloring activity would be.

Following the procedure described above, I calculated frequencies for language use by domain in the EXCEL database and transferred the totals into the SPSS data editor. In order to analyze by language, I broke each domain into three fields according to the language used during the activity(ies) for that domain. For example, the domain, “entertainment” became: “English entertainment”, “Portuguese entertainment”, and “Bilingual entertainment”, depending on whether the language used was English, Portuguese, or bilingual in both English and Portuguese. This allowed me to quickly view the language used by domain for each focal child. See figure G for a sample of the SPSS data editor showing the language usage by domain.

Figure G: Section of SPSS data editor showing totals for language use by domain.

C:\Documents and Settings\Sharon\My Documents\SPSS\dissertation\domain language.sav

	eng_ente	port_ent	bil_ente	eng_reli	port_rel	bi_relig	eng_dail	port_dai	bi_daily	eng_work
1	12.00	8.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
2	10.00	7.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	2.00	.00	.00
3	4.00	13.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	.00
4	4.00	4.00	1.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00
5	11.00	12.00	2.00	.00	2.00	.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	.00

English Language Proficiency of Focal Children and Parents

After reviewing and analyzing the data as described above, I decided to add a new category that would address the language proficiency of the focal children and their parents. It could be important to know if there were any correlations between English language

proficiency of either the adults or the focal children and any of the literacy events or their domains. If it appeared that English language proficiency facilitated access to resources supportive of the learning and/or development of the children in this study, this would be important to know.

Since the scope of my research did not include formal or standardized English language proficiency assessments of either the focal children or their parents, I decided to construct a simple scale, based on the need for an interpreter (me) or the need for Portuguese to be used in speaking with families during my home visits. Therefore I added two fields, "English ability of focal child" (eng_fc) and "English ability of parent" (eng_pare) to each of the databases, using the following scale:

- 1 = needs interpreter for all communication
- 2 = needs interpreter for some communication
- 3 = needs interpreter for occasional communication
- 4 = Does not need an interpreter for communication

I scaled the English proficiency of the parents and children, based on my observations and conversations with them, and their comments regarding their English ability made during the parent interviews and entered them into the SPSS data editor. For the field "English proficiency of parent" I entered one scale, based on the parent that I

had observed to have the greater level of proficiency. I did this for two reasons: (1) I assumed that the highest level of English proficiency of either parent would increase access of the entire family to the resources and benefits available in the mainstream American culture, and (2) in some families I had access to only one parent during the project. In this same data editor, I included three additional fields to represent the total number of events in English (English), in Portuguese (portugue), or in English and Portuguese (eng_port). This allowed me to see at once the frequencies of language used and the English proficiency of the parents and focal children. See figure H for an illustration of the English Proficiency data editor.

Figure H: SPSS data editor showing language proficiency and language use by participants.

C:\Documents and Settings\Sharon\My Documents\SPSS\dissertation\language use.sav

	english	portugue	eng_port	eng_pare	eng_fc
1	21.00	26.00	4.00	1.00	1.00
2	46.00	18.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
3	11.00	28.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
4	9.00	22.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
5	27.00	23.00	4.00	3.00	4.00

Participant Interviews

Researchers have stressed the importance of culture, personal history, and home environment when understanding how literacy develops (Heath, 1983; Camitta, 1997; Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1986; Akroyd, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1996, 1997; Switzer, 1999). Therefore, in addition to the observations of the literacy events recorded in my field notes, I also conducted interviews in Portuguese with the parents of the focal children. Through the interviews I sought to gain a rich perspective and narrative from my participants. These interviews were more than mere surveys for information. They required a process in which I was required to “conceptualize the project, gain access and contact with participants, interview them, transcribe data, translate the data, and analyze the data” (Seidman, 1991, p. 6).

Following the advice of the Head Start staff, the initial visits were conducted to interview the mothers. This was done so that they would have a chance to get to know me and feel more comfortable with me during the observations. At the time of the interviews, I explained that I would be using two tape recorders, in case one failed. I arranged the two small tape recorders about six inches apart from each other so that the tape recorder would not record each other's noise. I placed these on a hard surface, usually a table, between the two of us. I explained that I wanted to record our conversation, that I would ask some questions, but that I wanted them to feel free to just tell me their stories. Then I began the tape, and we began our conversation.

I conducted semi-structured interviews so that I could guide the conversation, using open-ended questions, without limiting their responses. I chose to direct the taped

conversations around the following three themes: (1) How do you see your role as your child's first and most important teacher? (2) What barriers and challenges have you and your family experienced through the immigration process that you believe might impact your child's development? and (3) What hopes and dreams do you have for your child's future?

I did not know in advance of our interviews what topics these questions might lead to in our conversations; but, whatever it was, I wanted the participants to feel free to speak their mind on the topic. I kept a pad of paper on my lap during the interviews, to make note of any significant gestures or other body language that might be important when listening to the tapes. However, I took few notes. Once the conversations began, I found myself absorbed in their narratives.

As described above conversational interviews with family members were audio-recorded and questions pertaining to literacy were unobtrusively embedded within the more general discussion of everyday family life. This data added another dimension to the analysis of the multiple contexts in which children are exposed to literacy practices in their home.

All of the parent interviews were conducted in Portuguese, either in whole or in part, depending on the preference of the parents. Tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed in Portuguese by a bilingual Brazilian transcriptionist with experience working with families of preschool children. This was to ensure that nuances of meaning, idiom, and intonation were captured correctly.

Once I received the Portuguese transcripts of the interviews, I translated them into English. This was followed by a review of my translations by a bilingual American-born

translator with a Brazilian family. I, then, reviewed the suggested revisions and compared them with the original Portuguese transcripts, and I adjusted the translation where necessary. The transcripts were then ready for coding. Copies of the transcripts in Portuguese have been kept, to permit comparison of the taped interview with the transcript for accuracy, in the event that doubts arise. I made the final decision regarding the final wording of the transcripts.

Although the interviews were guided by themes which I had pre-selected, their structure was much more like a conversation, rather than a survey. Under the guidance of the “Research on Human Subjects” committee at Lesley University, I had taken great care to ensure that the participants would not feel exploited or pressured in any way. However I found that, instead of being hesitant, the parents I interviewed seemed eager to tell their stories.

At the first meeting, on which I was accompanied by the Head Start home visitor, I did not use the tape recorder. Instead, I took the opportunity to establish a relationship with the parents. My purpose was to allow the informants to know me and to this end I shared my personal story of my connection to and love for Brazil.

I allowed the parents to choose the visit at which I would record our interviews. In four cases, this was scheduled to take place at my first solo visit to the home. In the case of Janaina’s mother, she was too busy to sit down with me until the fourth visit, and she requested that I not tape our interview. I obliged and took notes during our conversation. At a later home visit, her husband, Eduardo was home and he seemed very interested in what I was doing. After answering all of his questions, I asked if I might tape an interview with him. He gladly agreed. Thus, it was that I taped interviews with

four mothers and one father. Through careful probes and silences, I encouraged my informants to speak to my questions, to broach new topics or delve more deeply into existing ones (Merriam, 1988).

The taped interviews lasted from one to two hours each. Using the constant comparative method (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967), I began analyzing and reflecting on the field notes from observations, as well as the data from interviews, from the first contact with families. The constant comparative method is a technique whereby analyses and comparisons of data from observations, interviews, or existing documentation continuously occur, simultaneously and cyclically leading to the development of themes, domains, and properties to guide the research from its early stages (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967 for a more complete discussion of the constant comparative method).

I began to identify domains and themes and relate them to those of existing literature. Using this as a guide, I gradually refined the domains of interest to those which appeared to be most compelling based on both the data received and the existing research and theory (see Merriam, 1988). Using Spradley's processes of domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis I continued to refine, define, and redefine domains (Spradley, 1979) in the following manner.

(1) I selected a single domain to analyze (e.g., challenges); (2) searched for similarities in the included terms in order to define subsets (e.g., problems, difficulties, hardships, barriers); (3) searched for included terms that belong in these subsets (e.g., loneliness, homesickness, loss, isolation, pain, suffering, sadness). This led to the development of a new domain, isolation, which previously, was an included term, for the domain challenges (4). After following this procedure, to identify several domains, I

searched again to determine if any of these identified domains was really a subset of another domain; (5) Finally, I corrected and adjusted the final taxonomy (Spradley, 1979).

Even before the translation procedure, I reviewed the transcripts in Portuguese to gain early insight into the direction of the research. Using the constant comparative method, and with the assistance of the qualitative data analysis software, QSR NUD*IST, I searched for themes from the observations, interviews, and other documentation (news articles, demographic information, local histories, etc.). I began to identify promising themes to explore. Thus, early on, the participant narratives, in concert with my field notes, began to portray a group of families struggling to overcome not only obstacles of isolation, loneliness, and financial difficulties similar to many American families, but also attempting to navigate the waters of the American social, cultural, and educational system without the understanding and knowledge that comes with years of experience in the American mainstream culture. And in some cases, without the linguistic ability in English to even begin to learn such things.

In my initial searches for themes, I first coded the data from the interviews into 74 words or concepts that were used in the interviews. Because the lexicon of the participants was in Portuguese, and I coded and prepared my research results in English, I created the terms for the domains in English. Thus, they are analytic domains (Spradley, 1979), created based on my analysis of the translated transcripts.

Once the initial data had been placed into these early domains, I began to compare the domains looking for those that overlapped or were subdomains. I then examined these domains for similarities and eventually merged the original 74 concepts into ten

general domains. They were: hardships, extended family, languages, employment, happiness, Brazil, legal issues, USA, literacy development, and home life. As data continued to flow, I continued to search for relationships among these domains. As I continued to examine the data, I refined the domains to those which appeared most relevant to the literacy development of the children in the study and to what immigration-related challenges might affect this development, since these were my original research questions.

Spradley advocates for distinguishing and defining domains and relationships among them, and contrasts among them (Spradley, 1979). Eventually I chose thirteen domains that I considered to be significant in understanding the context in which the literacy practices in the home took place. Some of these themes were interrelated. However, I decided that each was worthy of a separate discussion. These themes were:

1. Why they left Brazil
2. Jobs, work, and employment
3. Better life in America
4. Brazilian family relationships
5. Challenges of immigration
6. Isolation
7. Changes and cultural differences
8. Brazilian children in American
9. Homesickness for Brazil
10. Head start support
11. Challenge of limited English proficiency

12. Learning English

13. Education and literacy

The reason for the theme, Education and literacy was that it was most relevant to my research. The reason that I chose the other themes is that I wanted to capture the situations, the background, and context in which these children are developing literacy and I decided that all of these themes together would best provide a picture of this context.

Summary

The purpose of the data analysis was to develop a broad description of the many and varied literacy practices found in the home of these ESL families. The combination of field notes from observations of literacy events, participant structures, and interviews enabled me to create a richly informative narrative of the experiences of the children in these families regarding literacy practices. A separate file was maintained for each family to permit the development of a detailed, in-depth description of the styles and personal biographies of the individuals involved. This provided an understanding of the ways in which the children themselves initiate, absorb, and synthesize the educational literacy influences in their lives.

Through this combination of data, a picture of these families emerged that will enlarge our understanding of the learning styles and social support systems of these young Brazilian immigrant children, as they develop their language and literacy skills through their family interactions. At the same time, I have developed an account that will address the ways that schools could build supportive environments in which such children could interact more successfully in schools.

This data has not only provided a deeper understanding of the Brazilian families involved in the Martha's Vineyard Head Start program, enabling them to provide better-quality services for the children, but may also contribute to present and future research of literacy events in other ESL families with young children.

Because of the emerging nature of the data, which was embedded in the interviews, domains for analysis were identified cyclically rather than sequentially. Through this process I repeatedly examined the original quotations, along with my field notes and reflections to define, refine, and define again domains, themes, patterns, and my reflections as new field notes to combine with the data. Using this constant comparative method (Spradley, 1979) I developed a plethora of data during the course of the in home observation and interview period. During the period of further writing and analysis, I continually gathered more data from existing literature, in particular, newspaper articles, publications, and internet websites that provided a broader context for the lives of the Brazilian community on Martha's Vineyard. Thus, through all of the methods and procedures described in this chapter, I have addressed the research questions: (1) What are the in-home communicative practices of a group of five Brazilian immigrant Head Start families? and (2) What cultural and socioeconomic factors might influence those communicative practices.

Chapter V: Description of Context and Participants

Introduction

In order to introduce the participants to the reader, this section provides a brief profile of each of the five families who took part in the study, as well as an overview of the community in which they live. The family profiles have been developed based on the information obtained during interviews and home visit observations. They include characteristics such as gender, age, and length of time in U.S., as well as descriptions of their lives as I observed them during my visits. The description of the Brazilian Community on Martha's Vineyard is based on census data, existing literature as cited, and my own experiences and observations living in the community. Names of the participants are all fictitious in order to ensure anonymity.

All of the participants in this study were Head Start participants, living on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. The length of time parents had been in this country when the project began varied, ranging from ten years to six months. Thus some parents had lived in this country for some time prior to the birth of the focal child. Others had arrived more recently, bringing their children with them from Brazil.

The focal children of the study were those enrolled in the Head Start program. Four of the five Head Start children were females. Four of the five were four years old at the time of the observations and interviews. Four of them had siblings either older or younger, and one sibling was born during the period of home visits. Because all of the families qualified for Head Start by income eligibility, they all would be considered of low socioeconomic status by the standards of the local community. However, as was discovered during the parent interviews, this was not necessarily true of these families

when they lived in Brazil. In fact they had gone to great expense in order to finance their emigration to the U.S. The costs to complete the necessary documentation plus travel expenses could easily rise to thousands of dollars. The high cost of immigration would prevent the very poor Brazilians from emigrating. Two of the families were Catholic, two were members of the Assembly of God church, an evangelical Christian sect, and one professed no religious affiliation. All of the participants in this study were year-round residents of Martha's Vineyard.

Martha's Vineyard Cultural and Historic Background

Martha's Vineyard is a triangularly-shaped island of approximately 100 square miles situated seven miles off the southeast coast of Massachusetts (Ward, 2002). Although it is the largest island resort in New England, it continues to maintain a rural character.

It is widely accepted that the native tribe of Wampanoags were the first inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard, possibly as long as 5,000 years ago (Ward, 2002). Some historians believe that Martha's Vineyard was the "Vinland" settled by the Lief Erickson and his Norse comrades in 1003 (Mayhew, 1966). More settlers from the Old World arrived in 1602 (Mayhew, 1966), and found the island inhabited by these Indians who survived by fishing, whaling, farming, and hunting (Mayhew, 1966). The Wampanoags continue to reside on the island.

It was the European settlers who named the island for its lush growth of grapevines (Mayhew, 1966). However it was not until 1630, after the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, that Martha's Vineyard began to be permanently settled by newly arrived Europeans (Mayhew, 1966). Martha's Vineyard remained an important whaling

center in the 18th and 19th centuries; and the period between the War of 1812 and the Civil war was considered the golden age of whaling (Mayhew, 1966). Later settlers included African Americans who originally were drawn by camp meeting revivals for Baptists and Methodists in the mid-19th century (Mayhew, 1966). These camp meetings which were religious revivals occurring each summer were also the beginning of Martha's Vineyard as a summer resort. By 1859 Camp Meeting had grown to 12,000 visitors making it the largest in the world (Mayhew, 1966). In time the tents were transformed into intricately laced Victorian cottages, and this marked the beginning of real estate development on the island.

Portuguese immigrants, principally from the Azores arrived in the 19th century to bolster the whaling industry (Santos, 2002). These Portuguese immigrants eventually established themselves as fishermen and whaling captains, and many of their descendants still live on the island.

During the tourist season, Martha's Vineyard is a bustling, crowded community with a population of over a 100,000, as compared to a year-round population of 15,000. The economy of Martha's Vineyard rests primarily on the tourist industry during the months from April to October. Although this provides an abundance of employment opportunities for unskilled laborers, it has also contributed to the high cost of housing. In addition to the demand for service jobs in restaurants and hotels, the large influx of tourists gives rise to housing-related industries, such as construction and landscaping.

The island's heritage as an untouched rural landscape, free from the bustle of the mainland, has led to its development as a resort. It is this very development and growth that threatens its unique position as an oasis of calm and sedate living that makes it so

desirable as a place to visit. The increasing year-round population as well as the increasing tourist population brings with it demands to increase the infrastructure of the island to accommodate the needs for housing, health care, education, and other needs of residents and visitors. The increased growth of the summer population requires a cadre of laborers willing to perform the housekeeping, restaurant service, landscaping, and housing construction needs of this population. At the same time, this cadre of laborers necessary to support the tourism industry becomes underemployed or unemployed during the off season, leading to greater demands for social service support. The Brazilian workers form a large part of these laborers. Some simply move away during the off-season, but many of those with children who require stability and education stay during the off-season when they can live comfortably in the housing that is more available at that time.

Thus Martha's Vineyard has long included a diverse population in its six communities. The most recent influx of immigrants is Brazilians who first began to move to the island in the early 1990's. They have come as part of a larger migration of Brazilians who have been settling in Massachusetts and adjacent areas since the 1980's (Martes, 2000; Sales, 1999; Margolis, 1993).

“Close to a half-million Brazilians have immigrated to the United States in recent years. Most choose to settle in the northeastern states, where there are established Brazilian communities” (Dragan, 2002). The number of Portuguese-speaking immigrants in the US is increasing, with clusters concentrated in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and California. The number of Brazilians in the US is

unknown; however, the Brazilian consulate in Boston, Massachusetts, estimates that there are approximately 150,000 Brazilians in New England alone.

They were drawn to the Southeastern Massachusetts area because this is an area that had been originally settled by Portuguese immigrants in the 19th century (see also Martes, 2000) and they came to this area with the expectation of finding some familiarity in culture and language. This Brazilian immigration has been propelled by economic problems in Brazil, which include unemployment and inflation. Brazilians have been emigrating to improve their financial situation, and they have been moving not only to the U.S., but also to Japan, where they are called “dekasseguis” (Sasaki, 1999). This flow of Brazilians away from Brazil reverses Brazil’s history role as receiver of immigrants from Europe, the Middle East, and Japan (Ribeiro, 2000).

Brazilian Cultural and Historic Background

Americans who wish to understand Brazilians need to understand something about how Brazilian history differs from American history. We Americans have a tendency to relate to others from the perspective of our own historical and political past. We use this as a standard to judge those of other cultures, and we are at best puzzled, and at worst, intolerant or bigoted, when we see behaviors that we do not understand. It is important, therefore, to briefly describe some differences between American and Brazilian culture and history. In this section I will very briefly touch on some important points related to Brazilian history. I will overtly skip major historical information. My intention is to portray why Brazil today is both a country of great wealth (the world’s ninth economy), covering a vast expansion of land (fifth in size in the world), but with the largest disparity between rich and poor.

Brazilians are a unique people who have evolved out of their own diverse history. While the United States was populated by Anglos who “transplanted” their culture to North America, Brazil has developed a new culture which was born of the interweaving of Portuguese, African, and indigenous tribes of Brazil (Ribeiro, 2000).

The Brazilian government itself, particularly during the repressive period of the 60's and early 70's, encouraged strong civic pride in Brazil as a way to unify the population. Brazilians are proud of their unique identity, their vast natural resources, their booming population, and the belief that, “Brazilian teamwork is more effective than individual effort” (Grupo da Educação Moral e Cívica, 1999, according to excerpts from material used at the secondary school level, and also handed out to newspaper magazine offices in 1973). This, in part, has contributed to a strong sense of nationalism, even xenophobia (Ribeiro, 2000). Brazil's culture is neither Portuguese nor Hispanic, and Brazilians are likely to be offended by those who choose to lump them with either of these cultures. Because Brazilians feel their strong sense of singularity, it is extremely difficult for them to “accept and enjoy life among other peoples” and as immigrants in other countries, they cling fanatically “to their identity as Brazilians” (Ribeiro, 2000).

Brazil was discovered in 1500 by the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Cabral, and to this day, Brazil is the only country in the hemisphere that commemorates this, instead of Columbus' voyage in 1492 (Levine and Crocitti, 1999). At that time the English and French began exploring eastern North America. The Spaniards were conquering the rest of South America and what is now the western and southeast areas of the United States. In North America the colonists, many of whom had immigrated to safeguard their right to freedom of religion, were working to develop a democratic way of life. For example, in

1619 colonists in Virginia founded the House of Burgesses, the first representative legislature in America, in order to ensure individual liberty.

Unlike that of North America, the distribution of the land of South America was peaceably settled in advance of its “discovery” by the Treaty of Tordesillas. This treaty established a boundary whereby all land to the east would belong to Portugal, and all land to the West would belong to Spain. Thus an adversarial history of battles, wars, negotiations and treaties to establish control of the land was not a part of Brazil’s history. Both Spain and Portugal accepted this treaty peacefully.

In the mid-16th century, the Portuguese king decided the distribution of land in Brazil. All Brazilian land was divided into “donatorios” and given to various friends of the Portuguese king. They, in turn, were responsible to defend and to develop the land. This was the beginning of a system in which a select few families would control the land and wealth of Brazil and in which indigenous and African slaves supplied the labor.

In the U.S. control of the land was the center of long-standing struggles between settlers and indigenous tribes who fought valiantly for the land. Finally, the Homestead Act of 1862 also ensured that the U.S. frontier would be settled by the individual “common” nonnative landowner who would be rewarded for his labors by land ownership.

The Colonial period in Brazil, which saw the rise of the triangular slave trade to support the sugar plantations, gave way to the Brazilian empire. During the Colonial period marked the opening of commerce to other countries besides Portugal. The discovery of gold and diamonds and the gold rush which followed (1690-1800) attracted new immigrants from Portugal. After the growth spurred on by gold and diamonds,

Brazil's coffee-growing and trade further enhanced the development of Brazil.

When the monarchy of Portugal fled to Brazil in 1808 in order to escape the advancing army of Napoleon, Brazil became the seat of Portuguese empire. The Portuguese monarch and his court moved to Rio de Janeiro. Brazil at that time was ruled under a highly centralized government. Both Pedro I and his son, Pedro II, demanded that officials rotate from place to place to ensure that the designs of the emperor would be carried out (Levine and Crocitti, 1999). Education was available only to the elite who would often go to the University of Coimbra in Portugal, leaving the vast majority of Brazilians illiterate.

Thus began the tradition of government and power in the hands of a few select individuals, while the majority of the population labored to support the power holders in a tradition of exploitation that continued into the twentieth century (Levine and Crocitti, 1999). In the twentieth century, with the rise of the military dictatorship that continued for some 20 years, this tradition of a select few power-holders exploiting the wealth of Brazil continued. This lack of equitable distribution of power and wealth, led to corruption and inefficiency in carrying out educational reforms, so that in 1948 the education system was such that primary and elementary schools were rapidly declining, but secondary schools which matriculated the children of the wealthy and elite thrived (Teixeira, 1948). This explains the low pay for the vast majority of Brazilians, including police officers, who have turned to extortion and other crimes to supplement their income (Spyer, 1997). In keeping with tradition, it is always the poor and disadvantaged, never the wealthy and the elite who are victimized by the system.

Thus, historically, land ownership in Brazil has been held as large estates in the

hands of a few wealthy individuals. One percent of landholders control 46% of the land in Brazil (Landless Movement, 1998). During the time of the Portuguese empire, individual landownership was forbidden. This power over the land by the wealthy has been driven by the need to acquire more wealth, and thus these landholdings have been used primarily to exploit the demand for certain crops, e.g. sugar, cocoa, coffee, or rubber. In each case, the high prices for these products led to the establishment of competitive markets in other parts of the world and the inevitable collapse of the crop-based economies. These booms and busts had the most detrimental effect on the slaves in the nineteenth century or poorly paid laborers in the twentieth century who had neither income nor capital to survive.

With a tradition in which the vast majority of the population was illiterate or semi-literate, an oral tradition based on folk wisdom transmitted a common body of understandings, values, and traditions which were expressed in folklore, beliefs, crafts, and customs. These were not influenced by foreign ideas, values, and cultural milieus (Ribeiro, 2000).

Brazilians are a people of mixed ethnicity of a variety of lineages, and Brazilians do not focus their attention on race (Ribeiro, 2000), as Americans who have a history of racial segregation. It is often difficult to ascertain from census data exactly how many Brazilians immigrants are living on Martha's Vineyard or in the United States. Brazilians are Brazilian by nationality, not by race. They definitely do not consider themselves to be Hispanic. And if asked to choose between "Black", White, or Hispanic, will almost inevitably indicate that they are white. (Lesser, 1999). Also their strong nationalistic ideals of a Brazilian nationality (Ribeiro, 2000) do not give rise to pride in ethnic roots or

ancestry. Brazilians, regardless of whether they are of Portuguese, Japanese, Italian, German, African, Middle Eastern, or native Brazilian descent, will invariably identify themselves as simply “Brazilian” (Fish, 1999; Ribeiro, 2000).

Severe unemployment brought on by the industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century caused masses of European immigrants to swarm to both the United States and Brazil. In Brazil they found ready employment, as the emancipation of the slaves in 1888 left plantations desperate for laborers. While the newly freed slaves flocked to the cities in search of a better life, the European immigrants eagerly took their place for wages that barely provided for their subsistence (Ribeiro, 2000). The exodus of the poor from the rural and to the urban areas in search of a better life has caused a massive swelling of the population in the Brazilian cities that has outpaced the ability of the government to provide adequate education and public services for the population. While emancipation of slaves in the U.S. occurred only after a tragic Civil War, Brazil’s abolition was voluntarily decreed by the acting monarch, Princess Isabel, without bloodshed. Despite the fact that slavery was no longer economically viable due to the costs of supporting aging slaves⁹ and the influx of cheap immigrant labor from Europe, the wealthy landowners turned against the monarchy. The emperor was deposed in 1889 by the military and a republic form of government was established.

Today the economy of Brazil continues to wreak havoc on the lives of Brazilians, middle-class as well as the poor. Teachers, historically poorly paid, earn about \$200 per month, and schools are poorly equipped. Thousands of others live in shantytown “favelas” from which they leave each day to work as launderers, or other laborers, while leaving their children in the care of other children (Levine and Crocitti, 1999). Although

slavery was abolished more than a century ago, the lives of many Brazilians living in poverty is not very different from slavery (Ferreira, 1999); as their chances of moving out of their present condition is very small.

The Brazilian social class system should be understood, not as tiers of socioeconomic levels, but rather like “an inverted funnel” with “a very thin apex of very few people and a neck that grows broader of those who are integrated into the economic system as regular workers. . . in which the majority of the population is on the fringes of the economy and society, with no regular job and earning no minimum wage” (Ribeiro, 2000). Thus, they are moving constantly, in the futile hope that they will find a better life somewhere else.

The roots of this inequitable social structure are grounded in Brazil's history of exploitation of the masses by the wealthy few. “It was not by chance that Brazil passed from colony to independent nation and from monarchy to republic with no effect on the plantation order and no perception of the part of the purpose of the change” (Ribeiro, 2000).

The class system in Brazil, because it is so unbridgeable, is more like a caste system in which it is almost impossible for those of lower birth to be admitted into the inner sanctum of the elite, even if they can acquire wealth. It is only the privileged who have access to the best education, while the majority remain illiterate or have access to poor education and must rely on popular wisdom and folklore rather than education and learning (Ribeiro, 2000).

Specifically, DaMatta focuses on an urban ritual that he called *Voçê sabe com quem está falando?* (Do you know who you are talking to?), a phrase used to interrupt the

⁹ Trafficking of slaves had been abolished some years earlier.

universal application of a rule—that is, to interrupt what he calls the discourse of the street—in order to gain exceptional status and to rise above the degradation reserved for all nobodies. So, for instance, a lady cuts in line to enter a parking lot; the attendant protests and points to the line, but she says “Do you know who you are talking to? I am the wife of so and so, member of the cabinet,” and so on (DaMatta, 1999). This ritual is a way for those with more status to exert power over those with less status, and it is a common and accepted practice in Brazil.

The great historical heritage of Brazil is really the achievement of its very makeup as a people unified ethnically, nationally, and culturally. It is also the failure of our efforts to structure ourselves in solidarity on the socioeconomic level as a people existing for themselves. At the root of this failure of the majorities lies the success of the minorities, who are still in charge. It is their destiny to shore up old privileges by perpetuating the monopoly of land ownership, by placing profits before needs, and by the imposition of archaic and renovated forms of the population’s dependence on its role as an overexploited workforce (p. 173, Ribeiro, 2000).

In addition, Brazil’s history has been one in which the presence of authority has been part of culture (see also Freire, 1998, p. 23-24). This acceptance of authority has existed in Brazil from the beginning of Portuguese colonization. Brazil is the only country in the Americas that accepted a European king.

The different histories of the United States and Brazil have likely contributed to the fierce individualism and independence that Americans value on the one hand, and the sense of loyalty that Brazilians feel toward maintaining the social order as necessary for

the greater good (Ribeiro, 2000). Notwithstanding this sense of national unity and subordination for the greater good (Ribeiro, 2000), Brazilian history is fraught with incidents of uprisings, revolts, and conflicts between the Indian, African, and white European contingents (Ribeiro, 2000). In every case, however, the revolutionary activities were quickly, often brutally, eradicated by the powerful ruling class and the system of inequity has continued.

A milieu of corruption continues and forms the background for the present Brazilian Diaspora. The new democratic constitution, which was established in 1985, did little to change this tradition of corruption, leading to scandals, (DaMatta, 1999) and a presidential impeachment. Most Brazilians can be induced to cooperate with the power schema because of fear of losing their jobs (Levine, 1999; DaMatta, 1999). Brazilians' way of coping with this unacceptable level of exploitation is through cultural venues based on religion, such as the traditional celebration of Carnival, the end of the year ceremonies of Candomblé, and the more recent spread of evangelical fundamentalist Christian sects (Ribeiro, 2000).

It is out of this cultural, social and historic context that the Brazilian immigration to the United States began in the mid- 1980's (Margolis, 1993; 1997; Martes, 2000; Sales, 1999); and it's this context from which the Brazilians in my study come. This context represents a "dynamic framework" and it is "a rich resource for the researcher's interpretation of the . . . Thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the participants. (p. 59, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1999). Brazilians are "a people in the making, in search of its destiny even today" (Ribeiro, 2000).

Important dates in Brazilian History

1500 - Portuguese land in the area and claim it to the Portuguese crown.

1530 – 1549 – First Brazilian settlements. Donatorios responsible for land development.

1580 – 1800 – Colonial period – Triangle Trade, Gold, Coffee boom, land development. .

1808 – 1821 – Transfer of Portuguese court to Brazil.

1822 - Son of Portuguese king declares independence from Portugal and crowns himself

Pedro I, Emperor of Brazil.

1888 - Slavery abolished. Large influx of European immigrants to Brazil begins.

1889 - Monarchy overthrown, federal republic established with central government controlled by coffee interests. Brazil produces 65% of world's coffee by 1902.

1930 - Revolt places Getulio Vargas at head of provisional revolutionary government.

1937 - Vargas leads coup, rules as dictator with military backing.

1960 – Kubitschek (president from 1956-61) moves capital to Brasilia.

1964 - Goulart ousted in bloodless coup, flees into exile. Repressive military regime.

1974 - Geisel becomes president. Reforms allow limited political activity and elections.

1988 - New constitution reduces presidential powers.

1989 - Collor de Mello elected president. By 1991 inflation reaches 1,500%.

Family Portraits

As a researcher working in the naturalistic environment of the home and family, I drew upon the dialogue from taped parent interviews, field notes from in-home observations, newspaper articles, as well as interviews with Head Start staff and staff from the Brazilian embassy in the Washington, D.C. I also included my perspectives and experiences as a teacher of English as a Second Language, an early childhood teacher, a parent, a speaker of Portuguese, and as a person who had done the reverse of my participants; I moved from the United States to Brazil. Weaving these various perspectives together with my data, I created a tapestry in which I could display these families as living, growing, changing, vital, and loving human beings. In this section I will unfold this tapestry so that each of these families, which I have identified, using pseudonyms, may be viewed as a portrait against the backdrop of their Brazilian culture and heritage. It is my hope that the reader will meet and know these families as I knew them at the time of my study.

Augusto's family

Augusto, a focal child in this study, was four years old when this research project began. He lived with his parents and his older sister in a four-room apartment (one half of a duplex) owned by his uncle, who lived in the other half with Augusto's grandmother. On entering the front door at my first visit, I immediately found myself in a tidy and compact living room from where I could see into the kitchen and through the window of the kitchen door into the backyard beyond. There were two bedrooms in the apartment,

one for Augusto and one for his parents. His older sister, ten-year old Sonia, shared a bedroom with her grandmother in the other unit.

Though the living room wasn't spacious, it was large enough for a wraparound sofa along the front and side wall, one of which faced an entertainment center with shelves, cabinets, and a large television set. A Portuguese language Brazilian newspaper lay atop a rectangular coffee table nestled in the angle of the couch. Whenever I visited this home, the television was always tuned to an English language channel, and the closed caption feature was in use, allowing television-viewers to read as well as hear the English words.

Augusto and his family had only been in this country for six months when I met them. Sabrina, Augusto's mother, a smiling, friendly woman of average build, with dark brown hair pulled back into a low ponytail, greeted me warmly when I arrived with the Head Start home visitor.

Her husband, Rodrigo, worked long hours as a stonemason, and was at home during only one of my visits. In Brazil Rodrigo had been a banker and Sabrina did not work outside the home. However, here in the United States she worked two jobs, housecleaning and restaurant work, even on Sundays. Both she and her husband were so well paid that they didn't mind the hard work. However, regardless of their work responsibilities, Sabrina and Rodrigo showed a great interest in learning English and in helping Augusto learn to read. A Portuguese-English dictionary was frequently in sight during my home visits, and Augusto had his own writing tablet and set of pencils. Sabrina told me that she and her husband were teaching Augusto his letters, as well as

teaching themselves English by using books and tapes. They also had the help of a literacy volunteer who visited their home weekly to teach English.

On one of my last visits, Sabrina proudly showed me a set of photos of a stucco ranch style house with a clay tile roof and an expansive tiled veranda. This, she explained, was her house in Brazil. She bought this house for US \$10,000 with money her husband had earned on his first trip to Martha's Vineyard. Sabrina explained to me that a few years earlier, her husband had come to the Vineyard to work for the summer. He earned enough money in that summer to buy their house in Brazil, and he made an impression on his employer. After his return to Brazil he went back to his work in the bank, but the bank failed. He could not get work. When his former employer on the Vineyard heard about his troubles, he urged him to come back and work for him and this employer prepared the necessary documents so that he could legally work here. Sabrina and the children followed him later. At first they were denied entry into the U.S., but they did not give up. Sabrina and the children first immigrated to Canada, and then, later, they were granted permission to enter the U.S. It was a long, difficult, and expensive process.

She explained that her brother was the owner of their Martha's Vineyard residence, and that she paid him rent for her unit. She knew how fortunate she was, because Brazilians looking for houses to rent on the island sometimes had the door closed in their face, she told me.

Augusto was the only child in my study who was not in a preschool and the only one who spoke no English at all. His mother tried to enroll him soon after they arrived on the island, but there were no spaces available. Augusto remained on the waiting list

during the entire time of the study. Consequently all of my conversations with Augusto were in Portuguese.

Except for my initial visit (when the Head Start visitor was present) and the day that I prearranged to interview her, Sabrina was rarely in the room when I arrived for my visits. Sometimes she was not at home, and Augusto was with his grandmother in the unit next door. Sabrina didn't always remember to tell me in advance, but I soon learned that if there was no answer at home, I should knock on the door of the other unit.

Augusto's grandmother always greeted me warmly and invited me inside

On days when she was home, Sabrina usually slipped quietly into her bedroom during my visits. From the living room, which was only a few steps away, I could hear her talking on the phone or practicing with her English language tapes. Occasionally she stopped in to see if I or Augusto needed anything, but she usually left us alone while she occupied herself with other matters. The house was so compact that no matter what room we were in, we were close to anyone else in any of the other rooms.

Except for the dictionary, there were no books in sight during my earlier visits. However as the holiday season drew near, there was a Spanish-English bilingual Christmas catalog from *Fingerhut* in the living room, usually on the couch or the coffee table. On one of my visits, Augusto turned this catalog into a game. He took out his notebook and began copying the words from the cover of the catalog. Although he couldn't read the words, neither in Portuguese nor in English, he did recognize the letters and he appeared to understand that those letters form groups that carry meaning.

On my second visit, Augusto invited me on a tour through his bedroom. Here he showed me a large laundry basket filled with toys, mostly miniature trucks and cars. He

seemed to enjoy the fact that he had my full attention, and he reveled in showing me the shelves filled with stuffed animals, adorning the walls of his bedroom.

He opened his closet to me, where I could see that, along with clothing, the large closet contained games, musical toys, construction paper, and art materials. Showing me his musical *Alphabet Apple*, Augusto demonstrated how he could listen to letters and sounds in English and then point to pictures beginning with those sounds. The *Alphabet Apple* played music when he identified the correct letter-sound combination, much to Augusto's delight.

Augusto explained the cars and the layout to me and when he put a tree on the race car set he told me what he was doing. He showed me how he could move objects, such as the tree or the toll gate, to different places on the board. He made noises like an ambulance and fire truck when he moved them on the board.

Augusto clearly considered me a valuable asset to his play, especially since he soon learned that I was a very compliant playmate who let him make all the decisions regarding his imaginative play. He chattered continually to me during play as he was explaining to me everything he was doing. One day when his array of Fisher-Price parking lot pieces were displayed along with several small cars, trucks, and other accessories, he picked up the miniature traffic light and said, in Portuguese, "What is this?" I answered, also in Portuguese, "A traffic light." Then he pointed to two other traffic lights, in succession, and said at one, "Stop," and another, "yellow," all in Portuguese. He delighted in showing how he could make his little cars stop and go up the ramp, and he explained everything to me while he demonstrated his toys for me. Augusto continued to play with his cars, piling all of them up in the "parking lot" of his

matchbox car layout. He had a fire truck, ambulance, police car, and helicopter, which he “flew” through the room, making appropriate chopper-like sounds.

Shortly afterward, I heard quiet voices in the background coming from Sabrina’s room. A few minutes later, a girl who appeared to be about ten or twelve years walked out and went into the kitchen. Then I heard the back door open and close and a young adult male, was also in the kitchen. I later learned that the girl was Augusto’s sister and the man was his uncle. This moving back and forth from one apartment to the other, made it clear that the physical boundaries of the duplex did not interfere with the free flow of family members. It seemed that this duplex was being inhabited more like the way they all might have lived together in their large house in Brazil.

On one of the rare visits, in which Augusto’s father was home, he picked up a book that he had been reading when I arrived, and went into his bedroom. Augusto, who had been watching television, barely noticed me. He sat quietly absorbed in a cartoon show with English close-captions. He said nothing to me. As the music from the program swelled, Augusto started clapping his hands in time with the music. Soon, that wasn’t enough. Then he started kicking his feet in time with the music. Finally he began clapping his feet together and continued with the rhythm of the music, even after it stopped.

A minute later, Augusto rose from the couch and looked around toward the bedrooms, apparently looking for his father. For a moment, I slipped, and said to him in English, “Are you looking for your daddy?” Augusto looked at me blankly, staring at me with a stunned look on his face. I immediately realized my mistake and repeated myself in Portuguese.

Although neither of us could see his father, we could hear the sound of paper shuffling coming from the parents' bedroom. I concluded from this that he had moved into his room to study or do other paperwork, so as not to be distracted by the television or to find a private place away from my observing eyes.

Augusto apparently was satisfied that his father was accessible, and he entertained himself with the television remote, using it to flip from channel to channel. He kept flipping until he found cartoons, and then he stopped. However, it was soon evident that the cartoons were a commercial, so he picked up the remote and started flipping again. This time he stopped when he found a children's show with Muppets, a playhouse, and animated cartoons. As always, the English language captions appeared. I could hear Sabrina, in a low voice, from the other room speaking or possibly reading out loud in English.

Then Augusto took the remote for the television and for the cable box and put them on the floor next to the couch. He rolled over the edge of the couch upside down into a somersault and then somersaulted back onto the couch, rolling from one end of the couch to the other.

Augusto rolled around some more and stretched out on the couch. He picked up a tiny piece of paper, about 1/2" square, from the floor and began examining it. Then he stuck it under his nose and rolled on the floor some more. He picked up a tiny black bead from the floor and showed it to me, saying in Portuguese, "It's a toy." Then he got down on the floor and said he was looking for some more beads.

After a few minutes he left the living room and returned with a Portuguese Pinocchio paperback book. Then he opened the book and began to turn the pages from

beginning to end and telling about Pinocchio and the leaves growing on his nose. Then when he turned the last page, he said in Portuguese, "It's finished," and he went to his room and came back with a toy car.

Augusto had among his toys, a little plastic case filled with soldiers and letters of the alphabet with tiny pegs on the backs. The cover of the case was like a pegboard that he could stick the letters into. On one visit he took out a piece of chalk from inside it, and he began to draw on the other side which was a chalkboard. He made a picture that he called a "ship" in Portuguese. It was a recognizable likeness and had two sails, one above the other.

Sabrina, who was in the kitchen, went outdoors on that bitterly cold day. Augusto immediately jumped up and he called "Mommy" as he went outside after her. A minute later she brought him back in by the hand and said to him, "Augusto, what are you doing? It's freezing." Then she sat next to him on the couch and said in Portuguese, "Mommy is studying, Augusto, o.k.? I'm going to my room to study." She smiled affectionately and gave him a hug. Then she went to her room, and he sat on the couch eating an apple.

Her voice could be heard practicing her English. Augusto sat on the couch, making no sign that he was aware that she was studying, yet her voice could easily be heard in this small apartment. When he finished eating, he went into the kitchen, opened the back door, and tossed the apple outside and into the back yard. He turned to me and said, "It's in the trash." I wondered where the apple had landed.

Augusto sat down to continue his "work". He erased his picture with a paper towel that he had removed from the box with the chalk. Then he put the paper towel and the chalk back inside. He said, "I'm going to write my name," and he removed the letters

one by one from the box. He began humming and singing, and then he started removing numbers from his box and saying the number in Portuguese, “Tres, Dois”. Then he said, “Done.” He closed and locked the case, and he started placing the numbers on the pegboard.

Sabrina came into the room, saw what he was doing, and said, “Are you going to study, too?” Then she sat next to him, and he said, “I’m going to play with this.” He started talking about the letters and numbers, and she chatted with him about them. Then he took the numbers one by one and said their names, and he put them on the pegboard. Sabrina said, “You have to learn to say it in English so the teachers will understand you.” He looked at her and asked if he had done the numbers correctly and she said, “Yes.”

She asked him to say the numbers in English. “One, two, three, four, five” he answered. Then, in Portuguese, she asked, “What is this in English?” Pointing to the number four, and he said, “Four.” She did this several times with the numbers between 1 and 5. Then he took the numbers and put them in order on the pegboard. He discovered that “5” was missing, and she asked him where it was. He said nothing, but went into his bedroom. He came back with more numbers, but he did not have a “5.” Then she showed him “8” and said, “What number is this?”

“Oito (eight),” he said. Then he went back to his room looking for the “5”. A few minutes later he came back saying that he could not find it. He soon solved this problem. He took the chalk out of his box, closed the lid and wrote the number “5” on the chalkboard cover, and Sabrina praised him lavishly.

While he continued manipulating the numbers, Sabrina told me that he was afraid to go to school, although she agreed that he would be prepared to begin kindergarten. She

told me that he was afraid of being with American children because he didn't know English.

Augusto then removed all the numbers from the pegboard. Then Sabrina took the letters and spelled out "pai" (father) and said the word out loud. Then she said, "amigo," (friend) and spelled it with Augusto's letters. Then she did the same with "tia" (aunt) and "mae" (mother). Then, as Augusto busied himself with the letters, Sabrina discussed a local day care center she had visited. She had been shocked at the poor quality, lack of formal instruction, and the lack of nutritious food (e.g., bagels) that was offered to the children.

One day when I visited Augusto at his grandmother's apartment, Augusto occupied himself with Portuguese cartoons and videos on television while his grandmother busied herself with laundry and housecleaning. The grandmother's apartment was almost identical to its counterpart next door, except that here Augusto did not have his extensive trove of toys.

Augusto's grandmother was polite and courteous, but she was usually busy in the kitchen during my visits. At my first visit, she chatted with me. She explained that she had a job cleaning houses. She also told me that she loved the United States because she was well-paid for her work. She talked about her heart condition, and she spoke very highly of the medical care she has received in this country. She explained to me that she was a widow and had lived on the Vineyard for three years.

Without his toys, Augusto's only entertainment was television. Nevertheless, his curious mind never stopped. He chattered on about Pinocchio, noting the hat on Pinocchio's head, his clothes and his shoes. He talked about the whale and how enormous

it looked. Then there was the cat, the goldfish in the bowl, Jiminy Cricket's umbrella, and the leaves on Pinocchio's nose – every detail was of interest to Augusto. When the fairy was about to arrive, Augusto, who knew what was about to happen, explained to me in Portuguese that it was the fairy who would make “Pinocchio's nose grow.” After the video ended, he examined the package from the videotape, acting as if he were reading and/or studying the words written on it.

On my later visits to the grandmother's apartment, Augusto began to bring out coloring books with simple stories in Portuguese; and he colored the pages eagerly. All the while, he constantly explained the story, the book, and the colors, just to make sure that I understood what he was doing. It was not unusual for Augusto to spend forty minutes coloring in one of these books while I sat nearby.

He had another book, which he called a storybook, and he thumbed through the pages. This book, which bore the stamp of the Department of Education in Minas Gerais, Brazil, had pictures, sentences with blanks to fill in, and pages to color. On closer examination, I saw that it was a Brazilian school workbook with instructions to the teacher for teaching stories. The book included Portuguese vocabulary words, simple sentences to read, and instructions on writing letters in cursive. It also included a section with directions to the teacher for enrichment activities.

The back of the book contained a set of short essays for the teacher, which focused on reflections on literacy. The essays referenced Piaget, Vygotsky, João Guimarães Rosa and Paulo Freire. Later, Sabrina explained to me that they had been able to get these books as well as other children's books through contacts in Brazil.

As if all of this wasn't enough to prepare Augusto for school, he received a toy computer for his birthday. This computer was like a lightweight laptop word processor. Augusto delighted in pointing to the numbers on the keyboard and naming all of them in Portuguese. He spelled his name on the computer, squealing with excitement every time he found one of the letters in his name.

Postscript, December, 2002

Augusto is now in the second grade. He successfully transitioned to kindergarten in the local public school and has been working at grade level. He now speaks English very well and is reading at grade level. However, he has forgotten much of his Portuguese. This is probably due to the fact that he is in school all day where he speaks only English; and, because he never learned to read in Portuguese, his literacy development is entirely in English. On the other hand, his parents now speak English; and I recently came upon them in the public school communicating effectively in English with the school staff. Augusto's parents recently bought their own home on Martha's Vineyard. It is a comfortable and cozy Cape Cod style home with enough space so that each of the children has a bedroom.

Janaina's family

Larissa and Eduardo lived with four-year old daughter, Janaina, in a one-bedroom apartment over a garage. Janaina, whose parents were both from rural areas in Brazil, was born in the United States. Eduardo grew up in a small town in Espirito Santo in Brazil. He came to the United States in 1988 when he was a young man and he wanted to earn money to help his parents. He had lived on Martha's Vineyard for last four years when I met him.

Eduardo originally moved to New York, then Boston, and finally moved with his family to Martha's Vineyard after the birth of Janaina. Larissa, who was from Minas Gerais in Brazil, met Eduardo in Boston. They fell in love and married. She had been in this country eleven years when we met. Eduardo had been studying English and was able to communicate very effectively in English. Larissa, who was expecting their second child, did not speak any English. Eduardo handled any business that needed to be conducted in English.

Janaina knew how to speak both English and Portuguese. Larissa told me that she wanted to speak only Portuguese to Janaina so that she would not forget how to speak Portuguese. She wanted her to be able to talk to her cousins and family in Brazil. Larissa said that she could teach Janaina to speak correct Portuguese, and she would learn correct English in school. That way Janaina would be able to speak both languages.

Eduardo, age 37, said modestly that he could speak only a little English, but that he was studying English using videotapes. He told me that he had completed his education in Brazil where he attended school until he was eighteen years old. Larissa didn't remember exactly how long she had gone to school in Brazil.

Larissa's family still lived in Brazil, but Eduardo had two sisters who lived in the Boston area. They found that Martha's Vineyard was a "good place to work in the summer, and a quiet, peaceful place to raise a family." Eduardo described himself as something of a homebody. He said that he didn't care to go out much and didn't mix much. He talked about his sister in New York, but said he wasn't able to visit her very often. He said that was all right, though, because his present family made up for any loss of ties he had with his family of upbringing, and he clearly showed in his behavior that

his wife and children were primary interests in his life. A quiet, soft-spoken man, Eduardo displayed affection and tenderness when he spoke with his wife or daughter. He bore a serious demeanor, but one that easily broke into a beaming smile for his daughter.

Larissa who was eight months pregnant continued to work as a maid in a local hotel. A slight, dark-haired woman in her thirties, Larissa wore her black hair tied back from her face, accentuating her high cheekbones and deep-set eyes. Although she could speak no English, she boasted that her boss at the hotel had learned to speak Portuguese.

Although their apartment was tiny, they used the space well. A large open room with a kitchenette at one end was adjacent to the single bedroom. The television, which was set to close captioned when it was on, stood directly in front of the lone couch in the narrow, galley-shaped living room. A cabinet and shelves flanked the television, and one day Janaina opened the cabinet door to a cascade of children's books of every kind that had been stuffed inside. Most of the books, which Larissa said they received from the Head Start program, were in English. There was one Portuguese language children's book. There were also three English language bibles.

Because the apartment was small, with few places to hide or store items, many print items related to every day living were in view. This included a variety of packaged and canned foods, notebooks, an appointment calendar, clock, microwave oven with dials, and a print of the New York City skyline with the words, "New York City, NY."

At the time of my first visit, the home was lush with baby things in anticipation of the newest member of their family. There was little chance to hide anything in their tiny

home; infant clothes, toys, and pillows are neatly stacked together between the sofa and the kitchen peninsula.

As I grew to know this family, they shared their pride in Janaina's drawings and her notebook (a large book of newsprint that Larissa bought for her). At lunchtime, Eduardo and Larissa worked as a team to place salad, fruit, and ham sandwiches on the table. With limited storage space, many packages of food products were on open shelves or on the countertop, making this home the most visibly “print-rich” of all the homes that I visit. Because many of the food items had been purchased at the local Brazilian food store, the language of many of these items was Portuguese.

The family subscribed to the Disney cable television channel, and they frequently used the closed caption feature to display the dialogue in English. One day, I had the opportunity to witness a valuable use of television. Instead of Janaina sitting alone watching television, as children often do, Janaina sat cuddled up to her father during a Disney movie. The entire time, they whispered to each other about what was happening in the story. It was a memorable moment in which the television became a springboard for their intimacy, rather than a barrier.

The Head Start home visitor, Mary, could not speak Portuguese; but Eduardo's English was sufficient for them. On the first visit, in which Mary accompanied me to visit the family, Eduardo asked Mary to help him with their Masshealth coverage. In Massachusetts, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid are combined into one program called Masshealth. Through this program the Department of Medical Assistance offers a broad range of health-care services by paying for part or all of a Masshealth member's health insurance, or paying medical providers for services

given to masshealth members. Qualified members may be able to get doctor visits, prescription drugs, hospital stays, and many other important services. Mary sat down with Eduardo and went over the paperwork with him. Mary offered to help him fill out the forms, if necessary. This application was important because Larissa's baby was due in just a few weeks.

At my first visit in December, the Christmas tree was up, decorated, and music was playing when I arrived. Mary was helping Eduardo with a bill for an insurance premium. Although he could speak English very well, he was, nevertheless, unsure about how the American system of health care and insurance worked.

At one of my earlier visits, I arrived at the appointed time and the door was open and I could see that the carpet in the apartment was being steam cleaned. Larissa wasn't in the apartment, but the Brazilian workers told me that she was expected back soon. I decided to wait for her, and after about ten minutes she emerged from a neighbor's apartment. In preparation for the baby, she had decided to have the carpet cleaned. She apologized for not remembering to tell me about the cleaning or that Janaina would not be home (requirement for my observations) because she was in school.

The workers were just finishing their job, and she invited me inside. As she finished her transaction with them, she turned to me with her check and asked me to fill it out for her so that she could sign it. She said that she was not sure how to spell correctly in English, and she did not want to make a mistake. I did as she asked and the cleaning people left.

Then the phone rang, and she asked me to answer it. I did. It was a phone call from an English speaking person who needed to make an appointment with Larissa. I

acted as translator and intermediary for them both and without knowing who or what the appointment was about, I arranged the date and time. Then Larissa herself had to leave.

Later, when reflecting on this, I wondered if Larissa had arranged my appointment for that day so that it would coincide with the completion of the carpet cleaning as well as the telephone call so that I would be able to be there to help her with those transactions.

Mary, the Head Start home visitor, was also present on one of my visits. She spoke only English, but since Eduardo and Janaina could speak English, they were able to communicate without difficulty. Both Eduardo and Larissa were very interested in Janaina's progress with her letters and numbers, and they listened intently as Mary answered their questions regarding Janaina's development.

While Mary talked with Eduardo, Larissa and Janaina sat together. Janaina was drawing pictures and Larissa was teaching her to practice and name the letters of the alphabet in Portuguese. Both parents were nearby as Janaina practiced her letters and her drawings. In this tiny apartment, no matter where one was, he or she was near whoever else was in the apartment.

Larissa and Janaina were very affectionate as they sat together, but Larissa said that she was not feeling well. The baby was due any day. Janaina did not seem herself either. She acted tired. She yawned, climbed on her mother's lap, put her head against her mother's bosom and closed her eyes. A few minutes later she got up again and went back to practicing her letters.

After Mary left, Eduardo busied himself in the kitchen nook. He began pulling things from the refrigerator. Then he started cleaning the kitchen area, moving papers

away from the counter and tidying up the cooking area. A basket of fruit sat on top of the breakfast bar, and he helped himself to an apple while he cleaned. Every now and then he interrupted his ritual to come over and talk to Janaina, sometimes patting her or tickling her.

When he finished his work in the kitchen, he turned on the television. Janaina brought him a book, and he told her to put it away until later, and she did. Then he picked up the television remote and spent the next few minutes putting batteries into it. Finally he settled himself on the couch only about 10 feet away from Larissa who sat at the dining table.

Janaina sat, engrossed in an animated cartoon on television, snuggled up to her father and watched as two small dinosaurs talked about their fear of never finding their lost little boy dinosaur. Then the scene went to the little dinosaur who was crying and Janaina looked intently, her eyes wide and piercing, with a very serious expression on her face. A song came from the animated characters, and Eduardo patted Janaina gently in time with the rhythm. Then the scene changed to a beautiful star-studded night sky and Janaina said in awe, "It's beautiful," in Portuguese. The next scene showed the dinosaurs whispering and shaking in fear. Eduardo and Janaina both giggled, and Eduardo turned to her to see that she was smiling, too, and wasn't afraid. Janaina and Eduardo quietly made comments to each other, comments which I could barely hear.

Then, in English, he offered me some refreshment. I declined, and he went to the kitchen and began preparing something for himself. A few minutes later he came back and cuddled up to Janaina again. When the movie got scary, Eduardo would turn to look at Janaina, and he would whisper in her ear.

This television watching was an intimate moment between parent and child. The interactions between them were very quiet. Although I was only a few feet away, I couldn't hear what he said to her, and I think that this was intentional. I believe that this was meant to be private between the two of them.

The closeness and affection that I saw was mirrored in the physical closeness of everything in their small apartment. With only one bedroom for mother and Dad, Janaina slept in the living room on the couch. At first her baby brother's crib was in her parents' bedroom; but later, it was moved into the living room next to the couch. In spite of the close quarters, there was still room for guests and visitors who frequently stopped by during my visits.

I thought about my own home and my friends' homes, organized so that everyone has their own space, and I marvel at how little space a person really needs. On my visits, they sang together, played together, read together, and Janaina drew pictures of all of them together. Clearly, Eduardo, Larissa, and Janaina are a close family and share a special bond.

The day before one of my scheduled visits in December, Eduardo called to tell me that Larissa had the baby and was in the local hospital. Instead of our usual visit, I decided to go to the hospital and bring a gift to Larissa. She appeared tired, but was very happy. She beamed expansively as she introduced me to her infant son. We chatted and a Brazilian friend who worked in the hospital also came to visit her. Larissa asked me to help her with the baby as she shifted to a more comfortable position. One of the nurses in the hospital noticed that I could speak Portuguese and asked for my help. The nurses had been trying to communicate with Larissa about the baby. They told me that Larissa

appeared to be frightened about their questions and routines; and the nurse asked me to reassure Larissa that the baby was absolutely fine, which I did.

On my last visit with the family, two guests arrived while I was there. Eduardo had just returned from a trip to Florida where he had been looking for a job. He showed all of us a video of the trip, along with his commentary. He showed us scenes of a Brazilian neighborhood in Florida, as well as the larger urban area in which it was situated. Family and friends together discussed his prospects and the life they could lead in Florida. The area was beautiful, with palm trees and a warm climate like they had in Brazil, and there would be many job opportunities for him. Eduardo told me that he was trying to decide if they should move to Florida.

Postscript, December, 2002

Janaina started second grade in September and had been progressing rapidly in English reading and writing. She no longer remembered very much Portuguese, and English had become her dominant language. Then, suddenly, a few weeks after the beginning of the school year, and without explanation, Janaina's parents notified the school that they were moving back to Brazil. Within a week the family was gone. Another student in the school told a teacher that they had to return to Brazil for legal reasons. However, no one has had any contact with the family since that time; and so we were not sure what actually happened.

Maria's family

Maria was a five-year old whose birthday was just two weeks past the deadline to enter kindergarten, making her the oldest Head Start child in this study. Maria, an only child, had long, dark curly hair framing her impish smile and her long dark eye lashes.

She lived with her father, Mario, and her mother, Nilza. They had been in this country only six months, and were, therefore, the newest immigrants in this project. They lived in a large two-story house, which they shared with two other Brazilians, unrelated to them. They paid \$1500 per month for their shared quarters, and they knew that their lease would expire at the end of April, when the tourist season would begin. No one in the household could speak English.

Nilza, a tall, thin woman, appeared to be in her mid-thirties at the time of our first meeting. She had long, brown, curly hair, and large dark eyes. At my first visit, in which I was accompanied by the Brazilian home visitor, also named Maria, she acted the solicitous hostess, offering me cookies and cafezinho (a strong, dark, heavily sweetened Brazilian coffee, served in small demitasse cups). The ease with which she seemed to float from the kitchen to the living room with her dishes of sweets gave her the air of one accustomed to entertaining.

Mario was a personable man, eager to learn about my studies and to share his thoughts and struggles as he learned to speak English. He was devoted to his daughter, and frequently engaged her in writing and drawing when he was at home with her. He was also quite astute. He prepared for my near weekly visits, and he regularly brought me documents and/or letters in English that he had received from various agencies, such as Masshealth, Social Security, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. At least part of my home visits were occupied with translating these letters and documents for Mario and Nilza, as well as explaining to them how the “system” works here.

Both Nilza and Mario had had professional occupations when they lived in Brazil, but the economy declined there, making work impossible to find. Nilza had worked for a newspaper; her husband had been a manager for an apartment building. Here in the United States, Nilza worked in a pizza parlor; and Mario was a house painter.

Nilza had a brother who had lived in Boston for the previous two years, but she and her family were unable to visit him there because he shared a residence with a group of other Brazilians and he did not have a private space of his own. Mario had a sister and brother-in-law who were also living on Martha's Vineyard with their children, so it was easier for them to visit. Although Maria was an only child, both Nilza and Mario came from large families. She had seven siblings. He was one of eleven children.

Both Mario and Nilza agreed that education was of the utmost importance for their daughter, and they expressed concern about Maria's educational future in American schools. They had heard stories about the poor American schools, and they feared that Maria, a very bright young child, would not be sufficiently challenged in the schools and that she would fall behind her counterparts in Brazil. Maria had been enrolled in a private school in Brazil. There, she had learned to recognize all of the letters of the alphabet and had begun writing them. Mario and Nilza were very disappointed that she had to wait a year to start kindergarten. They were particularly worried that she was bored by the American preschool. Both Nilza and Mario actively encouraged Maria in her writing and "reading." During one home visit, Mario showed Maria how to shape the letters. He reached around her and held her hand, almost embracing her as he guided her hand—for just a minute. Then he took his hand away and let her write. He watched, and

then he gently pointed out to her that she forgot to put the “little hat” on the capital F. It was a tender moment, as well as a teaching moment.

This family subscribed to a satellite television service, which allowed them to receive Brazilian and Portuguese television programs. Because their work schedules were lighter during the winter, off season, Mario and Nilza, spent more time at home. Perhaps their nostalgia for Brazil made this a time for watching Brazilian novellas (television stories that are equivalent to American soap operas). This Brazilian television played in the background while Maria and other members of her family engaged in conversations and play activities. Typically, Maria played with her dolls or her games on the floor of the living room, with only occasional interest in the television. Every few minutes she might interrupt her play to look at the television, but then she returned to her play.

Mario and Nilza limited Maria's television watching to two hours per day. The rest of the time, when she was not in school, she played with her many toys. She liked to draw, color, and produce creations with glitter, paint and glue. Nilza said proudly that “art is her [Maria's] favorite”. Nilza told me that in Brazil they read many stories to Maria, but in America they could not because all of the children's books were in English.

Maria's family found their emigration to the United States relatively easy. They all moved here together, and Nilza said that she could not see any real change in their family life. She worried that American television has too much violence, but both parents agreed that they were happy to be in a safe place like Martha's Vineyard where they also had access to more services, such as Head Start and health care, than in Brazil.

The one hardship that Nilza talked about was that she missed her mother and father in Brazil. She made a point to call them as often as possible.

Although she didn't dwell on it, Nilza also said that she had a great deal of difficulty adjusting to the cold climate of New England. On one of my home visits in November, I noticed that all three members of the family were wearing t-shirts and sandals. They didn't have any winter clothing because it was already getting warm when they arrived the previous March. They adapted by turning the thermostat high enough to be comfortable in their summer clothing. Nilza told me that they did not have any winter coats. She asked for my help, and I made some phone calls. A few days later I received three winter jackets from a local church to take to the family.

Besides drawing and coloring, Maria's favorite activity was playing with her dolls, especially her Barbies. On one visit Maria played with her dolls, ignoring me. I sat to the side, observing and taking notes. Nilza and Mario sat nearby and watched Maria playing, from time to time they chatted with me. Nilza talked to Maria about Barbie and how many she has and that she wants more from Papãe Noel. She dressed Barbie and Mom got down on the floor with another Barbie and dressed her. Then they talked about the snow that was expected to come and that it was going to be very cold, freezing cold.

Maria received more dolls for Christmas, as well as doll clothes, doll accessories, doll furniture, and a dollhouse. One of her Barbies even carried a baby in a baby carrier. Nilza played Barbie dolls with Maria on several of my home visits. When neither Nilza nor Mario was available to play with her, Maria solicited me as her playmate, and she was very precise in directing me how to play.

On another visit, Nilza wasn't home. Mario and Maria were the only two in the house. Maria was eager and excited that I had come to "play with" her and she immediately engaged me. Maria played with Barbie, dressing her with various clothes. Mario sat on the couch nearby, watching Brazilian television. He was wearing his jacket, and sipping something from a cup. He acknowledged me and spoke briefly to me; but most of the time he sat absorbed in a Brazilian novella. He looked like he was trying very hard to feel warm. I suspected that at that moment, with the cold snowy weather we were having, he missed his homeland very much. In Brazil, the seasons are the reverse of those in the United States, and as he sat in his wintry abode, he was surely well aware that his family and friends in Brazil were undoubtedly on their way to the beach.

Maria left the room to get more toys for us to play and Mario and I had a discussion about houses, and he asked where I lived on the island and where I was from. Then Maria returned with more toys. She brought a small sink, a stove, a doll chair, a cabinet with small pots and pans, and a cabinet with miniature food packages. Nilza came home and began to play with Maria, and together they dressed the Barbie doll.

Maria had a little bag of tiny doll shoes and boots (for snow) and a tiny doctor kit. Nilza and Maria dressed the doll with a hat and purse, and Maria decided that the green print hat coordinated better with the check print dress than the black and white check dress.

Then she took Barbie's little suitcase and Mom asked her if she wanted to go to Brazil. She said no. Then she left to get another "bolsa" (purse). She went downstairs to the basement. She came back with another knitted Barbie purse and started counting how many purses and bags she had. She counted -1 -2 -3 -4, in English. She took all of

them -- shopping bag, purse, medical bag, and another purse -- and arranged them in a box.

Then she took her doll furniture. She had a tiny entertainment center and she arranged a plastic television, speaker and VCR. She arranged the setting so that Barbie was sitting in a chair in front of the television as if she were watching it. Then Maria picked one small plastic doll accessory and said to her mother in English, "What is that?" and Nilza looked at it and said "o livro" (book). Maria never tired of her Barbie dolls and she found creative ways of combining her dolls and toys into stories that she played out for us. There was the day Barbie had a temper tantrum and knocked her entire entertainment center, pieces flying in all directions; and there was the time her black Barbie took her baby for a stroll in her baby carrier.

One day Nilza started a conversation with Maria while she was playing. She asked her if she wanted to go back to Brazil and asked her if she missed her grandparents who still lived there. Maria answered "mais ou menos" (sort of) to her question. Then Nilza asked if she missed "Robo". Maria couldn't remember, and then Nilza reminded her that was her dog in Brazil. Nilza didn't respond to this, but she noted that it was raining very hard.

Even though Maria did not yet know how to read, she sometimes behaved as though she could. One day she picked up the directions for a Barney board game and studied the page as if she were finding meaning in the words. She had several board games and delighted in explaining the directions to me.

Maria sat in the Living Room on the floor, right in the center and she had a "Barney" game. She explained in Portuguese to me how to play it. The Barney game had

cardboard cutouts shaped like eggs but each had different designs and colors. Maria took them and sorted them into stacks with like stripes. She showed me the pointer dial and said in Portuguese, “You’re supposed to spin it (the dial).” She picked up the cover to the game and studied it as if she were reading it.

Nilza was working in the kitchen which was totally open to the living and dining area, separated only by a breakfast bar. Nilza came in the living room and turned on a television cartoon of some children on a roller coaster. Maria started laughing and giggling. It ended and mother and child both said, “It’s over,” in Portuguese. The commercial came on in Portuguese. Nilza explained that they could get Brazilian television from a satellite service.

On one of my home visits, as I got ready to leave, Nilza asked me to translate a sheaf of papers that she had obviously set aside for my visit. I could see what looked like the seal of the commonwealth of Massachusetts on the top page. As I examined the documents, I saw that it contained information about their Masshealth application. I translated the document and discussed it with Nilza and Mario who joined us for the discussion.

At another visit, Nilza showed me a gift certificate she received, but she didn’t know what she was supposed to do with it. This gift certificate for food was one of several gifts the family had received from an organization that provides help to the needy. I called the store in question for Nilza and I got the information she requested, the name and address of the store. She explained that she didn’t know where it was, so I showed her on a map and I also wrote directions for her. In response to my inquiry, she told me

that she had transportation, but she had not known where to go or what to do with the certificate when she got there.

On another visit, Nilza asked me to go with her to the post office so that she could get a post office box. (Most areas of Martha's Vineyard do not have mail delivery. Therefore, almost everyone has a post office box, and the daily trip to the post office to pick up mail is usually a social activity where people meet their friends and neighbors.

We went to the post office together and waited in line. When we reached the clerk I explained in English that I was helping this lady who needed a post office box. He explained that there was a waiting list, and it would probably be several months before a box would be available. He said they would call her. I offered to leave my name so that they could call me to translate for her. The helpful clerk replied that wouldn't be necessary because there were plenty of people who could speak Spanish. I told him that she speaks Portuguese. He said, "Oh it's the same thing." When we left the post office, Nilza looked at me incredulously and said, "I don't speak Spanish. Doesn't he know that Spanish and Portuguese are two different languages?" Somewhat embarrassed I replied, "He thinks that if you speak Portuguese then you must also be able to speak Spanish."

During another visit, while sitting at the dining room table, we had a lengthy discussion about learning languages. Mario came and sat down with us so that he could join the conversation. They talked about how difficult it is to learn English. Maria sat at the table with us, silently coloring in her book the whole time we were talking. Then Nilza brought several more children's books to the table, and Maria took some tracing paper and began tracing the pictures in the book. Nilza smiled proudly and said in

Portuguese, “She always must have a pencil and paper in front of her. She always loves to be drawing or writing on paper.”

Postscript, December, 2002

Maria is now in second grade, and is an excellent student. Her reading and writing is equal to, if not better, than many American students. She loves school, has many American friends, and has been involved in a variety of extracurricular activities, such as dance and art. Maria told her teacher, and her parents have confirmed it, that they will return to Brazil during the summer school vacation. At that time, Nilza says that if Maria wants to stay in Brazil, they will leave her therein the care of relatives, and they will return to their jobs in the United States.

Tatiane's family

Tatiane, the focal child, was three at the time of this research project. Her mother, Helena, had been an elementary school teacher in Brazil, and it was very important to her that both Tatiane and her older sister, Rafaela, do well in school. They had been in this country eighteen months at the time that I met them. Their father worked long hours, and so I rarely saw him. He had come to the United States ahead of the family to make preparations. Helena told me that they left Brazil for economic reasons, but they looked forward to the day when they could return to Brazil without the financial worries of the past.

Helena, a quiet, introspective, dark-haired woman in her thirties, was working as a maid in a hotel on the island, despite her professional teaching background. Her pale skin and pulled back hair gave her round face an austere appearance that was softened by her gentle smile.

Neither Helena nor her husband could speak English. We conversed entirely in Portuguese. I taped two interviews with Helena. She seemed to want and need to tell me her “whole life story”, as she put it. In the first interview her words poured from her, and part of what she said became the “story” told in the beginning of this dissertation, a story that embodies much of the anguish, suffering, joy, and hardship that I suspect is common among many Brazilians and other immigrants who move here.

Tatiane’s family lived in the upper level of a split-level ranch nestled in a grove of trees on a quiet dirt road, not far from one of the main roads. They had the good fortune to rent on a year-round basis. A single, older man lived on the lower level, and both families paid rent to an out of state landlord. Although they didn’t have the entire house for themselves, they had a large eat-in kitchen, which opened from the living room. Down a hall were two side-by-side bedrooms, one for the parents and one for the children.

The English television was on, and Helena told me that they could receive a Portuguese language channel and watch the Brazilian novellas. Tatiane, age four, and her sister Rafaela, age eight, sat quietly watching television. Tatiane sat at a television tray with a cup and a piece of cake for a snack, which she dunked, never taking her eyes off the television.

Helena was able to work in the kitchen in close proximity to the girls who usually played in the living room, just a few feet away. This layout allowed Helena to be close enough to hear them easily while she worked in the kitchen. Helena was constantly listening for the children. When Tatiane called her mother from the kitchen, her mother

immediately came to the doorway, where she would have a brief word with Tatiane about the play in progress or something that was on the television.

There were only a few books observable in the home, and a few home decorating and fashion magazines that came with the house. Helena said that she couldn't read any of them because they were in English. There were several religious children's videos in the home, and on several occasions the family invited me to join them as they watched the cartoon versions of Bible stories. They had purchased these videos at the Brazilian evangelical church in which Helena and her family had been members since they lived in Brazil.

The magazine rack contained phone books, atlas, and three "coffee table books" in English. When asked, Mother said that they do not read the books, but that they came with the house. There was also a stack of three or four books, recipe books and National Geographic magazine on the lower shelf of the lamp table in the corner of the room next to the couch on the kitchen side. These, too came with the house, which the family rents furnished. In the very back, hidden against the wall was a stack of 33 LP records and a hardbound book on swing music. All that I could see of the house was totally immaculate.

One day when I arrived there was no electricity in part of the house. Helena said she didn't know why, and she didn't know what to do about it. I looked for a fuse box for her, but none could be found. Access to the basement storage and utilities was behind a locked door and no tenants had a key.

Only the bedrooms had electricity, and I found Tatiane and her older sister, Rafaela, watching television in their parents' bedroom. They were watching a video, a

Portuguese Bible story of Joseph and his brother, called *A Hunger for Home*. The children watched the Bible story for a few minutes and then Tatiane ran into the kitchen for a snack. I followed and when she saw me she was surprised that I was there and she said in Portuguese, “Oh, I’m going there,” as she pointed to the bedroom. I said, “Okay,” and followed. Helena came in a short time later and began dusting the room.

Helena paused in her work to tell me that the children loved this story, and she did, too. It was the biblical story of Joseph in a foreign land. In the story Joseph learned the language of the land, and he became a close friend of the king. But, despite his success, he still hungered to return to his homeland, for the chance to speak his own language, and to see his father again.

The children continued to watch television from their parents’ bed. Every few minutes one or the other of them would get up and leave the room and return a few minutes later with something to eat or drink -- a cup of milk, a cold hot dog, a cupcake, a lollipop, or a cup of yogurt.

The video ended and the children looked through a cache of videos next to the VCR and chose another. Helena said they buy religious videos in Portuguese at the Brazilian church. It is the Children’s Bible Series. She told me the children love them. Tatiane lay on her parents’ bed eating her chocolate cupcake. She got it all over her fingers and left a half eaten cupcake and crumbs on the bed and went into the kitchen. Her older sister pointed to the mess but didn’t say anything. Then Tatiane returned and together they watched the Portuguese language video, *Joshua and the Battle of Jericho*.

Tatiane, like most three-year olds reveled in being the center of attention. When I was quietly observing, Helena frequently engaged me in an adult discussion, such as “Is

it true that if a person is analfebeta¹⁰ it is impossible for them to learn English?” Or, on another occasion, “How do different climates in different parts of the world cause changes in people's skin quality?” Tatiane inevitably interrupted by tugging at her mother, jumping, or yelling until all eyes were upon her.

Tatiane played with dolls, paints, crayons, and small construction toys, e.g. tinker toys and Legos. She played with her sister, Rafaela, if she was home from school. Tatiane, a very independent little girl, left me feeling a little nervous on one occasion, after she brought a plate with two burning votive candles on it, into the living room. She put it on the floor near the curtains. I held my breath, hoping that one of the airy shears would not touch the lip of the flame. Then I breathed a sigh of relief as she blew them out nonchalantly and took them back into the kitchen.

One day when I arrived Helena told me that Tatiane was still in school, and we went together to pick her up. Rafaela came along with us. When we arrived at the preschool, we found that the children were out taking a walk. The teacher said we could go and meet them and pick up Tatiane, but Helena didn't want to because Tatiane loved to take walks.

There was a sign posted about Parent/Teacher conferences. I explained this to Helena and offered to translate at a conference for her, and she said that she would like that. When I explained this to the teacher I learned that Maria, the Brazilian Head Start home visitor, had already arranged to do this. Helena had either forgotten or she didn't realize what it was that Maria had arranged for her.

¹⁰ Analfabeta is the Brazilian term for a person who has had no contact with the alphabet. It is far more profound than the term “functional literacy” which is used in the United States to denote a person who cannot read well enough to function independently.

One day when I arrived, Helena was teaching Tatiane how to make her letters. Sitting on the floor beside the coffee table in the living room, Helena explained that Tatiane received a Barney game for Christmas, and then she had asked Helena to teach her how to make her letters. I asked if she was learning this in school and she said no. Helena said they only drew and did art in school. Tatiane made her letters in capitals on a lined, spiral-bound tablet. She filled the space between the two lines and formed the letters very perfectly. Helena stayed by her side and encouraged her, saying, “That’s right,” “That’s very good,” and “That’s perfect,” all in Portuguese. After a while, Helena said, “OK, now you can do it.” Helena explained that she makes the letters in dots for Tatiane to connect.

One day when I arrived, Helena was in the kitchen preparing dinner. Tatiane, who had been sitting on the living room floor having a snack of milk and cookies, silently went to her room after she finished eating. She returned a few minutes later with a dollhouse, and set it up in the living room. At first Tatiane just sat with her toys in front of her watching television. Then she began playing. Helena came in the room to pick up her snack dishes and stopped a minute to listen to Tatiane who was describing the tiny dolls she had arranged in the dollhouse. After Helena went back into the kitchen, the sounds of chopping, the sizzle of oil frying, the whirl of a blender, and the click of utensils could be heard. The pleasing aroma of dinner being prepared wafted through the house.

At one point, Tatiane who was on the floor with her feet up on the couch, called to Helena who came to the doorway. There was an exchange about Mickey Mouse and Disney World. Then Helena returned to her cooking.

Tatiane, still on the floor, began to play with a dog pull-toy. She said in English, “Come here, Dog,” and pulled the yapping toy behind her. Her play soon extended into the kitchen area where she played with the toy pulling it back and forth from the kitchen and to the living room. Then she and her sister began to play with the toy dollhouse and little people, all the while chattering in Portuguese. Tatiane began putting people into the house through the chimney and counting each one as she put it in.

Helena came into the room, noticed that it was getting dark, and turned on the lights. Tatiane continued to play with her doll house dolls, creating Portuguese dialogue for them. She called to her mother that she wanted more dolls. Then she went into her room several times, each time returning with more “little people”. She lined them all up in a row. She had a dog, a cowboy, a girl, a boy and a man. She then played with them, putting them into the house and arranging them.

Helena ignored me while she continued preparing dinner. Tatiane took the dolls out again, put them in a row and counted them again, this time in English. Next Tatiane played a game in which she took the string from the pull-toy and threaded it through a slot in the dollhouse. Then she opened the roof of the house to expose a mirror and a second floor bedroom in the house. Tatiane then put all the little dolls inside.

All the while, Mother could hear everything and came into the room when they called. The phone rang and Tatiane answered it. It was their father. Tatiane talked to him in a voice that seemed too loud for such a small person, and she told him all about me sitting in the living room writing on my pad.

Helena left the house to get her husband from work, and I stayed with the girls. They took me into their bedroom and showed me all their stuffed animals. They pulled a racing car set and track, and a tinker toy set from under their twin beds.

Soon the children had set up an entire racetrack in their room and were driving their cars on it. They had a disagreement about the way it was set up, and Rafaela picked up the entire set of tracks and re-laid all of them. While she was doing this Tatiane repeatedly launched the racing cars into her backside. Rafaela ignored her, and then Tatiane got up threw Tatiane's coat on the floor. The children spoke sometimes in Portuguese and sometimes in English, as they played, and explained their play to me.

Then Rafaela emptied her backpack and began pulling out a crumpled mass of papers that she showed to me. One of these was a newsletter from the school, explaining the importance of the parent-teacher's conferences and what parents can do to prepare for them. The newsletter was in English. The television, which was now only a faint vibration from the living room, was still on, but apparently no one paid it the least attention. Then Rafaela began to teach Tatiane how to add, using her fingers to count, such as "See 2 plus 3 equals five," and then, "How much is 5 plus 5?" And she showed her how to do this with her fingers. This was all in Portuguese.

One day the children were playing at the coffee table in the living room with a pile of costume jewelry. I had called earlier in the day to try to change the appointment, but Rafaela answered and said her mother was in the bathroom. When I arrived, Helena asked if I had called and said that she had been called in to work and she was not home when I called.

Helena was busy in the kitchen and Rafaela braided Tatiane's hair. They took all the earrings and arranged them in pairs. They played with elastic ponytail holders and the jewelry. They had a pair of earrings shaped like flowers, another pair shaped like leaves, two shaped like half loops, and a fourth pair of red love knots. They also played with two brooches, one of a brightly colored toucan and the other of a parrot.

Tatiane took the earrings back out of the bag and arranged them in rows on the coffee table. Helena came in and participated in the play with the girls. Tatiane needed help trying to put on a brooch. Rafaela picked up a magazine, "Martha's Vineyard Wedding Book," and began to flip through it, then tossed it on the sofa. Tatiane took all the jewelry and put it in a zip lock bag on a wooden TV tray.

From the living room where I sat with the children, I could see another woman working in the kitchen. Tatiane asked me to put some earrings on her and I did. Helena was in another part of the house. The children played quietly together in living room, while the other woman worked in the kitchen.

Usually the girls spoke in Portuguese, but sometimes they interspersed their conversations with English "formulaic expressions" such as "Excuse me," "Please," or "Thank you". The two children had a great time laughing and saying, "1,2,3, go," in English, and then they threw stuffed animals at each other, catching them or chasing after the ones that landed on the floor. After a while, Tatiane lay down on the bed and whimpered because her animal was on the floor. Rafaela lay down with her, and then retrieved her animal for her.

On one of my visits, Tatiane answered the door. When I came in Helena was at the kitchen table cutting vegetables, a few feet away from the children who were playing

in the living room. They had a large towel laid on the floor, and were playing with a toy peg board and plastic pegs with large knobs atop each one. A structure of small Lego's connected together was on the same table as the television and directly in front of it. An open bag of potato chips lay on the floor.

Tatiane coiled around in the easy chair and, like a snake, squiggled onto the floor. Next she jumped up, got back up on the chair, and stood with her legs, one on each arm of the chair. She then jumped down and took her dog pull-toy into the kitchen where she whirled it around on the floor. Helena took note and told her to be careful, but she made no attempt to interfere. However when Tatiane swung the dog into the kitchen table leg, Mom went into the kitchen and told Tatiane to bring the dog into the living room.

On one of my visits, Tatiane brought out a photo album and we talked all about the pictures of her family in Brazil. There were photos of past birthdays and vacations and photos of friends, cousins, aunts, and uncles.

Helena asked me about kindergarten. She heard that children may enter kindergarten at five years of age in the U.S. She said Tatiane would be five in March, so we agreed she would be old enough to begin school the next September

One day, Tatiane sat at the coffee table painting some drawings she had made. All the pictures were of apple trees with a tree trunk, a cloud of green leaves above and filled with red apples and the background of a blue sky. Helena commented on the blue color of the sky that Tatiane painted. Tatiane turned her painting upside down onto a towel that had been laid out to protect the table. She carefully smoothed it with her hand to remove the excess water.

Helena warned, "Don't get the table dirty," in Portuguese. Tatiane began painting again. She put drops of red water color on the paper and took a sipping straw and blew a design on the paper. Then suddenly she started screaming that she wanted the paintbrush! From the kitchen, both Mother and Father said in unison, "Tatiane!" Tatiane took the brush, quieted down, and painted a tree with a yellow trunk and blue and red leaves.

Helena came in from the kitchen and told her to play quietly. Then she spoke to me and said in Portuguese "How different children are here. They have more independence." She talked about how her children would go to the refrigerator and help themselves when they were hungry. She said that in Brazil the children were totally dependent on their parents for everything. She told me she thought the American way was better because the children would grow up independent. She said that she knew Brazilians who, even as adults, were totally dependent on their parents for everything.

One day Helena pointed out that Tatiane often played by herself and talked to herself at play. Helena proudly told me how quickly Tatiane learned her letters and that she (Helena) had been a teacher who taught children reading and writing in Brazil. In the middle of our conversation, Tatiane interrupted and shouted at her mother. She wanted something "NOW!" Mom said quietly but firmly, "Look how you talk."

Postscript, December, 2002

Tatiane is in the second grade and working at grade level. She is completely fluent in English. She is forgetting how to speak Portuguese and English is now her dominant language. She cannot read at all in Portuguese. In class, Tatiane loves to be the center of attention and raises her hand to speak at every opportunity. She complains

vehemently if she feels that she has not had her rightful turn to speak in class. She is confident and self-assured, and there appears to be little doubt in her mind that she always knows better than anyone else.

Rosa's family

The first three times I went to Rosa's home to meet her (accompanied by and arranged by Mary, the Head Start Home visitor) no one was home. The family lived in a large, two-story, seven-room house, which they rented during the winter months. Rosa lived with her mother, Denise, her stepbrother, Gilberto, and her father who was never present during any of my home visits.

As I entered the living room, I found an open floor plan in which the kitchen, living room, and dining area flowed into a single unobstructed space, free of dividing walls. Furniture was judiciously placed to separate one area from the other, without imposing a feeling of enclosure. There was a hallway that went out from this open area to three more rooms. Rosa had her own room, as did her older brother who was in high school. In addition to the family, another adult in the household lived in a room on the second floor.

Rosa, the three-year old Head Start child, was born in the United States. Prominently displayed in the living room was a framed baby picture and newspaper article of Rosa, who had been the first baby born on Martha's Vineyard in the year of her birth. In the corner of the room near the kitchen was a table with photos of children and underneath was a shelf that was filled with magazines and a soft-cover book. I later learned that the book was one that Mary had left on a previous visit Positive Discipline.

In the book pile were many catalogs and other unidentified books. Next to the television and VCR was a cabinet filled with videotapes.

Denise was born in Brazil and had lived eight years in United States when I met her. She said that she originally left Brazil because of economic reasons. She first lived in Boston for two and a half years. Denise had come here with her two children, and she supported them by working in various jobs. She had worked on the island as a housekeeper in a hotel, as a cook in a restaurant, and at the time of my home visits owned a store.

Denise did not say what kind of educational background she had in Brazil. She talked instead about the difficulties of trying to earn enough money to support her children in Brazil where she had worked in a series of jobs. She had been a dressmaker who sold clothes out of her home. She sold lottery tickets for a while, and later she worked in a gambling hall. She said that she was afraid to go back to Brazil because she had been away a very long time. Her fear was that at 30 years old, and without a profession she would not be able to support herself. "If you want to work in Brazil," she said, "you have to have a profession."

Denise told me that she also had a thirteen-year old daughter who had lived here with her, but had returned to live with her grandmother in Brazil. Denise sent her there because she worried about her getting into trouble as a teenager in America. Denise was afraid she might experiment with drugs. She told me that her daughter was happy in Brazil.

On one of my visits, Mary, the Head Start home visitor, was there when I arrived. She was threading beads with Rosa while she and Denise had a conversation about

housing. Denise was upset because they had rented a house, and when the landlord saw they were Brazilian he said the rent was higher. The coffee table was laid out with colored string and beads of various shapes and colors. Rosa took some beads over to Denise and gave them to her to string.

Then Denise took a piece of plastic lace, and showed her how she could make a necklace by taking the shoelace, threading it with lifesavers, and then wearing it around her neck. Rosa and Denise made a necklace together. When they were finished Rosa wore it, and then she ate some of the lifesavers from it. Rosa talked to her in Portuguese while they worked. Then Rosa started naming the colors on her necklace in English -- pink, purple, yellow, green, and white.

The “ABSeas” game and the children’s book Jump, Frog, Jump were on the floor next to Mary’s chair. It appeared that she had brought them with her.

Mary asked Rosa to find the jelly beans that were mixed with beads in a bag. Mary and Denise helped her put them in the plastic bucket and count them as she dropped them. If Rosa had trouble finding them all then they coached her, saying, “Where’s the orange one?” or “the purple one?” etc.

Mary said, “Now, Rosa, can you find all the purple ones and put them in?” This was all in English. Mary speaks only English, but this was not a problem since Denise and Rosa speak English.

After all the pieces were put away, Mary said to Rosa, “Do you want a story?” And Rosa climbed up in the chair with Mary, and Mary read to her. Denise sat across from them and watched them.

After the story Mary talked to Rosa about the frog in the story and asked questions such as, “What did the frog do?” “When?” And other questions about the story.

Then Mary left and Rosa lay down on the floor. Denise pretended to try to pick her up and could not, saying she was too heavy. Then Rosa came to me and said she fell and hurt her chin, and she pointed to the spot. Denise moved behind the counter into the cooking area and sang “Rosa, Rosa” and she made up a song about Rosa while she worked around the kitchen.

After this, Rosa became interested in me. “Eu não sou Brasileira,” (I’m not Brazilian) she said. “I’m ‘American e Brasileira,’” she said blending English and Portuguese into one statement. Denise started saying gender related pronouns in Portuguese: “Tia” (aunt), “Primo” (male cousin), and “Irmazinho que vai nascer” (little brother to be born). Rosa was to answer Brasileira or Americana or Brasileiro or Americano. Rosa became fascinated with the difference in the use of pronouns in the language. Why, in English, is cousin, or American, or Brazilian, the same word, regardless of whether it refers to a male or female? She showed that she knew that in Portuguese, the ending of the word changed, depending on the gender of the person. Rosa and Denise continued playing this spontaneous bilingual word game while Denise busied herself cooking, while a succulent aroma permeated the living area.

On another visit, Denise was sitting on the couch watching English television when I arrived. Rosa was playing at coffee table with her *See ‘n’ Say* game. She came over and showed me the animals in the game. After that, she climbed up on the oak dining room table and sat on top of her father’s valise. In English she named all the animals in the *See ‘n’ Say* and then switched to the “Old Macdonald” song. She used the

animal sounds from the *See 'n Say* as the animals in the song. When she was finished singing, she showed me the Yamaha synthesizer which was also on the table, and she told me that it was her father's.

Next Rosa showed me her playroom. On the floor of her room was a box of "Click Art" with the user manual inside. There was a box of Play Doh in the room with the original packaging. A birthday card was on her bureau. She invited me to sit down on the floor, which I did and then she picked up a finger puppet and walked it up my back and onto my head.

She had a big playhouse, a child-sized piano, and a big truck. Suddenly she began -speaking in Portuguese to me and showed me the toy bus being driven by Ernie and a stuffed bunny. A moment later, she switched back to English and opened the bus to show me the stuffed animals inside. I always responded to Rosa in the language in which she spoke to me. Then she picked up the small bunny which was a finger puppet. She cradled the puppet in her arms and said, "She's a baby," in English.

Then she took her stuffed animals and used them like puppets. She provided the voices for them to talk to each other. When she started to climb up on top of the house, I said, "No, perigoso" (Dangerous). Then she said, "It's not perigoso," mixing English and Portuguese.

Then she took out her styrofoam letters. She lined up "WYINL", all the letters she found, and said, "It spells music." Next she showed me two water balloons she had and said, "There's water right here," and held them both and said, "Two water." Then she bounced them on the floor and slapped them and bounced them again. I asked where she got them, and she said her mother made them.

She said, "I have a family -- Mom and Dad and Roberto and Denise. I have a sister, Teresa. And now I have a friend, Marcos." Then switching to Portuguese, she said, "Ele mora no Brazil." (He lives in Brazil). She continued to mix her comments in Portuguese and English, as she played.

She showed me another balloon without water and said, "You wait right here, I go show Mom." Then she went to her mother in the kitchen, and I heard her ask her to put water in the balloon. I couldn't hear Denise's response, but a few seconds later, Rosa came back and said, "Olha aqui. Ela vai por água depois." (Look here. She's going to put water in it later.) Then she said, "Look here, agua (water)," again, mixing English and Portuguese.

Then she took the cat finger puppet and the little stuffed dog and made them fight together arguing with each other in English. Suddenly she switched to Portuguese and said to me in Portuguese, "The cat ate the dog."

She pointed to a stack of Birthday Cards and said in English, "Two letters," and took the cards and the envelopes and she held them out to me and said, "I have letters." She had a large spiral bound book made from construction paper. There were two boxes wrapped in Christmas decorations and she said to me in English, "These are presents -- not opened."

She picked up a watch and put it on her wrist and said, "It's a clock." Then in Portuguese, she told me the watch was her cousin's. She looked at the watch and said, "Cinco horas eu vou em minha casa," (At five o'clock I am going home), and then she went into her playhouse.

She went into the playhouse and invited me to come in with her, but I told her I couldn't come in because I'm too big. She gathered more stuffed animals and took them into the playhouse with her. I could see through the doorway that there was a small kitchen inside. She closed the door and said, "Wait right here." I heard dishes clanking. Then she opened the door and said, "Here's some food" and offered me a child-sized saucer. I pretended to eat from it and she seemed satisfied.

One of my visits was on the coldest day of the year. When I arrived Rosa was watching cartoons. A teenage boy, whom I later learned was her brother, Gilberto, was on the couch and loud rock music was playing from a boom box. He turned it off when I arrived and went into the kitchen and started eating out of the refrigerator. A few minutes later Denise came downstairs. Her hair was wet, but neatly combed. She sat down on the couch next to Rosa. The cartoons were in English and the characters were counting. Rosa and Mom laughed as they counted together with the cartoon characters.

Gilberto was looking in the refrigerator and he called "Mommy" in English. Then Denise came in the living room with the boy and she carried the phone book and a pen and he had an appointment book. Then he put it on a side table and they had a discussion about dinner. What were they going to have for dinner? They decided on pizza. Rosa picked up the yellow pages and began searching for take-out food.

There followed a bilingual conversation between Denise and Gilberto as they continued to talk about ordering dinner. "Não tem nada aqui (there's nothing here), Gilberto" Rosa told him. She looked at him and said, "It's not in the book."

Then she picked up a carryout menu from a local deli. There was a list of sandwiches. She spoke in Portuguese, as she read to him from the English menu. "Tem

Steak and Cheese,”(They have steak and cheese), and she read down the list of sandwiches on the menu.

A few minutes later Denise was the on phone ordering in English. She spoke to him in English. “I like eggplant,” and she asked if he like it too. He answered that he did, and the conversation continued in Portuguese. Then he took the portable phone and dialed it. He called and asked if they deliver. Then he hung up and told Denise they didn’t deliver. The two of them huddled over the phonebook trying to decide where they would order their evening meal.

Rosa lay silently on the couch watching the cartoon show and sucking her thumb. The phone rang and in Portuguese Denise arranged a date and time with the person on the phone. She hung up, and Denise and Gilberto continued talking about dinner. Soup? Hot dogs? What would they have?

The phone rang again and Denise answered. The conversation was in Portuguese. Denise talked about her job, that Rosa had been sick, and the weather was terribly cold. Gilberto sat watching television alongside Rosa. When Denise got off the phone she said, “She had a little girl,” in Portuguese to Gilberto.

Then cartoons ended, and Denise said that she heard that a woman of 53 years old had triplets. Then she turned her attention to Rosa who was at the window, looking at the snow outside. They began breathing on the window to create a “slate” to write on the fogged window. Together they drew a cross. They talked about the snow, and Rosa said she wanted to go outside and make a snowman.

Denise made some soup with noodles and hot dog slices and brought the bowl in the living room. While Rosa played, Denise fed the soup to her, blowing on each spoonful to cool it and feeding it to Rosa one spoonful at a time.

Rosa noticed me writing and asked what I was doing. I said, "I'm writing on my paper." Then she ran out of the room and came back with a foam letter R and said in Portuguese, "Write my name." I took the letter R and traced it on my paper and she got excited and said, "Do another," in Portuguese. And we did this again and again, until I made four R's. Then she pointed to each and said, "Rosa."

This quickly turned into a game in which she brought letters to me to trace. Meanwhile every few minutes Denise gave her a spoonful of soup. Rosa continued to run back and forth to her room getting more letters for me. She got really excited and screamed when she saw the letter "E", because "E" is for her Grandmother Ericema.

Another day when I arrived, the television was on, but Rosa was at the counter helping her mom make dinner. Then she showed me her new pet bird in its cage. We looked at him together, and she explained that her Dad bought it. She told me that he was a boy bird and he slept inside a little birdhouse in his cage. She showed me the little place for his bath, his swing to play, and his seeds to eat. His name was Louie. Then we sat on the couch and Rosa watched English cartoons on the television. Denise continued cooking. Louie chirped intermittently, and Rosa looked in his direction when he did.

Denise was busy in the kitchen. The pressure cooker was hissing in the background, and the aroma of delicious-smelling food permeated the house.

Denise and I talked. We were planning a family literacy program for all of the research participants, and she wanted to talk about the other families. She wanted to

know who they were. Did she know them? Then the conversation changed to a discussion about discrimination, and Denise said she had not experienced much discrimination on Martha's Vineyard. Denise wanted to talk about housing on the island because she wanted to buy a house, and the procedures are very different from those in Brazil.

On another visit I arrived at the house and Gilberto answered the door and told me that Denise was not at home. I was about to leave when she drove up and said, "I'm on my way to the store. Want to come?" I got in the back seat of the car with Rosa who was in a car seat.

Rosa, confined to her car seat, showed me her red shoes. She wanted me to unbuckle her seatbelt, and she became angry and pouted because I would not. Finally I gave her my magnifier glasses to play with, and she was happy again.

We headed off to the store, and the conversation turned to cars. Denise had a 4-wheel drive truck with a back seat; but she said there wasn't room for 2 car seats and she was pregnant. She would need another car once the baby came.

We arrived at the store and unloaded bags of supplies for the shelves. The store was a small grocery that specialized in Brazilian canned and packaged foods, condiments, dried meats, sausages, and other Brazilian staples.

Postscript, December, 2002

Shortly after the end of the project, Rosa's baby brother was born. A year later, Rosa's parents finally were able to purchase their own home. When Rosa entered kindergarten she appeared to be working at grade level. However, she has fallen behind and is now struggling to keep up with her first grade work. According to her teachers the

main issue with Rosa is that she is absent an average of twice a week. The school has made numerous attempts to communicate their concerns about her absences to Denise. Although she has indicated that she understands and that Rosa will come to school more often, there has been no change in her attendance.

Summary

There is no one single profile that can be applied to the Brazilians living on Martha's Vineyard. As we shall see from their interviews, the Brazilian families in this study, like their Brazilian immigrant counterparts in other parts of New England and the United States, lived as low middle class professionals in their native country. They had the financial means, as well as the knowledge and social connections, to move themselves and their families to this country. The pressures of unemployment and government corruption have caused some Brazilians to make the life-changing decision to leave the country to which they are inextricably tied through their love of their families and their pride in their identity as Brazilians.

As I got to know these families and observed the fabric of their daily lives, I was struck by the obvious affection that family members shared with one another. There was a feeling of freedom in expressing affection and love openly to one another. These were caring, warm families in which the children were often the center of attention.

In the next chapters I will unfold the tapestry of their lives as they shared them with me during the months of my visits to their homes, and how their family experiences may be linked to their children's language and literacy development.

Chapter VI: Learnings from Interviews

Introduction

The parents in this study made tremendous sacrifices to bring their families and themselves here. In Brazil, they lived surrounded by friends and family with whom they shared their lives and who formed a network of support for them. But financial pressures brought on by lack of employment, with little hope of improvement, drove them to leave homeland, family, and even, for a time, their children. Then when they arrived here, they were faced with the additional isolation of not being able to speak the language of the dominant culture and, therefore, unable to easily access many of the resources of America. They became like children, unable to communicate, confounded by customs and traditions that seemed disconnected from their own values. Yet despite the many difficulties they have encountered, they have remained here and they have seen their children reap the rewards of their sacrifice.

Why they left -- life is difficult in Brazil

The Brazilian immigrants in this study, coming from a country in which people feel great pride in their uniqueness among nations, must feel a tremendous shock in being separated from their native country; and yet they chose to leave family, friends and all that is familiar to them. Paradoxically, although they leave their families to move to America, their reasons for leaving are inextricably tied to their loyalty and devotion to their families. Unemployment, financial distress, and crime, as a result of corruption, inefficiency, and lack of social justice in government led to a situation that became unlivable for the families in this study.

Economic reasons.

Denise has been in this country since 1991. She lived for the first two and a half years in Boston, and then she moved to Martha's Vineyard. She spoke softly of how difficult it was to live and raise a family in Brazil.

It was very difficult to survive. The economy was not good, and I lived with my mother. I had two children, and I had to work, and I earned very little. It was not enough to give my children a good upbringing.

Denise heard about Boston from her sister who lived there, and so she came. She explained that for years she had tried to eke out a living for herself and her children by making and selling clothes in Brazil. When she moved to Boston, she easily found work, for which she considered herself to be well-paid. She worked at a restaurant, a dry cleaner, a hospital, as a housekeeper, and she eventually opened a Brazilian store on Martha's Vineyard with her husband.

It was also very difficult for Helena and her husband to survive on what they earned in Brazil. "Think about it. I worked there as a teacher and made 200 reais per month . . . what now is worth some 100 dollars."

In Brazil Helena's husband worked at a milk cooperative in the city, where he earned 300 reais per month, which at the time was equivalent to some 150 dollars, per month. Helena found that even during a period when she was well-paid as a teacher they still couldn't survive. "There was a period of time when I made 800 reais per month . . . That was good money there . . . but here we can make 400 dollars in a week." Those were the good times in Brazil for Helena.

Eduardo also left Brazil for financial reasons. Although he didn't elaborate, he said that he wanted to improve his financial situation. In Brazil he had worked in the accounting department of a Brazilian airline.

A better life for their children

For Helena it was worries about her children that finally drove her to accept emigration. Their economic situation was such that she and her husband had to work very long hours. Their children stayed at their grandparents, and she felt that she was losing them.

Helena recounted,

I worked from 1:00 to 5:30 and from 7:00 at night to 11:30. At night my husband stayed with the children . . . and during the day they stayed at their grandparents' house. So I was losing control. The older one was already beginning to disobey me. You know. It was because she was at her grandparents' house all the time.

Helena, in sharing about their decision to come to America, described her husband's intense desire to provide a better life for their children. She remembered him saying "I want so much to give our daughters a good house. I want so much for them to have a good education," and then she added, "Because you know in Brazil a good education is very expensive."

Nilza summed it up like this: "There are few jobs in Brazil. You don't have what you need in Brazil. You do not have money."

Government corruption in Brazil.

Sabrina also told me that her family moved here because of the job situation in Brazil. The bank where her husband worked failed, and he lost his job. He found a job

working for the city as an accountant, but when the new mayor was elected he lost that job, too. Sabrina explained that, “In Brazil we have mayors every year. The party, that is the mayor, changes; and then they change all the employees. When the new mayor takes office, he hires people from his own party.”

So it was unemployment that was exacerbated by political patronage that finally induced them to emigrate. Sabrina’s husband had previously worked on Martha’s Vineyard for one summer. His employer remembered him, and when he heard about his situation, he called him and said, “Oh, come here. Come here. I will apply for a green card for you and your family. Bring your family here to live.” So he came.

Helena also talked about the corrupt government in Brazil as being institutionalized, and unlikely to change.

If you want to be able to have a better life and give a better life to your child, you have to make some kind of change for yourself, instead of waiting for others, the government to change things. To wait for the president to change, to wait for a good president in Brazil, you know, with so much corruption, with so much lack of caring for others, you will get old and nothing will change.

Helena and her husband decided to change what they could change, and since they couldn’t change the government, they decided to change the country where they lived.

Social Injustice.

Nilza bemoaned the way those who have political power take advantage of the situation for their own personal gain at the expense of others. “It is government,

politicians, government personnel . . . They all exploit others. You know. There is a lot of social injustice.”

Denise, too, lamented the lack of adequate social justice policies in Brazil, especially “the respect for the elderly and children.” According to Denise, “In Brazil if you are over 30, you can’t get a good job. . . The old in Brazil are not valued. After the age of thirty you don’t have value”.

Denise was concerned for the plight of both the children and the elderly in Brazil. “I get sad when I see on the television that the children there are on the street, needing help. You do find people who help, but one person alone cannot help everyone.” Denise went on to clarify that when she talks about this lack of value for children she means the poor and the lower middle class. The children and elderly of the rich are valued.

Nilza also spoke of discrimination and lack of rights and the effects of ageism in the workplace. “My husband is 35, and in Brazil. . . . When a person reaches 40 years the work market closes its doors. . . They give preference to younger people.”

For Nilza’s husband, at the age of 35, after working for a company for 10 years, the doors to advancement were closed to him. He tried to find another job, but he experienced the same form of discrimination. The only job open to him paid half what he had previously been earning.

Nilza also experienced discrimination. She was dismissed from her job because she married and became pregnant. She said that in Brazil they don’t want married women in the workplace. They especially do not want women who have children. “They think that a woman who has a child takes problems to work, that if a child is sick, the woman won’t go to work.”

She said they can do this because of the huge amount of unemployment. There are plenty of people vying for the few jobs available. So employers choose only to hire younger people and only women who are unmarried. “I was unemployed for four years in Brazil, and he was trying to change jobs. He couldn’t get anything. This was one of the reasons that we came here.”

Immigration is worth the pain.

Helena hardly saw her children, and both she and her husband wanted desperately to provide a better life for them. Then they heard from her husband's sister that life in the United States was good. Finally they made the difficult to decision to emigrate. Helena remembers how she agonized over the decision, “the conversations that he had with me were always like this, sometimes, many times he even cried. You know. He said, ‘Helena, I would like so much to give something better to our daughters’.”

Helena had been filled with anxiety about her husband moving to the United States to work. “I know of a lot of people who come here, and the family is destroyed,” she said. But she knew this was their only chance to build a better life for their family.

For Nilza, the decision was also painful, but the lack of jobs, the government corruption, and the lack of social justice made family life there unbearable. Nilza says that even though they have had to go through a lot in order to make their life here, she believes that in the end it will be worthwhile for them. She spoke of her love for her country, saying she never thought she would want to leave. But now she says, “I believe that it is worth the pain.

Coming to America was the fulfillment of a dream to make a better life for their families. Helena said:

I think everyone has this dream. You know, to achieve something. Our country is a very rich country, a beautiful country, a good place to live. Unfortunately I think that the government doesn't know how to administer our riches. This makes me very sad because we would like to have a country that was more developed, that was more humane in its treatment of people.

Jobs, work and employment

Too much work in America.

It's possible that having family members nearby helps Brazilians to face the many challenges in their lives. It may be the support system they need so that they do not become overwhelmed by feelings of isolation due to their lack of access to the mainstream community. Perhaps their sense of longing for their families in Brazil sustains them in the long hours they work in jobs. Once they get here, their life continues to be a life of work with little time for leisure. They work hard for the sake of their families, and yet in some cases their hard work and long hours keep them from their families.

Sabrina works two jobs, but she doesn't want to do it anymore. "I have two jobs, two, but now this summer I'm only going to clean houses so I can come home earlier. You know. When you work in restaurants you get home very late, and so I'm going to stop."

Nilza agrees that living and working in America has improved their ability to have a better life, but it has come at a price. "There is much more work, here, but little time for leisure" she says. She and her husband also work long hours. She explained how it had been for her husband, "Until one month ago my husband worked two jobs. . . He

left home early, and did not return until one in the morning. He worked straight through.”

Eduardo, too, spoke of his long hours and hard work for the sake of his family. “Here I have worked almost every Sunday.” He also works holidays and nights. “I never worked at night in my country, and here I’ve almost always worked nights.” The motivation is money. “When you’re in a bad financial situation, he said, “You accept things.”

American employers and Brazilians.

Helena feels satisfied with the rewards of her work in America. She feels that she is well compensated for her work. “Here you work, and you receive.” In Brazil her husband worked hard, but made very little in return for his efforts. Helena believes that this is the reason that Brazilians come and will continue to come to the United States.

Sabrina likes working for Americans. She talked about how their life improved because of their move here. It was challenging to come here, to overcome the difficulties, the mountain of paperwork and the legal and travel expenses. Fortunately in their case, her husband’s employer applied for a green card for them. Sabrina said that they and other Brazilians who have come to the United States work hard. They, in turn, are usually respected and treated well by their American employers.

Admitting that it was a rare occurrence, she related an incident that pained her “This week I was at a place here, and the owner of the hotel said he wouldn’t hire Brazilians.” Usually, though she finds that she and other Brazilians are respected and treated well in the workplace. “I think that all of us Brazilians are hard workers,” and she believes that for this reason they are valued as workers here.

Nilza also is very satisfied with the way they are treated at their jobs here in the United States, although here they are both working in unskilled laborer positions, as opposed to their white-collar jobs in Brazil. “Everyone I have worked for has been excellent to me.” She also said that her husband’s American employer in the house painting business has treated him very well.

Helena’s experience working for Americans has also been good. She described how her employer uses an electronic translator to communicate with her and to help her to learn English. “Whenever there’s a word she thinks that I don’t understand . . . She checks with the translator, and I automatically go and write it down.”

Helena is grateful. She, too, has heard about discrimination, but says that she has not experienced it, “They treat me very well, but they say that it happens.”

Helena has also received help from her husband's American employers. This unexpected source of help has filled her with loyalty, and a desire to stay with these employers. When Helena had her miscarriage, it was her husband’s employer who helped her, not her Brazilian sister-in-law. “I told my husband, I’m not going to look for another job for the summer, because I want to work there again, because I like to work there.”

Competitiveness for jobs among Brazilians.

In Helena’s experience, she did not receive the help that she expected from other Brazilians. She thought that her sister-in-law who worked cleaning houses, and was well-established here, would help her find work. She thought that at the very least she would help her to translate, but this didn’t happen. Now, she says that she doesn’t want

to work for Brazilians. “I’m Brazilian, but here, in the United States, it’s better to work for Americans than to work for Brazilians.”

Helena described the competition for jobs among Brazilians. “Unfortunately, when it comes to jobs, Brazilians are not friends,” she said. Instead, they compete with one another. “They want to take the jobs of other Brazilians. They gossip about each other.” She feels that, when it comes to jobs, among Brazilians, “Friendship does not exist.”

Helena does not understand this. It seems to her that if a Brazilian hires another Brazilian, then they both would benefit. She sees instead, a kind of jealousy, in which Brazilians do not want to see other Brazilians achieve success.

Life is better in America.

When asked what they liked about America, the participants talked about the services and the help from the government that provides a better standard of living. The treatment of the poor, the elderly, children, education, and the higher standard of living brought by their jobs were all areas that they said made their life here better.

Sabrina summed it up by saying that the benefits of earning a better living as well as having access to social services allows them to offer their children a better way of life here.

In terms of the social aspect, here our life is better. We can give something better to our children. We also have more dignity. . . Here in the United States, it’s better. You understand. In terms of security, in terms of studying, and even in financial terms, life is better.

America helps children and the elderly.

In the United States life is better for children, the elderly, the poor, workers in the workplace. Denise talked about the government programs in the United States that make it possible for her to have a better quality of life for herself and her children than was possible in Brazil. In her opinion the United States government is concerned about the needs of children and the elderly. This is not the case in Brazil, according to Denise. She says that in Brazil the children and the elderly of the poor have nothing.

In contrast, she has noticed that in the United States there are many older people who work and have jobs. She likes this and interprets this to mean that they are valued. “You go to the supermarket. There are lots of older people working. You go to an office. There are a lot of older people working. Everywhere you go there are older people working,” she says.

In Brazil, Denise says, “the old folks are sitting in chairs, doing nothing.” She is impressed by the way the United States shows that the welfare of children and the elderly is important. She had this to say about it, “The raising of children, the value given to children, the value given to old people, to older people, it’s very beautiful, really very beautiful. We don’t have this in Brazil.”

America supports education.

Eduardo sees the system of government that supports the schools in the United States as providing a better process for educating children. He talked about his daughter who had been attending the Montessori school for the previous two years. He explained that she had a partial scholarship to attend. “If it depended on me to pay the whole

monthly fee,” he said. “I couldn’t send her there”. Without this assistance his daughter would not have been able to attend.

He explained that to obtain this type of aid in Brazil would take a very long time. He adds that as time goes by, “the child loses out.” In this country, the system is more efficient. The process is faster. His wife, Larissa, also pointed out that “Here, the government won’t let children stay out of school. In Brazil, children sometimes don’t go to school.

Eduardo believes that the American schools are better because they teach more subjects. So he considers this to be an advantage for them. He said that, for example, children in Brazil who go to school “learn the basics, which would be Portuguese, mathematics, physics.”

He went on to explain that the schools in Brazil have split sections and a different course of studies is taught in these sections. “For example, there are two different schools, one to teach one area of studies and the other school to teach another.”

He explained that children go to school from 7:00 to 11:00 in the morning. That school would be for one subject area. Then if a student wanted to learn something else it would be necessary “to matriculate in yet another school, a school specifically for what you want. For example, if I want my daughter to learn computers, I have to find a professional computer school.”

In Eduardo’s opinion the public schools in Brazil “don’t work very well.” He said that in Brazil, he would have to be better-off financially to be able to pay for a private school for his daughter to learn things which children here learn in the public school.”

Life is better on Martha's Vineyard.

Eduardo explained that Martha's Vineyard was a place that offered more than jobs. He found it to be a place of calm and quiet, unlike larger cities with mobs of people, always in a rush. He found people to be calm and courteous. For him, Martha's Vineyard was a safe place to raise a child. "The people are less crazy. You understand. If you compare the island with New York, it's very different. . . There my child could not go outside because of the traffic."

He also feels that Martha's Vineyard is more relaxed and people are more patient and respectful than those he met in New York. He explained it this way:

The lack of respect in a big city is greater . . . The Island of Martha's Vineyard is like a rural area. It is calmer. . . . And the laws here are also a little different than in other cities, than other states. . . . For instance, the maximum speed is 45 mph. You understand. If you see a child wanting to cross the street, you stop the car and let them cross. You know. Here people have more time for things.

Brazilian Families -- close but extended

These Brazilian families, in talking about family life in Brazil, described the close affection that family members feel for one another. In Brazil their relatives and neighbors formed a support system to help with child-rearing. Loyalty and affection for family members seems to stand like a guiding light before these families.

Closeness of the Brazilian family

According to Eduardo in Brazil children stay with the families longer, partly because of financial reasons and partly because of their affection for their parents.

Family life in America is very different from family life in Brazil. Independence and self-sufficiency are not necessarily values to be strived for. He put it this way:

It's closeness, it's affection, for both, because, let's suppose, if I as a Brazilian am in a bad financial situation, and if my child of 14 or 15 starts to work, he is thinking about helping the family, not getting away from us, you know. So he tries to help out; he lives with us longer. When I started to work at the age of 14, instead of separating, being independent, I became closer to my family because I could help them more. This was a part of my affection for them.

Extended families together

Even if grown children do not live in the same house as their parents, they still live very near to them. "It is like this," said Helena, "most children, normally when they marry, stay in the same city. . . On the weekends everyone goes to their parents' house for lunch." Everyone works together to help. "We also help out with what we can, because it's like everyone is one, nobody separates." By doing this, they not only help financially, but they also share parenting responsibilities. She told how this enabled the grandparents to help with parenting responsibilities. In fact Helena said that Tatiane considered her aunt to be her second mother. "Mom, I have two mothers, you and my aunt," Helena quoted Tatiane as saying.

Closeness of life in small town Brazil

Helena described how this help extended even to her friends and neighbors. In their small town in Brazil her mother and her friends helped her after her baby was born. Helena was a teacher and had to work and so her mother and her friends took care of the baby because she didn't have a housekeeper.

Now Helena's father, who lives in Brazil, is suffering from their separation and he is thinking about possibly moving to the United States. He wants to be near his daughter and her children.

Sabrina has her relatives already living here in the United States. Her sister, her brother, and her mother are all here. Sharing a duplex seems natural to them. This is how they lived in Brazil. The sacrifices of leaving home have been worth it. Here she has her family, her home just as they would have been in Brazil; but now they have a better life and security for their children. Being able to be with her family is very important to her. She explained it like this.

For Brazilians the family is everything. You understand, so I have some of my family here. My mother, two siblings, and my children are with me, and I thank god I have the privilege of living with just me, my husband and my children. I don't share my house with anyone else, you understand, so therefore, for me, my life is very good here.

Sabrina was alluding to the fact that many Brazilian immigrants here share housing with other Brazilians who are not family members. At the time of this study, Nilza's family shared housing in this way and Nilza spent a great deal of effort looking for an affordable place where they could live without strangers.

Challenges of immigration

The families in this study faced a number of challenges related to their immigration status here in the United States. They were faced with the high cost of expenses related to travel and, especially obtaining proper documentation. They had to obtain visas, work permits, driver's licenses, and social security cards. For those with

school-age children, they also had to concern themselves with enrolling their children in school as well as attending to how the stress and loss of family ties might affect the emotional well-being of their children. On top of these things, they had to face the prospect of discrimination, humiliation, and abuse in the event that they did not follow American procedures properly.

Expenses of immigration

The finances were not easy and it was very difficult and costly for Sabrina to come to the United States. It has taken her two years to financially return from debt incurred by their immigration, and now she is spending more money on private tutoring lessons so that she can learn English.

I paid a lot of money to come here, you understand. I didn't get here cheaply like some do. It was very expensive, so the first year I had to recoup the money that I spent to come here, you know. It is expensive because there is exploitation of people who come here.

Visas

Helena described the difficulties encountered by Brazilians from her state of Minas Gerais in acquiring the necessary documentation to come to America. She explained that there are so many immigrants from Minas Gerais (Mineiros) that the "The United States government knows . . . many Brazilians live here . . . and they don't want any more to come." She said that she recognizes many of these Mineiros and she knows that some of them have been here for fifteen years. According to Helena, they are legal and they intend to stay in the United States. Because there are so many immigrants from Minas Gerais, the United States Consulate in Brazil has been trying to stem the flow of

Mineiros into the United States. For this reason, Helena had a particularly difficult time obtaining a visa. Helena talked how difficult it was.

It was a struggle . . . first of all because I am “Mineira” [from Minas Gerais]; because there are a lot of Mineiros here, so I think because of this it was very difficult. It took me almost three years to get one . . . For almost three years, my husband was here, and I was in Brazil trying [to get a visa] . . . Once you get to the consulate, and they see that you are Mineiro, they immediately decide not give you a visa.

Social security cards

Once they arrived here, they found that it is also a long and difficult process to obtain a social security card. Sabrina talked about it.

I believe I will receive it within 90 days or so. It’s been a long time since we sent the rest of the documents that were needed for social security card. . . . The lawyer already gave us a date, and said that we should have it by the end of the year.

Sabrina explained that after the social security card arrives, there is an additional process that must be completed to obtain the work permit. She has thought about the implications of the difficulty in obtaining a work permit. In her opinion this is not only detrimental to the immigrants who need to work so they can eat, but it is also detrimental to the United States due to lost income taxes. “Many people have to wait ten years for it,” she said, and in her next breath asks, “now how much has the government not collected from these people in income taxes?” She then went on to explain that once people have their work permit, they start to file tax returns.

Then she clarified that some people work with false documents because it takes so long to get the work permit.

Many people work under false names, with fake social security numbers that are not even theirs. You understand, and nobody files tax returns. Who ends up losing? It is your own country.

Sabrina explained that the process to obtain a work permit involves their employer who must sign for them. Since this process of allowing them to work legally can take a long time, there is a Brazilian “mafia” that will produce false documents for them. Sabrina believes that if the government here could expedite this process so that it could be completed more quickly, then this “mafia” would not exist. Therefore she thinks that “the government itself is at fault.”

So Sabrina and her family hired a lawyer to help them. In her family, they refuse to work illegally. She said that if they had not been assured that their documents were on their way, they would have returned to Brazil. It would have been intolerable for her and her family to live here illegally. They would have had to live in constant fear. If they had to live here illegally then they could never “live a normal life.” She says “in the end, you would be, hurting your own children. You know. You can’t even go out. You can’t have a free life.”

Driver’s Licenses

She went on to say that “There is so much bureaucracy for those who are not, who are not legal in this country . . . For example, to get a driver’s license, you understand. We wouldn’t be able to get one.”

False documents

According to Sabrina, Americans make and sell various false documents, such as driver's licenses, to those Brazilians who are illegal. She has heard that "a driver's license sells for 400, 500, 800 dollars and up to one thousand dollars. People buy them."

Sabrina has not been involved in any of this, however, as she has an international driver's license. "I drive with that."

Discrimination and Abuse

Sabrina considers herself lucky, though, because she has heard stories about people who have had problems with the international driver's license. She asserted that she had seen incidents "of people who have been imprisoned for having an international driver's license. The police even abuse people, laugh at people because of their driver's license. I think this is discrimination."

She went on to say that people who are illegal in this country have no recourse if they are treated this way. They "are afraid of resorting to the courts. . . I have a friend who was arrested near Boston. The police officer ripped up his driver's license and threw it at him."

School transfers and learning

One of the quirks faced by Brazilians immigrants in this country is due to the fact that they come from south of the equator where the seasons are the reverse of what they are in the United States. This means the school year in Brazil runs from March to December.

Sabrina talked about her older daughter, now in fourth grade. She had been first in her class in Brazil. “When she arrived here at the school, it was very funny, because in Brazil it was the middle of the year and here the school year was about to start.”

Sabrina’s daughter had to repeat work that she had already done in Brazil. The school placed her in a class with another Brazilian so that someone would be able to interpret for her because she couldn’t speak any English. So for this reason and because of the difference in the school year, Sonia went into the fourth grade instead of the fifth. According to Sabrina, her daughter was the best in her class in mathematics. She said that she already knew everything that the teacher was teaching.

Stress of immigration on children

Sabrina spoke about her Head Start son's stuttering problems, which had recently started. She did not consider it unusual, but rather looked upon it as a normal result of the stress he was under in adapting to life in the United States and to the fact that he was a timid child by temperament. “It’s not really normal, and yet it is normal, you understand, considering the differences in this place. You understand. I think that here Augusto is very afraid. He has always been a timid child.”

Parents and children living apart

Denise talked about the difficulty of living away from her thirteen year old daughter and a son whom she hasn’t seen since he was a year old, both of whom live in Brazil with her mother. Although Denise said that she herself has never returned to Brazil for a visit since she moved here to the United States, she sends money to her family in Brazil. She is able to provide her children a better standard of living because she lives here, and so this sacrifice has been worth it to her.

It's difficult, yes, but at the same time it's . . . comforting for me to know that I can give them what they need, send them to good schools, give them good food, good clothes, a good education, because I can send money to them there. If I lived there, I wouldn't be able to do that . . . And my son who lives with my mother will not leave her. He likes his grandmother very much. He has been with her since he was one year old.

All alone in a strange place

Although their improved financial situation has given them a higher standard of living, these Brazilian families described their feelings of isolation. A sense of isolation and distance from the mainstream American culture is in large part due to the inability to communicate and, therefore, to learn about the ways and culture of America. To compound matters further, Americans often mistakenly refer to Brazilians as Hispanics and speak to them in Spanish. This attitude conveys the message that the unique culture and character of Brazil is not important enough to be recognized as such. There is frequently isolation, even from other Brazilians in the community due to work schedules, and competition for jobs. There is also loneliness from the family in Brazil, and for the ways of Brazil. There is even, sometimes, the pain of separation of parents who are living in the United States while their children live in Brazil waiting for their parents to send for them.

Isolation due to different culture and language

One of the most obvious contributors to this sense of loneliness is the lack of ability to speak English. Sabrina spoke of how much she wants to take English classes,

partly so that she can meet other Brazilians, but also so that she will have the ability to communicate with and meet Americans. She, said, “When you can learn with other people, that is good; but when you don’t speak the language it’s almost impossible for you to communicate. It’s difficult to get to know people.”

Eduardo explained that it is more difficult to mix with Americans, not only because of the language, but also because of cultural differences. An event as simple as being invited to a party at the home of an American can be a daunting experience. “For example, an American party is different from ours, so if I go I have to learn how to behave differently.”

Isolation due to work schedules.

Another thing that contributes to the isolation of Brazilians, even from each other, is their work schedules. According to Eduardo, they work so hard here that they do not have time to mix with each other.

First of all everyone doesn’t have the same days off. Today I am off, but my neighbors are working. When they’re off, I’m working. You know, sometimes we don’t have much time. The schedules don’t coincide, you know; and I think it may be because of this that we aren’t more connected.

In the winter, when jobs are scarce in this tourism-driven community, the cold weather and the lack of contact with other people are also very difficult. The isolation was especially poignant to Helena who had been accustomed to a very active lifestyle when she lived in Brazil. Here, in the United States, she wants a job just so she has a reason to get out of the house. “In Brazil I worked. I always worked. My life was always

busy. I was never home like I was this week. I am going crazy. I want to find a job so I can get out.”

Lack of support from other Brazilians.

Helena talked about the disappointment she experienced as a result of the lack of encouragement, and moral support from other Brazilians. In speaking of other Brazilians she said that usually they do not help other Brazilians. Instead she says they are arrogant. Their attitude is, “I am here. I speak English. I don’t need anything. . . . I am me. I don’t need help, because I know.” Helena views this arrogance as an attempt by some Brazilians to put themselves in a position above the rest of the Brazilians. Existing literature has documented that Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts are often in competition with one another for jobs, and they attempt to create a class system within the Brazilian community that mirrors the class system in Brazil (Martes, 2000).

Unfortunately, Helena said that Brazilians here have this attitude and they should be helping each other instead. “We have moved to a different country. We are obviously in a country that is not ours . . . and still we don’t help our brother.”

On the other hand, Helena sees that Americans recognize that hiring Brazilians is a benefit to them.

They need me. I need my job, so each one does his part, and it’s fair. So why don't the Brazilians here, who could give a job to another Brazilian, why can’t they see this? I am going to give a job to so and so, because I need her help and she needs a job. But they don’t see it like this at all. They are here. They have been here longer. They can give you a job, but what do they think? “Oh, I am the

great one, I have made it, and, I am not going to help them.” So there is very little friendship, very little friendship among Brazilians here.

Support system of the church.

Helena was the person in my study who spoke most about the lack of support from other Brazilians. At the same time, she described how the Brazilian church had helped her when other Brazilians had not. Helena learned about Head Start at a Brazilian church meeting shortly after she arrived here from Brazil. Another woman in the church told her about the Head Start home visitor, Maria, who helped Helena find a preschool for Tatiane. On another day, it was a woman from this same church who called for help for Helena on the day of her miscarriage.

Changes – all I see are changes

Learning the American customs

These Brazilian families were faced with many changes. They needed to adapt to a world with a system of values and beliefs that are different from those to which they were accustomed.

For these families, the reality of being transplanted into a different culture, created a situation in which any event could become a learning experience. In even the simplest instances, these Brazilians learned that they would have to become accustomed to differences in the way things are done here if they were going to be successful.

Helena, an elementary school teacher in Brazil, works as a house cleaner here in the United States. Even this seemingly simple occupation requires procedures that are

different from those in Brazil, and they need to be learned. Helena described the difference in how to clean a Brazilian house as compared to an American house.

Our cleaning methods are different, because in Brazil, we don't use carpets, you know. Our floors are all ceramic tile, and you can clean it with water. Here you can't clean with water. In Brazil, when you clean the bathrooms, you throw water on everything. That's not the way you do it here. In other words, when Brazilians here go to clean house, they immediately see a big difference.

To Helena, it would be important for Americans to understand that for Brazilians everything is different and they have to allow time to learn.

So this is what happens to Brazilians. It's not that Brazilians come here to con anybody. It's that the first time you clean it really is difficult because you don't have any idea. . . . But after you learn how to do it, then it goes fast. . . The first time I worked at the hotel, you know, the first rooms I cleaned and everything went so slow. One bed, it took me forever to do one bed. Why? Because you have to fold the corners, you know. . . . Those corners . . . So it took longer. So you see if the woman had sent me home because I was slow, today I wouldn't know how to do it quickly. You know, what I mean is, people have to give others a chance.

Eduardo feels that there are a great many differences in customs that Brazilians need to adapt to when they live here. Even after living here for ten years, Eduardo still finds the differences to be difficult.

I am getting used to things, but I am still not accustomed to some things. . . . The customs here are so different. You know. The things you do for fun are different

from the way we do them in my country. You understand. We accept the ways of Americans, but they're not the same as our ways.

This lack of familiarity of customs and culture even when the language is no longer a problem, still presents difficulties as these families strive to become independent. "Learning a little English makes it easier," said Eduardo, "but we still continue to be dependent. We still don't know how to resolve everything. You know, which department do you have to go to?" Although he is a competent adult, and one of the two participants in this study who were most fluent in English, he still feels dependent, and outside of the mainstream due to the differences in culture.

Nilza sometimes makes mistakes because of these differences. Here in the United States, even on rural Martha's Vineyard, there are customs, rules, and laws that Brazilians wouldn't know about. She doesn't think that most Brazilians would intentionally break the law, yet sometimes they do because they don't understand. "For example, if you park your car in front of someone's driveway, they will immediately call the police. In Brazil, if someone stops their car in front of your driveway, they try to find you and ask that you please move your car."

Individualism vs. Collectivism

Some differences are more subtle. Even though Denise feels that the government here may seem more caring than that of Brazil, on a personal level Denise feels a lack of personal caring in her interactions with Americans. She put it this way, "I just haven't gotten used to the lack of human warmth, the love for one another, for your neighbors. It's very different."

Denise, when talking about adapting to the American culture, reminisces about the closeness to which she was accustomed in her native Brazil. “It’s very different, in Brazil,” she mused.

You are at home. Your neighbor comes to your house, talks, has coffee with you. . . It’s human warmth, friendship. You know what I mean – a lot of love. Here it is everyone for himself . . . It’s very individualist. I still have not gotten used to this.

Brazilians change lifestyle in America

The need to support the family leads to lifestyle changes that affect the Brazilian family values. These Brazilians made changes in their lives because their jobs, not the American culture, required it. Americans ought not make assumptions that everything they see these Brazilian immigrants do are examples of what life is like for all Brazilians, or that it is an example of Brazilian culture. Eduardo points out that Brazilians are willing to give up some things in their lifestyle when they come here. Working on Sundays, holidays, and nights are examples of how some change their family life when they come here.

Americans don’t like to work on holidays. Brazilians don’t either . . . Americans like to have fun. Brazilians do too, but when we come to the United States, we accept things we wouldn’t accept in our country. For example, in my country I didn’t work on Sundays.

For Nilza, too, her American lifestyle required her to spend much more time at work. “There are many more jobs here. . . I do not have much time for myself here.” Although she came here and she stays here because she needs the work, still it means that she has had to give up something in her life.

Denise thinks this has an effect on the children. “Here on the island there is not a lot to do. The children spend a lot of time inside, at the babysitter’s or at home. The parents work a lot in the summer. They don’t have time, and the kids feel this.”

Denise worries that job responsibilities of parents take time away from the children. She talks about her own situation.

Everyday I have to be at work from 10:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon . . . During that time I can’t leave to take the children anywhere. You understand. When I leave work, I come home. There everything needs to be done, meals to be fixed, things to be taken care of. I can’t go out. Most families are the same. Brazilians, you know. They have a lot of work and the children are put aside, left behind. You know, and sometimes we have to go out, like before. We went off-island to go to Hyannis. We went to the mall. We took her to play a little, to have a little fun; but we can’t do this all the time.

Larissa, Eduardo’s wife, believes that the American lifestyle encourages children to be more independent and less connected to their families. Whereas Brazilians children may take a job to help their parents and the family as a whole, American children often take jobs so that they can be independent from their parents. She sees this as a problem.

A child here, for example . . . an adolescent, around 13 or 14 years of age goes to work. You know. He starts to make money and to be independent. . . . So, very early, American children start to separate themselves from their families. . . . As they become less dependent on their families financially they become more detached from the family as well.

Change in occupational status

One change for these Brazilians was a change in job status. Sabrina talked about the difference between their jobs in Brazil and here. Sabrina recalls that in Brazil she lived in a very large house, and the weather was warm all year long. However when her husband lost his job, he could not find work. In Brazil, her husband was a banker. Here he is a stonemason. She, herself, had never worked outside of the home before coming to the United States, but here she cleans houses and works in a restaurant. She explained that in America he can earn more as a stonemason than working in a bank in Brazil.

You understand that, thank God, I was well off in Brazil. I never needed to work. I always stayed home. Before getting married I never needed to work, and after I got married. I didn't need to work . . . but here, we both have to work, both of us here, because the cost of living is very high.

Here in the United States Nilza, too, has become an unskilled laborer. "I worked in the office of a newspaper, but the immigrant here has to take what he can get. Also, we do not know the language. We can't get any other work." Her husband also had to change his profession. In this country, "He is a housepainter . . . It is totally different from what he did in Brazil. He worked in human resources in Brazil."

Helena also had a professional career in Brazil as a teacher. Here she works as a maid and finally earns enough to provide for her family. This change in job status is, undoubtedly, painful for these families. They have, in effect, exchanged status and class for survival.

Difference in child rearing

Denise talked about her 13 year old daughter who lives in Brazil. She explained why life in Brazil is better for her in terms of controlling her child's behavior.

In Brazil there is control. Here there is no control. If you catch your child, let's say you catch your 13 year old daughter using drugs in your house, and you punish her, hit her and ground her, she picks up the phone, calls the police, and the police come get you. In other words, you cannot discipline your own child, because they think you are beating them. But in Brazil if you hit them and ground them, children don't call the police.

Rhythm of life is different in Brazil

Eduardo remembered his life in Brazil when he was much younger and single, and his lifestyle centered on fun and recreation. Now his life is very different. Eduardo recalled as "a single man, much younger, you understand my lifestyle was very different, you know. On the weekends I went to the beach, camping, having fun, you know?"

Denise thinks the casual, warm and relaxed way of life makes Brazil a good place to raise children. "There are lots of things to do," she says, "the climate is wonderful. There are lots of beaches, lots of places to go."

Helena talked about her usual routine as staying home. She says that here she never goes out, "because here the rhythm of our life is different . . . Generally when we are at home, we stay at home. We don't go out, and I don't have a lot of enthusiasm for going out."

Brazilian Children adjusting to America

Just as there are many changes that the adult Brazilians in this study had to accept, so also did the children have to adapt. This was particularly true of the children who

were born in Brazil and immigrated here while they were at an age that they could remember their life and family in Brazil. Both Janaina and Rose, the two focal children who were born in the United States, experienced few difficulties. On the other hand two of the families with older children did see problems with their children acclimatizing themselves to the culture here. They handled it in different ways.

When Children adapt

Sabrina talked about what it is like for her Brazilian children to adjust to life in this county. “Brazilians are very sentimental, you understand. We have strong feelings.” She went on to talk about Sonia’s homesickness. At first she missed Brazil. Sabrina said that “Sonia didn’t like to study here.”

As time went on she made new friends here and became accustomed to American ways and her friends became accustomed to her. “Her little friends are beginning to get used to her ways, and she is becoming integrated here.”

When asked if Sonia’s friends were Brazilian or American, Sabrina replied, “She only has one Brazilian friend, because here there are almost no Brazilians her age, you know. It’s difficult, but all her friends are Americans.” Sabrina made it clear that Sonia has managed to maintain her Brazilian culture while learning American ways. According to Sabrina “the way Sonia dresses and acts, she can pass for an American. . . Even her way of eating is American. They eat differently from us. . . . But she has not lost her Brazilian ways.”

When asked if Janaina’s friends were Brazilian or American, Eduardo said she has both, and he described how she easily moves back and forth from one set of friends to

another, from one language to another, and from one set of customs to another. “At home she has Brazilian friends” and in school she has American friends.

When Children don't adapt

Denise, whose 13 year old daughter now lives in Brazil with her grandmother, spoke about how difficult it is for some children when they come to the United States. “For someone who was raised in Brazil for some years, when they come here they are very shocked.” She thinks that it is easier for adults to accept the changes because adults understand the reason. They understand the conditions in Brazil, and they see that this is a better alternative.

Denise talked about the problems her daughter had adjusting to the United States. She did not adapt well. As an adolescent, she was becoming difficult to control, and so finally Denise decided it would be better to send her back to Brazil.

You understand. I wasn't able to control her anymore. She was telling a lot of lies. She would go behind my back. You know. She would trick me. My husband is not her father, and this was starting to affect my life with him. . . . It was starting to interfere with my relationship with him -- her rebelliousness, her disobedience. We sat down, he and I sat down, talked, decided. “Let's send her to Brazil to her uncle's house because he is very loving, very good, although strict”. . . He is very firm in what he says, and he also has a 13-year-old daughter, the same age.

In Denise's opinion this was the best thing for her daughter. Now she is happy and Denise does not worry about her. However, Denise does not believe there will be a

problem with Janaina, “She was born here, you know, so she will grow up with the American culture . . . so I think for her it will be easy.”

Fears in children in adapting to America

Sabrina worried that the lifestyle of American children might make her son afraid. “Children don’t play in the streets here. They don’t go off to play alone. Here they arrange play dates. The children play inside the house or in the yard, and there is always an adult nearby.” Sabrina believes that this interferes with their development and causes children to be afraid.

“In Brazil they all play. . . They come home whenever they want. Everything is fine. The mothers, the fathers, the older children, nobody stays near them.” She goes on to say that in this country, “They hover around the children too much. The children grow up afraid.”

Are they Brazilians or Americans?

Eduardo does not worry that Janaina is acquiring American habits. He considers it to be his responsibility to teach her the Brazilian way of life. According to Eduardo, Janaina will “have the ‘American ways’ from the moment she loses contact with my country. If I lose contact with my country, she will not know my country, so we try to maintain contact with both sides, with the American as well as the Brazilian.”

He went on to say that in their home, they keep the Brazilian culture. When she is in the outside world, she acts like an American. Even though she is not yet 5 years old, she already knows how to distinguish which culture to follow. Eduardo says that she will grow up knowing both cultures and will someday be able to choose which one she wants to follow.

Children's sense of well-being depends on the parents

On the other hand, Eduardo believes that children's well being depends on their parents' sense of well being.

Anywhere in the world, the well-being of the children depends on the parents. If I am well off, let's suppose, financially, then she will be well off, regardless of where we live. If I am well off in Brazil, it will be good for her. If I am not well off, I won't be able to pay for school, good food, or anything.

Going to school in a new culture

Sabrina talked about how well her older daughter continues to do in school, so well that she is now helping other Brazilian children who arrive here not knowing how to speak English

“You understand, she is helping, you know, like when another child needs a translator . . . This year many Brazilian children have entered her school, so now she is helping her friends, the Brazilians.”

Sabrina's daughter, however, did have some difficulty adjusting in the beginning. This was because of the longer school day in the United States. According to Sabrina, in Brazil, children attend only one session of school. There is one session from seven to eleven in the morning. Another session is from noon until the afternoon. In some cases there is even a third session. In Brazil she went to school “from seven to eleven and here she studies from 8 to 2:30.” This schedule was very difficult for her at first.

It was also difficult for Rafaela, Tatiane's older sister because their resettlement came just at the time when she was learning to read and write. Unfortunately, when she

came to school here, because she did not know any English, it was like “starting all over again.”

A Hunger for Home -- *Saudade* for Brazil

Saudade is a Portuguese word that means a longing for something that is distant or no longer available. The term, homesick, is the closest word we have in English for *saudade*. But the term *saudade* conjures up images of the longed for with love and yearning and fond memories as well, as sadness. The favorite videotape in Tatiane’s family, “A Hunger for Home”, perhaps best captures the idea and feeling behind the word *saudade*.

For these Brazilian families, lack of ability to speak English, lack of understanding American culture, lack of a network of support in the United States, loneliness for loved ones and the familiar way of life in Brazil might all be translated into “Saudades” for Brazil, or a hunger for the homeland.

Longing for family

The sense of isolation is heightened by the homesickness and sadness in being separated from family. Helena was amazed at the ease with which Americans move away from home for the sake of their work, and almost in the same breath spoke about how terribly painful it is for her to be so far away from her father who is in ill health. She hears reports from her siblings and she is worried that as his only daughter she is too far away from him. She recounted a phone call to her father in which her brother answered and reported her father's ill health to her. He had been sick and had gone to the doctor, and the doctor said that his blood pressure is too high.

Helena made it clear that she does want to return to Brazil because of her family there. “I have to go because of my parents, our family, you know, because of the family. If it weren’t for the family, I think we might think differently.”

Nilza also talked about how she missed her father and mother and explained that if it were not for the job situation, they would have stayed in Brazil. She feels divided, part of her in Brazil and part of her here.

Although Eduardo also misses his family in Brazil very much, and they want to go back for a visit, it is not always so easy. In his case, his wife is pregnant and so they don't want to travel. “We would like to go in December, but my wife is pregnant, so we can't. We have to wait until we can all go together. . . We have to wait until the right time.”

Loneliness for Brazil

Eduardo talked about his loneliness for his homeland and culture. “It’s like I told you. Everyone has their own customs . . . affection for your family. When we come here we feel that we are practically alone. That is why we feel longing and sadness. Some people get depressed.”

To fall in the snow means you won't go back

Nilza’s family found it difficult to adjust to the cold weather. Hers was the family who came to this country with only their summer clothing from Brazil, and they were unprepared when the cold weather came. For them, adapting to the climate was difficult.

The cold weather is also a problem for many Brazilians who are used to the tropical climate of Brazil. Helena says that “there are Brazilians who come here and go crazy in the winter. They go crazy, and they want to go back.”

It's not just the cold weather, but Brazilians don't know how to walk in the snow and ice. Helena told how she fell in the snow shortly after she arrived in the United States

I came here on the 2nd of March . . . Then I fell in the snow, and Brazilians here have a saying. As soon as I had fallen, they said that now I wouldn't go back to Brazil anymore, because the saying goes that he who falls in the snow here doesn't go back.

Eduardo also finds that it is very difficult to get used to the cold here in the United States. He remembered his tropical life in his hometown. "In Brazil there are colder areas, too, but I am from the state of Espírito Santo. . . It is summer practically all year long there."

How to alleviate homesickness

Family is very important to the Brazilians in this study. One way of dealing with the loss of extended family and the isolation it presents is to bring your extended family with you. According to Nilza when Brazilians come to this country, they bring their relatives with them. It may not happen at first, but eventually that is their goal. "I think there are very many Brazilians here. I think that those who come here bring their relatives later, you know. . . They bring a lot of relatives."

Another way that Brazilians can alleviate their homesickness and feel connected to their homeland and families is through the Brazilian television station. Says Sabrina,

Now we have something here that's very good that's become available to us Brazilians -- a television channel from Brazil. . . . You know, all the Brazilians

have it at their houses. . . Brazil is over there, but there is a little piece of it here, and it's good.

Head Start Support

The parameters of the dissertation grant from the Administration of Children and Families required that the dissertation research be conducted in a Head Start setting with the collaboration of the Head Start program. Therefore all the children in this study were participants in the Head Start program sponsored by Martha's Vineyard Community Services.

The Head Start program on Martha's Vineyard is a home-based Head Start program, meaning that a home visitor provides Head Start services through weekly home visits. Since it is not a center-based Head Start program, children in Head Start are not necessarily in a preschool program. The Head Start program includes monthly group field trips for children and parents, as well as parent meetings throughout the year. At the home visits the home visitor may also help families to access medical care and provides assistance for Brazilian families regarding health insurance for the children. This home-based type of Head Start program is a less common than the center based Head Start programs. However, for my research, which required home visits to observe the home literacy environment, this proved to be an ideal Head Start setting in which to conduct my research.

They also provide books to the families. According to Debbie Milne, director of the Head Start program, the Brazilian Head Start home visitor goes to Brazil at least once each year and brings back Portuguese language Brazilian books for the Head Start program. Eduardo said that in their home they have many books in both English and

Portuguese which they received from Head Start. This was in contradiction to Nilza, who said that the Head Start program did not have any Portuguese language books. I myself observed the Portuguese language children's books in Eduardo's house, as described in the Family Portraits section of this dissertation and as noted in my discussion of observed print items elsewhere in this dissertation. However if the supply of Brazilian Portuguese books is limited to what the Brazilian home visitor can carry back with her when she visits Brazil, there may not be enough books for all the Brazilian families.

During the course of my research I purchased a number of Brazilian and Portuguese language children's books that were recommended to me by Helena, and I distributed these to all the families in the project. Portuguese language children's books of any type are difficult to come by in the United States; and, since the grant parameters did not permit funds to be expended outside of the United States I could not purchase books from Brazil. After conducting a search for Portuguese language books I found a small selection of about 100 Portuguese language children's books with the help of the bookstores Latin American consultant. I took this list to Helena because she had previously expressed interest in finding children's books, and I decided that with her teaching background she would be able to wisely recommend some appropriate Portuguese language books for children. The books were primarily story books and included some that were stories from Brazilian folklore, some Brazilian children's stories, and some Portuguese language translations of classic children books. I purchased multiple copies of the books recommended by Helena when they were available. In some cases I had only one copy of a book, in other cases only 2 or 3 copies. In some cases I was able to purchase 5 copies. Since I could not distribute each book

evenly among the families, I laid out all the books before the parents, and I allowed them to choose any eight books that they wanted. They were all very happy to receive these books.

Head Start Home visits

I was present during home visits in all five homes when a home visitor brought materials and supplies so that parents and children together could participate in activities. There were two Head Start home visitors who visited the families in this study. One was Maria, a Brazilian who visited the families who could not speak English. These were Tatiane's, Maria's, and Augusto's family. The other visitor was Mary, an American who could not speak Portuguese. She visited the families in which the children and at least one parent could speak English. These two families were Janaina's and Rosa's.

During one of my home visits, Mary explained and assisted Eduardo with applications for health insurance. I was present when Denise and Mary discussed discipline issues. Mary had given Denise a parenting book during a previous visit, because Denise had asked for help with discipline. Larissa, Janaina's mother had also showed me many children's books that Mary had given them. Larissa was very proud of the many books they kept for Janaina. They normally kept the books hidden behind the doors of a cabinet in the living room. However, when the doors opened the books spilled out in an array of literacy opportunities. I saw many books that would be typical in the home of many preschool American children. There were alphabet books, picture books, Golden books, and Disney storybooks. Mary brought materials for Janaina to draw, and she reminded Eduardo about parent-teacher conferences at the preschool.

Maria, the Brazilian home visitor, brought a recipe for home-made play-doh to Nilza's home; and Maria, Nilza and little Maria made play-doh together. At Maria's house, Nilza, Maria, and the home visitor Maria were very involved together in this activity. Nilza, as well as the home visitor, asked Maria questions about how the ingredients felt, what did she think was going to happen, why did she think so? All the usual questions that a preschool teacher or mother of any preschooler might ask of their child as they scaffold language and encourage them to observe, predict, and make inferences about what they are doing.

Mary brought materials for bead-stringing and counting to Denise's house. Then she read a story to Rosa after the activity. When Mary visited Rosa's house, Denise usually sat and watched while Mary guided the activity. She became involved in talking about the bead-stringing at Mary's encouragement. Usually, though, Denise seemed to take Mary's visit as an opportunity to sit and rest. Denise led a very busy life that included work in the family store, shopping for inventory for the store, caring for their two story home, and driving her high school age stepson, when necessary.

In each of the Head Start home visits at which I was present, the Head Start home visitor brought an activity to do with the Head Start child. She encouraged the parent to guide the activity. However, if the parent chose not to do this, then the Head Start home visitor guided the activity, and in doing so, modeled this for the parent. During the activities the Head Start home visitor encouraged parent-child interaction about the activity. I also noted the Head Start home visitor would frequently point out to the parent how an activity was encouraging the development of the child.

The Head Start home visitor also invited the parent to ask questions or to discuss concerns or problems. In my observations I saw that the home visitors encouraged parents, modeled for parents, supported parents, and offered assistance in various areas in which the families needed services.

Head Start and preschool

One of Head Start's services is to help families find a preschool slot, possibly with some scholarship aid, for the Head Start families. Maria, as a Brazilian, knows many Brazilian families living on Martha's Vineyard. Because of these connections she is able to quickly locate newly arrived Brazilian families with young children and to connect them with services provided by Head Start.

Nilza was especially grateful for the fact that Maria contacted them soon after they arrived on Martha's Vineyard. Nilza explained that Maria knew one of their relatives and had taken the initiative in contacting them. "It was she who looked for me. I didn't know enough to look for her."

Maria offered to enroll Nilza's daughter into the Head Start program. Nilza also said that the Head Start Home Visitor, Maria, had helped find a preschool and funding to pay for her daughter, Maria, to attend. "She's at a private school. . . Maria found a program to pay for her."

Helena talked about the day that the Head Start home visitor encouraged the focal child to draw some hearts for the people in the family that she loves. "Maria drew, told her to draw some hearts; and she drew my heart, her father's, hers, her sister's, and aunt nana's." So the Head Start home visitor encouraged her to use pen and paper to represent

her ideas, while at the same time recognizing and affirming her connection with family members in Brazil.

Helena also appreciated the help she received from Head Start. She described how the Head Start home visitor found a preschool for Tatiane. The home visitor arranged a visit with her in June so that she could get all the necessary information to register Tatiane for preschool. Together they completed all the paperwork and Maria submitted it to the waiting list. After that she “told me that I just had to wait, that she had put Tatiane on a list.” Then one day, “She called me and said they had an opening.”

Head Start and Basic Needs

Nilza went on to express her gratitude to Maria for all that she does. “Goodness she has been wonderful to us. . . She opens doors to help us.” This Head Start visitor saw to it that Nilza received information regarding medical and dental services. Nilza also extolled the group activities and parent education offered by the Head Start program. “I think it is very important. There are many meetings. You know, about child development. There are many field trips.”

Sabrina, too, expressed her gratitude to Head Start for helping her. “Head Start has helped me a lot,” she said. In addition to home visits for Augusto, Head Start assisted her in arranging private tutoring with a volunteer who comes to her home twice each week to teach her English.

Nilza also talked about how Maria, the Head Start home visitor, helped her family when they couldn't buy food. She explained that when they first arrived all their money went to pay for their house, and there was nothing left. So Maria connected them to a church that gave them food.

Instead of waiting for the family to ask for help, the home visitor recognized the likelihood of a need and offered assistance to the family. Nilza explained that when she lost her job at the hotel at the end of the tourist season, “Maria said, ‘You are not working any more. Do you want a letter to get food at the church?’”

The fact that the Head Start home visitors offered assistance before the families asked for help is important, because these families, based on their own personal experience and their culture, would not have thought that help would be available. For them, they were accustomed to helping and receiving help from relatives and close friends, but not from schools, the government, or social service agencies. Nilza remarked on how good it is to live in the United States where “There is so much help.”

The challenge of limited English proficiency

The inability to speak English was a major problem for three participants in my study, and English even presented some difficulties for one of the parents who appeared to be fluent when speaking. This limited English proficiency places adults in the role of dependent children who are unable even to help their own children with their schoolwork in their normal role as parent.

Dependence and limited English proficiency

Inability to speak English keeps people dependent on others for help for the most basic things in life. Nilza talked about her problems in not knowing how to speak English.

At the moment it is this. I need to go to the post office to get on the waiting list to see if I can obtain a post office box. I have to wait for somebody that speaks English to go with me, to find out how to do it. . . I need to go on the ferry to go

to Boston to register our vehicle in Boston because those who live off island pay less.[Nilza is mistaken about this. She might believe that she pays less if she registers her vehicle in Boston, but the fee is the same throughout the state.] I always need someone to help me, and it is terrible to have to always be dependent on other people to do get my work done.

When Helena and her husband made their decision for him to come to the United States for the sake of the family, they did not realize how difficult it would be. She explained that everything becomes a problem when you don't speak the language. "It's difficult. . . You arrive here. You don't know how to speak the language . . . You don't know how to communicate with people. It's difficult."

Sabrina described how painful it is to always need someone to help because she doesn't know how to speak English.

We suffer a lot in the beginning for not knowing how to speak English. It's very sad. We have to call someone to translate everything. You know. Sometimes people can't go with you. You know. It's very sad. You go to the supermarket or shopping, and you don't know what they are saying to you. You know. It's very difficult.

Her experience is that many Americans don't want to be bothered with people who need help in order to communicate. "It's because of the lack of English, you know. Many people just [don't want to help]."

Even Eduardo, who appears to speak English fluently, still has problems related to the language. He says, "For example, I don't understand things at the hospital very well. I don't know the scientific names."

School problems related to parents limited English proficiency

As a former school teacher, Helena had the ability to teach her children reading, writing, and math, and help them at home. But Helena was unable to help her older child who was having problems at school. Helena told me that if she could understand English she could help her daughter, but she didn't even have a dictionary. "She was bringing homework to do at home with me, but . . . I don't have a dictionary." The irony is that Helena would be perfectly capable of helping her daughter with her schoolwork, but it is her limited English proficiency that makes it impossible for her to do so.

Learning English

For several Brazilians in this study, their limited English proficiency was the one thing that prevented them from being able to integrate and enjoy their life here in the United States. It is a major barrier, and it is one that takes persistence and hard work to overcome. Although Sabrina admits that she misses Brazil and the Brazilian customs, she likes living in the United States. The only thing lacking is that she can't speak English. "I see it this way," she said, "as soon as I am able to speak English . . . my life will be complete."

Motivation to Learn English

The three participants who did not speak English shared the common goal of learning English, and their struggles may also instill in them compassion for others. Helena explains her motivation to learn English so that she can get a better job, so that she will not feel helpless and dependent upon other people to translate for her, and so that she can also help other Brazilians. She fantasized what it would be like to be able to speak English. "Think about it, I could go anywhere. There are many places that need

people to work.” To be able to have her choice of jobs someday is an incentive for Helena to learn to speak English.

After she learns to speak English she wants to help others. She said, “When Brazilians come here, they are helpless, like I was, like my husband was. I want to be able to help them.” Helena granted that being able to help people like this would also make her feel good.

Sabrina, too, wants to learn English as quickly as possible, so that she can work in a school and perhaps help other Brazilians who don't speak English. “I want to see if I can learn English faster because I want to be able to help. I want to help other Brazilians.”

Learning English is difficult

Nilza talked about how difficult it is to learn English, even though she considers herself to be an intelligent person. “I never had difficulty learning anything in my life, you know. I always caught on to things quickly, but English. I think it is very difficult.” She remarked particularly on the difficulty of learning English verbs.

Nilza spoke about the English classes that she and her husband were taking at the local adult education program at the high school. “We are learning English at the high school, free. We pay nothing. . . They have classes once a week.” She says progress is slow, but each day that they go they learn a bit more. As they begin to have more contact with Americans, it is also easier for them to learn English because they can put into practice what they learn in their classes.

Helena's dream was to “learn to speak English and to see my daughters speaking English.” She was doing her best to learn English on her own without formal classes and was learning English at work, with the help of her employer.

She described how she pushes herself to speak English whenever possible, rather than relying on others to translate for her. She told me about the pep talk she gave herself the first time she had to speak English.

I needed a taxi, because I couldn't drive. I said to myself, “My God, I am going to ask for a taxi by telephone . . . so I went and thought out how I would say it. I'm going to say it like this . . . I'll say the name of the street. I'll say where it is, and you know. It's going to work.” So I called, and they understood me, and they came to pick me up.

Nilza said the more she speaks to Americans, the more her English improves, but she also shared her feelings of shame in speaking English. “We are afraid that we will not speak correctly, and so we avoid speaking English except when it is absolutely necessary.” However she appreciates the fact that many Americans are patient with them and try to help. She explained, “If we make a mistake, they help us. They ask us questions so that they can understand what we are trying to say. They use gestures. . . They do not criticize. . . They help us very much.”

Children learning English

Helena thinks that it's easier for children to learn English. Tatiane's teacher reported to her that she was learning English very quickly. She told Helena that Tatiane is able to carry on a conversation with other children in the school.

Eduardo spoke about Janaina learning both English and Portuguese. “Here at home, with her, everything is in Portuguese. She learns English at school. She gets it from television. . . I don’t have to worry about English.”

Eduardo says that Janaina easily switches back and forth from English to Portuguese depending on whom she is talking to, whether it is her American friends or her Brazilian cousins. “If she has an American friend she speaks ‘American’ in English.” To her Brazilian friends and relatives, she speaks Portuguese.

Sabrina also thinks that children can learn English easier. She sees that her school age daughter, Sonia, learned English quickly. In fact, she speaks English so well that Sabrina proudly relates that she is helping other Brazilian students. “You know, she goes and translates for them . . .Children learn English fast.”

Education and literacy

All of the parents in this study were very interested in their children’s learning. They may have had differing expectations based on their experience and their knowledge of the American school system, but they all considered their children bright and capable and they wanted to do everything they could to encourage their development.

Helena's younger child, Tatiane, was not immediately able to enter preschool, as she was on a waiting list, but she was already eager to go to school. Helena explained that she wanted to be in school because her older sister was in school, and “She would give me a hard time. ‘Mom, what about me? Can’t I study, Mom? I want to study Mom.’”

It was Helena's wish that her children would keep their desire to learn. "I only hope that their interest is something that will continue, you know? There are children who, when they reach a certain age, don't want to study at all."

Preschool

Helena had not had much experience with preschool in Brazil. She said that there was a preschool in the town in which she lived, but it had been a recent addition to the town. She said that it was for three and four year olds. "It's a new thing, and it's a private school, too." Based on what she knew, she did not see it as being very different from the preschool she has seen here on Martha's Vineyard.

Nilza talked about the school experience for preschoolers in Brazil. Her daughter, Maria, had been in a private preschool in Brazil. From her description, young children in Brazil focus on recognizing and copying the letters of the alphabet. Nilza viewed a preschool environment as a place to develop academic skills. Because the teachers in her child's American preschool did not teach in this way, it was her judgment that the school was inferior and her child was not being academically challenged.

Nilza described the following scenario as being a typical Brazilian preschool. "The children sat with a notebook in a corridor of the school. I assume they were drawing a "abelha" [bee], and wrote the letter "a" to teach them to say the "a" of "abelha" [bee]. These were very little ones."

Nilza didn't say exactly how old these children were. However, Nilza concluded that, because the preschool her daughter attended in the United States was different, this meant that in the United States "they are not very concerned about literacy." She went on to say that in Brazil, the teachers tell stories to the children. When asked if the

teachers here don't also read stories to the children, Nilza replied, "The teacher tells stories, but she tells them in English; and she does not understand."

Because of this Nilza wants to take Maria back to Brazil. Nilza believes that her daughter, who is very intelligent for her age, will be thwarted in her academic development by what she considers to be the faulty American school system.

Public school

Helena and Sabrina both had older children who were enrolled in the local public school. Helena expressed concern for Rafaela who was having some problems with school related to her limited English proficiency. However, she did not have any complaints about the school itself.

Sabrina said that she thought that the local public schools were very good. "I think that all the schools here on Martha's Vineyard are great, you understand; and they help the children a lot." She praised the excellent teachers and appreciates the fact that they encourage all Brazilian students "to enter into the entire milieu" of the school. "Sonia even participates in theater." She did express concern that Sonia was studying content that she had already completed two years earlier in Brazil, but she also acknowledged that the school had placed Sonia in a lower grade because she didn't know how to speak English.

While he did not have direct experience with the public school, it was Eduardo's belief that the American public schools were better than the Brazilian public schools. However, Nilza had developed a very negative idea about the local public school based on stories she had heard from other Brazilians. "I knew one lady who told me that her son is in high school. The only subjects that he studies are English, history and

mathematics.” She found this shocking, saying that in Brazil he would be studying “Eight subjects. They would have chemistry, biology, and physics.” And she went on to tell me that they do not teach these things in the United States. I replied that students in high school do, indeed, study those subjects. However, she insisted that the American school system is backward and that the son of this Brazilian woman she knows only studies those three subjects in high school. This worries Nilza very much because she is afraid her daughter will not develop properly in the United States.

Parents formal instruction at home

Eduardo explained that at home he and his wife try to continue what their daughter is doing in preschool. “Let’s suppose that she is learning to count, so we have to try to continue teaching her the numbers.” He explained that he and his wife had given Janaina a spiral-bound book for drawing and practicing the alphabet. He told me that he and his wife had been working with their daughter on this for some time at home. It was not something that was introduced to her for the first time by Head Start or her preschool. “When she started school, she already knew how to write. She learned when she was less than three years old, you know.”

Nilza described how her husband also teaches their daughter, similar to what Eduardo does. She said that he is teaching her to write in cursive. When I asked if it is typical for parents to teach their children in Brazil, Nilza responded that it is not. Usually teaching is considered to be the job of the school. However when she and her husband saw that the preschool was not teaching cursive writing, they became worried and decided to teach her themselves.

Lack of Books in the home

Helena explained that in their home they do not have any Brazilian children's books. They do have a few English books that were given to them by her employer, but she can't read them. The books in their home belong to the older child and they are her schoolbooks, which are written in English. Her older daughter was experiencing difficulties, and she wished they had at least one Portuguese book in their home to read. Helena believes that if she had some material in Portuguese, she muses, it could make life easier for them. In the case of Helena's older daughter, she was just beginning to learn to read and write in Portuguese when they left Brazil.

Having a Portuguese book at home might help her daughter to develop her reading and writing in Portuguese "because that way she would learn English in school, because she spends enough time at school, from 8:00 until 3:30 now, and she would learn Portuguese at home."

Nilza was unhappy about the fact that they had no Portuguese children's books in their house. She said that they read many stories to Maria when they were at home in Brazil, but here they do not have any books. In Eduardo's house they have books, many books, in Portuguese as well as in English. The books came to them from the Head Start home visitor.

Helena discussed the fact that there are many classic children stories that are well known in Brazil in Portuguese as well as in English in America, and the children are able to read and understand these stories more easily. She gave as an example, "Little Red Riding Hood". "By the drawings, she recognizes it's the story of 'Little Red Riding

Hood’.” She suggested that if they had books, such as these, at home, it would help her child when she studies those same stories in English in school.

Summary

Based on the interviews a picture of these Brazilian families has emerged which is consistent with works by other Brazilianists (Margolis, 1993; Martes, 2000; Sales, 1999) and Brazilian anthropologists (Ribeiro, 2000; DaMatta, 1999). These five Brazilian families left Brazil, where they lived as middle class Brazilians, educated to work in professional occupations, because they could not support their families in an acceptable way in Brazil. The combination of unemployment, fiscal crisis, low wages, and government corruption, along with the stories of the good life in America, drew these Brazilian families here.

Once here, they struggled with the sense of isolation brought on by the loss of their support network of extended family and neighbors, coupled with their new state of dependency brought on by their inability to speak English. They discovered that other Brazilians were often more interested in seeking their own success and viewed their presence as competition. They faced many other challenges, ranging from legal issues, costs of relocation, concerns for their children’s education and well-being, and worries about families back home. The Brazilian churches sometimes filled this isolation by providing a network of caring support, much like the caring support they would have experienced from their extended families.

The Head Start program proved to be an invaluable aid in helping these families to navigate the unfamiliar waters of the health care, educational, social security, and other social service systems in America. In our country the system of social service agencies,

in effect, is a systemized and government-sponsored attempt to provide help and aid that might have naturally been offered by family in Brazil. But for these immigrants, it was critical that someone be there to introduce them to these services and explain to them how to access these services, as well as to translate the language for them. Head Start provided a valuable cultural and linguistic bridge to assist these families in accessing these services.

Chapter VII: In-Home Observations

Introduction

In addition to parent interviews to learn about the challenges and barriers that the families in this study experienced as a result of their immigration to the United States, in-home observations were conducted in each of the families over a six month period. The purpose of these observations was to collect data regarding the amounts and types of literacy events in which the focal child participated or which s/he observed. With the social and cultural context of these families as revealed through their interviews, the observations of these literacy events along with the amount and types of print, I have attempted to construct a picture of the literacy experiences of these children as situated in their socio-cultural context. In this section I will describe the results of those in-home observations.

Results for the in-home observations were derived from analysis of the data entered in Excel spreadsheets, as described in Chapter 3. This data was analyzed for types of literacy events, types of domains, participant structure and language. My intent was to determine frequencies, means, and standard deviations for literacy events observed, and to examine this data for differences and similarities observed in these families. I, therefore, calculated sums, means, and standard deviation for events and domains, as previously coded. According to Sirkin (1999), measures of dispersion, or variability, i.e. standard deviation, enable us to see the clustering of scores among participants. These results, therefore, present the average or typical score that would be expected among the participants. In the following sections, I will describe the results of the analysis of this data.

Observed Print Items

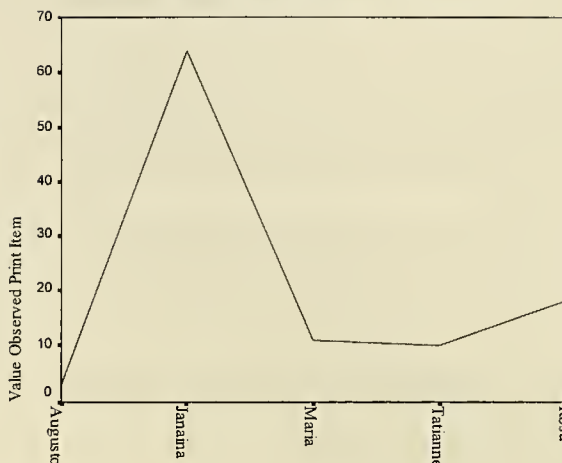
During the in-home observations, items of print were noted and coded for domain, as described in the Methods Chapter. The types of observed print items found in these homes included a variety of environmental items that were observed, but were not necessarily observed being used. These print items included telephone books, appointment books, newspapers, birthday cards, clocks, calendars, children or adult books in view on shelves, an atlas, magazines, items of print on clothing, print on television such as credits or in advertising, print in artwork hanging on the walls, business cards, and so forth. A total of 106 such print items were observed in the homes of the five children in this study.

In reviewing the data, one thing was certain. The amount and nature of literacy materials observed in these homes varied considerably from family to family. Of a total of 106 print items observed in these homes, Janaina's family had the greatest number of print items within view (64) and Augusto's family had the least (3). Maria's and Tatiane's homes had an almost equal number of print items observable, 11 and 10 respectively, while Rosa's family had 18. Since the average number of observed print items seen in the homes was 21.2, Rosa's was the only home that had close to the average number of print items observable. Table 1 illustrates total numbers of print items observed among families. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of this same data.

Table 1
Observed Print Items

	Observed Print Items
Augusto	3.00
Janaina	64.00
Maria	11.00
Tatiane	10.00
Rosa	18.00
Total: Mean	21.2000
Sum	106.00
Standard Deviation	24.5092

Figure 1
Observed Print Items by family



There are two things to keep in mind that influenced these items that could be observed. One is that in Janaina's home, where there were many more items of environmental print observable, one obvious reason is that this family had a very small apartment with little space to store food packages or other items. Therefore, many packages of food were stored on the kitchen counter in plain view of everyone. Second, again because of the single open space that constituted a living room/child's bedroom and kitchen/dining area, all cooking and eating that took place involved opening and closing refrigerator and cabinet doors to reveal a variety of food packages labeled with print. This was again in full view of anyone in the home.

One more consideration of importance is that Janaina had far more children's books than any other children in this study. I counted 25 children's books in her home. However, these were kept in a cabinet under the television set; and I only saw this collection when Janaina opened the cabinet to retrieve a book because she wanted an

adult to read to her. I did not see any children's books in Maria's, Augusto's, or Tatiane's home, and I only saw three children's books in Rosa's home.

There are two obvious reasons for this lack of children's books in these homes. The first reason is that in the three homes where there were no children's books at all, those families could not speak or read in English. Both Tatiane's and Maria's mother, bemoaned the fact that they could not read to their children because they could not read in English. Therefore English books would have been unusable for these families. They both said that in Brazil they did read to their children and so, presumably, they had books in their homes in Brazil. Portuguese language books are extremely difficult to come by in the United States, and they are costly as well, so it is no surprise that they did not have many books in either language.

The second obvious reason for the lack of children's books, even among those who could speak English, is that books cost money and for these families, there was little expendable income to be spent on books. The two focal children who had parents who could speak English very well, Janaina and Rosa, both had children's books in English. However, I only saw three in Rosa's home, whereas there were three times as many to be seen in Janaina's home. Janaina and Rosa both could speak English fluently and each had at least one parent who could and so they were able to use the English books that, according to Eduardo, came from Head Start. However, I do not know if Rosa had more children's books that were hidden from view somewhere in their home.

Prior to the end of this project, I distributed a collection of children's books in Portuguese to these families. This was at an event which we had planned as a group to celebrate the end of the project and to thank the families for their participation. I brought

with me some 30 books that I had purchased, most of them on the recommendation of Helena, Tatiane's mother, the former school teacher. I laid all of the books out on a table for the parents, and asked each to choose eight books for their child. It was a precious moment, as they all gathered silently around the table, studying the selection, and then choosing their books, one by one. My impression, in observing this moment, was that this was an occasion they considered both solemn and joyful. It appeared that this was a very special event, indeed, and it left no doubt in my mind that they placed a great value on children's books and would certainly have purchased more of their own if it had been possible.

The observed print items were coded for social domain. Table 2 shows the domains of all print items observed in the homes. However, because there is no way of knowing whether or not there were other print items not in view, it would seem prudent to use caution in drawing conclusions based only on the number and types of print in open view. The stacked bar graph in Figure 2 illustrates the fact that every child in this study was exposed to print in their home in varying ways and amounts.

Literacy Events

To review, literacy events were identified from field notes and were coded according to the type of activity. The categories were: reading, writing, talking, choosing, coloring, drawing, singing, looking at, playing with, on the phone, copying, and showing. Observations of in-home literacy events by previous researchers (Teale, 1986; Purcell-Gates, 1996) did not count coloring, singing, copying, and showing as literacy events.¹¹

I added these categories for reasons previously discussed. However, when comparing these research results with theirs, it is important to be aware that I broadened the definition of literacy events. Therefore I observed considerably more instances of literacy events per focal child, per hour than either of these two researchers.

The actual number of hours observed varied from home to home. Time spent interviewing parents, getting settled on arrival, saying good-by and arranging future appointments, and the first two or three visits (the getting-acquainted period described previously) were not included as observation hours. Therefore, the actual number of hours observing literacy events was less than the number of hours spent by the researcher in these homes. Thus the number of hours observing literacy events was 7.5 for Augusto, 6.25 for Janaina, 8.75 for Maria, 8.75 for Tatiane, and 6.25 for Rosa, for a total of 37.5 hours.

¹¹ Like my participants, the participants of both Teale and Purcell-Gates were described as low-income families. However, in both of their studies the focal children and their parents spoke English as their first language.

Table 3¹² summarizes by focal child the average frequency of occurrences of literacy events per hour. These figures indicate the total amount of literacy to which each child was exposed either by direct participation or by observation of another person. The range in frequency for total events per hour was from a low of 4.0 per hour to a high of 8.8, with an average of 6.74 per hour.

¹² All references in this paper to case numbers for participants are as follows: 1= Augusto, 2=Janaina, 3=Maria, 4=Tatiane, 5=Rosa.

Table 3 Average number of occurrences of Literacy Events per hour of observation

FC/hours	Read- ing	Writ- ing	Talk- ing	Choos- ing	Color- ing	Draw- ing	Sing- ing	Look- ing at	Play- ing With	On the Phone	Copy- ing	Show- ing	Total	Av/hr
Augusto/7.5	5.00	3.00	17.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	.00	10.00	4.00	.00	2.00	6.00	55	7.33
Janaina/6.25	1.00	6.00	24.00	.00	.00	9.00	7.00	7.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	55	8.8
Maria/8.75	4.00	2.00	19.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	.00	7.00	6.00	.00	1.00	1.00	46	5.25
Tatiane/8.75	1.00	3.00	21.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00	2.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	.00	35	4.00
Rosa/6.25	2.00	1.00	12.00	.00	.00	1.00	9.00	2.00	18.00	7.00	.00	.00	52	8.32
Sum	13.0	15.00	93.00	7.00	5.00	14.00	16.00	28.00	32.00	8.00	4.00	8.00	243	33.7
Mean	2.60	3.000	18.60	1.40	1.0000	2.8000	3.200	5.600	6.400	1.600	.8000	1.600	48.6	6.74
SD	1.82	1.870	4.51	2.19	1.41	3.49	4.43	3.50	6.84	3.04	.836	2.51		

In analyzing the results of the coding, it became evident that the literacy event, talking about activities related to literacy, was by far the most common literacy event observed in all the families. Out of a total of 243 observed literacy events, 93 were of the type, talking. This accounts for 38% of all literacy events observed. The average number of occurrences of this event was 18.6.

The second most frequently observed activity, playing with, was observed 32 times, only 13% of the total, with an average number of occurrences at 6.4. Thus, it can be observed that the frequencies of the twelve literacy events observed varied from household to household. However, out of all the possible types of literacy events, the most frequent for every child in the study was talking about some aspect of literacy.

These quantifications of the literacy environment of the home indicate that every child in this sample was involved with literacy-related activities during the course of everyday home experiences. Even taking into consideration that of the 243

contrast Purcell-Gates (1996), in her study of 20 low SES families, observed a low of .17 per hour to a high of 5.07 per hour. See Table 4 below.

Table 4 Range of frequency of Literacy events per hour

	Low	High
Teale	.34	4.06
Purcell-Gates	.17	5.07
Switzer	4.00	8.32

Domains of Literacy Events

In addition to literacy event, one of nine domains as listed in Chapter 3 was also identified. Both Teale (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1996) found that literacy events observed could be categorized into ten social domains. This is because literacy events are not isolated events that are disconnected from the reality of everyday living. They are, in fact, an integral part of the social activities of which these and other families are routinely involved. In other words, the family members engaged in the literacy events observed were usually seeking an end other than literacy itself. Examples such as Maria playing with her Barbie and giving Barbie a book to read, attempting to read the directions for a Barney board game, watching a Brazilian educational television program teaching the alphabet, or the focal child watching television as Christmas songs are sung and the words appear on the screen with a bouncing ball so that children can sing along illustrate the point that these are all examples of literacy-related activities, but they are carried out in the social domain of entertainment. In contrast, events such as an older sibling doing homework, or a parent studying English are engaged in for the purpose of literacy and/or learning.

The social domains of these literacy events are important not only to provide a context for understanding the observed literacy events, but because there is a direct link between cognition and social experiences of a learner (Vygotsky, [1934]1986). In fact, the written word, in and of itself, is meaningless unless it represents the social act of communication. Teale concludes that “the ways in which literacy enters into the social life of a family will affect how it is incorporated into the mental life of the members of the family” (1986, p. 184).

In this research study, I used the nine social domains for analyzing literacy events that were constructed by Teale (1986) and utilized by Purcell-Gates (1996). Table 5 summarizes the frequency and amount of time (and relative percentage for each) spent in literacy in each domain for the 5 focal children per hour. The domains most frequently mediated by literacy for the five children were entertainment and literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy.

Table 5 Average frequency of literacy for all focal children by social domain

Domain	Augu	Janai	Maria	Tatia	Rosa	Sum	M	SD	Av/hr/ 37.5	%
Daily Living	.00	5.00	8.00	1.00	9.00	23	4.6	4.037	0.613	9.46
Entertainment	22	22	24	13	31	112	22.4	6.426	2.986	46.09
School-Related	.00	5.00	.00	6.00	.00	11	2.2	3.033	.2933	4.52
Work	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	1	.2	.447	.026	.41
Religion	.00	.00	.00	1.00	2.00	3	.6	.894	0.08	1.23
Interpersonal Communication	.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	2.00	14	2.8	2.167	.3733	5.76
Information Networks	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1	.2	.447	.026	.41
Storybook Reading	4.00	3.00	.00	.00	.00	7	1.4	1.949	0.186	2.88
Teaching/Learning Literacy	28.00	22.00	11.00	8.00	7.00	76	15.2	9.313	2.026	31.2

Teale (1986) distinguishes three categories for the social domain entertainment: source, instrumental, and incidental. Instances in which literacy, itself, was the source of entertainment would be, for example, reading a novel or doing a crossword puzzle. Literacy that was used as an instrument to facilitate entertainment, such as reading the TV guide to decide what entertainment program to watch, or reading or attempting to read the rules for the Barney game, was considered instrumental. Literacy, which was observed in an event, only in an incidental way to the act of entertainment, such as the road signs that Augusto set up with his matchbox car set, is an example of literacy that is incidental to, or embedded within the activity of the domain of entertainment.

In this study of 5 Brazilian immigrant families on Martha's Vineyard, there were no observed incidents of literacy events in the social domain entertainment in which the occurrence of literacy was a source of the entertainment. In almost every event in the social domain of entertainment, the literacy event was incidental to the entertainment. Therefore in my analysis I did not distinguish between these three categories of entertainment.

In Teale's San Diego study, comparatively few instances of literacy were observed in the domains: entertainment-incidental (1%), work (2.3%), and interpersonal communication (3.5%). Furthermore, there was a dearth of incidents of storybook reading observed (0.9%) (Teale, 1986).

However, when the three subcategories of entertainment were merged (incidental (1%), instrumental (5.6%) and source (17.2%), the total of all literacy events in the social domain entertainment became more notable at 23.8%.

Entertainment was exceeded only by daily living routines (25.5%) in the frequency of literacy events observed. This was followed by Literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy (19.8%) and school-related (11.2%).

Purcell-Gates, using the same social domains as Teale, found few differences in her results. Purcell-Gates did not distinguish the subcategories of entertainment; and noted 25.8% of all literacy events in the social domain of entertainment. Daily living routines were observed 32.3% of the time. This was followed by school-related at 12.3%, interpersonal communication at 10.5%, and teaching/learning literacy (9.1%). Storybook reading was observed to occur 5.8% of the time.

These findings are in marked contrast to the Martha's Vineyard Brazilian study. The domain in which the greatest number of literacy activities occurred was entertainment, which represented 46.09% of all literacy events observed in these homes. The average number of events observed in this domain per family was 22.4, with an average of 2.986 occurrences per hour.

To help clarify the differences and similarities in the three studies, Table 6 provides a comparison of literacy events observed by social domain in the studies of Purcell-Gates, Teale, and the current study. Figure 3 provides a graphic representation in the form of a stacked bar graph to illustrate the distribution by percentage of literacy events observed by hour for each domain in these three studies of home literacy events.

The second most frequent domain of literacy event observed was teaching/learning literacy which was observed 76 times, with a minimum number of occurrences of 7 in one family and a maximum of 28 in another family. The average

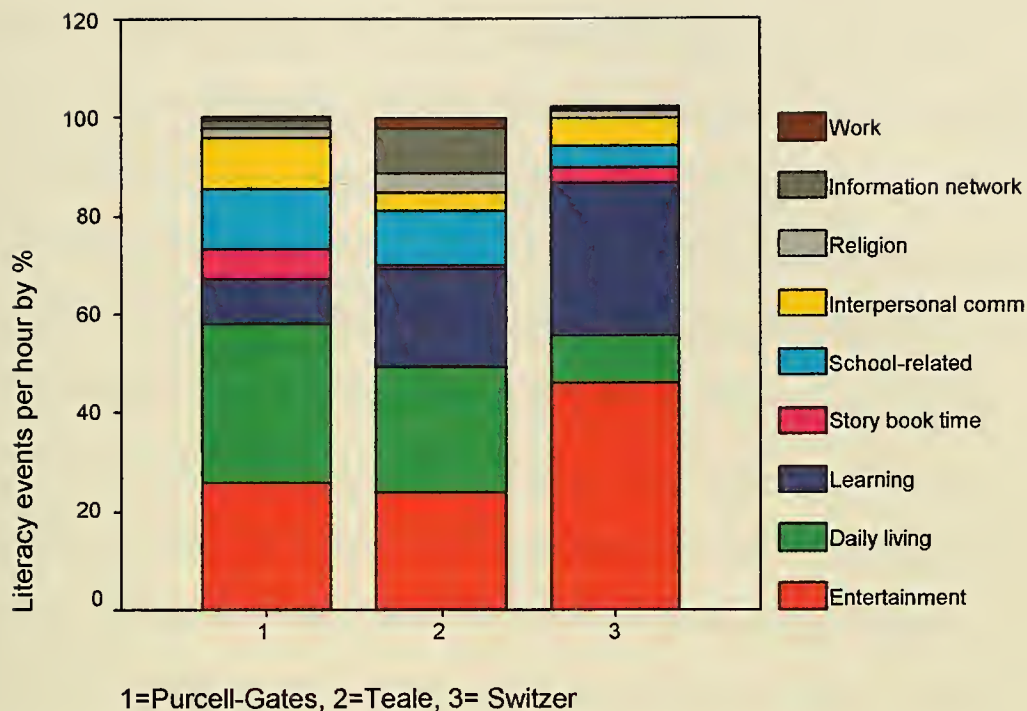
number of literacy events observed in the teaching/learning literacy domain was 15.2 with a standard deviation of 9.3113. The average number of occurrences per hour was 2.026 and represented 31.2% of literacy events observed.

Table 6.

Frequencies of literacy events and average proportions of occurrences of literacy events per hour observed for social domains as compared to Teale's (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1996) findings.

	Purcell-Gates (N=24)		Teale (N=22)		Switzer (N=5)	
	M	%	M	%	M	%
Entertainment	.178	25.8	.157	23.8	2.986	46.09
Daily Living routines	.174	32.3	.168	25.5	0.613	9.46
Teaching/Learning literacy	.113	9.1	.130	19.8	2.026	31.2
School-Related	.097	12.3	.074	11.2	.2933	4.52
Storybook Reading	.086	5.8	.006	.9	0.186	2.88
Interpersonal Communication	.068	10.5	.023	3.5	.3733	5.76
Religion	.036	2.1	.025	3.8	0.08	1.23
Information Network	.014	1.5	.060	9.1	.026	0.41
Work	.004	.8	.015	2.3	.026	0.41

Figure 3



Far fewer occurrences of literacy in the domain of daily living were observed in these families than Teale or Purcell-Gates observed in their studies. Events in this domain were observed a mere 9.46% of the time and averaged only 0.613 incidents per hour. Daily living was observed a total of 23 times, interpersonal communication only 14 times (5.76%), while school related was observed 11 times (4.52%).

Similar to Teale and Purcell-Gates, storybook reading was observed infrequently in these homes, only 7 times in all. Thus storybook reading occurred 0.186 times per hour, occupying a mere 2.88% of the total observed literacy events.

Similar to Teale (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1996), literacy involving work was a rare occurrence. Like the two previous studies, the participants in the Martha's

Vineyard Brazilian study are employed in positions in which they are unlikely to encounter opportunities for literacy, and less likely to bring these instances into their homes. The families in this study worked as maids in hotels, landscaping, house painting, housecleaning, and in a restaurant. Nilza worked in a pizza parlor making pizzas. She did not use a recipe, and it would have been unlikely that she could have read an English recipe even if one were given to her. Helena and Sabrina both told me that their employers helped them to learn English, studying with them, if you will. However their jobs in themselves did not require the use of reading and writing.

If, on the other hand, they had been able to obtain employment in the professions in which they worked in Brazil, the situation would, undoubtedly have been quite different for some of them. In Brazil these parents worked as teacher, banker, and accountant. It is because of their limited English proficiency that they must work in jobs classified as unskilled labor here in the United States.

The domain of religion is another domain that deserves comment. In this study, the instances of literacy events observed in the social domain of religion accounted for only 1.23% of all observed literacy events. This is fewer than the 3.8% observed by Teale (1986) and the 2.1% observed by Purcell-Gates (1996). It is important to bear in mind that these figures represented events that are mediated by literacy; that is, that involve reading and writing in some way. Only two households gave any evidence of literacy-related activities related to religion. One was in the home of Tatiane and involved reading the cover of a religious video. The other was in Rosa's home and involved singing religious songs, events that in the other two studies would not have even been counted as literacy events. In Janaina's home I saw

three bibles when she opened the door to the cabinet of books. However, I never observed these bibles being used by anyone. Hence they are not included as literacy events.

It is important to be aware that although religion is an important part of Brazilian culture (Martes, 1999; Ilé Axé Opô Afonjá, 1999), as well as an important source of support for Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts (Martes, 1999); I observed few instances of literacy that were in this social domain. The fact that there were only a few observable instances of literacy events related to religion is, I believe, a result of the lack of reading and writing going on in these homes rather than a lack of interest in religion. The focus of this research was to observe literacy events and identify the social domains of these events in order to better understand the context of these literacy events.

To expand on this idea, I would also suggest that the reason for the paucity of literacy events in the social domain religion and in almost all other domains, except entertainment and literacy for the sake of teaching and learning literacy, is related to the paucity of printed material in these homes. There simply are very few items available in Portuguese for these families to read.

I find it hardly surprising that people who work two jobs, and have little expendable income, are not spending their money buying books because they are in all likelihood too tired to read anything except what is most essential to their lives. Based on the fact that these families, even those adult members who could speak English fluently, still needed the help of either the home visitor or myself to explain such things as how to buy a house, how to obtain automobile insurance when the

insurance company goes bankrupt, and how to apply for health insurance for a young child demonstrates the challenges facing these speakers of English as a second language.

The absence of books in the home is the obvious explanation for the paucity of storybook reading, especially since two mothers, Helena and Nilza, made it a point to tell me that they were in the habit of reading to their children regularly in their native language when they lived in Brazil. This, again, is a reflection of the lack of available tools for literacy in the language in which these parents are literate.

The fact that entertainment was the most frequent area of literacy event observed in this study is partially because the focus of these observations was preschool children who spend most of their time engaged in normal play with dolls or toys, or in watching television. For similar reasons, school-age children who might be more likely to engage in school-related activities, such as homework, were generally not available to interact with the focal child when I was present. The only school age children observed in this study were the siblings, Sonia, Rafaela, and Gilberto. Gilberto was only present during one of my visits in which he and his mother engaged in an extended search for a place where they could order dinner and have it delivered. While Sabrina spoke about Sonia, her oldest child, and how she was progressing in school, Sonia herself was only present once when I was there. She was in the kitchen with the English tutor studying English. Thus, Rafaela, Helena's older daughter, was the only school-age child who was present on a regular basis during my observations. Therefore Rafaela was the only person in my study who would have had the opportunity to be engaged in formal school related literacy

events during the time of my visit. Janaina, who attended preschool, did engage in preschool-related activities, as well.

Regarding the high frequency of observations of literacy events in the domain literacy for the sake of literacy and learning, I believe that this is due to the lack of ability to speak and read English as well as desired. The need to be able to read and write in English, as well as to speak and understand in English, is of the greatest importance to these families as they explained to me in the interviews. Thus Augusto's parents studied English and encouraged him to learn English. Tatiane's mother, Helena, worked with her employer's electronic translator to learn new vocabulary in English. Maria's parents tried but could not get into English classes and so they bought a set of English language audio tapes so that they could study English. Janaina's parents told me that they made a point to always have the close-captions on when watching television (which was always in English in their house) to help them learn English and to help Janaina learn to read.

A second explanation for why so much literacy activity was focused on literacy for the sake of teaching and learning literacy in these homes is likely because these families were very concerned about the literacy development of their children. When asked directly how they saw their role as their child's first and most important teacher, they all, without, exception, said that it was not their job to teach their children. Yet in all of these families the parents were making efforts to actively support their children's literacy development. Further evidence supporting the view that these parents are, indeed, very actively involved in the literacy development of their children may also be gleaned from the interviews in which parents expressed on

the one hand, their belief that their children were intelligent and on the other hand, some concerns that the American schools would not sufficiently challenge their children academically.

This may be partly due to the influence of the Head Start program. However, it may also be that these families sought out the Head Start program because they were keenly interested in their children's academic and educational success.

Another observable fact in looking at the data is that the high frequency of literacy events observed in the domain literacy for the sake of teaching and learning literacy is due to the fact that two of the families (Janaina's and Augusto's) were far more involved in activities in this social domain than the other three families. These two families were observed to engage in far more literacy events in this domain because 1) Augusto's mother spent a great deal of time studying English, and 2) Janaina's parents made a conscious effort to have books, encourage writing, and encourage reading in English. In Augusto's family the focus of literacy for its own sake was on learning English. In Janaina's family the focus of literacy for its own sake was in supporting Janaina's literacy development in English.

Language usage by domain

In addition to participant structure, each literacy event also had one of three language usages: English, Portuguese, or bilingual English and Portuguese. Table 7 displays a summary of language usages for literacy events by domain.

Table 7
Language Usage by Domain

	English	Portuguese	Bilingual
Entertainment	41	44	5
Daily Living	8	9	2
Religion	0	3	0
Interpersonal Communication	2	6	0
School Related	5	5	0
Storybook Reading	3	4	0
Information Network	0	0	0
Teaching/Learning Literacy	17	35	7
Work Related	0	1	0

The frequencies of literacy events in which English was used were analyzed by domain. The domain entertainment had the greatest number of events (41) in English. This was followed by teaching/learning literacy with 17 and daily living with 8. This was out of a total of 76 literacy events in which English was used. Table 8 provides complete data on English language usage for literacy events observed. Not surprisingly, it can be noted that two of the families, Maria's and Tatiane's, who appeared to have the least proficiency in English also were engaged in the fewest number of literacy events in English. However, Augusto's family, who also appeared to have a low level of English proficiency, was observed to engage in almost as many English literacy activities as Janaina's family, with the greatest English language proficiency. This was primarily due to the large amount of studying English in this family, as well as talking alphabet toys and English signs for Augusto's matchbox cars.

Table 8 English by Domain

	Entertainment	Daily Living	Information Network	Interpersonal Communication	Religion	School Related	Storybook Reading	Teaching/Learning Literacy	Work Related	Totals
Augusto	12.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	7.00	.00	20
Janaina	10.00	1.00	.00	1.00	.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	.00	25
Maria	4.00	3.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	8
Tatiane	4.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	4
Rosa	11.00	4.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	3.00	.00	18
Total: Sum	41.00	8.00	.00	2.00	.00	5.00	3.00	17.00	.00	76
Minimum	4.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
Maximum	12.00	4.00	.00	1.00	.00	4.00	3.00	7.00	.00	
Standard Deviation	3.8987	1.8166	.0000	.5477	.0000	1.7321	1.3416	3.0496	.0000	
Mean	8.2000	1.6000	.0000	.4000	.0000	1.0000	.6000	3.4000	.0000	

Just as occurred in the analysis of English by domain, the domain, entertainment had the greatest frequency of literacy events in Portuguese with 44 events observed. Following the same patterns as was seen for observed literacy events in English, the domains teaching/learning literacy followed in frequency of events with 35 events in Portuguese. This was out of a total of 115 events in Portuguese. See Table 9 for complete information for Portuguese usage during literacy events.

In addition to English or Portuguese usage, some literacy events were observed to be conducted using a combination of both English and Portuguese. Such language mixes were coded as bilingual by domain. Only 14 such instances were observed during the study, and similar to other results, the domains in which the most literacy events were noted were teaching/learning literacy. The literacy events that were observed in a combination of English and Portuguese in the homes of Maria, Augusto and Tatiane were signing up for a box at the Post Office, reading labels on food package, playing with and translating toys, looking up a word in an English-Portuguese dictionary, etc. In short they involved some kind of translating or other explicit learning activity. In the homes of the two focal children who were bilingual, I also observed children occasionally switching from one language to another while speaking to others who were bilingual. Table 10 shows complete data for bilingual literacy events.

Table 9 Portuguese by Domain

	Entertainment	Daily Living	Information Network	Interpersonal Communication	Religion	School Related	Storybook Reading	Teaching/Learning Literacy	Work Related	Totals
Augusto	8.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	4.00	11.00	.00	24
Janaina	7.00	2.00	.00	2.00	.00	1.00	.00	9.00	.00	21
Maria	13.00	2.00	.00	3.00	.00	.00	.00	7.00	.00	25
Tatiane	4.00	1.00	.00	6.00	1.00	4.00	.00	6.00	.00	22
Rosa	12.00	4.00	.00	2.00	2.00	.00	.00	2.00	1.00	23
Total: Sum	44.00	9.00	1.00	13.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	35.00	1.00	115
Minimum	4.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00	
Maximum	13.00	4.00	1.00	6.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	11.00	1.00	
Standard Deviation	3.7014	1.4832	.4472	2.1909	.8944	1.7321	1.7889	3.3912	.4472	
Mean	8.8000	1.8000	.2000	2.6000	.6000	1.0000	.8000	7.0000	.2000	

Table 10 Bilingual by Domain

	Entertainment	Daily Living	Information Network	Inter-personal Communication	Religion	School Related	Storybook Reading	Teaching/Learning Literacy	Work Related	Totals
Augusto	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	4.00	.00	4
Janaina	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00	3
Maria	1.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	2
Tatiane	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1
Rosa	2.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	4
Total: Sum	5.00	2.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	7.00	.00	14
Minimum	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
Maximum	2.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	4.00	.00	
Standard Deviation	.7071	.5477	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	1.6733	.0000	
Mean	1.0000	.4000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	1.4000	.0000	

As can be seen from the results of the data analysis with respect to language usage during literacy events, the domains entertainment and teaching/learning literacy were the domains in which the greatest frequencies of literacy events were observed, regardless of language used.

There were only 14 literacy events noted in a combination of English and Portuguese. Therefore, there was not a great deal of variation observed among these families for bilingual literacy events. However, Janaina's and Rosa's families engaged in more bilingual activities than Maria's and Tatiane's.

Not surprisingly, the two families in which the parents and focal child had the greatest degree of English proficiency engaged in more English and bilingual activities. There was little difference among the families in Portuguese usage, and all five families engaged in a considerable amount of literacy activities in their native language.

Augusto's family who spoke almost no English appears to be an anomaly. Their frequencies of English and bilingual activities were nearly equal to the two families who spoke English very well. However, on closer examination it can be seen that nearly all of these activities were in the domain teaching/learning literacy and entertainment.

Analyses by Major Social Variables

It is clear that if we accept the premise that literacy is influenced by the context in which it is situated, then it is important to also examine other variables within the home that might affect the exposure of these children to literacy experiences. Obviously, because these families were all participants in Head Start, they were all low-income families or they would not have qualified for the program. We also know that by the

parameters of this study, they were all of the same cultural, ethnic and linguistic background. There were, however, some other differences among the participants. There were differences in the participant structure of the literacy events. By participant structure of the literacy events I mean the participants, both adult and children, who were involved in that event, either directly or through observing that event. There was only a slight difference in ages of the children since they all were in the Head Start preschool program. There were obvious differences in the English fluency of both the parents and the children in this study, and there may also have been differences in parental education levels.

Information regarding parental education level was not explicitly asked of all parents. Some parents volunteered this information; and one parent, Janaina's mother, said that she could not remember how long she had gone to school. However I have attempted to construct some idea about the education level of these parents based on what they said about their occupational status in Brazil.

It is likely that those parents who were employed in white collar jobs in Brazil had completed high school, and those who were employed in unskilled labor positions in Brazil in all likelihood did not complete high school in Brazil. None of the parents in my study directly indicated that they had graduated from a university in Brazil. Helena, who was an elementary school teacher in Brazil, in all likelihood, did not have a college degree because this is not required of teachers in Brazil. According to a recent Brazilian government publication (SECOM, 2002), teachers of "the first to fourth grades of elementary education must hold a preparatory course certificate in education". However a college degree is not required. In 1995, three years before Helena left Brazil, only 18.1%

of teachers in grades 1 to 4 had graduated from the preparatory course and received their license (Ministry of Planning, Brazil, 2002).

I have assumed that Nilza who worked in the office of a newspaper, Mario who was a banker, Helena who was a teacher, Eduardo who was an accountant, and Sabrina who said that she was well-off and never needed to work most likely completed high school. I have assumed that Larissa who could not remember how long she went to school and Denise who had a variety of jobs including making clothing at home, working in a gambling hall, and working in a poultry market probably did not complete high school in Brazil. Neither Sabrina nor Denise told me about their husbands' occupations in Brazil. Helena told me her husband worked for a milk cooperative, but she did not say what he did. Therefore, I will not venture a guess as to the educational levels of these three men who were the fathers of Rosa, Augusto, and Tatiane. In table 11, I have indicated that this information was not available.

Another variable likely to influence the exposure these children have to literacy events at home is the English ability of the parents and of the focal children themselves. This is because access to books, materials, media, and other literacy resources in English would be limited by the degree of English language proficiency of the parents or children. Since I did not administer English language proficiency assessments to the participants in this study, I devised a holistic scale, based on my personal observations, of the English ability of these participants, using the following scale: 1= needs interpreter for all tasks, 2= needs interpreter for some tasks, 3= needs interpreter for occasional tasks, 4 = rarely needs interpreter. Using this scale I assigned a score from 1 to 4 to each child. In assigning a score for the parents, I used one score to indicate the proficiency of

the parent who had the greatest level of English language proficiency in a family. This was because I assumed that the access available for the most fluent parent would also become available to the entire family through that parent. Thus, in the case of Janaina's family, her mother could speak no English at all, but her father could speak English very well. It was, therefore, his knowledge and his access to English language resources that brought those resources to the family. Finally, I determined a single score for the family which represented the sum of the parents' English proficiency and the child's English proficiency. See tables 11 and 12.

It is important to point out that while Janaina and Rosa each were scored on a scale indicating a higher level of English proficiency than their parents, this does not mean that they speak better English than their parents do. The English language demands of a preschool child are quite different from those of an adult. Both Janaina and Rosa were fluent in all the English language required for stringing beads, naming colors, listening to stories, talking about the pictures they drew, and so forth. Their parents, on the other hand, required help with interpreting a health insurance application, and in understanding how to apply for a mortgage. These activities require a very different level of proficiency in English, yet they are both appropriate demands for the age and developmental level of the participants in this study.

Each literacy event also involved, not only the focal child, but also other adults and siblings either directly (through intercommunicative involvement) or indirectly (in the focal child's presence, but not directly involved). Thus, Mario teaching his daughter to put the "little hat" on the letter "f" was a literacy event in which Maria was directly involved with her father. An event in which the participants were indirectly involved was

when Sabrina was within earshot and access of Augusto while she was practicing and studying English with her tutor.

Furthermore, the number and type of participants in the literacy events varied from family to family and included at various times, older siblings, Head Start home visitor, grandmother, researcher, English tutor, friends, neighbors, and so forth. These various participants also were involved either directly or indirectly with the focal child for some literacy events. In table 11, I have summarized some of the major social variables for the literacy events observed for each focal child in this study.

Table 11 Information relating to social variables associated with literacy events

Focal child	Age	Siblings participating in literacy events	Adults participating in literacy events ¹³	Parental Education		English proficiency		
				M	F	FC ¹⁴	F/M ¹⁵	Total
Augusto	4	Sonia, 12	M, F, fr, gr, t	HS	NA	1	1	2
Janaina	4	0	M, F, hsv, fr,	HS	<HS	4	3	7
Maria	5	0	M, f, hsv,	HS	HS	2	1	3
Tatiane	3	Rafaela, 8	M	HS	NA	2	1	3
Rosa	3	Gilberto, 15	M, hsv,	<HS	NA	4	3	7

Participant Structure

Every observed literacy event had one or more persons involved, as previously discussed. For review, I elected to code events in which the focal child was present for the following participant structures: (1) focal child (engaged in a literacy event) alone, (2) mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child, (3) father with focal child or in the presence of focal child, (4) sibling with focal child or in the presence of focal child,

¹³ M=mother, F=father, fr=friend, gr=grandmother, t=tutor, hsv=Head Start home visitor

¹⁴ FC=focal child

¹⁵ F/M=Father or mother, whichever had the highest level of English proficiency

(5) any other adult with focal child or in presence of focal child. I did not count the literacy events in which only the researcher and the focal child were interacting in a literacy event. As discussed earlier, this participant structure would not be a normal part of the focal child's literacy environment. This only happened when the focal child drew me into an activity, and I retreated from this stance as soon as possible. However, because they were literacy events engaged in by the focal child, these events were counted in the literacy events analyzed by domain. They were only eliminated for the discussion of participant structure.

Focal child alone

Literacy events in which the focal child was acting alone were the most common, over all. Of all the literacy events observed, 82 were events in which children were alone. The focal children in this study engaged in literacy events alone at an average of 2.186 events per hour. This represents 34.3% of all literacy events in which they were directly or indirectly involved.

It was notable that out of the 82 total literacy events in which the child was alone, 57 were in the entertainment domain. The range of occurrences was 4 for Janaina and 19 for Rosa, with an average number of occurrences of 11.4. Much of the entertainment engaged in by all of the focal children was when they were playing alone, and not interacting with anyone. When Maria played with her dolls and gave her doll a book to read, when Augusto arranged the stop signs and street signs for his matchbox cars, and when Janaina or Rosa watched cartoons with close-captions in English, they were all engaging alone in literacy events in the social domain of entertainment.

It is also not surprising that children alone were not involved in daily living, religion or work related literacy events, as these are not normally the domains initiated by children. There were only 4 instances of storybook reading alone. This also is not

surprising because none of the children knew how to read. However, Augusto had storybooks and did spend time alone looking at them, turning the pages, and studying the pictures as if trying to garner meaning from their pages. He was the only child in the study who engaged in this activity alone.

It is also interesting that there were 17 or 20.7% of literacy for the sake of teaching and learning literacy engaged in by these children alone. However, all of these literacy events were engaged in by Augusto and Janaina, while the other three children engaged in no literacy activities alone in this domain. Augusto, particularly, with his little case of chalk, letters, numbers, and pegboard and his workbook from Brazil, accounted for twice as many of these instances as did Janaina.

Mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child

The participant structure code, Mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child, was applied to all activities in which the mother and child were involved in the activity, including activities in which others may have been involved as well. This code also indicated activities that the mother was involved in alone, but in the presence of the focal child, such as when Sabrina was studying English while sitting next to Augusto who was watching television.

Literacy events involving the mother, either directly or indirectly, accounted for a total of 59 literacy events. These occurrences were observed at a frequency rate of 1.573 such events per hour, and accounted for 24.6% of the total literacy events.

The greatest number of these (24) or 40.6% was in the domain, teaching/learning literacy for literacy's sake. Most of these occurrences were in Augusto's home, where all nine of the literacy events in which his mother was involved were in this domain. Over half of these literacy events occurred in the homes of Augusto and Maria combined. From this it can be seen that Sabrina's and Nilza's involvement with their children,

Augusto and Maria, in teaching and learning literacy for the sake of literacy accounts for the frequency of occurrences of this literacy event.

The second greatest number of events involving the mother (10) was in the two domains entertainment and daily living. The incidents of these events appeared 2 to 3 times per family, except in Augusto's family where his mother was only observed to be involved in literacy for the sake of literacy. The mothers in this study were frequently engaged in play with their children, such as when Maria's mother helped her to decipher the directions for the Barney game, entertainment. When Helena was in the Brazilian store with Rafaela reading the recipe on the food package and discussing whether to purchase the item, they were engaging in a literacy event in the daily living domain in Tatiane's presence.

Father with focal child or in the presence of focal child

Domains of literacy events were similarly coded for events involving or in the presence of fathers. Once again, the domain entertainment had the greatest frequency (20 out of a total of 40) of such events. The average number of events per hour for this participant structure was 1.066, or only 16.7% of the total literacy events. However, this also does not represent what occurred in all five families. In fact, all 39 of these 40 literacy events occurred in the homes of Maria and Janaina. Augusto's father was observed in a literacy event once when he sat in the living room next to Augusto studying English. However, it is important not to jump to the conclusion that the fathers of Tatiane, Rosa, and Augusto were not interested.

The fact of the matter is that they simply were rarely, if ever, present during one of my home visits. In Rosa's case, her father was usually working at the store which her

parents owned. Most of my home visits were during the day when those fathers were at work.

Both Maria's and Janaina's fathers were very involved in teaching their children reading and writing. However, there were many differences in the lives of these two fathers. Eduardo, Janaina's father, had been in the United States longer than any other participants in the project. His English was very good and he had been in this country long enough to have developed some understanding of the workings of American culture as well as experience in accessing the resources available in the American mainstream culture. Mario, on the other hand, had been in this country only a few months. He was still acclimating to the United States workplace and cold climate, not to mention that he could not speak any English. Perhaps the only conclusion that can be drawn regarding involvement of fathers in literacy events in these five families is that those who were home with their children were observed to be very involved with them in literacy events.

One thing that can be derived from this is that we are reminded of the obvious, that for parents to be involved in literacy activities with their children, they must be home or somewhere with their children. This study occurred during the fall and winter months, the off-tourist season when many of the Brazilian living on Martha's Vineyard are out of work. This may be the reason why two of the fathers were at home in the middle of the day, rather than at work.

However, we also know from the interviews that these parents often work unusual hours, frequently on weekends when the majority of the off-season stores and restaurants are open. We are reminded also that when the tourist season returns, both parents will be working, likely two jobs. And one can envision long periods of time in which children

are with a babysitter or perhaps with older siblings, watching television. Parents may be straddling shifts so as to share their child care responsibilities, and when parents are home after working 12 to 16 hour days how much energy will they have to be engaged in literacy activities with their children, if they are even awake at all.

Sibling with focal child or in the presence of focal child

Similar to the above analyses, literacy events were also coded for the participant structure, sibling with focal child or in the presence of focal child. Maria and Janaina had no siblings during the first half of the research period. Then Janaina's brother was born. Thus, only three of the focal children had siblings with whom they could have been observed engaging in literacy activities. Sonia was not observed at all engaged in any literacy events with or in the presence of the focal child, Augusto. This was due to the fact that she was rarely present, either because she was in school, or she was in the other unit of the duplex where she lived with her grandmother and uncle. Therefore all of the literacy events involving siblings were with Rosa and Tatiane. In these families there were a total of 30 literacy events observed in which focal children were engaged with siblings in literacy events. Of these, the greatest number (9) was in the domain, daily living.

Rosa's stepbrother, Gilberto, was 15 years old, and he also was frequently not at home during my home visits. However during the times when he was at home, he was observed to be engaged in daily living events, such as the extended discussion of what to order for dinner, one day. This was the reason for the frequency of literacy events with sibling in that domain.

Other adult with focal child or in the presence of focal child

The final participant structure for which literacy events were coded by domain was other adult with focal child or in the presence of focal child. As previously discussed, all other adults included the Head Start home visitor, English language tutor, grandmother, and friend. There were 16 literacy events observed in which some other adult was present. However, it is important to note that in 13 of these events, the adult was the Head Start home visitor. Once a friend of Janaina's family who was visiting helped her to write her name. One time Augusto's grandmother talked to him about the "studying" he was doing in his Brazilian school workbook, and one time Augusto talked to the English tutor about learning English. All other times the Head Start home visitor was the other adult involved with the focal child in a literacy activity. Since the Head Start home visitor was not present for any of my observations in Tatiane's or Augusto's home this meant that Tatiane was never observed to be involved in literacy events with any other adults besides her parents during the times of my visits.

As will be recalled, parents who agreed to participate in this study agreed that they would arrange home visits at times when I would be able to observe the normal activities in their home. There was never any discussion as to whether or not a Head Start visitor should or should not be present at my home visits. Since the visit by the Head Start home visitor was a normal occurrence in the lives of these families, it would seem natural and normal for families to sometimes schedule my visits at the same time as the Head Start home visitor. An additional benefit was that it gave me the opportunity to include the Head Start home visits as part of my observations, something that I had actually not anticipated prior to beginning the observations.

It happened once in each of these three homes that the mother double-booked the home visits for me and the Head Start home visitor. It is possible that those who scheduled the Head Start home visit at the same time as my observation did so for scheduling convenience. Both the Head Start home visitor and I required that the focal child be present, and since Janaina, Rosa, and Maria were out of the house and at a preschool part of the time, there were limits as to the times when home visits could be scheduled.

In any case, this means that the literacy events in which the Head Start home visitor was present only occurred once in each of those three families. During this one visit, I observed 5 literacy events during the Head Start home visit in Janaina's home, 6 literacy events during the Head Start home visit in Rosa's home, and 2 in Maria's home. Considering the fact that the home visitor was not present during my entire period of observation, but only for a portion of it, it is safe to say that the Head Start home visitor was the instrument of a significant number of literacy events, comparatively speaking. The Head Start home visitor was present for approximately one hour for each of these three visits, in which these 16 literacy events were observed.

As can be seen from the above analyses, the most common participant structure overall was focal child alone with a total of 82 literacy events observed with this structure. Literacy events with mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child (59) and father with focal child or in the presence of focal child (40) were the participant structures with the next greatest frequencies. The following table displays totals for all domains by participant structure.

Table 12 Participant Structures for All Domains (excluding researcher)

	Focal Child Alone	With Mother	With Father	With Sibling	With Other Adult	Sum
Entertainment	57	10	20	12	12	111
Daily Living	0	10	5	9	2	26
Religion	0	3	0	0	0	3
Interpersonal Communication	2	8	1	4	0	15
School Related	1	3	0	0	0	4
Storybook Reading	4	0	1	0	2	7
Information Network	1	0	0	0	0	1
Teaching/Learning Literacy	17	24	13	4	12	70
Work Related	0	1	0	1	0	2
Sums	82	59	40	30	28	239
Av/hr/37.5	2.186	1.573	1.066	0.8	0.746	
%	34.3	24.6	16.7	12.5	11.7	

The above analyses demonstrate the variety of domains and participant structures related to the literacy events observed in the homes of the five families in this study. However, there were some commonalities among them. The domains most frequently observed in all of the families were: entertainment and teaching/learning literacy. The most common participant structure was focal child alone, followed by mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child, and then father with focal child or in the presence of focal child. The 28 instances for the participant structure, focal child alone with researcher were not discussed, because in the naturalistic setting of the home in which the researcher would not normally be present, it is unknown whether the focal child would engage in those activities alone or would elicit the involvement of another person in the household.

English language proficiency

In order to explore the possible relationship between language usages during literacy events and the English proficiency of parents, I examined the data in relation to English language proficiency. As discussed previously, I gave each family a score for English language proficiency of parents and of the focal child on a scale of 1 to 4.

The two focal children, Janaina and Rosa, who were most fluent in English, rarely needing an interpreter, also were observed to have the greatest number of literacy events per hour, 8.8 and 8.32, respectively. They each also had at least one parent who was very fluent in English, needing an interpreter only for occasional tasks. However, Augusto's average number of literacy events observed per hour at 7.33 was only slightly lower than Janaina's and Rosa's and neither he nor his parents could speak more than a negligible amount of English. Maria and Tatiane were both beginning to learn English in their preschools, but their parents could not speak any English.

Table 13 makes it evident that the highest English proficiency scores of 4, 3, and 7 for Rosa and Janaina were associated with the greatest frequency of literacy events observed per hour. Augusto, Maria and Tatiane all had lower scores of English proficiency with Augusto at 1, 1, and 2; and Maria and Tatiane at 2, 1, and 3. Augusto appears to be the anomaly. For the other four children there does appear to be a correlation between English proficiency of children and English proficiency of parents to the frequency of literacy events. Augusto's high frequency of literacy events is also related to the unusual amount of studying and learning English that was happening in his home.

Table 13 English language ability and literacy events per hour

FC/hours	Total	Av/hr	English proficiency		
			FC	F/M	Sum
Augusto/7.5	55	7.33	1	1	2
Janaina/6.25	55	8.8	4	3	7
Maria/8.75	46	5.25	2	1	3
Tatiane/8.75	35	4.00	2	1	3
Rosa/6.25	52	8.32	4	3	7
Sum	243	33.7			
Mean	48.6	6.74			

I suspect that the relationship between English language proficiency and frequency of observed literacy events is not related to English ability, per se; but is related to the consequences of proficiency or lack of proficiency in English. The most obvious consequence of lack of proficiency in English on the part of either parent or child is that the vast majority of environmental literacy that comes or could come into the home through the uses of newspapers, books, magazines, crossword puzzles, etc. simply are not usable in the homes in which the focal children and the parents are not proficient in English.

The Brazilian parents and children who were not proficient in English simply did not have access to the normal tools of literacy in the mainstream American culture because those are written in English. While it is true that they are proficient in Portuguese, they do not have literate materials in Portuguese available to them because they generally are not available in the United States. Thus it would appear, that in this small sample, Augusto excepted, English proficiency is related to frequency of literacy events observed in these homes.

Parental education

Another social variable which is sometimes used as an indicator of literacy in young children is parental education level. As previously discussed, because this information was not available, I attempted to construct a probable education level, based on the occupations the parents held in Brazil. There were important limitations in attempting to do this. In some families I only had this information for one parent. Also, a college education would not necessarily be required for a teacher, accountant or office manager in Brazil as it is in the United States.

With so little information, it is impossible to know if parental education level has any relationship to the frequency of literacy activities in the homes of these five children. Even if my aforementioned assumptions regarding their education levels in Brazil were correct, there still is no discernible correlation. Janaina, who was observed to have proportionately more literacy events than the other four children, had a mother who probably had little formal education, while her father reported that he finished high school. Tatiane, who was observed involved with the lowest frequency of literacy events per hour, had a mother who was a teacher, and may have had additional training even beyond high school. However we know nothing of her father's education level. There simply is not enough information to determine if there is a relationship between parental education and frequency of literacy events for the families in this study. Table 14 shows the assumed parental education levels and the frequency of literacy events per hour.

Table 14 Parental education and average frequency of literacy events per hour

FC/hours	Total	Av/hr	Parental Education	
			M	F
Augusto/7.5	55	7.33	HS	NA
Janaina/6.25	55	8.8	HS	<HS
Maria/8.75	46	5.25	HS	HS
Tatiane/8.75	35	4.00	HS	NA
Rosa/6.25	52	8.32	<HS	NA

Length of time in United States

One other variable that could be linked to the frequency of literacy events in the homes of these five children is the length of time in the United States. The five children in this study had parents who had lived in the United States for varying amounts of times. Two had arrived only within the previous few months, two had parents who had lived in the United States for 8 or more years, and one had been in the United States 18 months at the time this study began. Furthermore two of the children, Rosa and Janaina, were born in the United States and had lived their entire lives here.

The two children who were born in the United States, not surprisingly, also had parents who had lived in the United States for the longest periods of time. These two children also were observed to have the greatest frequency of literacy events per hour in their homes. The other three children had been in this country 6 to 18 months, and in two of these homes, the fathers of the children (Tatiane's and Augusto's) had lived in the United States either continuously or intermittently for up to three years before the children and their mothers moved here. Maria's family was the only one of these three who had moved to the United States together as a unit. Of these three families, Augusto again appears to be the anomaly because the other two children who had been in the

United States for less time were observed to have fewer literacy events observed per hour.

If Augusto is viewed as an anomaly here, because of his mother's strong emphasis on learning, then there does appear to be a relationship between length of time in the United States and frequency of literacy events in the home. This is similar to the relationship that seems to exist between English proficiency and frequency of literacy events, and length of time in the United States and English proficiency are undoubtedly related. The longer these families lived and worked in the United States the greater was their exposure to English and the more opportunity they had to formally study the language. Therefore it would not be surprising to find that length of time in the United States is one major predictor of English language proficiency.

I suspect that the length of time in the United States is a variable which affects literacy events in the home by increasing access to the literacy resources of the mainstream American culture. The length of time in the United States correlates very well with the English proficiency of these participants, and this English proficiency allows families to have a greater knowledge and understanding of information through books, resources, community services, schools, and the media that may positively influence the literacy development of children.

Furthermore, I suspect that the length of time in the United States also increases access to these literacy resources that are often embedded in mainstream American culture by the gradual acceptance of customs and mores of the mainstream culture that may have seemed idiosyncratic or problematic to these Brazilian in their earlier months and years of adjustment to the United States. Much has been written about the complex

relationship between affective factors and second language acquisition. Self-esteem (Oller, Hudson, and Liu, 1977), anxiety (Brown, 1987; Carroll, 1963; Chastain, 1975), and acculturation (Stauble, 1980; Schumann, 1978) all may play a part in how quickly a person learns a new language. It would seem that the longer a person has lived in the United States the greater is the likelihood that s/he has accepted the strangeness of the new culture as normal, and this attitude would likely also make it easier to comfortably seek out the literacy, educational and other resources available in the culture.

In this study it would appear that, Augusto excepted, the length of time the parents (and focal children) have lived in the United States correlates favorably with literacy events observed in the home. Table 15 shows this more clearly.

Table 15 Length of time in the United States and frequency of literacy events per hour

FC/hours	Av/hr	Yrs in United States		
		M	F	FC
Augusto	7.33	6 mos.	3 yrs.	6 mos.
Janaina	8.8	11 yrs.	10 yrs.	Born US
Maria	5.25	6 mos.	6 mos.	6 mos.
Tatiane	4.00	18 mos.	3 yrs.	18 mos.
Rosa	8.32	8 yrs.	NA	Born US

Summary and Reflections

Literacy events were identified from field notes of in-home observations and were coded by type of event (reading, writing, talking, choosing, coloring, drawing, singing, looking at, playing with, on the phone, copying, showing) and social domain of event

(Daily living, entertainment, information network, interpersonal communication , religion, school related, storybook reading, teaching/learning literacy, work related). The frequencies of literacy events observed varied from household to household.

The most frequent literacy event observed for all children in the study was talking about some aspect of literacy and the most frequent domain of literacy activities observed was entertainment. Almost half of all literacy events observed in these five families fell into this domain. The second most frequent domain of observed literacy events was teaching/learning literacy. However, activities in the entertainment domain were observed nearly twice as frequently as those in the teaching/learning literacy domain.

Print items observed in the home were also coded for domain. Although there was also a considerable amount of variation among the families in the numbers and domains of print items observed, the most common domain of observed print items in three of the five families was daily living.

Domains of literacy events were examined for participant structure (focal child alone, focal child with researcher only, mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child, father with focal child or in the presence of focal child, sibling with focal child or in the presence of focal child, and other adult with focal child or in presence of focal child). Literacy events that were most commonly observed with the participant structure mother with focal child or in the presence of focal child were in the domain teaching/learning literacy. For the structure, father with focal child or in the presence of focal child the most frequently observed domain of literacy events was entertainment (20 out of a total of 40).

In the case of the participant structure, other adult with focal child or in the presence of focal child, the most common “other adult” was the Head Start home visitor.

Literacy events were also examined for language usage (English, Portuguese, Bilingual English and Portuguese) by domain. Few literacy events with the language usage, Bilingual English and Portuguese, were observed.

Data were also examined in relation to English language proficiency of parents and/or focal children. The two families in which the parents and focal child had the greatest degree of English proficiency engaged in more literacy events than the families who were not proficient in English. All five families were observed to engage in frequent literacy activities in Portuguese, regardless of their English proficiency. Similar to English language proficiency, length of time in the United States also was related to an increase in frequency of literacy events observed. A relation to parental education could not be determined.

In comparing the in-home literacy events observed in this study with those in two other studies of English-only families in the United States (Teale, 1986; Purcell-Gates, 1996), activities in the social domain daily living were replaced by those in the domain, entertainment, as the domain of most frequently observed literacy events. Furthermore literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy was observed in this study at a frequency similar to daily living in the two previous studies, and was the domain of the second greatest frequency of literacy events.

In this study of five Brazilian Head Start families, over 75% of all literacy activities occurred in the two domains, entertainment and literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy. Furthermore the majority of literacy events occurred with the

focal child engaged in the literacy event alone, and that literacy event was most frequently in the entertainment domain. This may be related to the fact that the parents are frequently busy working or, in one case, studying English, during much of the time.

The second greatest number of literacy events was in the teaching/learning domain and was most frequently engaged in by the mother and the focal child or in the presence of the focal child. This high involvement of the mothers in teaching and learning with their preschool children may also be related to the reasons that these parents came to the United States in the first place – to make a better life for their child. These parents were, perhaps, so motivated to see that their children had the best opportunities in life that they decided to make the sacrifice of immigration and separation from loved ones to make this happen. The participant structures observed affirm the idea that, although these families are very well integrated in their extended families in Brazil, this has not extended to their life in the United States. Were it not for Head Start, there would have been precious few literacy events with other adults to be observed. It is evident that these families, who by their own words, were accustomed to having family, neighbors and friends frequently involved in the lives of their children, no longer have this network. And whatever network these families may have been able to construct did not include literacy events.

In addition to the level of English proficiency, the length of time in the United States was also positively correlated to the frequency of literacy events in the homes. I believe that this is related to the varying degrees of limited English proficiency in these homes and the implications this has on the family's ability to access the resources of literacy in the mainstream American culture.

There was no question that all of these parents were literate in their native language of Portuguese, and, based on the interviews, that they valued literacy and education for their children. The fact that they enrolled their children in Head Start and in preschool is further evidence of this.

However, they face significant barriers in attempting to access the literate riches of our culture. These barriers include lack of proficiency in English, lack of understanding of how to access literacy resources in the United States, lack of time due to their long work hours, lack of expendable income for books in any language, resistance to accepting American culture which may be related to loneliness for their homeland and the fear of the subversive effects of Americanism, lack of social supports due to loss of the extended family in Brazil. All of this together paints a picture of five families struggling mightily to provide the best life possible for their children as well as family in Brazil, while paying a heavy price for their endeavors.

Chapter VIII: Implications for practice and further research

Introduction

This study, by viewing the literacy practices embedded in the home environment of a group of Brazilian Head Start children, provides us with a picture of young children and their parents engaging in a variety of literacy activities. It also described the challenges to the literacy development of these children as a result of experiences related to their immigration to the United States.

It is important to note that although the five Head Start children in the study shared a common heritage and a common home language, they also had many differences. Their families were from differing socio-economic backgrounds in Brazil, and their parents were of differing educational backgrounds. Although the children were all preschool age children, their parents differed in age, in length of time in the United States, and in English language proficiency. Their parents were of different occupational backgrounds. They were of different religions. They were from households of different sizes. Some had siblings. Others did not. What these families did share in common was a desire to give their children the best learning opportunities available to them, and for this reason they all had found their way to the Head Start program.

As a study of a group of five Head Start Brazilian children living on Martha's Vineyard, this research may or may not reflect the literacy practices in the homes of other Brazilian children or other immigrant children living on Martha's Vineyard or elsewhere. However, the results of this study do raise questions that may be relevant to other populations. More research with Brazilian and other immigrant populations is warranted to further the understanding of the literacy environment in the homes of such families, as

well as provide a deeper and broader understanding of how the immigration experience affects their lives.

Regarding the population under study, there are several important implications we can derive based on the results.

Assumptions and Bias

First and foremost, assumptions that practitioners may make about these families based on experience with low income American families do not reflect the experiences of the families in this study. The connection between low income, job status, and parental education did not appear to reflect the so-called cycle of illiteracy that is assumed to be a fact for low income, poorly educated, poor or unemployed American families in the United States. Although they are low-income families in the United States, by American standards, the families in this study were not from the lower class in Brazil. Several of them had held professional middle class jobs before coming to the United States. Therefore it is important for practitioners not to assume that because they are low-income in the United States that they are poorly educated or that they do not value education and learning. Quite the contrary was observed in the families in this study.

This understanding is important because such biases may influence the way teachers, administrators, and social service professionals relate to these families. Unlike the low income Appalachian children who did not understand the uses of the tools of literacy in their homes (Purcell-Gates, 1997), these children all were very familiar with the appropriate uses of pens, pencils, and paper. I never observed pens being used for guns or paper being used for airplanes as Purcell-Gates reported (1997).

For these families there was no need to teach anyone the purpose of literate materials. These were already a part of their lives, and every one of the parents expressed their desire for their children to have a good education. Indeed, they may have been attracted to Head Start because of this desire. This is an important strength of these families that needs to be recognized and supported whenever possible.

Another common assumption made by many Americans is that Brazilians are Hispanics. For Brazilians, who are neither descendants of Spanish explorers nor who speak the Spanish language, it is problematic and insulting to be classified as Hispanics. Brazilians have a unique culture which derives from the commingling of three heritages: colonists and the royal court from Portugal, indigenous populations who lived in Brazil prior to its colonization, and Africans who were brought to Brazil as slaves (Ribeiro, 2000). It is important to recognize the unique nationality of Brazil and its separateness from Hispanic cultures and also from other Portuguese-speaking cultures which may not contain the richness of the intermingled traditions found in Brazil. It would be wise for schools and social services agencies to make a point to avoid equating Brazilian culture with Hispanic culture. Likewise it is important to remember that the Brazilian culture is not the same as Portuguese, Azorean, or Cape Verdean cultures, even though they may share a common language. Brazilians feel a sense of pride in their unique culture and nationality, and it is important that this culture be recognized.

Need for English language development

Second, these families, particularly the parents, were hampered by enormous barriers as a result of their inability or incomplete ability to speak, understand, read, and write English. This limited English proficiency became a part of a cycle which made it

difficult for the parents learn English quickly. It meant that the only jobs available to them were those that did not require English, that is, unskilled labor. Furthermore, these jobs offered little opportunity for them to learn or improve their English ability or even to practice the literate skills they held in their native language, for example Mario's skills as an accountant. Also, because these families worked long hours they had little time to study or take classes which could have improved their ability to speak English.

In these families, also, there was clearly a problem for some parents who were unable to read English books to their children or to help their children with their homework. This limited English proficiency became a key factor which also prevented the parents from reading to their children and even from modeling their own reading for their children.

Because of this, I believe that it should be a priority for schools to make English classes available for the parents of school age and preschool children. Schools need to form relationships which will support parents' efforts to improve the literacy development of their children. Parents need to feel that they are partners with teachers and schools in supporting their children's education and literacy development, and parental ability to read, write, speak, and understand English seems to be a key ingredient to this partnership.

Books in the home

A third finding in these families was the need for more books in the home, particularly Portuguese language books. Research supports the notion that literacy development in the native language is transferable to the second language once it is acquired. It is well documented that children who have a solid base of literacy in their

native language can easily use that as a base for further literacy development in the second language (Lessow-Hurley, 1990; Hudelson, 1987; Flores, et al., 1985). Therefore I believe that is important for schools and other social service agencies to make efforts to acquire native language books and make them available to immigrant families. This will enable them to more easily support their children's literacy development.

While English books may be useful to these families in varying degrees depending on their and their children's ability to speak English, native language books are imperative. These parents expressed interest in reading to their children, but they had little access to Portuguese language books. To make the written word come alive for their children, to be able to read to their children with vitality and passion, they need to be reading in the language of their own identity and culture rather than under pressure to pronounce and explain the foreign words of another culture. Thus, I would suggest that the most effective parent-child story reading scenarios would occur with native language books. Furthermore the act of parents and children reading together would encourage a healthy parent-child relationship in addition to providing experience with print and stories.

Social and emotional supports

A fourth aspect of the lives of these children and families that was apparent was their isolation resulting from the separation from family members and extended family members prior to, during, or after immigration. The loneliness and longing for home and the difficulties in adjusting to the American culture can lead to problems for newly arrived immigrant families. These parents and children experienced the pain of loss of their families and friends in Brazil, rejection by Americans as a result of mistakes they

made due to misunderstanding of the American culture, rejection of the American culture by these families as a result of their misinterpretation of this culture, and the isolation of the children who spent a great deal of time alone.

While parents were often physically present in the home, they frequently were not interacting with their children. Furthermore, these Brazilian children did not have access to American peers, except in school. These parents, who were puzzled by the practice of Americans arranging playdates for their children and fearing allowing their children to run off to play alone as was their custom in Brazil, did not know how to facilitate peer relationships with American children. Even if they did know how to organize this type of social activity and if they thought it would be a valuable experience for their children, some of them still could not have done this because they did not have the language ability in English to do so. Parents may also have been afraid that too much contact with Americans might have had a negative effect on their children.

The pain, loneliness, and isolation experienced by members of these Brazilian families is also likely to affect their ability to learn English and to comfortably adapt to American culture in the long term. Emotional factors, such as anxiety, sadness, and fear, are strongly related to success in acculturation as well as attitudes and motivation to learn a new language (Stauble, 1980; Schumann, 1978). Furthermore such emotional difficulties may be related to dysfunctional styles of adapting to the new culture. In ethnic flight children may structure their identities to align with the mainstream culture and reject their own culture, feeling disdain and shame in their cultural identity and ethnic roots (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Children may also develop adversarial identities in which they reject the dominant culture and may retreat into gangs

or engage in other forms of rebellion against the mainstream culture (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

It would seem that a proactive stance on the part of social service professionals in helping to identify such affective and emotional issues early before they become a crisis, might support families in adjusting to their new life and deflect serious emotional problems before they develop. The idea of an Immigration Center where newly arrived immigrant families in a community could go for information and assistance in finding housing, health care, English classes, child care, school, as well as advice regarding the laws and culture of the United States, all in the native language, might be a first line of assistance to families when they first arrive here. Simple information such as regulations regarding school attendance and immunizations, driving regulations and procedures to acquire a driver's license, and assistance in filling out job applications could give families a start in their adjustment. As seen by the families in this study, without accurate information about schools and social service agencies in the United States, rumors, misunderstandings, and ungrounded fears are inevitable.

The needs for supports in these social areas have implications for schools, as well. Just as the Head Start program provided more than preschool opportunities for these families, schools need to address the obvious. Children of immigrants who come to school need more than academic instruction and instruction in English if they are to succeed in the U.S. school system. Their parents need the knowledge to support their learning at home. This means parents need opportunities to learn English. They may need help with child care arrangements so that children are not left to be cared for by older children who do not have the maturity to parent younger children or to scaffold

their learning. Parents often need information regarding health insurance and health care. They may even need help in balancing when a child is too sick to go to school and when a child has missed too much school because of lack of parental supervision, lack of understanding of the importance of school attendance, or because parents need the child to translate adult business dealings for them. Schools need to see their students as bringing their family life with them when they enter the doors, and they need to examine ways to connect with families for the sake of supporting the children's school successes. Schools, then, would be leaders in community education and in seeking methods to make life better for families in order for families to support their children's learning.

Areas for Future Research

This research was an extension of research in home literacy practices following similar ethnographic methods as those employed by other researchers (Teale, 1986; Purcell-Gates, 1996) studying the literacy practices of low income American families. It also provided an exploration of how the life-changing event of immigration might also affect the home literacy environment of these young children.

Further research should focus on larger populations of Brazilian immigrant children, both in Head Start and those not in Head Start, to explore further how the unique experience of immigration might affect the development of the children as well as the literacy events in the homes. With a larger population researchers could explore questions that might provide insight into both the literacy practices and acculturation of families with a variety of immigration experiences.

Questions related to length of time in the United States, parental education, origin of birth of children need further exploration to see if there is a relation between any of these factors and the literacy environment of children.

Studies which focus on placing an abundance of native language books in the home can be developed to explore the relationship of availability of native language print to literacy events in the home. Because story book reading has been identified as a significant influence on children's literacy development, it would be extremely important to see how the presence of native language books in the home might affect the amount and quality of parent-child storybook reading. Furthermore, since there are indications that social class and cultural differences are related to storybook practices (Heath, 1982, Heath and Thomas, 1984; Ninio, 1980), it would be important to see how storybook reading might then relate to the changing social class and cultures of these families. Descriptive and longitudinal research that documents the strategies that help families to overcome the emotional and social difficulties related to immigrating to the United States will provide a research base for developing support networks to facilitate with healthy acculturation and adaptation of these and other immigrants to the American culture.

Studies which examine the relationships between school - family support systems to the academic success of immigrant children would provide new information regarding ways to promote academic success of these children. A study of the most effective methods to develop the involvement of immigrant parents in their children's education could provide a model of parental involvement. For example, what are some effective methods to encourage Brazilian immigrant parents in forming a PAC (parent advisory council) to the school? A qualitative study of parents developing such a PAC could

provide insights regarding cultural issues that may need to be overcome, as well as events most likely to attract parental participation. A longitudinal study of the academic progress of children of Brazilian or other immigrant parents actively involved in a PAC or in different types of PACs could provide information in developing effective models of such organizations for different cultural groups.

Another area for future research is in the study of the loss of the ability to speak the first language. The language children speak in their early years of development is intricately connected to their identity. As young children learn and discover the world, themselves, and develop relationships with significant people in their lives it is in that first language. Why did the children in this study forget how to speak Portuguese as they went to school and learned to speak, read, and write in English? I suspect that this is related to their aborted literacy development in their first language. Sonia, who was older and more literate, when she learned English; remains literate in Portuguese today. Rafaela, who arrived in the U.S. at age 7, just as she was learning to read and write in Portuguese, continues to struggle with reading and writing in English; and she no longer has any ability to read and write in Portuguese. The focal children in this study all have learned to read and write in English and none of them know how to read and write in Portuguese. This is not only a tragic loss of their heritage and identity, but also a loss of a powerful skill that they could use for learning and excelling in a second language. This loss of the native language needs to be examined so that we can have a better understanding of why it is lost, what advantages there might be in maintaining it, and what techniques and strategies may be employed to maintain the first language. One way

to do this might be through qualitative studies of children who did not lose their native language, or their developing literacy in their native language when English was learned.

Literacy development is a phenomenon that is embedded within the context of the lives of these children, indeed, the lives of the vast majority of children in our literate culture. Because of this contextual embeddedness it is important that we continue to examine the home environment as the cultural context in which young children of a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds may develop literacy. It is clear that immigrant families of children of all ages are coming to the United States to live and to learn, and it is the responsibility of educators to make sure that no child is left out or left behind due to language or cultural differences. We need to continue our efforts through research to broaden our understanding of the cultural and linguistic influences, both at home and at school, that they may help the development of these and all immigrant children.

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Appendix A: Consent Form, English

Head Start Research Scholar Language Development Project

Description of the Project

Greetings. My name is Sharon Switzer.

I am taking part in the Head Start Research Scholar Language Development Project. The project is taking place at the Martha's Vineyard Community Services Head Start Program. The purpose of this project is to learn more about the language development of young children in non-English speaking homes. This will help the Head Start staff and others to learn more about patterns of learning in young children and how services can be improved for non-English speaking and other families with young children.

The project will involve 10 – 12 home visits during the 1999-2000 school year and again during the 2000-2001 school year. During these visits I will quietly observe your child in his or her usual activities or play. During some of these visits I will have conversations with you that I will tape record, with your permission.

The project will also involve your attending family sessions that will include learning activities for children, English as a Second Language instruction for parents, and parent and children time together. Four other families will also be included in this project. This will take place in Spring 2000. Each family will receive a stipend of \$300 in May 2000 and \$300 in May 2001 in return for participating in this project.

My Rights

I understand that:

1. I may stop any home visit at any time or refuse it on a given date.
2. That I may refuse to have any conversation tape recorded and that I may stop the tape recording of any conversation at any time.
3. That I will be asked my permission before each time a conversation is taped.
4. That I may listen to the tape recording, if I wish.
5. That I may leave the project at any time, for any reason.

6. That I am guaranteed complete confidentiality for myself and my child regarding anything that is observed during the home visits or learned during the interviews.
7. That my name and my children's names will not be used in any summary of results. Pseudonyms will be used and identifying information will be changed.
8. That at the end of the project a summary of the results will be disseminated to the administrator of the Martha's Vineyard Community Services Head Start Program and that I may have a copy of this summary, if I wish.

I am over 18 years old. I understand everything this consent form says.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PRINT YOUR NAME: _____

Sharon Switzer, Project Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Consent Form, Portuguese

Projeto de Pesquisa Head Start do Desenvolvimento da Linguagem Escolar

Descrição do Projeto

Olá. Meu nome é Sharon Switzer.

Eu estou fazendo parte do Projeto de Pesquisa Head Start do Desenvolvimento da Linguagem Escolar. O projeto está acontecendo no Programa Head Start de Serviços Comunitários de Martha's Vineyard. O propósito deste projeto é aprender a respeito do desenvolvimento da linguagem em crianças pequenas que residem em casas onde não se fala o inglês. Isto ajudará o pessoal que trabalha no Head Start e outros a aprenderem mais sobre as regras de aprendizagem em crianças pequenas e como os serviços podem ser melhorados para famílias que não falam inglês e outras famílias com crianças pequenas.

O projeto envolverá de 10 a 12 visitas domiciliares durante o ano escolar de 1999-2000 e novamente durante o ano escolar de 2000-2001. Durante essas visitas eu observarei sua criança silenciosamente em suas atividades normais ou brincadeiras. Durante algumas destas visitas eu terei conversas com você, as quais eu gravarei, com a sua permissão.

O projeto também envolverá a sua participação em sessões familiares que incluirão atividades de aprendizagem para as crianças, aulas de inglês para os pais, e atividades para os pais e as crianças participarem juntos. Quatro famílias além da sua participarão desse projeto. Isso acontecerá na primavera do ano 2000. Cada família receberá \$300 em maio do ano 2000 e \$300 em maio do ano 2001 como retribuição por participar desse projeto.

Meus direitos como participante deste projeto.

Eu entendo que:

1. Eu posso interromper qualquer visita a qualquer momento ou recusar uma visita numa data específica.
2. Eu posso recusar ter qualquer conversa gravada e posso interromper a gravação de qualquer conversa a qualquer momento.

3. Minha permissão será pedida antes que qualquer conversa seja gravada.
4. Eu posso escutar a gravação, se eu assim desejar.
5. Eu posso abandonar o projeto a qualquer momento, por qualquer motivo.
6. É garantida completa confidencialidade para mim mesmo(a) e para minha criança com relação a qualquer coisa que seja observada durante as visitas ou descoberta durante as entrevistas.
7. O meu nome e os nomes de minhas crianças não serão usados em qualquer resumo dos resultados. Pseudônimos serão usados e qualquer informação identificadora será mudada.
8. No fim do projeto um resumo dos resultados será entregue a(o) administrador(a) do Programa Head Start de Serviços Comunitários de Martha's Vineyard e eu posso ter uma cópia desse resumo, se eu assim desejar.

Eu tenho mais de 18 anos de idade. Eu entendo tudo que este formulário de consentimento diz..

Assinatura: _____ Data: _____

ESCREVA O SEU NOME COM LETRA DE FORMA:

Sharon Switzer, Coordenadora do Projeto: _____

Data: _____



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