

Shared Book Reading in Families: Exploring Engagement Between Children and Parents

A thesis submitted to fulfil requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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Authorship Attribution Statement

This thesis contains material published in the following research conferences, symposiums, competitions, coursework assessments and in the thesis proposal. They are listed below. Ms. Ruth McHugh professionally edited this doctoral thesis.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is my own work and that all assistance received in the preparation of this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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As supervisor for the candidature upon which this thesis is based, I can confirm that the authorship attribution statements above are correct.

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Research Dissemination

- Kuruppu, S., & Evans, D.** (25, October 2022). *Shared book reading (SBR) with children with disabilities* [Oral presentation]. Communication Sciences Research group of Speech Pathology, School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney, NSW, Australia. [shared contribution]
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Abstract

Shared book reading is considered an early literacy activity that can facilitate language and literacy skills in children. A shared book reading session consists of three agents namely the parent/adult, child and the reading material. The interactive nature of shared book reading is critical to a quality shared book reading session.

Previous research studies on shared book reading have focused on monolingual families mostly compared to bilingual families. This is the first study that focused on parent-child engagement during shared book reading in Sinhala and English languages in both print and digital texts. This study consisted of 7 parent-child dyads including children aged 4-7 years old. This study used a case study mixed methods to explore how parent-child engagement occurred in relation to language presentation and text representation.

The findings of the study revealed that parents focused more on language comprehension than word recognition skills in children regardless of the language and type of text. Moreover, the passion for reading in both parents and children, language competency in parents and children, parental knowledge and skills in relation to children's early literacy skills had a significant influence on the parent-child engagement during shared book reading.

Overall, there were no major discrepancies in parent-child engagement during shared book reading in print and digital texts. The findings of the study could be used to guide the design of community-based parental training programmes on how to develop early literacy skills in children and to design reading materials in various text types which could facilitate the interactive nature of shared book reading.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Globally, six-out-of-ten children are estimated to be impacted by learning poverty. Learning poverty is defined as the inability to read a simple text and understand it by the age of 10 (UNICEF, 2022). The learning poverty rate is established by measuring what proportion of all children are not able to read with comprehension (i.e., decoding text and understanding its meaning). This includes both children in school and the children who are not attending school. The learning poverty rate demonstrates the failure of society in facilitating the fundamental skills in children to live a quality life and achieve lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is vital in human development and social transformation. The acquisition of reading and writing skills are priceless in this learning process. The ability to read and write enables us as humans to live an independent and quality life. Acknowledging the importance of reading and writing, it is vital to become knowledgeable of the pre-requisites for learning to read and write. Not only that, but also being knowledgeable about ways of promoting and facilitating those pre-requisites is equally important.

Literacy is regarded as an experience-dependent brain process. The brain is required to experience a culture and instructions within that culture across a considerable amount of exposure. On the other hand, language and visual processing are regarded as experience-expectant brain processes, which contribute to the reading process. As humans, learning to read involves the purposeful instruction and acquisition of skills (e.g., decoding, language comprehension) in order to derive meaning from written text (Church et al., 2021).

Globally literacy is considered to have two viewpoints – the traditional view and the context-oriented view. The traditional view defines literacy as the person's ability to read and write with the focus on print skills and the social level attached to them (Baker et al., 2010).

On the other hand, the context-oriented view defines literacy as a social practice and highlights context as an important factor. As a result, literacy is highly dependent on context with different meanings in different societies. Therefore, there is a need to value the skills and competencies necessary to acquire literacy skills while

acknowledging the social and contextual elements which could affect the process of literacy development and acquired knowledge implementation (Street, 2017).

The role of literacy in our world for persons of all ages is critical to learning and functioning across the life span. The crucial importance of literacy is seen in a range of different statements (e.g., *the Sustainability Development Goals 2030*, United Nations, 2015). In more recent times, the impact of global events (e.g., COVID19 pandemic) have affected the acquisition of literacy, and demonstrated the importance of literacy in maintaining health and well-being.

Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19 Pandemic

The *United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development* consists of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) is designed to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015).

Providing quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education is one of the targets in achieving the SDG4 targets for quality literacy and numeracy outcomes. According to UNICEF global databases (i.e., Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys, national household surveys), being developmentally on track for literacy and numeracy for children aged 36 months to 59 months is the ability to “identify/name at least 10 letters of the alphabet, can read at least 4 simple words, and can recognise and name all numbers from 1 to 10” (Manu et al., 2019, p. 1). Ensuring these literacy and numeracy outcomes are attained in the early years has lifelong implications for the individual, and our communities. Literacy is important for achieving SDG 4 but also for achieving all the other Sustainable Developmental Goals which are focussed on areas such as poverty alleviation, food security, health and well-being, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, environment and climate, work, and economic growth (Hanemann, 2019).

Foundational learning skills consist of children achieving minimum proficiency in reading and numeracy. Foundational reading skills consist of word recognition, literal and inferential questions, while foundational numeracy skills consist of number reading, number discrimination, addition, and pattern recognition (Manu et al., 2019).

UNICEF (2022) explained the need to focus on three areas when assessing foundational reading skills, a key feature part of literacy. If a child can read 90% of

words accurately from a given text and is able to answer three literal and two inferential questions related to the text, then the child is regarded as having foundational reading skills. If a child cannot read a simple text with comprehension by the age of 10, that could be considered as an indicator of the failure of the education system in a country. These foundational skills are considered as the building blocks for all other learning, knowledge, and higher-order skills that children and youth gain through education. Notably, foundational learning, including foundational reading and foundational numeracy skills are acknowledged as essential skills for a child to become independent in society and to contribute to society to their maximum potential.

There are various reasons which prevent children from attaining foundational learning skills, especially reading skills. Poverty is the main reason and other reasons include gender, urban-rural location, disabilities, parental involvement in children's education and home environment (Kelly et al., 2022). Literacy development can be hindered for young learners across any country or society when impacted by global events. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, disrupted schooling and education of children world-wide. Unfortunately, school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation further. Recent studies have shown that a child enrolled in Grade 1 could experience a 27 percentage point reduction in reading acquisition by Grade 9 as a result of the prolonged school closures due to the pandemic, emphasising the urgent requirement to redouble the efforts to achieve effective learning recovery (Kelly et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic created more inequalities in education contributing and worsening the situation of learning poverty. Learning poverty focusses on reading skills and basically it is described as the inability to read and understand a simple story. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic the world had experienced a learning crisis with nearly 6 out of every 10 ten-year-old children in low-and middle-income countries experience the impacts of learning poverty (Saavedra Chanduvi et al., 2020). COVID-19 complicated and heightened the existing learning crisis, resulting in a reported risk of \$21 trillion in lifetime revenues. If the level of learning poverty cannot be reduced and/or prevented, it could negatively impact human resources and the future work force. (Saavedra Chanduvi et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2022).

The urgency of addressing the lost learning due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in multi-agency and multi-national efforts. The RAPID framework (Saavedra Chanduvi et al., 2020) for learning recovery focusses on five

domains: **R**each every child and keep them in school, **A**ssess learning levels regularly, **P**rioritise teaching the fundamentals, **I**ncrease the efficiency of instruction including through catch-up learning, and **D**evelop psychosocial health and wellbeing.

UNICEF (2022) has highlighted the aim of reducing the rate and level of learning poverty by half by 2030. This aim to achieve Sustainability Developmental Goal 4 targets needs to be fulfilled in each country. How this is achieved may be different across different countries and societies, but the importance of literacy across countries and societies cannot be underestimated.

21st Century Readers

Undoubtedly, the skill of reading is identified as an essential requirement for the citizens and societies in the technology-rich 21st century. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a well-recognised student measure focussed on 15-year-old students in multiple countries. PISA is focussed on assessing reading, mathematics, and science in students aged 15 years old. Literacy in the 21st century comprises constructing and validating knowledge (Patrinos, 2020; PISA, 2018; Rodríguez et al., 2020).

The PISA 2018 report provided an insight into the reading skills of 15-year-old students, and these skills could steer the technology rich 21st century print-reading in a digital world. PISA 2018 discovered that students who read books mostly in a paper format rather than a digital format performed well in reading. PISA 2018 also reported students having more time for reading for enjoyment in all participating countries. However, compared to students who rarely or never read, those who read in digital format reported reading for enjoyment 3 hours more weekly. Those who read print books, read 4 hours each week while students who read both book formats reported 5 hours or more weekly reading for enjoyment. PISA 2018 found that strong readers performed well both in print and digital formats. The students with an immigrant background using the language of instruction at school in the home obtained higher scores in reading compared to others who used their native or first language (PISA, 2018; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2019).

PISA 2018 highlighted that strong readers could balance the reading time between paper and digital text, or they tended to read in paper format. Further, these students would use digital devices to browse the internet for schoolwork but continued to enjoy reading books in the paper format.

PISA 2018 reported that 8.7% of students performed at the top level for reading as they could comprehend lengthy texts, abstract concepts, and differentiate fact and opinion, based on implicit cues related to the source of information. Notably, those examples or the areas assessed for reading performance aligned with the domains in the model of Cognitive Foundations of Reading Acquisition posed by Tunmer and Hoover (2019). It consists of language comprehension and word recognition as the main domains, where the word recognition domain consists of alphabetic coding, concepts about print, and knowledge of the alphabetic principle.

PISA 2018 defined reading as understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and engaging with texts with the intention to achieve an individual's goals, to enhance his/her knowledge and potential to participate in society (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2021). According to the OECD (2021), reading is not merely the ability to decode written words, but also a flexible set of skills that people develop during their lives. Of course, the skills for the decoding of written words is usually acquired during childhood. PISA definitions of reading have evolved to reflect the changes in society, economy, culture and technology (OECD, 2021). Moreover, OECD (2021) has claimed that the concept of reading has changed since PISA 2000 in a way that reflects the progression of the theoretical understanding of what it means to know how to read which consists of cognitive, metacognitive and affective-motivational dimensions of behaviour.

Notably, PISA 2018 was based on three major elements, the cognitive processes, the text and the scenarios. The cognitive processes consist of the approach that regulates how readers engage with a text. The text consists of various materials that are read. The scenarios consist of the various contexts or purposes whereby reading takes place (OECD, 2021). While PISA 2018 results were one set of data on levels of literacy in different global locations for 15-year-olds, they pointed out the importance of literacy and in particular the function of reading in being literate. The results reiterate the importance of reading and its impact on life-long learning and quality of life.

The OECD (2021) highlighted the importance of reading engagement and its strong correlation with reading performance. The student's reading engagement is nourished by an interest for reading and the pleasure of reading, along with an intrinsic motivation for reading. Further, the OECD (2021) highlighted that reading enjoyment is pivotal in developing reading skills in children. Inarguably, parents are valuable role

models for reading habits. The students who reported a higher index of reading enjoyment in PISA 2018 had parents who enjoyed reading. Notably, the parental role in expressing positive attitudes towards reading begins at home in the child's early years, and the daily reading activities of parents reported a high correlation with children's early learning and development. Most importantly, the children who noticed their parents reading at home and children whose parents promoted reading as a pleasurable activity, engaged in reading activities at home with reading motivation and success (OECD, 2021).

Influence of Reading Skills on the Human Life

The influence of reading skills on the human life can be discussed in two aspects: at the individual level and at the society level. As humans we learn across our lifespan. In the learning process, the ability to read is crucial. Undoubtedly, the ability to read opens the window to wider learning journeys by exposing the reader to a world of knowledge and information, to being able to communicate socially with family, peers and colleagues. Being able to read independently gives an individual access to a wealth of knowledge, and hence the ability to explore the whole world and beyond – indeed as far as the universe. Simply, being able to read could even facilitate survival in this modern rapidly-changing technological world.

The ability to read plays a crucial and influential role in the lives of individuals. For example, from the time we wake up in the morning until we go to bed, we encounter a world of information. Such as, being able to read a recipe and prepare the dish correctly by following the written instructions (and follow symbols and pictures) step by step, to read and follow the instructions given by a doctor for a healthcare problem, to find a place in the city by reading a map and following the directions, to read and follow the guidelines to complete a banking form or read and adhere to the safety instructions in the workplace. In a socially connected world, being able to read text messages and social media posts can be individually empowering.

When examining reading at the society level, being able to read facilitates smooth and efficient functioning in society. For example, reading different materials such as books, newspapers, e-books and websites contributes to updating and broadening the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people to help them live quality lives in this rapidly changing current world (e.g., to find innovative solutions to common

problems and challenges in the world). Overall, the ability to read can be identified as a great asset to a human, to their society, and to the whole world.

While discussing the advantages of being able to read, it also allows us to consider what would happen if we could not read independently, if we read inefficiently and with difficulty, or not at all. The relationship between reading and health, for example, is described as health literacy. Health literacy evolves across the life span of an individual and depends on various factors such as numeracy and education. Low health literacy and low medication literacy, for example, are considered risk factors for poor health outcomes of children as well as adults (Vaillancourt, 2022). Health literacy facilitates the ability to differentiate reliable information and misinformation on a health topic, for example, COVID-19 (Okan et al., 2020). Overall, health literacy empowers humans to make decisions about their health after navigating sources of health information on various topics such as nutrition, preventative methods, first-aids, signs and symptoms of diseases, and emergencies.

Taken together, the ability to read is an essential skill each individual needs to acquire to lead an independent, healthy, and quality life. The *OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030* project focusses on three foundations: cognitive foundations, including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and data literacy; health foundation; and social and emotional foundation. These foundations are considered as the building blocks which contribute to context specific competencies such as health literacy, financial literacy, global competency, or media literacy (OECD, 2019).

As humans we need to be able to read and write, communicate meaningfully via various media, and extract meaning out of numeric and linguistic information that occupies our daily lives. Therefore, as literacy and numeracy skills are considered as essential skills for all persons, achieving literacy for all by 2030 is a key goal for all nations.

The OECD (2019) has highlighted the need to update some of the cognitive core foundations to align with the evolving nature of becoming literate and numerate by the year 2030 and beyond. For example, all areas of human existence are gradually becoming more digitalised and human interaction with the digital world is becoming stronger. This is mostly through the use of apps, be it to gather data from banking transactions or apps related to health, fitness and mental health. As a result, digital and data literacies are acknowledged as core foundations of the current society.

Therefore, being literate in the modern world requires the abilities to decode, interpret, extract meaning, communicate via digital sources, and the ability to critically evaluate and filter information. Most importantly, digital literacy also builds upon the foundation skills equal to traditional literacy. However, digital literacy is associated with a digital device such as an i-Pad, smart phone or a computer whereas traditional literacy is associated with print on paper. Similarly, data literacy comprises extracting information from data and being able to read, work, analyse and understand data, meaning that data literacy is aimed at both technical and social aspects of data. Indeed, becoming data literate is crucial in this digitalised world, for example, the present business world uses extensive amounts of data and uses platforms such as Google, Amazon Marketplace, Airbnb, and Uber to extract and analyse data effectively about their clients. In addition, financial literacy and media literacy are considered as some of the other literacies which are important today and will be in the future.

Collectively, the fundamentals in reading acquisition should not be neglected and focussing on those skills in the developmental years of human growth (e.g., 3 to 8 years of age) has become a high priority in all countries, more than at any time in the past. Indeed, the fundamental skills such as language comprehension and word recognition set the foundation to become literate in any form such as digital, data and media. The influence of reading skills in a human's life can be acknowledged continuously from the past to the future, as well as the present.

Parents and Teachers as Partners in Children's Reading Development

Early learning, responsive parent-child interactions, child-directed stimulations and positive parenting are considered as essential elements for a child's total development (Britto et al., 2017). Parents and teachers play a critical role in nurturing children; parents are considered the first teachers in a child's life. As a result, it is vital for them to have a solid understanding about the process of child development and their contribution in that process (Bryce et al., 2019). Inarguably, the adults provide a considerable amount of semantically related speech to children throughout the daily activities. However, adults rarely intend to serve as language teachers during the interactions with children. Mostly they facilitate the type of language that suits their child's speech, interests and motivations by answering their child's questions, commenting about what children are doing and responding to the conversations initiated by children (Snow, 2019).

When considering reading development, the home literacy environment can not be underestimated as it is the learning space prior to kindergarten and formal schooling. As parents, reading books with children is acknowledged as a contributing factor for developing emergent literacy skills in children as early as the child's first year of life. The children whose parents started reading to them as early as possible indicate better emergent literacy skills prior to school admission. Lenhart et al. (2022) recommended parents start reading as early as the last quarter of the first year of life if the child allows them to do so. Notably, the early language development is essential for later reading, social and vocational development (Lenhart et al., 2022).

Shared book reading is an early literacy activity in which an adult reads a book with a child or children and engages in conversations about the immediate story content and beyond. Shared book reading provides the parents an opportunity to apply strategies such as scaffolding, questioning, prompting and inferencing to facilitate the child's language and emergent literacy skills (van der Wilt et al., 2022).

Therefore, the parental attitudes, knowledge, and skills in reading, and specifically about shared book reading, should be discussed in relation to children's reading acquisition. The cultural background of parents and families is considered an influential factor in shaping parental attitudes on shared book reading. In the Western culture, shared book reading is acknowledged as a parent-child activity in supporting children's language and early-literacy development (Kucirkova & Grover, 2022). In some cultures (e.g., Hong Kong) shared book reading is considered a vital aspect in responsible parenting (Wing-Yin Chow & McBride-Change, 2003). Differences can be identified among families from the same country in relation to their attitudes on shared book reading (Bus et al., 2000). Different attitudes on shared book reading across cultures has been associated with different reading styles. For example, variations in asking questions, talking spontaneously, deviating from the story in the book and engaging in storytelling instead of shared book reading (Melzi & Caspe, 2005).

The attitudes of parents are considered an indicator of their engagement in shared book reading at home. A study on Norwegian parents' attitudes towards shared book reading with their children aged 1 - 4.5 years was examined by Kucirkova and Grøver (2022). The thematic analysis of interview data exposed two main themes such as the agency and the embodiment. The agency consisted of child's independence, the adult's control, as well as the shared control during shared book reading, while

embodiment consisted of physical presence and the intimate experience of a shared book reading session (Kucirkova & Grøver, 2022).

In addition to attitudes, reading behaviours are also an important element in the process of the development of reading. Singh et al. (2022) examined reading behaviours of parents and children focussing on vocabulary sizes. Singh et al. (2022) argued that shared book reading could minimise the effects of socio-economic differences on early language development. Parental education had direct and indirect effects on the size of vocabulary in infants. Single language (dominant and non-dominant) and dual language infant vocabulary sizes were estimated by the parent's education level. Parent-child book reading activities mediated the association between parental education and infant vocabulary size.

On the other hand, a study by Costantino-Lane (2021) on teachers' perceptions of reading instruction in Kindergarten reported that they had the perception that students with developed language skills at Kindergarten entry became proficient readers compared to the students with less developed language skills. Teachers felt that students with less developed language skills found learning to read challenging, and despite their mastery of decoding text their reading comprehension was adversely impacted (Costantino-Lane, 2021). In sum, the importance of the home literacy environment in supporting children's language and early literacy skills including reading acquisition cannot be underestimated.

Shared reading at school can also play an important part in the early years. PISA 2018 (OECD, 2021) suggested that assignments given by teachers to read books for school could facilitate students to read books for pleasure outside the school as well. The feedback given by teachers could enable struggling readers to perceive their strengths and limitations. Therefore, the teacher's role can be considered as highly influential in facilitating reading skills. PISA 2018 also emphasised the importance of having strong reading and language foundation skills in a digital world. It highlighted that those countries and economies that could facilitate learning opportunities throughout the "reading spectrum" in both print and digital formats, would become most successful in producing proficient readers in a digital world (OECD, 2021, p.143). As a result, they would facilitate students with strong critical thinking, metacognitive and self-efficacy skills to negotiate the technologically rich 21st century.

Overall, parents and teachers play an influential role in supporting novice readers to become proficient readers. The home literacy environment and home reading

practices affect children's language development including bilingual vocabulary. The early onset of shared book reading in families can facilitate children's word recognition skills and language comprehension skills (Lenhart et al., 2022).

Reading in the Australian Context

The statistics on participation in selected cultural activities in Australia in the financial year 2017-2018 revealed that 80.4% of children in the age group of 5 to 8-year-olds engaged in reading for pleasure while 80.9% of children in the age group of 9 to 11-year-olds engaged in reading for pleasure. However, it dropped to 73.2 % for children aged 12 to 14 years. There was a slightly higher rate of participation in reading for pleasure as a cultural activity in young children than older children (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017-2018).

In addition, a study on *How Australians Use Their Time* (Statistics, 2020-21) revealed that of the different types of childcare activities undertaken by parents of children under 15 years, 51% of female parents spent time playing, reading, or talking with a child compared to 38% of males. When considering the use of internet and digital device use, 39% of females participated in general internet and digital device use compared to 33% of males. However, 25% of females participated in reading compared to 18% of males. Taken together, females engaged in literacy related activities by themselves and with children more than males.

Overall, 89% female parents and 73% male parents engaged in childcare activities with their children under 15 years of age. Those childcare activities included physical and emotional care, teaching, helping, playing, talking, and feeding children. In sum, female parents spent 3 hours 34 minutes in childcare whereas male parents spent 2 hours 19 minutes. Therefore, female parents spent more time in childcare activities than males, with greater opportunity to promote literacy skills (Statistics, 2020-21).

The Australian Early Development Census (Census, 2018) measures five aspects of early childhood development such as physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based) and communication skills and general knowledge. All aspects consist of three descriptors. These are: children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk, and developmentally vulnerable. In relation to language and cognitive skills, children who are developmentally on track should be able to read and write simple sentences and

complex words, count, and identify numbers. The children who are developmentally at risk are the children who can only identify some letters and associate sounds to some letters, are aware of rhyming words and may not have mastered reading and writing simple words and sentences. The children who are unable to read and write simple words, are unable to associate sounds to letters and are uninterested in trying to read, write and count are considered as developmentally vulnerable children.

Australian Early Development Census 2021 data relate to the level of vulnerability in the domain of language and cognitive skills (school based), and were reported as 6.6% in the year 2018, while it was 6.5% in 2015. In addition, there was a decrease in the number of children on track in all five domains in 2021 compared to the number in 2018.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 revealed that 80% of students in Australia achieved minimal reading proficiency (i.e., Level 2) or above, with 13% of students performing at the top level. Further, PISA 2018 reported that reading proficiency in Australia was like the rates reported in the year 2015. However, PISA 2018 reported that the mean performance in reading has been declining gradually since PISA 2000. Further, PISA 2018 discovered that the students from socio-economically advantaged families outperformed students from disadvantaged families by 89 points (OECD, 2021).

Overall, PISA 2018 reported that girls significantly exceeded boys in reading across all the participating countries. In addition, 17% of students from immigrant families belonged to the top quarter of reading performance in 2018 on average across all participating countries, and 29% of immigrant students in Australia performed at that level. Reading performance and the time spent using digital devices indicated a positive relationship in Australia, Denmark, Korea, New Zealand, and the United States.

The National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are conducted across Australia for students in the school Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to assess reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy. NAPLAN National Report 2022 revealed that students in Years 3 and 5 have exhibited a steady upward trend in reading since 2008 and the results for spelling indicated a steady upward trend for Years 3, 5 and 7 since 2008. Moreover, grammar and punctuation results were stable in all years (Australian National Assessment Program, 2022).

In addition, non-indigenous students demonstrated a steady improvement in Year 3 grammar and punctuation. Interestingly, their results in Year 7 numeracy indicated a positive steady trend when considering results since 2008. The students with Language background other than English (LBOTE) exhibited a steady positive trend for reading in Years 7 and 9 since 2008. In addition, LBOTE students from Years 3, 5 and 7 exhibited a steady positive trend for grammar and punctuation. Interestingly, students who only speak English at home indicated no change in Years 7 and 9 in spelling since 2008.

Having said that, when comparing NAPLAN test results in the years 2022 with the year 2021, Year 9 students indicated a decline in spelling at the national level and Year 5 students who speak only English at home indicated a decline in grammar and punctuation. The percentage of Year 9 boys achieving the National Minimum Standard (NMS) in reading dropped to its lowest level, below 90%. That is, 13.5 % of Year 9 boys had not achieved the NMS in reading in year 2022 compared to 8.5% in year 2008. In conclusion, there were many students who were unable to attain the basic level in reading in Year 9, being only a couple of years prior to leaving the school system.

NMS in reading for Year 9 students is considered as the ability to infer the main idea in more complex texts and to link the ideas throughout the text. While NMS for Year 3 students for reading is considered as the ability to make meaning from short texts such as stories and simple reports with some visual support in those short texts. Students are expected to make connections between direct information and between text and pictures (Australian National Assessment Program, 2022). At each of these year levels, the skill of decoding text accurately and efficiently is assumed.

Distinctly, the role of foundational skills in learning to read is pivotal and intertwined with other skills such as spelling, writing and numeracy. The New South Wales adaption of the Australian curriculum adopted recommended reforms for English and Mathematics syllabuses for Kindergarten to Year 2. The new curriculum emphasised the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy skills to develop competencies in oral language, reading, writing and mathematics. The areas of focus in the new syllabus for Kindergarten to Year 2 consists of oral language and communication, vocabulary, phonological awareness, print conventions, phonic knowledge, reading fluency, reading comprehension, creating written texts, spelling,

handwriting, and understanding and responding to literature (NSW Education Standard Authority, 2021).

The foci of the K-2 curriculum, and NAPLAN across year levels, requires students to have acquired two core sets of knowledge. Linguistic knowledge consists of phonological, syntactic, and semantic knowledges, while language comprehension includes background knowledge and inferencing skills. Similarly, letter knowledge and phonemic awareness feed into knowledge of the alphabetic principle. Both the alphabetic principle and concepts about print contribute to alphabetic coding skills leading to the higher knowledge set of word recognition. Both language comprehension and word recognition abilities are required to acquire reading comprehension, the main goal of reading. The Cognitive Foundations of Reading Acquisition proposed by Tunmer and Hoover (2019) comprises these two knowledge sets, and links strongly with the aims of shared book reading in the home and at school. The Cognitive Foundations of Reading Acquisition underpins the theoretical framework in this study.

Purpose of Study

Taken together, the above evidence highlights the importance of the home literacy environment, and parental involvement in facilitating a child's overall literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development. Indeed, the family engagement during a child's early learning could have a positive impact on the child's overall development (Rey-Guerra et al., 2022). The home environment and parental support can contribute strongly to the nation's outcomes in national testing (i.e., NAPLAN) and international comparisons (i.e., PISA). More importantly, it gives young people choices for their long-term development, while also contributing to their communities.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the parent-child engagement during daily activities to find out the diverse ways they engage with each other while participating in shared book reading activities. The analyses of the findings will be beneficial to identify current behaviours and pose insights into training needs for parents and carers to facilitate the total development of their children. Similarly, they will help identify how to engage with children in activities more effectively to enhance their skills and nurture their development. Some examples of common parent-child activities at home include pretend play, painting, singing, and reading. Inarguably, each activity contributes to

the development of a child. However, reading story books with children can directly influence the language and literacy development in children.

The purpose of this study was to explore the parent-child engagement during shared book reading in bilingual families. To date, most research studies on shared book reading have focussed on English, both in monolingual and bilingual families. While English is a language most often reported in the research to date, Sinhala is a language which is not frequently reported in the research literature. Sinhala is one of the official languages in Sri Lanka. The usage of Sinhala is predominantly limited to Sri Lanka, while those who have migrated to other countries only use Sinhala with their own family. Hence, Sinhala is a less known language in the world, and it is important to identify the ways to facilitate Sinhala learning and literacy among young generations living outside of Sri Lanka and often speaking English. Indeed, shared book reading is a well-known home literacy activity in facilitating children's language and literacy skills. Hence, exploring how parent-child engagement takes place during shared book reading in Sinhala and in English would enable greater understanding of the similarities and difference in various aspects such as reading strategies.

No studies have reported findings regarding shared book reading in Sinhala and English language. This study will be the first in addressing this gap. Further, print text is the most researched book type, despite the presence of digital technologies and environments around us. Taken together, this study used both print and digital texts in Sinhala and in English languages during shared book reading sessions to explore the parent-child engagement while exploring their attitudes and knowledge about shared book reading. The implications of this study will be beneficial in designing story books in print and in digital texts, training parents and teachers on strategies to support language and reading acquisition in children, as well as education policy development and curriculum reforms.

Thesis Structure

Following this introductory chapter this thesis follows a traditional form. Chapter Two will provide an in-depth review of the literature relating to shared book reading leading to the postulation of the study research questions, Chapter Three will outline the methodology for the study, followed by Chapter Four which provides an overview of the case study dyads. A cross case analysis will be provided in Chapter Five, and the thesis will conclude with a final Discussion chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This study explored the social practice of parent/s and one of their children reading together. This chapter will explore this practice, known in this study as shared book reading. The chapter will review the research surrounding shared book reading across several variables (e.g., home literacy, types of books). This work will then discuss the theoretical and conceptual perspectives that surround shared book reading in this study. In the final section of the chapter, early language development and learning to read, the importance of which was discussed in Chapter 1, will be outlined theoretically as will the implications of this to the practice of shared book reading.

Shared Book Reading (SBR)

Shared book reading consists of three elements: reading material and two (or more) participants. The participants interact with each other, read, and explore the same reading material at the same time. Taken together, shared book reading is considered a social practice (Nicholas & Paatsch, 2021; Strouse & Ganea, 2017). Shared book reading in the home is a type of parent-child engagement which facilitates oral language skills in children, while also orientating the child to the comprehension of text and skills of reading. Various terminologies are used in the literature when discussing shared book reading including terms such as *shared reading*, *shared picture book reading* and *shared interactive book reading* (Bergman Deitcher et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Ozturk & Hill, 2020).

Shared book reading can take place in different forms. Dialogic/interactive reading is one example, where a specific set of techniques such as asking open-ended questions are used to scaffold an interaction about the book between the adult and child (Menotti et al., 2020). In addition, specific language skills such as grammar and vocabulary can be targeted via shared book reading (Noble et al., 2018). Simultaneously, the book itself can be used as a tool to teach language skills to a child explicitly or implicitly.

In general, shared book reading is beneficial in creating opportunities to enhance literacy skills, including the decoding of print, understanding the structure of a story, developing expressive language skills, and learning new vocabulary (

Cárdenas et al., 2020; Dowdall et al., 2019).

More recently, it has been revealed that shared book reading is a meaningful context to provide a strong contribution to mathematics learning (Green & Towson, 2020). However, shared book reading does not include activities such as telling a story without a book, recalling past events, talking about the future, or talking out of context (Noble et al., 2020; Noble et al., 2019).

Shared Book Reading Strategies

In general, it is important to know how to apply effective techniques and strategies in an activity to get the best out of it. Şimşek and Işıkoğlu Erdoğan (2021) aimed to explore the effectiveness of three different shared reading techniques including dialogic, digital, and traditional reading, on the language development of 56 children in Turkey, aged 48 to 66 months. The study was designed as a convergent parallel mixed method research consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design in the quantitative phase while the qualitative phase included video recorded data which were later analysed using content analysis techniques. The results revealed that the expressive language skills in children could be developed through reading regardless of the different reading techniques, such as traditional reading, digital reading, and dialogic-reading techniques.

There is significant evidence that dialogic reading has a robust impact on language development in children including both receptive and expressive language skills (Pillinger & Vardy, 2022). It is postulated this occurs because of frequent language interactions which take place during dialogic reading. Whereas traditional reading and digital reading may have an impact only on the expressive language skills (Şimşek & Işıkoğlu Erdoğan, 2021). Therefore, it is important that parents and teachers are aware of the value of dialogic reading in developing children's both receptive and expressive language skills. The same study recommended that parents or teachers use adult guided reading techniques to facilitate verbal interaction among children during digital reading and traditional reading.

Saracho (2017) highlighted the need for family members to learn storybook reading strategies. The study explained that children were provided the opportunity to identify the structure of the story, language, and the reading behaviour through shared book reading. Similarly, the adult in the shared book reading session engaged in a

conversation with the child before reading the book, during and after reading. Consequently, shared book reading facilitated language and literacy development enabling children to become successful in school-based literacy instruction and reading achievement (Saracho, 2017).

The importance of frequent story book reading was emphasised in a study by Patel et al. (2021) which examined the parent-child interactions during story book reading. The study found that both parents and children influenced each other's non-immediate talk or the talk beyond the immediate story content. Therefore, the parental knowledge on the importance of scaffolding and the effective application of scaffolding could be identified as important factors. Notably, the parental knowledge and behaviour during shared book reading could impact the child's engagement in the shared book reading session. When, for example, the parents engaged in more immediate talk (i.e., talking about the immediate story content), and non-immediate talk, that contributed to the children that have higher levels of engagement. The parent-child relationship and socio-emotional environment during the shared book reading session were influential factors for a quality shared book reading session (Patel et al., 2020).

Dialogic reading is considered as an easy-to-implement interactive shared book reading intervention for parents and teachers. Undoubtedly, dialogic reading is considered as having a positive impact on the language and literacy development of young children. Pillinger and Vardy (2022), for example, conducted a systematic review of the literature on the impact of dialogic reading on literacy, non-literacy, social-emotional and cognitive outcomes of children under 10 years old. The systematic review emphasised the need to consider using dialogic reading to enhance parental engagement in shared book reading, as dialogic reading is a well-structured approach which supports less confident parents to initiate and engage in shared book reading (Pillinger & Vardy, 2022). It also suggested dialogic reading as an effective intervention to develop language, literacy, social and emotional skills in children younger than 5 years. The frequent exposure to books at home leads to the language development of children, and hence contributes to longer-term literacy development.

Akemoglu et al. (2022) explored parent implemented shared book reading interventions via telepractice using the internet-based Parent-implemented Communication Strategies-Storybook (i-PiCSS). The intervention was designed to train and coach three mothers in southern United States of America to use evidenced

based naturalistic communication teaching strategies such as modelling, mand-model, and time delay along with the reading techniques. Single-case, multiple-baseline design across behaviours such as reading techniques and naturalistic communication teaching strategies were used to assess the outcome of the training. The study consisted of three phases including baseline, coaching and maintenance. The findings of the study revealed that the parents learned to apply the reading techniques and naturalistic communication teaching strategies with confidence because of the training they received via Zoom, and it led to enhance the communicative behaviours of children in the study. The study highlighted the need to continue parental coaching until they become competent and feel confident to apply the strategies. Parent's self-reflection identified the importance of providing feedback, and teaching and supporting parents to apply the reading strategies to enhance children's participation during shared book reading (Akemoglu et al., 2022). Notably, providing parents with supportive material such as a checklist of important features of reading. In addition, the importance of incorporating a partial in-person or full tele-practice service delivery model in the early intervention systems could cater to families at a wider level as it facilitates access to wider services. The use of tele-practice in the early intervention system can be identified as feasible and beneficial (Akemoglu et al., 2022). However, the study involved only three dyads with substantial support from the researchers.

Parents of children aged 12 to 36 months old were included in a book-sharing intervention to evaluate the "acceptability/usability and preliminary efficacy of the intervention using a randomized control trial" (Salley et al., 2022). The randomised control trial study comprised 8 weeks book-sharing intervention, with an equivalent wait list control. The book-sharing skills of 30 parents (n=15 intervention; n=15 wait list control) were assessed using quantitative measures (i.e., questionnaire, coded video observations) at baseline, post-intervention, and 2-month follow-up. The findings of the study indicated that parents considered the intervention helpful and satisfactory. The parents who received the intervention exhibited a significant improvement in book sharing strategies compared to those who did not at post-intervention and 2-month follow-up. The study concluded by shedding some light on the beneficial role played by a brief, low intensity and targeted intervention in developing book-sharing with infants and toddlers (Salley et al., 2022). Even a small add on in parental knowledge, confidence and child engagement were considered to accelerate more positive book-sharing strategies and home literacy practices. The need for providing direct

instruction in shared reading skills to parents was recommended effective in developing parents' book sharing strategies with very young children (Salley et al., 2022). Book sharing skills which benefited the most from the intervention were naming, asking questions, linking, and elaborating. It was suggested to consider modifications to support parents in acquiring the skills they need to apply strategies such as pointing, naming, pausing to fill-in-the-blank and talking about acting out actions and feelings during shared book reading (Salley et al., 2022).

Overall, the need to provide knowledge and training for parents with foundational skills might assist them in applying shared book reading strategies to align with the linguistic and cognitive skills of the child (Salley et al., 2022). In sum, the findings and recommendations of these studies highlighted the importance of the parental training in foundational shared book reading skills required to facilitate language comprehension, communication and word recognition skills which contribute to reading comprehension.

Weadman et al. (2022) investigated the oral language and emergent literacy strategies used by Australian early childhood teachers during shared book reading. They found that the early childhood teachers frequently used comments on the story or imitated children's utterances in book related talk. Early childhood teachers asked more closed questions during shared book reading than open questions and mostly used para-linguistic features and non-verbal features such as prosody and volume to maintain the children's engagement in the shared book reading sessions. However, they used few prompts and explicit vocabulary strategies, and the teachers did not frequently expand the children's utterances. The early childhood teachers rarely used strategies to focus on children's print knowledge or phonological awareness. These early childhood teachers frequently used extratextual dialogue, however, the researchers did not observe targeting techniques for oral language and literacy development. Weadman et al. (2022) concluded there was a presence of missed opportunities for children to obtain benefits from the shared book reading session.

Six early childhood teachers from Queensland's long day care centres, early learning centres, pre-schools and kindergarten were included in a pilot study which examined shared book reading in early childhood education to support young children's literacy development along with phonics and phonological awareness (Campbell, S., 2021). The study administered the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation* (Pre-K) tool and found there was limited evidence of picture

book reading across settings. Notably, there was an absence of shared book reading activities in some early childhood settings. On the other hand, in some settings the books for shared reading were selected according to the length of the story or with a focus on phonics. The study emphasised the capability of shared reading of quality children's literature in developing the reading strategies including phonics in addition to guiding children's positive attitudes towards reading (Campbell, 2021). The reviewed studies involved trained practitioners providing guidance to parents in sharing reading activities in clinics; in others teachers provided shared reading experiences within pre-school environments.

Shared book reading provides benefits to young people. The strategies highlighted the importance of the adult in this social practice. Shared book reading strategies were shown to be promoted through low intensity approaches, enhanced further through ongoing low-cost supports. The benefits to young people are across various aspects such as social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive (Meredith & Catherine, 2020; Skerrett, 2020). Hence, the literature discussed the notion of shared book reading in relation to various social and cognitive theories.

Cultural Influences on the Home Literacy Environment

The traditions of a culture can be passed on to the younger generations through family literacy practices in the dominant language of a family. For instance, shared book reading is an effective activity in passing on the cultural traditions and knowledge of the world and can be imparted to youngsters (Miller & Khatib, 2023). In some cultures, especially in Asian countries, children live with extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles). On the other hand, in the West children live in nuclear families which may consist of parents and siblings only.

When the children live with their senior generations there is increased possibility for them to experience a language-rich and stimulating environment. Shared book reading as a home literacy activity displays variations in different cultures in aspects such as the parental attitudes and how parents engage in shared book reading. In Hong-Kong, shared book reading is accepted as an essential part of responsible parenting (Wing-Yin Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003). Different reading styles can be seen across cultures and among immigrant families (Kucirkova & Grøver, 2022). For example, Caucasian mothers tend to ask more questions but engage in less spontaneous talk than African American mothers (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994).

In sum, culture can be acknowledged as an influential factor in the home literacy environment including home literacy activities and the way they are conducted.

Shared Book Reading and Theoretical Perspectives

Scholars (Grolig, 2020; Leon & Payler, 2021; Rubegni et al., 2020) have explored shared book reading in relation to various cognitive and social theories. Two such theories are the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), and systemic functional linguistic theory (Schwarz & Hamman-Ortiz, 2020). These theories will be discussed in the following section, and the contributions they make to the area of shared book reading will be highlighted.

Shared Book Reading and Sociological Theories

Social cultural theory (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1981) posited that the social interaction in social contexts is the key element which influences learning and cognitive development. Language is considered a psychological cultural device which facilitates humans to internalise the world around them. These cultural devices can be either physical or psychological and they mediate learning, thinking and human actions. The mediated thinking and mediated actions lead humans to externalise the world around them by internalisation (Cuocci & Arndt, 2020). Shared book reading is an ideal example in which the interaction of two individuals takes place and they experience the mediated learning, thinking and actions during a shared book reading session.

Having said that, the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory focusses on social semiotics (Halliday & Hasan, 1989) consisting of making meaning, learning and social change. It accepts that language consists of meaning (semantic), speech sounds (phonology) and wording. In addition, the theory acknowledges grammar as a meaning making resource which facilitates situational and cultural contexts. Moreover, the theory accepts that semiotic systems construct and evolve in situation and cultural contexts.

The Systemic Functional Linguistic theory emphasises the importance of analysing the immediate context to understand the meaning making systems (Accurso & Gebhard, 2021). However, from a sociological point of view, Systemic Functional Linguistic theory has two limitations, the lack of diversity and disharmony of development. In addition, Systemic Functional Linguistic theory adapts according to

the changes in the role of English language. The applied linguists believe that the principles of the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory are still in the process of formation because the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory needs to adjust to meet the diverse cultural needs beyond the western culture (Rubtcova & Pavenkov, 2016).

In comparison with the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory, the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020) focusses on the cognitive requirements of reading. The framework accommodates aspects for learning to read, reading development and the retention of reading skills in other skills. Even though the Cognitive Foundations Framework mainly focusses on reading in English language it also allows the framework to be adapted to understand reading in any phonologically based orthography. As a result, Hoover and Tunmer (2020) introduced the Generalised Cognitive Foundations Framework. In addition, the framework offers a comprehensive knowledge to reading professionals as to how they could effectively support all children who are learning to read (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020).

Shared Book Reading and Cognitive Theories

There is a need to examine the benefits of shared book reading across a common theoretical framework. A theoretical framework provides “a set of statements about the relationship(s) between two or more concepts or constructs” (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010, p. 28). The use of a theoretical framework for this study was considered with a focus on the parent-child engagement, knowledge, and skills in language and reading development in the early childhood.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the Generalised Cognitive Foundations Framework (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). It is acknowledged that other theories could have been considered for adoption in this study. The sociocultural theory, for example, posits that adult and child interactions and engagement are fundamental to a child’s general development (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). The dialogic reading strategy, for example, is a common feature of shared book reading that supports adult child engagement. Dialogic pedagogy is a method used in literacy classes in Australian primary schools and is based on the systemic functional linguistic theory posed by Halliday (Simpson, 2016; Thwaite et al., 2020).

While acknowledging other theories of language and literacy development that impact reading and language acquisition, this current study applied the generalised cognitive foundation framework (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). Moreover, the framework

underpins research that is inclusive of early readers who have trouble in acquiring early skills due to disability or impairment.

A key feature of the cognitive model is oral language, and its interplay with other features of becoming a skilled reader (e.g., meaning making, linguistic knowledge, alphabetic code knowledge). Since this study focussed on the engagement within parent-child dyads during shared book reading in phonologically based languages such as English and Sinhala, the generalised cognitive foundation framework was the most appropriate to be used as the theoretical framework for this study. The following section will discuss in more detail the theoretical framework adopted.

Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of Reading (SVR) (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) has been acknowledged in the academic literature as a pioneering theory in describing how reading comprehension is acquired (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020; Nation, 2019). The SVR focusses on three main components: decoding, linguistic comprehension and reading comprehension. It defines decoding as the overt “sounding out” of a word (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). It is also called phonological decoding or alphabetic decoding, the ability of identifying the printed words quickly and accurately to gain access to the suitable word meanings stored in the internal mental lexicon (Castles et al., 2018) . However, this definition of decoding is inappropriate for those who are in the beginning phase of learning to read as their word recognition system is still developing and they are yet to become fluent and accurate. Further, skilled reading comprehension requires skills and knowledge beyond a highly refined word recognition system.

Linguistic comprehension is “the ability to take lexical information (i.e., semantic information at the word level) and derive sentence and discourse interpretations” (Hoover & Gough, 1990, p. 131). It is the reader’s ability to extract and build meaning from discourse which is represented in the speech form. Strong and rich linguistic knowledge is an important part of learning to read. A child with rich, deep, and extensive linguist comprehension skills is often in a better place for learning to read than a child with limited knowledge.

Reading comprehension, therefore, is the ability to understand the word in print, by extracting and constructing the meaning from the discourse represented in the print form (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Reading comprehension is not an isolated process as it occurs in collaboration and coordination with the other two components - decoding

and linguistic comprehension. It is essential, however, that these two components function accurately and proficiently together in an interactive manner.

Rapid and efficient decoding also plays a key role in reading comprehension. Children learning to read spend cognitive energy and time on decoding which can impact cognitive skills, especially short-term memory (Coch, 2021). This negative impact on short term memory can result in difficulties in expanding linguistic comprehension and reading comprehension. It is postulated that purposeful decoding restricts short term memory and the available cognitive energy to understanding the text (Coch, 2021). Further, students may have trouble in remembering what they have read in the text.

The integration of the meaning of the text which the reader has decoded, and the meaning of the subsequent text are required to achieve overall reading comprehension of a text. However, the readers who decode each word phonetically experience a lack in achieving overall reading comprehension regardless of their accurate decoding skills. Short-term memory is one of the cognitive resources humans possess. However, if the process of decoding consumes a cognitive resource at a considerable level, the available cognitive resources to acquire reading comprehension become fewer, resulting in a struggle to achieve reading comprehension (Follmer, 2018; Li & Clariana, 2019).

Horowitz-Kraus and Hutton (2015) examined the influence of learning to read on a child's brain, especially from emergent literacy to developed reading skills. Executive functions such as early literacy and cognitive control are identified as important elements in developing the skill of reading. The study by Horowitz-Kraus and Hutton (2015) concluded that a child with typical development should be exposed to dialogic reading as it facilitates the parent-child engagement to a maximum level by encouraging the child to apply and practise various language and executive function skills. Similarly, the authors explained the possibility of some young children experiencing a lack of integration among the neural circuits which support language, reading and developing executive function networks, resulting in children experiencing difficulties in acquiring early reading and language skills.

Horowitz-Kraus and Hutton (2015) emphasised that frequent exposure to written material and storytelling facilitates the key elements that are required for the development of reading and language skills. They also highlighted that parents and educators need to consider daily practice that is inclusive of dialogic reading, shared

book reading and storytelling with children to facilitate their literacy development. In undertaking this 'practice' it is important that is undertaken in a playful and child-centred manner with purposeful guidance and structure.

The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990) proposes that both decoding (D) and linguistic comprehension (C) hold equal responsibility for resulting reading comprehension (R). The relationship between each component can be represented as follows: $R = D \times C$. This representation makes it clear that one element (i.e., decoding, or linguistic comprehension) does not hold a 'majority holding' over the other. They both need to develop and be responsive to each other in supporting the development of a skilled reader.

Therefore, according to the Simple View of Reading equation, if an individual has difficulty identifying the words of the text or understanding the language being read or difficulties in both, it can lead to experiencing difficulties in reading comprehension. In contrast, if an individual has advanced skills in understanding both the words of text and the language being read, and proficiency in decoding text, they are more likely to experience a high skill in reading comprehension (Cervetti & Wright, 2020; Ehri, 2020; Eskenazi & Nix, 2020; Oakhill, 2020; Silawi et al., 2020; Snowling et al., 2020; Stainthorp, 2021).

As humans, we create a mental model of what we are reading by producing a rich interpretation of the text which we read or hear while going beyond the boundaries of the literal sense of the words and considering all verbal and non-verbal contexts. The text facilitates the reader to extract the relevant information including the meanings of words, syntactic rules, and background knowledge. The extracted information can be used to make connections and to produce intended meaning or meanings (Burnett & Merchant, 2020; Chowdhary, 2020).

When considering the development of reading, there must be an underlying factor in relation to language which feeds into both decoding and linguistic comprehension. Further, an individual must have reading experiences to acquire reading comprehension. According to the Mathew Effect (Stanovich, 1986) the initial advantage moves towards further advantage, or the initial disadvantage moves to further disadvantage over time, leading to a wider gap between those who have more and those who have less (Rigney, 2010). Further, those who are exposed to language and gain more reading experiences, become fluent in both reading and spoken language skills compared to those who lack those experiences (Caglar-Ryeng et al.,

2020; Farquharson & Babeu, 2020; Guevara et al., 2020; Serratrice & De Cat, 2020). Moreover, those who are equipped with more reading and language experiences can become expert readers while others with less reading and language experiences often exhibit difficulties in reading and speaking (Acha et al., 2020; Kühhirt & Klein, 2020; Walker et al., 2020). Therefore, the language and literacy stimulation in the formative years has a strong impact on learning to read, influencing linguistic comprehension directly and consequently decoding. Shared book reading provides the chance to promote linguistic comprehension, as well as skills of decoding and reading comprehension. Shared book reading in the home can provide the same support in becoming fully and functionally literate.

According to the SVR (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990), primary school aged children do not acquire reading skills in a similar manner and in a similar rate. They exhibit different levels of progress during the process of reading development. The role of oral language is critical to the development of reading comprehension (Lervåg et al., 2018). Shared book reading within the home can have a powerful impact on the early and vital development of linguistic comprehension skills (e.g., use of language, vocabulary) as well as decoding and reading comprehension skills.

The Simple View of Reading has not been without its critics. One line of criticism is the focus on the internal factors of the reader, and the limited emphasis on the variations within the text being read. The complexity of the text, genre, and metrics of cohesion can have an impact on the ease and difficulty experienced in comprehending a text. Another line of concern is how the SVR addresses the individualised nature of learning to read, with children bringing a range of different background variables to the learning context. In response to these concerns, an expanded view of the SVR was posed known as the Complete View of Reading (Catts, 2018; Snow, 2018).

Children acquire skills at their own pace. Therefore, different strategies need to be in place when considering the activities on learning to read, which should be tailored to cater to the functioning level of everyone. In the literature this has been referred to as the “Goldilocks condition”, meaning that it should be exactly right to the needs of the individual, without being too much or not enough (Capps, 2020, p. 466).

The goal of reading is to obtain reading comprehension. However, this does not take place in isolation and there are two critical mechanisms namely, the decoding and language comprehension which should occur successfully in a timely manner to

achieve accuracy and proficiency in reading comprehension (Chiu & Language Reading Res., 2018).

Simply, decoding is the efficient word recognition in print (Mano & Guerin, 2018). The ability to take lexical information at the word level and to form sentences and to interpret discourses, is regarded as linguistic/language comprehension/listening comprehension (Florit et al., 2020). Having said that, the importance of focussing not only on phonological knowledge, but also on morphological knowledge and vocabulary knowledge has been suggested when working on children's reading skills (Kargiotidis et al., 2022). Notably, the contribution of a developed vocabulary on a child's reading comprehension was acknowledged in the same study (Kargiotidis et al., 2022).

In a recent study (Taboada Barber et al., 2020) indicated the need to explore the higher-order cognitive strategies such as inference making, as some individuals have poor reading comprehension but adequate word recognition. In a recent investigation Foorman et al., (2018) examined the unique and common effects of decoding and language factors that explain variance in reading comprehension in Grades 1-10 students in Florida, United States of America. The researchers reported the measures of decoding, namely phonological awareness and decoding fluency. The language measures included listening comprehension, vocabulary, and syntax. Since reading comprehension involves comprehension of written language which consists of a range of linguistic and cognitive skills, Foorman et al. (2018) mentioned the need to examine how the decoding factors and linguistic comprehension factors such as phonemes, morphemes and words influence reading comprehension. The results were discussed in the context of an expanded interpretation of the simple view of reading. The investigators used confirmatory factor analysis and structured equation modelling to analyse data. The researchers concluded by emphasising that for students to learn to read with understanding, they should be provided with literacy instructions that integrate the fundamental skills needed for developing word knowledge and text discourse from the early grades – or earlier.

Orthographic Systems of English and Sinhala Languages

English language comprises an alphabetic orthography and the learner needs to learn the alphabetic principle and the idea of association between letters/groups of letters with their respective phonemes in words. When reading in English, the use of the alphabetic sound-symbol system is the most reliable method to read and identify

the words (i.e., decoding). It is essential to acquire the skills in learning how the alphabet represents sounds and how letters and sounds are connected by adhering to grammatical rules to represent words which can be understood. Therefore, the acquisition of skills of phonological awareness, letter-sound mapping and decoding are important in learning to read in English. However, the comprehension of words and texts also assists an individual to identify words (Goldenberg, 2020; Gredler, 2002).

Sinhala language consists of akshara symbols which represent the phonological units. Further, they also represent vowels and consonants just like in an alphabetic system. However, akshara cannot be named as an alphabetic system since akshara do not represent phonemes. In addition, akshara are arranged to represent accent and codes positioned around a root consonant which makes the 'alphabet'. The languages written with akshara have a CVCV (Consonant+ Vowel+ Consonant+ Vowel) word structure which facilitates word reading.

The Sinhala akshara can be described as a symbol block which is different from forming syllables from discrete letters in alphabetic languages. The consonants and vowels in Sinhala language do not receive equal treatment. Sinhala phonology consists of 40 consonant segments and 20 vowel sounds. A primary consonant symbol functions as the base with the subsequent sounds in the symbol block written in the secondary form and connected to the base. This connection to the base consonant can occur on any side of the base consonant.

Sinhala language is written from left to right. The fundamental orthographic unit is an akshara which represents either a vowel or a consonant-vowel sequence. Further, each akshara has its own unique sound. The correspondence between akshara and phonology is highly regular in Sinhala language. Therefore, reading in Sinhala is noticeably clear or transparent. In general, children's story books consist of a mixture of all types of akshara. Children who get the experience of reading frequently, get exposed to a broader akshara set which could facilitate their reading skills. Despite controlling for variables such as gender, grade and phonological processing skills at syllable and phoneme levels, a significant correlation has been identified between the akshara knowledge, and the time spent on reading at home (Wijaythilake et al., 2019).

Learning to read in akshara orthographies builds on the same cognitive-linguistic processes which are required for learning to read in alphabetic orthographies (Nag,

2017). However, extra processes, such as visual processes, are also required in learning to read in akshara orthography. In addition, it is important to be able to identify a syllable against a phoneme in akshara orthographies compared to alphabetic orthographies (Nag, 2017).

It is evident in a study by Nakamura et al. (2019) that there is an association of phonological awareness, decoding and oral vocabulary knowledge with spelling skills irrespective of the first language (L1) and second language (L2). Therefore, taking those aspects into consideration during the early stages of learning to spell in an akshara language or in an alphabetic language is essential. Nakamura et al. (2019) revealed that the sharing of crosslinguistic resources occurs even in akshara-English spelling biliteracy acquisition. The first language (L1) is also named as the mother tongue, since it is the language that a child uses at home for communication and both terms, first language and mother tongue are used interchangeably (UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific [1065], 2019; Zhao & Huo).

A 5-year longitudinal study by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) examined the impact of parental involvement in children's reading development. They examined the relationships between the early home literacy experiences, language comprehension and early literacy skills development and their impact on reading development. Notably, exposing to books linked to vocabulary development and language comprehension which then contributed to the children's reading achievement in grade 3. The parental involvement in teaching reading and writing words to their children was associated with early literacy skill development. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) revealed that children's reading skills at the end of Grade 1 directly estimated their early literacy skills, and indirectly by the end of Grade 3. Similarly, children's word reading in Grade 1 estimated the reading comprehension in Grade 3. Taken together, early literacy experiences contributed to children becoming fluent readers (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Hence, shared book reading by parents is a means of enriching children's language comprehension and vocabulary development. In sum, both formal and informal literacy instructions contribute to children's reading development.

If we are going to understand reading in both English and Sinhala languages, we must find a theory which can be applied to both writing systems. The Simple View of Reading focusses primarily on reading in English language which has an alphabetic system. The Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) has its roots

in the Simple View of Reading and has accommodated and unpacked the cognitive components which are needed for decoding and language comprehension (e.g., phonological awareness, vocabulary), in turn impacting reading comprehension. Further, it focusses on reading in languages which have a phonologically based writing system. The features of phonologically based writing systems include an alphabetic system (e.g., English) and syllabaries (e.g., Sinhala) (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2020). The alphabetic system is represented by phonemes while a syllabaries system is represented by syllables.

The Cognitive Foundations Framework (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020) was adopted as the theory for this study. The Cognitive Foundations Framework represents both the Cognitive Foundations of Reading, and the Cognitive Foundations of Reading Acquisition (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). It is noted that a person who has learned initially to read in an alphabetic language, can easily master the orthographic principle and phonological awareness skills in learning to read in a second language with a phonologically based writing system (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). The domains which facilitate the language comprehension are common to any language. However, the skills that are needed for word recognition in learning to read in a phonologically based writing system consists of different orthographic characteristics. The Cognitive Foundations Framework posed by Hoover and Tunmer (2020) caters to those differences and provides the opportunity to use the framework for learning to read in a first language and in a second language. These two languages could be alphabetic or a language with a phonologically based writing system. In conclusion, the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study is the Cognitive Foundations Framework.

Hoover and Tunmer (2020) described how the Cognitive Foundations Framework differentiates from other reading frameworks such as the Reading Pyramid, Modified Cognitive Model, Component Model of Reading, and Model of Basic Early Literacy Skills. According to Hoover and Tunmer (2020) the reason for that differentiation is that the Cognitive Foundations Framework represents evidence-based elements and their relationships with each other. Thus, the framework guides those who work in developing children's reading skills to obtain a stronger understanding about both reading and reading development. This leads to supporting learners' use of appropriate resources and tools. Hoover and Tunmer (2020) highlighted that the Cognitive Foundations Framework is created to support reading

professionals to differentiate and produce specific connections among teaching and learning in reading.

Overall, the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) consists of the elements in the linguistic comprehension and orthographic principle. Hence, the practice of shared book reading as an early literacy activity can tap each of the core elements such as phonological knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and semantic knowledge and orthographic units leading towards a progress in acquiring reading comprehension.

Cognitive Foundations Framework

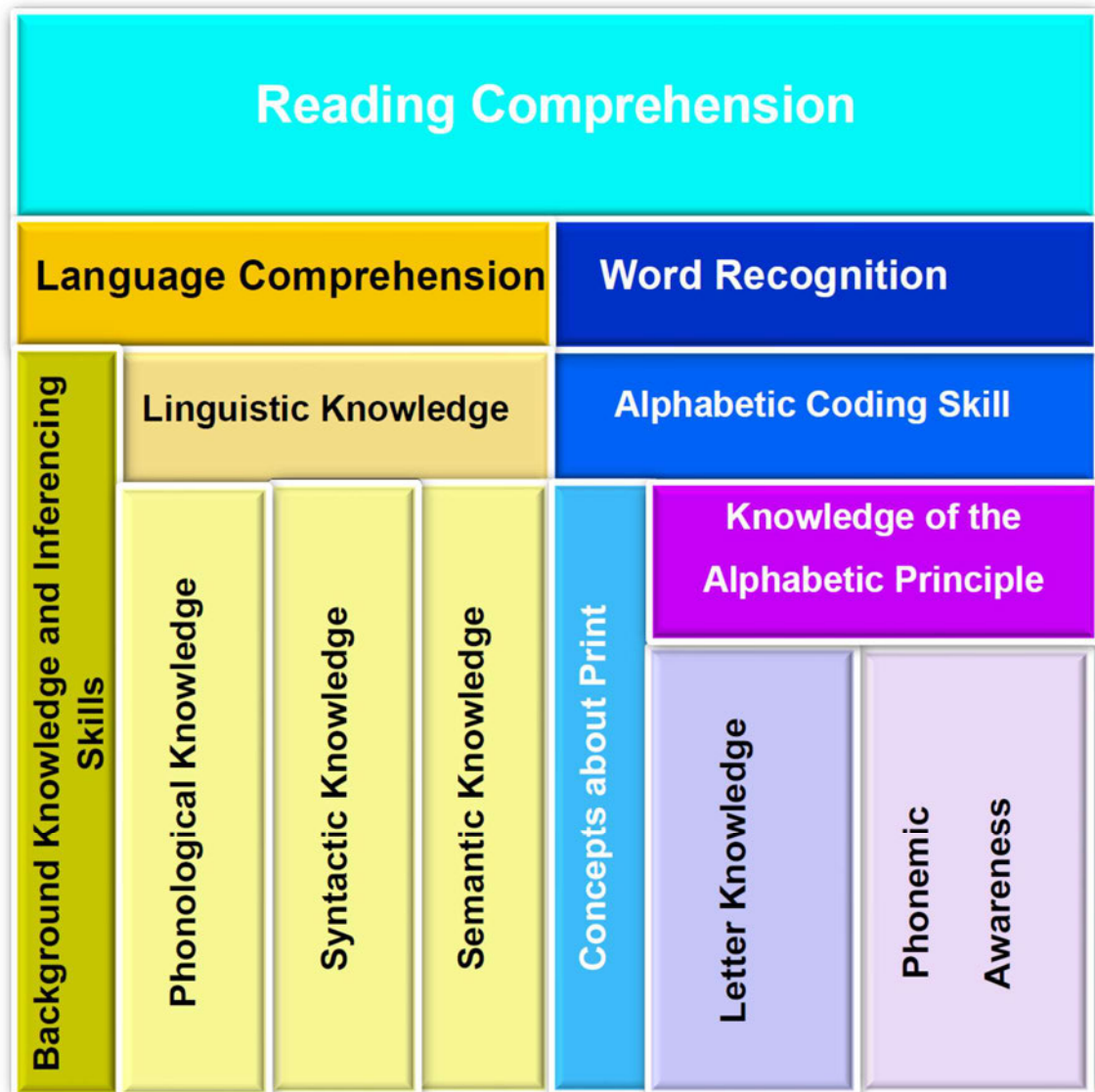
Most recently, the literature has emphasised the expansion of the previously used theoretical concepts (Nation, 2019; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). This work has examined the cognitive foundations of learning to read, with a specific focus on how an inclusive model can account for children with a range of skills in learning to read and as skilled readers (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). There are five key components which are important to improve reading, which need to be considered in constructing a reading curriculum. Those five components or big ideas include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Hempenstall, 2016).

The SVR and Complete View of Reading have been constructed within the research on learning to read in English which has an alphabetic writing system. The theoretical framework needs to be able to accommodate reading in other languages (e.g., Sinhala). The Cognitive Foundations Framework (see Figure 2-1) represents capacities which are required for learning to read and achieving reading. It indicates the connection between the higher order cognitive capacities and the lower order cognitive capacities according to a hierarchy. The Cognitive Foundations Framework is based on reading in English; however, it has been generalised to accommodate reading in other non-English phonologically based systems. As a result, the Generalized Cognitive Foundations Framework was formulated (see Figure 2-2).

As discussed earlier, Sinhala language has a writing system in akshara symbols which represent phonological units while English language has an alphabetic system which represent phonemes. Hence, the Generalized Cognitive Foundations Framework (GCFF) can be applied to explore reading in both English and Sinhala languages. Each of the elements within the Generalized Cognitive Foundation Framework will be outlined.

Figure 2-1

Cognitive Foundations Framework



Note. From “Summary of the Cognitive Foundations of Reading and Its Acquisition” by W.A.Hoover & W.E Tunmer, in R.M Joshi, *The Cognitive Foundations of Reading and Its Acquisition* (pg. 85), 2020, Switzerland; Springer Nature. Copyright 2020 by Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the goal of reading. It is about obtaining maximum academic and psycho-social outcomes from the meaning within connected text. Reading comprehension is also about unpacking and understanding the influencing factors within the words that make up the text (Gough Kenyon et al., 2018). Most importantly, reading comprehension is a result of the interaction between word, sentence, and text level processes. Moreover, it is about taking advantage of the interaction between the componential processes including higher order and lower order processes (Gruhn et al., 2020).

Language Comprehension

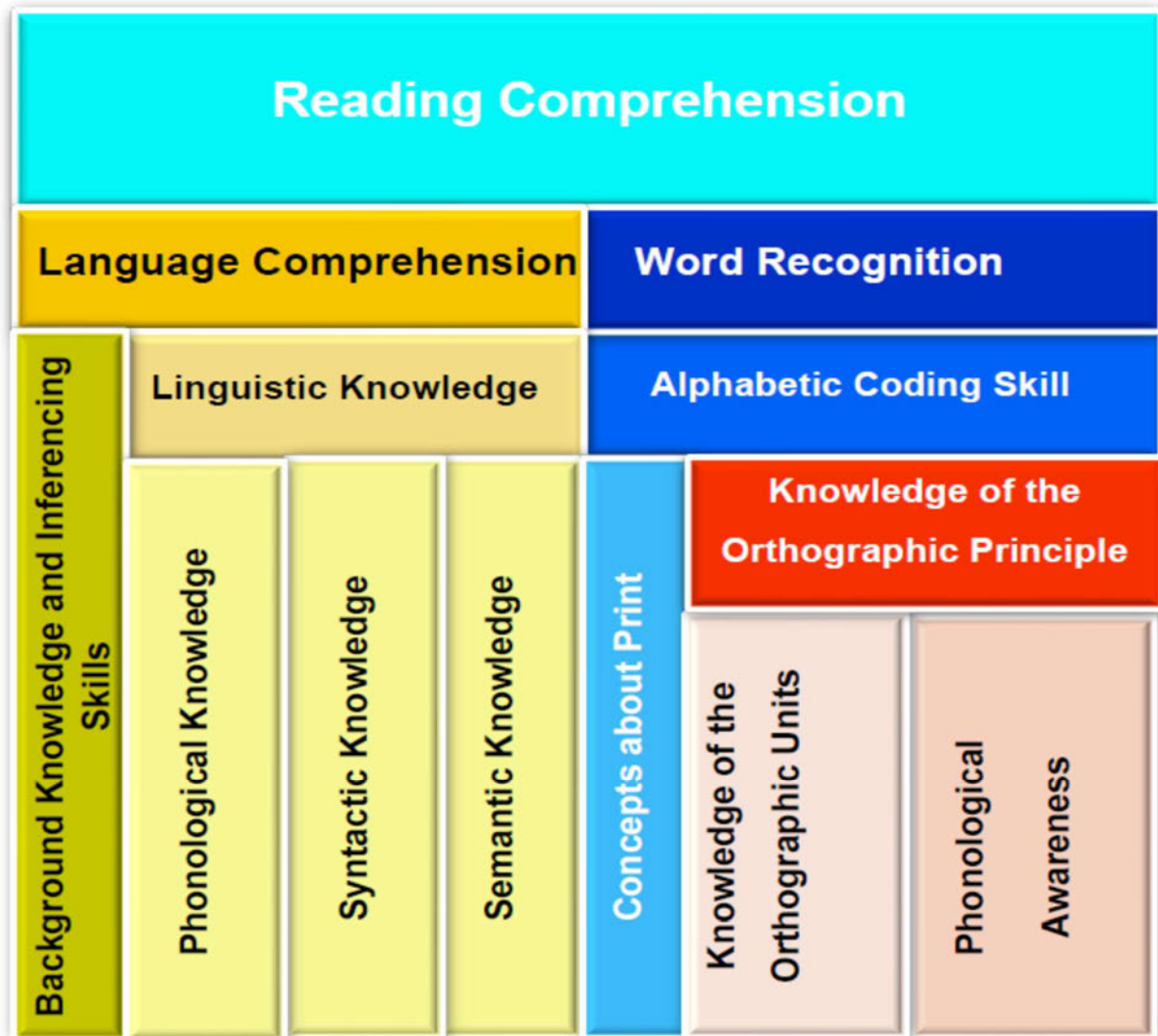
In the literature, language comprehension is also referred to as linguistic comprehension or listening comprehension (Hoover & Tunmer, 2018). Basically, language comprehension is about the skill of understanding the spoken language. It involves the ability of taking semantic information at the word level, deriving sentences, and interpreting the discourse within the spoken language. Similarly, reading comprehension entails the same abilities but it depends on the graphic based information coming through the eyes (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Nation, 2019).

Language comprehension can affect cognitive flexibility indirectly. Cognitive flexibility is defined as the ability to overcome the previously held beliefs or practices of an individual once the individual is presented with new scenarios and/or exposed to other's perspectives, therefore being able to change priorities and to be ready to approach a problem in multiple ways. This is a key factor in the reading comprehension of children (Chang, 2019).

Both language and reading comprehension consist of common elements in a language such as vocabulary, grammar, and inferencing skills. A recent study by Babayiğit et al. (2020) concluded that the development of reading skills in children beyond the primary school years is influenced by individual differences in both language comprehension skills and language expressive skills. Skilled reading comprehension occurs because of the integration of skills in both language comprehension and language expression. Therefore, robust skills in language comprehension and expressive skills play a pivotal role in providing effective reading comprehension skills.

Figure 2-2

Generalized Cognitive Foundations Framework



Note. From “Understanding Reading Across Writing Systems” by W.A.Hoover & W.E Tunmer, in R.M Joshi, *The Cognitive Foundations of Reading and Its Acquisition* (pg. 122), 2020, Switzerland; Springer Nature. Copyright 2020 by Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Importantly, decoding and language comprehension skills develop alongside each other. Language comprehension becomes more influential in the process of reading as children move through the elementary classes in school. Researchers have concluded that it is important to pay more attention to the ways to develop language

comprehension among diverse populations during the conversations (Silverman et al., 2021).

While facilitating the language development in children from an early stage in their lives (e.g., shared book reading in the home), a key factor for developing reading comprehension, broadening their content knowledge is also equally important. Having said that, building the language and knowledge together leads to a synergistic effect on linguistic/language comprehension, consequently influencing reading comprehension (Cabell & Hwang, 2020).

Linguistic Knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is an individual's unconscious knowledge about components of the language such as phonology, syntax, and semantics. Phonological knowledge is about speech sounds and their combinations while the knowledge about the grammatical structure of language is known as syntactic knowledge. The knowledge of semantics is the meaning of language at different word levels and how to use them in sentences and at the discourse level to produce meaning.

Background Knowledge and Inferencing Skills. Background knowledge and inferencing skills includes the knowledge of the relevant context, content, prior linguistic knowledge, and the ability to use that knowledge to go beyond the literal meaning and to extract logical conclusions (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). The alphabetic coding skill is also known as the phonological decoding skill which can be described as the acquisition of mapping letters and letter patterns onto phonological forms at the phonemic level. Kaefer (2018) examined the role of topic-related background knowledge in visual attention to illustrations and children's vocabulary learning during shared book reading. The study included 41 kindergarten students. The children undertook an assessment about a familiar topic; next they read a fictional story about a familiar topic or a fictional story about a new topic on an eye-tracking monitor. The results revealed that the children who had heard the familiar story oriented quickly to the illustration representing the new word, in comparison to children with lower background knowledge. As a result, the children had more possibility to learn the new word. Notably, Kaefer (2018) emphasised that background knowledge develops implicit learning during shared book reading by incorporating the strategy of guided attention to the named elements of the illustrations during shared book reading activity.

Word Recognition

Orthographic Coding Skills. Orthographic coding skills are the ability of mapping orthographic units with phonological forms of the language. The knowledge that the orthographic units can be used to represent the phonological units which underly the spoken words is referred to in the Generalized Cognitive Foundation Framework as the knowledge of orthographic principle. The ability to identify and manipulate the orthographic units used in print is a key part of the knowledge of the orthographic units.

Phonological Awareness. Phonological awareness can be described as the skill of conscious identification and manipulation of the phonological units which underly the spoken words (Nation & Castles, 2017; Stainthorp, 2020). Phonemic awareness is a higher order cognitive process and is often acquired in becoming a competent speaker. Phonemic awareness comprises three components including the phoneme, conscious awareness about the discrete phoneme unit, and the ability to manage the unit. The phonemes are linguistic units. In the process of managing the phonemes, the individual should be able to segment, hold, contrast, and mix in memory both the phonemes and the string of letters which represents them. Phonemic awareness is important to read a language which has an alphabetic writing system with letters with a relationship to phonemes in its spoken language (e.g., English) (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020).

Concepts About Print. Basic print concept consists of elements such as knowledge about the correspondence between the printed and spoken words, the link between linguistic meaning and printed text, the functions of punctuation marks and spacing of words, the arrangement of words on a page and in which direction the sentences should be written, for example, writing from left to write and how to turn pages. If a child learns these basic print concepts in the early stages in life, that will have a positive impact on broadening their abilities in making connections between orthography and phonology. One of the keyways of promoting these skills are through shared book reading. Skills are modelled, supported, and reinforced in a child-centred, playful manner.

Knowledge of Orthographic Units. The knowledge of the alphabetic principle includes the conscious awareness about the use of how letters and letter combinations represent the phonemes which underly the spoken words. It is about knowing that written words consist of a string of letters which has a structure which is also connected to the phonological structure of the spoken word. The ability to identify the shapes of the letters, their names, and to recognise the relationship of the graphic representation with their names and sounds is fundamental knowledge an individual must have for learning to read and write.

Benefits of Shared Book Reading

The benefits of shared book reading to overall literacy, and specifically learning to read, is well supported in the literature (Boyle et al., 2021; Dore et al., 2020; Dowdall et al., 2020; Fricke et al., 2013; Hamilton & Hayiou-Thomas, 2022; Kaderavek & Justice, 2002; Lorio et al., 2022; Sim et al., 2014). It is evident that shared book reading provides a positive and sometime accelerated development of language skills in children (Dowdall et al., 2020). Interestingly, shared book reading offers benefits to both first language users and second language learners (e.g., first language is English, but a second language is being learned). Moreover, it is evident that shared book reading offers extra benefits in addition to language development. It is also important in preparing a child for reading, as it facilitates the interest in books, and in supporting ongoing social development (Zuckerman et al., 2019).

Shared book reading can have benefits from early on in a child's life. A recent study found promoting literacy skills from the newborn period may have a lasting impact on establishing routines which will remain throughout the childhood (Sinclair et al., 2019). Interestingly, shared book reading has an impact beyond language and reading skills. Shared book reading has a robust influence on strengthening the relationship of children with their parents leading to improved behaviours of children. Simultaneously, shared book reading is also associated with less harsh parenting (Jimenez et al., 2019).

Shared book reading is an important home literacy activity which takes place during the early years in a child's life. Lenhart et al. (2022) examined the onset of shared book reading and its effects on early literacy development. They synthesised five experimental studies by controlling the child and family characteristics and examined the relationship between the retrospectively reported shared reading onset

age, current shared reading frequency and emergent literacy skills. Importantly, the study concluded by highlighting that shared reading can facilitate a child's early literacy skills even if shared reading commences prior to the child's first birthday.

The early forms of shared book reading consist of pointing and naming illustrations such as daily objects, food items, toys, and animals. By the time the child starts to listen to the stories the interaction can build into the dialogic style with the support of extensive illustrations at the beginning. Not surprisingly, shared book reading is identified as a main element of parent-child interactions which facilitates both language, social and emotional development. Thus, it is pivotal to read books with children frequently from the early years of children, in addition to other activities such as oral storytelling and shared play. Eventually, the child gets the opportunity to experience a strong and meaningful dyadic interaction which has the potential to facilitate the child's overall development (Lenhart et al., 2022).

Reading and language skills go hand in hand; language is a fundamental factor in acquiring reading skills (Snowling & Hulme, 2020). Learning to decode print is influenced by various oral language skills such as phonological skills, morphological skills and vocabulary knowledge (Hulme & Snowling, 2014). There is a reciprocal relationship between language development and learning to read. Shared book reading contributes to this development, and contributes to the development of cognitive, social, and emotional processes (Grolig, 2020; Hutton et al., 2020).

The development of language and social skills is influenced by individual differences and environmental factors which are at proximal and distal levels. Reading with the child is one of the proximal activities (Gibson et al., 2020). While we acknowledge that there is a science behind cognition, memory and learning, Snow (2021) has suggested that there is a science of reading, and that oral language is a central driver in reading acquisition. Moreover, Snow (2021) acknowledged the social emotional aspects for language and reading instructions along with continued development of interpersonal and pro-social skills of an individual. Promoting print access, literacy engagement, teaching cross-lingual transfer, and acceptance of student identities when reading with a child to support reading acquisition is key among immigrant students (Cummins, 2012), and students with disability (Turner & Hoover, 2019).

Inarguably, the importance of shared book reading in early literacy development has been well acknowledged and discussed over the years. However, it is important

to discuss the role of shared book reading as a significant mediator of social inequalities in early skills development. It is evident that children with unsatisfactory development in their early skills have a robust association with their social origin. Unfortunately, the unsatisfactory development in early skills may continue or deteriorate across school education and further result in a negative impact on future employment and quality of life (Blossfeld et al., 2017). Early literacy skills play an influential role in educating a child as early literacy skills, such as vocabulary and knowledge of print, start to develop ahead of formal literacy instructions. Having said that, the importance of the home literacy environment in developing a child's early literacy skills is clear. Shared book reading between parents and child, and the frequency of shared book reading, are influenced by the family background, which in turn affects the child's academic performance. Shared book reading is regarded as a possible mediator of social inequalities in language development (Notten & Kraaykamp, 2010).

In a large-scale field experiment Barone et al., (2021) assessed the casual impact of an intervention which focussed on the frequency of shared book reading and the vocabulary of children. The study conducted in Paris, France, involved 1725 children aged 4 years and 6 months. The sample was drawn from "arrondissements" or districts which were not considered to be "upper class" (p. 22). The results indicated that parents with low educational level reacted more to the intervention while their children indicated a remarkable progress in language development. Therefore, the findings highlighted that the informal home learning activities overcame, to some extent, the barriers that lead to social inequalities in early childhood (e.g., information about the benefits of shared book reading are often found amongst parents in upper class families). Further, it has been suggested that implementing simple interventions (e.g., providing a range of reading materials, prompts through community prompts) is important to remove social equalities.

Inoue et al. (2020) examined the relationship between the home literacy environment and early literacy development across four alphabetic languages (i.e., English, Dutch, German, Greek) with varying orthographic consistency. The sample included children from Grade 1 to Grade 2. Their emergent literacy skills such as vocabulary, letter knowledge and phonological awareness were assessed when they commenced Grade 1. Their word reading fluency and spelling were assessed again at the end of Grade 1, beginning of Grade 2 and end of Grade 2. In addition, the home

literacy environment was assessed through a questionnaire completed by parents. The questionnaire focussed on parent teaching, shared book reading and access to literacy resources. Access to literacy resources indicated a positive relationship with emergent literacy skills in all languages. The study concluded that all components in the home literacy environment are not equally important for emergent literacy skills, reading fluency and spelling. Further, the role of orthographic consistency did not indicate any relationship with the findings.

An orthography which comprises closer relationship between its letter-sound correspondence is a transparent orthography (Pham & Snow, 2021). One language with a highly transparent orthography is Finnish. A seminal study (Torppa et al., 2017) examined the double dissociation between reading and spelling, and the role of cognitive factors such as letter knowledge and phonological awareness. Also, the role of non-cognitive factors such as the home literacy environment and task avoidance in the dissociated patterns. This longitudinal study included children from Kindergarten until Grade 4. Children were assessed on reading fluency and spelling in the Finnish language and allocated to four different groups: good readers/good spellers, children with reading difficulty only, children with spelling difficulty only, and those with difficulties in both reading and spelling. The results revealed that the gap between the groups with and without difficulties continued to develop annually in reading fluency, but not in spelling. The children with both reading and spelling difficulties reported the lowest performance when comparing cognitive skills at Kindergarten. The children in the spelling difficulties group indicated issues in phoneme identification and letter knowledge, while children with reading difficulties indicated these in letter knowledge. The task avoidance behaviour was greater in children with spelling difficulties and in the group of children with difficulties in both reading and spelling. The groups of children with reading difficulties and children with both reading and spelling difficulties indicated a less frequent amount of shared book reading with fathers compared to other groups. Torppa et al. (2017) concluded by identifying a double dissociation between reading and spelling even in a high transparent orthography. The study suggested the inclusion of both reading and spelling assessments in planning and implementing remedial programs (Torppa et al., 2017). In sum, focussing on providing reading and spelling instructions to facilitate literacy skills, such as letter knowledge and phonemic awareness, is an important factor to consider during shared book reading to support the children's early literacy skills and development.

Steenberg et al. (2021) discussed shared book reading in relation to literacy reading and mental health by recognising shared book reading as a type of intervention which provides therapeutic benefits, such as psychological benefits, as unintended consequences of literacy engagement. Moreover, engagement was considered as a learning process which needs an already experienced reader to demonstrate how to explore the content of the book by questioning and making comments such as inferencing to facilitate reading engagement (Steenberg et al., 2021).

The goal of reading is to achieve reading comprehension. (Silva-Maceda & Camarillo-Salazar (2021) focussed on how reading comprehension skills are influenced by developing either decoding or listening comprehension skills. A differentiated instruction program which focussed on either one or both decoding and listening comprehension skills was administered, followed by assessing the reading comprehension skills between intervention and control groups. The intervention group included 14 students and the control group included 13 students, all of them age 6-7 years within Year 1 public school classes in Mexico. The participants in the intervention group received the intervention according to their needs, based on core elements of the simple view of reading (i.e., phonological, and orthographical awareness, vocabulary, oral language). The post-test evaluations indicated higher scores in the intervention group when compared to their pre-test scores, and to the post-test scores in the control group. The study emphasised the importance of using a brief shared book reading program with small groups using relevant instructions according to their difficulties in decoding and listening comprehension. In addition, focussing on meaning through shared book reading, even in a setting with more focus on decoding, could facilitate listening comprehension skills leading towards progress in reading comprehension skills.

The outlined of shared book reading provide important pointers for policy makers and educators. They should consider shared book reading as an effective activity in improving literacy skills of children around the globe, also contributing towards the United Nation's (2020) Sustainable Development Goal of providing quality education (Goal 4). Further, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2018) has emphasised the correlation between social mobility and reading achievement. They further argue that frequent reading, including shared book reading, is more valuable irrespective of the educational background of parents.

While acknowledging the benefits of shared book reading and how shared book reading takes place at home, it is equally important to consider how shared book reading takes place in other child related settings such as the kindergarten and primary schools, as well as their partnership with the child's home. Indeed, the presence of a communicative and transparent relationship between the two entities of home and school ensured the child will experience a quality learning journey (Barger et al., 2019; Grace & Gerdes, 2019).

Shared Book Reading and Types of Books

Shared book reading can take place using different types of books (e.g., picture books, alphabet books, story books). However, little is known about the nature of parents' shared book reading between and across books. Interestingly, Bergman Deitcher et al. (2018) addressed this research gap by examining the nature of parent's shared reading using two different alphabet trade books. The books had differences in relation to the number of sentences and words per page, illustrations and the space and colour taken by the target letter. The study included 46 parent-child dyads including children from the age group 4 years old to 6.8 years-old. The results indicated that parents made more references to the writing system and to more narrative components when reading the book with fewer words and illustrations, simultaneously, they also asked the children to respond more while reading those books. However, the parents made more references to the illustrations while reading the book with more words and complex illustrations. It was also revealed that parents had a more consistent style across both alphabet books. The study concluded that parents may benefit by exposing children to different types of alphabet books with different elements as it may influence the impact on their discourse style. These results also highlight the need to support parents with different activities and strategies when using different types of books.

Shared Book Reading as a Home Literacy Activity

During the early developmental stages, a child learns from the immediate environment and people around, which lays the foundations to become academically and socially successful in school (Frydenberg et al., 2019; Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2017). The brain plasticity and the rapid neurodevelopment during the early childhood stage, along with an appropriate early intervention, lead to the overall development of

a child (Clark et al., 2020). Unquestionably, in the journey of life from womb to tomb, parents become the first teachers and the home becomes one of the first learning spaces for a child. Having said that, the home literacy environment is a major contributing factor to a child's literacy development (Korucu et al., 2020; Krijnen et al., 2020). Research studies (Derby et al., 2020; Højen et al., 2021; Riser et al., 2020) have highlighted the positive contribution of home literacy environment towards the literacy development in children with diverse backgrounds including children with disabilities and children from monolingual or bilingual and/or immigrant families.

The different types of activities in the home literacy environment such as playing, singing, watching television, telling stories, and reading make various contributions for literacy development in various dimensions (Zgourou et al., 2021). Having said that, knowing how to use those activities effectively to develop literacy skills of children has been shown to be highly beneficial. One such home literacy activity which has been examined in various aspects over the years is the shared book reading (Lorio et al., 2021; Saracho, 2017; Toub et al., 2018).

There are many factors which influence the home literacy environment such as parent's education levels, socio-economic level, attitudes towards reading, and having a home library. Interestingly, Støle et al., (2020) argued that parent's engagement in reading was not always associated with socio-economic background or their level of education. However, children from poor family backgrounds may have parents who nourish them with positive attitudes about reading, resulting in rich literacy backgrounds. On the other hand, it is possible for children to adopt negative attitudes towards reading from parents with higher education but who do not like to read. Similarly, there are households where the parents have an interest for reading but only limited time for reading at home. Therefore, the children in those families grow in an environment in which little reading takes place which may negatively affect their literacy skills despite the education level of the parents.

Støle et al. (2020) found that parents who enjoyed reading contributed to their children's reading achievement more than those who did not enjoy reading, regardless of the level of education. Parents with the habit of reading for pleasure but not highly educated, might not be able to support their children's reading acquisition to the level of highly educated parents, but they could influence the child's interest in reading and pass the habit of reading for pleasure to their children. Parents who enjoyed reading had the tendency to engage in shared book reading with their young children more

than parents who did not enjoy reading. Parental reading interest and enjoyment was an influential factor in developing children's reading skills. Other than reading enjoyment, the home library was identified as one of the most influential factors in reading achievement irrespective of social background (Støle et al., 2020).

Støle et al. (2020) confirmed that having more books, for example, more than 100 books at home, has contributed to obtaining higher academic success in children from the Nordic countries. Books are acknowledged as cultural capital. Interestingly, types of reading materials such as newspapers and comics were found not to have contributed to reading development in children, and this highlighted the importance of learning to appreciate fiction during early childhood. This can be stimulated by shared book reading at home and/or in childcare and/or kindergarten (Støle et al., 2020).

On the other hand, a home full of books alone may not facilitate a child's language and literacy skills to the optimum level unless the family members engage in reading with the child. Logan et al. (2019) mentioned that children in literacy rich homes where book sharing with children took place at least once a day were predicted to hear a cumulative 1.4 million extra words in the first 5 years in contrast to children without shared reading experience. Thus, filling up a home with reading materials would be insufficient to support children's language and literacy skills development if the parents and children rarely engage in shared reading. If parents do not know how to make the best use of the reading materials to facilitate their child's language and literacy skills due to lack of relevant knowledge and skills, this could be addressed by parental training and intervention (Weadman et al., 2022). Overall, it is argued that parents reading books with children can nurture both the children themselves and their own children in the future. The adult participants in this study were interviewed to capture their insights into reading, and their own passions for reading for pleasure (and professionally).

The literacy environment plays a vital role in language development in children. Notably, features of caregiver input could facilitate language learning throughout early childhood. Rowe and Snow (2019) discussed three dimensions of quality input such as interactive, linguistic, and conceptual. The interactive dimension consisted of responsiveness, shared attention, and discussions of child interests which facilitate child involvement. The linguistic dimension consisted of phonological, lexical, and grammatical features of the input. The conceptual content/topics of the conversation consisted of introducing present and familiar objects and events for children in early

childhood while introducing more abstract topics such as the past for children in later childhood.

Rowe and Snow (2019) highlighted the importance of children being exposed to talk, however, that talk must be responsive, engaging, and linguistically adapted to the child's level while conceptually challenging the level of development of the child. This exposure could use both verbal and non-verbal communication. In a study of Turkish speaking parents and their toddlers aged around 18 months (Ünlütürk et al., 2022) the use of pointing and gestures along with parental questions directed at their toddlers were identified as important to elicit toddler communicative interactions verbally and non-verbally during shared book reading.

In a large cohort study in Ireland, Leech et al. (2022) examined the unique effects of book reading with 9-month-old infants on vocabulary development at 36 months. Leech et al. (2022) revealed that approximately 80% of 9-month-old Irish children experienced book reading to them by their parents. Parents with "higher education level, fewer depressive episodes and high-quality language stimulating environment at home" were reported to read to their children more often (p. 242). It was also reported that language outcomes for children where there was shared reading were similar across socio-economic strata. In sum, the study emphasised the importance of having a high-quality home literacy environment to facilitate language and literacy skills in children. Further, the influence of both proximal and distal factors on the developmental outcomes in the Irish context was highlighted, such as oral language skills. Indeed, shared book reading with children as young as 9 months could nurture their foundational skills leading to achievement of the developmental sequence (Leech et al., 2022). These results concur with a large cohort study in Australia by Farrant and Zubrick (2013).

Aarts et al. (2016) aimed at exploring the academic language development of 15 monolingual Dutch and 15 bilingual Turkish-Dutch children aged 4 to 6 years old, in home and in school settings. Data were collected using several instruments that included videotaped observation of mother-child interaction and teacher-child interaction during book reading, parental interview, a questionnaire for teachers and standardised language tests. (i.e., one or both languages). The data were analysed using descriptive analyses and the difference in academic language across groups and time were analysed using repeated measures analysis of covariance.

The academic language features in the mothers' input comprised interrelated dimensions at different linguistic levels. The association of different academic language measures in the teachers' input was lower compared to the mothers' input. Overall, the children's language output had an association with the mothers' language input. Academic language features of mothers' input in the first language had an association with children's output in both first and second languages. Notably, there was less association between the input of teachers and the language development in children compared to the input of mothers. Further, the children who received input from their mothers at the age of 4 years gained an important influence on their later language development (Aarts et al., 2016).

The role of parents in their child's language and literacy development is powerful from an early age (e.g., first year of life). The place of shared reading, including shared book reading, has been shown to be influential. Other variables include frequency of engagement, the onset of shared reading and language support, and the resources available. While socio-economic background was found to have some impact, it was the quality and frequency of opportunity that played a key role.

Shared Book Reading and Home-School Partnership

A healthy partnership between home, childcare and school is one of the influential factors for a child to become a successful and literate learner. The causality of parent involvement was tested in a randomised trial study by Kim and Riley (2021). The study consisted of a multi-stage random sampling method, combining cluster with stratified sampling method. The study involved 2 to 3-year-old children from Wisconsin, United States of America, their parents, and early childhood teachers. The same training on child language development was provided to all teachers in the two groups of control and treatment. The training included discussions of the current practices in language and literacy in the classrooms, instructions about how to use dialogic method, and used videos to model dialogic reading and let teachers practise dialogic reading in dyads.

Upon completion of the training, teachers received the same six story books to engage in shared book reading in the classroom for six weeks. In addition, teachers in the intervention group received training on methods for involving parents. They were asked to send the same books home to parents for them to use. Teachers provided support to parents on the use of the dialogic method in reading with their child via the

usual school news outlets (e.g., newsletters, formal and informal conversations with parents). These outlets were also used to encourage and motivate parents to read to their child.

At the beginning of each week the teacher provided a new bag of picture books, the same as those being used in the classroom. Each time the bag went home it included a one-page overview of how to use the dialogic method in shared reading activities. Parents were encouraged to read with their child for 15 minutes each day (Kim & Riley, 2021). At the end of the 6-week intervention, the control group were provided with the same reading materials and supporting information.

The measures in the study by Kim and Riley (2021) comprised the family characteristics and family literacy, early language and literacy skills, receptive vocabulary skills, expressive vocabulary skills, Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) Taxonomy measuring the child's ability to categorise objects into primary groups, print awareness and the extent of dialogic reading. Contrary to the study hypothesis, teachers in the control group demonstrated greater use of the dialogic method than the teachers in the intervention group. The parents in the intervention group did not always collect the book bags weekly, however, those parents reported the use of dialogic reading method at least three times a week on average during the last week of intervention. Kim and Riley (2021) found an ongoing influence of the intervention on the children's early language and literacy skills beyond the intervention and highlighted that it was a result of the intervention. The children who received dialogic reading in both home and school settings were found to have greater development in their early language and literacy skills compared to those who received dialogic reading only in one setting (Kim & Riley, 2021). This replication study supported findings by Whitehurst and associates (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Whitehurst et al., 1994)

Puccioni (2018) utilised data drawn from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort* (ECLS-B) to examine the association among parental beliefs on academic and behaviour-oriented school readiness, home and school based parental involvement, and the academic achievement throughout transition from home to kindergarten. Simultaneously, they examined the differences in parental beliefs in relation to socio-economic status and ethnicity. The evidence highlighted those parents with a focus on behavioural skills of children (e.g., taking turns, ability to sit still and communicate) engaged in more home-based involvement activities resulting

in children with higher average reading and mathematics achievement scores at kindergarten entrance. Parental beliefs about academic skills were positively associated with their school involvement activities. On the other hand, parental school involvement was negatively associated with their children's reading success and, those children reported lower average reading scores.

Similarly, the parents who participated in a family literacy program made a positive contribution towards the reading performance of their children. They were found to have applied the home reading strategies which they had learned by attending a family literacy program. Children's reading rate, accuracy and fluency developed throughout the literacy program. These findings were taken from a case study involving four parent-child dyads (Steiner et al., 2022). The small number of case studies limits the extent to which the results can be generalised.

A research gap to emerge from these studies has been the limited focus on the parent-child role, and the language and literacy development in children. Meng (2021) used a sample of approximately 10,690 children and their mothers from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort to examine the mediating role of parent-child interactions in the relationship between shared literacy activities and the emergent literacy skills and oral language skills of children. Data were collected across three time periods, with the mean age of children 10.5 months at Time 1, 24.5 months at Time 2, and 52.9 months at Time 3.

The study focussed on multiple behaviours of parents and their children which occurred during their interactions which had been identified as possible mediators for shared literacy activities and emergent literacy skills and oral literacy skills of children. The multiple behaviours included six parent behaviours and three child behaviours. The parent behaviours comprised sensitivity, intrusiveness, stimulation of cognitive development, positive regard, negative regard, and detachment. The child behaviours comprised engagement, sustained attention, and negativity towards parent (Meng, 2021).

Meng (2021) considered parent's stimulation of cognitive development as a global measure of the cognitive-linguistic domain of parent-child interaction. Similarly, the measure of the affective-emotional domain of parent-child interactions included sensitivity, intrusiveness, positive regard, negative regard, and detachment. Examined behaviours of children included engagement, sustained attention, and negativity towards the parent. Data analysis included longitudinal path analysis with mediators

(e.g., positive regard of parents, child engagement) and indicated that the emergent literacy and oral language outcomes were affected directly by shared literacy activities. Further, the association between shared literacy activities and emergent literacy skills at preschool were mediated by parent's positive regard, children's engagement, and their sustained attention.

Meng (2021) highlighted the use of data collected from both mothers and their children in multiple methods such as self-reports, direct assessments, and observations as a strength of this study. The multi-method multi-informant approach is more beneficial than the single-method single-informant approach. The multi-method multi-informant approach can eliminate common method variance interpretations of the findings, leading to increased validity in the findings (Meng, 2021). The researcher suggested that future research in shared reading activities (e.g., shared book reading) incorporate the affective dimension of parent-child interactions such as praise and encouragement, and cognitive-linguistic supports such as scaffolding, book interest and cooperation of the child, and referencing such as pointing to the pictures in the book. Having said that, this study addressed the affective, cognitive, and behavioural engagement during shared book reading by collecting data through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and video recorded shared book reading sessions to capture the required data to address all three dimensions of engagement.

Notably, having a strong understanding about the behaviours of parents and children during their interactions around home literacy activities becomes beneficial in designing early intervention plans, and activities to facilitate children's language and literacy skills. With that perspective in mind, having a healthy home-school partnership can provide more opportunities for the child to obtain the maximum benefits from the intervention programs.

Parental involvement in children's literacy learning and development has the potential to increase child language and literacy. Hence, it is important to identify the features and outcomes of programs which can promote home-school partnerships together with identifying the roles of teachers and schools in facilitating successful home-school partnerships. Steiner et al. (2022) conducted a study aimed at supporting literacy by helping parents to become aware of the school norms and strategies in use to facilitate literacy learning with their children. In addition, the study aimed at engaging

children in home-reading practices with a direct link to their literacy learning in the classroom such as reading fluency and overall reading performance.

Shared reading sessions of four parents with their children were included in the study by Steiner (2022) in which they represented various ways how parents worked with literacy at home. In addition, how parents used the knowledge they took from the intervention and how they customised the strategies to their home environment were investigated in the study. In one family, the parent used to read with the child by taking turns and applying word learning strategies she learnt from the intervention which led the child to read more. Hence, the study highlighted the need to include additional support and repeated modelling of how to use reading strategies. As a result, the parents could enhance their confidence in supporting their children's reading at home in monolingual families as well as bilingual families. The authors emphasised that they wanted to produce a parent involvement program in which parents could identify how their contribution resulted in their children's successful learning. Moreover, the study recommended the importance of facilitating parental involvement in their children's literacy learning at school while using the available resources.

The need for parents and teachers to be at ease in sharing information and learning was identified as crucial in nurturing the home-school partnership (Steiner et al., 2022). As a result, both parents and teachers could gain a better understanding of the process and their involvement which could gradually reduce the gap between the home and the school, leading to a more intense partnership. Most importantly, maintaining such a strong partnership between home and school was identified as essential for children to become successful in learning, and to foster literacy and language skills (Steiner et al., 2022).

A randomised control study (Timperley et al., 2022) used the 6-week Tender Shoots program with 69 parents of children aged 3.5 to 4.5 years old in New Zealand. Parents and their children participated in one of three conditions, namely Rich Reading and Reminiscing (RRR), Strengthening Sound Sensitivity (SSS) and Activity-Based Control (ABC). The participants in both SSS and RRR conditions received training to read interactively with their children as well as the books to guide implementation. After the 6-week program, the findings indicated that those who had the RRR condition focussed on meaning-related talk to facilitate vocabulary and comprehension while those who had the SSS condition focussed on sound-related talk to facilitate

phonological awareness. The participants with the ABC condition received materials and resources along with developmentally suitable activities.

A comparison of shared reading interactions between the intervention sessions with the follow-up interactions revealed that parents and children in the RRR and SSS groups continued to use more condition specific targeted talk compared to the ABC group. The parents who received the RRR condition displayed frequent use of program activities compared to those with the ABC. In sum, shared reading programs could contribute to a long-lasting impact on the extratextual talk as well as facilitating parental involvement in their children's learning (Timperley et al., 2022).

A systematic review and meta-analysis by Dowdall et al. (2020) on shared picture book interventions to foster child language development indicated that shared picture book training had a small impact on both expressive and receptive language. Based on 33 studies, selected using the PRISMA protocol, the review analysis focussed on children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The review, however, reported a significant impact on the caregivers' book sharing competence. The children's language skills were affected by the amount of intervention they received (i.e., a less amount of intervention had a minimal impact on the child's skills). Notably, the child's age and the caregiver's level of education did not relate to the child's outcome. It was concluded that book-sharing interventions have the potential to enhance and progress the language and literacy development in children (Dowdall et al., 2020).

Undoubtedly, shared reading training programs for parents have the potential to enhance parental competence in reading with their children (Dowdall et al., 2020) and hence their child language and literacy. Taken together, it is important for the schools and service providers to consider in what ways the parents could get involved in such programs even prior to their children's formal school commencement. Overall, the importance of the home literacy environment, the collaborative work between parents and teachers, the child's transition from home to preschool education and the child's early literacy development are equally important and related to each other.

Shared Book Reading in Monolingual and Bilingual Families

As discussed earlier, different types of books can be used in shared book reading and parental training is considered an important factor in effective shared book reading practice. A systematic review and meta-analysis on shared picture book reading interventions for child language development which included children from 1-6 years

emphasised the importance of book sharing interventions for child language development (Dowdall et al., 2020). Also, these book sharing interventions significantly affected the caregiver's book sharing competency. Child's age and caregiver's level of education were not associated with the child's language (Dowdall et al., 2020). The backgrounds of children have not been the focus of many shared reading studies, nor how these backgrounds may impact benefits of shared reading experiences. Background factors include the number of languages spoken in the home, children impacted by disability, and the impact of immigrant status.

Bilingualism is acknowledged as a highly personal experience. It is evident that the use of two languages in different contexts can have an impact in moderating any cognitive effect (Potter et al., 2019). Moreover, bilingual children with developmental delays should not be discouraged from learning and using two languages as doing so may improve their orientation skills (Park et al., 2019).

The learning of two languages is called bilingual acquisition. This could be either two spoken languages or one spoken language and a signed language (Genesee & Nicoladis, 2007). Bilingualism and/or multilingualism is an important aspect to be investigated in Australia, with many members of the community being immigrants from all over the world (Eisenclas & Schalley, 2020; Martin, 2020). There is a high possibility for an individual to be exposed to a language other than English in different settings including the home environment. Having said that, family members play a pivotal role in creating a language stimulating environment other than, and often alongside, English.

In addition to the daily activities, reading a story book with a child in a selected language can influence the child's acquisition of a new language. As a result, a child can acquire and/or enhance acquisition of another language. Parental behaviour during reading with a child is therefore crucial, however, limited research studies have been conducted on parental behaviour across more than one language. Also, the engagement of parents and children with and without disabilities during shared book reading using print and digital texts in a bilingual context has been rarely investigated. As a result, there is a timely need for further research, given there are identified gaps in the benefits of shared book reading (e.g., children from bilingual backgrounds, type of text, children with and without disability).

In reading research, many of the studies have been conducted in relation to the mother-tongue, and it is the same with shared book reading. However, there are

studies which have been conducted regarding shared book reading practices in bilingual families. A study by Gonzalez-Barrero et al. (2021) aimed at investigating the effect of the proficiency of language on shared book reading practices in a bilingual family context revealed that home reading practices might adversely impact uneven development throughout two languages. As a result, the investigators have emphasised the importance of identifying strategies to facilitate home reading practices using the non-dominant language in a bilingual family context (Bezciöglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2022; Byers-Heinlein et al., 2020; Han & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2015). Bezciöglu-Göktolga and Yagmur (2022) examined how the first language affected the second language acquisition in children and found that bilingual children were delayed in defining words, semantic skills, and grammatical relationships in words compared to monolingual children. They concluded that it could be due to the limited first language input which resulted in the children experiencing difficulties in concept and cognitive development apart from the acquisition of the second language.

Language switching in a bilingual context is not unusual and it is true with shared book reading in a non-dominant language. Potter et al. (2019) examined the processing of single-and-mixed-language sentences in Spanish and in English, in toddlers aged 18-30 months. They observed the eye tracking behaviour of the toddlers while they listened to sentences in each language and looked at objects. They found that bilingual toddlers could identify highly familiar nouns the same as the monolingual toddlers, independent of language switching. They concluded that the strength of children's knowledge about a word and its relationships to other words can influence their skill to identify the word in various settings (Potter et al., 2019). Even though the study by Potter et al. (2019) was not based on shared book reading, it examined one aspect which takes place in a shared book reading session. That is, listening to a story being read by an adult and answering the questions asked by the adult either by verbally answering, pointing, or even by looking at the illustrations. It is argued that the experience which children receive influences the language and literacy skills in monolingual and bilingual children. Therefore, shared book reading in both dominant and non-dominant languages is important in facilitating children's language and early literacy skills. Overall, the role of language switching during shared book reading has the potential to intensify children's knowledge about words. The association between the words could then facilitate children's ability to identify the words in different settings such as in a different country.

A randomised controlled trial conducted by Yang et al. (2022) based on bilingual shared book reading electronically found that children's story comprehension and retelling skills significantly developed by implanting bilingual discussion prompts in the storybook app. The embedded discussion prompts enabled parents to practise dialogic reading strategies and to provide scaffolding to their children's responses in a natural manner even without extensive training. The parents translated and expanded the story, leading the children to gain more coherent input resulting in a boost in their comprehension. The study highlighted the importance of having well-designed English storybook apps connected by interactive discussion prompts especially for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Yang et al., 2022).

Linguistically diverse preschool children from low-income families in the United States included in a study (Sparks & Reese, 2013) explored the relations between various literacy related home practices and children's language and literacy acquisition outside their preschool setting. The study reported it had discovered that the mothers' elaborative talk when reflecting on behaviour-related events indicated a relationship between children's semantic and print-knowledge. Remarkably, the study (Sparks & Reese, 2013) found that there was an association between a child's interest in the storybook and their emergent literacy skills but not with the language.

Shared Book Reading in Immigrant Families

Shared book reading was observed in three multilingual immigrant families in their home contexts as part of an ethnographic study (Kibler et al., 2020). Context-sensitive and cooperative shared reading practices were identified as the recurring literacy practices in the families during shared book reading. Notably, the families gave more focus to decoding which has also been named transcultural decoding (Kibler et al., 2020). The multidirectional language socialisation practices which occur across languages and the contribution of older family members during reading can be seen in transcultural decoding. Kibler et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of focussing on decoding during shared book reading while considering siblings as cultural and linguistic mediators in family literacy activities. Kibler et al. (2020) highlighted that the multidirectional teaching by younger siblings was undervalued in the literacy research. Notably, the findings highlighted the need to explore the home literacy practices in naturalistic contexts (e.g., home, favoured place for reading).

Sharing picture books or reading with young children by parents in both immigrant and non-immigrant households was investigated in California (Festa et al., 2014). The study revealed that daily book sharing was mostly reported in native-born families compared to immigrant families, and concluded that there were inconsistencies in early literacy practices in the immigrant families even after controlling for variables such as parental education and income (Festa et al., 2014).

Shared Book Reading in Print and Digital Text

In a modern electronic era, the use of e-stories and different educational apps have become available across the world, and it is worthwhile to look at how it has influenced shared book reading in children and parents. A key part of eBooks has been the inclusion of hot spots. When activated by a reader tapping a word or image these hot spots provide auditory and/or visual information (e.g., definition of a word, explanation of concept) (Reich et al., 2016). Responses to hot spots given by parent-child dyads during shared book reading in relation to eBook design has been investigated in recent years (e.g., Abdelhadi, 2020; Kucirkova, 2018). These studies have concluded that it is important to allow the child to tap on the hotspot as it can support understanding of the story. Further, when designing hotspots, it is important to consider the main themes in the eBook story content.

Richter and Courage (2017) compared attention, engagement and recall in preschoolers in relation to electronic and paper story books. In this experimental and within-subjects study design, reading engagement was defined as the attentiveness of a child to a story book, the ability to maintain attention throughout a reading session, their interest, and their unprompted communication about the story. They discussed five measures of engagement. Firstly, the child's visual attention during shared book reading was identified by the child's gaze at one of the three targets which included the book, the adult and off-task. The visual attention indicated the child's interest in the story book and their ability to maintain attention throughout shared book reading activity. Another measure of engagement was based on the ratings made by an observer in relation to a child's enthusiasm, persistency and adherence and orientation to book reading. The third measure was about the type of spontaneous verbal communication produced by the child during shared book reading. The child's preferences between paper and electronic story books and the use of hot spots in the digital books by the children were the last two measures of engagement discussed in

the study. It was considered that attention and observer ratings could provide more powerful evidence about the engagement. In this study, the use of video recorded shared book reading sessions provided the opportunity to capture evidence in relation to engagement and provided the opportunity to go through the sessions several times to collect as much useful data as possible. In addition, all these measures provided conjoint evidence about the engagement of children in their experiences in reading books.

Richter and Courage (2017) reported that pre-school aged children were more engaged (e.g., they were more attentive and less-off task) with the story in the electronic format when compared to the paper format. However, the study pointed out that the setting for the study was a limitation, that is, the study was conducted in a formal setting in a day care centre where the children engaged in reading with an unfamiliar adult. As a result, children did not involve in much conversation with the adult despite being attentive to the activity. Moreover, a formal setting like the day care centre is less likely to reflect the typical natural interactivity which occurs between a parent and a child in a home setting. This is because the parental involvement in a reading activity provides scaffolding to elicit conversation leading towards learning through reading. The involvement of a familiar adult/parent in a familiar setting during reading may facilitate more interaction between the parent-child dyad.

Parents' beliefs about children's digital book reading were investigated in seven families (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022) in the United Kingdom. They read four award-winning digital books and observed how mothers facilitated their 3- or 4-year-old children's digital book reading for a few weeks. The data of the study indicated opposing themes such as trust/mistrust, agency/dependency, and nostalgia/realism in parental opinions towards their children's digital book reading. The study highlighted the need to consider the parents' contradictory opinions about their children's digital reading and the influence it could have on their children's learning using digital media (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022).

There are limited research findings, however, on how young children engage with and how they learn from interactive story book apps as well as how teachers facilitate early reading experiences. A case study by Neumann and Merchant, (2022) conducted in the north of England explored how a teacher used scaffolding during shared reading of a story book app for the story *Three Little Pigs* with a young child to facilitate learning and interactions. The study found that the teacher used an extensive

range of words, repetition, and questions to facilitate the child's engagement with the story content as a means of cognitive scaffolding as well as to continue the child's interest throughout the shared reading session. Moreover, the teacher encouraged and gave feedback to the child as a means of affective scaffolding. Affective scaffolding is considered useful in maintaining the child's interest in the story. In addition, the teacher supported the child to navigate through the interactive features of the story book app as a means of technical scaffolding, resulting in the child learning language and literacy in meaningful ways while using a digital device. The study by Neumann and Merchant (2022) highlighted that early childhood teachers should consider how they could engage in shared reading using book apps so they can facilitate language and literacy learning. The multi-model features of the story book app such as audio and animations provided opportunities for the child to exhibit their autonomy, choice, and agency by navigating the story along with the teacher's guidance. Simultaneously, it demonstrated the child's interest and the level of engagement in the shared book reading session. In this study, the child's reading interest in relation to language and type of text were examined using a questionnaire and observing the child's agency in navigating the reading material.

Neumann and Merchant (2022) highlighted how the teacher could consider the child's zone of proximal development in using verbal scaffolding to make sure that they were appropriate to the child's functional and skill level. The teacher's comments and questions could scaffold the child's interactions with the story as well as how the child responded to different elements within the story. In summary, the study emphasised the importance of providing cognitive, affective, and technical scaffolding during shared book reading using story book apps to enhance language and literacy learning for children.

E-book reading in Kindergarten and story comprehension support were examined in three intervention programs (Korat et al., 2021). The first group collaborated with teachers who received training on how to support children during e-book reading with expansions to facilitate story comprehension (e.g., animations). The second group worked independently with the e-book with expansions, while in the third group the children worked with the e-book without expansions. All children were aged 5-6 years and read the e-book in Kindergarten classes six times over 3 weeks. The results of the study reported that the children whose teachers had the training on e-book reading indicated the highest positive outcome for story comprehension

compared to others (Korat et al., 2022). These results again highlight the importance of training programs for both parents and teachers on using digital story books, e-books, and story apps for shared book reading in an effective way to facilitate children's language and literacy skills.

Deshmukh et al. (2019) explained the importance of asking more questions in general during shared book reading and especially the wh-questions such as why and how questions. These question types are considered open questions where the person responding provides an extensive response instead of responding either yes or no, or the provision of a fact. Hence, providing opportunities for listening to, repeating, and practising new vocabulary. Deshmukh et al. (2019) further described how questioning should be used strategically such as starting from a question relating to the child's interests, moving on to a factual question and then with why and how questions to expand the response. For example, "How do you think the fox is feeling?". Building on the child's responses while prompting and giving feedback is considered equally important.

The study (Deshmukh et al., 2019) found that teacher talk during shared book reading contained 24% questions comprising Wh- or closed questions requiring yes/no responses. The use of Why- or How-questions were less frequent, but they evoked longer responses from children. As many of the questions required yes/no responses, the Why-questions gave them a greater challenge. While children made errors in some of their responses, teachers did not adjust the level of challenge in questioning that was just beyond their current level of skill (e.g., one of proximal development). As questioning during shared book reading was not always accompanied by scaffolding to support children, the benefits of shared book reading may not have been fully realised. Children who came to sessions with fewer skills and background knowledge found it difficult to answer questions fully due to limited scaffolding. Similarly, the children who had the capability to produce lengthy responses did not get adequate opportunities as many questions required one-word answers (Deshmukh et al., 2019).

The study by Deshmukh et al. (2019) reported that teacher questions could guide the language behaviour of children during shared book reading. The study recommended to include more Wh- style questions in the curricula to facilitate questioning by teachers in general and to have a special focus on the frequent use of Why- and How-questions. It would also seem worthwhile examining the use of different levels of guidance and scaffolding to support learners from a range of backgrounds to

engage in Wh- type questions. In sum, it is important to consider how to conduct productive, quality, and supportive shared book reading sessions to facilitate children's language and literacy development at school, and in the home.

Shared Book Reading with Children with Disabilities

There are a limited number of studies involving children with disabilities and shared book reading; emerging evidence suggests that the benefits are like those for students without disability. Arciuli et al. (2013) explored home-based reading practices between children with autism spectrum disorder and their parents. In reading to their child the mother were found to focus on print related information compared to contextual information. Moreover, the behaviours such as print-based behaviours and contextual behaviours of mothers while their children engaged in oral reading were consistent with the parental beliefs about reading instruction. Interestingly, these results were compatible with previous research studies conducted with typically developing children and their parents (Arciuli et al., 2013).

Recent studies (e.g., Barton-Hulseay et al., 2020; Dimitrova et al., 2016; Draghi & Zampini, 2019) investigated the maternal language input and the expressive communications skills of typically developing children and children with Down syndrome during shared book reading. The results revealed that mothers of children with Down syndrome used more utterances compared to mothers of typically developing children. While utterances consisted of less grammatical complexity, the vocabulary was the same as with typically developing children. The mothers of typically developing children used 50% of their utterances to read straight from the books while mothers of children with Down syndrome used more explanations, gestures, labels, and questions. The children with Down Syndrome used significantly fewer spoken words compared to typically developing children. However, both groups of children indicated equal communication frequencies. The researchers identified a few limitations in the study including not controlling the characteristics and the content of the books (e.g., the sound effects, rhyming books and books with manipulatives). It was also found that parental language input and children's language output can be influenced by the type of book (Dimitrova et al., 2016; Draghi & Zampini, 2019).

Wicks et al. (2020) conducted a pre-test-post-test randomised control group study with participants residing in Queensland, Australia. The study examined preschool children with autism spectrum disorder during a shared book reading activity

in relation to the link between the visual attention of children and their verbal engagement, shared book reading behaviours of parents and the emergent literacy skills in children. A significant relationship was identified between visual attention and verbal engagement in children with the use of questions and/or prompts used by the parents during shared book reading. However, no association was found between children's emergent literacy skills and their visual attention. Moreover, the same study mentioned a robust interplay between the engagement of children with autism spectrum disorder and the behaviour of parents during the shared book reading activity. This study did not provide a fine-grained insight into the type and level of engagement observed.

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often experience impairment in social interaction, and shared book reading has been considered a way to strengthen social communication skills (Fleury & Hugh, 2018; Tipton et al., 2017; Westerveld et al., 2017). However, it was evident that children with ASD can initiate social interactions independently during shared book reading if they receive systematic teaching on relevant behaviours needed for social interaction (D'Agostino et al., 2020). The investigators identified limitations of the study including the difficulty in generalising since it took place outside of children's classrooms. They mentioned it would have been more possible to generalise the findings if the study had taken place in different natural settings such as the home environment (D'Agostino et al., 2020). Not only children without disabilities but also children with disabilities or at risk can benefit when their parents receive training on effective reading strategies to apply during shared book reading. These benefits are often seen in enhanced language and literacy skills.

Requa et al. (2022) examined the effects of an intervention focussed on parents of at-risk pre-school aged children. Sixty-nine consenting parents who completed all elements of the study from northern California were part of the final study report. Thirty-nine parents were randomly assigned to the treatment group, and the others to a control group (e.g., stories only). The intervention focussed on how to teach new vocabulary through elaborated and non-elaborated word instruction during shared book reading. Requa et al. (2022) revealed that the parents who used elaborated vocabulary instructions (e.g., definitions, synonyms, and examples), and non-elaborated vocabulary instructions such as simple definitions only, with children during shared book reading, enriched new vocabulary learning of their children. The study by

Requa et al. (2022) found that two or four repeated readings did not impact the target word learning in a significant way. The implications from this study included that the researchers could transfer knowledge and techniques to parents on vocabulary instructions by using a parental training workshop (Requa et al., 2022).

Akamoglu and Meadan (2019) explored the effects of parental training and coaching on shared book reading with children with developmental delays. The study explored the use of Parent-Implemented Communication Strategies Storybook (PiCSS) which supported parents to use reading strategies such as modelling, mand-modelling, and time delay. The study was based on three theoretical frameworks: transactional model, behavioural model, and the social learning theory. The features of the study included the bidirectional parent-child interactions based on the transactional model, naturalistic communication teaching strategies based on the behavioural model, and the quality of parent-child interactions based on the social learning theory. The findings suggested creating a comfortable environment, such as a specific space for reading, which should be visually and auditory distraction free to enhance the child's engagement. In addition, the use of attention getters or feedback provided by a parent often leads the child to participate verbally or non-verbally in the shared book reading activity. The study concluded that training and coaching parents contributed to improving their skills in implementing the strategies, leading to the development of communication skills of their children with developmental disabilities (Akamoglu & Meadan, 2019).

While shared book reading contributes to developing the language skills in children, the extratextual talk during shared book reading has a positive impact on boosting the vocabulary capacity in children. However, the maximum benefits of parent's extra-textual talk are achieved by children when the children's engagement is promoted during shared book reading. The engagement includes the child's attention and interest to the shared book reading activity. Moreover, the type of engagement strategy during shared book reading is also important. Parent's responses to their child given in a prompt and positive manner can be considered as an effective engagement strategy during shared book reading. The value of these engagement strategies in using extratextual talk during shared book reading is important in its direct contribution towards word learning in children. Studies (e.g., Blewitt & Langan, 2016; Garcia et al., 2016; Lenhart et al., 2022; Toub et al., 2018) have outlined some limitations in research, such as not including direct methods to measure children's engagement, the

participants belonging to middle to upper socio-economic background and limitations in generalising the findings.

Given that the benefits of shared book reading appear to be comparable for students from a diverse range of backgrounds, this study was open to young children with and without disability within an inclusive approach to shared book reading. While also acknowledging the previous explanations about engagement during reading, this study looked at some more specific elements which can be identified in parent-child engagement during shared book reading. The concept of engagement applied in this study will be outlined in the next section.

Engagement and Shared Book Reading

Shared book reading can be identified as the adult-child interaction which facilitates the active engagement of children in comprehending and responding to a text which is read aloud (Pentimonti et al., 2021). Shared book reading can take place in various settings, including home, day-care centre, kindergarten, and primary school (Adam & Barratt-Pugh, 2020; Hu et al., 2021; Zucker et al., 2021). Basically, shared book reading involves a dyad of individuals and a text to read (e.g., print, digital). At first glance, the key observation during shared book reading is the verbal and non-verbal interactions which take place in the dyad. Having said that, the literature emphasised the importance of underlying elements (such as alphabetic coding skills, word recognition, linguistic knowledge, vocabulary and language comprehension), the relationship between them, and how they coordinate with each other to make a complex but important process which is beneficial for the child's development in different dimensions such as language, social and emotional development (Boyle et al., 2021; Leon & Payler, 2021).

The three literacy agents, namely the child, adult and the book, and their relationship with each other, influence the overall communication skills, and their development during a shared book reading session. Shared book reading takes place in various places such as at home, early-childhood development settings and child day care settings. As a result, the relationship between these settings is crucial to develop a child's language and literacy skills.

A recent research review by Grolig (2020) on the relationship between the home environment and childcare centre environment with shared book reading and oral language development, investigated and introduced the triad model of oral language

learning through shared book reading. The model integrates the approaches and findings from different research areas such as educational psychology, psycholinguistics, and developmental psychology. The shared reading triad model postulates that the characteristics of literacy agents have an impact on the effects of shared book reading on oral language skills (e.g., reading habits of the adult, the previous language skills of the child, the interest to read, the diversity of content of the story book, presentation mode of text).

The relationship between the three agents has an impact on the effects of shared book reading. The child's interest in literacy, joint attention, engagement, and the appropriate modifications to extratextual talk to suit the child's level of oral language skills are important factors to consider. The relationship between the adult and the child depends on the factors such as the adult's ability to select books which are developmentally appropriate for the child, access to books at home, and the reading habits of the adult. In addition, the interplay between these three agents has an influence on the effects of shared book reading. The adults need to use basic and inferential comprehension questions for the child to actively think and engage in shared book reading. The active engagement and language production during shared book reading are essential factors for a child to learn a language.

Engagement is a requirement to be successful in learning (Hiver et al., 2020; Mercer, 2019) with various dimensions. These can be identified as the strength of positive emotions, autonomy for engagement and active participation. Positive emotional support is needed to engage purposefully in an activity, while the presence of a trustworthy relationship is also crucial. Engagement reflects an action that is meaningful, purposeful and leads to learning (Hiver et al., 2020).

Traditionally, engagement emerges from the interaction of three components (i.e., cognition, motivation, and behaviour) within an individual (Tai et al., 2019). Therefore, engagement can be explored by examining the antecedents and consequences of the components. As a whole, engagement has been recognised as complex and dynamic interactions of all components within specific contexts (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

Cognitive engagement consists of the effort which is required to comprehend complex concepts and to acquire new skills (e.g., language skills, memory). While emotional engagement consists of positive and negative reactions to other persons and/or settings with which they are in contact. This can be specifically described as

affective reactions such as interest, happiness, sadness, boredom and anxiety (Zaccoletti et al., 2020). Finally, behavioural engagement focusses on participation. It can be categorised as positive conduct including the absence of disruptive behaviours and involvement in the task (e.g., attention, asking questions and persistence) (Mahatmya et al., 2012).

Engagement is a key element to be considered in the learning and development process, and the home environment plays a critical role in this process (Lehrl et al., 2020). While there are many activities in the home environment to promote the development of children, activities which promote early literacy skills are critically important for long term development, health and well-being, and quality of life (Gough & Turner, 2020). Shared book reading is one of these important activities and promoting its use in households can lead to significant development in literacy skills (Santamaria, 2020).

Engagement during shared book reading has investigated various variables such as visual attention, verbal engagement, meaning-related talk, print-related talk, and facial expressions (Canfield et al., 2020; Cutler, 2020; Muhinyi et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2020; Wicks et al., 2020). Xu et al. (2021) explored how interactive features in e-books affect a young reader's engagement and concluded that interacting with hot spots improved sustained visual attention as well as emotional engagement. However, it was not linked to enhanced verbal engagement of young children. Engagement during shared book reading in relation to gender was examined using a paper book and an electronic book. Interestingly, the findings revealed that nonverbal engagement occurred more often when reading the electronic book, while verbal engagement occurred more often when reading the paper book. However, there was no difference in engagement by gender (Rvachew et al., 2019).

MacKay (2015) investigated the nature of interactions when a child and their parent engaged in a traditional book reading and in a story on an i-Pad. The behaviours observed included meaning related talk, text and print talk, technology talk and the nature of affective climate. On par with the previous research (e.g., Ozturk & Hill, 2020), the study revealed that the reading experiences were different when reading the traditional book and the i-Pad. Interestingly, an increased number of vocabulary related interactions, which also corresponded with changes in meaning related talk, were observed during i-Pad reading while the number of text and print related interactions decreased.

However, during shared reading with the i-Pad book, the parent-child dyads engaged in more interactions in relation to technological elements of the i-Pad texts (Ozturk & Hill, 2020). In contrast to the traditional book, the child was more engaged with a digital book (e.g., non-immediate talk). Arguably, this could be due to the lack of sensitivity of parents and children to the traditional book. Given that shared reading with a digital story book is a relatively new experience for the parents, the lack of awareness on how to interact with their children to promote traditional and digital literacies needs to be considered with caution (MacKay, 2015).

While studies on shared book reading have mainly focussed on a single reading of a book, a study by Schapira et al. (2021) reading the same book repeatedly with preschool aged children investigated the variability and stability in parent-child engagement. This study focussed on the utterances of parents and children at the action level and consciousness level. It was revealed that more utterances in relation to action level was made by parents in the first reading and decreased across readings. However, parents made fewer utterances to the conscious level in the first reading but these increased across readings. Interestingly, children spoke less than parents, however, their engagement increased throughout the readings and post reading conversations. Moreover, consistency in the quantity of utterances made by parents and children throughout the readings was observed. The repeated shared book reading, and post reading conversations can enhance discourse between parents and children, and simultaneously, can develop the involvement of children (Schapira et al., 2021).

Research studies on shared book reading with children with disabilities have become prominent in recent years. Marbel-Flint et al. (2020) explored the comprehension scores in typically developing children and children with autism using paper and i-Pad story books. The findings included that the use of i-Pad story books functioned in the same way for both typically developing children and children with autism in relation to their comprehension. Moreover, Fleury et al. (2018) emphasised the impact of shared book reading in developing social communication skills in children with autism, which eventually leads towards the development of listening skills and reading comprehension skills. Overall, the evidence indicates the importance of shared reading in developing literacy skills in children with a range of abilities and disability diagnoses (e.g., Down syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, language impairments and developmental delays).

When considering the different study designs and methods, several research studies on shared book reading conducted are exploratory (Ko, 2017; Lee, 2017; Pillinger & Vardy, 2022; Şimşek & Işıkoğlu Erdoğan, 2021), and interventional or experimental studies (Kucirkova et al., 2021; Lowman et al., 2018; Mol & Bus, 2011). Interventional studies have aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in relation to a targeted variable such as children's vocabulary gain, and types of questions asked by the adult during shared book reading sessions. In the same vein, research studies have included participants from low-income families compared to middle or high-income families (Sawyer et al., 2018; Son & Tineo, 2016).

Engagement is common to shared book reading opportunities between a child and their parent. However, the operational definitions for engagement differ according to the aims of a particular research study. Despite this, operational definitions within differing studies correspond with the key dimensions of the engagement (i.e., cognitive, emotional, and behavioural).

In this study, I considered the key dimensions of engagement (i.e., cognitive, emotional, behavioural). Measures of engagement were undertaken through examining various and different interactions between the child, parent, texts, and environmental features. This study explored, for example, verbal and nonverbal behaviours, language related behaviours, and other behaviours which correspond with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement.

The verbal aspect has been explored in two main aspects (i.e., meaning related talk and the print/digital features related talk). The meaning related talk relates to immediate talk and non-immediate talk. The language related behaviour is observed through code switching, translation and providing prompts, while non-verbal aspects include the gestures, eye-contact and facial expressions. While other behaviours were examined (e.g., involvement, mimicry, rapport, and feedback); social and emotional reactions and behaviours within different shared book reading sessions were also explored. In their study, Hindman et al. (2014) focussed on book-related talk such as discussing letters and sounds and meaning-related talk such as emphasising new vocabulary and inferencing. In a similar study, Patel et al. (2021) the examined variables included the immediate talk, non-immediate talk, illustration talk, and engagement.

Ewin et al. (2021) systematically reviewed the influence of joint media engagement of parent-child dyads, such as sharing the smart phone or tablet

computer, on the parent-child interactions. Cognitive interaction, physical interaction, technical interaction, and affective interaction were considered in the study (Ewin et al., 2021). In the same vein, changes in the cognitive affective and postural domains of interaction during shared book reading on paper and on tablet computer screen were examined in the study (Yuill & Martin, 2016). The variables include the interaction warmth, child engagement per minute, the analysis of dyadic postural synchrony, comments by mother and quality of children's recall included in the study as well as the interview with both children and parents about their encounters of reading on print and on screen (Yuill & Martin, 2016).

In sum, this study explored the parent-child engagement during shared book reading in the bilingual families in relation to language representation and text presentation. The study included story books written in Sinhala and English languages and presented them in print and in digital texts. The study addressed the cognitive, behavioural and affective engagement of parent-child dyads during shared book reading and the above-mentioned variables in the previous literature were taken into consideration during data collection and analysis. The study explored engagement during shared book reading in parent-child dyads where recruitment placed no restriction on the background of the child (e.g., with or without disability, immigrant or Australian born). Finally, the study explored engagement during shared book reading where there was no support or feedback; the research was interested in engagement during naturally occurring, home-based shared book reading sessions.

Overall, the effective engagement among participant-participant, and among participant-object during any shared activity influences the quality of the outcome. For example, the effective engagement during shared book reading can facilitate a child's language and reading skills from the child's perspective and, from the parent's perspective, it provides an opportunity to get involved in the child's learning process.

Learning to Read

The Generalized Cognition Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) focusses on the cognitive aspects of learning to read. Further, it emphasises that the presence of higher-order cognitive skills occurs when there is a level of proficiency in lower-order cognitive skills. Once a critical level of an element is acquired, it supports the simultaneous development of the elements above and below in a corresponding manner. Therefore, the integration of all the elements is important and those who are

beginning to read should be given more opportunities to apply and practice their newly acquired skills while working on more advanced cognitive functions.

Linguistically based meaning is important in the reading comprehension. Therefore, the knowledge of the language being read is an essential factor. The literature suggests that the reading process is grafted into the listening process of an individual who is learning to read in their mother-tongue or the first language (e.g., during shared book reading).

Hence, the skill of reading is the ability to convert the language in the print representation to a representation which is based on the spoken language and the individual can derive the meaning of what is being read. When an individual can identify or decode the written/print words accurately and have access to the meaning of those words, they can then use their innate language system to build up the meaning of discourses. Despite the type of representation, either print or spoken, the same set of linguistic skills are needed to comprehend the language. The ability to search each individual word in the lexical memory which then follows the ability to select the appropriate meaning for that word and then assign the appropriate syntactic structure to each word are crucial linguistic skills to form the syntactic structure of the sentences (Karageorgos et al., 2019; Solari et al., 2018). The meaning which is derived from each individually structured sentence leads one to derive a meaningful discourse for the whole set of sentences.

The ability of identifying the word and understanding the meaning requires more specific skills such as phonemic awareness, phonic, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Ecalte et al., 2020). Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate the sounds in spoken words while phonics is the ability to decode words using the letter-sound relationships. Fluency is the flow of speech, especially the ability to decode with speed while being accurate. The vocabulary is important; to know the meaning of a large corpus of words and the structure of written language. Simultaneously, comprehension is vital to understand the meaning of the text. All these skills are equally essential to be a skilled reader. Therefore, the focus on these specific skills plays a major role in creating best opportunities for all children to enhance their reading performance.

It is argued that the development of these skills can be supported by shared book reading opportunities within the family unit. Understanding how shared-book reading

occurs within families without support or direction from expert others is important to understanding the development of literacy generally.

Contributions of Shared Book Reading

Unquestionably, shared book reading contributes to the language and early literacy development in children regardless of the language. Language acquisition is fundamental to reading acquisition and shared book reading plays a desirable role in this process. Introducing shared book reading as early as possible has the potential to facilitate not only early literacy skills but also to enhance social, emotional, and psychological aspects of children and to cultivate the habit of reading. Indeed, there is a need to focus on reading and spelling instruction including introducing letter-sound associations during shared book reading. Various types of books are being used for shared book reading by families. However, it is important to use books with various elements without confining to one type of book. The variations of elements in the books in any language and any format can influence variations in the discourse style during shared book reading.

Shared book reading should be responsive, engaging, linguistically and conceptually suitable to the child's level of development to generate the maximum benefit out of it. Hence, merely having books or just reading without considering those factors can hinder a child's opportunity of receiving the maximum benefit through shared book reading. This can be facilitated by providing required knowledge and skills to the parent. Overall, shared book reading benefits not only the children but also enables the parents and teachers to contribute to children's academic achievements. These aspects contributed to identifying gaps in the current research which led to developing the research questions for this study, and to plan and conduct this study.

Conclusion

Taken together, there are many extrinsic and intrinsic factors which are essential in reading acquisition and development (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, this study has considered different aspects such as the home literacy environment, participants' knowledge and views on shared book reading, their reading strategies, aspects of bilingualism and the use of digital and print text during shared book reading. The study has placed a special focus on the engagement between parents and children and how

this engagement may support development of skills directly and indirectly related to reading.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore parent-child engagement during shared book reading, and to assist addressing the research questions set for this study. Firstly, this chapter will discuss the research design, participants, sampling, and variables including independent and measures. This discussion will give specific attention to the concept of engagement and how it was conceptualised in this study, and how observation data from each case's students were analysed and then explored through a mixed methods cross-case analysis. Thus, this chapter will explore how parent-child engagement occurs in bilingual families during shared book reading according to language representation (i.e., Sinhala and English languages) and text presentation (i.e., print and digital texts).

Research Design

A research design is a plan which is made prior to a program of enquiry or study. The design of a research study is a process comprising both logic and logistic. The logic is the thinking and reasoned judgment while the logistic is the method. The logic/thinking used by the researcher to design the research is impacted by the type of research inquiry. The logic is concerned with the researcher thinking about what types of data are required to answer the research questions, and what are the most appropriate research methods to produce those data.

The purpose behind the research, which is known as the research inquiry, shapes the overall design of the study with a special focus on the methods. Meanwhile, the research design as logistics can be described as the workplan, developed by the researcher to collect and analyse data to answer the research question while respecting the research inquiry. In addition, research design as logistics can be defined as planning and organising to keep study elements in the correct place. Research design as logistics is concerned about planning and organising to ensure all elements are aligned (e.g., measures align with research questions, equipment has been piloted to ensure it captures relevant data). This is important for an activity to occur effectively. Basically, the logic influences the logistic and in return the logistic reflects the logic (Frey, 2021; Minton & Lenz, 2019).

Three predominant research methodologies are found within social science research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. These methodologies are used within different types of research inquiries such as exploratory research inquiry, descriptive research inquiry and explanatory research inquiry (McGregor, 2019). The logic in a quantitative research methodology is based on organising, standardising, and arranging research into formal procedures and techniques. This is a linear plan which is highly organised and systematic resulting in adherence to a formal plan. The logic in a qualitative research design is that the original plan may change as the research unfolds. Therefore, the logic in a qualitative research design is non-linear and needs broader and fewer restrictions in the design concept. In a mixed method research design logic, there is not only one logic, more challenging logistics are also required.

It is important to consider the purpose of the research, and the research design as logic and logistic. The current study drew on research findings that reported the evidence behind shared book reading, based within the Cognitive Foundations Framework for reading (Hoover & Tunnmer, 2019). This theory was applied to further explore the engagement between a parent and their child during shared book reading sessions in a naturalistic home environment. The focus of the exploration was to better understand the nature of this engagement when variables of text type (i.e., print, digital) and language (i.e., Sinhala, English) are considered.

As mentioned earlier, the manner in which the researcher conducts the research refers to the design of the research. This includes recruitment and assignment of participants, administration of experimental procedures, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. The design of a research can influence the validity of the research, described as the ability to make conclusions based on the findings of the study and to generalise them. It is important to have a study design to maximise validity in order to gain meaningful research findings.

Generally, a research study is conducted to answer a specific research question for a specific purpose. Simply, to fill a gap in the existing research in a field. The investigators of a study can draw conclusions based on the research findings. However, the ability to draw conclusions is based on the validity of the study including the study design, sample, and how it is conducted.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods are a process of integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively address a research question (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Creswell et al. (2011) pointed out three fundamental designs in mixed methods such as the explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, and convergent. The explanatory sequential design consists of starting the study collecting quantitative data followed by analysis and moving to a qualitative stage to explain the findings of the quantitative stage. The follow-up stage consists of conducting a case study. The exploratory sequential design consists of starting the study collecting qualitative data followed by a quantitative stage to examine the results or to generalise the results. The convergent design consists of one stage in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected, analysed, and integrated to compare the findings from both forms (Creswell et al., 2011).

In a complex mixed method design, the researchers commence the study with a basic design and add other elements. This includes joining the basic designs with philosophical worldviews as in participatory research or considering other purposes such as developing case studies and randomised controlled trials (Creswell, 2015).

Mixed method designs have an important element called integration which can be achieved through the approaches of merging, connecting, and building (Fetters et al., 2013). Both quantitative and qualitative findings compare or relate to each other in merging, such as examining the theme patterns in relation to statistics. The integration via connecting takes place using the findings from one research type to advise the sampling of the other, such as deciding the cases to be included in the sample to collect qualitative data to describe the quantitative data. When integrating using the building approach, findings of one type of research data are used to advise the data collection plan of the other type of research, such as, building an assessment instrument based on the qualitative results, or using an elicitation study to build a questionnaire and inform further higher order explorations via observations and in-depth interviews (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

This study used an integrated mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2015). The purpose of this study was to explore engagement between parents and children in bilingual families during shared book reading in Sinhala and English languages using both print and digital representations of the book. In this study, the use of mixed method gave the opportunity to investigate the research questions in various

perspectives, such as addressing the quantitative data for “What” and qualitative data for “How” and “Why” of a phenomenon (Bazeley, 2018). The use of a mixed method approach in this study allowed the investigator to explore the parent-child engagement during shared book reading from two different perspectives: (1) parent-child engagement during shared book reading while using print text and digital text (representation), and (2) parent-child engagement during shared book reading while using Sinhala and English language (language). In both situations, the shared book reading sessions were in the home environment. The study was seeking to explore shared book reading in a naturalistic environment.

Case Studies

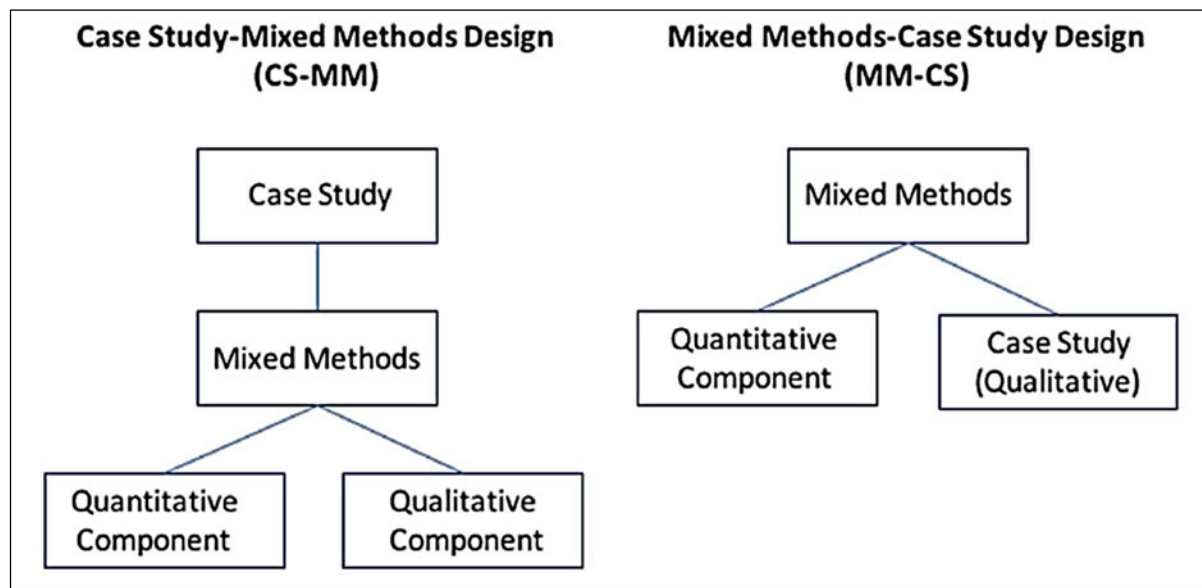
Yin (2014) described how the case study has the potential to examine one or more real-life cases at a deeper and comprehensive level. Both qualitative and quantitative research can be integrated when examining the case in a case study (Yin, 2014). However, mixed methods case study is considered as a complex design (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The combination of mixed methods and case studies can provide an overall understanding of the study under examination. Indeed, a mixed method case study “enable(s) you to address broader or more complicated research questions than case studies alone” (Yin, 2014, p. 67).

In general, two designs can be identified as approaches to integrated mixed methods and case study designs. They are the mixed methods-case study design (MM-CS) and the case study-mixed methods design (CS-MM). In the MM-CS design, a nested case study with a qualitative element is used as the core or parent mixed methods study. In a CS-MM design, a case study with a nested mixed methods design is used as the parent case study (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

Figure 3-1

Two Basic Designs in Integrating Mixed Methods and Case Study Designs

(Guetterman & Fetters, 2018)



Case study research can involve the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. As a result, it can be identified within mixed method research approaches (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018). Hence, a researcher can use the mixed methods design with a case study for the qualitative component, with a complimentary quantitative data set (see Figure 3-1). In contrast, the researcher can use the case study design with quantitative and qualitative methods nested in it (see Figure 3-1). In both cases, the researcher can consider using both qualitative and quantitative data in a meaningful way in mixed methods research to make new connections and to obtain a comprehensive understanding (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

Yin (2014) pointed out four varieties of case study designs to choose based on the following features: single or multiple case design, holistic or embedded design. Further, a case study design comprises three main features such as the case study purpose, number of cases and the unit of analysis. The case study purpose can be either instrumental or intrinsic. The number of cases can be either single case or multiple case study. The unit of analysis can be either holistic or embedded (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

Integration of Case Study and Mixed Methods Designs

The mixed methods-case study design consists of a mixed method design as the basis and a subsequent use of a case study design to collect qualitative data. On the other hand, the case study-mixed methods design can consist of a case study as the basis and apply mixed methods by collecting, analysing, and integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The use of mixed method design can enhance the clarity of the case study method, and the integration of various data sources results in providing an overall understanding of the research inquiry.

This study applied the case study mixed method design (CS-MM) in which the mixed methods was applied within the case study. This study chose seven case studies, as more than one case study leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the research. Yin (2014) explained the importance of using more than one case study to obtain a comprehensive understanding. A cross-case comparison was applied to identify common and unique characteristics of each case.

With relation to the mixed method perspective, the integration of quantitative research into the case studies can facilitate the identification of patterns, statistical associations, and generalisable inferences with the presence of a sufficient sample and a well-considered design. In sum, the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a systematic manner is vital to producing purposeful data and results to achieve a comprehensive answer to the research question under study (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

Participants

Study participants included children and their parents from bilingual families living in New South Wales with the language backgrounds of Sinhala and English. The overseas-born residents from Sri Lanka represent 0.6% of Australia's total population, moving up to the 10th position in the top 10 countries of birth for the overseas-born population of Australia in the year 2019 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019-20).

The enrolments of students of language background other than English by language in New South Wales government schools in 2018 and 2019 includes 0.7% of students with the language background of Sinhala in both years. The distribution of students with Sinhala language backgrounds across 11 areas of New South Wales are shown in Table 3-1. The term Sinhalese is used to refer to Sinhala language in the literature (Wijaythilake & Parrila, 2019).

According to statistics from the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2021), the proportion of students enrolled with a language background other than English in the primary and secondary level of schooling with a Sinhala language background was 0.7% as of March 2019. Further, the statistics in relation to enrolments of government preschool students from language backgrounds other than English, which has focussed on the largest language groups in March 2019 indicated 0.3% of students were from the language background of Sinhala.

Table 3-1

Number of Enrolments of Students of Sinhala Language Background by Area in New South Wales (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2021)

Language	Sydney-North	Sydney- Inner	Sydney- South	Sydney- Southwest	Sydney- West	Sydney- Northwest	North East NSW	North West NSW	South West NSW	South East NSW	Central Coast, Newcastle	NSW total	As % of total LBOTE
Sinhalese	393	95	51	119	542	525	20	25	27	51	61	1,909	0.7%

All children in this study belonged to the age group of 4-7 years old. The participants were recruited through various avenues such as Sri Lankan community organisations, alumni associations of Sri Lankan universities, and friends of recruited families residing in New South Wales. Information flyers and notices were sent via e-mails to the above-mentioned resource groups, who were also asked to notify friends and families who may be interested in participating in the study.

Sample

The purpose of the study was to explore the engagement between parents and their children during shared book reading. The sampling strategies should be able to generate a sample which could answer the research questions of the study. When considering all the sampling strategies, the most appropriate sampling strategy to serve the purpose of this study was the mixed methods sampling strategy (Campbell et al., 2020; Houchins et al., 2022). This would allow for both quantitative and

qualitative data to be collected, allowing for both depth and breadth of information throughout the research study.

The sampling method in this study was originally designed as a stratified purposive sampling but due to COVID-19 pandemic the study resorted to a snowballing sampling method. Stratified purposive sampling is one of the basic mixed method sampling strategies (Suter, 2012). The stratified nature is a characteristic of probability sampling, while the small number of cases generated through this strategy is a characteristic of purposive sampling. In the stratified purposive sampling strategy, the researcher divides the groups of interest into strata as the initial step. Next, based on this purposive sampling the researcher selects a small number of cases to study in detail within each strata/subgroup. As a result, the researcher gets the opportunity to explore and explain in detail the similarities and differences across the strata.

The snowballing sampling method has the features of networking and referral. It involves starting with a few initial contacts who meet the research criteria and invite them to participate in the research. Next, the researcher asks them to recommend other contacts whom they think would meet the research criteria and would be willing to participate in the research. The researcher then asks that second set of participants to follow the same procedure and the process is continued until the target sample size or the saturation point achieved. Snowballing sampling method has become very useful for accessing people who are hard-to-reach. In this study, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown a barrier was created to reaching out to the target population, and some of them or their family members were affected by COVID-19, adding extra challenges to the recruitment process (Knott et al., 2022).

While snowball sampling allowed the researcher to address recruitment barriers posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it appeared to restrict the breadth of participant characteristics. For example, the sample consisted of mainly highly educated professionals. While attempts were made to attract participants from a wide range of backgrounds, this was not possible within the time constraints of the study. These restrictions will be discussed in the limitations of the study.

In this study, the population was the families who have migrated from Sri Lanka and are currently living in New South Wales with the language backgrounds of both Sinhala and English, with children in the age group of 4-7 years. This age group was selected as children were most likely to be in the learning to read phase of development, and shared book reading was more likely to be conducted in the home.

Independent Variables

In this study, there were two main independent variables and each of them had two levels. They were:

- Type of representation of the story book
 - Print text
 - Digital text
- Language presentation of the story book
 - Sinhala language
 - English language

A within-subject design with a counterbalance feature was implemented with seven parent-child dyads. A within-subject design was suitable for this study as the sample size was small and the participants exposed to all the types of conditions but in a different order. However, the within-subject design would have less variance due to the small sample size (MacKenzie, 2002).

When conducting a within-subject design it is important to consider a procedure to control the learning effects resulting from the order of presentation of different conditions. Counterbalancing is available to control the effects of the order of conditions in a study, resulting in the enhancement of the internal validity in a study. The procedure of counterbalancing does not eliminate the order of conditions, but it balances the influence of the conditions on the study (Bazeley, 2018).

The study adhered to the counterbalancing procedure by placing participants as parent-child dyads and presenting the conditions to each group in a different order. A Latin Square design was used where each condition appeared only once in each row and column. Simultaneously, each condition appeared before and after each other condition a similar number of times (i.e., Balanced Latin Square). Since this study focussed on four conditions, the order of them took place in a Balanced Latin Square (MacKenzie, 2002) as shown in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2*Order of Counterbalance for Text Representation and Language*

Order	Text Representation/Language			
1	Print text/Sinhala	Print text/English	Digital text/Sinhala	Digital text/English
2	Print text/English	Digital text/Sinhala	Digital text/English	Print text/Sinhala
3	Digital text/Sinhala	Digital text/English	Print text/Sinhala	Print text/English
4	Digital text/English	Print text/Sinhala	Print text/English	Digital text/Sinhala

Books and Book Formats

Award-winning children’s story books written in Sinhala language which also had been translated into different foreign languages were used in the study. Both Sinhala and English translation of the books had been undertaken by the same author including the illustrations (see Appendix A). The selection of the books aimed to enhance the quality and maximise validity of the materials to be used in the study. The books chosen attempted to be representative of those found in homes and written by a well-respected author.

In this study four book formats were used to engage in shared book reading (i.e., print text Sinhala, print text English, digital text Sinhala, digital text English). In selecting the texts, consideration was given to the following features of the books:

- Similarities in the plot structure (themes)
- Similarities in characters
- Similarities in illustrations

The four books chosen were all written by Sybil Wettasinghe. The books chosen to be part of the study were: *Run Away Beard*, *Little Red Car*, *The Umbrella Thief*, and *Hoity the Fox*.

While print text in English and Sinhala are often similar in appearance, this may not be the case with digital text of the books. There are two main types of digital books including basic features and enhanced features. The basic format allows the reader to tap on the pictures to elicit the word and swipe it to turn the pages. In addition, the basic format of digital text doesn’t include the auto narration feature whereas the enhanced features can be described as including sound effects and/or animation

(Munzer et al., 2019). In this study, the researcher tried to maintain the uniformity of the digital text type using a basic format. Due to the lack of availability of the digital text of the books in both Sinhala and English, print text of each story was scanned and converted to a digital text to maintain the similarities in the stories. The participants in this study were encouraged to use their own digital device available at home (e.g., computer, tablet, phone).

Measures

This study was an exploratory study in relation to parent-child engagement during shared book reading. Therefore, it was important to investigate different perspectives to gather a comprehensive set of data about the quantity, nature, and substance of engagement (Lee et al., 2021). Hence a variety of data collection methods were used in the study.

Questionnaires

Questions for the questionnaire were developed to capture background information on participants. They were developed from reviewing previous literature (e.g., Kucirkova & Grover, 2022; Melzi & Caspe, 2005). The questions developed by the researcher, and reviewed by experts in the field (i.e., academics with expertise in English literature). They were piloted as part of Case Study 1.

Questionnaires written in simple English were provided to both parents and children to complete. The parents were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the data collection. The demographic data of parents, their knowledge and attitudes about shared book reading were collected via the questionnaires (see Appendix B).

Another questionnaire was used to collect data on the perception about shared book reading among children (see Appendix C). They indicated their perceptions using symbols of a child's face with a range of facial expressions (e.g., pleasure, dislike, boredom, no idea). The parents were allowed to read the children's questionnaire to their child, whenever the child needed support. The purpose of the questionnaires was to collect data in relation to their knowledge, attitudes, and perception about shared book reading.

Both questionnaires included questions focussing on the following types of concepts:

- Experience and behaviour questions
- Opinion and values questions
- Feeling questions
- Knowledge questions
- Background/demographic questions

Video Recorded Shared Book Reading Sessions

Video recorded observations were used to capture both verbal and non-verbal engagement of the participants during all shared book reading sessions. It provided rich and comprehensive information about parent-child engagement during shared book reading to assist with addressing the research questions under investigation.

Three dimensions of engagement and the relevant behaviours for this study were identified using previous research studies. Patel et al. (2021) included immediate talk, non-immediate talk, illustration talk, and engagement in a similar study. MacKay (2015) included behaviours such as meaning-related talk, text, and print talk, and technology talk when exploring the nature of the interaction between the parent and child during traditional book reading and in a story on an iPad. In addition, visual attention, verbal engagement, meaning-related talk, print-related talk, and facial expressions were included as variables in studies on engagement during shared book reading (Canfield et al., 2020; Cutler, 2020; Muhinyi et al., 2020; Wicks et al., 2020). The pilot study was used to modify the pre-identified and defined behaviors for each dimension of engagement.

Engagement. Engagement is a common phenomenon in a shared book reading session which involves the parent, child, and a piece of reading material. However, the operational definitions for engagement differ according to the aims of a particular research study (Hiver et al., 2021; Shafer & Wanless, 2022; Son & Tineo, 2016). Despite this, operational definitions within differing studies correspond with the key dimensions of the engagement, that is, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural (Guthrie et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2021).

This study considered three key dimensions of engagement (i.e., cognitive, emotional, behavioural). Measures of engagement were undertaken through examining various and different interactions between the child, parent, texts, and

environmental features (Figure 3-2). This study explored, for example, verbal and nonverbal behaviours, language related behaviours, and other behaviours which corresponded with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement.

A child's engagement in shared book reading can be hindered by various other factors. For instance, a child's sensory needs, self-regulation, attention span, health status, age and cultural appropriateness of the stories. As this study was conducted in the home, these factors were under the control of parents. Consistency in addressing these factors was not possible or desirable due to the nature of the study.

The different behaviours within each dimension are listed and defined with examples in Table 3-3.

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted at the end of the recoding of the four shared book reading sessions. At least one of the child's parents participated in the interview. The interview was conducted via the phone due to COVID19 restrictions on research. Each interview was recorded to allow for transcription and a fine-grained analysis.

When planning a semi-structured interview, it is important to design it across a topic guide which should consist of a group of three to five broad topics (Knott et al., 2022). The semi-structured interview in this study was designed to examine parental reflection about the shared book reading sessions. Hence, the topic guide in this study consisted of questions based on the strengths, challenges, reading strategies and the modifications for the future shared book reading sessions. This included talking about the things they felt went well during the shared book reading sessions, and those matters that they felt were unclear. Parental views about what is meant by shared book reading and its role in learning to read and language development were also discussed in the interview. In addition, there were discussions around the place of digital technology in shared book reading, the place of bilingual shared book reading and how they contribute to learning to read.

Figure 3-2

Key Dimensions of Engagement and Differing Behaviours within Each Dimension

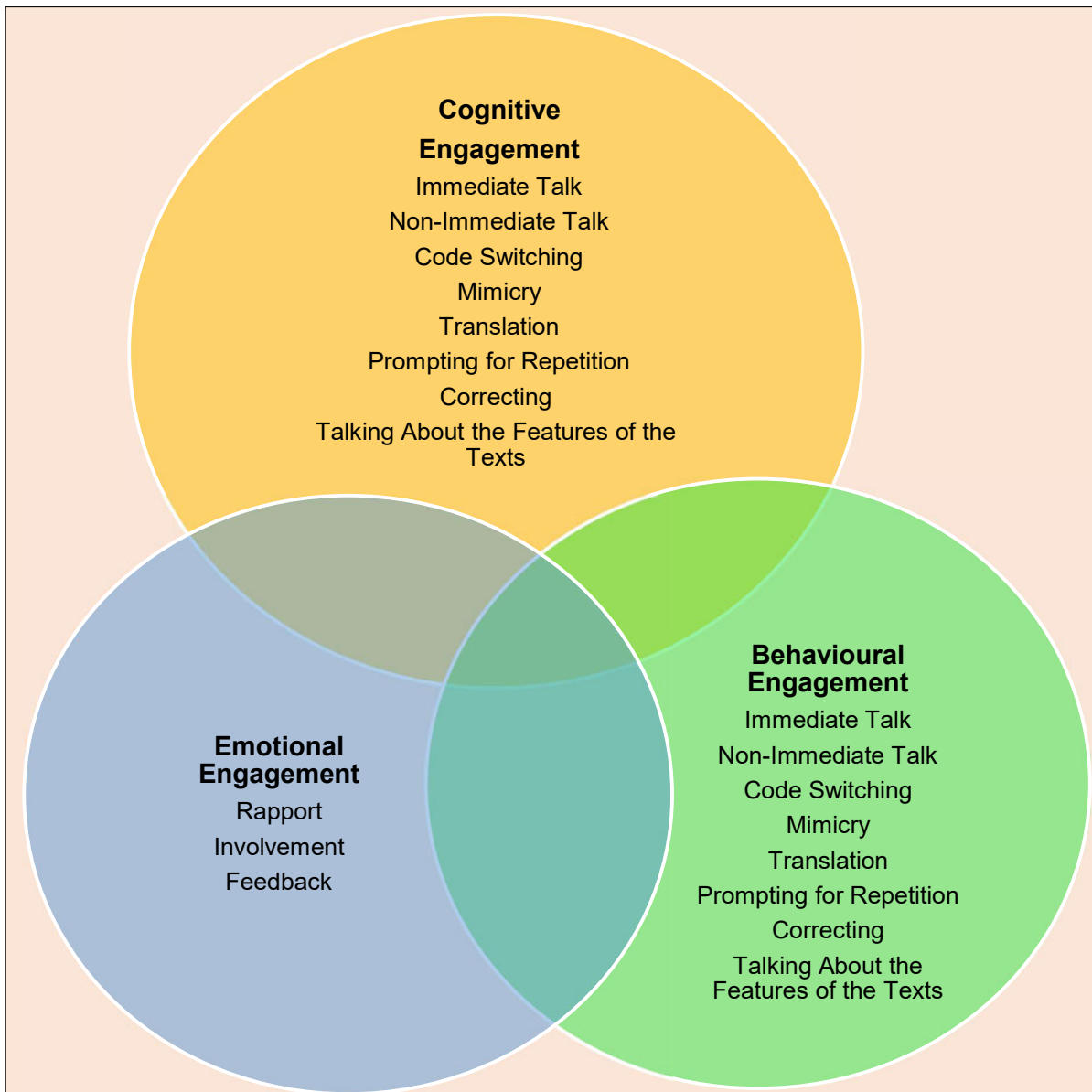


Table 3-3

Engagement Behaviours, Definitions and Examples

Behaviours	Definitions	Examples
<p>Meaning related talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate talk 	<p>Talking about the immediate story content and how it directly links to the literal meaning of the story being read</p>	<p>Asking “Wh” questions such as, “What is this?” “Where is he going?” Talking about the events in the story</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-immediate talk 	<p>Talking beyond the content of the immediate story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of inferential questions (Questions that ask for inferences, imagination, social knowledge, and internal states) • Use of inferential statements (Statements that draw upon inferences, imagination, internal states, or social knowledge that should be assumed despite the direct observations from the text) 	<p>“What do you think happened to the umbrella?” “Why does he keep the toy car under the tree?” “How would you feel if this happened to you?” “The umbrella has flown away” “May be to play with tree” “I will be surprised”</p>
<p>Language related behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code switching 	<p>While using the language which is presented in the story book, switching to the other language</p> <p>This could be either mandatory /cued language switching or voluntary language switching</p>	<p>“amba tree eka ehua” (This comment includes three Sinhala words and one English word)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation 	<p>Explaining the meaning of the story by translating from the original language to the other language</p>	<p>“It means to clap their hands” (Translating from Sinhala to English)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompting for repetition 	<p>Child may be asked to repeat a syllable/word/phrase or a sentence after the parent/adult</p>	<p>child repeated, “to <i>clap their hands</i>” while making the gesture of clapping</p>

Table 3-3(cont.)*Engagement Behaviours, Definitions and Examples*

Language related behaviours (cont.)	Correcting	When the child read inaccurately, the parent/adult makes/attempts to correct
	Providing Cues	Providing the first sound of the word
	Mimicry	Imitating sounds, words, or gestures
Talk related to features of the text	Talking about the features of the print and digital text	Ask questions and make comments about letters, sounds, words, and illustrations
Rapport, involvement	Smiles, making eye-contact	Word tracking Verbal praise (e.g., “good boy”, “yes”, “that’s right”)
Feedback	Verbal and non-verbal feedback	Facial expressions to show feelings such as fear, surprise

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained prior to commencing the study. Clearance was obtained from University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2021-209; Appendix D), upholding the intent of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research (NHMRC, 2018).

The primary data collected as part of this research were via video recordings. Ensuring the security of these data was a key ethical issue. Recordings were uploaded to a secure site within the University of Sydney, as per the data management plan set out for the project. The researcher also kept a copy on the university owned laptop during analysis; the computer was password protected and encrypted.

Due to the current global pandemic situation of COVID-19, visiting the participants to collect data was a major challenge. Therefore, the researcher was required to consider another option, that is, inviting the parents to video record the sessions and to upload the video recordings to a unique and personalised Dropbox. The semi-structured interview took place via mobile phones, and data uploaded to the university data storage site.

Procedure

Following the approval of the proposal, an application to conduct research submitted to the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee. Following the approval to conduct the research, recruitment of participants was undertaken by sending notices to the Sinhalese Cultural Forum of NSW Inc, Sri Lankan Universities Alumni Associations in NSW, Sinhala language schools, and Sri Lankan Buddhist Temples in NSW. The Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education at the University of Sydney was also approached to assist with identifying potential avenues of recruitment.

Pilot Study

Prior to the commencement of a research study, the planned study can be evaluated by conducting a similar study on a smaller scale by involving only few participants (Doody & Doody, 2015). This is identified as a pilot study. A pilot study is useful in various perspectives including the researcher and the research itself. From the researcher's perspective, the researcher gets the opportunity to practise and evaluate the planned data collection and data analysis methods including the possibility of identifying problems to be anticipated. As a result, the researcher can modify the research questions or methodology to prevent those identified problems such as ethical and practical issues occurring in the larger scale study. From the researcher's perspective, conducting a pilot study provides an opportunity to self-reflect on their ability and commitment as a researcher (Doody & Doody, 2015).

From the research study perspective, the pilot study provides the opportunity to determine whether all the elements of the planned larger study would work collaboratively. This can be particularly relevant in conducting case studies in which there are multiple components (Malmqvist et al., 2019). In sum, a pilot study is useful in modifying and adjusting the plan of the main study and facilitates the validity of the research study.

The pilot study for this study mainly focussed on evaluating the coding scheme for the anticipated behaviours of participants during a shared book reading session. The pilot study was conducted with one parent-child dyad who met the requirements in the planned criteria for the recruitment. The instructions for shared book reading sessions were provided to the parent verbally and they were advised to video record the session. The researcher analysed the video recording to identify the behaviour

codes for each participant, and manually tabulated the pre-defined behaviours as they unfolded while recording the time duration for each behaviour. It was decided to calculate the rate of behaviour per minute rather than the time duration to better align with the research questions. Further, it allowed for a common point of comparison across passages due to the different periods of time to read the passage by individual families.

The pilot study provided an opportunity to modify and clarify the coding scheme for various behaviours which could take place during a shared book reading session. The factors to consider when video recording the sessions, such as the placement of the recording device, were identified as a valuable aspect to consider when providing instructions to participants in the main study. It was important for the camera to be placed so that it could capture both verbal and non-verbal behaviours of each participant. Further, the instructions for reading were prepared in written form in addition to the verbal explanations on the phone.

The pilot study was also used to evaluate the suitability of the semi-structured interview questions. The analysis of the interviews provided evidence that the constructs on which the interview questions were based (i.e., strengths, challenges, reading strategies, future modifications) provided sufficient data to address the research questions.

As a result of this analysis of the pilot data, it was determined that more background information was required about the families participating in the study. As a result, a questionnaire was developed and administered to each parent and child prior to the study commencing. A key part of this questionnaire was to ask about parental understanding of shared book reading, as well as collecting background information about the family (e.g., demographic details, attitudes towards reading, family literacy resources).

In sum, the pilot study was useful to create and modify the operationalised definition of engagement for this study, and to determine the aspects of engagement which should be included in this study. The validity of the main study became enhanced because of the pilot study as the modified coding scheme was used for inter-rater reliability agreement.

Main Study

When a potential family contacted the researcher with an interest in participating in the study, any questions they had about the study after reading the Participant Information Statement (Appendix E) were addressed by the researcher. Once all questions were addressed, written consent was obtained from the parent and assent from the child (Appendix F). Next the parental questionnaire was administered.

Participants were randomly assigned one of the counterbalanced order of books for the activity. All participants read the same stories but the type of representation (i.e., print text and digital text) and language presentation (i.e., Sinhala language and English language) of the stories and the order they were read were different across the participants. There were four books in total, and each book had its own differences in relation to the type of text and language.

Each parent-child dyad was posted written instructions for conducting the shared book reading sessions, along with the story books. The reading instructions encouraged families to engage in shared book reading the way they normally do at home and to video record the shared book reading sessions using their own recording device in a way which captured their engagement during sessions. In addition, the parent was asked to use their own digital device of choice to read the digital story books and was also asked to finish reading all four books over a one-week period.

Once all the reading sessions were completed, each family was provided with a Dropbox link to upload the recordings. Each parent-child dyad received a unique Dropbox link. The unique Dropbox site could only be accessed by the allocated dyad, and the researcher. Finally, the semi-structured interview was carried out with the parent over the mobile phone and recorded. The questionnaire for the child was also administered.

Data Analysis

The structure of the research can be identified as descriptive. It required both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The unit of observation was the parent-child dyad, from which data were collected, while the unit of analysis was the engagement during shared book reading.

Quantitative Analysis

Engagement was the dependent variable in this study, and it comprised three types such as cognitive, emotional and behaviour. The categorical (nominal) variables were established by calculating the rate of the behaviour occurred per minute among each parent-child dyad during each shared book reading in relation to text presentation and language representation. The numeric data generated from the observations were described and compared.

After receiving data, the video recordings of shared book reading sessions were coded (e.g., Dyad 1, Dyad 2 ...). An Excel spreadsheet was initially used to record data. It consisted of the pre-defined behaviours given in Table 3-3. The time duration of each session was recorded second by second on the vertical axis of the Excel spreadsheet. The video recording of shared book reading was played alongside the Excel in the computer and the researcher recorded the observations under the relevant behaviour as they unfolded by each second (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3

Excel Sheet Used for Recording the Observations of a Shared Book Reading Session in English Print Text

Time	Immediate Talk	Non-immediate Talk	Mimicry	Code Switch	Translation	Prompting for Repetition	Correcting	Providing Cues	Talk Related to the Features of the Text
0.6.05									
0.6.06	P-"What's a jack tree?"								
0.6.07			C-"mm jack tree?"						
0.6.08	P-"yeh,kos gaha"				P-"kos gaha"				
0.6.09									
0.6.10									

P-Parent C-Child

When recording observations, the person who demonstrated the behaviour was noted (e.g., P for parent or C for child) (Figure 3-3), along with verbatim wording of conversations. The video recorded sessions were observed twice to make sure the required evidence was identified and recorded under the appropriate behaviour. The

frequency of occurrence for each behaviour was calculated. The total time duration of each session was recorded and used to calculate the rate of occurrence of each behaviour per minute. Next, charts were constructed to exhibit the findings according to English and Sinhala languages and print and digital texts.

The video sessions were watched and how the dyad's engagement unfolded was recorded in writing with relevant examples. Next, they were categorised according to the pre-defined behaviours (Figure 3-4). Total time duration was then noted down for each shared book reading session. The time when either participant read the name of the story was considered as the start of the session, and the time the video was turned off considered as the end of the session. Total time duration was calculated for each session. The total number of each pre-defined behaviour was calculated for each participant for the shared book reading session. Then the rate per minute for each pre-defined behaviour was calculated.

Evidence for emotional engagement such as rapport, non-verbal expressions including facial expression, eye-contact and gestures were summarised for each shared book reading session and used along with other data to support analysis in this case study-mixed method research. Analysis of video recordings captured a record of occurrences of target behaviours accompanied by descriptions of what part of the story was being read, contributions by the adult, and other events within the shared book reading context (e.g., contribution of sibling).

Reliability Scoring Method

The transcripts and the video recorded observations of shared book reading sessions were used to complete the reliability measures in this study. The video recordings of the shared book reading sessions were used to evaluate non-verbal aspects such as the gestures and facial expressions while the audio component in the recording was used to evaluate paralinguistic characteristics such as the intonation and the pitch.

Figure 3-4

Example of a Transcribed and Coded Video Recorded Shared Book Reading Session

PRINT -ENGLISH (Time duration 3.42 minutes)	P-Parent, C-Child
Parent gave the book to child and said “can you read the story today” but mother gave the answer as “ it’s called THE RUN-AWAY BEARD”	
The child looked at the book and said “THE?” (<i>Immediate talk, Repetition</i>)	
P- “ oh, you are right, it is called RUN AWAY BEARD, there is no “THE” mom just put that in there”	
<i>(Self-correct and Immediate talk)</i>	
P- mother read the topic of the book (<i>Print talk</i>)	
Child laughs and looked at mother and showed her enthusiasm	
P- mom asked the child to hold the page of the book	
Parent read and relate the long beard in the story to the child’s hair – mother said “just like your brother’s hair (<i>Print talk and Non-immediate talk</i>)	
P- reading (<i>Print talk</i>)	
P- do you think he will do ? this is beard (pointed to the picture) (<i>Print talk and Non-immediate talk</i>)	
C- oh ! (<i>Immediate talk</i>)	
P- read (<i>Print talk</i>)	
P- oh look at that , it seems crazy (pointed to the picture of the long beard) (<i>Print talk and Immediate talk</i>)	
P- reading and said “ oh , she is going to burn it , do you think it will work ?” (ask the question from the child) (<i>Print talk and Non-immediate</i>)	
C- I cannot say (<i>Immediate talk</i>)	
Parent read the story (<i>Print talk</i>)	
Child read the last sentence “ la la la la” (<i>Print talk</i>)	

A study consists of various types of reliability methods and the inter-rater reliability or the interobserver reliability is one of them. Three raters approved the pre-defined categories of themes such as the behaviours. The method of calculating inter-rater reliability should be selected by considering factors such as the level of measurement, the data, number of raters, minimum score of agreement and practical elements (e.g., technical expertise, time and funds) (Frey, 2018; Multon & Coleman, 2018; Weadman et al., 2022).

Reliability Method

Initial reliability of 90% established between the student researcher and the lead research supervisor, both of whom have expertise in education, special and inclusive education, and speech and language, during the development of the coding scheme. The video recordings of the shared book reading sessions were observed and coded according to the coding scheme with at least 90% agreement. The student researcher is bilingual, whose first language is Sinhala, and second language is English. The inter-rater reliability was ensured by being double coded by the student researcher and then the percentage of agreement between the two coders was calculated. Overall inter-rater reliability was 95%.

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the semi-structured interview data (Harry et al., 2005). An interview schedule was used as a guide in the semi-structured interviews and included a list of topics or possible questions to ask. The semi-structured interview provided the researcher with the capacity to explore a topic at a more intense level and provided the opportunity for the participant to explain in detail (Dimond, 2015). All semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded to allow for transcription.

In this study, the researcher used verbatim transcriptions of interviews, and moved back and forth among the data coding the concepts, ideas, and articles of relevance to understand the parent's perceptions of shared book reading. In this process of open coding the researcher named the events and actions in the data while comparing them frequently with each other in order to identify the relationships among them. The open coding was followed by axial coding (Harry et al., 2005). During the axial coding, the open codes were clustered around specific points of intersection. The

axial coding was followed by selective coding in which the researcher recognised the code clusters in a selective manner including their relatedness to each other and the narration behind them (Beth et al., 2005).

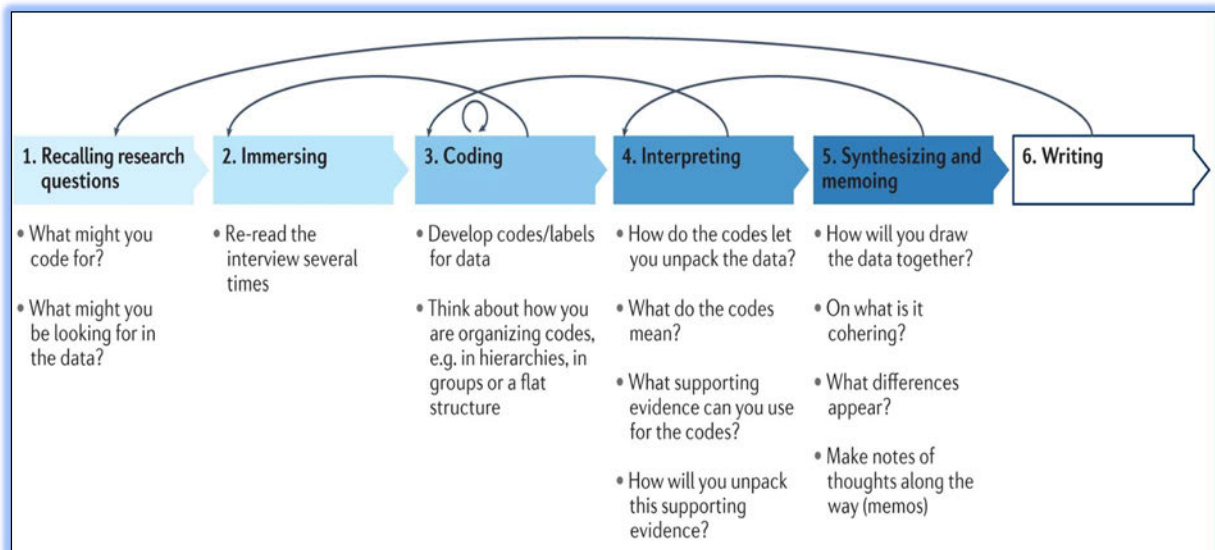
The identification of themes, patterns and relationships was obtained by using different techniques such as scanning raw data to identify word and phrase repetition, and comparing primary and secondary data (e.g., comparing the findings of the interview data with the findings in the literature). Another technique used to identify the themes was searching for missing information (e.g., aspects of the question not answered by the interviewee). Finally, the results were discussed with other researchers (e.g., supervisor) in relation to the research objectives (Dudovskiy, 2018).

The audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed. Most importantly, deciding what needed to be included when transcribing could impact aspects of the analysis such as the direction and possibilities. This decision regarding transcription was taken in relationship to the analytical focus and the data that needed to be captured. In this study, a post positivist perspective was the focus, and importance was given to what was said by the participants, and not how they said (Knott et al., 2022). The analysis of semi-structured interviews, therefore, was considered a generative process.

The analysis of interviews was also iterative in nature. As the researcher refined coding through multiple readings of transcripts and drawing on findings from observations and the dyad questionnaire, interpretations were enriched. This iterative form of analysis allowed the researcher to strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis (Malmqvist, 2019). This process is outlined in Figure 3-5.

Figure 3-5

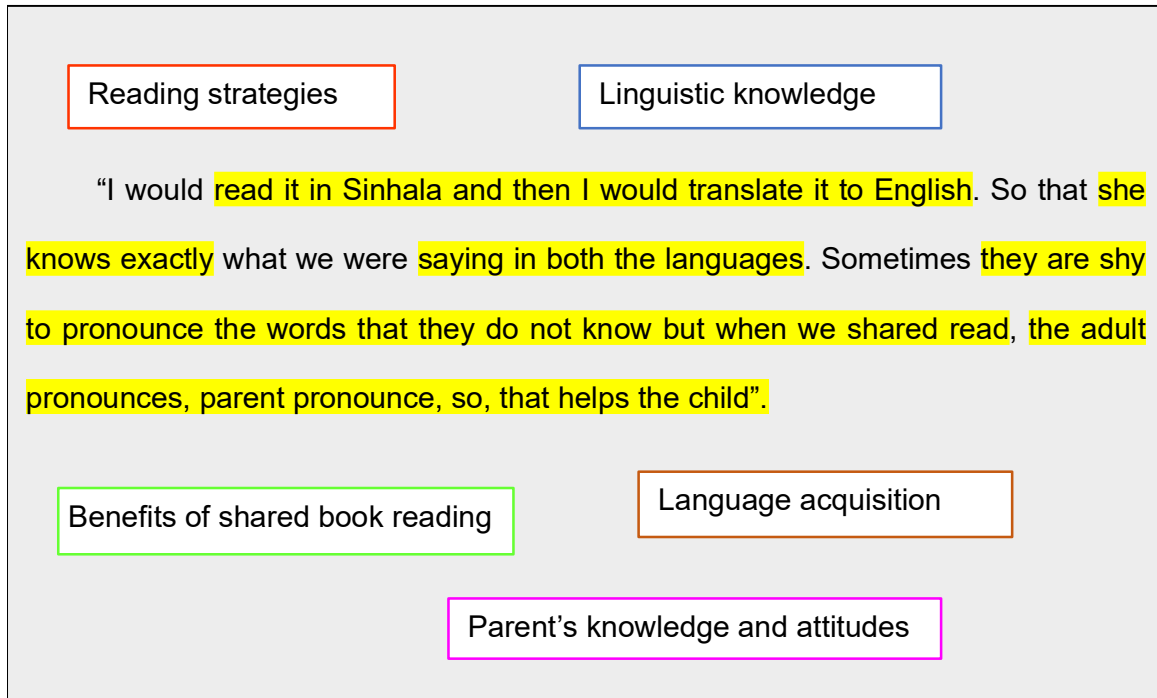
The Iterative Nature of the Analysis of Interview Data (Knott et al., 2022)



In this study, the researcher started with an initial analytical framework focussing on the areas the interview questions were based on, and then refined them when commencing the analysis process. During the process of coding, the data transformed to codes. This was done by highlighting key words and clauses, and labelling them (e.g., Figure 3-6). After the refinement process the distinct codes and commonalities were identified across the dyads. The codes consisted of the knowledge and attitudes of parents, and reflections about the shared book reading sessions including the strengths, challenges, reading strategies, future modification, and benefits of shared book reading.

Figure 3-6

Example of a Segment of a Text from Semi-Structured Interview Data Transcription



This study followed the case study-mixed methods design. Hence, the data from both parent's and children's questionnaires were used to support the findings from the video recorded shared book reading sessions and the semi-structured interview for each dyad. The results for each case study will be reported in the next chapter.

Mixed Methods

The data collection methods generated both numeric and non-numeric data. The types of numeric data generated from the study can be classified as categoric (i.e., nominal data; number of behaviours) and ratio data (i.e., observational data; behaviours per minute). The non-numeric data were qualitative (e.g., interviews, affective observational data from videos).

The data analysis used mixed methods because different data components contribute differentially and provide opportunities for stronger inferences when compared to using only one method (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). Generally, the mixed methods enhance the breadth and depth of the outcome of research. In achieving this

more comprehensive knowledge about the subject, and to provide validity of the results, data triangulation is commonly used when mixing methods.

Triangulation is described as the combination of various perspectives on a problem under research (Flick, 2019). Triangulation involves combining various qualitative or quantitative methods or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Triangulation provides the opportunity to use the research methods in a flexible and methodical manner according to the research under study (Flick, 2018). Triangulation is categorised into four types: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation (Flick, 2019). This study applied methodological triangulation, and data were collected in various ways at various levels such as via questionnaires, video observations and semi-structured interviews.

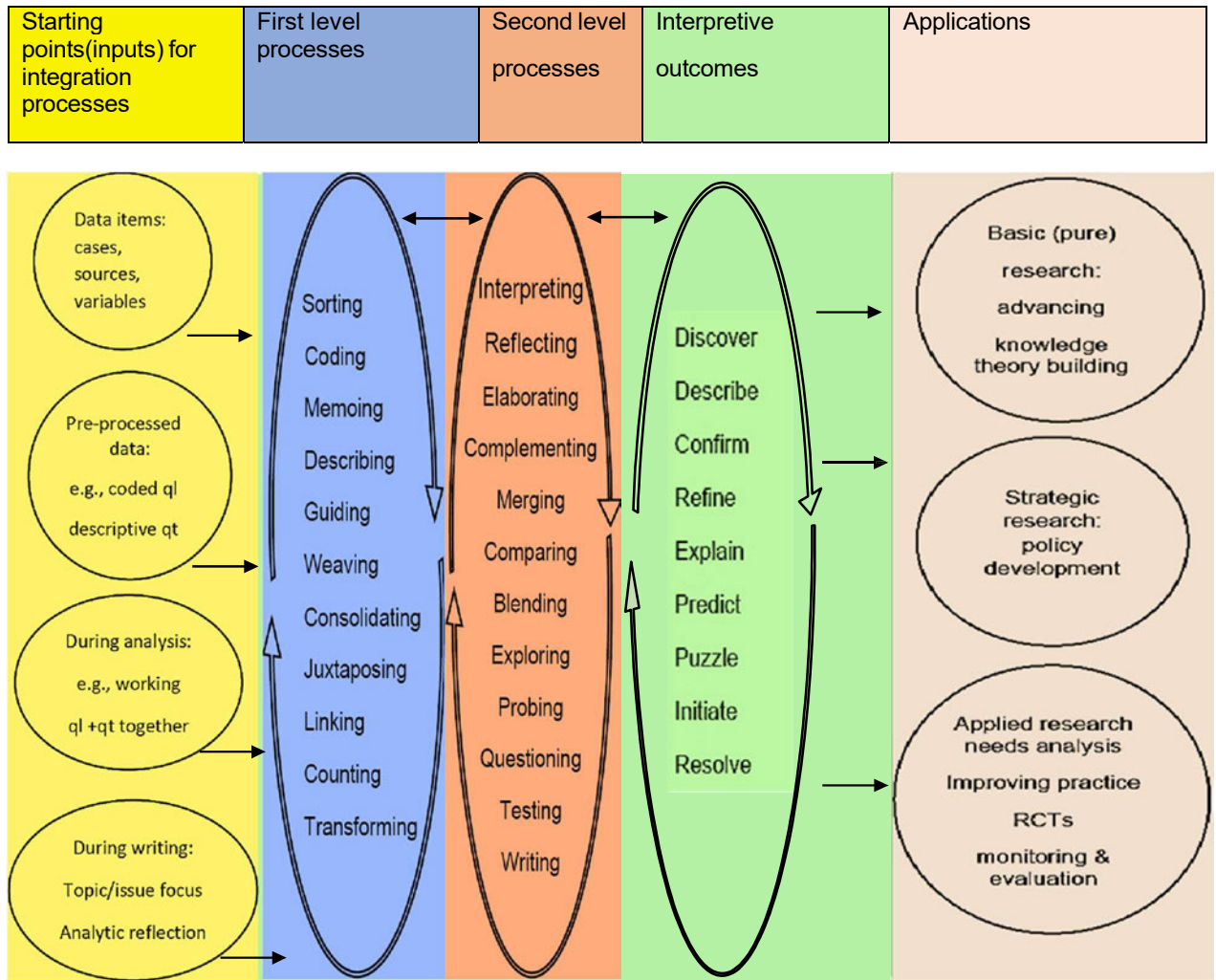
The data analysis was undertaken in an iterative manner, working to a more integrative and interpretative approach (see Figure 3-7). The first level of processes included the analysis from raw data to partially or fully completed quantitative or qualitative analyses. During the second level process, the sources and methods were integrated in ever increasing depth as outlined in Figure 3-7. As a result, the data analysis went through a continual process of interweaving, investigating, comparing, interrelating, and challenging, to lead to drawing interpretive results.

Conclusion

Overall, this study was based on seven case studies, and applied mixed methods by collecting, analysing, and integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The next chapter will focus on the results from each of the seven dyads in this study.

Figure 3-7

A Mixed-Methods Integration Analysis to be Used Within the Study (Bazeley, 2018)



Chapter 4

Results

This chapter reports the analysis of data collected across seven case studies. The chapter will discuss each of the case studies individually, arranging data analysis in a manner that suits the extent and depth of data collected on shared book reading between a parent and their child. Across the seven case studies there were six families; one family had two children participate in the study. Each case study will give a background to the family. The pseudonyms of the actors in the case studies are list in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1

Pseudonyms of Parents and Children in Each Case Study

Case Study	Adult	Child
Case Study 1	Mother: Lisa	Ruby
Case Study 2a	Mother: Sue	Max
Case Study 2b	Mother: Sue	Marian
Case Study 3	Mother: Jane	Pat
Case Study 3	Father: Jim	
Case Study 4	Mother: Diane	Mark
Case Study 5	Mother: Bree	Ana
Case Study 6	Mother: Tracey	Tim

The demographic data from each of the families were collected as part of the initial interview. These data show that the group was primarily tertiary educated adults (see Table 4-2). English was the primary language spoken in the home, while reading varied from 1 hour per week to about 4 hours per week. Families generally were middle/upper-middle income earning families with combined incomes more than \$150,000 per year.

Table 4-2*Demographic Details of Each Case*

	Parental Education	Number of siblings	Family income (Monthly)	Language use at home	Reading time per week with the	Number of books at home
Case Study 1	Graduate	01	\$10,000-12,499	English > Sinhala	1-2 hours	100+
Case Study 2a	Post-Graduate	02	\$12,500-14,999	English > Sinhala	More than 1 hour	100+
Case Study 2b	Post-Graduates	02	\$12,500-14,999	English > Sinhala	More than 1 hour	100+
Case Study 3	Post-Graduate	01	> \$15,000	English > Sinhala	3-4 hours	100+
Case Study 4	Post-Graduate	01	> \$15,000	English > Sinhala	4hours	100+
Case Study 5	Post-Graduate	02	\$7500-\$9999	English > Sinhala	1-2 hours	around 75 books
Case Study 6	Post-Graduate	01	> \$15,000	English > Sinhala	2-3 hours	100+

The stories read by families, as outlined in Chapter 3, were ordered to remove the possibility that the order of reading was an influence. The order of passage was randomly assigned to parent-child dyads. The duration for each passage read in each parent-child dyad are shown in Table 4-3.

On examination of data in Table 4-3, considerable variation was noted. Duration of shared book reading sessions 2 minutes 55 seconds (2:55 for Case Study 4 on the Sinhala print passage) to twenty minutes thirty-four seconds (20:34 on the Sinhala digital passage). The reasons for this variation were varied (e.g., length of the passage, dialogue undertaken during the shared book reading sessions). The mean duration for a session was 4 minutes and 22. As a result, occurrence of behaviours was converted from number per session, to number of behaviours per minute in a session.

Table 4-3*Time Duration for Each Shared Book Reading Session in Minutes*

	Shared Book Reading session			
	Sinhala Print	Sinhala Digital	English Print	English Digital
Case Study 1	4.52	12.52	8.08	3.19
Case Study 2a	7.45	14.52	4.02	10.38
Case Study 2b	6.07	12.21	3.42	12.27
Case Study 3	6.10	12.25	3.07	12.38
Case Study 4	2.55	4.40	11.23	4.45
Case Study 5	9.54	20.34	10.31	13.31
Case Study 6	14.30	3.46	7.19	4.17

Case Study 1

Case study 1 consisted of a mother and daughter dyad whose pseudonyms are Lisa (mother) and Ruby (child). Dyad 1 recruited to the study comprised members of a family of four who had been living in Australia for the last 10 years at the time of data collection. The family comprised mother, father and two daughters. The elder daughter was 10 years old and the younger who participated in this study was 7 years old. Both parents were employed outside of the home and their monthly income fit in the in the category of \$10,000-12,499.

The family used both Sinhala and English languages at home. Lisa was a university graduate and spent up to two hours per week reading with Ruby. Both Lisa and Ruby engaged in watching TV, reading, travelling, and cooking together.

In completing the parent questionnaire, Lisa indicated that she had not heard of shared book reading. As a result, she did not describe her ideas about shared book reading, despite probes to gain some insight to the idea.

Lisa reported that the home had a range of reading materials. Ruby had more than 100 story books/reading materials at home. Further, she accessed story books in several other ways such as borrowing from the library or as gifts. Her mother would buy print text story books for her daughter once every three months and download digital text story books once a year. While the mother accompanied her daughter to buy story books, she let her daughter pick the book she preferred and bought it. These

books are in English due to the availability of books in English, and limited access to books in Sinhala.

Lisa indicated on the questionnaire that she had a passion for reading. She and her daughter often read in the evenings. About once a week, the mother and the child's sibling chose the book for reading. As the parent, Lisa preferred to read in the bedroom while Ruby preferred to read in the living room. Usually, Ruby lay on the bed next to Lisa when reading a book together. Lisa, the mother took turns when reading and both ask questions from each other during reading. They did not use the same book repeatedly for reading sessions. Lisa indicated that she does not have any specific aims for Ruby to achieve during these sessions with her daughter.

Both Lisa and Ruby preferred to read print text. However, Ruby was exposed to video and audios in Sinhala at home. Usually, they read story books daily, and picture books four to six times per week.

Mother's Opinion on Reading in General

Lisa strongly agreed that reading books with children builds the home literacy environment and it is an important activity in promoting bilingual skills in children. Further, she also strongly agreed with the idea that reading books with children with developmental delays could facilitate their language development. She disagreed with the ideas boys have less interest in reading print text than girls and that girls have less interest in reading digital text than boys. However, Lisa mentioned in the parental questionnaire that both she and Ruby preferred to read books in print. Notably, Lisa strongly disagreed with the idea that passion for reading depends on gender. Lisa was neutral in her views that reading with children reduces harsh parenting skills. However, she strongly agreed that parental behaviour during reading with children has an impact on reading skills of children.

Being a family who preferred using print textbooks as the main source of reading materials, she disagreed that digital text story books can develop reading skills more than printed text story books. Similarly, Lisa disagreed with the opinion that print text story books can be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay. Importantly, she strongly agreed that parents reading to their child is instrumental in learning to read and this could be evident by having a daily reading practice in her home setting.

Video Recordings of Shared Book Reading Sessions

The family was sent via post the four readings for the study. The order in which they were to read the stories was digital Sinhala, digital English, print Sinhala, and print English. The family recorded the sessions using a video camera available in the house. These recordings were uploaded to the data site. The researchers then coded all four video recorded sessions and tabulated the results.

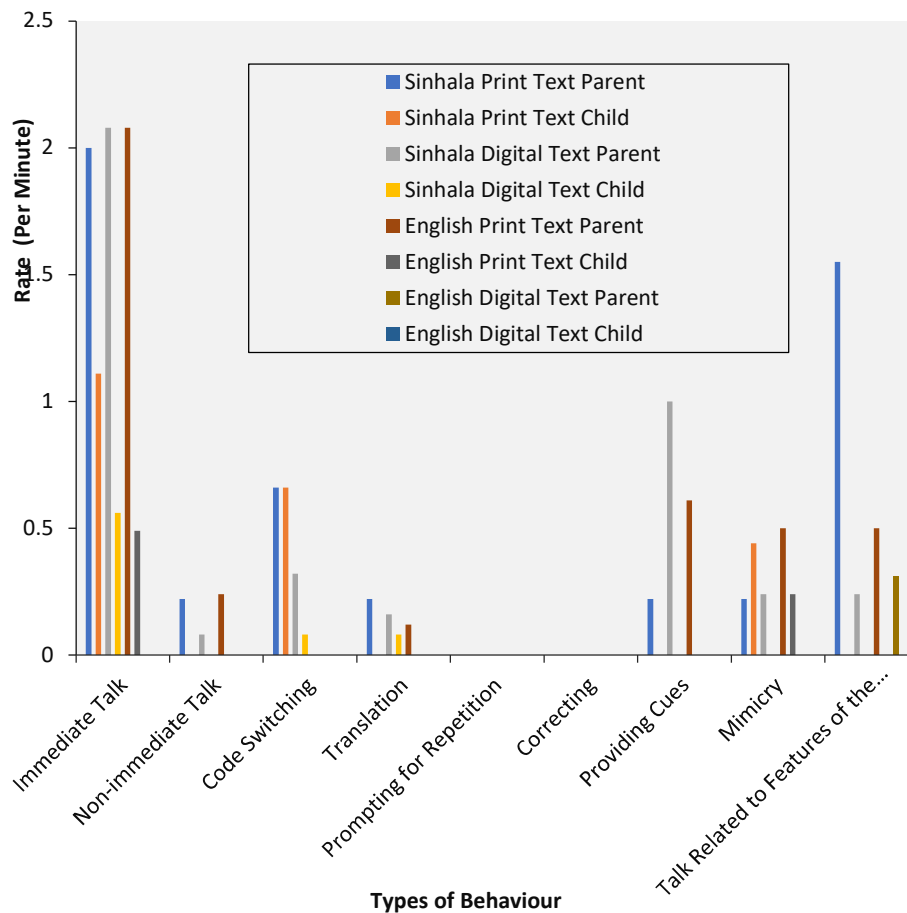
Figure 4-1 presents the rate of behaviour types observed in the parent-child dyad 1 during shared book reading in both languages and in both text types. Overall, mother Lisa exhibited more behaviours than her daughter Ruby during all four shared book reading sessions, suggesting that the parent was dominant in all the shared book reading sessions.

In examining the videos and the graph, immediate talk was the highest rate of behaviour during shared book reading in both languages and in both text types. The immediate talk included talking about the immediate story content and making direct links to the literal meaning of the story being read. For example, when they were reading the English story book in print text, Lisa pointed to the pictures in the book and said, *“Look this is the village, this is the city”*. Similarly, when they were reading the Sinhala story book in print text, Ruby pointed to the pictures and said, *“Look! she is hiding behind the tree”*.

However, non-immediate talk which includes making inferences and talking beyond the immediate story content was observed at a lower rate compared to immediate talk. When they were reading the English story in print text, Lisa made a prediction by saying *“So, he must have kept it here”* when they were talking about the lost umbrella in the story, although the story had not mentioned or illustrated where the lost umbrella was. During shared book reading in Sinhala in digital text, Lisa asked an inferential question from the child, *“Dan saree andinawada pirimi kattiya?”* (*“Do males wear sarees?”*) There was nothing mentioned about this fact in the story which they were reading, and this was merely a question for the child to be answered by using her background knowledge and inferencing skills.

Figure 4-1

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed During All Shared Book Reading Sessions in Dyad 1

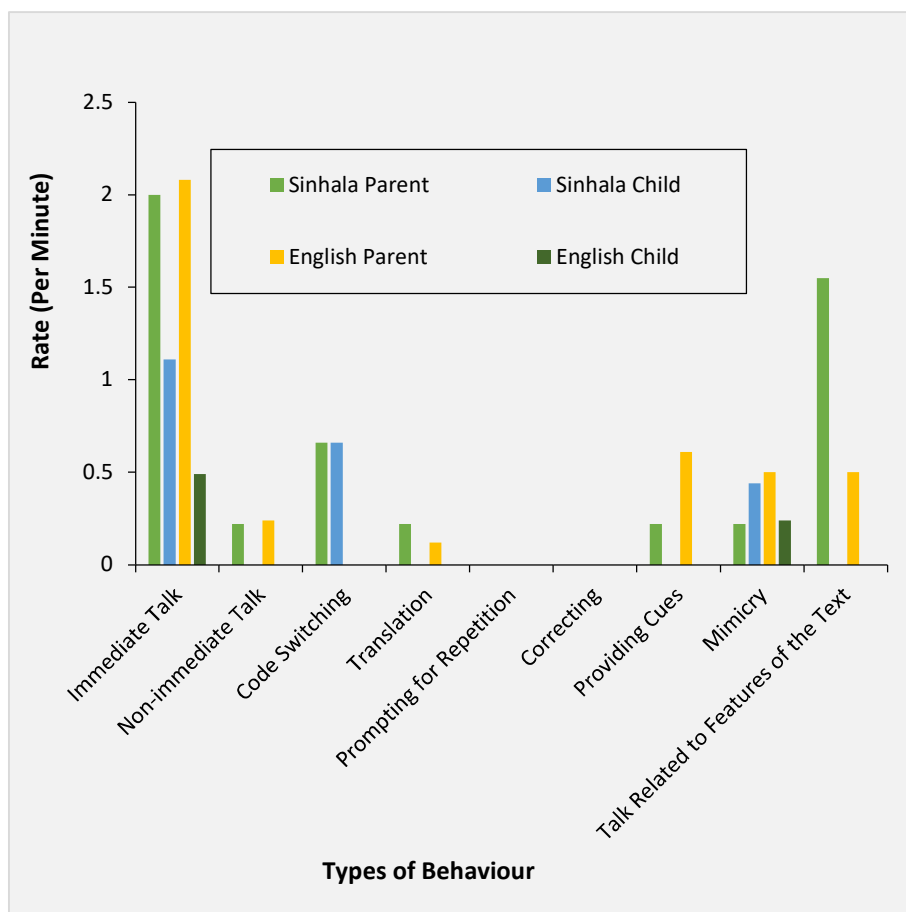


The immediate talk by the parent occurred most often during shared book reading in both Sinhala and in English languages followed by shared book reading in Sinhala print text. The child used immediate talk at a higher rate during shared book reading in Sinhala compared to English, regardless of the text type. Surprisingly, Ruby exhibited none of the behaviours during shared book reading in English digital text. According to the parent, both she and the child preferred reading in print text only, and the reason for the child's passive participation during shared book reading in English digital text could be an outcome of the preference they had for reading print text. Ruby demonstrated behaviours such as immediate talk and non-immediate talk during shared book reading in print text regardless of the language.

Behaviours such as prompting for repetition and correcting were not observed in the parent-child dyad interactions during shared book reading. Code switching, by both parent and child had a similar rate during shared book reading in Sinhala print text (see Figure 4-2) compared to Sinhala digital text (see Figure 4-3). The code switch during shared book reading meant changing to a different language other than the language in the story which they were reading, for example, during shared book reading in Sinhala digital text the child code switched by saying “*That’s a big cow*”. During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, Lisa switched to English by asking a question, “*That means?*” and by making a comment “*It started to burn*”.

Figure 4-2

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Parent-Child Dyad 1 During Shared Book Reading in Print Text

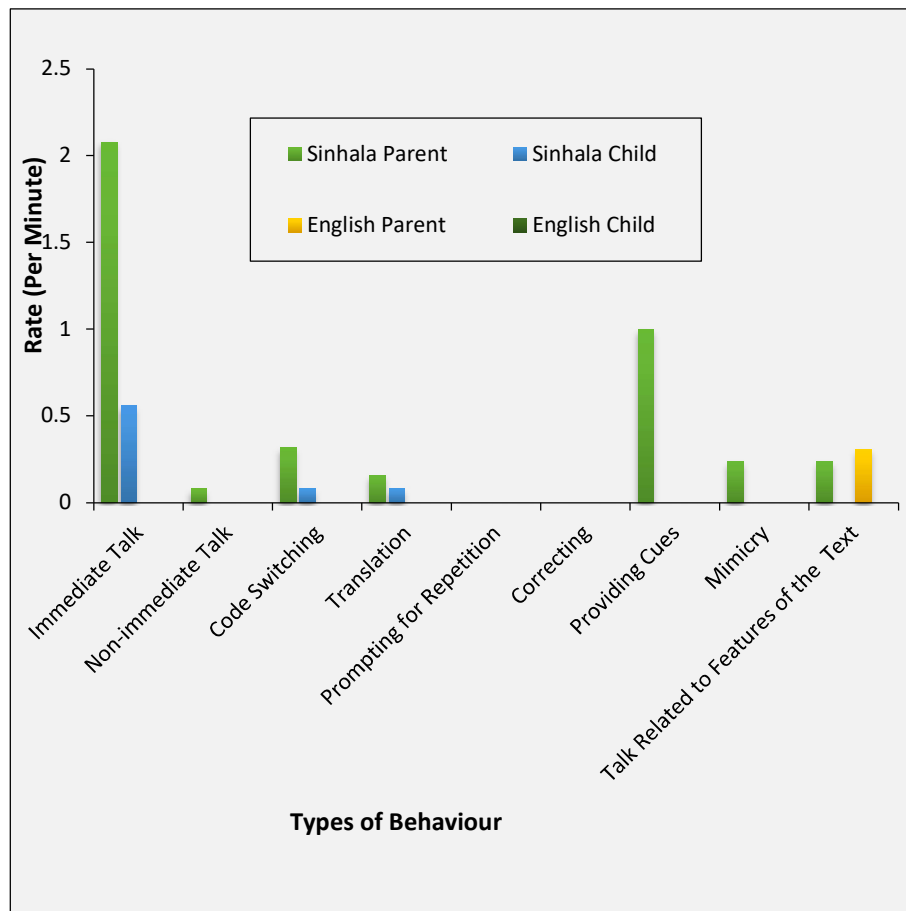


More translation occurred during shared book reading in Sinhala (see Figure 4-4) than in English (see Figure 4-5). During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, the parent translated a Sinhala sentence in the story into English by saying "*It means clap their hands*". Providing cues such as pausing at the end of a sentence allowed Ruby to fill in the gap, for example, the parent made an incomplete comment with a pause "*Who was only a*" while pointing to the picture during shared book reading in English print text, and the child was able to complete the sentence by saying "*Monkey*". Overall, the rate of providing cues was higher during shared book reading in Sinhala than in English. This allowed Lisa to promote the Sinhala language in an informal manner, which Ruby appeared to relish. Similarly, the use of cues was prominent during shared book reading in digital text than in print text. The reason here was not as evident; one perception from the video was that Lisa and Ruby were not as familiar with using a digital based text during shared booked reading.

Ruby used more mimicry in Sinhala than in English (see Figures 4-4 and 4-5). However, Lisa used more mimicry in English than in Sinhala. During shared book reading in English print text, Lisa asked Ruby "*What's a jak tree?*" and Ruby repeated "*Mm... jak tree*" as if she was trying to figure out a jak tree. During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, Lisa translated a sentence and said, "*It means to clap their hands*" and the child repeated "*To clap their hands*" while making the gesture of clapping. Overall, mimicry occurred more in print text than in digital text with an orientation towards clarifying the meaning. Talk related to features of the type of text such as the reader tracking the words while reading facilitates print referencing skills. In this dyad, word tracking was more prominent in Sinhala than in English and in print text than in digital text. Interestingly, word tracking can be observed as the unique behaviour which occurred during shared book reading English digital text.

Figure 4-3

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Parent-Child Dyad 1 During Shared Bok Reading in Digital Text

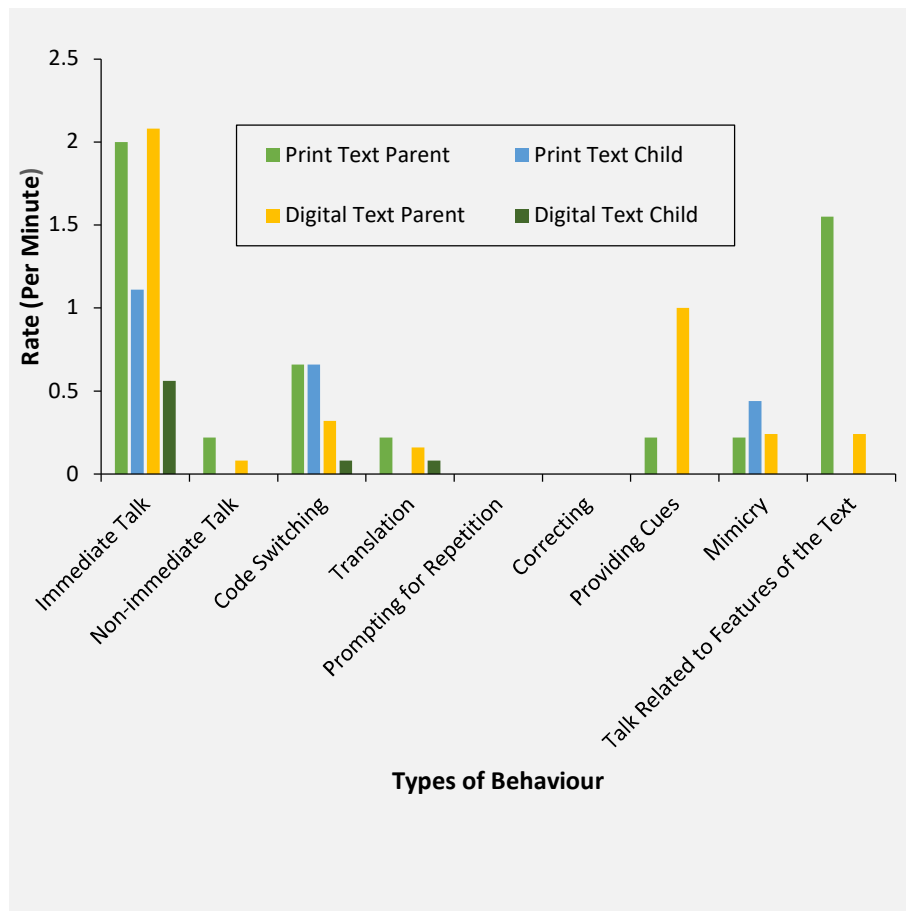


Interviews

The themes emerged for the interview questions in relation to the strengths the parent perceived that a shared reading activity provided included the opportunity for the child to ask questions from the parent. In addition, the stories brought back memories to the mother from her childhood. She said, *“It’s good to read the books to my child”*. This indicates the self-satisfaction and pleasure she experienced by engaging in shared book reading with her daughter. Further, Lisa mentioned that shared book reading sessions gave her the opportunity to share good memories and beautiful stories with her daughter, while facilitating a good relationship between them.

Figure 4-4

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Parent-Child Dyad 1 During Shared Book Reading in Sinhala



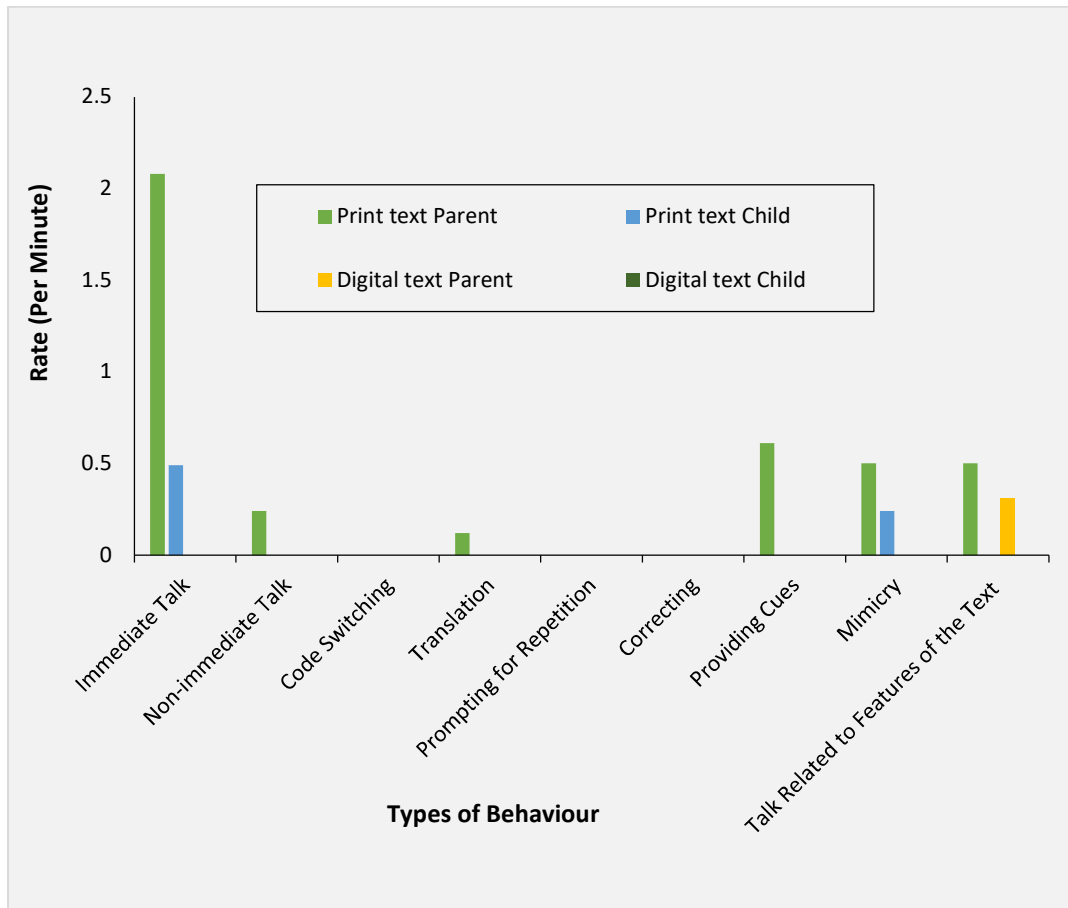
Lisa also claimed that she had been teaching the Sinhala language to Ruby. Further she said that the child’s vocabulary in Sinhala had been strengthened and broadened through shared reading activities. Lisa also mentioned that “*She knows how to translate them back to English so she understands the meaning because she can compare the two languages and use them regularly at home and its good for the future*”.

Lisa expressed the challenges Ruby experienced during shared book reading as, “*She sometimes gets mixed up with words*”, for example, “*When I said thattu, which means stories like two-story buildings stuff like that in Sinhala, she thought I was talking about thatu as in wings, so it is not what I say she realises*”. In examining this example, two possible explanations could be provided. First, it may be seen as an issue with phonemic awareness (i.e., hearing the sounds). The other option could be an issue with phonological knowledge. In both instances, this is difficult to determine

without further assessment of phonological skills. Future studies maybe be better placed to conducts such assessment without the limitations of the COVID19 pandemic.

Figure 4-5

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Parent-Child Dyad 1 During Shared Book Reading in English



From the parent’s perspective, sometimes it was a challenge to make sure that Ruby understood the book. However, Lisa said that they had been reading in both languages and it had been useful for the child to understand the real meaning of the story, similarly, Lisa had been able to overcome the latter challenge mentioned. In addition, Lisa said that finding time is another challenge and they usually read at night. She said that her daughter Ruby fell asleep easily as she is still younger and tired easily after a busy day at school. Lisa commented that checking Ruby’s understanding of what they were doing and why they were doing during shared book reading sessions

was a challenge. Lisa said that she was finding it difficult to decide what types of questions she could ask her daughter during shared book reading.

The next question focussed on the reading strategies the parent used during shared book reading sessions. Lisa said that she would explain the Sinhala word in English. She added that she used to tell her daughter in advance about the changes in grammar in Sinhala and in English languages. Mother mentioned that *“What we say or where we put the verb in English, if we put the verb at the end of the sentence in English, we usually do it at the beginning of the sentence in Sinhala”*.

With reference to the Generalized Cognitive Foundations Framework (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020) Ruby was not competent in Sinhala language comprehension, she lacked the phonological, syntax and semantics knowledge in Sinhala. Hence hampering her language comprehension and reading comprehension in Sinhala.

Hoover and Tunmer (2020) explained that when a child lacks the competency in a second language the child lacks the comprehension in that language, for example in this study all children lack comprehension in Sinhala compared to English. They had not developed the phonological system in Sinhala, which led to experiencing difficulties in word recognition in Sinhala. They had limitations in phonological awareness, knowledge of the orthographic principle, and orthographic coding causing word recognition to be challenging. Regardless of their skills in reading in English Ruby experienced difficulty in reading in Sinhala as they had not mastered adequate skills in the phonological system in Sinhala. Hence, the skill in associating the phonological unit such as the syllable with their corresponding orthographic unit becomes harder. Regardless of having strong skills in phonology, with limited skills in syntax and semantics an individual can experience difficulties in language comprehension (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020).

Lisa mentioned that if she could, she would try to read books with her child frequently in the future. Lisa commented that she would read in Sinhala and translate into English as it would support Ruby to understand what they were saying in both languages. Mother said that she thought Ruby must be comparing the words with the words familiar to her. Both Lisa and Ruby preferred print text compared to digital text. She also mentioned that they did not use the computer to read books. She claimed that they read for leisure and to achieve this they usually switched off the computer and laptop. Lisa mentioned that she would always use the print text during shared

book reading. According to her, it was easier to manage the print text story books than the digital text story books, on a digital device.

Lisa reported in the interview that she had the experience of reading with her brother as a child. She mentioned that her children loved reading and usually they read themselves to sleep. She said that *“We will love reading, that is because I loved to read, like we are doing the shared read”*. She said that reading facilitates the pronunciation of words. She added, *“Sometimes they are shy to pronounce the words that they do not know but when we shared read, the adult pronounces, parent pronounce, so, that helps the child”*.

When asked her views about the use of open-ended questions during shared book reading, she commented that it encourages the skills of imagination in her children. When asked whether she had considered introducing letters and sounds while reading, the mother mentioned that *“I think it is good idea to introduce letters through stories, I think shared reading when the adult reads that helps them pick-up sounds and words”*.

When asked whether shared book reading helps language and literacy development, Lisa mentioned that she was definite about that. She also commented, *“Good great literature in Sinhalese language which we use to read, if you read these textbooks and then you can go towards those beautiful literature...literacy stuff in the olden days”*. However, this comment maybe reflects that Lisa had a restricted idea about what is meant by *literacy*, which is simply the ability to read and write and not *literature*.

Lisa explained that they had not experienced reading books using high-tech digital devices. She commented that the use of digital devices such an iPad could distract her children from reading as the devices provide many options, for example, playing a game. Due to these concerns the use of electronic devices was not encouraged for reading.

Lisa mentioned that she believed her child communicated more while using print books than digital books. According to her, one of the main reasons for that is the ability to take the print book wherever her child prefers and to place it any posture the child prefers. On the other hand, the mother commented that,

Digital ones, well because it's an expensive device, I tend to say ah, do not use it like that, just lie down and look at that, because you might get eye problems, so they are not very free to use the digital device as the print book version.

It is important to consider the above-mentioned aspect of shared book reading using digital devices which has not been explained in the previous literature on shared book reading of digital books. It reflects a mindset that the child gets a more relaxed mind when reading a book in print text rather than in digital text. This state of mind clearly influences the effectiveness of the shared book reading experience she gets leading towards language and literacy development. This psycho-social aspect around the use of digital devices for shared book reading in home settings could be accountable for the popularity of the usage of digital books.

However, Lisa mentioned that Ruby had engaged in using digital books only in the online learning environment which took place during the COVID pandemic. She also commented that they had been borrowing printed textbooks from the libraries rather than digital textbooks. In the kindergarten and Year one class, she had shared book reading in school, but Lisa was only aware of the use of printed texts in the classroom.

Ruby completed a questionnaire based on the perception of reading. Ruby indicated that she liked reading a story book. She indicated using the facial expressions that she did not like reading a story book using the computer/iPad, and more preferred reading a story book in the printed form. Ruby indicated that she preferred reading a printed story book with a parent. Similarly, she mentioned that she liked reading by herself. Ruby liked to read a story book in the evening after returning from school, as well as enjoying for reading during school holidays. Ruby preferred to read inside the house in contrast to reading in the garden.

Ruby indicated she enjoyed visiting a bookshop to look at books and was happy to receive used story books from family and friends. She also enjoyed visiting the library to look at different books. Ruby preferred to read story books in English, however, Ruby did not like to read story books in Sinhala.

Data collected via the interview with the parent can be identified as data related to attitudes, reading strategies, strengths, challenges, and modifications. Similarly, the same data can be discussed in relation to three dimensions of engagement such as emotional, cognitive, and behavioural as well as in relation to the cognitive foundations of reading and its acquisition.

Lisa mentioned that both Ruby and she liked to spend the time together and the shared book reading provided that opportunity for them. Lisa mentioned that the use of story books in two languages for reading provided the opportunity for the child to

compare the two languages and to use them regularly at home. She also pointed out *“It’s good for the future, she gets to learn her mother tongue”*.

According to the cognitive foundations of reading and its acquisition, background knowledge and inferencing skills are important in the process of reading comprehension. Lisa said that some stories she read with Ruby had been read by herself as a child and, that has allowed her to share good memories with her daughter facilitating the building of a good relationship between them. So, when she shared her past experiences with the child during shared book reading, the child may have acquired stronger background knowledge which may in turn, have contributed to the acquisition of reading comprehension. In addition, building up a good relationship between mother and the child also align with the emotional engagement dimension. Lisa mentioned that Ruby had the opportunity to ask questions during shared book reading. This is great practice to enhance her background knowledge, and to make inferences as a child.

Simultaneously, when talking about the challenges Lisa mentioned that:

It is hard to find the time to read books, it is depressing sometimes, in the night, its mostly in the night. Because she is little, she falls asleep easily and then she does not remember. So, making the time is challenging.

The above comment is again aligned with the emotional engagement dimension, as she feels ‘depressed’ sometimes due to time constraints. According to this comment, it is evident that the child’s cognitive engagement during shared book reading at night is was affected by her sleep routine and that Lisa struggled to find a suitable time for shared book reading at night. This also provides evidence that the mother was aware about the important role played by the cognitive skills such as attention, memory, and alertness to obtain a productive outcome from a shared activity. She added, *“In general, we love shared reading, we love reading, that was because I loved to read, like we are doing the shared read. My kids are avid readers they both read themselves to sleep, and they love reading”*.

This reflects how the habit of reading and the love for reading can be passed through generations. Lisa acknowledged that shared book reading contributes to the development of expressive language skills such as pronunciation. She said that *“it really encourages them with the pronunciation. So, it is a good thing. Sometimes they are shy to pronounce the words that they do not know but when we shared read, the adult pronounces, parent pronounces, so, that helps the child.”*

This comment, and the passion for reading shown in these two generations, demonstrates how the emotional engagement between the child and the parent can be influenced by the reading strategy used by the parent. Modelling the pronunciation of a word, for example, in a safe environment like shared reading can be copied or mimicked by the child. Simultaneously, the reading strategy used by the parent is facilitating the child's cognitive engagement during shared book reading. When considering the Cognitive Foundations Framework for reading and its acquisition (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020), modelling of the correct pronunciation facilitates the child's phonological knowledge which contributes to developing linguistic knowledge.

In the area of comprehension, Lisa stated that she used open-ended questions during shared book reading to encourage imagination in her child. The use of open-ended questions belongs to the behavioural and cognitive engagement during shared book reading. Similarly, the use of open-ended questions facilitates the reading comprehension a key goal of reading.

Lisa claimed that she felt it was a good idea to introduce the letters through stories. She added:

For example, my older one can read Sinhalese and English both, but how she learnt was by reading story books. Because we did not go to any classes or private tuition, how she identifies letters are by reading the stories. I think shared reading helps to pick-up sounds and words.

The value of shared book reading in various languages needs to be acknowledged in language and reading acquisition. Lisa acknowledged the role of word recognition including alphabetic coding skills and language comprehension which led to reading comprehension. Lisa indicated her eldest child learnt to read in both Sinhala and English languages because of reading story books.

When talking about the digital texts, Lisa emphasised that as a family they did not prefer the use of digital texts for shared book reading. She identified the digital text as a distractor. She stated that a digital device provided various options in addition to reading, for example, online games and could distract the child during digital shared book reading. She said, *"It could be distracting so they think like, 'if its O.K. to read a book at this time of the night, so fine it's O.K. for me to play a video game.'"*

In contrast, she highlighted the user-friendly nature of the print texts:

They can take it anywhere, and read them in any posture they like, unlike the digital ones, well because it's an expensive device, I tend to say don't use it like

that, just lie down and look at that, because you might get eye problems, so they are not very free to use the digital device as the print book version.

Her comment highlighted personal and family concerns about using a digital device: the expense of the device. Lisa pointed out previously that her children were under restrictions when using a digital device. As a result, the emotional engagement of the child and the mother during shared book reading in digital text may be impacted through limited experience with digital devices. As she mentioned before, they enjoy reading and do it during their leisure time. Therefore, having to engage in shared book reading with a digital device could be a 'different' activity for child and mother that could impact their interactions. In contrast, the user-friendly nature of the print text had become the sole source of reading in this parent-child dyad, with mother and child more comfortable with this representation of the book.

Another important area revealed through the interview were the challenges and the strategies used by the parent in relation to two languages. She mentioned that when reading in Sinhala, she translated to English as well to make sure that the child has understood what they were reading. According to Lisa, she has the habit of telling the child the different grammar patterns in both languages, for example, the place where we put the verb in a sentence in each language is different. In English it is Subject + Verb + Object, whereas in Sinhala it is Subject + Object + Verb. However, the mother's habit of explaining differences in the grammar pattern was not observed during these four video recordings.

The mother said that her child sometimes mixed up the meanings of the words, for example, *"When I read that day in Sinhala the word thattu, which means stories in English, like two-story buildings. But she thought I was talking about thatu, as in wings so it is not what I said"*. When applying this scenario to the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019), it could be explained by the child's lack of background knowledge and lack of linguistic knowledge such as phonological knowledge in Sinhala which is her second language.

Simultaneously, Lisa mentioned that the use of translations had minimised the occurrences of such misunderstandings. The translations, from Sinhala to English language or from the second language to the native language/first language, facilitated the linguistic comprehension of the child, resulting in successful reading comprehension.

Lisa emphasised the important role played by language recognition and word recognition skills in the process of obtaining reading comprehension. Overall, when evaluating interview data and shared book reading sessions data, it was evident how they had addressed some elements in the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) such as the phonological knowledge, phonological awareness, and semantic knowledge.

Having said that, in relation to the aspect of engagement, these examples revealed how the emotional, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions of engagement were involved in a shared activity at the same time. Further, how each dimension of engagement can influence the knowledge, strategies, and attitudes of participants to gain a productive outcome. Noticeably, the behavioural engagement has the potential to signify the cognitive engagement and emotional engagement. The presence of strong emotional engagement facilitates joint attention and interest throughout the story and contributes to cognitive engagement, such as by facilitating language comprehension and word recognition. The behaviours such as questioning, inferencing, commenting, cueing, prompting, translating, and code-switching contribute the cognitive elements in the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) such as linguistic knowledge and alphabetic coding skills. Gradually, the child becomes successful in acquiring reading comprehension. Hence, having a proper knowledge of reading strategies, skills in applying the best suitable strategy along with the right attitude about shared book reading have the potential to nurture a child's acquisition of reading comprehension.

Case Study 2

In this case study, the family had two children eligible to participate in the study at the time of recruitment. Both children accepted the invitation and gave their consent to participate in the study. The eldest child of the family was a boy who belonged to the age group of 7-8 years. The second child of the family was a girl who belonged to the age group of 5-6 years. Therefore, this case study consists of two dyads:

- son Max and mother Sue (Case Study 2a)
- daughter Marian and mother Sue (Case Study 2b)

The family unit comprised two parents and three children. The grandparents of the children immigrated to Australia, and raised their families in Australia. The

demographic data revealed that the son was born in the United States of America while the daughter has born in Australia. The family's youngest child is 1 year old. No members of the family had lived in Sri Lanka but had visited the country.

The family's monthly income was in the range of AUD12,500-14,999. The mother has a post-graduate degree and is in paid employment as a teacher librarian in a primary school in the New South Wales. The father is also in paid employment and holds a tertiary qualification. The data about their language use at home indicated that English was the predominate language, while both parents occasionally used Sinhala.

When exploring reading habits of family members, it was found that the mother spent more than 1 hour per week reading with both children in addition to activities such as playing, watching television, and traveling. She mentioned that the children engage together in cooking, exercising, and listening to audio books.

The family had a range of reading materials and resources within the home The children had more than one hundred story books to access within the home. They also borrow books from the library, bought books, received books as gifts, or received second-hand books from the relatives/friends. Sue mentioned that she bought print-text story books and accompanied the children to buy books. Usually, she supported her children to pick and buy, both print-text and digital text story books. Sue reported that there were no specific book topics that she would disapprove of her children pursuing, although this matter had not been evaluated.

Sue reported that she had a passion for reading, and often read where her children could see her. When reading with her children they preferred to do this in the evenings. The choice of book to read was achieved through consensus. They did not have a preferred place to engage in reading, although the children often chose to read in the bedroom. Typically, the children would sit next to their mother during shared book reading. Both mother and children would take turns and asks questions from each other during shared book reading. They would read a book multiple times during shared book reading session when it was a book they were very fond of.

Shared book reading was usually undertaken as a separate activity, that is, mother would read the book with each individual child. This allowed for the choice of book to be of more relevance to the child. On occasions, Sue, Max, and Marian would read together, having chosen the same book.

Both children preferred to read print-text books. There was a good selection of books in the home, with further access at the local and school libraries, that supported

this preference. The children accessed digital media in Sinhala language that allowed them to listen to stories in Sinhala, as well as songs. The parents often purchased these materials due to little access in the local community. When digital texts are available, the parent preferred to read them without subtitles in English (if available).

Both children preferred to read in print text in their own time. Max preferred to read picture books two or three times per week, however, Sue preferred to read picture books and story books daily. This reading was undertaken without prompting from parents, with no specific preference of location in the home.

Overall, the mother reported that shared book reading was not aimed at achieving specific goals (e.g., teaching them to read). She hoped that her children could benefit through richer language skills, an interest in the world and would develop the love of books as an indirect outcome of shared book reading. She provided an active model of reading generally to her children and was happy to support their reading habits where she could.

Opinions About Reading

As reported, Sue had a passion for reading, and read on a regular basis herself. Sue strongly agreed with the idea that reading books with children builds the home literacy environment and it is an important activity in promoting bilingual skills in children. She also strongly agreed with the statement that reading books with children with diverse backgrounds (e.g., developmental delays) could facilitate their language development.

Sue did not believe that the gender of the child would influence the interest that her children would have in reading. That is, she strongly disagreed with the idea that boys have less interest in reading print-text than girls. Similarly, she strongly disagreed with the idea that girls have less interest in reading digital text than boys.

Sue felt that reading in the home could have a positive impact on the behaviour of her children but was not in agreement with the idea that reading with your child reduces 'harsh parenting' skills. She went on to indicate that parenting behaviour during shared reading sessions could positively impact the reading skills of her children. The type of reading material (i.e., digital or print) was not a factor that would influence her child's learning to read.

She strongly agreed with the idea that parental behaviour during reading with children had an impact on reading skills of children. She agreed that digital text story

books can develop reading skills in the same way as printed text. In agreeing with this statement, Sue did not use digital texts on an ongoing basis during shared book reading, so her response may not be well supported by real life experiences.

Sue had strong ideas about the importance of the role that reading had in the lives of her children. Her role in supporting the development of her children's reading skills was to encourage them to read; reading with her children was something she strongly agreed as important in supporting her children to learn the skills of reading as well as promoting language comprehension. The type of text, therefore, was not an important factor in supporting her children to read. She did not think, for example, that print text story books would be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay.

Shared Book Reading Sessions

The researcher sent the reading materials to the family by post. Both dyads (i.e., Sue-Max and Sue-Marian) had the same reading order, same stories in language representation and text presentation. The reading order was print Sinhala, print English, digital Sinhala, and digital English. The mother engaged in all the shared book reading sessions with both of her children. Once the family uploaded the video recorded sessions of the shared book reading sessions to their unique Dropbox, the researcher coded and tabulated the results.

The video data were downloaded from the data store facility and analysed. The two dyads will be discussed separately; first, discussion will focus on the results of the dyad comprising Sue and her son, Max (Case Study 2a). Second, results of the videos involving Sue and her daughter Marian will be reported (Case Study 2b).

Case Study 2a. Figure 4-6 shows the rate of behaviour stacked for each of the shared book reading sessions between Sue and Max. Each stack of data for reading session shows the number of behaviours observed from the video recordings taken by the family.

Figure 4-6

Number of Behaviours per Minute (stacked) for Each of the Shared Book Reading Conditions in Case Study 2a

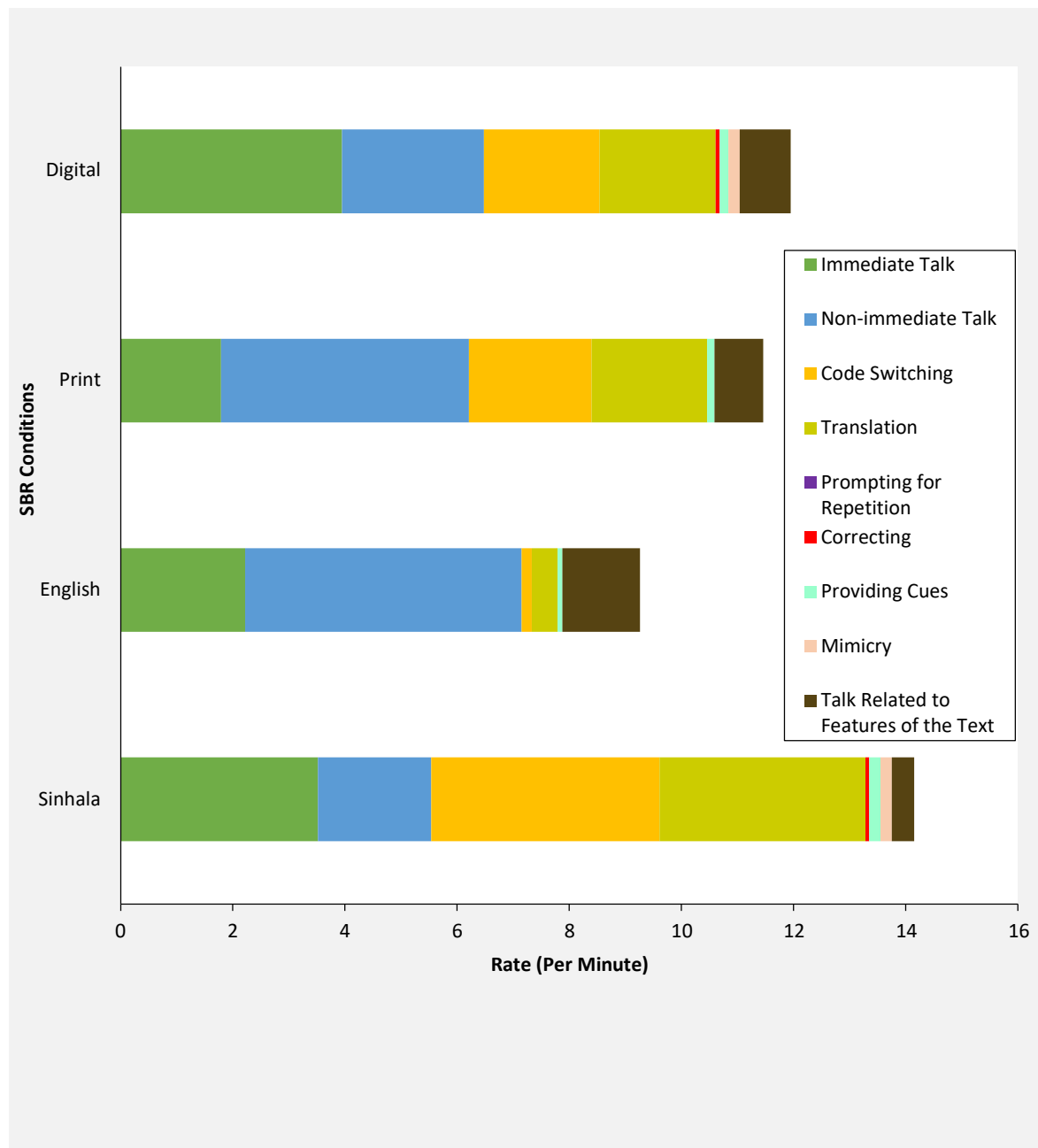


Figure 4-6 shows that non-immediate talk was the behaviour that occurred most per minute in all four shared book reading sessions. The behaviours observed included non-immediate talk as the most frequent, followed by immediate talk, code switch and translation. Non-immediate talk occurred at a higher rate in English than in Sinhala, and more often in print text than in digital text. Sue mentioned that she typically bought print textbooks, and digital textbooks purchase was less frequent (e.g.,

may see a digital text while shopping with Max). This aligns with Max's preference to read print texts. However, Sue mentioned that when they do read digital texts, she preferred to read digital stories without subtitles.

These results also show that when the shared book reading session was in English, the dominant language at home, there were more occasions when Max and Sue were involved in behaviours where they made inferences, predictions and talking beyond the story content than in the shared book reading session in Sinhala. The greater frequency of non-immediate talk behaviours showed that Sue and Max engaged in behaviours while reading that were more challenging cognitively and psychologically.

Overall, Sue and Max appeared relaxed, comfortable, and confident during shared book reading in print-text in English, which allowed them to utilise their cognitive skills for the occurrence of non-immediate talk at a higher rate. Max and Sue appeared on the video to be comfortable during their reading session to discuss higher order ideas and concepts. At times it appeared Max was challenged to use higher-order language comprehension skills. For example, Sue inferred the story in the book to the story of "Willy Wonka". Max predicted the story by looking at the cover picture and told his imaginary story. He said:

He does not really have a beard and then he really wanted a beard, so he went to this magic source and then he gave him, this person to make his hair to grow long but said not touch but he didn't listen and then it became a problem.

At the end of the story Sue asked Max,

Sue: *"How are your predictions?"*

Max: *"Not really"*

Sue: *"So they just grew of its own volition."*

Max: *"Yes, I wonder how?"*

Sue: *"Maybe it is a magical force, maybe it was the mouse."*

Max: *"May be the mouse drank something and some mystify happened"*

The above example clearly indicates how they used their higher order cognitive skills such as the skills in analysing, evaluating, and creating. In contrast, the immediate talk, which is about talking about the immediate story content, is less challenging cognitively and psychologically. For example, during shared book reading in English digital text, Sue pointed to the picture of a drum and named it. She pointed to the picture of the food bowl and asked Max what it was, to which he answered

correctly by saying “rice”. Unlike the non-immediate talk, the participants experienced less challenge as they talked about what they could immediately see in the story. They needed to identify the picture and to choose the relevant word, to name it. Mainly, they had to use their language comprehension and expression skills in English.

Figure 4-6 shows that immediate talk occurred more in the shared book reading session involving Sinhala and digital text. Review of the video data did not provide an immediate insight into why this was so. It may have been due to not being familiar with using a digital device for shared reading, in a language that was not dominant in the house.

Code-switching involved switching from one language to the other (e.g., reading in Sinhala, then switching into English). This occurred during shared book reading in Sinhala where Max and Sue had the following exchange where she shifted from English to Sinhala in the one sentence:

Sue: “Do you know what *kopi kadeta giya* means?”

Max: “No”

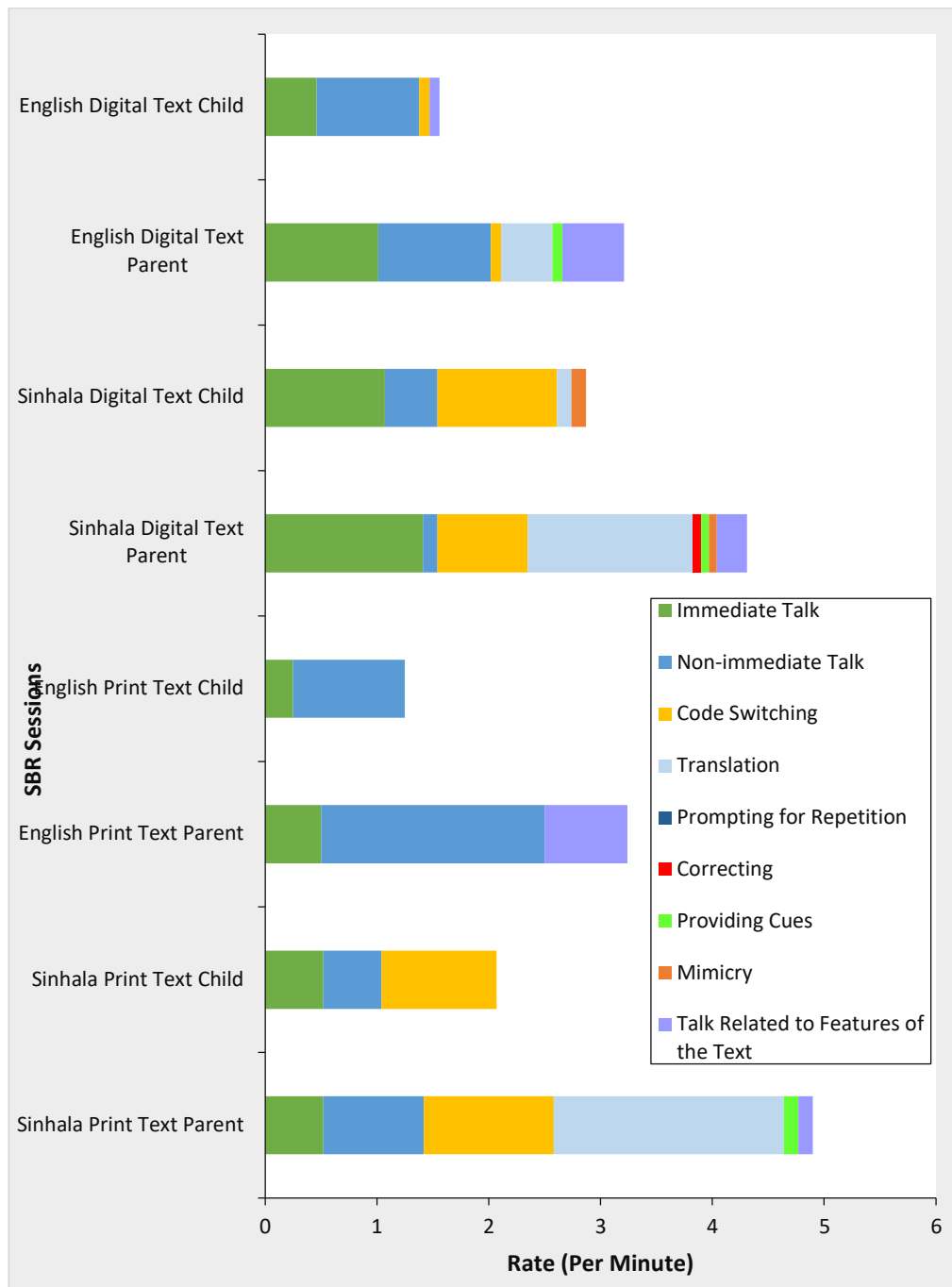
Translation, in comparison, involved translating from one language to the other (e.g., reading in Sinhala, and then explaining the meaning of the text in English). The following was an example for translation Sue and Max had during shared book reading in Sinhala, where Sue said: “*Kudayak means umbrella and hora means thief*”. In this example, Sue translated the meaning of the word in Sinhala into English to help Max comprehend the story content.

Both code-switching and translation occurred at a higher rate for shared book reading in Sinhala. This was predicted as their first language was English, and Max was not overly familiar with Sinhala. Hence, more code switch and translations were needed during the shared book reading sessions in Sinhala. Code-switching has a higher rate of occurrence for shared book reading in print text than digital text. However, there was a slightly higher rate of occurrence of translation during shared book reading in digital text than in print text. Despite these slight differences, calculating the total rates of occurrences for both code-switching and translation during shared book reading, it was higher in print-text than in digital-text. This outcome was aligned with their daily habit of reading in English and preference in reading print-text.

Figure 4-7 shows the rate of behaviour within each of the shared book reading sessions. The rates of behaviour are stacked within each session, and reported in terms of who used the behaviour: Sue or Max.

Figure 4-7

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed for Sue and Max in Case Study 2a during all Shared Book Reading Sessions



In examining the videos and the graph, the rate of behaviour for immediate talk and non-immediate talk occurred at a similar rate for both child and mother. However, non-immediate talk by the parent during shared book reading in English print text was

the highest rate for both immediate and non-immediate talk. For example, the parent asked the child, “*Would you like to make a prediction?*”. In another instance she said, “*You know what it reminds me? It reminds me of Willie Wonka*”. Making predictions and inferences facilitate cognitive engagement. The Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) also poses the influence of using background knowledge and inference in promoting and supporting reading comprehension.

In her shared book reading sessions with Max, Sue facilitated the child’s background knowledge and inferencing skills on several occasions. For example, at one point the mother pointed to the picture of a sweet and named it, simultaneously, she provided background information and made inferences by explaining to the child as follows: “*You know assmi? don’t you? do you remember that noodley crispy thing that you love, atthamma has?*”

Similarly, the child also exhibited his background knowledge and inferencing skills by explaining the pictures in the book, “*Rice and the green thing like ‘mellum’*”. This indicated that Max had experience in using the word “*mellum*” to refer to a dish made from green leaves.

In contrast, the child’s lack of background knowledge was evident when he referred to the design of the picture of the window in the story *Hoity the Fox* by saying, “*It’s a bit like bar cells*”. This indicated that he was attempting to use inferencing skills, but he was not familiar with the traditional designs of windows in the Sri Lankan context to make sound inferences. As a result, his inference or prediction was misguided, but not downplayed by his mother.

Both Sue and her son Max used linguistic knowledge during the reading of texts (e.g., phonological knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and semantic knowledge). For example, Sue was reading a sentence during shared book reading the English digital story *Hoity the Fox* and gave the child similar words in Sinhala “*Yam leaf curry*” like a *mallum*, “*dried fish*” that’s “*karawala or may be even haalmasso*”. In another instance she read the word “*drum*” and translated it into Sinhala by saying, “*rabaana*”. Sue had more linguistic knowledge in Sinhala than Max and she used her linguistic knowledge in Sinhala to facilitate Max’s linguistic knowledge in Sinhala by translating and code switching the words and phrases.

Similarly, Sue translated the words in Sinhala into English “*haamine*” used part in part of the story is like a word they use in rural Sri Lanka to call their wife instead of saying “*darling or dear*”. It was interesting to see how Sue facilitated the child’s

bilingual skills during shared book reading. This behaviour was compatible with the previous literature in relation to shared book reading and bilingual literacy skills. (Brouillard et al., 2022) which compared the vocabulary learning in 5-year-old children, through shared book reading using books in one language and in two languages, English and French. In this study, Brouillard et al. (2022) revealed that bilingual children were able to learn new words, despite their language proficiency and the book format. In sum, shared book reading facilitates bilingual literacy skills.

In another instance, the mother related the child's habit of eating a bowl of rice to the same habit of the main character in the story of *Hoity the Fox*. Relating the story content to a personal habit, facilitates all three aspects of engagement.

During the reading of *Hoity the Fox*, Max asked a question of his mother, "*Do you think like he is dressed into a farmer?*". His mother replied by asking another question, "*Do you think he is dressed into a boy?*". Max answered "yes", and Sue continued the exchange, saying: "*Yes, that's what I was thinking and would be my prediction too*". The mother and child exhibited a good verbal interaction during this shared book reading session. This exchange provided a good insight into the benefits of shared book reading in building relationships between the mother and her child.

Max was curious about the illustrations in the story of *Hoity the Fox* and commented: "*It's looks like traditional*". These pictures were hand drawn and painted by the author herself. The pictures reflect the traditional features which are in use in Sri Lankan culture. Max was able to bring some background knowledge to the reading and make a prediction about the type of illustrations in the book. Further, Sue encouraged Max to read and find out who had illustrated the pictures. Max read the sentence correctly exhibiting his ability of alphabetic coding skills and word recognition which included concepts of print, letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, and knowledge of the alphabetic principle. Then Sue checked Max's understanding of the sentence.

Sue: "So, what is that mean?"

Max: "It's by a Sinhalese person"

Sue: "Yes, Sinhalese person but if it is written and illustrated by her, does that answer your question?"

This situation showed that the mother was facilitating the child's reading comprehension during shared book reading. It was also noted several times during the shared book reading sessions that Sue summarised each section they were

reading together. This strategy improves language comprehension and enhances background knowledge leading towards enhanced reading comprehension.

Another observation made during these shared book reading sessions between Sue and Max was that Sue asked her son's thoughts about the story and what he learnt from the story. This strategy is another way to improve a child's cognitive skills including higher order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, sequencing, problem solving and acquiring language skills.

Case Study 2b. In Case Study 2b, Sue completed the four shared book reading sessions with her daughter, Marian. Like her sessions with Max, Sue was found to engage positively, supporting her daughter with differing aspects of literacy, language, and reading.

As seen in Figure 4-8, non-immediate talk had the highest rate in total across all four shared book reading sessions followed by immediate talk. This was followed by the occurrence of immediate talk during shared book reading in English rather than Sinhala. In addition, code switching and translation only occurred during shared book reading in Sinhala. The reason for these observations are compatible with the level of language proficiency they have in English, compared to Sinhala.

When discussing the type of text presentation, the immediate talk, non-immediate talk, code switching and translation have almost similar rates regardless of their reading preference in type of text. However, the talk related to features of the text is significantly higher in print text than digital text. In the questionnaire, mother mentioned that her children preferred to read only in print text, however, she preferred to read in both text types.

During shared book reading in English digital text, both participants indicated their highest individual scores for the behaviour of non-immediate talk (See Figure 4-9). Clearly, the highest rate for providing cues was reported during shared book reading in English digital text.

Figure 4-8

Total Rate of Behaviour Observed in Case Study 2b During all Shared Book Reading Sessions

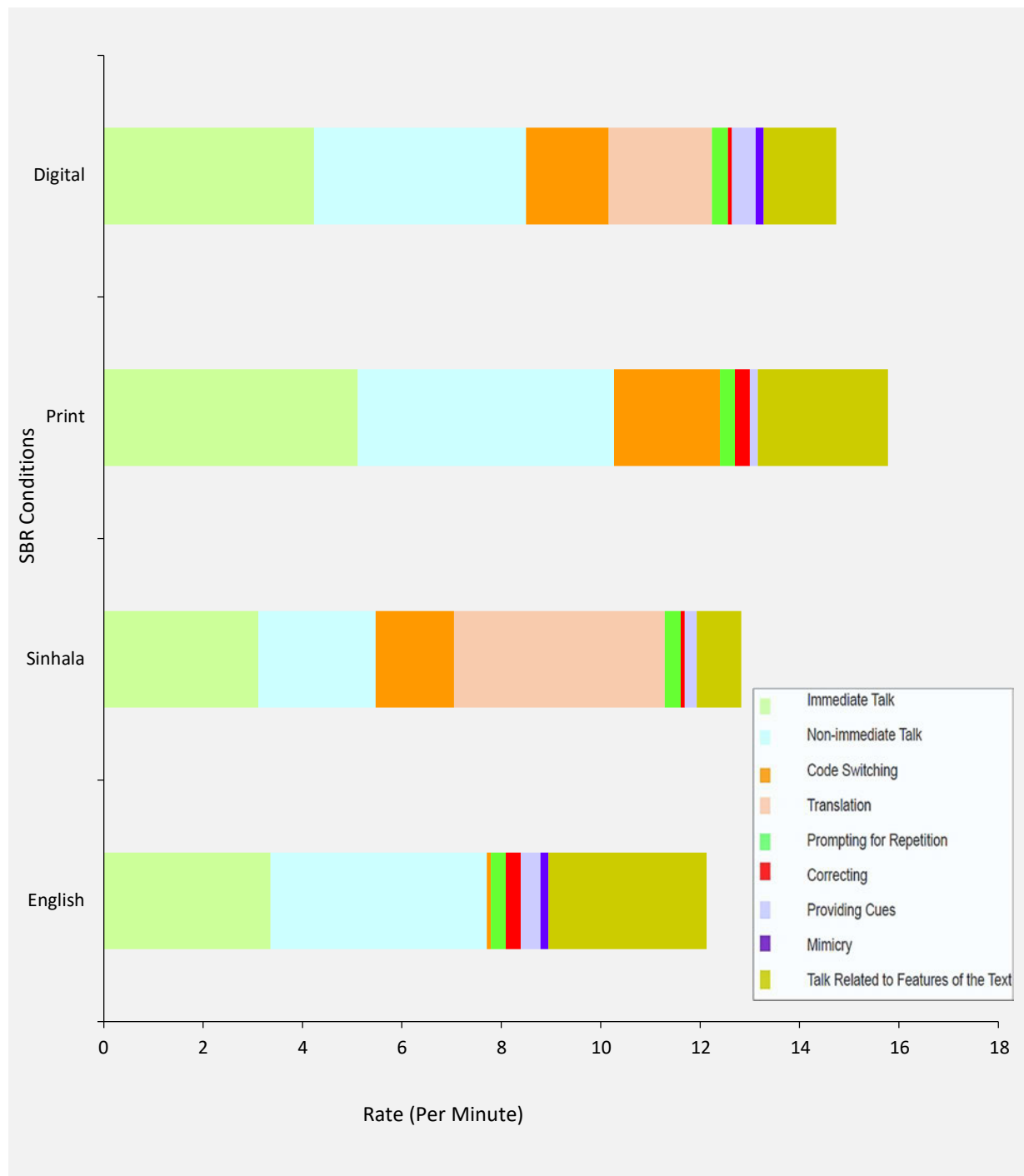
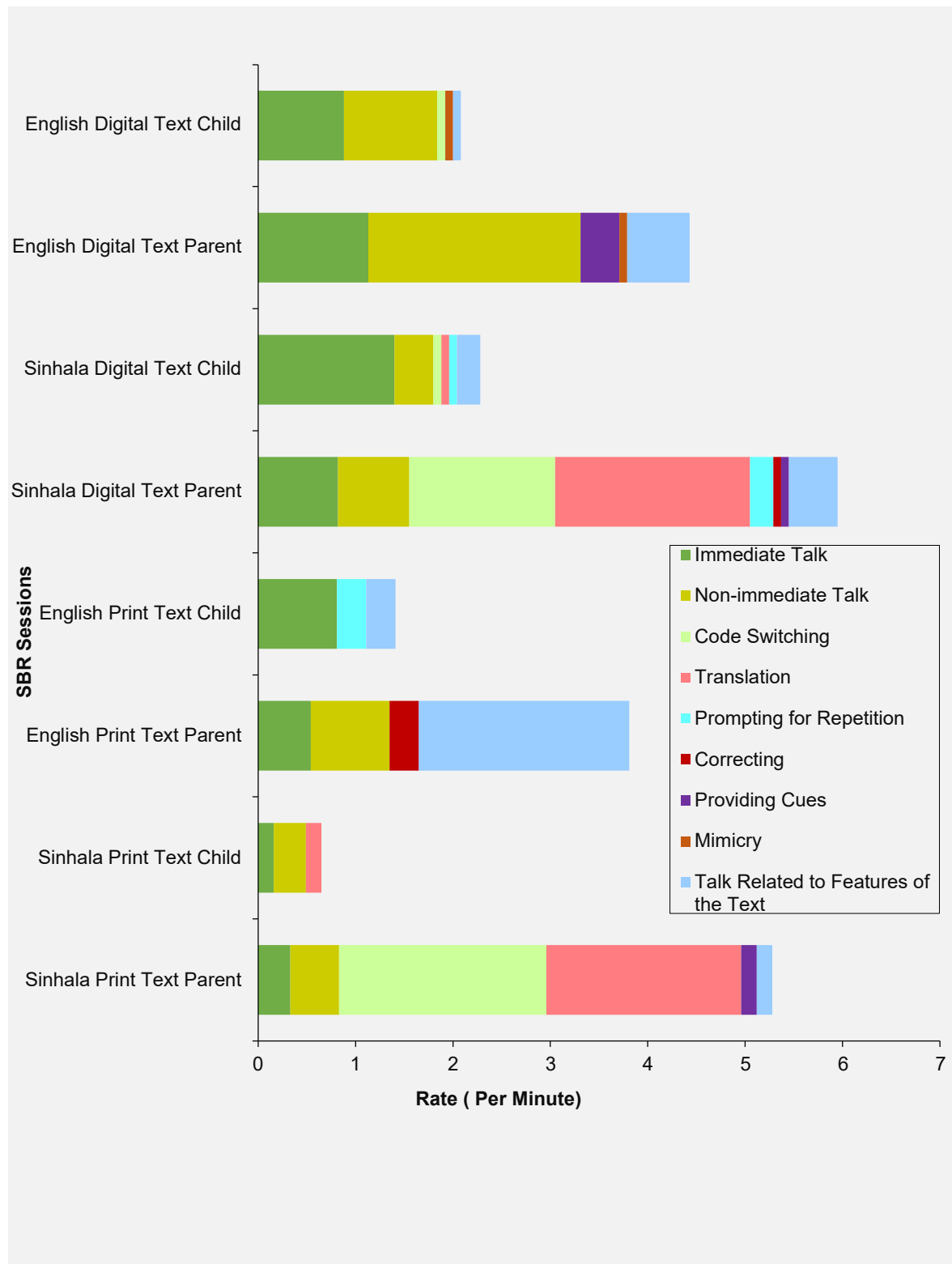


Figure 4-9

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in Case Study 2b During all Shared Book Reading Sessions



The presence of mimicry became unique to shared book reading in English digital text. For example, when the mother read out the name of the author the child mimicked the last part of the word. Then mother mimicked what the child said,

Sue: *“Hoity the Fox, and it is by somebody from Sri Lanka called Sybil Wettasinghe”*

Marian: *“Sinha”*

Sue: *“Sinha”*

In addition, the shared book reading session in English digital text demonstrated interesting conversation between the participants. For example,

Sue: *“What do you mean by Sinha?”*

Sue: *“Why do you say it is interesting? It feels like you say it’s interesting mum!”*

“Why is Sinha interesting?”

Marian: *“Because it is in the word Sinhala”*

Sue: *“Yes that is true, do you know anybody called Sinha?”*

Marian: *“No”*

Sue: *“You do actually”*

Marian looked at her mother.

Sue: *“Do you know what your cousins are called?”*

Marian: *“No”*

Sue: *“Do you know what Bappi’s surname is?”*

Marian: *“Sinha”*

Sue: *“You know, go ask him”*

The above section of their conversation indicates how the mother was providing cues to facilitate the child’s phonological knowledge, background knowledge and inferencing skills leading to acquiring language comprehension.

During shared book reading in English digital text, the mother asked the child about the meaning of the word, “adjoining”. The mother provided cues by showing the two pictures which were next to each other, *“Here is the house, here is the forest”*. Although the child was unable to provide the meaning, the parent’s attempt should be acknowledged. It indicated how the mother was trying to facilitate the child’s semantic knowledge and vocabulary development.

During shared book reading in Sinhala digital text, the code switching and translation scored higher rates compared to other behaviours. Notably, providing cues only occurred during shared book reading in Sinhala digital text.

Shared book reading in English print text was unique in two aspects. Firstly, by reporting the highest rate for the behaviour, talk related to features of the text. Secondly, by reporting none for the behaviour, non-immediate talk by the child. During the interview, the mother commented about the last two set of story books they read which were English print text and Sinhala print text. She said,

The second set of the printed books were a bit shorter than the longer ones. The shorter book in that style is quite different to what they are normally used to. I preferred, and they preferred as well, the shorter stories because they could go back and look at them themselves. They prefer the paperback because that is just what they knew.

We assume that the reason that the shared book reading in English print text session to become unique in two aspects is embedded in the mother's comment above. Since both like reading in paper/print text, they named the pictures, read words, tracked words, and pointed to relevant pictures which we considered, talk related to features of the text. We assume the child exhibited none, for non-immediate talk due to the distinctive style of the story.

During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, the child reported her highest rate for translation. The parent reported her highest rate for code switching in Sinhala print, compared to Sinhala digital. However, she scored similar rates for Translation for shared book reading in Sinhala print and Sinhala digital shared book reading sessions.

Overall, the daughter and the mother actively engaged in shared book reading sessions. There were clear indications of their emotional engagement, for example, during the story about the monkey, she said, "*cheeky monkey*" with the relevant facial expressions and voice tone. Then she asked, "*Is this story real?*". This behaviour provided evidence of her inquisitiveness about the shared book reading session. The mother mentioned in the interview that her children were curious from the beginning of a story.

In another instance, the mother read out the name of the story by adding word "*The*", in front of the given topic. Then the child looked at her and said in a questioning voice, "*The?*". Then mother realised the mistake she had made and self-corrected. She said, "*Oh, you are right, it is called Run Away Beard, there is no 'The*". This made the child laugh and looked at her mother with enthusiasm. Mother also made sure to

reference the story content to the child's background knowledge. At one point, mother compared the long beard to the child's brother's hair and asked her opinion about the possibility of her brother growing a long beard, "*Do you think he will do?*". The child said, "*oh!*" with a surprised voice and facial expression.

Notably, during the shared book reading in Sinhala print text the child pointed and tracked the words and asked, "*Mum, how do they print? when they print do they have keyboards that have these symbols?*". This question asked by the child revealed her interest in the concepts of printing. In addition, this illustrated her cognitive engagement.

Overall, Case Study 2a and Case Study 2b provided evidence of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional aspects of engagement in the parent-child dyads during shared book reading sessions according to language presentation and text representation.

Code switching is switching from one language to another within a sentence or conversation. There are patterns of code switching such as the alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicon. In alternation, there is a clear switch between two languages. In insertion, the speaker borrows words or phrases from one language while speaking in another language. In congruent lexicalisation, merging of words or phrases from both languages take place which may lead to identifying the languages separately (Alexiadou,2018). The possibility for a pattern to occur depends on the language proficiency, language equivalence and the sociolinguistic background. There is more possibility for the occurrence of code switching within a sentence in languages with the same grammatical structure. Code switching in the pattern of insertion for example: during the shared book reading session in Sinhala, Sue asked "*What is kudaya?*". In this example Sue borrowed the phrase in English while reading in Sinhala. Usually, the code switching in the insertion pattern occurs when the individual is not proficient in one or both languages. In shared book reading in Sinhala, Sue asked the above question of Max as he was not proficient in Sinhala.

Case Study 3

Case Study 3 was unique in many aspects. Three of the shared book reading sessions included mother, Jane, her son Pat, father Jim and Pat's sister Ingrid. Ingrid, who was younger than Pat, joined one of the shared book reading sessions in English. Jane was able to read Sinhala with an effort, but her partner Jim struggled with the

Sinhala language. As a result, the shared book reading session in Sinhala print text involving the father and son dyad was limited to describing pictures in English.

When considering the reading arrangement, Jane kept Pat on her lap in a chair during two shared book reading sessions and the child held the book, especially the printed material and the laptop as the digital device. However, Jane and Pat had another shared book reading session in a digital representation in which she held the mobile phone while both were lying on the bed. The dyad of father and son had their shared book reading session while they were sitting on the bed in Pat's room.

Pat was in the age group of 5-6 years. He was born in Australia, and he had not resided in Sri Lanka at any time. His parents, who were both university postgraduates, had a monthly income of more than \$15,000. Pat has a 2-year-old younger sister.

Pat's home literacy environment consisted primarily of the English language, with Sinhala language less than 25%. Pat's parents mentioned that they read to Pat 3-4 hours per week. In addition, they watched TV, played, and engaged in craft activities on daily basis.

Pat's parents had heard about shared book reading, but they were unable to describe it. Pat had more than 100 story books at home. His parents had bought the books, borrowed from the library or Pat had received them as gifts. Pat's parents usually bought print text story books once a month and Pat accompanied them. However, Pat's parents did not let him pick print or digital text story books. Pat's parents had never downloaded digital text story books, and rarely used digital story books in the home.

Pat's parents had bought the stories which were chosen by Pat. His parents had a passion for reading and they usually read in the evening with Pat. The choice of story book was shared between mother, father, or Pat. The parents preferred to read in either the living room or Pat's bedroom. However, he did not have a preference. Pat usually sat on his parent's lap during shared book reading or sits on the chair next to his parent or they lay down on the bed.

The parental questionnaire also revealed that as a family they read daily. Pat, Jane, and Jim asked questions of each other during readings sessions and read the same book repeatedly and took turns in reading. The parents wanted Pat to develop his comprehension through shared book reading as well as using the sessions to develop bonds between them. Pat's parents mentioned they all preferred to read in

print text. Pat's exposure to Sinhala language was typically through songs in an audio format. Pat's parents preferred to read in English.

Opinions About Reading

Pat's parents strongly agreed that reading books with children builds the home literacy environment and is an important activity to promote bilingual skills in children. They strongly agreed that reading facilitates the language skills of children, including children with developmental delays.

Jane and Jim were neutral about the role of gender in shared reading activities. They were neutral about boys having less interest in reading print text than girls and girls having less interest in reading digital text than boys. The views that the passion for reading depends on gender and reading with children reduces harsh parenting skills were also viewed in a neutral manner by Jane and Jim. They agreed, however, that parental behaviour during reading with children has an impact on the reading skills of children. In addition, they agreed that digital text story books can develop reading skills better than printed text. However, they disagreed with the statement that print text story books can be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay.

Shared Book Reading Video Sessions

The shared book reading session in the English digital text, *Hoity the Fox* was unique as Pat's sister joined the session and both sat on their mother's lap during reading. Pat's 2-year-old sister also provided input to the session from time to time and joined the session on and off. Pat did not get disturbed by the background noise made by his sister during the shared book reading session. Both Pat and Jane responded to Pat's sister when she joined the shared book reading session. However, at the last part of the story they encountered a technical issue with the device and missed a few pages. They started reading again after a break, making a separate video file. However, in this second part of the video Pat looked sleepy and he was yawning. At the beginning of the second part, mother asked Pat, "*do you love the story?*". Pat nodded. However, when they were getting close to the end of the story, Pat asked his mother, "*How long is this?*" to which mother replied, "*A little bit*". The time they spent for the whole story was 16 minutes. Pat's lack of interest at the end could be a result of the technical issue they experienced halfway through the session.

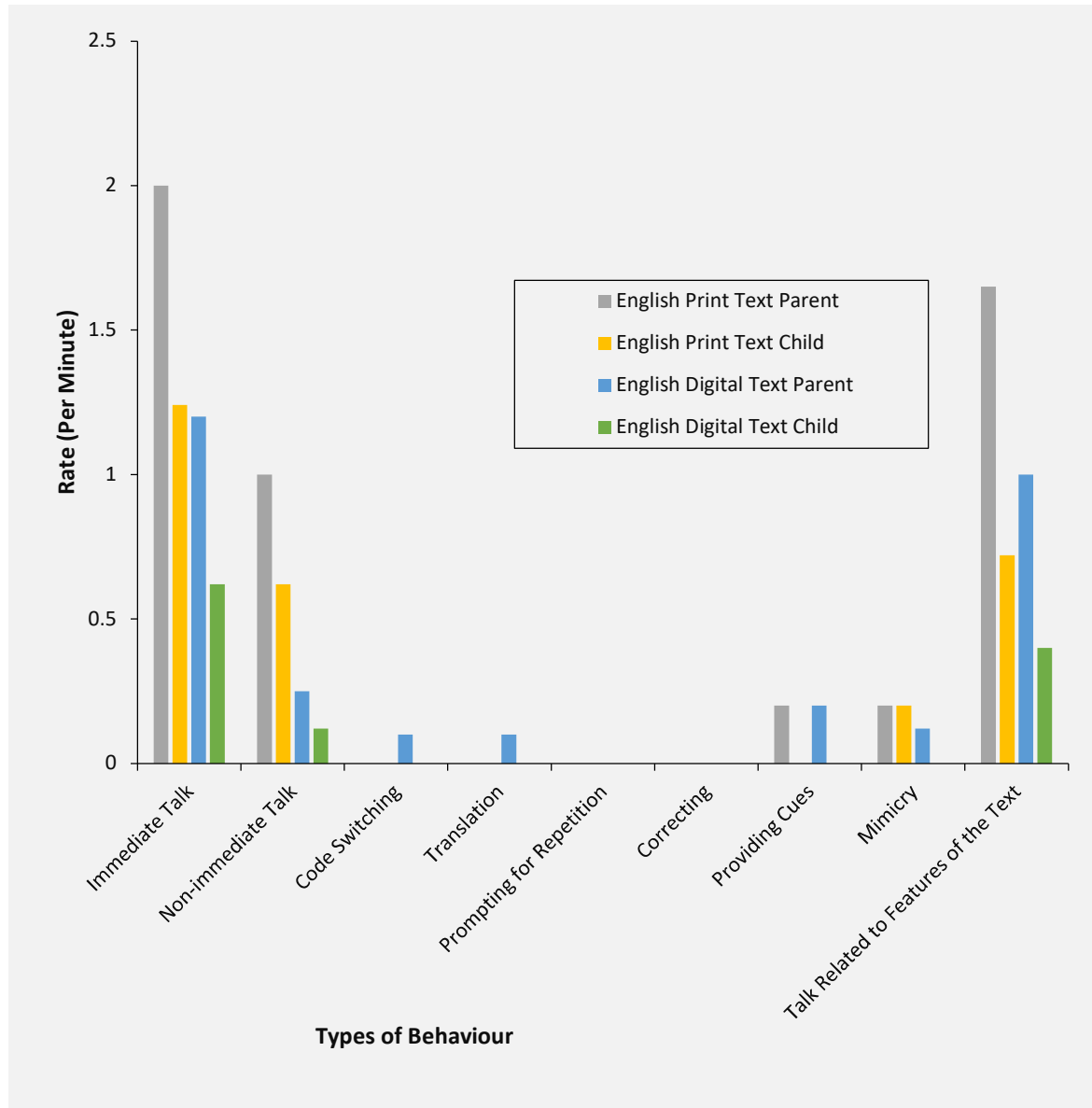
Figure 4-10 shows that immediate talk had the highest rate of observed behaviour type during shared book reading sessions in English. Regardless of the type of text, Pat's mother had the highest scores for immediate talk compared to Pat. The same scenario applied to the rate of non-immediate talk and talk related to features of the text. Notably, the coded behaviours during shared book reading in English was more prominent in print text than digital text. This outcome coincided with their preference to read in print text.

The shared book reading session in English print text became prominent for many reasons. In this session, Pat exhibited his ability to make inferences by relating the main object of the story, which was an umbrella in the story "The Umbrella Thief", to his own umbrella. He said, "*It's like my spider man umbrella*". Tim mimicked the word "yellow" and phonetically segmented it as, "/y/ /e/ /l/ /l/ /o/ /w/" and exhibited his skill of phonological knowledge and phonemic awareness. Pat indicated an example of non-immediate talk by asking about the material the umbrella was made of. He was curious about how to pull down the umbrella. So, he asked his mother, "*But how can they pull it down?*" while pointing to the picture. Pat's mother demonstrated while commenting, "*Just like your umbrella, there is something like a clip, so you can pull it down and it clicks into place*". She provided background information and facilitated Pat's semantic knowledge and vocabulary.

Jane asked Pat to predict who could have stolen the umbrella. Pat responded by saying it was "*A bad guy*", revealing his understanding about human values, social norms, and good and bad behaviours. Pat named a picture of a food item saying, "*pretzels*", however, they were not pretzels but had a similar shape. Therefore, Pat's mother said "*Pretzels, yeh, they are like pretzels, but they are*", she paused and provided a cue to Pat, to which he responded as "*cookies*". Since they were not cookies, mother related to his experience by commenting, "*Remember like what achchi makes?*" referring to cooking from his granny. The use of background knowledge and previous experience was evident in that scenario.

Figure 4-10

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in Case Study 3 during Shared Book Reading Session in English



In another instance, Pat suddenly pointed to the word “see” and read it as “see” illustrating an example for his alphabetic coding skills. The story included a picture of a monkey and Pat referred it as “koala”. Jane explained that the story happened in Sri Lanka where they have lots of monkeys instead of koalas. Jane provided background knowledge to facilitate Pat’s general knowledge and reading comprehension. Whereas Pat also made a clear reference to a similar figure he had experienced, both animals were black, living on trees and fluffy. Therefore, from Pat’s perspective, he

related to the best possible match from his experience. He indicated his inferencing skills which lead to a greater level of reading comprehension. Another unique feature observed during this video session was Jane's attempt to introduce the symbol of an exclamation mark to Pat.

The shared book reading in English digital text session included Pat, his mother, and his sister who joined the session here and there. They read the book *Hoity the Fox*. All three of them were in the session at the beginning of the story with Pat's sister repeatedly naming a picture to which Pat responded, "yes" while listening to the story. There was another instance where Pat held his sister's hand while listening to the story, highlighting how a shared book reading session can facilitate emotional engagement between siblings.

Pat and his mother started talking about a picture in the story which Pat identified as "fire". His mother asked, "Do you mean because it's like upwards?". Pat answered, "No, there is fire behind the plant". Providing Pat an opportunity to clarify and to verify his answer can be considered an effective literacy strategy to use in a shared book reading session. Further, Pat did not get distracted by the background noises created by his sister while she was playing on the floor. This was an indication of Pat's interest in reading in English. He read aloud some words in the story, such as "farmer", to which his mother praised him "Yeh, very good".

Pat's mother used appropriate voice qualities such as intonation, pitch, and volume to suit the context. As a result, even Pat's sister who was playing on the floor got attracted to the story and came running to peep into the story saying, "Can I see?". This showed the need to consider the use of appropriate voice qualities which can contribute to enhancing the reading comprehension. Jane described a picture to her daughter and Pat was attentive to the story while holding the digital device. Pat did not show any displeasure about the constant involvement of his sister Ingrid.

However, Pat and his mother experienced a technical malfunction during the session which interrupted the shared book reading session. They recommenced the session a little later after resolving the technical issue, but Pat looked sleepy and lethargic by that time. Jane tried to gain his attention to the story by asking, "Do you love the story?" at the beginning of the second part. Pat nodded, however, he then asked, "How long is this?" to which mother said, "A little bit". This indicated that Pat had lost interest in the story, possibly because of the disruption to the recording of the session.

Jane translated the words “*coconut sambal*”, and code switched saying, “*achchi makes*”, meaning “*granny makes*”. Jane facilitated Pat’s background and inferencing skills, semantic and syntactic knowledge. At the end of the story, Pat commented about the fox saying, “*he ripped it*”, to which mother said, “*Yes, you are right*”.

This session highlighted a few aspects to consider as part of shared book reading. One area is the emotional engagement between Pat, his sister and mother, through the seating arrangement, position of the digital device, and the ways they overcame the impact of the technical malfunction.

A shared book reading session in Sinhala digital text was conducted by the mother and son dyad. They were lying on the bed and the mother was holding the mobile phone as the digital device to read the digital story. As the mother started to read in Sinhala, Pat started to giggle. Jane was reading slowly and struggling to read the story in Sinhala. Pat was closing his eyes and laughing. Jane stopped reading and asked, “*Why are you laughing?*”, to which Pat said, “*You read*”. Jane continued reading in Sinhala and Pat pretend to be sleeping and was snoring loudly. Mother asked, “*Why are you snoring?*” Pat opened his eyes and mother said, “*You have to listen*”. Pat agreed and started listening to what mother was reading in Sinhala when Pat said “*birdy*”. Mother switched the code to English and said “*Yes, there is a birdy, yellow birdy*”.

While mother continued reading in Sinhala, Pat said, “*nest*”. Pat’s mother’s code switched to English and she replied with verbal praise “*Yes, ‘nest’, that’s right, the birds are in the nest*”. However, Pat stood up and walked away from the bed without waiting to finish the story. Pat was possibly indicating his preference for the English language that he could understand.

Pat also preferred print text. In this instance, he did not have authority or responsibility to hold or to navigate the digital reading material (i.e., the mobile phone) in this session. This could be another reason for Pat to walk away.

Figure 4-11

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in Case Study 3 during Shared Book Reading in Sinhala Digital

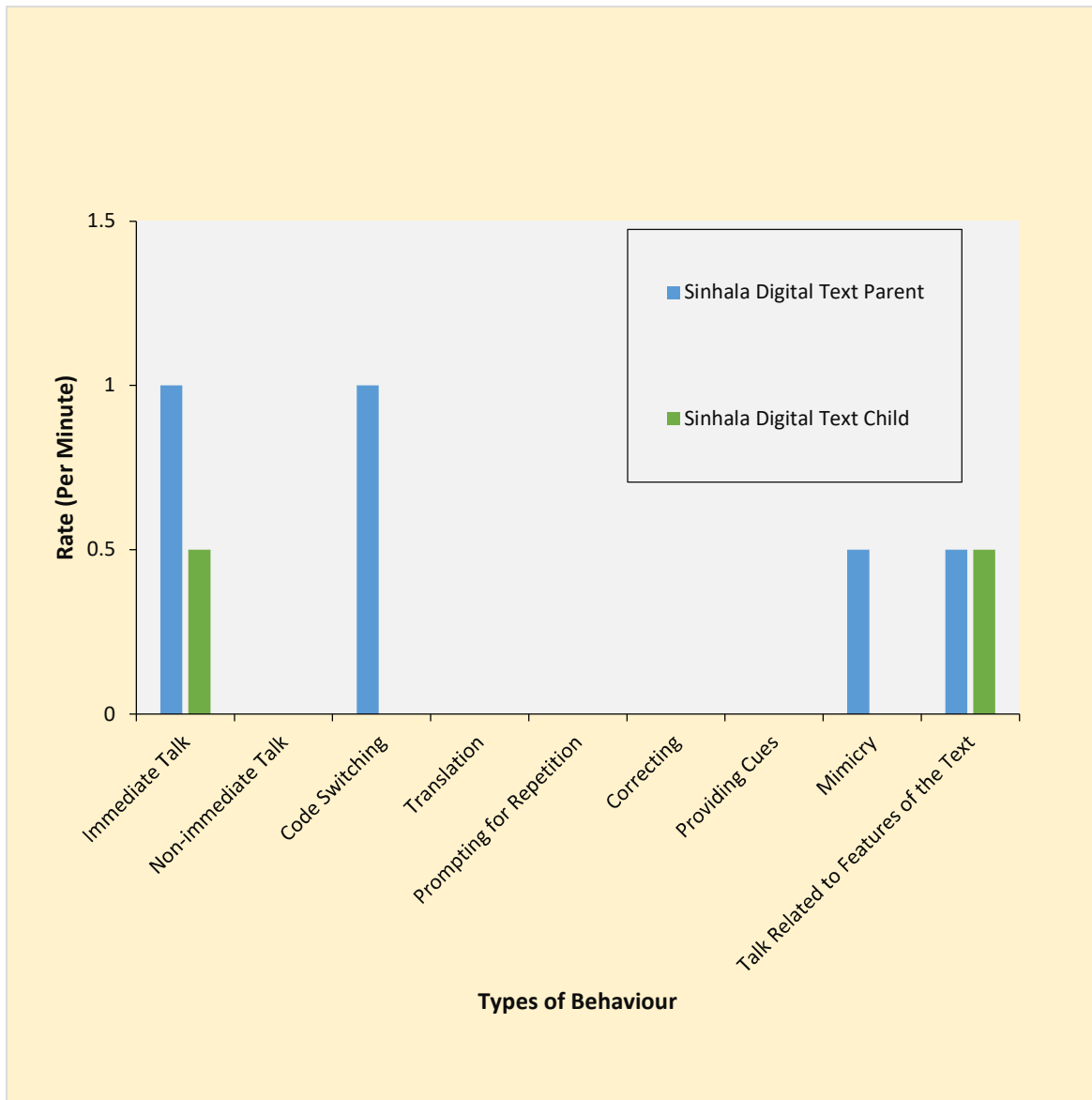
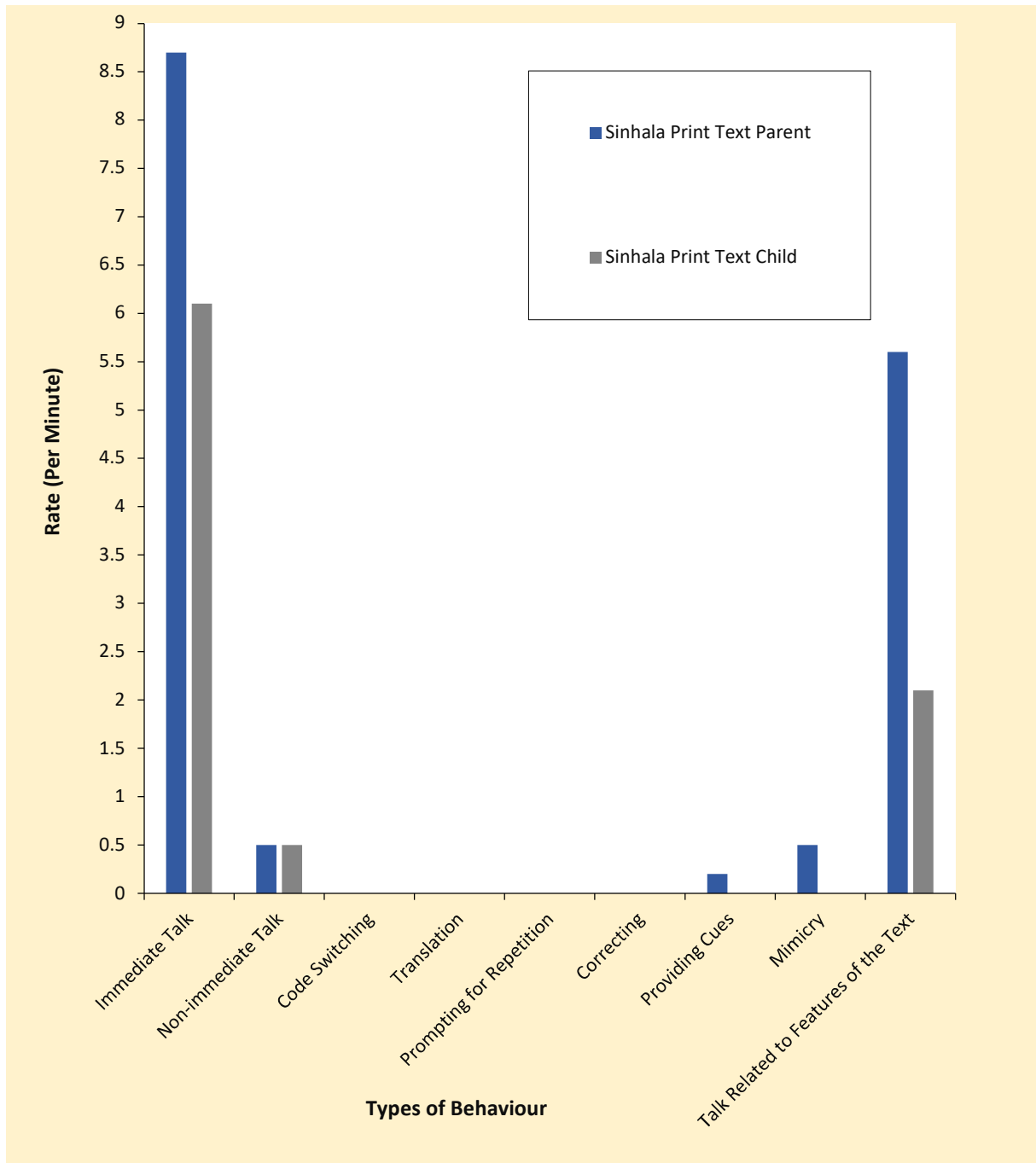


Figure 4-12

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in Case Study 3 During Shared Book Reading in Sinhala Print



Note: This session turned out to be a session of describing pictures in English and appeared as a story telling in English

The shared book reading session in Sinhala print text involved the father-son dyad. Both were sitting on the bed and the father was holding the book, *Rathu Kaar Podda (Little Red Car)*. At the beginning, the father told his son that he could not read fluently in Sinhala, and he would be describing the pictures in English. The whole session was focussed on describing and asking questions about the pictures in English. A prominent comment made by father several times across the shared book reading session was to ask Pat to sit still, *“Can you please sit still?”*.

Since they were sitting on the bed and the father was holding the book, Pat had more freedom to move around. Despite that it was meant to be a shared book reading session in Sinhala, and the father started to describe the pictures in English, which was their dominant language, Pat’s lack of attention to the task could be due to their positioning which was different from usual practice. In the questionnaire both parents mentioned that they usually sat in a chair with Pat, or Pat sat on their lap or lay down on the bed.

Pat again did not have any responsibility or authority to hold the reading material, in this case the printed book. However, during shared book reading sessions the child had with his mother, she let Pat hold the book and even scroll the pages during digital text reading on the laptop. The father’s behaviour of holding the book was evident in the interview data where he said that *“I will just hold the book”* when reading with Pat. The data in the interview also revealed that Jim did not have a strong understanding of shared book reading and how to engage Pat in it. During the interview he discussed the challenges he experienced during shared book reading sessions and stated,

Sometimes they want to read instead of the parent reading it, generally, at school the reading is done, he will read us the reading and I will just hold the book. It was the parent reading the book and he must listen to the story.

The whole shared book reading session was focussed on immediate talk and talk related to print features such as describing the pictures in English. There was one instance where Jim, the father, asked Pat for his opinion, *“Why do you think he is dancing?”* which can be identified as an example of non-immediate talk which was not mentioned in the story.

The other behaviours indicated by the father was the use of providing cues and mimicry. Once Jim paused at the end of a sentence allowing Pat to complete it and Pat correctly completed by saying *“dog”*. Then the father mimicked what Pat said. In

addition, Jim verbally praised the child saying, “Yes, good” for all the correct answers Pat gave.

In sum, this case study highlighted some fundamental, but very important aspects to consider in making a shared book reading session more effective and meaningful. These included the positioning/seating arrangement, the type of digital device and the size of it and the proximity to the reading material. Along with these aspects it would be important to consider involving the siblings in the session as well. This could facilitate the shared book reading session linguistically, such as contributing to the background knowledge of the story content or introducing letters and vocabulary. Simultaneously, contributing to the facilitation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement.

However, there could be instances where the involvement of siblings could distract the participants in shared book reading, leading to an interruption to the session. Having said that, the influence of the interest in reading cannot be underestimated and it is equally important as the other factors. Overall, the fundamental aspects discussed before have an influential role in making a shared book reading session more effective in terms of engagement.

Case Study 4

Case Study 4 described shared book reading sessions between Mark and his mother, Diane. This case study was exceptional in its own way, highlighting factors which can influence the effectiveness and productivity of a shared book reading session.

Mark was born in the latter part of 2014 and, he was 6 years and 11 months at the time of data collection. He has a sibling, who is two years older. Mark was born in Australia and has lived in Australia all his life. Both Mark’s parents hold post-graduate degrees and have a monthly income of more than \$15,000. Mark’s parents reported that they spent about four hours per week reading with him. Mark also engaged in sports and watching television with his parents.

The parental questionnaire revealed that Diane had not heard of the idea of shared book reading. After giving it consideration, she indicated that shared book reading was “*A good way to introduce reading*” but did not elaborate on any other benefits of the strategy.

Mark preferred to read English story books in a printed format. No preference to read Sinhala books in print or digital format was recorded through the questionnaire or interview. The family did indicate they watched videos in Sinhala. Mark liked going to the library to locate new books. Mark preferred to read inside the house but did not indicate a location within the house that he preferred (e.g., lounge, bedroom).

Discussion of Mark's home literacy environment with Diane revealed that he had more than 100 books which he had acquired in various ways such as gifts, buying, borrowing, and using books passed on from relatives/friends. Mark and his parents bought print text storybooks about once a month, with the choice of book left up to Mark. However, the family had never downloaded or bought digital story books.

In the questionnaire and in the interview, Mark's mother reported how she had no passion for reading for pleasure. If she did read, it was for professional purposes using printed materials. Despite this disclosure, Mark and she prefer to read books in the evening; about once a week all four family members randomly chose the book to read. Diane mentioned that both she and Mark preferred to read books together in the library where Mark preferred to sit next to his mother. It was noted when reading digital texts during the study, however, that Mark sat on his mother's lap.

Diane indicated in the questionnaire that she and Mark took turns to ask and answer questions when reading together. Diane did not elaborate on the types of questions, or the nature of ensuing conversations. Despite indicating that Mark and she read in the evening, she wished that Mark would develop a stronger habit of reading together with her.

General Opinion About Reading

Mark's mother agreed with the ideas that reading books with children can facilitate the home literacy environment, and bilingual skills, in children. However, she was neutral in opinion that language can be developed for children with developmental delays through reading books with them.

Diane had different views about the relationship between gender and the reading materials used (i.e., print, or digital). She agreed with the statement that boys have less interest in reading print text than girls but held a more neutral view about the comment that girls have less interest in reading digital text than boys. She disagreed with the statement that digital text story books can develop reading skills in children more than printed text story books. Similarly, she disagreed with the statement that

print text story books can be less effective than digital story books in developing language skills of children with developmental delay.

Her opinion on the impact of shared book reading on the relationships between the parent and the child was neutral. Diane felt that the passion for reading depended on gender where girls would have more passion than boys. She did not believe that reading with her child impacted her style of parenting, that is, that it reduced harsh parenting. Diane was neutral about the idea that parental behaviour during reading with children has an impact on reading skills of children. Overall, she agreed that parents reading to their child is instrumental in learning to read.

Video Recordings of Shared Book Reading Sessions

English Digital Text. The first shared book reading session was in English with digital text and lasted 4 minutes and 45 seconds. Mark sat on his mother's lap and looked at the desktop computer screen in front of them for the duration of the reading. Mother navigated the computer while holding Mark's hand. Mother continued to read the book from the beginning to the end, with Mark scrolling the pages from time to time. Mark's mother read the story loudly and Mark did not utter a word nor did his mother ask a question of Mark. There was only one point where the mother described a picture saying, "*Look, he looks sad*". There was no verbal or non-verbal response from Mark other than staring at the screen.

Overall, the session seemed quite passive, with Diane being the active participant in comparison to Mark. While the session was expected to be a social interaction between the parent and the child (i.e., shared book reading), it appeared to be 'reading aloud' by the mother. At the time, the observed outcome was due to their reading preference, that is, reading a digital text was not their preferred representation of text even though reading in English was their preferred language.

The observation made during this first shared book reading session appeared to contradict information collected on the study questionnaire. While Diane reported on the questionnaire about using questioning and answering during shared book reading it was not observed in the shared book reading in English digital text.

Mark's non-verbal behaviour throughout the story was also noted. There could be various possible reasons for his behaviour, such as, lack of opportunities to engage in reading as an active participant, inexperience of gaining pleasure through reading and lack of interest for reading.

Diane's knowledge about shared book reading as a concept, and the purpose of shared book reading, captured in the questionnaire appeared to be limited. This level of background awareness about shared book reading could well be a key attribute to the outcomes observed in this first session. It was also evident in this first session that Diane and Mark were that of a mother and child; but the shared book reading session was not one where this relationship was used to enhance the language and literacy levels of Mark. The next three sessions would affirm or contradict these conclusions from the first shared book reading session.

Sinhala Digital Text. This reading session between Mark and Diane was for 4 minutes and 40 seconds. Mark sat on his mother's lap throughout the reading. She held him tightly and he scrolled the pages of the desktop computer. Mother kept on reading the book loudly while Mark was only interested in scrolling the pages. He was non-verbal throughout the reading; Diane made no attempt to engage socially with Mark.

Mark looked at his mother at one stage during the reading to make sure whether he needed to scroll to the next page by pointing to the desktop computer screen, to which his mother nodded. This provided evidence that Mark was aware that mother was reading page by page and by the time she reached the end of the page, he was supposed to move to the next page. Mark's ability to figure out when to move to the next page could be considered as a positive sign in relation to his print related skills regardless of the language.

During the interview, Diane said that Mark had a lot of Sinhala story books written and illustrated by the same author, Sybil Wettasinghe, and he was familiar with the style. This could be the reason Mark was able to figure out when to move to the next page even though he was not familiar with the language or code.

The last page included a poem which Diane sang to Mark. The poem's last line was *"/ la.....la...la...../*". Mother turned to Mark, made eye contact while singing the sentence rhythmically and shaking him according to the rhythm. Mark mimicked the shape of mother's mouth when she sang, *"/ la.....la...la...../*" and smiled. This was recognised as a strategy to motivate Mark in the shared reading session and to encourage him to be an active participant.

The seating position during this session highlights a key element of a quality shared book reading session. In this case Mark and his mother were in a position

where they could make eye contact easily and often. Their positions for the session could lead to active engagement in the session.

Mark provided evidence that he could be an active participant in a shared book reading session, if the other participant catered to his needs and considered his strengths (e.g., motivation to turn the page on the digital device). His ability to stay until the end of the story regardless of the type of text and language can also be identified as a strength. It indicates his interest in reading which is an essential requirement in the process of learning to read.

Therefore, this session shed light on the areas to be considered when planning literacy activities for children. Having said that, the knowledge and skills the parents have need to be at a level to identify the strengths and challenges faced by a child during a shared book reading session. This could be considered as part of workshops for parents around the benefits of and strategies to use in a shared book reading session.

Sinhala Print Text. This session lasted 2 minutes and 55 seconds, during which time Mark and Diane read *Rathu Kaar Podda (Little Red Car)*. Mark could be seen sitting on the sofa next to his mother who held the book. This was another 'reading aloud' session by Diane. She kept on reading from the start to the end of the story while holding and turning the pages all by herself. Mark stretched out on the sofa and scratched his eyes and looked sleepy. Throughout the session he made no attempt to engage with Diane or the content of the story or features of the book. However, he stayed until the end of the story. The reason for the outcome could be the interest Mark had in reading in print text.

English Print Text. This session involved reading the book, *Hoity the Fox*. Diane and Mark sat next to each other on the sofa. Mum held the book and turned pages. She also used voice quality appropriate to the story context providing some evidence that Diane found the book a little more motivational than previous books. The session also lasted for a duration of 11 minutes and 23 seconds.

In this session Mark asked a question from his mother about a scenario in the story,

Mark: *"Don't she see it's a fox?" (Mark asked this after the story scenario where the person serving food to the fox who was disguised as a lady.)*

Diane: *“Probably not”*

The possible reason for this conversation could be the alignment of language and type of text with their preferences (e.g., experience and success in reading print texts available in the house). This could have influenced Mark to be more visibly active in engaging in the session compared to other sessions.

Apart from the above conversation, mother kept on reading and Mark listened to the story. If Diane asked open ended questions and spent more time discussing the scenario with Mark, he may have had more opportunity to express his thoughts verbally. Diane could have used these moments to draw out more knowledge and skills from Mark in relation to language comprehension and word recognition. For instance, making inferences, talking about background knowledge, making predictions, semantic knowledge, concepts about print, letter knowledge and phonemic awareness.

Overall, the observations of Mark and Diane were relatively brief. The observed behaviours in the four sessions provide little insight into the social nature of shared book reading. The four sessions could be described as Diane reading to Mark.

The observations from this dyad highlighted that some parents may require some support to foster the love of reading in positive and engaging sessions. (These ideas will be addressed in the Discussion section.) The sessions observed also provided evidence that while the idealistic perceptions of a parent towards shared book reading sound well meaning, the enactment may not fit the perception.

Semi Structured Interview

Mark’s mother had not heard about the term shared book reading. After it was explained to her, she acknowledged that shared book reading could strengthen the bond between Mark and herself, and that it could support vocabulary development. She said, *“He likes to be read to, and enjoys time with us, we stress words that needs to be emphasised”*. Mark indicated that he preferred to read with a parent and did not like reading only by himself.

While Diane said she did not know the idea of shared book reading, she highlighted elements of shared book reading during the final interview. Diane stated that when reading with Mark, *“I first ask him what he thinks, then we go to the book and then check whether what he thought was right or wrong and what the context”*. However, the four recorded shared book reading sessions did not exhibit this

behaviour. Having said that, she mentioned the modifications for the future shared book reading sessions could include, *“I would give him the book, have a look and ask to look at it, ask to think”*.

Further, Diane believed that it was easier to engage Mark in print text than digital text. She commented that Mark could get distracted easily by digital text on the digital device. This was supported to some extent during the digital reading where Mark appeared to be focussed on the device.

The family used English at home mostly and Diane stated that she believed Mark could understand the story by looking at pictures. She mentioned that she would translate when they read in Sinhala. However, there was no evidence of any translation behaviour during shared book reading in Sinhala.

Diane identified that shared book reading could support literacy skills stating, *“They do not know the words, or where to stop, or the punctuation marks, they pick up on us how to read a book.”* The interviewer asked whether she asked questions, made inferences and worked on print awareness during shared book reading. She said that she asked for the moral of the story and worked on the sounds of the letters. Diane indicated that Mark did not like listening to stories in Sinhala as he could not read and write in Sinhala. He did not find it extremely rewarding or interesting.

Unfortunately, the shared book reading sessions observed in this study did not reflect Diane’s views about the benefits of reading together with her son. On questioning at the end of the interview, Diane indicated that she may not have read the simple instructions given to them as participants. In addition, the videos reflected she was in a hurry to finish reading the story, possibly due to the busy schedule she had as a professional in the health services field. In addition, she revealed that Mark engaged in various extracurricular activities, and he would often indicate that he did not want to read in the evening.

Overall, this case study highlighted influential factors of a shared book reading session which were common with previous studies, such as the interest in reading, preferences, positioning and seating arrangement. The most distinctive feature in all videos of shared book reading sessions was the prominent contradiction with the data from the questionnaire, observations, and the interview. Simply, the videos did not fully reflect the mother’s knowledge and skills which she mentioned in the questionnaire and in the interview. It was conjectured that her lack of application of the knowledge

and skills could be a result of various reasons such as the lack of practice, lack of personal interest in reading and the lack of available time.

Case Study 5

Ana is a girl who was in the age group of 6-7 years and has lived in Australia since her birth. She has two siblings who were about two years older. She lives with her mother and father whose monthly income is in the range of \$7500-\$9999. Ana's mother Bree has a post graduate qualification in early childhood education and is currently working in the field. Bree reported on the questionnaire that she spent between one to two hours reading with Ana per day. English was the most common language they used at home, while Sinhala was used sometimes. Bree, Ana, and the family enjoyed several activities together including watching television, reading, travelling, and playing.

Bree reported that she had a passion for reading. She preferred to read in the evening while Ana preferred to read both during the afternoon and evening. Bree reported that she usually gave Ana the chance to pick the book they would read together. They did not have a preferred place for reading.

Ana's mother mentioned that she accompanied Ana to buy story books and lets her choose the book to buy. They download digital story books once a month and bought print text story books every six months or so. Apart from buying story books, Ana received books as gifts, borrowed from the local library and used books from relatives. Ana said she had a collection of around 75 books.

Ana's mother had heard about shared book reading. She outlined that it was an interactive reading experience which takes place between a child and an adult (e.g., mother, father). Bree did not elaborate on the types of interaction that might occur between the child and adult (e.g., asking questions, pointing to pictures, supporting reading skills).

The parental questionnaire revealed that Ana and her mother would sit next to each other during shared book reading. Bree mentioned that both would take turns and asked questions of each other during their sharing of a story. They would often repeatedly read the same book to find new ideas. Bree was eager for Ana to enjoy reading for pleasure; but she also believed that these experiences would assist Ana to develop her language skills and improve her general knowledge.

Ana preferred to read in both print and digital texts, while Bree preferred to read in print text in Sinhala. Ana had the chance to listen to audio books and video stories in Sinhala. Bree reported that Ana had the chance to talk to her grandparents in Sinhala, an experience that she felt gave Ana more chance to learn this language. While Ana indicated that she preferred to read story books in both digital and text types, she preferred to read with her parents and disliked reading only by herself. She indicated on the questionnaire a neutral feeling about reading in the evening after returning home from school.

General Opinion About Reading

Bree was strong in her thoughts that the home literacy environment can be built by reading books with children, and it can promote bilingual skills in her children (e.g., learning Sinhala). She felt that reading with Ana supported the development of her language skills; that shared book reading would also support the development of language skills of children with developmental delays.

Bree was quite strong in her view about the place of gender and reading by indicating 'Strongly Disagree'. She disagreed with the statements that boys have less interest in reading in print text and girls have less interest in reading in digital text. This was supported with Ana's interest in listening to audio books and watching video stories.

Bree provided evidence that reading with her children could influence their behaviour and the relationship that they had with her. She was neutral in her response to the idea that reading with children could reduce harsh parenting, while she strongly agreed that her parenting behaviour could influence the reading skills of her children.

Bree was not as certain about the influence of the different text representations (i.e., print, digital). She was neutral that digital text story books could develop reading skills in children better than print text story books. However, she disagreed that print text story books could be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay. She felt that her behaviour influenced the reading skills in her children learning to read.

Video Recorded Shared Book Reading Sessions

Ana and her mother read all the books while sitting alongside each other at a table. It was not clear from the videos where the table was in the house. In each of the

sessions they placed the laptop on the table and made sure other materials (e.g., the books) were easy to reach. Following the analysis of the videos, number of behaviours per minute were established for each session.

The highest rate of behaviour within this dyad was immediate talk during shared book reading in English language and in print text representation. English is the dominant language in the home. Ana preferred print text and Bree preferred digital print. Both immediate talk and non-immediate talk occurred least during shared book reading in Sinhala, a second language that was not used frequently within the family.

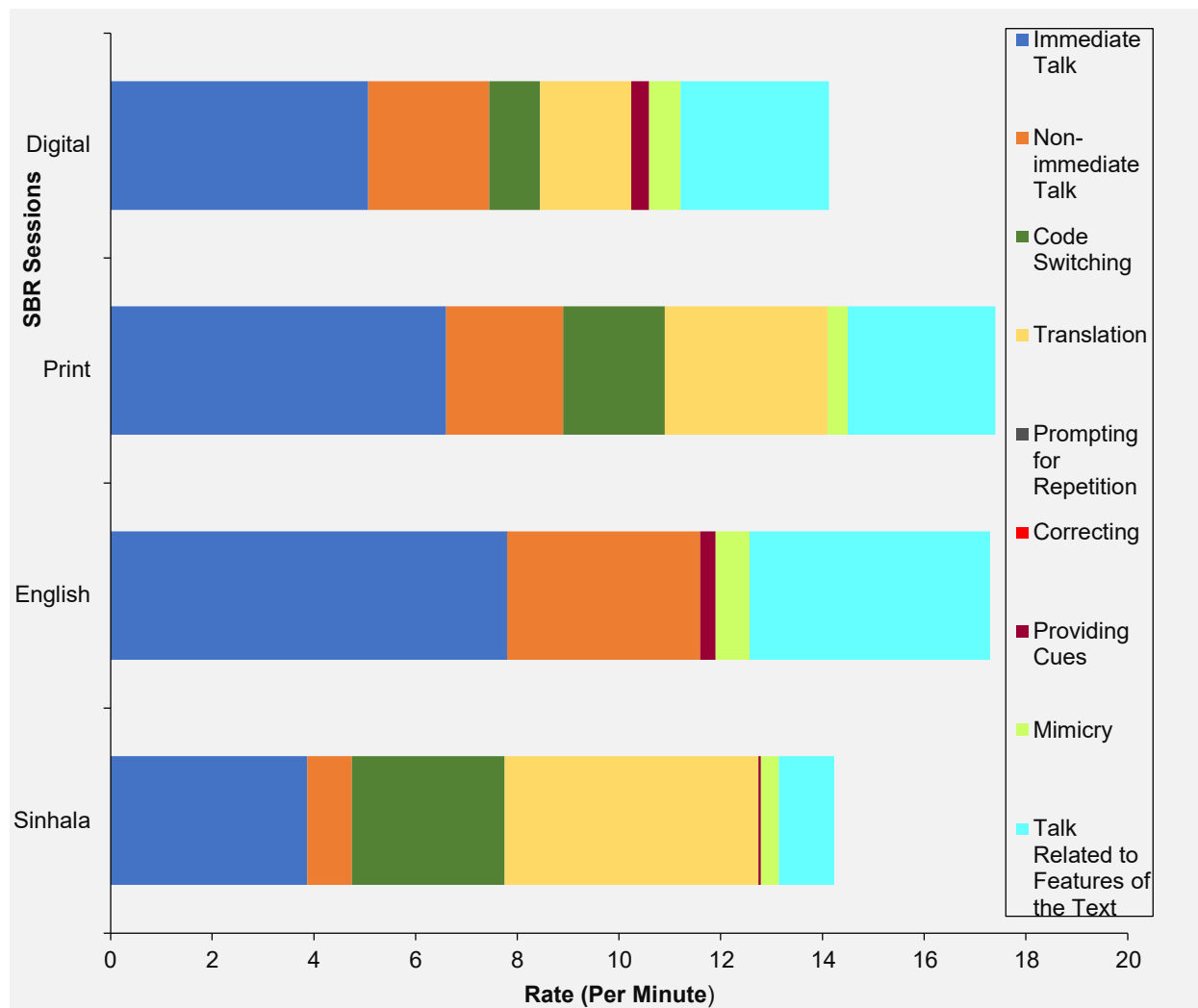
The rate for the behaviour for talk related to features of the text occurred at similar rates during shared book reading in print and digital texts. However, it achieved a greater frequency during shared book reading in English than in Sinhala. This again can be considered because of the better language proficiency in English than in Sinhala as English was the dominant language at home.

The behaviour of mimicry took place in all shared book reading sessions regardless of language and type of text. This behaviour appeared to occur in shared book reading regardless of language and type of text. For a person to mimic a word, they should be attentive to a task, have an interest in the task and the desire to learn a new word. In the few cases where it occurred, mimicry was used as source of humour where Ana and Bree would mimic a character (e.g., the man with the long beard).

Several behaviours did not occur much or at all during sessions. Figure 4-13 illustrates that the behaviour of providing cues was not evident in the shared book reading session in print text, while the behaviour of prompting for repetition was not reported in any shared book reading session.

Figure 4-13

Summary of Differing Behaviours by Differing Representations In Case Study 5 (i.e., language, text)



Code switching, shifting from one language to another, in this case switching from Sinhala to English while reading was not consistent across sessions. It was used during the Sinhala sessions, across both print and digital. On the other hand, translation, explaining something in the proficient language (i.e., English) to get the meaning of the words in a less proficient language (i.e., Sinhala), was evident in both forms of text in Sinhala.

Ana was more proficient in English than in Sinhala while the opposite was found for her mother, Bree. Ana's mother preferred to read in Sinhala and in print text. Hence, the likely reason for code switching and translations being slightly higher in shared book reading sessions in print text could be due to Ana's mother's preference to read

in print text than digital text. Exploring the difference between child and adult may provide further insights into the reading sessions.

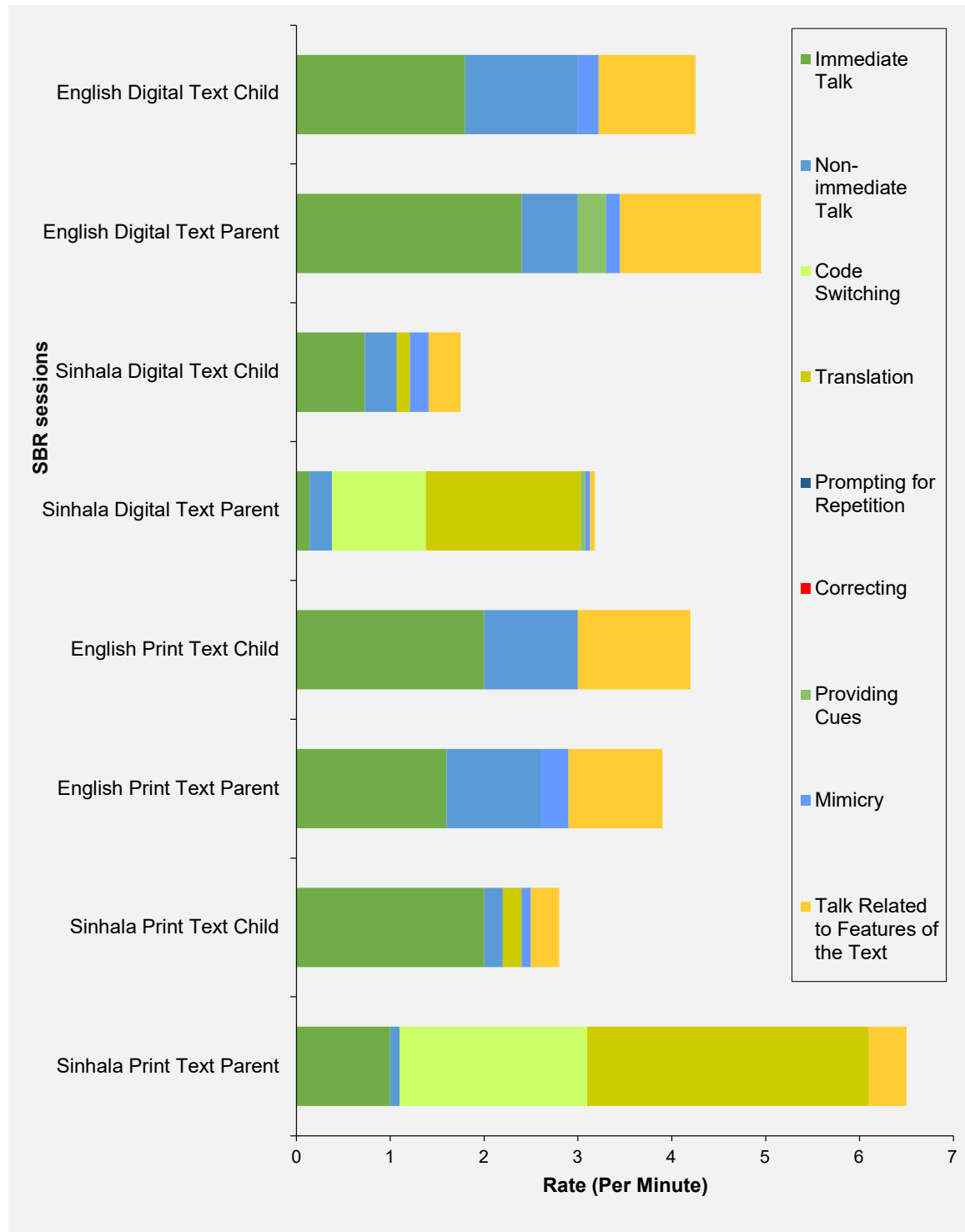
Figure 4-14 shows the rate of behaviours exhibited by Ana and her mother during each shared book reading session. When considering the shared book reading session in English digital text, Bree exhibited more immediate talk than Ana. However, Ana exhibited more non-immediate talk than her mother. Ana made inferences and predictions throughout the shared book reading sessions, which the recordings showed to be gleeful and representing enjoyment. While reading the story, Bree asked, "*What happened to the umbrella?*", and Ana responded, "*Someone took it, it could be a person or animal*". Ana guessed the answer before finding the answer by reading the book.

In another instance mother and daughter were talking about the immediate story content. Ana made a comment, "*Imagine if there was a leaf umbrella*" while making the gesture of holding an umbrella. She added, "*Oh, they could use a blanket umbrella or something like that, even a banana umbrella*". These examples proved Ana's ability in inferencing, imagination, problem solving and logical thinking.

Ana was shown to bring her comprehensive knowledge about the day-to-day life. These skills can be identified as cognitive skills. According to the cognitive foundations of reading (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019), the linguistic knowledge comprising phonological, semantic, and syntactic knowledge and the background knowledge, influences reading comprehension. Ana provided strong evidence of her capacity in linguistic knowledge and background knowledge. In the story "The Umbrella Thief" there was a scenario where the main character planned to solve his problem using a paper trail. Ana asked her mother to explain what was meant by a 'paper trail'. Once Bree explained, Ana re-explained it to her mother by pointing to two places on the table and demonstrated going from one point to another and said, "*Like a map*". This was good evidence of the interest Ana had for the story, her willingness to learn more and her ability to apply what she learned from the story.

Figure 4-14

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Case Study 5 During all Shared Book Reading Sessions



Both Ana and mother used mimicry and there was talk related to print features. For example, Ana pointed to pictures in the story, "The Umbrella Thief" and asked her mother's opinion, "*Which one do you think jack tree?*". Another instance, Ana's mother pointed to a word in Sinhala and asked, "*what kind of letter is this?*" Ana said, "*It's in Sri Lankan*", which indicated her ability to visually identify and differentiate two different orthographies by inferencing her previous experiences. Mother replied, "*Yes, its Sinhala*" to which Ana said, "*My Sri Lanka's books are all in these letters*". Mother asked whether she could recognise the letters and Ana said she did not know much. Then mother read the word in Sinhala. This exhibited mother's desire to facilitate Ana's bilingual skills.

Bree provided cues to Ana by leaving a pause at the end of a sentence, allowing Ana to complete the sentence such as,

Bree: "*These are the jack fruits, and these are the.....?*"

Ana: "*Oh, my god, umbrellas!*"

Another feature observed in all four shared book reading sessions in this dyad was giving Ana enough time to answer a question. This facilitated Ana to produce creative and logical ideas.

When mother used appropriate intonation or prosody during reading, that facilitated Ana's curiosity. Bree, for example, read the sentence about how the main character in the story, "The Umbrella Thief" hid his umbrella. Mother used an intonation to elicit the feelings of doing something secretly and said to herself, "*I wonder why?*". Ana replied, "*Because he did not want to show anyone that he has the umbrella and thinks something is going to happen*". This use of intonation provides an example for Ana, but it also supports her comprehension of material being read.

At the end of the story, Bree asked Ana whether she liked the story and what was the best part. Ana pointed to the picture and said, "*When they found out the monkey*". It was interesting to observe how Ana asked her mother the same question in return, Ana asked her mother "*What is your favourite?*". These behaviours of taking turns and asking questions of each other was revealed in the parental questionnaire. Ana's questionnaire revealed that she enjoyed reading with a parent. As a result, the session provided evidence of the emotional engagement between them. It was observed that Ana was keen on the pictures and tried to predict, infer, imagine, and create her ideas and express them, adding more depth to the session.

When moving on to the shared book reading session of a Sinhala digital text story, *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)*, it was observed that Bree used more code switching, and translation compared to Ana. Her behaviour was compatible with her language proficiency in Sinhala and with her language preference in reading. Similarly, Ana's use of questions to clarify the meaning facilitated the frequent use of code switching and translation. The following evidence shows how Ana asked questions in English which prompted Bree to answer in English, during shared book reading of the Sinhala story in digital text *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)*.

Ana: "What is *lensuwa*?"

Bree: "It is a handkerchief"

Ana: "Can you say the song in English?"
(Bree translated the song into English and sang)

During the interview with Bree, she revealed she had noticed that Ana enjoyed the sessions in Sinhala. Despite the language barrier, Ana made a great attempt to use strategies like questioning and describing pictures to facilitate her reading comprehension in Sinhala. Ana used immediate talk in English to make comments and ask about pictures, for example, she said "*I have to say something about that page*". Then Bree gave her the chance to make her comment in English during shared book reading of the Sinhala digital text story, *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)* and Ana said, "*I saw something on the front cover, he dressed up with the clothes and he fooled others, not that he is a fox, and he will get rice*". Ana's mother gave feedback saying, "*Oh! You are clever*" and asked whether Ana could remember any other story where a fox getting dressed up in clothes. So, Ana's mother attempted to connect similar scenarios from present and past.

In another instance, Bree asked, "*You know /sarama/ what /thaththa/ make?*" (i.e., meaning a dress made by her dad). Then Ana replied, "*/thaththa/ wears that*". This could be considered as code switching by both Ana and mother, as the words */sarama/* and */thaththa/* were both in Sinhala and the rest in English. In another example Ana asked for a meaning of a word in Sinhala, "*What is /lensuwa/?*", meaning "handkerchief" in English and her mother described it in English. This showed Ana's determination and motivation to learn new words and her desire to enhance her semantic knowledge in Sinhala.

When reading the stories in Sinhala, Bree translated each page into English after reading in Sinhala. At one point she said, "*Tail is something that humans have not*

got", to which Ana replied, "*Like cats have tails but they are not humans*". That was evidence for Ana's skills in inferencing, logical thinking, and application of the idea she comprehended. Bree mentioned in the interview that modelling was an important strategy in a child's learning and development process. Both sessions, English digital and Sinhala digital, provided evidence of the use of mimicry by both Ana and her mother.

Bree related a scenario in the story, *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)* to a habit of Ana's brother, she said, "*Just like your brother, he likes to eat chicken*". In another instance after reading the sentence where the fox intends to eat rice instead of chicken, mother said, "*I wish if ayya picks to eat rice instead of chicken*", here the word *ayya* is the Sinhala word for brother.

The story *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)* contained a song, to which Ana started to rock rhythmically while the mother was singing. This indicated that Ana enjoyed the story regardless of the language. In the story, there was a saree and mother tried to explain it, she said, "*You know the saree, the long saree amma wore that for the wedding*". Here the word "*amma*" is the Sinhala word for mother. Ana replied, "*Oh yes, like this (showed the gesture of wearing the saree) - like Cinderella*". Ana provided evidence of her linguistic knowledge in English by using a simile here.

However, Ana looked fed up with the session after spending more than about 10 minutes, with some sessions lasting around 20 minutes. The reasons for her behaviour could be the language barrier and the cognitive energy required, and her attention span.

A common observation across all four shared book reading sessions was the opportunity given to Ana to be part of the session by her mother (i.e., to look at the book cover picture and to predict the story). It provides an insight into the social event that shared book reading was for Ana and Bree. Even in the shared book reading session in English print text, Ana said, "*I think I know that because of the picture, because it looks very long, we could predict if we do not know what it says*". Her comment was a good indicator of the importance of print features and the importance in illustrating them in a way to express ideas clearly.

Bree summarised what she read and made comments about the content. During a session, Ana was heard to say, "*I wonder how?*". That mimicked a behaviour she had heard her mother use. In response to the sentence read by Bree (i.e., about the beard getting trimmed by the mouse in the story), Ana's automatic expression was

“that’s interesting”. While it was another example of mimicking, it could be a sign that she was enjoying the shared book reading session.

Ana was also prepared to ask her mother about the meanings of words. In the story “Run Away Beard”, she asked her mother, *“What is ‘in vain’?”*, and her mother provided the meaning. This was an indicator of Ana’s interest to learn new words which can lead to the expansion of her linguistic knowledge in English. This support during a shared reading exercise in the home also builds background knowledge and enhances literacy.

The way Bree read supported Ana. Bree read the sentence in the book with intonation, *“The mouse said ‘grandpa, grandpa, what can I do?’”*. As a response to this question in the story, Ana replied, *“I do not know, let’s find out”*. That was further evidence that Ana was actively engaging in the story, was comprehending it, and she was enjoying it.

In another instance Ana indicated her enthusiasm for the story by commenting on the picture after listening to the sentence read by her mother, that the beard began to grow like water flowing out of the spring. Ana said, *“I do not know how it is going to get out, because it is tangled. It is like a flood”*. The use of simile showed Ana’s extensive linguistic knowledge in English. Another interesting example was where she saw the picture of the beard which moved everywhere and listened to the sentence that the runaway beard wrapped up the people and objects. Ana said, *“It’s kind of an octopus with tentacles, but it is more than eight”*. This again exposed Ana’s massive background knowledge, inferencing skills, linguistic knowledge, print awareness, numerical concepts, and the active engagement in the shared book reading session. In a more extensive example, the following exchange was recoded between Ana and her mother,

Ana: *“Oh, I wonder if it is the beard, the beard goes crazy like dancing everywhere”*

Ana: *“It’s kind of like a wind” (referred to the running beard)*

Ana: *“Wait, maybe got scared and they ran away”
(when she heard the sentence, “there was no one was at home”)*

Bree: *“No, they went to the rice field, when we go to Sri Lanka, I’ll show you the rice field”*

Ana: *“They should be lucky because the beard is coming”*

Bree: *“They are lucky”*

Ana: *“But what about if it reaches there?”*

The above example is evidence of more than Ana's linguistic knowledge. It also indicated her human values such as empathy and caring and logical skills. Again, this is a great example to indicate how the habit of reading had contributed to cultivate social and emotional values in Ana.

Ana's mother expressed in the interview that a shared book reading session needed to be collaborative and not one person reading. Her idea was evident in the shared book reading sessions, which included allowing Ana to predict, answer, comment, ask questions and similarly, mimic herself, facilitate inferencing, give positive feedback, and provide cues. All these behaviours led Ana to become an active participant in shared book reading sessions regardless of the language and type of text.

It was observed that Ana raised her hand to indicate that she wanted to ask a question while mother was reading the book. This again exhibited the discipline Ana had while she was engaging in a shared book reading session, providing a non-verbal cue that she had something to contribute but not interrupting her mother's reading. Another example from the shared book reading in English print text,

Ana: *"But what if a bushfire comes?" (pointing to the picture)*

Bree: *"You....good thinking, it could happen to a bushfire, but you know in Sri Lanka, we do not have that much bushfire"*

Ana: *"But I saw something goes up on you tube, there is something about this Australian Cricket player goes to Sri Lanka, there was a flood"*

Bree: *"Ah, that is the flood, it is the Tsunami happened in Sri Lanka. That is why Shane Warne went to Sri Lanka but not the fire.*

Bree: *"Fire usually happens in Australia. It is very hot during summer, but in Sri Lanka we have similar temperatures, we hardly have the bushfire.*

Ana agreed with mothers' comment by talking in unison.

Bree: *"You are right (after reading that the beard ran in to the house) said while turning to the child and tapping her.*

Ana smiled; she said interesting. Ana raised her hand again.

Ana: *"I think he do not have the beard"*

Bree: *"He still has got the beard, but it is not that long"*

Ana made the gesture of small.

Ana sang with mother the poem rhythmically.

Bree: *"What do you think about the story?"*

- Ana:** *"I think the story was a really good story, coz you know that stories like all you got into a bad situations but at the end you get it all right"*
- Bree:** *"Like some of your cartoons, you do not like when things go all wrong, the other day remember when we watched Kung Fu Panda, is it?"*
- Ana:** *"Yes"*
- Bree:** *"You were very sad; everything is going to be sad but at the end everything was ok"*
- Ana:** *"But I didn't like one thing"*
- Bree:** *"You did not like one thing because Panda could not find the mum"*
- Ana:** *"Yes, she died"*
- Bree:** *"She died, but that's OK, we all die one day."*
- Ana:** *"That was a sad moment."*
- Bree:** *"Did you enjoy the book?"*
- Ana:** *"Yes I think the book was really funny because I saw an octopus."*

The above conversation affirmed and confirmed comments discussed earlier, such as Ana's application of extensive knowledge about the world, linguistic and orthographic knowledge, application of knowledge and human values. For example, she expressed her views on the story, and how the story had a better ending amidst all the problems and sadness. She discussed her feelings through relating them to characters in her favourite cartoon. From Bree's point of view, the way she encouraged and facilitated Ana's learning and development needed to be appreciated. Unsurprisingly, Ana's mother stressed the importance of letting the child be open and expressive during shared book reading and, how it can support her as a parent to gauge the level of the competency of the child in reshaping the learning needs.

In addition, this dyad exhibited how shared book reading can create a platform for cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement between the participants. Overall, shared book reading influences a child's social, emotional, communication, language, and literacy development and a stronger relationship between mother and child.

In the shared book reading session in Sinhala print text, Ana exhibited frequent use of immediate talk. However, non-immediate talk was less compared to shared book reading in English print text. A possible reason was that language proficiency in English was greater than in Sinhala. During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, Ana translated a small phrase from Sinhala to English, Bree read, *"Reta geta ganna"*,

to which Ana replied, "*Geta ganna ... I know... go in the house*". This was a high frequency phrase in Sinhala, and most probably Ana might have been exposed to that in the past. Mother asked Ana's older brother to translate the word "*amba*", she asked, "*Manuka, you know 'amba'?*", to which he replied, "mango".

There were instances where the mother explained the pictures in detail and translated into English. At the end, Ana described the whole story in her own words in English. She was interested in the picture of a dog, and she said by turning the page, "*I always saw the dog behind it*". She commented that her favourite part of the story was, "*when the little boy found the car and my favourite character is the dog*". Bree asked which book Ana preferred more out of the two print textbooks, "*do you like this book or the Beard book?*". Ana said that she liked both, but she liked the Beard book most as it was funny. Bree went further and asked whether it was because of the language, because the Beard book was in English and the book they had just finished was in Sinhala. Ana said, "*Yes I understand English*". Then mother replied, "*you understand little bit of Sinhala*", to which Ana responded as, "*I understand a bit*" while making the gesture of small by hand.

During the interview, Bree said that usually Ana read books by herself, but she helped with her reading when Ana came across a difficult word. Mother said that shared book reading can support a child to learn to read which can then be used to read to learn. She also mentioned that Ana could read in English with appropriate pronunciation. Unfortunately, few examples of Anna's use of prosody were observed reading during the shared book reading sessions in English.

In conclusion, Bree described Ana as a curious learner and said she preferred to talk more in a shared book reading session. She found it challenging when considering her availability. Simultaneously, she acknowledged Ana's behaviour as a strength. In acknowledging this Bree highlighted the idea that a collaboration between parents and professionals, such as teacher librarians, in shared book reading sessions could influence the effectiveness of a shared book reading session in the home.

Case Study 6

Tim and his mother Tracey were the participants in this study. Tim was in the age group of 7-8 years of age. He was born in Australia and had lived all his life in Australia. Tim had one other sibling who is two years older. His mother had a postgraduate qualification in the medical field. The family communicated in both Sinhala and in

English languages, however, the dominant language was English. The family has a combined monthly income of more than \$15,000.

Tracey indicated on the survey she allocated 2-3 hours per week to read with Tim. Apart from reading, Tracey engaged with Tim and his sibling in activities such as playing, watching television and travelling.

The questionnaire revealed that Tracey had not heard about the term shared book reading, however, she described it as a child and parent both reading together. Tim had a collection of more than 100 books and regularly received books as gifts in addition to buying and borrowing. Tracey reported she bought print textbooks regularly and accompanied Tim when buying books. She allowed Tim to select a print text story book when shopping but had not supported the purchase of digital text story books. However, she had bought the books chosen by Tim and felt she did not make judgements about the topic of the books.

Tracey had a passion for reading and both preferred to read in the evening. Tim or Tracey took turns picking the books to be read in a shared reading session. Both preferred to read in the bedroom where Tim lay on the bed next to his mother. Tracey mentioned that both took turns in reading. However, Tracey indicated that she was the one who asked questions about the story. She also mentioned that they did not use the same book for repeated shared book reading sessions. Both mother and Tim preferred to read print text in English, with no indication that they engaged with text in Sinhala.

Tracey's Opinion about Reading

Tim's mother Tracey strongly agreed that reading with her child, and children generally, facilitated their home literacy environment. She also felt that it could promote bilingual skills in children. She was not positive in her opinion that reading books with children with developmental delays could facilitate their language development.

When it came to the statements on reading and gender, Tracey disagreed with the comment that boys have less interest in reading print text than girls. However, she was neutral in the idea that girls have less interest in reading digital text than boys. She strongly disagreed that passion for reading was dependent on gender, however, she felt that parents reading with their child can facilitate the skills of learning to read.

Tracey indicated she disagreed with the comment that reading with children reduces harsh parenting skills, however, she strongly agreed that parental behaviour during reading with children impacted on the reading skills of children. Tracey did not agree with the statement that digital text story books can develop reading skills in children more than print text story books. This position seemed to align with her reluctance to support the purchase of digital textbooks. She disagreed that print text story books can be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay.

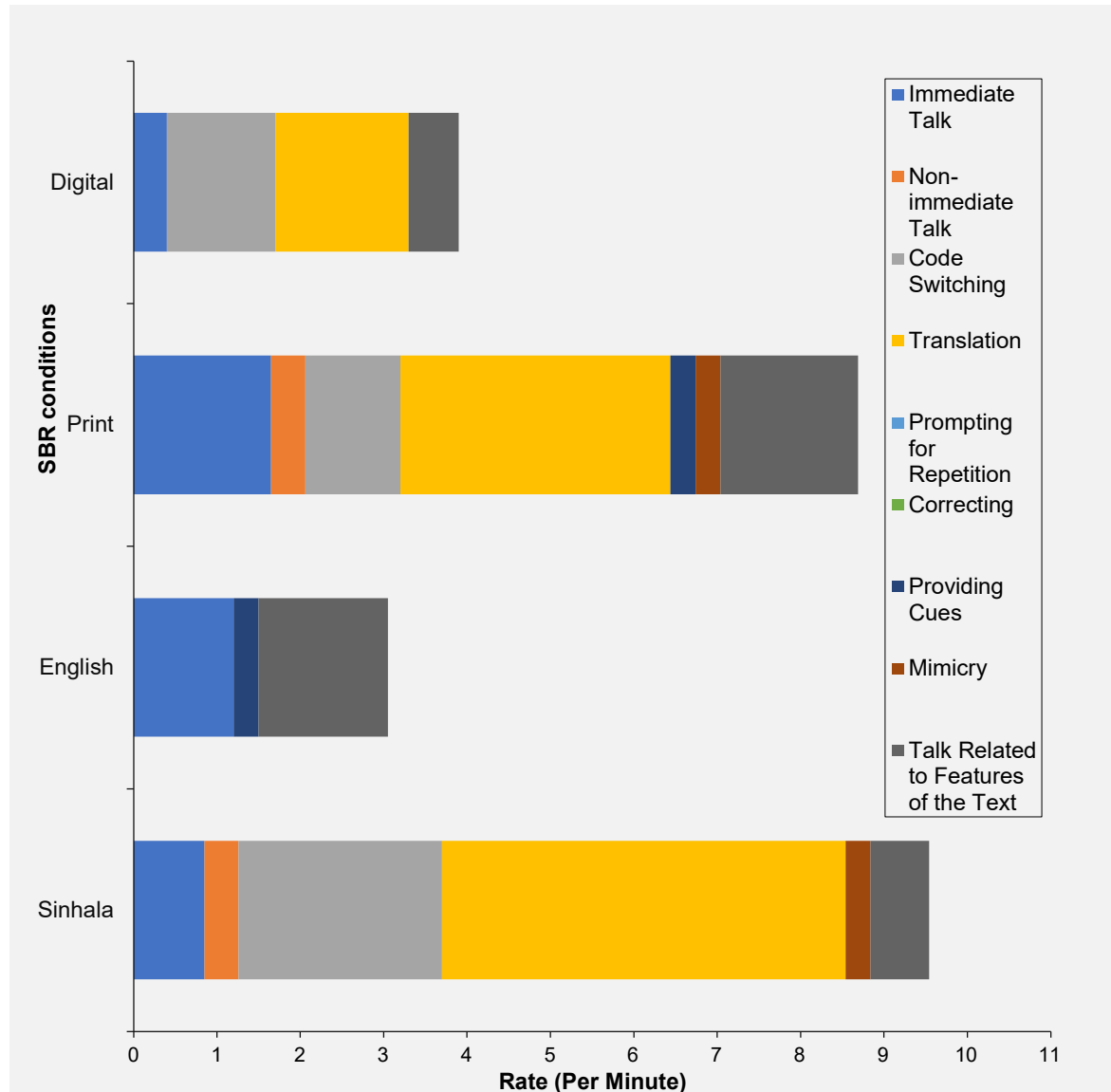
Video Recorded Shared Book Reading Sessions

Tracey and Tim completed the video recordings of them reading together where they were seen to be seated next to each other for all four shared book reading sessions. They uploaded each session to the secure data management site created for the project. These recordings were analysed. Figure 4-15 provides an overview of each behaviour by text representation (i.e., print, digital), and by language (i.e., English, Sinhala).

The behaviour of translation scored the highest rate of occurrence in Sinhala, print and digital text shared book reading sessions, followed by code switching. Those behaviours were expected to occur at a higher rate as English was their dominant language in the home, with Sinhala used at an infrequent level.

Figure 4-15

Total Behaviour Types Observed in Case Study 6, During all Shared Book Reading Sessions in Sinhala, English, Print and Digital



Notably, there were only three types of behaviours observed in shared book reading in English: immediate talk, providing cues, and talk related to features of the text. However, in shared book reading in Sinhala, the behaviours of non-immediate talk and mimicry were observed. Non-immediate talk, which means talking beyond the story content could be considered as more challenging compared to immediate talk, meaning talking about the immediate story content. Shared book reading in print text recorded the highest frequency of different types of behaviours. There were seven types of behaviours such as immediate talk, non-immediate talk, code-switching,

translation, providing cues, mimicry and talk related to features of the text. This result was aligned with Tim's and his mother's preference to read in print rather than in digital text.

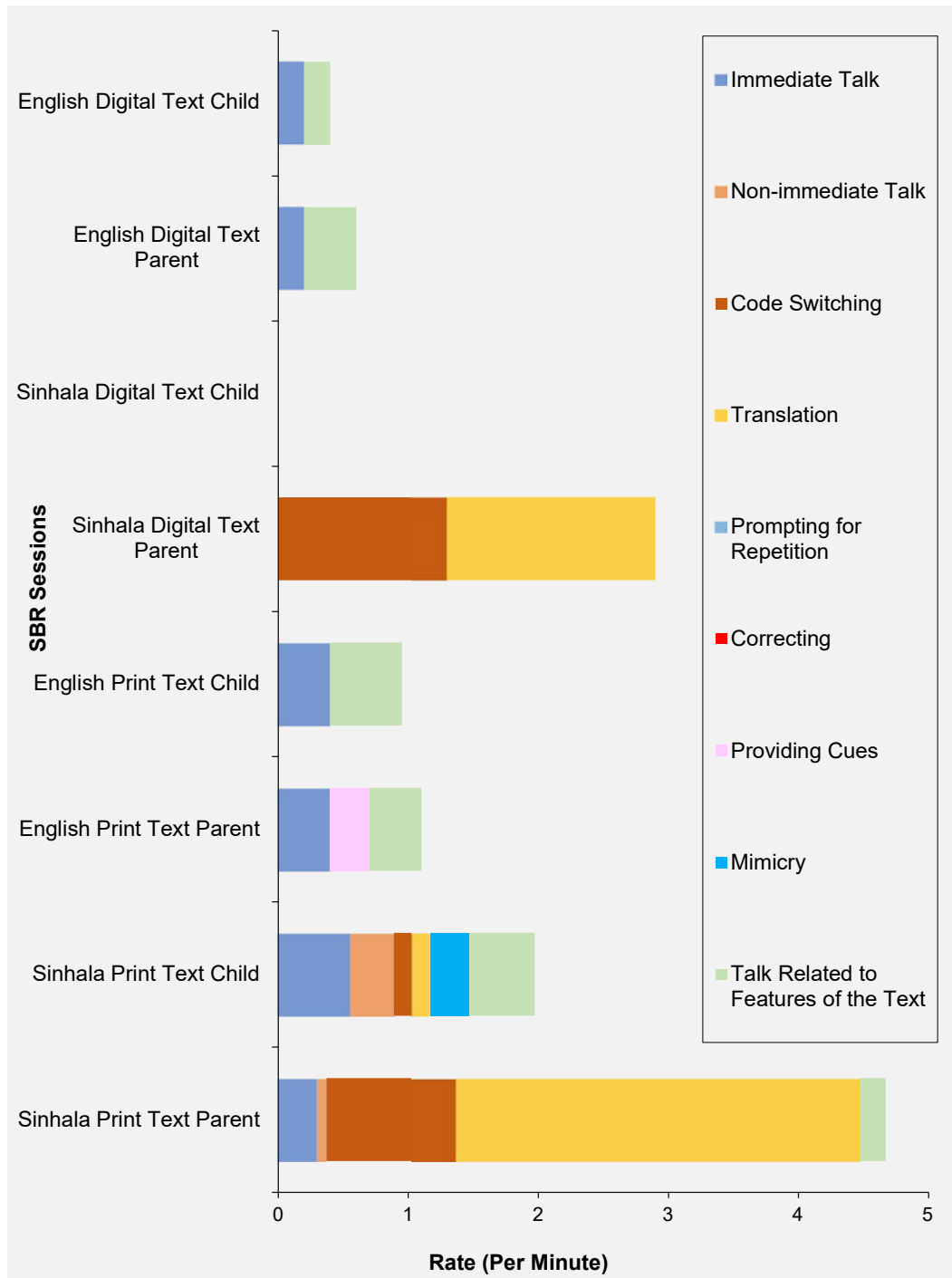
There were different types of behaviours during shared book reading in Sinhala than in English. However, the dyad's preferred language to read in was English and the dominant language at home was English. The observed behaviour could be a result of greater confidence they had in their language competency in English than in Sinhala. In shared book reading in Sinhala, there were higher rates of translation and code switching, in addition to immediate talk, non-immediate talk, mimicry and talk related to features of the text. This observation appeared to facilitate both orthographic and linguistic knowledge in Sinhala leading to reading comprehension in Sinhala.

Despite their preferred language to read being English, it was interesting to observe how Tracey and Tim applied different types of behaviours during shared book reading in Sinhala. This could be considered as a sign of their interest they had for reading regardless of the language.

An analysis was undertaken of the frequency of shared book reading behaviours across text representation and language for both Tracey (mother) and Tim (child). These data are shown in Figure 4-16. During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, Tracy used translation at a relatively higher rate (3.1 per minute) and code switching (1 per minute). After reading each page she translated to English, for example in the story *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)*, she translated and said, "*Chickens screamed when the fox comes and that is how the people in the village get to know that the chicken has been dragged away*". After listening to that Tim said, "*Like a car*". He exhibited non-immediate talk by using his previous knowledge and maybe referring to a similar scenario. The Cognitive Foundations of reading and its acquisition (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) highlighted the importance of the background knowledge and inferencing as a contributing factor for reading comprehension. Tim provided an insight into the importance of his background knowledge and inferencing skills and how it supported him to comprehend stories. In addition, "*Like a car*", could be identified as a simile and revealed the syntactic knowledge Tim has in English. In addition, Tim described pictures in the story in English while pointing to them, for example, he said, "*See the pants, shirts*". This, however, was not observed during the reading of stories in Sinhala.

Figure 4-16

Rate of Behaviour Types Observed in the Case Study 6 During all Shared Book Reading Sessions



The following example includes different types of behaviours such as code switching, translation, immediate talk, and non-immediate talk:

Tracey: “You know *“karawala, the dried fish?”*”

Tim: “*Is dried fish like halmasso?*”

Tracey: “*Not halmasso wage ara anith karawala eka, so that’s what was there for lunch that day*”

This example indicated how Tim used his previous knowledge and inferencing skills to figure out the meaning of “*dried fish*”, he tried to relate the word and its meaning to a visual representation of a similar food item, what he had already experienced. Mother’s explicit description and the use of code switching facilitated Tim to learn new vocabulary in Sinhala, and to expand his vocabulary in English. Tim got the opportunity to add a new word which belonged to the category of “food”, and it could facilitate Tim’s semantic knowledge leading to linguistic knowledge in Sinhala.

The importance of translation in the process of reading comprehension was evident in the shared book reading session *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)*. Tim’s mother read in Sinhala and translated to English as, “*The fox saw a clothesline on the way to farmer’s house and got an idea*”, to which Tim responded, “*To wear them then so no one will notice him*”. Tim was able to comprehend what his mother translated in English, and he figured out the next step of the story with appropriate meaning. If he had not been provided the translation, he may not have been able to figure out the next step as he would not have been able to connect the ideas meaningfully. Even though he expressed his ideas in English, he comprehended the story, and he was able to connect both languages to the same scenario of the story. Once, Tim acquires language comprehension in Sinhala he will be able to express in Sinhala because language comprehension is superior to language expression. In addition, by exposing to Sinhala orthography, Tim’s reading skills in Sinhala may develop parallel to language skills. Having said that, this example sheds some light on how to engage in shared book reading effectively to facilitate bilingual skills in children. Mother’s frequent use of translation and code switching enabled Tim to actively engage in the shared book reading session regardless of his language competency in Sinhala.

An important observation made in shared book reading sessions in English was Tim reading some sentences aloud with his mother’s non-verbal approval. Once, Tracy started to read a sentence and paused, letting Tim read the rest of the sentence. He read fluently (i.e., decoded accurately with good rate). Their language competency

in English could be the main reason for them not to indicate behaviour types such as translation and code switching compared to shared book reading in Sinhala.

When considering the shared book reading sessions in Sinhala digital text and English digital text, there was no recorded behaviour for Tim during shared book reading in Sinhala digital text. Even in English, both Tracey and Tim had lower rates for the observed behaviour types in digital text than in print text. This observation was compatible with their preference for reading in print, and their position that they did not prefer to read digital stories.

Shared book reading of the English digital text “Run Away Beard” became special as Tim’s mother started to read from the end of the story to the beginning. This occurred when Tracey opened the laptop, and the screen displayed the last page. She scrolled down without realising that she was navigating backwards in the story. Unfortunately, the page numbers were not visible properly due to the illustrations which covered the bottom of each page. While mother was reading, Tim scanned the pictures/illustrations and giggled listening to the funny story content. Tim commented, “*Beard everywhere*” while scanning a picture. Mother also joined in describing pictures as she said, “*Yes, look at that, even the birds*”. Tim replied, “*Bird is getting trapped*”. Both were fascinated by the colourful and large illustrations. Surprisingly, neither mother nor Tim indicated any reaction or response by the time they reached the first part of the story. This could be due to their limited experience of reading digital text stories. Another possibility could be that Tim comprehended the story while skimming and scanning the pictures rather than grasping what mother was reading.

During shared book reading of the Sinhala digital story *Rathu Kaar Podda (Little Red Car)*, mother (Tracey) used translation and code-switching. Once she translated word by word,

Tracey: “*ira, is the sun*”

Tracey: “*hand, is the moon*”

Tracey: “*amba, is mango tree*”

Another time she code switched saying “*Amba tree eka ehuwa*”, which included three Sinhala words and one English word. The sentence in English was “The mango tree asked”. Tracey was attempting to facilitate bilingual skills in Tim, and she provided an example of her efforts.

From Tim’s perspective, he became neutral about reading Sinhala story books. He mentioned in his questionnaire that he enjoyed reading a book with a parent. That

was clear during the shared book reading sessions. Tim actively participated until the end of each story, his facial expressions, gestures, verbal responses, comments, questions, his smiles, and giggles indicated his enjoyment in reading a story book with mother. Even in the Sinhala digital text shared book reading session, where there were no reported behaviours for Tim, he appeared on the video recordings to listen to the story and scanned the pages with colourful pictures.

When reflecting all shared book reading sessions, Tim's mother identified that shared book reading sessions can facilitate the bond between the child and the parent. She also recognised the value of the one-to-one time which she got to spend with her child. The difficulty in translating Sinhala words into English was a challenge experienced by her from time to time. Tim's mother mentioned that she had a habit of asking questions from the story, letting Tim read by taking turns, asking him to pronounce words and encouraging Tim to predict the story beforehand. However, Tim was not observed predicting the story prior to reading.

Tim's mother strongly acknowledged the importance of shared book reading in developing literacy skills in children. She shared the experience she had with her older son with whom she had just read a book with a focus only on the aspect of reading for pleasure. She mentioned that she was not aware about any reading techniques to apply during shared book reading at that time. However, now she was focussing on the learning aspect of reading.

Even during the interview, she reconfirmed that they read only print text and her children had not established any interest in reading digital stories. Tracey emphasised the need to be mindful in choosing books in a language different to a child's first language. She shared her experience that even she found it difficult to translate some of the story content in the Sinhala book. She said that she struggled to grasp the idea before translating it. She commented that it would have been better if the book content were less complicated. She commented about the Sinhala print book, "*Sinhala book has literature type of language, does not seem appealing to small kids, maybe they have to rephrase it*". She mentioned that when the story becomes less appealing to the child, the possibility of losing the child's interest for reading could not be prevented.

Tracey stated, "*The whole goal of reading ... like the fun part ... and learning would go away*". She also mentioned that children find it challenging when the words become above their level of competency. During shared book reading in Sinhala print text, she read some of the sentences in the story silently at first, and then loudly

expressed the translated content in English. The story book in Sinhala print *Hoity Nam Hiwala (Hoity the Fox)*, was lengthier than the Sinhala digital text story *Rathu Kaar Podda (Little Red Car)*. This could be another reason Tracey experienced a struggle in grasping the ideas as it contained low-frequency and traditional words. However, the observations were able to identify various types of behaviour occurrences during shared book reading in Sinhala as in English. Tracey's great attempt and determination to convey the story content to Tim should be appreciated.

Having said that, Tracey also mentioned that they applied the use of taking turns in reading. She mentioned that they read on a nightly basis after dinner, and it had become the norm in their daily routine. However, she insisted that they read mainly print text in English and rarely read Sinhala books only with simple words. Tracey's first language was Sinhala.

Being a working mother, she also acknowledged the important role of shared book reading as an activity in developing early literacy skills in children. Tracey said that if we want to teach a second language to a child, it is important to use story books written in that language. However, she emphasised the need to consider using books written in simple language both to facilitate both learning and to experience the pleasure of reading. She believed that the story books should be appealing to the novice learners and readers especially when it comes to languages other than the first language.

Despite not having heard the term "shared book reading" before, she believed that reading a story book with a child at night was a part of the daily routine for parents with young children. Notably, Tracey admitted that she was not that interactive when she was reading with Tim's older brother, her first child, and it had been merely reading for fun. As a result of the previous experience, Tracy believed that she had become more interactive when she was reading with her second child Tim, as she asked more questions and took turns in reading. Tracey also emphasised that she made sure to use reading with Tim to contribute to his learning, in addition to the pleasure.

Chapter 5

Cross-Case Analysis

In this chapter, the cross-case analysis of the seven parent-child dyads will be discussed. The data from each case were analysed to identify common themes, similarities, and differences. The unit of analysis in this study was the parent-child dyad while this cross-case analysis is a secondary level of analysis in the case study mixed methods approach. The aim of employing a cross-case analysis was to form a cluster across cases and to find a method for generalisation. In this study, the researcher aimed at identifying connections between language presentation and text representation in relation to type of engagement.

Engagement

Engagement has been defined in various ways in the literature (Ellis & Coddington, 2013; Hiver et al., 2021; Kucirkova et al., 2017). In this study, the definition of engagement comprised three components: emotional, behavioural, and cognitive (Fredricks et al., 2011).

Emotional Engagement

One of the observable dimensions of engagement is the emotional or affective engagement. It consists of both positive and negative emotions and feelings which can influence the level of interaction of an individual in an activity. When an individual becomes emotionally engaged in an activity, they can experience both positive and negative emotions such as excitement, passion, curiosity, frustration, sadness, or pleasure (Shafer & Wanless, 2022).

On the other hand, the feeling for and with characters when reading a fictional story is identified as emotional transportation and it is defined as the reader's experience resulting from the emotional arousal while engaging in reading (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013). Emotional engagement focusses on the affective involvement with the text rather than the cognitive involvement with the text (Shafer & Wanless, 2022).

Since emotional engagement is related to an individual's internal state, it has become difficult to measure it directly and requires indirect measures to assess (Lee et al., 2021). Therefore, the use of mixed methods approach is recommended in a study on engagement in early childhood (Shafer & Wanless, 2022).

Having a strong relationship between an adult and child has been identified as pivotal for a better engagement during a shared activity. From the child's perspective, it can provide the child a safe, confidence inducing, and relaxed environment to engage in the shared activity. A recent study revealed that emotional engagement has an influence on the affective empathy of an individual after reading a fictional story (Kotrla Topić, 2021).

In Case Study 1 Lisa, the mother, mentioned that she had a "*passion*" for reading that she had developed from her childhood experiences of shared book reading. She also experienced the satisfaction from the shared book reading sessions she had with her daughter. In fact, with both her children who engaged in reading daily. During the shared book reading video sessions, the non-verbal aspects of communication, such as facial expressions, indicated the feelings and emotions of curiosity, pleasure, and interest. Lisa made sure to use the relevant intonation according to the story content and context to facilitate comprehension. This was evidence of her emotional engagement in the story which also influenced the child's emotional engagement with the task as the child was able to indicate her emotions through facial expressions that were suitable to the story's content and context. A study on children's engagement and caregiver's language boosting strategies has revealed that the caregiver's speech acts could contribute high engagement along with the other elements of interaction (Lingwood et al., 2022).

Case Studies 2a and 2b included participants from the same family. The mother Sue and her children demonstrated a passion for reading as they read daily. In general, both Case Studies 2a and 2b provided evidence of higher rates of non-immediate talk compared to all other case studies (e.g., Case Studies 1, 3, 4, 5, 6). Non-immediate talk included talking beyond the immediate story content such as inferencing and predicting. The following is an example from Case Study 2(a), during the shared book reading of the story – "Run Away Beard".

Sue: *"Would you like to make a prediction? What is going to happen?"*
(Max was looking at the front cover of the book)

Max: *"I think this person here has a beard"*

Sue: *"Who has a bit given away in the title"*

Max: *"Actually, he does not really have a beard and then he really wanted a beard, so he went to the magic source and then he gave this person to make his hair to grow long but not touch, but he didn't listen and then it became a problem"*

Sue: *“You know what it reminds me? It reminds me of Willie Wonka.”*

Max: *“Oh, yes I knew”*

The above example shows how the child became emotionally and cognitively engaged to make a reasonable and meaningful prediction. He was cautious about the consequences, and the cause and effect of an incident. Similarly, the mother’s views about the story content reflected her positive emotional and cognitive engagement and the child’s response, despite whether they agreed or not, reflected the positive emotional engagement between the child and his mother. This was reflected in the video of the shared book reading sessions through the relevant facial expressions for being excited.

Mother Sue’s behaviour of asking the child to re-evaluate his prediction about the story at the end of the shared book reading session indirectly facilitated the child’s emotional engagement with the story content to reveal his perceptions. From the mother’s perspective, this practice could be a strategy to check the reading comprehension of the child because the opportunity could be regarded as a time for re-telling the story. For this, the child required linguistic comprehension. Since the child was emotionally engaged in the story while drawing links to his past experiences with similar stories, it enabled him to make relevant judgments about the present story.

During the shared book reading of the story *Hoity the Fox*, Sue and Max discussed food items in the story and their eating preferences. Sue, for example, asked Max *“Do you like curd and treacle?”* to which he said *“No”*. In another instance, his preference of eating rice from a bowl was related to the fox eating food from a bowl and facilitated Max’s interest in the story. In addition, Max asked his mother’s opinion about a character in the story.

Max: *“Do you think he is dressed as a farmer?”*

Sue: *“Yes, that’s what I was thinking and would be my prediction too”*

The above dialogue provided evidence for their emotional engagement. How they respected and valued the opinion of each other. Regardless of the level of language proficiency, both participants indicated a high level of engagement using their proficient language, English, even during the shared book reading in a less proficient language, Sinhala. This could be considered as an indicator of their passion for shared book reading. They shared their emotions and feelings throughout all shared book reading sessions.

The mother-daughter dyad in Case Study 2b also provided similar examples for their engagement. The mother was keen to make references to their family members whenever she came across a similar character or a plot during shared book reading sessions. While reading with her son in Case Study 2a, she made references to grandparents and in Case Study 2b, reading with her daughter, she made references to their immediate family members (e.g., referring to Marian's grandmother). The use of this strategy supported linguistic comprehension. Also, it provided emotional engagement with their loved ones and an opportunity to cherish their memories.

In Case Study 2b during shared book reading in English digital text, the following dialogue took place:

Sue: *"Hoity the Fox and it is by somebody from Sri Lanka called Sybil Weththasingha"* (Mother read out the name of the author)

Marian: *"Sinha?"* (repeated the last two syllables of the word with a questionable facial expression)

Sue: *"Sinha"*

Sue: *"What do you mean by Sinha?"*

Sue: *"Why do you say it's interesting, it feels like you say it's interesting mum"*

In the above example the mother read her daughter's facial expressions reflected through the comment she made, *"It feels like you say, 'it's interesting, mum'"*. This could be identified as evidence of emotional engagement and was supported through the video images of non-verbal evidence of their emotional connections while reading the story.

The example below demonstrates how the mother made references to the child's relationships and the prompts she provided her daughter to figure out the answer. In addition, the child's curiosity was observed in the video recording of this shared book reading session.

Sue: *"Do you know anybody called Sinha?"*

Marian: *"No"*

Sue: *"You do actually"* [Child looks at mother]

Sue: *"Do you know what your cousins are called?"*

Marian: *"No"*

Sue: *"Do you know what bappi's surname is?"*

Marian: *"Sinha"*

Sue: *"You know, go ask him"*

During the shared book reading of the story book *The Umbrella Thief* in Sinhala, Marian said, “cheeky monkey” with the facial expressions and intonations in a way to express her perception about the monkey who stole the umbrellas. While both children in Case Studies 2a and 2b were highly engaged in all shared book reading sessions, Marian in Case Study 2b exhibited more emotions verbally and non-verbally. For example, when she was surprised, she made a facial expression along with the sound “Oh!”. During the story *Hoity the Fox*, Sue was reading the sentence in the story, “Let’s feed Hoity plenty of hot green chillies next time he comes”. Marian expressed her astonishment about the idea of feeding chillies to Hoity. The following is another example from the same story:

- Sue:** “What are your thoughts after the story? do you have any?”
- Marian:** “The fox did not want to go to the farmer anymore, because he thought he would trap him again”
- Sue:** “mmm, he is worried about getting trapped, tricked maybe”
 “So, what is your conclusion?”
 “Is Hoity the fox good or ... ?”
- Marian:** “At times a bit bad”
- Sue:** “Yeh, but mostly good do you think?”
- Marian:** “He should not have dressed up in the farmer’s clothes”
- Sue:** “So you think that it is not the right thing to do?”
- Marian:** “No I do not think so”
- Sue:** “But do you think if he went to the farmer’s house and just asked for food without the clothes, the farmers would have given it to him?”
- Marian:** “No”
- Sue:** “I don’t know the answer either but trying to think”
- Marian:** “He could have just said ‘please, can you give me some food because I do not have any in the woods, and I am hungry”
- Sue:** “Maybe he could have made a promise, if you give me some food, I won’t steal your chickens’. That’s what I would have done probably.”
- Marian:** “And I am sad that the girl’s (pointed to the picture of the saree)
- Sue:** “Saree got ruined yeh, I got that too, that seems like not a great outcome”

This example demonstrates how the mother facilitated and attempted to cultivate human values such as empathy, trustworthiness, kindness, and social values. Also, the example reveals how mother and child acknowledged and respected each other’s

opinions and perceptions about the characters in the story and their actions. The child's comment about her sad feelings towards the girl, whose saree got ruined, exhibited an intense emotional engagement. All examples show how the passion for reading influenced the emotional engagement of the participants and how it could have an impact in instilling human values.

In Case Study 3 both parents, Jane and Jim engaged in shared book reading in separate sessions with their son with noticeable variations in overall engagement. The positioning of both the parent and the child could be considered as an influential factor in the engagement of the child. Several positions taken during shared book reading facilitated his enjoyment of tactile sensation, for example, sitting closely next to his mother on the couch. This positioning was not apparent when reading with his father.

The language competency levels in English and Sinhala in both parents and child had an impact on the outcome of the shared book reading sessions. Pat, the child, was emotionally engaged during shared book reading of the story *The Umbrella Thief* in English. He referred to his umbrella as, "*It's like my spider man umbrella*" with a smile on his face. This was an indicator of his pleasure and self-esteem for owning a similar umbrella which facilitated his emotional engagement during the story. Throughout the shared book reading session he exhibited his curiosity about the umbrella illustrated in the book by asking about its materials and how did it fold it up. All those questions he raised indicated his deep emotional engagement towards his umbrella.

When Pat's mother asked for his prediction about the person who had taken the umbrella, he said "*I think a bad guy*". Pat's prediction was a clear indication of his perception about the act of stealing as bad. He exhibited his inner human values via his prediction.

In another instance Pat suddenly identified a word, pointed it out and read it loudly as "See" to which mother replied as, "*That's right, good boy!*". Pat's voluntary participation in identifying the word independently and reading it aloud was an indication of his self-confidence. His mother's positive feedback could have strengthened Pat's self-confidence and passion for reading. Mother indicated in the interview that she had identified that Pat liked the possession of his umbrella as she mentioned, "*You like to play with your umbrella, don't you?*" to which Pat said, "Yes". It appeared that Pat and his mother were able to emotionally engage during the shared book reading of the story, *The Umbrella Thief*, as it was about an object which Pat

also owned and had pleasurable experiences with. Similarly, the story was in English which was the proficient language for both, and it allowed them to engage in the session comfortably.

The other story in English was *Hoity the Fox*, which was a lengthy story compared to the other stories. At the beginning of the story Pat expressed that he was interested in the story, however, by the time they got closer to the end of the story he asked, “*How long is this?*”. This was an indication of losing interest in the story and the possible reason could be the unfamiliarity of the context and characters of the story or could be his attention span. However, Pat’s younger sister joined the shared book reading session from time to time and Pat was interested to have her company and he indicated that by holding her hand and comforting her in the session. Once, Pat answered a question raised by his sister while they were engaging in the shared book reading session. This apparent emotional link with his sister appeared to facilitate the exchange of ideas and added to Pat’s capacity to continue engagement with the story.

In the same story, mother asked Pat, “*Do you think he likes green chilli?*” He shook his head to indicate “*no*”, then his mother asked, “*Do you like green chilli?*” to which he made the same gesture of “*no*”. This example indicates how mother made attempts to tap into Pat’s personal preferences regarding food. However, the shared book reading session with his father which took place seated on the bed, involved describing illustrations in the book in English in place of reading in Sinhala. Since his father could not read in Sinhala, they followed an alternative method. However, Pat lost interest and started to move in various directions and father repeatedly told Pat, “*Can you please, sit still*”. This was a clear indication of the lack of emotional engagement apparent during the other shared book reading sessions. Most probably, that could have been the result of just describing the illustrations which lacked a sequence of incidents in the story; it may have been due to the limited use of prosodic cues to motivate Pat or convey meaning. Consequently, Pat could not recognise a meaningful story which led him to lose his interest.

The father attempted different approaches to engage Pat in the session. He inquired about Pat’s opinion regarding the illustrations in addition to asking what Pat could see in the illustrations. The story, *The Little Red Car*, was woven around a little boy who owned a red car. While Pat’s father Jim was describing the illustrations, he asked Pat while showing the image of the boy, “*Why do you think he is dancing?*”. Pat answered, “*Because he loves his car*”. Next, father asked, “*So, do they look happy or*

sad?", to which Pat answered by saying, "happy" while pulling his mouth sideways. Father mimicked Pat's answer and praised him. The following example also revealed the emotional engagement they had during the session:

- Jim:** (turned to the last page) *"The last one is this one. What do you think the boy is doing?"*
- Pat:** *"The boy is riding his car and the dog is chasing him."*
- Jim:** *"Yes, do you think he is going fast or slow?"*
- Pat:** *"He is going fast."*
- Jim:** *"Do they look happy or sad?"*
- Pat:** *"They look happy, but the mum said not to go fast."*
- Jim:** *"OK, how can you say that they look happy?"*
- Pat:** *"They look happy because they have a car, they are driving and going so fast on dirt."*
- Jim:** *"Good"*

The above example indicated Pat's perceptions about possessing a car and driving fast on dirt. The transcript shows how his father Jim related the conversation to the story in the book, with only minimal evidence of drawing on Pat's own thoughts and desires. Much of the conversation was linked to the illustrations in the book despite Pat providing evidence that he had a picture of what was happening.

Since Pat's mother could read in Sinhala with effort, she joined Pat for the other story in Sinhala. When Pat noticed the struggle and effort his mother was experiencing to read in Sinhala, the shared book reading session turned into a pleasurable moment for Pat. He started to giggle and laugh, and mother asked, *"Why are you laughing?"*, to which Pat answered, *"You just read"*. His comment revealed that he wanted his mother to continue her 'effortful reading' as Pat found it quite entertaining. Even his mother was laughing as she was self-correcting the words she pronounced incorrectly in Sinhala.

Even though Pat's mother translated what she read in Sinhala into English, it was evident in the video that Pat was more interested in responding to his mother's different and effortful reading pattern in Sinhala. In a way, that could also be considered as a means of emotional engagement they had during the shared book reading session in their less proficient language. At one point, Pat pretended as if he was sleeping and started to snore loudly. Pat's reaction made his mother laugh. Jane continued to read in Sinhala, to which Pat responded by walking away prior to the end of the story. The interview data revealed that they engaged in reading in English at night on a regular

basis before going to sleep. The language presentation had a clear impact on the overall engagement, especially emotional engagement.

In Case Study 4 Mark appeared to be a passive participant and his mother continued loudly reading all the story books. Diane commented that her limited passion for reading could be one of the reasons for the observed limited engagement in the shared book reading sessions. In comparison to all other case studies, Case Study 4 appeared to be a more adult centred shared book reading sessions. The sessions appeared as 'reading aloud' by an adult instead of 'shared book reading' with a social component. The nature of interactive behaviour was not demonstrated in the sessions. Their reading sessions appeared as a 'chore' instead of a pleasurable activity.

Unlike Pat in Case Study 3, Mark stayed until the end of the stories regardless of the language. However, it was more a 'physical presence' than an active engagement. Having said that, there were some positive indicators of emotional engagement, for example, during shared book reading in Sinhala digital text, Mark looked at his mother to make sure that he scrolled to the correct page to which his mother replied by nodding. Mark understood this non-verbal cue and move to the next page. In another instance, the mother pointed to a picture and said, "*He looks sad*" but Mark did not respond verbally and kept on staring at the screen.

Mark and his mother Diane had only two verbal interactions during the four shared book reading sessions. Once she sang the last line of a poem while making eye contact with Mark and he copied her. The other incident was when Mark asked an inferencing question during shared book reading in English, to which his mother provided a short answer. The video data provided little other evidence of emotional engagement. The questionnaire data revealed that they preferred to read English print text. In addition, Mark indicated that he preferred to read with a parent instead of reading independently.

However, in the shared book reading sessions the emotional engagement of Mark and mother was not reflected much compared to other parent-child dyads. Plausibly, this could be due to various reasons including the lack of passion for reading. Overall, their shared book reading sessions did not reflect that they enjoyed reading compared to other dyads. The sessions indicated a lack of inquisitiveness, spirit of inquiry, humour, and opportunities for learning and development. Simply, all shared book reading sessions exhibited a limited number of the fundamentals of a shared book reading session, including the interactive nature of sessions. Plausibly,

the lack of home literacy practices, lack of frequency of reading and lack of knowledge on how to enjoy a shared book reading session could have impacted their behaviours demonstrated in the videos.

Case Studies 3, 4, and 6 consisted of parents from the same professional background, with different levels of passion for reading. While reporting a similar professional background there was variability in approaches that affected the outcomes of their shared book reading sessions. Case Study 5 provided evidence of overall engagement including the emotional engagement of Ana and her mother. There were indications of human values such as empathy and indications of knowledge about the social, cultural, and economic aspects that impacted on the characters in the story. These values were used to examine how the characters might look in the given story contexts. For example, during the shared book reading of the story "The Umbrella Thief", the mother pointed to the picture of two male figures and asked Ana:

Bree: *"Where's Kirimama? Which one?"*

Ana: *"I think he is Kirimama, or he is Kirimama?"* (Ana said while pointing to the two different images of males to decide which figure could be Kirimama)

Bree: *"I think he is Kirimama"* (said while pointing to one of the above two male images)

Ana: *"Yes, because he is in a sarong, and he is just wearing normal pants."*

This example provides evidence of emotional engagement between Ana and her mother on sharing and negotiating different views and concluding. Moreover, how Ana came to the final decision was interesting as she revealed the emotional engagement and social knowledge she had about Sri Lankan culture and society.

The following is an example of Ana and her mother's conversation at the end of the story. It provides a unique insight into the rapport between mother and daughter.

Bree: *"Do you love the story?"*

Ana: *"Yes, I loved it"*

Bree: *"What is the best part of the story?"*

Ana: *"When they found out the monkey"*

Bree: *"Good reading session"*

Ana: *"What is your favourite?"*

Bree: *"I like the people enjoy the umbrellas"*

A strong parent-child rapport was evident from the above example as both asked each other's preferences by taking turns. This was the only dyad who inquired about each other's preferences instead of questions coming from only one individual.

Ana also used lot of gestures while making verbal comments. For example, during shared book reading with the Sinhala story *Hoity the Fox*, she said, "*He has a long nose* (while making the gesture of long nose and pointing to the picture)". There were instances where Ana wanted to go back to certain pages of the story book and talk about them. This was an indicator that she was interested and emotionally engaged in the shared book reading session.

The following example was from their shared book reading session in the English story *Run Away Beard*.

Bree: *"What do you think about the story?"*

Ana: *"I think the story was a really good story, coz you know that stories like all you got into a bad situations but at the end you get it all right"*

Bree: *"Like some of your cartoons, you do not like when things go all wrong, the other day remember when we watched Kung Fu Panda, is it?"*

Ana: *"Yes"*

Bree: *"You were very sad; everything is going to be sad but at the end everything was ok"*

Ana: *"But I didn't like one thing"*

Bree: *"You did not like one thing because Panda could not find the mum"*

Ana: *"Yes, she died"*

Bree: *"She died, but that's OK, we all die one day"*

Ana: *"That was a really sad moment"*

Bree: *"Did you enjoy the book?"*

Ana: *"Yes I think the book was really funny because I saw an octopus"*

The above example exhibited how both Ana and her mother emotionally engaged by sharing their preferences, emotions, and the understanding of each other's personalities. Mother talked about the reality of life openly with her daughter. There was clear evidence on the video data that the mother and Ana were listening and hearing each other as part of a social interaction.

The example below indicates how Ana and her mother enjoyed shared book reading as they discussed their favourite part of the story. It also indicates in what ways participants could initiate and perceive the joy of reading.

- Bree:** *“What was your favourite part in the story?”*
- Ana:** *“I think the favourite part about this book is when the little boy found the car and my favourite character is the dog”*
- Bree:** *“I thought so, do you like this book or the beard book?”*
- Ana:** *“I like both, but I like the beard book”*
- Bree:** *“Why do you like the beard book?”*
- Ana:** *“Because it’s funny”*
- Bree:** *“Yes, it is funny”*

The dyad in Case Study 5 demonstrated their strong emotional engagement during shared book reading regardless of language and type of text. Both mother and daughter demonstrated a passion for reading, something they participated in each day in the home. Plausibly, these regular sessions may have contributed to their strong emotional engagement. Respecting each other’s opinions and their empathy needed to be appreciated.

In Case Study 6, Tim and his mother indicated that they enjoyed the shared book reading sessions via facial expressions. A unique feature observed in this dyad was that both took turns in reading sentences. This showed their mutual respect and the way they shared the joy of reading. While their dominant language at home was English, Tim exhibited his curiosity and was attracted to the illustrations in the story books in Sinhala. For example, during the shared book reading of “Run Away Beard”, Tim said, *“Beard is everywhere”* while scanning a picture. Mother also joined in describing pictures as she said, *“Yes, look at that, even the birds”*. Tim replied, *“Bird is getting trapped”*.

Both were fascinated by the colourful and large illustrations. The use of translation and code-switching facilitated their emotional engagement as they could comprehend and express their ideas. Both had a passion for reading and engaged daily as a home literacy practice.

The parents in Case Studies 3 and 5 had working experience in the early childhood and literacy area and had a strong passion for reading. The mother in Case Study 1 had no work experience promoting literacy in a work-related field (e.g., early childhood centre) but had a strong passion for reading and the experience of shared book reading as a child.

The passion for reading was an influential factor in the role of emotional engagement during shared book reading. Also, it depended on the individual

capabilities and preferences such as language and type of text. However, it appears the individuals with a strong passion for reading provided evidence that they could emotionally engage regardless of the language or the type of text. Therefore, the level of passion for reading had a strong influence on the emotional engagement. Those who had a strong passion for reading were regular readers for pleasure and had personal insights into how to find ways to make the reading experience a pleasurable and motivating activity.

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement of participants during shared book reading is invisible and it mainly consists of the mental processes, mental efforts, and strategies they use to build meaning and solve problems to complete the reading task and to achieve the goals. In a shared book reading activity, cognitive engagement is related to reading proficiency. Hence, participants who are well engaged in the activity tend to initiate strategies to facilitate the process of building meaning from the story content, leading towards the acquisition of reading comprehension (Cantrell et al., 2017).

When considering Case Study 1, during the shared book reading of the story *Run Away Beard* which was in Sinhala print text, the mother paused during a sentence she was reading to give the opportunity for her child to complete it. In this scenario, the child needed to use the mental process to find out the correct word to complete a meaningful sentence.

While engaging in shared book reading in Sinhala, the mother code switched to English and asked the meaning of a simple Sinhala phrase. For example, Lisa read the phrase “*Muwa thiyann enna*”, and asked Ruby, “*That means?*”. Ruby answered correctly in English, providing the answer “*sharpen*” which was related to the knife in the story. In that scenario, both Lisa and Ruby cognitively engaged as they indicated code-switching and translation which were the outputs of a complex mental process belonging to cognitive engagement. Mother Lisa’s attempt to facilitate Ruby’s translation skills by applying code-switching, indicated that Lisa was attuned to the level of her child Ruby’s language competency in Sinhala. Because the question Lisa asked Ruby was about a daily object, the knife, the use of it and the need to sharpen it to get the proper use of it. Hence, the object and action were highly familiar to the child and that contributed to her producing the correct answer; her mother was also aware of her child’s level of language skills in Sinhala and pitched the question at a

challenging level. In another instance the child commented about an illustration, “*Look! she is hiding*”. Even though the session was in Sinhala, her verbalisation in English indicated her syntactic knowledge in English as she used a present continuous sentence, “*she is hiding*” (subject-verb in present continuous grammatical form “*is hiding*”) to describe an illustration that she could see in the book at that time.

Lisa quizzed Ruby about meaning within the story at different levels. She asked an inferential question in Sinhala, “*Ei rawlata rathu menika allanna beri une?*” which meant in English, “*Why could not the beard catch rathu Menika (name of the girl in the story)?*”. Ruby replied in English, “*Because she was running fast*”. This example provides a glimpse of the child’s language comprehension in Sinhala and the language comprehension and expression in English. She was able to comprehend the inferential question in Sinhala, then word search, select and form the correct wording in her mental lexicon, leading to forming a sentence with correct structure and order of words. If a child has the knowledge of the world and inferencing skills, they can use it in their first and second language comprehension (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). Background knowledge and inferencing skills are components of the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) for understanding the acquisition of reading comprehension in English. It is also part of the Generalized Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) where it can be used to understand the acquisition of reading comprehension of phonologically based languages. The detailed illustration of “Rathu Menika” running fast also facilitated Ruby’s comprehension and inferencing skills. Ruby demonstrated her knowledge of the world and inferencing skills as she was able to comprehend the question in Sinhala and to answer it correctly in English. She could not answer in Sinhala because she was not verbally competent in Sinhala compared to English. She could comprehend the simple question in Sinhala. However, answering in Sinhala needs skills in searching, selecting, and forming the correct words and placing the words in a correct sequence to form a meaningful sentence. This can be considered a challenging task for anyone with a limited language competency.

Ruby’s cognitive engagement in relation to linguistic knowledge was visible, however, the orthographic knowledge in Sinhala was invisible as she did not decode in Sinhala. However, her mother Lisa facilitated the orthographic knowledge in Sinhala by tracking the words while reading. In addition, the illustrations in the story provided clues for the child to figure out the correct or appropriate answer. Regardless of the

language competency in Sinhala, the colourful illustrations with details facilitated the comprehension of the story.

During shared book reading of “The Umbrella Thief” in English print text the mother accidentally made a mistake while reading a sentence and the child realised it. She looked at her mother with a questioning face and her mother re-read it correctly. In this case the child was cognitively engaged in the session and was able to establish a flaw in the flow and meaning of the story.

In some instances, the mother summarised the content of the story in her own words. This could be identified as a strategy for both participants to cognitively engage in the story meaningfully as it could clarify the sequence of events in the story. It was a form of repeating the story which could assist in establishing a stronger comprehension of the story.

During the story *Hoity the Fox* in Sinhala digital text, the child provided a description for an illustration, “*That’s a big cow*”. This indicated her linguistic knowledge as it contained an adjective, a noun, a determiner, and a pronoun.

Lisa, Ruby’s mother, introduced a synonym in Sinhala for the word in the story, “*pawana*” as “*hulanga*”. Her child translated it to English as “*wind*”. This scenario was evidence of the mother’s attempt to enhance the child’s vocabulary in Sinhala and the child’s ability to find the correctly word in English. She also used translation from time to time. She used gestures such as head nodding as a means of giving feedback to the child for the correct translations and for the answers she gave during the shared book reading session.

The semi-structured interview data revealed that Lisa identified the difference in the sentence structure in Sinhala and in English languages. In Sinhala, for example, the structure should be Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) whereas in English it should be Subject-Verb-Object (SVO). Compared to Case Studies 2a, 2b, 3, 4 and 6, Case Studies 1 and 5 used Sinhala at home and the parents could read and speak in Sinhala. As in the example above the parents tried to promote Sinhala alongside English development.

When considering the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019), the dyad in Case Study 1 exhibited cognitive engagement and more weight was on language comprehension compared to word recognition.

A unique feature in Case Study 2a was the use of prediction at the beginning of each story. Prediction required imaginary skills and the use of background knowledge

which belonged to the cognitive aspect of engagement. Looking at the topic and the illustrations on the cover page of the story book orientated the child to the book, and primed background knowledge about linguistic knowledge and concepts of print. For example, during the shared book reading of the print English story, "Run Away Beard".

- Sue:** "Would you like to make a prediction?
(Max was looking at the illustrations on the front cover of the book.)
- Max:** "So, I think this person here has a beard" (while pointing to an illustration)
- Sue:** "Who has a bit give away in the title"
(When reading the title of the book, "The Run Away Beard" the reader perceives that the story is about a beard with a missing part)

Another unique feature in this dyad was their revisit to the prediction they made at the beginning of the story to figure out whether it was correct or not. The following dialogue occurred at the end of the story:

- Sue:** "How are your predictions?"
- Max:** "Not really"
- Sue:** "So, they just grew of its volition"
- Max:** "Yes, I wonder how?"
- Sue:** "Maybe it's a magical force, maybe it was the mouse"
- Max:** "May be the mouse drank something and some mystify happened"
- Sue:** "Yes, must be"

This dialogue between mother and child provides evidence of good cognitive engagement. This engagement was possible because the mother guided her child, and the child was able to provide a relevant response as part of their interaction. Therefore, the child's imagination, critical thinking skills, language comprehension and expression skills are visible in the above example.

Shared book reading in Sinhala print text by Case Study 2a, used the story *Little Red Car (Rathu Kaar Podda)*. Sue translated Sinhala to English and used code-switching during this session. This allowed the child, Max, to comprehend the story using his proficient language. Both became attracted to the colourful and detailed illustrations, and it facilitated the awareness of print concepts. The following example is a robust evidence of the child's cognitive engagement.

- Sue:** "Mum and dad said probably good idea to bring him inside the home, it might get scared and lonely" (translation of the Sinhala dialogue between mum and dad in the story)

Max: “*So, it has a life in the tone*” (The above dialogue consisted of feelings and emotions which are features of a living being, and the child was able to identify that)

Sue: “*It’s animated*”

Max was the only child in this study who realised that the author had given ‘life’ to a lifeless object, the car. The illustration of the car consisted of characteristics related to a living being by including eyes, mouth, and facial expression.

Sue asked Max about the meaning of some of the Sinhala sentences such as, “*Do you know what andanna patan gaththa means?*”. Sue was attempting to facilitate Max’s language comprehension in Sinhala. However, Max could not answer. Therefore this mother translated it to English and said, “*He started to cry*”.

At the end of the story the mother asked the child for his views about what could have been said by the car in the story. The child said, “*He was saying that you should not leave something you love outside because sometimes it could get damaged*”. This lengthy sentence demonstrated his language comprehension and expressive skills in English. The use of knowledge in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics was evident in that response. Use of this linguistic knowledge as part of shared book reading can support development of comprehension in the longer term.

In addition, the home literacy practices contributed to the outcome of those shared book reading sessions. During the semi-structured interview, Sue revealed that usually she used reading strategies such as predictions and inferences. She mentioned that they usually engaged in a discussion at the end of the story about the moral or the lesson of the story and the purpose of the story. The daily shared book reading sessions facilitated the cognitive engagement in the child, and it is predicted it will facilitate overall long-term literacy development.

Sue tracked and read out the sentence in shared book reading of the English digital text story, *Hoity the Fox*. The child was curious about how the illustrations were drawn, and their mother read out the name of the person who had authored the story and the person who had illustrated the book. Reading while tracking the words could facilitate print awareness and alphabetic coding skills hence contributing to word recognition.

When considering the Cognitive Foundations Framework (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) there was evidence of the development of linguistic knowledge during the

shared book reading sessions. In contrast, there was limited evidence of promoting word recognition skills even in English which was their dominant language.

The parent-child engagement in Case Study 2b exhibited similarities and differences compared to Case Study 2a. For example, during shared book reading of the English digital text story, *Hoity the Fox*, mother read out the name of the author as “*Sybil Weththasingha*,” to which the child was listening. In hearing the name, she said, “*Sinha*” and her mother concluded that her child was interested in that word, she asked the reason for her interest to which the child replied, “*Because it’s in the word Sinhala*”. This indicated how the child was able to hear how the name of the author sounded like words in the Sinhala language. Her linguistic knowledge, specifically the phonological knowledge, was visible here, however, it could not be considered as word recognition as she did not decode the word. She responded to what she heard. However, her ability to identify a word with a similar phonological unit needs to be appreciated.

During the same shared book reading session Sue introduced synonyms to the child: “*Do you know what ‘adjoining’ means?*”. Since the child could not answer, Sue pointed to the illustrations and said, “*Here is the house, here is the forest*” as a way of providing a cue. However, even with that cue the child could not produce the answer which led mother to mention the synonym as, “*next to*”. In this example, the mother facilitated the child’s logical reasoning skills and semantic knowledge, contributing to linguistic knowledge. That was an example of the cognitive engagement they had in the shared book reading session.

There were instances where the child asked, “Wh” questions, such as, “*Why did Hoity go back?*”. This was an example of her non-immediate talk as the reason was not mentioned in the immediate story content.

During the Sinhala digital story book, *The Umbrella Thief*, Sue used translation and code-switching to facilitate the comprehension of the story. For example:

Sue: “*Kude ne*”

Marian: “*What does that mean?*”

Sue: “*What does it mean ‘kude ne’*” the parent made the gesture for “*no*”

Sue: “*What’s missing? what did he bring back?*”

Marian: “*Umbrella*”

Sue: “*Kude ne*” what does “*ne*” means?

Marian: “*Umbrella*”

Sue: “No, “*kude*” means umbrella, “*ne*” means gone”

Marian: “*Umbrella gone*”

The above example demonstrated how Sue supported the child to comprehend the story. She used relevant gestures, cues and she segmented the phrase, “*kude ne*” into two words as “*kude*” and “*ne*”, then translated them into English. This strategy supported the child to join the two words together and to produce the phrase, “*umbrella gone*”.

During the shared book reading session in English print, the story was “Run Away Beard”. Sue gave the book to Marian and said:

Marian: “*Can you read the story today?*”
(However, mother read out the name of the book)

Marian: “*It is called, Run Away Beard.*”
(*The book title was, Run Away Beard*)
Marian looked at the title of the book and said, “*the?*”

Sue: “*Oh, you are right, it is called Run Away Beard, there is no “the,” mum just put that in there*”

The above dialogue indicates Marian’s skills in word recognition in relation to orthography. The same story ended with a poem and Marian read out the last phrase of it as “*la, la, la*” which indicated her alphabetic coding skills.

There was evidence for the use of linguistic knowledge and background knowledge such as questioning and commenting during the shared book reading session. For example, during the shared book reading of the story in English *Hoity the Fox*, the following dialogue took place between Sue and Marian,

Sue: “*Is Hoity the fox good or?*”

Marian: “*At times a bit bad*”

Sue: “*Yeh, but mostly good do you think?*”

Marian: “*He should not have dressed up in the farmer’s clothes*”

Sue: “*So you think that it is not the right thing to do?*”

Marian: “*No, I do not think so*”

Sue: “*But do you think if he went to the farmer’s house and just ask for food without the clothes, the farmer would have given it to him*”

Marian: “*No*”

Sue: “*I don’t know the answer either but trying to think*”

Marian: “*He could have just said, please can you give me some food because I do not have in the woods, and I am really hungry*”

Sue: *“Maybe he could have made a promise, if you give me some food, I won’t steal your chickens”*

The above dialogue reflects Marian’s background knowledge of the world and the way she inferred it to the story content. Sue’s input and scaffolding paved the way to facilitate Marian’s cognitive engagement, and to expand her knowledge in terms of the world and the language.

During shared book reading in Sinhala print, the story of the *Little Red Car*, mother asked the following:

Sue: *“You know what ‘rathu’ is? It is a colour, what do you think it could be?”*

Marian: *“Red”*

Sue: *“Yeh, what’s a car?”* Marian showed the gesture of driving a vehicle.

The above example indicated that the child was able to translate from Sinhala to English with the cues provided by her mother while the illustration facilitated her finding the correct word. By looking at the illustration Marian was able to match that with the mental image of ‘a red car’ she already had in her mental lexicon. Then in the mental lexicon she could have searched within the category of ‘colours’ and selected the word ‘red’. Next, she had to figure out the phonemes and the order of phonemes to form the word /red/. The same mental process occurred in identifying the image of ‘car’, however, instead of producing the name verbally she made the gesture. This scenario was evidence of the cognitive engagement that was facilitated by the adult in the shared reading session. Whether this cognitive engagement was deliberately planned or more informal, the sophistication of the exchange supported the child’s linguistic comprehension.

Marian pointed and tracked the Sinhala letters in the book *Little Red Car*, and asked, *“Mum, how do they print ... when they print do they have keyboards that have these symbols?”*. That was one piece of evidence of Marian’s interest in Sinhala orthography. Across the seven case studies there was little evidence of this motivation to question and discuss orthography across both languages.

Compared to Case Study 1, Case Studies 2a and 2b exhibited evidence of cognitive engagement, particularly for language comprehension and word recognition. A significant number of conversations occurred between the parent-child dyads which could facilitate language comprehension, such as talking about the immediate story content and talking beyond the immediate story content in Case Studies 2a and 2b

compared to Case Study 1. This required a considerable amount of cognitive engagement in terms of language comprehension. Word recognition skills of children in Case Studies 2a and 2b were evident as they read out several words in the story, whereas the child in Case Study 1 did not read any words. However, the parents in both dyads did not provide many opportunities for their children to indicate their skill of word recognition. The parents could have given a chance for the children to read aloud and asked the children questions to elicit the word recognition skill. Possibly, the parents unintentionally neglected that aspect of shared book reading.

Case Study 3 was a strong example of how language comprehension could impact a reading session. The parents said that the child was not interested in engaging in shared book reading in Sinhala as he could not understand Sinhala language. Neither parent were fluent in reading in Sinhala and had difficulty in decoding the story books with fluency and expression. However, the mother Jane, and her child, Pat, engaged in the Sinhala digital shared book reading session. Jane used code-switching and translation to facilitate comprehension of the story. Pat was interested in the illustrations, and he named them in English. While the mother kept on reading in Sinhala, suddenly the child said, “*birdy*” pointing to the picture, to which his mother said “*Yes, birdy, there is a birdy, yellow birdy*”. Here, the mother added more words including an adjective to describe the bird in detail.

In another instance, Pat named the picture of a nest and his mother elaborated when she said, “*Yes, the birds are in the nest*”. That was evidence of how the mother attempted to increase the utterance length in English. However, the child walked away before the end of the story when the mother read it in Sinhala. Jane also struggled to read in Sinhala which made Pat laugh at the way she was reading, and how she ‘sounded’ trying to read in Sinhala.

The Sinhala print text shared book reading session undertaken by the father, however, involved describing the illustrations in the book in English as he was unable to decode Sinhala text. While this session was not formally a shared book reading session, it involved sharing ideas about the text. Pat was able to indicate his skills in print concepts as he named the pictures in English which contributed to building his vocabulary and general understanding.

Pat and his mother engaged in reading the print story book of *The Umbrella Thief* in English. His mother tracked the words while reading which facilitated Pat’s word recognition skills, specifically the letter-phoneme relationship. After Jane read a

sentence about the colours of the umbrellas in the story, Pat said, “/y/ /e/ // // /o/ /w/ yellow”. That was an example of Pat’s skills in phonemic segmentation and blending the segments together. While his mother was reading in English, Pat pointed to the word ‘see’ and read it out as “see”, and his mother recognised his efforts.

It was interesting to observe how Pat independently read out words that he could identify during the shared book reading session. That was an indicator of his cognitive engagement in word recognition which included alphabetic coding skills. At the end of the story his mother pointed to the exclamation mark symbol and asked Pat what it was, but he could not answer. So, Jane named it as the ‘exclamation mark’ and Pat mimicked what Jane had said. Mimicry is also an indicator of cognitive engagement. Like the previous case studies, Jane and Pat’s shared book reading in English sessions consisted of their conversations. Those conversations comprised questioning and commenting about the immediate story and beyond its content, in English.

During the shared book reading in English digital text, Pat’s mother read out the name of the story and paused to encourage him to read the last word. He read it correctly as “fox”. He was able to decode and recognise the word correctly. The following is another example of his word recognition skills in reading:

Jane: (continued reading and paused at the end) “*just like a.....*”

Pat: (read the last word) “*farmer*”

Jane: (praised the child saying) “*Yeh, very good*”

Mother provided opportunities for Pat to read out independently the words that he could decode. That was an indication of the mother’s awareness about the capabilities of her son, and how providing practice and repetition could allow Pat to strengthen these decoding skills.

Unlike the shared book reading sessions in Sinhala, Pat participated in the session in English until the end of the stories. His language proficiency in English, including comprehension and expressive language skills along with word recognition skills, facilitated his reading comprehension in English. For Pat, shared book reading in English was less cognitively challenging than shared book reading in Sinhala. He could use all his cognitive skills and knowledge for reading comprehension in English. In contrast, a shared book reading session in Sinhala always included code-switching and translation by the parent, which was an extra challenge for his parents as well as

for Pat. When compared with the previous case studies, Case Study 3 showed how cognitive engagement could be impacted by the level of language proficiency.

Case Study 4 provided some unique features of shared book reading compared to other case studies. Mark engaged in shared book reading sessions with his mother who stated that reading was not a high priority for her. Unlike the previous case studies, Mark did not name or describe illustrations in the book except once.

During the shared book reading session English print text story, *Hoity the Fox*, he said:

Mark: “*don’t she see it’s a fox?*” (Mark asked this after the story scenario where the lady served food to the fox who was disguised as a lady)

Diane: “*probably not*”

All shared book reading sessions involved Mark’s mother reading the story aloud to Mark. Compared to other case studies, they did not engage in any other conversation other than the example given. The sessions provided limited evidence of cognitive engagement. Compared to Case Study 3, for example, the child in this case study stayed until the end of the story even in Sinhala which was not his dominant language. However, ‘physical presence’ itself could not unpack cognitive engagement. Compared to other case studies, Mark did not get enough opportunities, or did not generate the opportunities, to exhibit his capabilities. There was no indication of facilitating Mark’s word recognition skills including the alphabetic decoding skills, or to provide evidence of his understanding of the story.

In contrast to Case Study 4, Case Study 5 included evidence of language comprehension, expression, and word recognition. Both mother Bree and child Ana engaged in conversations using questioning and commentary from each other. Bree attempted to facilitate Ana’s orthographic skills in Sinhala. She pointed to a Sinhala word and asked whether Ana knew the letters. Ana said that she knew those letters were from Sri Lanka and said she had seen them in the Sri Lankan books she had received as presents. This indicated that she was able to map the visual shape of the letters from her previous experience.

Ana knew Sinhala orthography was related to Sri Lanka. Her response gave a clue that she cognitively engaged with the concept of print. However, she could not decode the word as Sinhala was not her dominant language and she had not acquired sufficient skills and knowledge of the language. Ana asked for the meaning of the words that she came across during shared book reading in Sinhala, for example “*what*

is 'lensuwa'?' to which her mother answered, "handkerchief". Compared to Marian in Case Study 2b, Ana's utterance length was more sophisticated. However, it could be due to her age as Ana was one year older than Marian.

As in other case studies during shared book reading in Sinhala, the adult parent used code-switching and translation. In Case Study 2(b) during shared book reading in Sinhala print, the Sue said the name of the book, "*Rathu Kcar Podda*", and she asked for her child to provide the relevant English words. However, the child was not able to translate them into English, so mother translated word by word. Ana, however, built the sentence, "*Oh, it's red car*". Then her mother translated the word, "*podda*" as "*small*" and said, "*Small red car*". Ana replied, "*Yes, I know*". Ana retold the story in English in her own words at the end of the story, providing an opportunity to use her retell skills.

In Case Study 6, the child Tim read the print text English story, *The Umbrella Thief*, while taking turns with his mother. Tim read the sentences with high decoding accuracy. That was an indicator of his cognitive engagement as he was able to alphabetically decode the words in English. During shared book reading in the digital text Sinhala story, *Little Red Car*, mother used code-switching and translation to facilitate reading comprehension. This was the same observation for shared book reading in the print text Sinhala story, *Hoity the Fox*, where Tim also described illustrations in English. Unlike the child in Case Study 3, Nick stayed until the end of the stories in Sinhala despite the difficulty with the language. In addition, compared to the child in Case Study 4 who was 'physically present' until the end of the stories in Sinhala, Tim indicated his engagement by making comments using his dominant language, English. That could be considered an indicator of his interest during shared book reading.

Case Study 6 was also unique as the dyad engaged in reading by the child taking turns with the adult partner during shared book reading in English. In contrast with the dyads in Case Studies 2a, 2b, 3 and 5, the child read out a couple of words in the stories. If the children got more opportunities to read by taking turns, they could have demonstrated their capabilities in word recognition on a larger scale. Indeed, word recognition is a pivotal skill to read out words correctly. However, the mother in Case Study 1 did not provide opportunity for the child to read aloud and this could be due to her lack of knowledge of the influence of shared book reading in early literacy development and how she could use the activity to promote the child's word

recognition skill. In Case Study 4 the mother indicated she had a limited interest in reading and did not take turns reading with the child. Hence, there were underlying contributory elements for the evidence in all the case studies and being able to extract them would be beneficial in research implications.

However, during shared book reading in English digital text of the story *Run Away Beard*, Tim's mother used the laptop and started reading from the end of the story to the beginning. Unlike the other books, she did not read the name of the story as she started from the last page which included a poem. She scrolled the pages and continued reading the story from the end to the start without realising the difference in order. Being a story in English, their dominant language, it was an unexpected scenario. This could be due to the author's attractive writing style and the illustrations which may have influenced the dyad to engage in the session without identifying the reverse order of the events of the story. Tim showed his pleasure and enthusiasm in response to the strange and funny events that took place in the story through his facial expressions. Reading the digital story in English, in the reverse order, could be considered as a careless action. Even the results for rate of behaviours during shared book reading of the English digital story reported only the behaviours immediate talk and talk related to features of the type of text. This could be due to the pleasing illustrations.

Each dyad's cognitive engagement during shared book reading sessions was unique. However, it was influenced by factors such as their language competency and their passion for reading. In sum, there was more evidence for language comprehension compared to the word recognition aspect of the reading comprehension. The Cognitive Foundations Framework consists of two main aspects of reading comprehension, namely language comprehension and word recognition. Shared book reading is recognised as an early language and literacy developing activity. Hence, those who engage in shared book reading with young children should pay equal attention to facilitate both language comprehension and word recognition during the activity. Similarly, the parents, teachers and carers should be educated about the equal importance of both language comprehension and word recognition in developing children's reading comprehension and the need to consider achieving goals in both aspects during shared book reading.

Behavioural Engagement

Behavioural engagement identifies behaviours related to the learning process including participation and involvement (King, 2020). Behavioural engagement during reading consists of the reading time, frequency of reading and the rate of behaviours. These behaviours include verbal and non-verbal aspects. For example, the verbal aspect consists of questioning and commenting while the non-verbal aspect consists of eye-contact, facial expressions, and gestures.

In this study a focus was placed on immediate talk, non-immediate talk, code-switching, translation, prompting for repetition, correcting, providing cues, mimicry and talk related to features of the type of text. The use of the video data for each shared book reading session allowed for observation of non-verbal behaviours.

Figures 5-1 and 5-2 demonstrate the rates of each behaviour during all 28 shared book reading sessions for all the participants. Overall, the common behaviour reported by all case studies, except for Case Study 4, was immediate talk in all reading conditions such as print, digital, English and Sinhala. Out of the reported behaviours, prompting for repetition and correcting reported fewer rates compared to other behaviours.

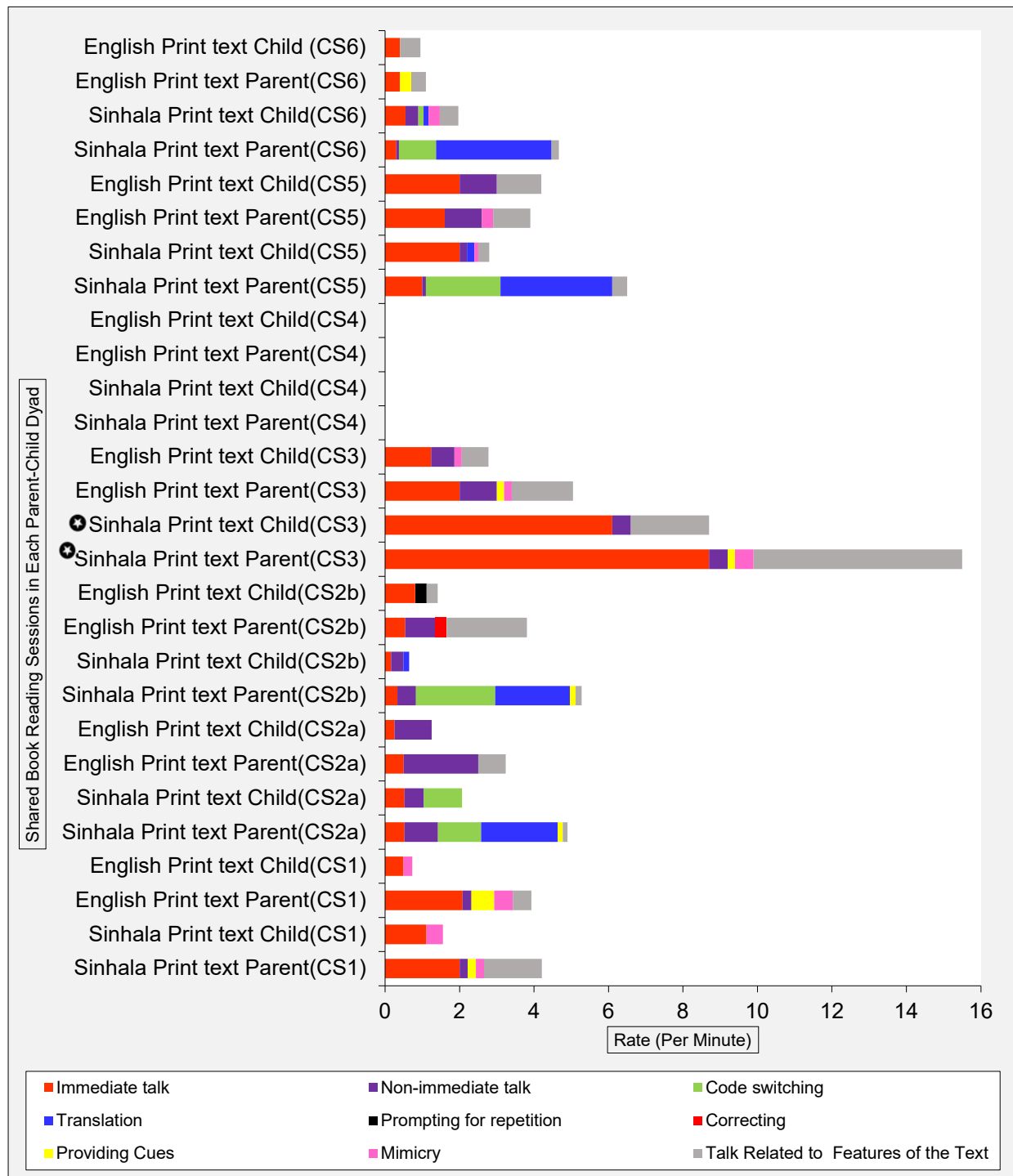
When comparing the print and digital text types, diverse types of behaviours occurred more in digital than print shared book reading. Overall, in both text types, immediate talk occurred more than other behaviours.

Shared book reading in print text reported at least two types of behaviours for each case study (excluding Case Study 4) while shared book reading in digital text did not demonstrate a single behaviour by the children in Case Studies 1 and 6 (excluding Case Study 4).

Shared book reading in digital English in Case Study 1 indicated none of the behaviours by the child and only one behaviour by the parent. Similarly, the child in Case Study 6, Tim, indicated none of the behaviours during shared book reading in Sinhala digital. However, Tim showed several types of behaviours during shared book reading in Sinhala print text. In this scenario, Tim's behaviour was not impacted by the language but by the type of text. The dyad in Case Study 6 demonstrated more various behaviours in shared book reading in print text than digital text. This was compatible with their preferred type of text.

Figure 5-1

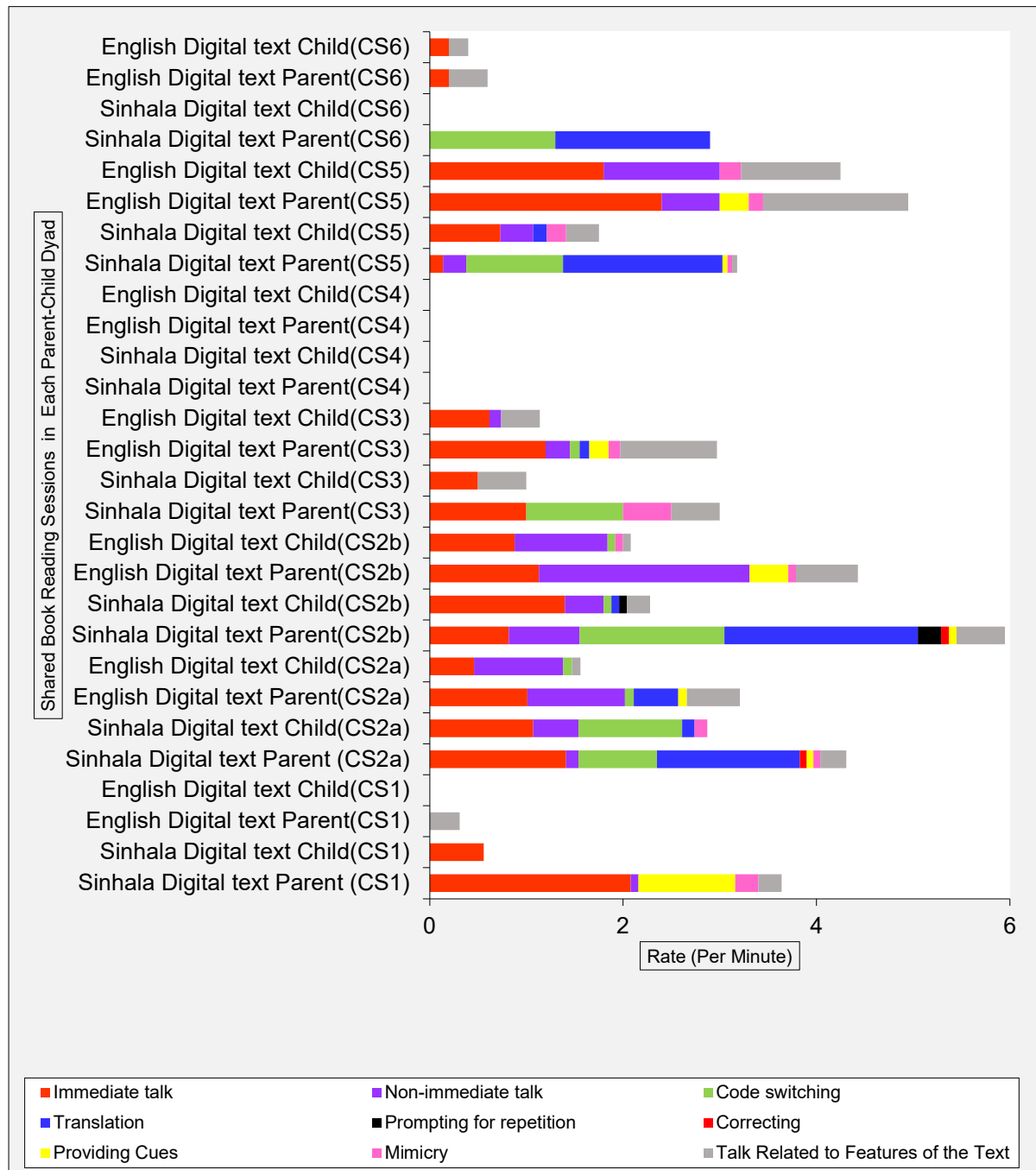
Cross Case Analysis of the Observed Behaviour Types During Shared Book Reading in English Print Text and Sinhala Print Text Across all Dyads in all Case Studies



Note. ⊛ This shared book reading session was meant to be Sinhala print text but converted to a picture description in English print text.

Figure 5-2

Cross Case Analysis of the Observed Behaviour Types During Shared Book Reading in English Digital Text and Sinhala Digital Text Across all Dyads in all Case Studies



Case Study 5 exhibited a greater range of behaviours in digital text than in print text. The dyad talked more about features of the type of text in digital than in print. Similarly, the immediate talk was reported more in digital than in print for both child and parent in English. However, they reported more immediate talk in print text in Sinhala than digital text Sinhala. Most probably, this could be a result of a greater availability of Sinhala books in print text than digital.

Talk related to features of the type of text occurred at various rates in both print and digital text. However, more occurrences took place in digital text than print text. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 show five shared book reading sessions without talk related to features of the text in print and only three shared book reading sessions without talk related to digital text. Simply, talk related to features of digital text occurred more than in print text. There could be various contributory factors which are unique to each dyad. For example, the size of the digital device, positioning of the device and the positioning of participants during reading which could facilitate easy access to the story, the child's agency in navigating the digital story and the frequent use of the digital devices and digital content due to more familiarity in working with digital content. This appeared to be a point raised in the interviews where both children and parents engaged in learning from home and working from home due to the COVID-19 lockdown at the time of data collection.

Out of all shared book reading sessions, Case Study 3 demonstrated the highest rate for the talk related to features of the type of text and it was for print text. The main reason could be the shared book reading in Sinhala print text, which turned into describing pictures in the print text in English.

The non-immediate talk which included talking beyond the immediate story content occurred in 19 shared book reading sessions in print and 15 sessions in digital. However, non-immediate talk reported higher rates of occurrence during shared book reading in digital text than in print text. Case Study 2b recorded the highest rate for non-immediate talk in shared book reading in digital text. While Case Study 2a recorded the highest rate of behaviour for non-immediate talk in shared book reading in print text. The parent in both Case Studies 2a and 2b had background knowledge and work experience in early literacy development. The role of non-immediate talk is crucial in developing early literacy skills in children. Non-immediate talk facilitates linguistic comprehension including semantics, syntax, and higher-order cognitive skills such as inferencing skills and critical thinking. Since the mother in Case Studies 2a

and 2b had professional training and experience in relation to early literacy development, it may be that she was better placed as a parent to cognitively challenge the children during shared book reading.

Providing cues was reported in seven shared book reading sessions in print text and eight shared book reading sessions in digital text. The parent in Case Study 1 reported the highest rate for providing cues in both print and digital texts. The mother in this dyad had indicated her passion for reading and the firsthand experience in shared book reading she had as a child.

Providing cues can be an effective strategy to support a novice reader to learn and practice new vocabulary. It provides the opportunity for the novice reader to find the correct word linguistically and orthographically. The mother in Case Study 1 acknowledged how providing cues influenced effective learning. Providing cues gave an opportunity for the child to cognitively engage in the task. In addition, the child being able to answer independently contributed to enhancing self-confidence which could contribute to the child's active learning. Even though other parents did not specifically mention providing cues in their interviews, they provided evidence of this by applying it during shared book reading sessions.

Both code-switching and translations were recorded in more shared book reading sessions in digital rather than print text. Out of these shared book reading sessions both code-switching and translation was reported more frequently for digital text than print text. Again, the mother in Case Study 2b, Sue, demonstrated the highest rate of the behaviour code-switching in both print and digital texts. Case Study 2b involved the mother and daughter dyad. Marian's dominant language was English and that was the reason for her parent to switch from Sinhala to English. Code-switching supports acquiring reading comprehension in the less proficient language. On the other hand, from the child's perspective having a passion for reading and enthusiasm had influenced her mother to code-switch and facilitate the child's reading comprehension in the less proficient language.

The highest scores for translation in print and digital shared book reading sessions were reported in Case Study 6 and Case Study 2b. Translation facilitated linguistic comprehension in the less proficient language, which was Sinhala across all dyads. Both mothers translated from Sinhala to English to facilitate linguistic comprehension in Sinhala which can contribute to reading comprehension in Sinhala in the future as linguistic comprehension is needed for reading comprehension.

Mimicry was reported in more shared book reading sessions in digital text than print text. Case Study 3 recorded the highest rate of occurrence for mimicry in shared book reading in digital texts, while both Case Studies 3 and 1 recorded the highest rate for mimicry in shared book reading in print text. Case Study 3 during shared book reading in Sinhala print text turned into a session of describing pictures in English.

Mimicry facilitates the learning and development of a new skill. In this context, it facilitates reading skills. When a novice reader learns to read mimicking the parent or vice versa it influences the child's confidence in reading and facilitates their reading comprehension.

Correcting was recorded in two shared book reading sessions in digital and only in one session in print. All three sessions were observed in Case Studies 2a and 2b and recorded by the parent. There could be various reasons for having a lower rate for the behaviour of correcting. Correction occurs when someone makes errors. To make errors that person should actively engage in the task. For example, if a novice reader or a learner speaks up and exposes their capabilities in language and literacy, they are vulnerable to making errors as a novice reader or a learner. Only then does the adult have the opportunity to correct the errors.

There could be many reasons that restrict the active engagement of a novice reader in a shared book reading session. The reasons could vary from biological factors such as heredity, and psychological factors such as trust. If a child has an introverted personality, the child may be a listener during shared book reading. In contrast, a child with an extroverted personality may be an active participant by asking questions and making comments. Similarly, if the child lacks trust in the other reading partner, mostly an adult, the child tends to stay quiet and listen. If a child has had a bad experience in relation to making an error and/or has received negative feedback, this may have had a negative impact on the child's self-confidence, and there is a higher possibility that the child may revert to being a passive participant. Hence, the way of correcting errors and giving feedback are crucial factors that may need to be considered. Similarly, it is important to have a reward system in place to use for errorless comments or questions. This could motivate the child and encourage the child to actively engage in the task on a larger scale in future reading sessions. It could provide the basis for developing positive relationships between parent and child.

On the other hand, the adult should be aware of ways to motivate a child to engage in the task in an active manner. Similarly, they should provide opportunities

for the child to demonstrate their capabilities in relation to language and literacy in a safe and trusting environment. For this to happen, the adult should be aware of the child's level of competencies in language and literacy, as well as their interest and motivations. This is important in deciding the level of challenge during questioning and responding to the child. Having said that, not only the child but also the adult can make errors and the child can correct the adult, which was evident in this study. In a situation like that, the adult should be humble enough to accept and appreciate the child for making the correction. This was evident in Case Study 2b where the child Marian looked at her mother Sue to indicate that her mother had read the title of the book incorrectly. This non-verbal action supported Sue to correct herself.

Since learning to read is a gradual process, giving the children that reassurance that it is 'OK' to make errors when learning a new skill should be discussed with the children in a supportive and constructive way. This would provide less competent readers the chance to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem, resulting in their active participation during shared book reading.

Despite the majority of the participants indicating their preference to read in print text in the questionnaires, they demonstrated a similar level or more behaviours during shared book reading in digital text. The parent in Case Study 3 mentioned that due to "*learning from home*" because of the lock down due to COVID-19 pandemic, they had become more familiar with the use of digital devices. This could be the reason for the outcome displayed in the figures in shared book reading in digital text.

Overall, the most prominent behaviour in both English and Sinhala shared book reading sessions was the immediate talk. However, immediate talk was recorded in higher rates during shared book reading in English which was the dominant language of participants. Non-immediate talk was also recorded in higher values for shared book reading in English than Sinhala. Usually, the non-immediate talk offers more demand cognitively than immediate talk. Therefore, the use of one's most proficient language is more possible, as it requires less effort to encode and decode the information.

In shared book reading in English, Case Studies 2a, 2b and 5 recorded higher rates for non-immediate talk. Both mothers in these case studies had professional knowledge and work experience in relation to early literacy development. That clearly influenced the present outcomes in shared book reading in English. Even during shared book reading in Sinhala they demonstrated various behaviours compared to other cases who demonstrated limited types and rates of behaviours.

The mothers involved in shared book reading in Case Studies 3, 6 and 4 were post graduate degree holders employed in the medical field. The mothers in Case Studies 3 and 6 showed a passion for reading during sessions and they appeared to have a general understanding of shared book reading in relation to early literacy development. In contrast, the mother in Case Study 4, who held a postgraduate degree, revealed that she had limited passion for reading outside of her work. The mother in Case Study 1 was a graduate and had a passion for reading. In the interview she said that she had the experience of reading with her mother and brother as a child and wanted to share and give the same experience to her child. She also mentioned that she cherished sharing her childhood stories with her daughter. Case Study 3 included a session by the father who had a passion for reading. Regardless of his lack of competency in reading in Sinhala, he engaged in describing pictures in English and tried to tell a story in English. This could be due to experiences of reading he had as a child, and the habit of reading they practised as a family with their children. Hence, the passion for reading contributed regardless of his background in accountancy. Overall, it was observed that a parent's passion for reading regardless of their level of education cannot be underestimated as an influential factor in achieving a successful outcome through shared book reading.

Similarly, the children in Case Studies 2a, 2b and 5, with their mothers who were employed in the field of early childhood with specific training on early literacy development, reported various behaviours during shared book reading in English and in Sinhala. They demonstrated a greater range of behaviours compared to other dyads. Plausibly, their knowledge of language and literacy development, reading strategies and firsthand experience in applying the knowledge and skills to cater to the individual needs of children in their careers on a daily basis, led them to exhibit a range of behaviours during shared book reading with their own children at home. Hence, they were well attuned to the nature of shared book reading compared to other parents.

Non-verbal behaviours were evident throughout shared book reading sessions across all dyads. The non-verbal behaviours observed included tracking the words while reading (e.g., finger pointing), facial expressions, pointing to the pictures, eye contact, gestures, and positioning. However, it was observed that seating arrangements during shared book reading could impact eye contact. In the parent-child dyad in Case Study 4, the child was on the mother's lap facing the desktop

computer. This limited the child's ability to have eye contact with the mother. Contrary to this example, the dyad in Case Study 5 was seated at the table at an angle of 90 degrees, meaning that they were positioned at one corner of the table while placing the book and the laptop on the table. The sitting position allowed them to have eye contact easily and frequently. All other dyads sat next to each other on a couch, chair, or bed, or lay on the bed. Those positions allowed them to have eye contact to different extents compared to dyad 4.

The child in Case Study 5 used gestures frequently compared to other dyads. Similarly, the child in Case Study 2b used more facial expressions to express her feelings. These behaviours reflected their engagement in the sessions, the way they enjoyed reading, their passion, and their experiences in reading. These were contributing their language comprehension and word recognition skills which could facilitate reading comprehension.

The dyad in Case Study 1 indicated frequent use of word tracking and smiling at each other from time to time. The dyad in Case Study 4 indicated extremely limited facial expressions while the children in the dyads 3 and 5 looked less interested in shared book reading in Sinhala compared to English, which led the child in Case Study 3 to walk away prior to the end of the story. At different points within the case studies, non-verbal behaviours communicated differing messages.

Conclusion

Overall, various behaviours occurred in the dyads which were unique to each other. These variations and uniqueness depended on various influential factors. Those factors could be identified as the passion for reading, language competency, knowledge and skills related to language and early literacy skills in children, reading preferences in relation to language and types of texts, home learning practices and reading habits, reading resources and, the frequency of and familiarity with using digital devices.

As the data were collected during the COVID-19 lockdown period, the children in the study had been engaged in learning from home and their parents working from home. This provided all parties greater opportunities to become more familiar in working together with digital devices, such as the parents supporting their children's learning using digital devices. Plausibly, this contributed to their exhibiting different behaviours during shared book reading in digital text compared to print text. Having

said that, the passion for reading and the language competency appeared to have an intense influence on the quality of a shared book reading session, along with the knowledge and skills related to early literacy development in children.

Chapter 6

Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings of this research with regard to the set research questions. This discussion will make links to previous research and their findings and reflect on these findings in relation to the theoretical and conceptual positions taken. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

This study explored: (a) attitudes of parents and perceptions of children about reading; (b) types of parent-child engagement that occurs during shared book reading in Sinhala and in English language presentations; (c) types of parent-child engagement that occurred during shared book reading in digital and print text representations; and (d) parents' reflections on shared book reading sessions according to language presentation and text representation.

The concept of engagement has been investigated by researchers (e.g., Barber & Klauda, 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Kucirkova et al., 2013; Naumann, 2015) in various contexts and recognised as comprising multiple dimensions. The primary dimensions are the cognitive, behavioural and emotional or affective dimensions (Lee et al., 2021). In this study, cognitive engagement was explored with a focus on the cognitive elements which contributed to reading comprehension posed by Hoover and Tunmer (2109) and included elements of language comprehension, word recognition and their associated underlying elements such as linguistic knowledge and alphabetic knowledge. Similarly, the behavioural engagement focussed on the verbal and non-verbal aspects, while emotional engagement focussed on literacy skills and bilingual skills in children.

Using a mixed methods case-study design, seven parent-child dyads were observed undertaking four shared book reading sessions. Each of these sessions involved passages of material that varied in terms of representation (i.e., print, digital) and presentation (i.e., English, Sinhala). Using additional data from interview and questionnaires, themes and conclusions were drawn in addressing the research questions.

Key Themes

The key themes that emerged from the results of this study included knowledge and attitudes about reading, socio-economic background, passion for reading, and home literacy environment which consisted of reading resources and reading practices.

Knowledge and Attitudes

Parental knowledge and attitudes about reading and children's perceptions about reading highlighted how they could impact the parent-child engagement during shared book reading. All parents in the study demonstrated to some extent the attitude that reading books with children could facilitate literacy skills and bilingual skills in children, a finding which was consistent with previous research findings (Durán et al., 2016; Merga & Ledger, 2018; Sawyer et al., 2018). A recent study Peixoto et al. (2022) concluded that the mother's beliefs on reading needed to be considered as an influential factor in creating a quality home literacy environment.

Parents in this study had varied views about the role that gender played in their children being involved in shared book reading. Half of them disagreed with the idea that girls had less interest in reading digital text than boys, and boys had less interested in reading print text than girls. While the other half of parents were neutral or agreed with the statement. A detailed and systematic exploration on perceptions of parents on media use of their children conducted in the United Kingdom found that parents had more concerns about media usage by boys than girls (Kucirkova et al., 2018).

Overall, the preference to read in print text was higher than digital text by both parents and children in the study. This finding was consistent with an earlier study which explored mothers' views on shared book reading in print and digital text in Australia. Nicholas and Paatsch (2021) interviewed mothers whose children were two years old and discovered that mothers had a strong preference to use printed picture story books as they facilitated greater active engagement than the electronic text.

Eutsler and Trotter (2020) reported on reading preference by text type. Their results contrast with this study where parents and children preferred print text over digital. Eutsler and Trotter (2020) reported that only 27% of parents were correct in predicting their children's text choice (i.e., print, or digital text) while 65% of children

selected the digital text as their preferred text type. The gender and book choice investigated in the study discovered that more girls chose digital text than boys.

During the discussion about the shared book reading in digital text, one parent emphasised that she was concerned about the safe handling of the digital device due to its cost. On the other hand, she believed the use of story books in print text was user-friendly and allowed for a more natural interaction. In contrast, Kucirkova and Flewitt (2022) revealed that the parents in their study highlighted that the portable nature of I-pads was an advantage as children could use them even while travelling. However, the content and the format of the digital text identified were influential factors in forming the parent's beliefs and attitudes about their children's use of digital texts along with the parent's skills and confidence using digital text.

Despite parents identifying themselves as either moderate or highly confident technological users, they were not confident about their role in using digital text with their children's learning tasks compared to print text (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2022). When considering the parents in this study, all of them were professionals with university education at bachelor's or post-graduate level, they could be considered as having moderate or high confidence in using digital text or digital devices. However, during the shared book reading sessions some of them exhibited less confidence in using digital text compared to print text, on par with similar findings of the study by Kucirkova and Flewitt (2022). In their study, they found that parents were not confident about their role or the purpose of shared book reading using digital devices other than providing them technical support and guidance. On the other hand, during shared book reading in print text, the parents were confident about their roles and exhibited more natural involvement compared to shared book reading in digital text.

When considering this study, each case study was unique in its own way. The majority of parents were not aware of the concept of shared book reading and they were not aware of the strategies they could apply during a shared book reading session to facilitate their child's early language and literacy skills. They perceived shared book reading as reading to the child, not a social event where they would read with the child. While reading comprehension requires language comprehension and word recognition, many parents focused on facilitating language comprehension, rather than word recognition which consisted of print concepts, alphabetic/orthographic principle knowledge and alphabetic coding skills. Plausibly,

that could be due to their limited knowledge of shared book reading, and how to use it in a way to facilitate children's early literacy skills such as reading skills.

The parents in this study mentioned that they used print text for reading. However, shared book reading sessions in this study indicated a greater variation of behaviours during shared book reading in digital text than in print text. Parents in each dyad demonstrated unique variations in behaviour during shared book reading in print and digital texts.

Passion for Reading

Parents with a passion for reading had more interactive shared book reading sessions with their children, facilitating active engagement during sessions. In addition, parents with both passion for reading and work experience in the field of early literacy were able to conduct more productive shared book reading sessions with their children. For example, in the Case Studies 2a, 2b and 5 the parent-child dyads exhibited various behaviours including non-immediate talk, correcting, and talk related to features of the text compared to others. This observation was similar with previous research findings that suggested that parents should be enthusiastic reading models if they wanted to facilitate the practice of reading in children (Merga & Roni, 2018).

Raban (2022) reported a strong relationship between reading development in children and reading interest in their families. The reading assessment administered on the children from families with reading interest reported a positive impact on areas such as the print concept, letter identification and word recognition skills by the time they started schooling. Parents who had a passion for reading did not consider reading with their children as a chore, but as a pleasurable activity to express their love and care to their children which could lead to building a strong relationship between them (Raban, 2022). In this study, the parent in Case Study 4 who mentioned that she has only a passing interest in reading for pleasure exhibited how it could impact the quality of the shared book reading sessions. Her child served as a listener and became a passive participant while she kept on reading the books. On the other hand, the father in Case Study 5 had a passion for reading although he was not skilled in Sinhala. However, during the shared book reading in Sinhala print text he used the illustrations in the book to describe and build up a story, using strategies such as questioning, pointing to pictures and commenting to facilitate the child's active engagement. Hence, the findings in this study are on par with the findings in the study by Raban (2022).

A study by Puglisi et al. (2017) disclosed that maternal language skills influence the relationship between reading skills in children and the early informal home literacy practices. The authors suggested that it might reflect the influence of genetics. The findings in this study also shed some light on the genetical influence. For example, the parents in Case Studies 1, 2a, 2b, 3, 5 and 6 mentioned that they had a passion for reading and had the experience of reading with their parents as children. The parent in Case Study 2a and 2b mentioned that both she and her partner had a strong passion for reading and they read a lot. Hence, the children from that family who were in Case Study 2a and 2b provided evidence for how they had been influenced genetically. They exhibited a range of behaviours such as non-immediate talk including predicting and inferencing, translating, and talking about the orthographies of the language they were using. Their curiosity about the stories was evident from their facial expressions and gestures as well.

Socio-economic Background

The parents in this study had either a graduate or post-graduate level of education and reported medium to high economic backgrounds. All parents were professionals in sectors such as accountancy, medicine, and education. All children in the study had older or younger siblings. Most of the previous literature reported that early literacy development can be impacted negatively by low socio-economic background of the family (Aram et al., 2017; Araújo & Costa, 2015; Hartas, 2011).

This study consisted of families from middle income backgrounds. While no comment can be made about their levels of literacy and language, it was evident that some parents were more engaged and informed about literacy development than others. Raban (2022) argued that socio-economic status of family background did not define reading development in children and those who had the opportunity to create successful understanding of reading from the experience they had at home, allowed them to enter school with a strong conceptual framework leading to continuous development in reading skills. Having said that, the education level of mothers and their beliefs about literacy, have been identified as variables of interest in comprehending home literacy experiences (Peixoto et al., 2022).

Chen et al. (2018) found that socio-economic status could directly influence the reading ability of children, as well as indirectly via the parent-child relationship established by parent's speech and behaviours. Their study of children in China

reported that the effect of socio-economic status on reading ability could vary depending on the learning motivation of the student. In addition, Chen et al. (2018) mentioned that parents with high education levels provided more support directly and indirectly than parents with low educational levels. They argued that learning motivation moderated the effect of socio-economic status on academic accomplishment. Motivated children, for example, from low socio-economic background could achieve to a greater extent than children with limited motivation from high socio-economic background. These findings were compatible with the findings in this study as all participants belonged to high socio-economic backgrounds, but the interest, motivation and the parent-child relationships varied across all participants, impacting the quality of overall engagement in shared book reading. Consequently, impacting the language comprehension and word recognition skills which are the main aspects in acquiring reading comprehension.

A study by Barone et al. (2021) identified shared book reading as a significant mediator of social inequalities in the process of early skills development. The findings from their large-scale information experiment assessed the causal impact of an intervention aimed at the parents of pre-school aged children. It revealed that parents with lower levels of education were more responsive to the intervention and there was a significant impact on their children's language development. The authors concluded that the cognitive barriers and information gaps in informal home learning activities led to social inequalities. The study argued that a simple intervention for parents could mitigate those barriers which could contribute to the development of the early language skills of children (Barone et al., 2021).

In this study all parents were highly educated, and evidence from the interviews indicated they valued the importance of shared book reading. However, there were two parents with a passion for reading, with the relevant knowledge, and firsthand experience of shared book reading and its impact on children's early language and literacy development. Whereas there were another three parents without any specific professional expertise on shared book reading and its impact on language and literacy development in children, but they reported a passion for reading. There was only one parent in this study, with a similar level of education as the other parents, but with a very limited passion for reading. Her shared book reading sessions appeared less interactive and lacked active engagement compared to shared book reading sessions by other parents.

Hence, having a higher level of education, an ample collection of reading resources, and a higher level of financial capacity may not have significantly influenced the active engagement in the shared book reading sessions, but the passion for reading and language competency did have a significant influence on the active engagement in the shared book reading sessions. The parent-child active engagement during shared book reading is important in facilitating language comprehension and word recognition which could lead to developing reading skills in children and to acquiring reading comprehension. Hence, this study argues the need to design and implement interventions to provide information on informal home learning activities, such as shared book reading, to all parents regardless of their level of education and socio-economic level.

Home Literacy Environment

The home literacy environment consisted of the language they used at home, reading resources, and reading practices. Overall, the dominant language was English, and majority of reading resources were in English. The reading resources consisted of print text, digital text, and audio books as well. The participants revealed that they read in English more than Sinhala and used print text more than digital. Those discoveries were compatible with the findings of a previous study which compared the shared book reading practices in bilingual families in relation to both languages (Gonzalez-Barrero et al., 2021). The researchers concluded that the families gave more prominence to reading in the family's dominant language and using reading resources in that language. Also, they started reading and spent more time reading in the family's dominant language than the non-dominant language (Gonzalez-Barrero et al., 2021).

The home literacy environment was seen as a mediator between parenting style and children's oral language skills. Parents with an authoritative parenting style had a positive association with informal home literacy practices such as reading books. On the other hand, the parents with an authoritarian parenting style had a negative association with informal home literacy practices. The study highlighted the association of parenting style with their engagement in the home literacy activities with their children (Bingham et al., 2017). The less authoritative parenting style was considered as a child centred approach which nurtured and guided children. In contrast, authoritarian parenting style was considered as a strict style of parenting

which expect children to adhere to rules and involved a less responsive shared book reading environment.

An authoritarian parenting style did not encourage the interactive nature in a shared activity such as shared book reading. The findings by Bingham et al. (2017) aligned with the findings in this study. The parent-child dyads who reported limited active engagement during shared book reading sessions in this study, disclosed evidence of an authoritarian parenting style during the semi-structured interview and shared book reading sessions. For example, during the parental interview, there was a comment *“he stays when I ask him to stay”*, and *“I tell him that we have to read this”*. In contrast, there were parents who invited, valued, and respected the child’s contribution and ideas and asked them, *“can you predict the story?”* or *“what is the moral of the story?”*.

Shared book reading is an opportunity to promote language. A recent systematic review by Larson et al. (2020) on language interventions focussed on children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. They found that the language intervention programs which were linguistically and culturally responsive revealed the most effective outcomes. The responsiveness to language and culture contributed to the meaningfulness for children and family members as the interventions aligned with their norms, beliefs and values while using the existing knowledge of the participants. The notion of responsiveness led to an effective engagement in the language intervention.

This finding of Larson et al. (2020) aligned with the results of this study as children were more interactive during shared book reading in English compared to Sinhala. There were instances where they supplied evidence of their lack of cultural knowledge in Sri Lanka and linguistic knowledge in Sinhala through their responses such as by misidentifying the illustration of a monkey, a common animal in Sri Lanka as the koala, and walking away in the middle of the story in a Sinhala shared book reading session. Similarly, there were instances where they used their existing knowledge to make inferences, such as relating their personal objects to the illustrations in the story. According to the Cognitive Foundations Framework on learning to read by Tunmer and Hoover (2019), background knowledge and inferencing skills are fundamental skills in the process of language development and subsequently reading acquisition.

A systematic review on the impact of joint media engagement on parent-child interactions found that many parents used active, dialogic techniques to support

children's joint media engagement which included cognitive, emotional, and physical supports. It revealed that joint media engagement could enhance child engagement, compared to the non-device shared activities. However, joint media engagement could reduce the aspect of language quality. In addition, the study found that joint media engagement could have both mixed and negative impact on aspects of interaction. For example, turn taking, barriers in viewing the screen and technical skills (Ewin et al., 2021). In this study, the variety of behaviour occurrences were more in digital text than print text. In general, the outcomes reflected the influence of each dyad's preferences in language and type of text to read. Taken together, each dyad exhibited their uniqueness in shared book reading sessions aligned with their individual interests, proficiency with digital technology, and home literacy practices.

Overall, the knowledge and attitudes, passion for reading, socio-economic background and home literacy environment are influential factors in early language and literacy development in children regardless of the era and equally applicable to past, present and the future. Hence, focussing on enhancing those factors and considering improving the quality of shared book reading by facilitating active parent-child engagement during shared book reading is pivotal for children as the learners of the 21st century, in a digitised universe. At the same time, contributing to achieving the goal of quality education.

Engagement

The parent-child engagement during shared book reading in this study included aspects of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement. Overall, the parents exhibited more different types of behaviours such as immediate talk, non-immediate talk, code-switching, mimicry and talk related to features of the type of text, than children. This finding is consistent with Shaneha et al. (2021) who included children around 6 to 7 years of age and examined the book-reading interaction between parents and children. They found parents produced almost three times as many behaviours or utterances than their children; in this current study parent behaviours were also more than children but not to the same extent. However, the ratio of behaviours differed across case studies and for each behaviour.

The ratio of parent to child behaviours was unique for each case study and depended on various contributing factors such as the passion for reading, home literacy environment and language competencies. In this study, the diverse types of

behaviours exhibited by parents and children during shared book reading in print text were recorded at a ratio of 3:2 regardless of the language. Interestingly, the ratio was almost same for shared book reading in digital text regardless of the language. A recent study by Avelar et al. (2022) on children and parents' physiological arousal and emotions during shared and independent e-book reading concluded that parents had similar arousal and emotions reading to children in both formats and children had higher arousal and positive emotions when they read with parents. Avelar et al. (2022) highlighted that shared reading appeared to be important regardless of the book format.

Shaneha et al. (2021) discovered that children demonstrated more non-immediate talk than immediate talk which was inconsistent with the findings in this study. In this study, children's immediate talk and non-immediate talk varied across case studies and depended on various factors, mainly their language competency. Non-immediate talk comprised talking beyond the immediate story content and put a higher challenge on the cognitive skills than the immediate talk. Therefore, the level of language competency was essential to produce non-immediate talk in that language. According to the cognitive framework for reading acquisition, linguistic knowledge is considered a pre-requisite in acquiring language comprehension which then leads to acquiring reading comprehension along with word recognition skill (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019).

In this study, the dominant language was English. It was assumed that the rate of non-immediate talk would be higher in English than Sinhala language, and it was observed in this study in shared book reading sessions in English. Alternatively, immediate talk was more in Sinhala language as immediate talk was less challenging and involved talking about the immediate story content. As a result, the readers had the opportunity to use the visual images in the story books regardless of the type of text, such as illustrations which served as facilitators to produce immediate talk in the less proficient language. The visual images were considered important in facilitating the word finding skills allowing access into the mental lexicon. The talk about the immediate story content allowed the parent and child to identify the association between the visual image and its relevant word, both verbally and orthographically.

The uses of code-switching and translation by parents were prominent in shared book reading in Sinhala. This aligned with the language proficiency of the parents in Sinhala. The parents in this study consisted of those who had migrated to Australia as

young children and started schooling in Australia. The other set of parents had completed schooling and university education in Sri Lanka and later migrated to Australia (i.e., Sinhala was their first language). The parents who lived in Sri Lanka until the end of their university education used Sinhala language in their Australian household more frequently compared to parents who lived in Sri Lanka for a few years as children. However, both categories of parents were more proficient in Sinhala compared to their Australian born and raised children.

Kaushanskaya et al. (2022) conducted a study to examine the impact of code-switching on the word learning of Spanish-English bilingual children with the mean age of 5.05 years. There were two conditions (i.e., English-only condition and the code-switch condition). During the English-only condition, the definitions of the novel words provided only in English, while during the code-switch condition definitions were provided in both languages integrating the code-switches. It was revealed that the children required fewer numbers of exposures to preserve novel words in code-switch compared to the English-only condition. This outcome was not mediated by children's language skills or by exposure to code-switching. The study concluded by suggesting that both bilingual children, and children with lower levels of language skills would not experience a risk in word learning with the code-switch input (Kaushanskaya et al., 2022). In this study, the use of code-switching facilitated the language comprehension and reading comprehension which contributed to facilitating the parent-child engagement.

An ethnographic study conducted in three multilingual immigrant families by Kibler et al. (2020) identified recurrent literacy practices that took place at home with the participation of mothers, older siblings and young children. The families were found to engage in context sensitive and cooperative shared book reading that has the decoding focus. Kibler et al. (2020) discussed transcultural decoding which involved the multidirectional language socialisation across languages and older family members providing expertise. The researchers highlighted the need to acknowledge the focus on decoding during shared book reading in families across languages and cultures. Similarly, to consider siblings as cultural and linguistic mediators in family literacy practices.

In this study there were instances where the siblings became involved during the shared book reading sessions, and they contributed as linguistic mediators as they had more linguistical skills than cultural. All children in this study were born outside Sri

Lanka and had lived primarily in Australia to date, while their immediate or extended family members had resided in Sri Lanka for periods of time. This geographical distancing created the opportunity to communicate with them in Sinhala. As a result, the older siblings of these children had become knowledgeable linguistically rather than culturally. In this study, there were few instances where the older siblings contributed by translating from Sinhala to English and vice versa.

Verhoeven and Perfetti (2022) discussed a cross-linguistic perspective on the language specific properties of reading and common properties to reading in all languages and orthographies. They explored the universals of learning to read by systematically analysing the variations among 17 different languages in their orthographical form and their mapping of written units to language units. Those languages were either syllabic, morpho syllabic or alpha syllabic and exhibited the commonalities in the operating principles in learning to read across languages and their writing systems. The operating principles facilitated the process of encoding, allowing the children to perceive, analyse and use written language resulting in the acquisition of a specific orthography. These operating principles contribute to three main aspects of learning to read, such as becoming linguistically aware, acquiring word recognition, and comprehension. The researchers considered three principles in facilitating word meaning and learning comprehension, such as the morphological processes, use of linguistic knowledge and reclaiming the background knowledge.

In this study during the shared book reading of the story *Rathu Kaar Podda (Little Red Car)* in Case Study 5, the child Ana exhibited her skills in linguistic knowledge and background knowledge by making a good attempt at translating a sentence from Sinhala to English. When her mother, Bree, read out the sentence “*reta geta ganna*”, the child said, “*geta ganna, I know, go in the house*”. Even though, Ana’s translation from Sinhala to English did not reflect the full meaning of the sentence in Sinhala, which should be “*take inside the house at night*”, from which she has missed the word ‘*reta*’ which means at ‘night’, Ana was able to encode the overall meaning in Sinhala and then translate it into English. Ana knew it was about taking the red car inside the house at night. Her response in English was not 100% correct in relation to sentence structure and syntax but she encoded the overall meaning of the story.

Verhoeven and Perfetti (2022) argued that children’s reading comprehension depends on their oral language comprehension across languages. Having said that, the authors acknowledged reading as an activity which facilitates the vocabulary

development in children while exposing them to different grammatical structures and improving their background knowledge.

Children in this study had limited experience in engaging in shared book reading in Sinhala compared to English. Similarly, they had limited exposure to oral language in Sinhala than in English. As a result, the children in this study exhibited limited behaviours during shared book reading in Sinhala than in English. Further, there were more active parent-child engagements observed during English than Sinhala. These results are on par with the perspectives of the study by Verhoeven and Perfetti (2022).

Developing children's language comprehension through means such as shared book reading in the early years of child development is critical to overall language and reading development. In some instances (e.g., young children with developmental delays), the role of early intervention is invaluable to developing long term quality of life. Thus, having a home environment which is rich in stimulations in relation to language and literacy is pivotal for the development of language and literacy skills in the child, contributing to the child's academic success in school and beyond. This applies to all children with diverse learning needs. Being capable of comprehending and expressing various languages, in spoken and in written forms has the potential to enhance a child's quality of life as it facilitates the child's engagement with society and the cultural community.

Verhoeven and Perfetti (2022) discussed the importance of building a situational model in acquiring reading comprehension which consists of information from the text, inferences based on the text, relevant previous knowledge and inferences which connect text and previous knowledge. The findings in this study demonstrated examples for building a situation model during shared book reading in both Sinhala and English. There were instances where both parents and children made inferences based on the text such as food items, family members and objects the children had like those in the story. In addition, they made inferences focussing on previous knowledge such as a past visit to a place mentioned in the story. While building a situation model can predict reading comprehension, the researcher in this study argues that it is crucial to consider in what ways parents can facilitate the building of a situation model during shared book reading with their child.

In addition, Verhoeven and Perfetti (2022) discussed the possibility of activating previous knowledge across languages by the text titles, headings, and paragraph structures. In this study, there were instances where the children read the title of the

book and predicted the story both in English and in Sinhala languages. However, that was apparent with the parent-child dyads who had the passion for reading. There were instances where the parent with identified less passion just kept on reading the story. This was observed in the shared book reading sessions involving parents with limited passion for reading where they were not aware of the need, or were skilled in, activating prior knowledge.

The process of encoding contributes writing skills while the process of decoding contributes the reading skills. Indeed, both encoding and decoding require cognitive skills and cognitive processes. For example, an individual should be able to identify the correct phoneme and grapheme association. In simple terms, the ability to identify a letter, and the corresponding sound of that letter. An individual can become proficient in those cognitive skills gradually, with frequent exposure to a particular language and reading in that language as well. Gradually, an individual acquires the ability to comprehend across languages with the support of the familiarity-based identification.

This was compatible with this study as there was a clear indication of how the reading habits in families and the frequency of reading in different languages influenced the parent-child engagement during shared book reading. The children and parents who read more exhibited higher levels of parent-child engagement by indicating higher levels of behavioural and emotional engagement regardless of the language compared to those with limited reading habits. Both parents and children with frequent reading habits indicated the familiarity-based identification in both English and Sinhala languages. Even in Sinhala shared book reading sessions children were able to identify and/or infer the content of the story up to a certain extent. The researcher in this study argues that the passion for reading might have a direct influence on the familiarity-based identification across languages. Those with the passion for reading tend to read more frequently in their preferred language and try to learn to read in a different language solely because of their passion for reading. As a result, there is a greater opportunity they develop the skill in familiarity-based identification across languages.

When considering the parental experience in shared book reading, the mothers with work experience in the field of early literacy skills demonstrated active engagement during shared book reading compared to others. Similarly, mothers with a passion for reading showed active engagement compared to those with limited passion for reading. Salley et al. (2022) included shared book reading as an

intervention to parents of children under 3 years of age revealing that the parents benefitted from the intervention and experience. The key intervention targets were capacity development in parents and child engagement in shared book reading. The parents in the study observed changes in their child's engagement in relation to their interest, attention, participation, and enjoyment during shared book reading at home. Salley et al. (2022) highlighted that positive book sharing interactions and home literacy practices could take place by improving parental knowledge, confidence, and child's engagement even in smaller sizes.

This study largely portrayed the impact of the mother and their child within the shared book reading experiences. There was one instance (i.e., Case Study 3) where a father engaged in a shared book reading session (Sinhala print text). However, that shared book reading session turned into a story telling activity in English as the father was not confident in reading in Sinhala. The father-child dyad attempted to build up a story with the use of illustrations. Using English, they demonstrated behaviours such as asking and answering questions from each other, giving feedback, describing illustrations, and talking about their individual opinions about the features visible in the illustrations such as facial expressions. Regardless of the language and the type of activity, the father's attempts to facilitate the child's active engagement in the activity can be acknowledged as a chance to enhance literacy and language skills. The interactive nature is a key element in shared book reading, and the father's input quality in this study was promising as he made attempts to apply and maintain the interactive nature throughout the session, despite the session turning into a picture description session.

The physical mechanism such as the positioning and seating arrangement during shared book reading session influenced the behaviour of the child and the joint attention to the task. This was identified in a similar study based on an interaction analysis of father-child exchanges, configurations and discourse during shared book reading by Campbell and Schindler (2022).

In another study Robertson and Reese (2017) examined mothers' and fathers' shared book reading strategies of various book genres in relation to language and literacy skill development in children. Robertson and Reese (2017) found that the gender of the parent or the genre of the book did not influence the reading strategies of parents and children. Hence, they concluded that selecting a book which can be enjoyed by both parent and child is important regardless of the genre of the book. In

Case Study 3 which included shared book reading sessions with mother and father in two different ways –shared book reading and telling a story while describing illustrations – included the same reading strategies including immediate talk, non-immediate talk, talk related to features of the text and providing cues. Hence the findings in this study are aligned with the findings of the study by Robertson and Reese (2017).

Duursma et al. (2020) included Australian fathers and explored how they talk and read with their 3-year-old children during shared book reading. The study concluded that the fathers engaged actively in the shared book reading sessions and used reading strategies including non-immediate talk. Similar observations were made during the father-child session in this study. In a more recent observational study Cutler (2023) examined the physical performative behaviours exhibited by mothers and fathers during shared book reading with their pre-school aged children. The findings of the study revealed that mothers spent more time on physical contact with the child during shared book reading than fathers. Having said that, the study highlighted that fathers were more probable to engage in close physical contact with the child. The fathers in the study by Cutler (2023) disclosed that they considered shared book reading as a moment which could facilitate the emotional bond with their children. This finding is in line with the comment made by the father during the semi-structured interview in this study as he also considered shared book reading as an opportunity to build up the bond with his son. The same child had more physical contact during shared book reading with his mother.

Case Study 3 involved the mother-child dyad in shared book reading in Sinhala digital text. Effortful reading in Sinhala by the mother during the session resulted in the child finding humour in his mother's effortful reading pattern but he did not actively engage in the session. The level of language proficiency in Sinhala was an influential factor in their case.

All other shared book reading sessions in the study included mother-child dyads and out of them there was a higher magnitude of mother-to-child effects than child-to-mother effects, such as questioning and answering. This aligned with the study by Luo and Tamis-LeMonda (2017) which explored the reciprocal associations between maternal questioning and their children's narrative contribution during shared book reading across different ethnic groups from low-income backgrounds. However, in this study all participants were from high- or middle-income backgrounds.

Overall, in this study the parent-child engagement in relation to language representation and type of text presentation revealed that individual factors had a robust influence on the parent-child engagement. For example, the passion for reading, reading practices at home, knowledge, and experience in relation to early literacy development and reading diverse types of texts identified as factors that can influence the quality of parent-child engagement during shared book reading. Therefore, it is vital to consider those influential factors in designing activities for early literacy development.

This study highlights the need to have a comprehensive understanding about everyone in a shared book reading activity to obtain a more productive outcome. Simply, identifying and acknowledging individual differences and catering to those needs are equally important as the language and the type of text in the reading material during a shared book reading session. Like other child focussed activities, shared book reading should be a child centred activity where the child becomes an active participant instead of a listener.

The goal of reading is to acquire reading comprehension. Shared book reading facilitates the early literacy skills such as word decoding and language comprehension. If a child acquires more language and exposure to various reading resources in different text formats, there is more possibility for them to explore the world and to learn. However, to what extent that could be successful depends on other related factors for reading such as passion for reading and effective home literacy practices.

This study highlighted features of a shared book reading session required to achieve language and literacy benefits. In this study, there were participants with a passion for reading but without any training on how to conduct an efficient shared book reading session. On the other hand, participants with both passion and training exhibited more efficient shared book reading sessions. The researcher argues that it is essential to support parents to conduct a shared book reading session effectively to facilitate language and reading comprehension in children.

Equipping parents with relevant knowledge and skills on how to engage actively in a shared book reading session with their children could have multiple benefits in relation to early literacy development in their children. Taken together, making parents aware about “Why” they should do shared book reading, “What” they should do during

shared book reading, “How” they should do it and “When” they should do it need to be addressed in the parental training programs.

A recent study, Batista Rocha and da Mota (2022), examined how the different styles of interaction influenced the development of emergent literacy styles in children in the ages 4- and 5-year-old children. The study highlighted the importance of shared reading style in promoting emergent literacy skills. The shared reading style contributed to expanding the vocabulary development and scored a significantly higher score in both phonological awareness and vocabulary tests compared to other styles. Notably, Batista Rocha and da Mota, (2022) highlighted that the results could be useful in guiding families to obtain better outcomes through a shared reading style. The researcher in this study also highlighted the need for parental training to obtain a better outcome through shared book reading.

The data of this study were collected during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Read et al. (2021) investigated how young children’s home literacy practices were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Read et al. (2021) administered a survey for parents of children between 2 and 5 years of age to find out the frequency of shared book reading engagement and the frequency of screen-mediated reading. It was revealed that there were no considerable differences in the frequency of shared book reading. There was, however, a significant growth in screen-mediated reading (Read et al., 2021). Interestingly, similar observations were made in this study as there was an increased engagement during shared book reading in digital text which was unexpected when considering the findings of the previous studies on shared book reading in print and digital texts. The parental interviews revealed that learning from home contributed to engagement in more time with screens and digital devices for both children and parents. The author in this study concurs with the conclusions by Read et al. (2021) in which they have mentioned that the nature of shared book reading changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A randomised experimental design study by Strouse et al. (2023) consisted of children in the age group of 2.75 to 5.10 years who shared a book twice with a parent to investigate the impact of the medium on parent-child language. The mediums were digital and print texts. Audio-narration and built-in conversational prompts were the features used to systematically differ the medium. Strouse et al. (2023) revealed that the built-in conversational prompts were influential in enhancing the extra-textual talk (referred as the non-immediate talk in this study) quantitatively and qualitatively. There

was no evidence that the book in digital medium or with the automatic narration feature led to a decline in quality of the language or the conversation compared to reading in print. Strouse et al. (2023) concluded that well designed digital books with the narration feature have the same potential as print books to facilitate quality shared book reading sessions. Having said that, this study consisted of digital text with basic format without any auto-narration feature. However, shared book reading even with the basic digital format in this study was able to demonstrate outcomes on par with the shared book reading in print text.

When discussing the methodological strength in this study, having the shared book reading sessions video recorded provided the opportunity to repeatedly watch them and to clarify the data leading to enhanced credibility of data. Also, the three dimensions of engagement, affective, behaviour and cognitive could be clearly explored through the use of the videos. Specially, the affective engagement reflected through facial expressions and gestures was identifiable with the use of the videos. In addition, the use of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires contributed the observations in the videos of shared book reading sessions, as the data from each data collection method supported in identifying the contributory factors for the outcome.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are discussed according to several aspects such as sample, data collection and analysis. This study consisted of a limited number of participants which limited the degree to which results of the study could be generalised. While there was limited number of participants, the study design allowed for an in-depth examination of shared book reading in a naturalistic home environment.

The researcher reached out to a range of organisations to support the recruitment of participants. This strategy was generally successful, while participants recruited was also helpful in recommending the study to friends. The parents in the seven dyads recruited were generally well educated, and from a solid socio-economic background. Parents placed a high premium on literacy. Drawing on families where parents did not have tertiary qualifications, and not as well-off socio-economically, would be a worthwhile extension to this study.

As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown and the travel restrictions, the researcher was unable to engage directly with participants, and to support the collection of data.

The parents video recorded the shared book reading sessions according to the recording instructions given by the researcher. Therefore, the researcher relied on the parents to set up the recording device which resulted in differential quality in recordings. This could negatively impact the reliability and credibility of data. I

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, the usual daily routine changed in the households and the time a spent together as a family was more compared to usual life practices. Also, the use of digital devices at home by both parents and children were significantly higher compared to the time prior to the COVID-19 lockdown. This contributed to both parents and children becoming more competent in using the digital devices. Those who usually use a limited number of digital texts for shared book reading prior to COVID-19 lockdown, had to rely on both print and digital text because of the introduction of 'learning from home' concept.

Since this study examined the parent-child engagement during shared book reading according to the type of text presentation, the impact of the frequent use of digital devices and texts in the households could not be disregarded. The results could have differed if the data collection took place outside the COVID-19 lockdown period. The parent-child engagement could be impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown as the family members were impacted in various aspects such as physically and psychologically. Therefore, the influence of these factors might have influenced the results of this study.

Since the parents used their own digital device such as the mobile phone and laptop to video record the shared book reading sessions, the quality of the video recordings was inconsistent, and it could be identified as a limitation. The original study proposal involved the researcher visiting the family home and modelling the setting up of the video equipment. While a written set of instructions were provided to parents, with images of the setup, there was still a variation in quality of video images. An alternate way to support parents may have been to use a short video presentation.

Of the 28 shared book reading session, there was only one shared book reading session which included father-child dyad. This was a limitation as the results could not be generalised. Also, it could be considered in families that shared book reading is a feminine activity to do with the child.

The shared book reading session which included the father-child dyad was with print text in Sinhala. Due to the limited reading skills in Sinhala, however, they engaged

in describing illustrations in English. While this situation was discussed as part of the study findings, the behavioural data was not included.

Another limitation of this study was the absence of assessing the level of language and reading competencies in the participants (i.e., parents, children). Parents were more competent in reading in Sinhala than children, however, their competency in reading in Sinhala also varied as some struggled to read in Sinhala. This language competency reading in Sinhala had an impact on the parent-child engagement. From children's perspective some of them did not actively engage in the shared book reading session due to this language barrier and indicated the lack of interest.

Since the stories based on the Sri Lankan culture, vocabulary, and settings the children who had limited exposure such as limited visits to Sri Lanka found the stories a bit challenging due to limited background knowledge. The lack of familiarity with the vocabulary and the background knowledge appeared to be a challenge for them in acquiring the reading comprehension. The author in this study prescribed the reading materials to the participants, and it could be considered as a restriction on selecting the books that they preferred to read. Consequently, that could have a negative impact on the quality of the parent-child engagement during shared book reading.

The technological issues the parents experienced during the shared book reading sessions in digital sessions may have impacted the active engagement of the children. The dyads used digital devices with different screen sizes, and it was a limitation in this study. The participants had to peep into the smaller screens, and it restricted the easy access to the story and could have negatively affected the active engagement. It was in some cases difficult to manage the device, especially a mobile phone, due to its smaller size. Keeping consistency in the use of mobile devices may change outcomes.

Implications

It is argued that supporting families further with their skills and knowledge of shared book reading could facilitate development of foundational reading skills with young learners. Specially, word recognition skills which consists of the print concepts and alphabetic coding skills could be prioritised to improve the foundational language and reading skills of young children. Hence, raising parent's awareness of the equal importance of both language comprehension and word recognition aspects are

essential in the process of reducing the learning poverty and contributing to achieving the quality education for all under the Sustainable Development Goals. There are also possibilities that raising parent/carer awareness of shared book reading could impact on high stakes testing and concerns about falling literacy levels. However, this cannot be achieved without targeted and focused interventions by government.

Designing and validating assessments of reading comprehension including the elements related to word recognition and language comprehension skills are important to building early literacy skills. While there are commercially available assessments, ones that could be used by community-based personnel to support parents could help build greater focus to family based shared book reading programs. Web-based assessments may be another development to assist guide greater understanding of shared book reading as a home-based literacy activity.

The value of shared book reading and its impact on early language and literacy development and how a quality shared book reading session looks could be the focus community-based literacy development projects. These projects could be demonstrated to parents regardless of their educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Further, the value of using various reading resources in various text formats could be popularised in a rapidly changing digital world and so children develop as learners in the 21st century. Notably, shared book reading can be used as a home literacy activity in recovering the learning poverty and inequalities in education experienced because of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Overall, shared book reading should be recognised and popularised among parent's children, their siblings, other family members and teachers as a means of an important activity in facilitating communication, language, literacy, social and emotional skills in both children and adults. As a community we need to provide greater support these interventions and community-based programs. Further, more research needs to acknowledge the unique context of each home, and move away from carefully designed and controlled clinic-based interventions that fail to recognise the natural inconsistencies of the home.

Conclusion

Shared book reading is an interactive home literacy activity that many families undertake. As shown in this study, families do not always use the terminology of 'shared book reading'. Yet parents and their children use a range of actions and

approaches to support the development of early language and literacy skills. This study revealed that parents focused more on facilitating the aspect of language comprehension compared to the aspect of word recognition during shared book reading.

Shared book reading as a home literacy activity has the potential to facilitate children's language comprehension and word recognition skills leading to achieve reading comprehension. Parents in the study, even those with professional background knowledge in the field, were less likely to promote wording recognition skills which included concepts about print, alphabetical coding skills, and phonemics awareness.

Foundational reading skills are essential in developing literacy skills for all young learners. These skills were observed during shared book reading sessions, contributed to the parent-child engagement and overall quality of the shared book reading session. They skills were also observed during sessions involving English and Sinhala, and with digital and print texts. The interactive and social nature of shared book reading during all sessions provided evidence of the opportunity to promote these skills.

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Appendix A
Outline of Books Used in the Study

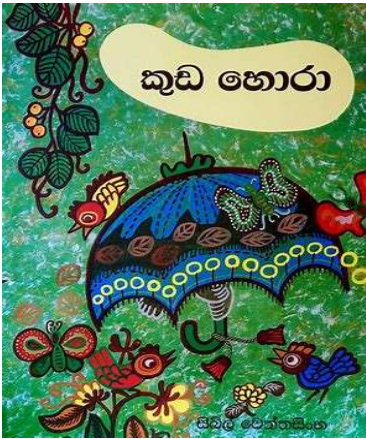
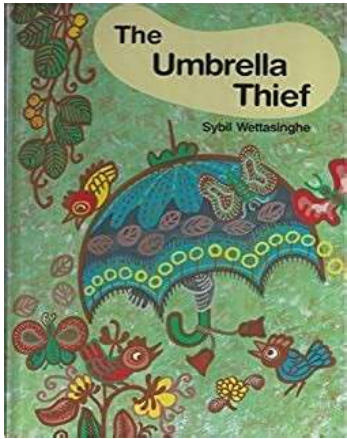
Story 1

<p>Name of the book (in Sinhala & the English translation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Duwana Rewula Run Away Beard</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Author: Sybil Wettasinghe Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p>
<p>Other languages the book has been translated</p>	<p>Japanese, Korean & Tamil</p>
<p>Awards for the book</p>	<p>SAARC Award for the best designed children's book in 2003</p>
<p>Summary of the story</p>	<p>In the past, people didn't have scissors to cut their beard. So, they grow their beards, and the story is unfolding based on that.</p>
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>6-8 years age group</p>

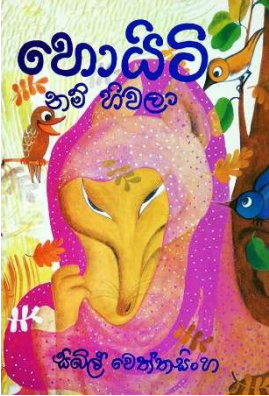
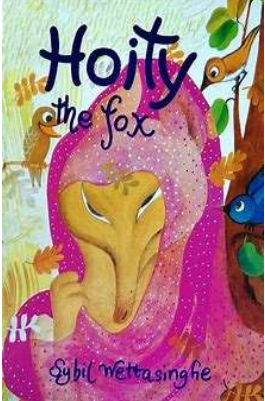
Story 2

<p>Name of the book (in Sinhala & the English translation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rathu kaar podda</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Little Red Car</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p> 
<p>Other languages the book has been translated</p>	<p>Tamil</p>
<p>Awards for the book</p>	<p>A very famous book among children</p>
<p>Summary of the story</p>	<p>A little boy plays with his little red car and he loves it a lot. After he plays with the toy car, he keeps it under a mango tree as he believes that the mango tree is taking care of the car.</p>
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>6-9 years age group</p>

Story 3

<p>Name of the book (in Sinhala & the English translation)</p>	<p><i>Kuda Hora</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p> 	<p><i>The Umbrella Thief</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p> 
<p>Other languages the book has been translated</p>	<p>Japanese, Chinese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Korean & Tamil</p>	
<p>Awards for the book</p>	<p>Best Children's Picture Book award -Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Japan, in year 1986. Most popular Children's Book award by Tokyo Children's Library, in year 1987</p>	
<p>Summary of the story</p>	<p>This book is about a man from a village. He visits the town for the first time and noticed the “umbrellas”. He brings back an umbrella to the village, but it got disappeared. This happens each time he brings an umbrella. So, he designs a plan to catch the thief.</p>	
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>7-10 years age group</p>	

Story 4

<p>Name of the book (in Sinhala & the English translation)</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Hoity nam hiwala</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Hoity the Fox</i> Author: Sybil Wettasinghe</p>  </div> </div>
<p>Other languages the book has been translated</p>	<p>Japanese, Chinese, Swedish, Norwegian, Korean & Tamil</p>
<p>Awards for the book</p>	<p>Nikkei Asia Prize 2012</p>
<p>Summary of the story</p>	<p>Three women in a village fool a fox</p>
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>8-11 years age group</p>

- Does your child is eligible for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support or New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability (NCID) services?

Yes..... No.....

- What is your highest level of education?

Secondary education Apprentice technical
 College diploma Higher diploma.....
 Bachelor degree..... More than 20 years.....
 Post-graduate diploma Post-graduate degree

- In which language/languages do you communicate with your child at home?

Sinhala English..... Both.....

- What is the percentage of using the above-mentioned languages at home?

Language	1-25%	25%-50%	50-75%	75%-100%
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sinhala	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- What is the monthly income of your family?

<\$2,500 \$2,500-\$4,999 \$5,000-\$7,499
 \$7,500-\$9,999 \$10,000-\$12,449 \$12500-\$14,999
 \$15,000+

- How many children (<18 years) have you in your household? _____

- How old are they?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+

- Approximately, what is the time duration you spend with your child per week for reading?

< 1 hour..... 1-2 hours
 2-3 hours..... 3-4 hours
 4-5 hours..... More than 5 hours

- What type of activities do you do with your child daily?

Play Reading.....
 Watch TV Travel.....
 Other.....

Example: _____

- Have you heard about shared book reading?
 Yes..... No.....

- Describe your ideas about what shared book reading is.

- How many storybooks/reading materials does your child has have?
 < 10 10-24
 25-50 50-74
 75-99..... 100+

- How does your child receive story books?
 Buy Borrowing from the library
 Gifts..... Used books from relatives/friends

- How often do you buy print text story books to your child?
 Daily Once a week
 Once in two weeks Once a month
 Once in 3 months Once in 6 months
 Once a year.....

- How often do you buy or download digital text story books to your child?
 Daily Once a week
 Once in two weeks Once a month
 Once in 3 months Once in 6 months
 Once a year.....

- Do you accompany your child to buy story books?
 Yes..... No.....

- Do you let your child to pick a print text story book?
 Yes..... No.....

- Do you let your child to pick a digital text story book?
 Yes..... No.....

- Do you buy the story book which is selected by your child?
 Yes..... No.....

- Do you have a passion for reading as a parent?
 Yes..... No.....

- When do you prefer to read a story book with your child?
 Morning Afternoon..... Evening.....

- When does your child prefer to read a story book with you?
 Morning Afternoon..... Evening.....

- Who choose which book to be read?
 Mother Father
 Sibling Child

- What is the frequency of choosing the book per week by the above-mentioned person/child during shared book reading?
 Once..... 2 -5 times 6-10 times

- As the parent, do you have a preferred place to engage in shared book reading?
 Yes..... No.....

- If so, which place from the following places?
 Living room Bedroom
 Verandah Garden
 Other.....
 Example: _____

- Does your child have a preferred place to engage in shared book reading?
 Yes..... No.....

- If so, which place from the following places?
 Living room Bedroom
 Verandah Garden
 Other.....
 Example: _____

- How do you position yourself and your child during shared book reading?

Child is on your lap <input type="checkbox"/>	Child sitting on chair next to you <input type="checkbox"/>
Sitting face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/>	Child lying on the bed next to you <input type="checkbox"/>
- Do you take turns in reading with your child?

Yes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	No..... <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------
- Does your child ask questions during shared book reading?

Yes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	No..... <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------
- Do you ask questions from your child during shared book reading?

Yes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	No..... <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------
- Do you and your child use the same book repeatedly for shared book reading?

Yes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	No..... <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------
- As a parent have you got any aim/aims for your child to achieve through shared book reading?

Yes..... <input type="checkbox"/>	No..... <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

• If so, what are they?

- What type of text does your child prefer to read?

Print text only <input type="checkbox"/>	Digital text only <input type="checkbox"/>	Both print and digital <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	---
- Does your child expose to other digital Medias in Sinhala?

Videos in Sinhala..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Television programs in Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>
Audios in Sinhala..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Radio programs in Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>
Other..... <input type="checkbox"/>	

Example: _____
- What is your preferred type of text to read books?

Print text <input type="checkbox"/>	Digital text with subtitles ... <input type="checkbox"/>	Digital text without subtitles.... <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	---
- What is your preferred language to read books?

Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--

- What is the frequency of reading the following materials?

	Never	2-3 times	4-6 times	Daily	Print text only	Digital text only	Both
Story books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picture books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Please indicate your opinion on the following comments.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Reading books with children builds the home literacy environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading books with children is an important activity in promoting bilingual skills in children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading books with children with developmental delays can facilitate their language development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boys have less interest in reading print text than girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Girls have less interest in reading digital text than boys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The passion for reading depends on gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading with children reduces harsh parenting skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parental behaviour during reading with children has an impact on reading skills of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital text story books can develop reading skills in with more than printed text story books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Print text story books can be less effective than digital text story books in developing language skills of a child with developmental delay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents reading to their child is instrumental in learning to read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C

Child Questionnaire



Sydney School of Education and Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

David Evans PhD
Professor of Special and Inclusive Education

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NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
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Shared Book Reading in Bilingual Families

1. How do you feel about reading a story book?



2. How do you feel about reading a story book using the computer/iPad?



3. How do you feel about reading a story book with a hard cover (printed book)?



4. How do you feel about reading a story book with your parent?



5. How do you feel about reading a story book only by yourself?



6. How do you feel about reading a story book in the evening after you being to school?



7. How do you feel about reading a story book during your school holiday?



8. How do you feel about reading a story book inside the house?



9. How do you feel like reading a story book in the garden?



10. How do you feel about going to a bookshop?



11. How do you feel about receiving used story books?



12. How do you feel about reading story books in English?



13. How do you feel about reading story books in Sinhala?



14. How do you feel about going to a library?



Appendix D

University of Sydney Ethics Approval



Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 May 2021

Prof David Evans
Education; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Email: david.evans@sydney.edu.au

Dear David,

The University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has considered your application. I am pleased to inform you that after consideration of your response, your project has been approved.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project No.: 2021/209
Project Title: Shared Book Reading in Bilingual Families
Authorised Personnel: Evans David; Achchige Sumali; Zanuttini Jessica;
Approval Period: 17 May 2021 to 17 May 2025
First Annual Report Due: 17 May 2025

Documents Approved:

Date Uploaded	Version Number	Document Name
03/05/2021	Version 2	PCF ParentCarer v2 2021/209
03/05/2021	Version 2	PIS Parent v2 2021/209
03/05/2021	Version 2	PIS Child v2 2021/209
03/05/2021	Version 2	PCF Child v2 2021/209
03/05/2021	Version 2	Flyer v2 2021/209
03/05/2021	Version 2	Email Manager v2 2021/209
07/03/2021	Version 1	Questionnaire v1 Parent/CarerSBR
04/03/2021	Version 1	Questionnaire v1 SBR
04/03/2021	Version 1	Email Manager v1 SBR
04/03/2021	Version 1	Interview Parent/Carer v1 SBR

Condition/s of Approval

- Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal.
- An annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and on completion of the project.
- You must report as soon as practicable anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
 - Serious or unexpected adverse events (which should be reported within 72 hours).
 - Unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- Any changes to the proposal must be approved prior to their implementation (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate *immediate* risk to participants).
- Personnel working on this project must be sufficiently qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or adequately supervised. Changes to personnel must be reported and approved.
- Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, as relevant to this project.

Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
Research Portfolio
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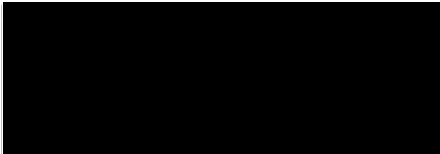
ABN 15 211 513 464
CRICOS 00026A

- Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the relevant legislation and University guidelines.
- Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, applicable legal requirements, and with University policies, procedures and governance requirements.
- The Ethics Office may conduct audits on approved projects.
- The Chief Investigator has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research and is responsible for ensuring all others involved will conduct the research in accordance with the above.

This letter constitutes ethical approval only.

Please contact the Ethics Office should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Dr Haryana Dillon
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC 3)

The University of Sydney of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2018\)](#) and the NHMRC's [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#)

Appendix E

Participant Information Statement (Parent)



Sydney School of Education and Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

David Evans PhD
Professor of Special and Inclusive Education

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Email: david.evans@sydney.edu.au
Web:

Shared Book Reading in Bilingual Families

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about how parents and their child engage when reading a book together (i.e., shared book reading). Shared book reading is found to be highly beneficial for young children, and we aim to find out more about how parents engage with their child, and how their child responds and engages with the activity. We are particularly interested in families where English and Sinhala are used, involving young children with the fullest range of abilities.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as a family that has a background in English and Sinhala languages, and have a young child ages between 4 and 7 years. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Dr David Evans, Professor of Special and Inclusive Education, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Dr Jessica Zanuttini, Lecture in Special and Inclusive Education, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Ms K.A. Sumali Saminda Kuruppu, doctoral candidate, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

Ms K.A. Sumali Saminda Kuruppu is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Arts (Education) at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Professor Evans and Dr Zanuttini.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

This study asks parent/carer participants to read four, short children's books to your child. Prior to reading the text, parents/carers are asked to complete a short questionnaire about themselves, their reading habits and how they promote early literacy with their child. We also ask that your child completes a short questionnaire about reading.

The four children's books we ask you to read to your child will vary in the language they are written (i.e., English or Sinhala) and the format in which they are presented (i.e., print or digital). These materials will be provided for you by the researchers as part of the study.

We ask that you video record each of the shared booked reading sessions using your phone. Ms Sumali Kuruppu will provide instructions and tips on how this can be undertaken. This will allow us to analyse the sessions and establish the ways in which you and your child engage in the reading sessions.

At the end of the four shared book reading sessions, we ask participant parents/carers to participate in an interview. The purpose of the interview is to establish your ideas, thoughts and reflections on the shared book reading session with your child. Ms Sumali Kuruppu will conduct an interview with you via a Zoom link. These interviews will be recorded to allow us to listen carefully to your responses.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

We anticipate that the study will require about 2 to 2.5 hours of your time, and 1.25 hours of your child's time. The initial questionnaire will take about 20 minutes; the four video sessions approximately 60 minutes; and the concluding interview 40 minutes. You may also have further questions about the project which will require time.

We ask that you transfer video files to a central and secure location on the University campus [insert Dropbox address].

(5) Who can take part in the study?

We are seeking the involvement of families who use both English and Sinhala language in their home and have a child who is aged 4 to 7 years of age. We are seeking the involvement of children with a full range of abilities (e.g., children with disabilities, children who possess specific skills and talents).

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by emailing Dr David Evans [david.evans@sydney.edu.au]. There will be no consequences of withdrawing from the study.

Submitting your completed **questionnaire** is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw your responses if you change your mind about having them included in the study, up to the point that we have analysed and published the results.

You are free to stop the **videoing** at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results.

You are free to stop the **interview** at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

During the study we are asking you to video shared book sessions with your child aged 4 to 7 years, and to forward these recordings to us. We will undertake a careful analysis of these recordings to find out how you and your child engage as part of a shared book reading session. Interview data will be used to better understand the engagement between you and your child.

Your information will be stored securely, and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

The data will be stored until your child reaches years of age, as required by law. The data will be stored within the University of Sydney data management system, and will only be accessible by the researchers.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Ms Sumali Kuruppu will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Dr David Evans [Professor of Special and Inclusive Education, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney; david.evans@sydney.edu.au; 02 9351 8463].

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one-page lay summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [Protocol No: 2021/209]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

Appendix F

Participant Information Statement (Child)



Sydney School of Education and Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

David Evans PhD
Professor of Special and Inclusive Education

Room 707
Education Building | A35
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 8463
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 2606
Email: david.evans@sydney.edu.au
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

Study Information Sheet: Shared Book Reading in Bilingual Families



Hello. Our names are

- Sumali Saminda Kuruppu
- David Evans

We are doing a research study to find out about children and their families, and what happens when they read books together.

We are asking you to be in our study because you are between 4 and 7 years old, and your family uses two language: Sinhala and English.

You can decide if you want to take part in the study or not. You don't have to - it's up to you.

This sheet tells you what we will ask you to do if you decide to take part in the study. Please read it carefully so that you can make up your mind about whether you want to take part.

If you decide you want to be in the study and then you change your mind later, that's ok. All you need to do is tell us, or your family, that you don't want to be in the study anymore.

If you have any questions, you can ask us or your family or someone else who looks after you. If you want to, you can call David any time on 0421 243 441

What will happen if I say that I want to be in the study?

If you decide that you want to be in our study, we will ask you to do these things:

- Answer a few questions about reading; we would like to know what you think about reading. You will only need to circle a picture to show how you feel and think about reading.
- Take part in reading four books with someone who looks after you. These books will use two differing languages (English and Sinhala); two of the books will be made of paper, the other two will be on a device (computer, phone, or tablet).
- All of this will take place in your home. We would like to record you reading with someone in your family. This person will record you reading together on their phone.

When we ask you questions, you can choose which ones you want to answer. If you don't want to read with someone from your family, you can stop.

Will anyone else know what I say in the study?



We won't tell anyone else what you say to us, except if you talk about someone hurting you or about you hurting yourself or someone else. Then we might need to tell someone to keep you and other people safe.

All of the information that we have about you from the study will be stored in a safe place and we will look after it very carefully. We will write a report about the study and show it to other people but we won't say your name or show a picture of you in the report, and no one will know that you were in the study, unless you tell us that it's ok for us to say your name.

How long will the study take?



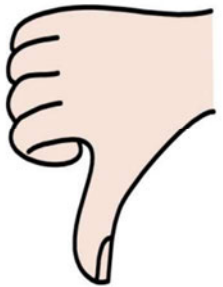
Taking part in the study require about 90 minutes of your time. This will about 15-20 minutes for the questionnaire; and 70-75 minutes for the booking reading.

Are there any good things about being in the study?



You won't get anything for being in the study, but you will be helping us do our research.

Are there any bad things about being in the study?

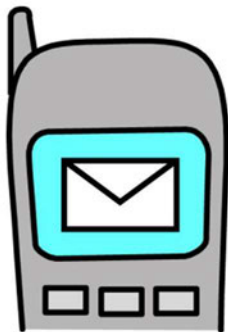


This study will take up some of your time, but we don't think it will be bad for you or cost you anything.

Will you tell me what you learnt in the study at the end?

Yes, we will if you want us to. There is a question on the next page that asks you if you want us to tell you what we learnt in the study. If you circle Yes, when we finish the study we will tell you what we learnt.

What if I am not happy with the study or the people doing the study?



If you are not happy with how we are doing the study or how we treat you, then you or the person who looks after you can:

- Call the university on +61 2 8627 8176 or
- Write an **email** to human.ethics@sydney.edu.au

This sheet is for you to keep.