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This dissertation, HOME LITERACY PRACTICES OF ARABIC-ENGLISH BILINGUAL FAMILIES: CASE STUDY OF ONE LIBYAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOLER AND ONE SYRIAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOLER, by AZUSA CALLAWAY, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

HOME LITERACY PRACTICES OF ARABIC-ENGLISH BILINGUAL FAMILIES: CASE STUDY OF ONE LIBYAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOLER AND ONE SYRIAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOLER

by
Azusa Callaway

Individual differences in early literacy skills can be attributed to children's previous history of emergent literacy experiences during their preschool years. The purpose of this qualitative study was to learn about the emergent literacy experiences of one Libyan American preschooler and one Syrian American preschooler and how their families support these experiences in their bilingual homes. Through the lens of social theory of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), this multi-case study was designed to explore family literacy practices with a preschooler in a naturalistic setting. The questions guiding this study were: (1) How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in two bilingual home settings impact the emergent literacy practices of a Libyan American child and a Syrian American child? (2) What support did family members provide for these two children as they developed emergent literacy practices in their bilingual home settings? Data sources included a demographic questionnaire, digital-recordings of family literacy practices with a preschooler, audio-recorded in-depth interviews with the parents, home visits, the preschoolers' writing samples, and photographs of literacy activities, materials, and the home environment. The recorded family literacy practices and interviews were transcribed and analyzed to identify emerging themes. Both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis were conducted.

Findings revealed that the preschoolers in both families use a multimodal process such as talking, drawing, singing, chanting, recitation, technologies, and sociodramatic play in their daily literacy experiences. The parents are not concerned with teaching their children specific literacy skills; but they naturally use techniques for keeping them on task and questioning skills to enhance oral language and comprehension development. These families' home literacy practices are Americanized by living in the mainstream social group, and English is frequently used among the family members. However, their bilingualism and religious literacy practices enrich and vary their children's emergent literacy experiences and their family literacy practices. The significance of this study resides in the importance of getting to know individual families' backgrounds to better understand and respect the cultural practices of family literacy.

HOME LITERACY PRACTICES OF ARABIC-ENGLISH BILINGUAL FAMILIES:
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ONE SYRIAN AMERICAN PRESCHOOLER

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I greatly appreciate the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family who participated in my study. They always pleasantly opened their homes for me to film and photograph and shared their family literacy experiences and personal stories with me. The experiences with these families are the most precious moments in my academic life. They have helped me become a better teacher for young learners.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to my family and friends. My parents, who were teachers, supported me for many years and created a foundation for who I am now. Especially my father, Teruji Uchihara, gave me courage to go abroad and study in my second language. He had demonstrated a love for learning until he was hospitalized in June 2010. Until he passed away in September 2011, he showed an interest in my Ph.D. program and always asked me about my progress. I am sure that he is proud of me in heaven. His spirit for learning will continue to live in my heart for the rest of my life. My husband, Dr. Phillip Ray Callaway, has been always a cheerleader, a mentor, and the chief supporter of my graduate work. Without his constant encouragement and support, I would not have accomplished my academic work. Sincere thanks to Dr. Pat Akin and Mrs. Lynne McClendon for being my inspiration when I was still learning many things in this newly adopted country.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the very first day of school, kindergartners receive a warm welcome when they walk into a freshly decorated classroom. They see their parents and me, their teacher, standing tall and greeting one another full of hope and excitement. The children's eyes focus on signs and illustrations on a calendar, a weather chart, a number chart, alphabet cards, and the classroom rules that are neatly displayed on the walls. Some of the children recognize familiar picture books in a cozy corner space where a book stand, a book case, stuffed animals, and pillows are placed on a colorful rug. The children's first task is to find their own names on their tables and cubbies and store their brand-new backpacks, lunch boxes, and school supplies in them. It seems that all these children begin their formal education at the same starting line.

One of the first activities on the first day of school is learning to write one's own name (Clay, 2001). As I walk around their tables, I see a large range of individual differences in their basic writing skills. Sarah struggles to hold a pencil properly. She tries to write the first letter of her name, but her pencil slides on the paper and falls out of her tiny hand. Ibrahim writes his name backwards from right to left. Caroline writes her name on a line neatly with the first letter capitalized and the rest in lowercase letters. As this vignette illustrates, some children have already been introduced to written language by family members in the home during their preschool years. Some others may have been intensively exposed to written language by family members, a daycare program, or a pre-kindergarten program.

After the first few weeks of school, I notice a broad spectrum of literacy development in the classroom of 19 kindergartners. Sarah who struggles to hold a pencil has her birthday in August and came to my class when she was still four years old. Ibrahim who writes his name from right to left and backwards lived in Egypt until he was three years old only surrounded by environmental print in Arabic. Caroline who writes her name neatly and correctly already reads chapter books at home imitating her older brother who reads above the grade level. I learn a slice of each child's background to help me to understand what he or she is experiencing in my class. I often wonder how much I could learn about individual children if I had more time to get to know them. I also want to know how individual children learn their literacy skills in their home environments that are culturally and linguistically different from my own. Thus, my interest in studying young children's home literacy experiences has grown in connection with my practical need for becoming a better teacher in the classroom setting.

Statement of the Problem

Human learning and development actually begins the first day of a child's life. The child's first teacher is his/her parent(s), and the first learning happens in the child's home in most cases. Whatever experiences children accumulate during the first several years of their lives become their foundation for all later learning. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that children's learning begins long before they start formal schooling. Individual differences in early literacy skills lie in the children's emergent literacy experiences during their preschool years. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) address reading difficulties in later life as "the result of problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years" (p. 5). Some statistics show that over one

third of American children start kindergarten without some of the basic skills necessary for successful learning (Rowley, 2010; Russ, Perez, Garro, Klass, Kuo, Gershun, Halfon, & Zuckerman, 2007; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Many educators, experts, and researchers are concerned about how to close this literacy gap at an early stage.

If establishing a solid foundation during the preschool years (birth to age five) leads to children's learning success in later years, how do parents learn to be their children's first and best teachers? There is no magic curriculum that parents can follow. Many parents are eager to devote unconditional affection and support to their children and willing to help their children do well in school. Cook-Cottone's (2004) survey data prior to a literacy program highlighted parents' positive attitudes toward school and learning as well as their unfamiliarity with teaching strategies. Seventy-five percent of parents reported that they could help their children more with their literacy experiences if they knew specific teaching strategies. The survey data also made clear how little time parents had to support their children's literacy experiences in the home. WestEd reported that the studies reviewed lacked information on how research findings could be translated into actionable recommendations and practices (Abdullah-Welsh, Flaherty, & Bosma, 2009). Nonetheless, the parents in Cook-Cottone's study found scaffolding strategies and activities helpful after they had participated in the mentoring program. In this program, trained parent mentors taught parents literacy techniques, such as read aloud, decoding, phonics, sight words, and creative expression. They also provided scaffolding strategies with parents, such as erasable writing boards, family syllable games, a language experience approach, and reading games. There is a need for further research studies that connect theories with practices.

Simply promoting parental involvement in children's literacy experiences is not specific enough to help parents implement good literacy activities and teaching strategies at home. Suggested activities and strategies are typically based more on school literacy practices than on home literacy practices that reflect cultural practices of literacy. Parents from non-mainstream cultures may experience difficulties in implementing and maintaining activities and techniques suggested in many literacy programs. For example, Heath (1983) illustrated cultural practices of literacy in three geographically connected communities: Roadville, Trackton, and the townspeople. Each community differed culturally in its language use. It influenced children's language and literacy development and school performance. The townspeople's children grew up seeing their family members reading for various purposes and in different ways. "They acquire the habits of talk associated with written materials, and they use appropriate behavior for either cooperative negotiation of meaning in book-reading episodes or story creation before they are themselves readers" (Heath, 1983, p. 256). The parents pass on their literacy practices from generation to generation believing intuitively that their literacy practices will lead to school achievement and job success. The children of Trackton and Roadville viewed the townspeople's ways as unnatural and strange. Therefore, the children of a cultural group that cultivates literacy practices similar to those of the American mainstream might have more opportunities to succeed in formal schooling. Whereas, the children of families that do not share the literacy practices of the American mainstream may perform at lower levels in American education.

The problem is that there is very little literature that describes how families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds navigate literacy development in the home. Literacy practices based on the middle-class mainstream dominate in American education. As the student population becomes more diverse, educators and parents need to be familiar with a broader array of literacy practices reflecting many students' cultural values and heritage. Various forms of cultural literacy could bring the richness of literacy practices to formal schooling if we, as educators, were more inclusive of various cultural differences in our culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. More importantly, even more children would have an opportunity to succeed in American classrooms.

In my own experiences as a teacher, I have encountered various families' values toward education. Because I am from a relatively monocultural and monolingual society compared to the U. S. society, I am very interested in learning about cultural diverse parental involvement and how it influences children's learning and achievement. For example, parents' bedtime story reading (Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004; Heath, 1983) for children was not a common home literacy practice when I was growing up in Japan in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in recent years more and better quality children's books have appeared in the market, and shared bookreading by parents has been widely promoted. Parents' bedtime storyreading may come from the West. I enjoyed listening to children's stories on a small thin floppy record, which accompanied the story book. Sometimes my family listened to recorded stories together. My father's love for books has been more influential in my interest in language and literacy than

anything else. He purchased the house next door and transformed part of it into his own library.

In order to understand the nature of literacy, researchers have to study literacy events as cultural practices. In various cultures and communities, people value certain activities and certain ways of practicing literacy. Even within the same culture, however, there are variant literacy practices in different eras, local communities, and individual families. Differences in social class and parents' educational background may also show varied emphases on a certain aspect of home literacy. One helpful way to learn about the home literacy practices of culturally and linguistically minority families in depth is through ethnographies or case studies. Cairney (2003) points out that relatively few research studies have provided a detailed description of home literacy practices within a wide range of families. There are, however, two very significant ethnographies (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983) in the early literature. In the current study, I used a qualitative multi-case study to describe two Arabic-English bilingual preschoolers' (age four) emergent literacy experiences and the parental strategies used to support these experiences. Learning from the parents of good readers allows other parents and educators an opportunity to become familiar with effective strategies, interactions, and home environment for daily emergent literacy activities in the home.

Purpose of the Study

Through the lens of social learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), this multi-case study was designed to explore the home literacy practices of two Arabic-English bilingual families in a naturalistic setting. The purpose of this qualitative study was to learn what

emergent literacy experiences one Libyan American preschooler and one Syrian American preschooler have in the home and how the families support their preschooler's emergent literacy experiences.

This study addresses the following questions:

1. How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in two bilingual home settings impact the emergent literacy practices of a Libyan American child and a Syrian American child?
2. What support did family members provide for these two children as they developed emergent literacy practices in their bilingual home settings?

The study included two Arabic-English bilingual families: one Libyan American family and one Syrian American family that live in a southeastern state. The assumptions of this study were the following:

1. The participants in this study revealed their normal daily lives when their family literacy practices were digitally recorded in the home.
2. The participants in this study honestly provided information for the questionnaire and interview questions.

In this study, I chose two Arabic-English bilingual families who moved to the United States because many of my students' families are from Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. I am interested in learning about this particular group of a linguistic background. However, there is scant literature about the family literacy practices of Arabic-English bilingual families with a preschooler. Recently, the media report daily on the civil rights movement in the Arab world. After the successful protests and demonstrations in Tunisia in December, 2010, the wave of

Arab uprisings spread out to other North African and Middle Eastern countries. This movement has revealed to the world how oppressed the Arabs have been for a long period time under dictatorships, corrupted governments, human right violations, unemployment, and poverty.

For this research project, I worked with a Libyan American family and a Syrian American family starting in March 2011. The Libyan American family is one of many families who lived with tremendous fear of Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship and fled to the United State to claim political asylum. Until they heard the news of the death of Gaddafi on October 20, 2011, the family remained fearful. The Syrian American family also eye-witnessed their country' protests for political reforms, which began in January 2011. In both countries, many lives were sacrificed to gain a democratic society and freedom. The families in this research still have parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends in their native countries and neighboring countries. Seeing and reading about the Arab uprisings on TV and in the social media has affected their daily lives to varying degrees.

The term *family literacy* is defined as “social and cultural practices associated with written text” (Cairney, 2003, p. 85) in families. Cairney (2003) explains that research has attempted to focus mainly on literacy practices in the families of preschool children; however, he notes that some research focuses on family literacy practices of young school-age children. The term *home literacy* is also used interchangeably for the same definition. Another important term in this study is *emergent literacy*. It is defined as “the development of the ability to read and write written texts” (Purcell-Gates, 2001, p. 8). The term *emergent* indicates that one is “in the process of becoming literate,” not

“a time in a child’s life when literacy begins” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. xix). Therefore, *emergent literacy* is a developmental continuum of learning to read and write written texts rather than an all-or-none phenomenon that begins when children start school (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). It is difficult to draw a clear line between written language and oral language in emergent literacy research. Purcell-Gates (2001) clarifies this by saying that oral language itself is not directly relevant to emergent literacy research, but that it is appropriate to include oral language because emerging knowledge of written language influences oral language.

Specifically in regard to home literacy practices, “culturally, linguistically, and economically minority families often have home literacy practices dissimilar from those of families within the American mainstream culture” (Edwards, Paratore, & Roser, 2009, p. 78). This study uncovered the home literacy practices of understudied Arabic-English bilingual families. It also shed light on four-year-olds’ emergent literacy experiences in a bilingual home setting before formal schooling because “learning as it occurs in the preschool years differs markedly from school learning” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 84). The findings of this study will possibly inform parents and educators of home literacy practices different from their own. They will also help them become more aware and sensitive to various values and home literacy practices of culturally and linguistically diverse families in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study are the social theory of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and the sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The social theory of learning was initially proposed by Bandura (1977), who

expanded on Rotter's (1945) ideas in his book, *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology*. This theory emphasizes the aspects of behavioral and cognitive learning and claims that people learn from observing other people. According to Bandura, "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling; from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p. 22). Observational learning has four component processes: attentional processes, retention processes, motor production processes, and motivational processes. For learning, observers have to attend to the significant features of the modeled behavior, remember them in symbolic form, convert symbolic representations into appropriate actions, and adopt modeled behavior that has a positive consequence. Young children must have an opportunity to hear the utterances of models to learn the linguistic skills that constitute a language. Bandura explains that young children's imitations of what they see and hear are partly influenced by their models' response to their behavior. For example, young children accurately reproduce behavior if models give positive responses.

In the 1990s, two scholars developed a new model of social learning theory based on Bandura's model. Within this new model of social learning theory, the cognitive process becomes the social practice. In their model of *situated learning*, Lave and Wenger (1991) shifted the theoretical paradigm from the individual as learner to learning as participation in the social world. Later, Wenger (1998) alone elaborated on the concept of *communities of practice*. The model characterizes social participation as a process of learning and places learning in the context of one's lived experience of participation in social communities (Wenger, 1998). Lave and Wenger based their

model on different apprenticeships of work practices, such as midwives, tailors, U.S. Navy quartermasters, and meat-cutters. They explain that newcomers have to actively participate in the practices of a social community to learn knowledge and skills at the periphery and that they move to the center of the community when they become more competent. In this sense, we all belong to communities of practice, such as families, schools, work places, clubs, and religious groups. Within a family, family members develop their own practices, routines, rituals, artifacts, symbols, conventions, stories, and histories (Wenger, 1998). The children are essentially “legitimate peripheral participants” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 32) before they become a full member in adult social communities. Thus, young children actively participate in family literacy practices by observing models in order to become full members in the world of literacy.

The current study focuses specifically on bilingual children’s literacy experiences in their first immediate community – the family. Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (1990) discuss in a more detailed fashion children’s learning through social interactions in a social context. From his own experience as a secondary school literacy teacher, Vygotsky became interested in how children learn new things. He believed that carefully observing children was just as important as reflecting on their test scores (Mooney, 2000). Children bring to school what they have already learned at home and from the larger environment in the five years preceding formal schooling (Vygotsky, 1978). Children construct their own knowledge not only from personal experiences, but also from social interactions with others. Vygotsky believed that children advance their knowledge by interacting with someone who is more competent than themselves. Adults and more competent peers can show them something they have not learned yet

and give them feedback and/or assistance (scaffolding) so that they can reach the next level without scaffolding. “The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86) is called the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). To illustrate this, Vygotsky (1978) used an example of two children with the same level of mental development to explain how varied degrees of teacher’s guidance would make a difference in individual children’s subsequent course of mental development and learning. It is the role of adults to challenge children’s potentials. Therefore, sociocultural studies of early literacy development focus on how adults or more competent peers help children navigate the zone of proximal development.

In her book, *Apprenticeship in Thinking*, Rogoff (1990) discusses “processes of guided participation in which caregivers and children collaborate in arrangements and interactions that support children in learning to manage the skills and values of mature members of their society” (p. 65). By supporting children’s learning, adults not only arrange and structure learning activities but also structure children’s involvement in learning situations through joint participation. Rogoff points out that there are cultural and individual variations in deciding what is important for children’s learning, the skills considered important, and the approaches to be used. In joint problem solving, adults give direct assistance by breaking down the overall goal of the problem into small subgoals and also focus the children’s attention and actions on the process. As explained in Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, adults create supporting situations in which children can advance their current knowledge and skills to a higher

level of competence by scaffolding children's performance. For example, adults help children develop narrative skills by asking for elaboration, giving cues and prompts, and outlining their narratives, such as "What happened next?" or "Who else was there?" Adults' questioning skills are key to effective assistance. Rephrasing or elaborating questions is more effective than just repeating questions not answered by the child. In Rogoff's apprenticeship, adults play an important role in choosing appropriate activities, structuring the activities into manageable small steps, and providing effective assistance knowing the child's current level of skills.

During data collection for this research, I realized that researchers had to be very sensitive not only to the cultures of the families, but also be aware of why they moved to the United States and what relations they still have with their own native countries. Funds of Knowledge by González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) suggests that teachers conduct home observations and ethnographical interviews to learn about families' community-based knowledge and resources. However, it is important for teachers and researchers not to invade families' privacy by asking many probing questions that they want to have answered. Also, they need to be aware of and sensitive to current foreign affairs and politics.

In this research I focused on the role of parents in their children's emergent literacy experiences in the Arabic-English bilingual home. Children engage in emergent literacy activities more actively when parents and siblings are involved in their literacy activities than when they attempt to read and write on their own. In this chapter, I stated the problem in home literacy practices of culturally and linguistically diverse families and family literacy research. I also discussed the importance of emergent literacy

development during the preschool years and the important parental role in supporting their children's emergent literacy development through social interactions in the home.

The remainder of this study is organized into four chapters. Chapter Two presents a review of the related literature related to family literacy and emergent literacy. Chapter Three includes the research design and methodology of this study. An analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings are reported in Chapter Four. Chapter Five consists of the summary of important findings, conclusion, limitations, recommendations for further research, implications, and afterthoughts. This study concludes with references and appendixes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literacy is conventionally defined as reading and writing (DeBruin-Parecki & Krol-Sinclair, 2003). However, as technology advances in the digital age, the definition of literacy has expanded to include multimodal literacy practices, such as using cameras, television, DVDs, drawing, websites, picture books, and comics (Yamada-Rice, 2010). Studies of emergent literacy also include not only conventional approaches to literacy but also non-conventional ones, such as drawing, pointing, storytelling, sociodramatic play, and playing with computer games. In contrast with older children and adults, young children are in the process of learning about what literacy is and how to read and write. Therefore, they create meaning through oral language and drawing, and using technologies with the assistance of adults and more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

The first sociocultural context for young children is their family homes. Young children construct their own knowledge about reading and writing long before they can actually demonstrate any reading and writing skills (Clay 1967; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). They accumulate literacy experiences by noticing what their family does with written language, interacting with them, and absorbing what they experience in the environment. A child's family shares and instills in the new child what they do, believe, and value. In this way, each one becomes a member of the family. According to a sociocultural view of literacy, literacy learning cannot be separated from the cultural practices in which it is situated (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003). "Literacy practices are the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives. In the simplest sense literacy practices are what

people do with literacy” (Barton & Hamiton, 2000, p. 7). Razfar and Gutiérrez (2003) note that home literacy practices are recognized as essential to children’s literacy development as a result of the growing importance of culture and context in the study of early literacy. Home literacy practices, the role of parents and other significant family members, and available materials and tools in the home become central in studies of emergent literacy.

This chapter reviews literature about young children’s home literacy experiences and the assistance of parents and other significant family members in their emergent literacy development. Since many researchers include both preschool-age children and young school-age children (Cairney, 2003) in the topic of family literacy practices, the literature review begins with family literacy in general, including the categories of family literacy, landmark studies on family literacy, family literacy studies on mainstream groups and cultural groups, and the issues of bilingualism and acculturation, and digital media in family literacy. Later in this chapter, I narrow down my review to a historical overview of emergent literacy, constructs of emergent literacy, emergent reading, and emergent writing for preschool-age children.

Family Literacy

Family literacy studies are divided into two large categories; naturally occurring practices within the home, family, and community and formally structured activities, such as family literacy programs (Wasik, et al., 2001). Various researchers have studied the different aspects of family literacy. Studies of family literacy are categorized under several areas (Knobel and Lankshear, 2003; Morrow & Paratore, 1993; Wasik, Dobbins, & Herrmann, 2001). One broad area that researchers focus on is which family literacy

practices occur within families. Many qualitative researchers observe literacy practices, adult-child interactions, or parental teaching styles and strategies in a naturalistic setting (Heath, 1983; Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Rodriguez, 2006; Taylor, 1983; Volk & de Acosta, 2003; Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2002). They also use questionnaires (Saracho, 2000) and interviews (Saracho 1999) to find out what types of activities and materials are used in the home. Quantitative researchers examine relations between family literacy activities and children's literacy performance as evidenced by specific skills (Haney & Hill, 2004; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008; Wood, 2002).

Researchers also study other aspects of families, such as their ethnicity, home environment, parental education, socioeconomic status, and values to see how these factors influence children's literacy development. In these areas, researchers investigate correlations or cause-and-effect relations in quantitative studies (de Jong & Leseman, 2001; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005; Wu & Honig, 2010) or use a qualitative study (Van Steensel, 2006). Researchers (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Lever & Sénéchal, 2011) also want to know specifically how family literacy programs improve family literacy practices and children's literacy performance. They investigated the effectiveness of dialogic reading intervention by using comparative studies. The last area is relations between home literacy practices and school literacy practices (Volk & de Acosta, 2003).

Landmark family literacy studies. In the 1980s two landmark ethnographic studies on family literacy were published. These family literacy studies investigated naturally occurring literacy practices within the home, family, and community. In her

10-year study, Heath (1983) intensively studied the family literacy practices of three communities: Roadville, Trackton, and townspeople. She described in great detail how different social and linguistic environments and family literacy practices influenced children's literacy development and academic performance in these communities. Heath compared several aspects of family literacy — childrearing styles, oral traditions, and literacy traditions. The parents in Roadville, who were predominantly European-American in background, provided their children with books, read to them, asked questions about the books' contents, and coached their children to retell a story from a book or talk about a real event with a lesson. In contrast to the parents in Roadville, the predominantly African American parents in Trackton did not read books with their children, nor include them as gifts to preschoolers, and had no occasion to talk about stories from books. The townspeople, both Blacks and Whites, were mostly teachers, preachers, politicians, and all the “big heads” (p. 236). They used focused language, monitored their children's learning, and provided extensive exposure to stories and situations. Neither the children from Roadville nor those from Trackton were prepared for the ways of the school house. The townspeople's children were ready to start their school literacy. Heath emphasized that it is “the *kind* of talk, not the *quantity* of talk that sets townspeople children on their way in school” (p. 352). Her research described clearly how family literacy practices are situated in cultures.

Another landmark ethnographic study on family literacy in the 1980s is Taylor's (1983) three-year study of successful readers in six families. She discussed how parent-child interactions contributed to children's literacy development. The six families she studied were middle-class Whites who lived in suburban towns. She interviewed the

parents about their own experiences of learning to read and write as well as the experiences of their children. She also observed the families in their homes and collected many writing samples (e.g., notes, lists, and letters) written by both the parents and the children. The findings suggest that the most significant mode of transmitting literacy styles and values occurred indirectly, while the direct transmission of literacy styles and values occurred infrequently. In other words, the transmission of literacy occurred when the children were continuously exposed to various types of written language in everyday family life. The parents were not specifically trying to teach their children to read or write at home. Taylor also realized that the interplay of the parents' individual life stories and teaching styles was the dominant factor in shaping the literacy experiences of the children within the home. She emphasized the importance of talking with children, listening to them, providing meaningful contexts for children, and providing print in social situations in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes.

These two landmark ethnographic studies on family literacy in the 1980s shed new light on family literacy practices in different communities and cultures. Heath's findings suggest how different communities value and practice different aspects of family literacy practices, which might not match school literacy practices. Taylor's findings show that parental experiences and educational values contributed directly to the literacy environment of the home. She emphasized that the children in her study learned to be literate in an authentic and meaningful daily context. These two seminal studies illustrated that parental values and language use shape their children's home literacy experiences. Family literacy practices are situated in daily life reflecting the cultural ways.

Family literacy studies on mainstream groups within a particular context.

Many family literacy studies have been conducted in the United States (Haney & Hill, 2004; Saracho, 1999; Saracho, 2000), United Kingdom (Wood 2002), Canada (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008), and Netherlands (de Jong & Leseman, 2001). In this section, I review studies with various focuses in family literacy practices. Some research focused on the descriptions of activities and materials (Saracho, 1999; Saracho, 2000), and others focused on the effects of home literacy practices on specific literacy skills (de Jong & Leseman, 2001; Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Haney & Hill, 2004; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008; Wood, 2002). It is difficult to synthesize, compare, or make an argument based on these results. Cairney (2003) points out that “few studies use comparable categories or even broad definitions of literacy practices” (p. 91). These studies are reviewed together based on similar factors that affect literacy development.

Saracho (1999) examined the kinds of family involvement in first-grade children’s literacy development. Based on open-ended interviews with 100 families, four categories emerged: reading at home, reading outside the home, using informal literacy activities and materials, and writing activities. Children read various materials other than storybooks in the home with family members: comic strips, sports pages, and horoscopes in newspapers, comic books, magazines, personal letters, personal notes, recipes, religious materials, homework, information from school, TV guides, labels on food and other products, catalogues, advertisement, and telephone books. Families engage in informal literacy activities, such as board games, crossword puzzles, word searches, watching TV, and writing notes, phone messages, shopping lists, personal

letters to friends or family members, and invented play words. Thus, family literacy activities and materials do not necessarily include books or formal reading instruction. Families also share informal literacy experiences related to their interests in everyday family life experiences. Family members are sensitive to their children's interests and skills when selecting activities and materials that promote their children's literacy development and family-child interactions (Saracho, 2000). It is clear that children learn literacy skills not only from direct parental teaching but also by being immersed in daily practical activities with authentic purposes in various meaningful contexts. These studies describe the kinds of activities and materials that young children encounter in naturalistic settings and do not necessarily indicate any causality of literacy skills or correlations between specific activities and literacy skills.

Some studies explored the effects of family literacy activities on the development of specific literacy skills. In a longitudinal study in Canada, Evans, Shaw, and Bell (2000) investigated the effects of home literacy activities on 66 children's early literacy skills. They found that shared bookreading did not enhance young children's letter-name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, phonological sensitivity, and receptive vocabulary. In contrast, activities involving learning letter names, letter sounds, and printing letters predicted knowledge of letter names, letter sounds, and phonological sensitivity. Wood's (2002) study also investigated the effects of parent-child joint activities on preschoolers' specific literacy skills at ages four and five in the United Kingdom. Children who engaged in a variety of parent-child joint activities demonstrated the best achievement in reading one year later. The frequency of parent-child joint activities was also found to affect children's reading attainment, vocabulary,

short-term memory, and phonological awareness. Shared bookreading indicated a later independent reading ability in the study.

The study of Haney and Hill (2004) builds on the findings of Evans, et al. (2000) by investigating how parent-led direct teaching activities in the home impacted preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. A questionnaire for parents reported direct teaching of literacy skills (86%), letter names (71%), sounds (65%), printing letters (45%), writing words (29%), reading words (26%), and reading stories (26%). Consistently children who received some type of parental literacy instruction demonstrated higher scores on all early literacy skills. Children who were taught how to write words scored higher on measures of alphabet knowledge and beginning decoding skills. Additionally, children who received instruction on letter sounds scored significantly higher scores on vocabulary. Haney and Hill concluded that children who were provided frequent opportunities to explore the connection between oral language and print constructed their own knowledge about sound-letter relationships and letter knowledge needed for decoding.

Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, and Kirby (2008) expanded the independent variables to include not only shared bookreading and teaching activities, but also the number of books, children's task-focused behavior, and parents' beliefs and expectations about their children's reading and academic abilities. The study examined the effects of multiple environmental and child factors on 61 kindergartners' emergent literacy skills and later word reading in Canada. Stephenson, et al. found that teaching activities that took place in the home prior to kindergarten were more important for the development of phonological sensitivity, letter knowledge, and word reading than the frequency of

storybook exposure or the number of books at home. They also found that children's task-oriented behavior was positively correlated with the general cognitive and emergent literacy measures. Thus, more teaching activities are likely occurring outside of shared bookreading. Stephenson, et al. suggests that it is not quantity, but quality that really matters in children's literacy experiences.

In the Netherlands, de Jong and Leseman (2001) examined the lasting effects of home literacy during the preschool years on the development of word decoding and reading comprehension. In this longitudinal study, the home environment was assessed three times prior to formal schooling. Reading achievement was assessed at the end of Grade One and Grade Three. The results revealed that opportunity for literacy activities, but not for play activities, was related to reading development. Parental instructional and social-emotional quality with reading comprehension increased from the first grade to the third grade. In contrast, the influence of home education on the development of word decoding is limited to the initial stage of learning to read. Thus, parents' sensitivity to their children's literacy progress makes it possible for them to change their educational interactions and quality during joint activities over the years.

Only Saracho's (1999, 2000) studies provided a descriptive picture of home literacy experiences of young children in a naturalistic environment. Most of the studies focused on the effects of home literacy practices on specific literacy skills. Based on the results of these studies, parent teaching with a specific purpose would result in the development of a specific literacy skill. Shared bookreading just for enjoyment, the frequency of share bookreading, or the number of books are factors that are not particularly related to the development of literacy skills.

Family literacy studies on diverse cultural and socioeconomic groups. In this section, family literacy studies with a focus on cultural differences are reviewed.

According to the sociocultural view of literacy, literacy learning cannot be separated from the cultural practices in which it is situated (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003).

“Culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse families often have home literacy practices dissimilar from those of families within the American mainstream culture” (Edwards, Paratore, & Roser, 2009, p. 78). Some researchers focused on low-income families (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005). Others were interested in different ethnicities (Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Rodriguez, 2006; Van Steensel, 2006; Volk & de Acosta, 2003) and a cross-cultural comparison (Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2002). Young children become family and community members while participating in culturally situated literacy practices.

Both Roberts, Jurgens, and Burchinal (2005) and Purcell-Gates (1996) studied the home literacy practices of families of low socioeconomic status in the United States. In their longitudinal study, Roberts, et al. (2005) followed 72 African American children from low-income families from their first year of life through their entry into kindergarten. They examined the effects of home literacy practices and the home environment during the preschool years on children’s language and emergent literacy skills. Their data analysis indicated that maternal sensitivity and maternal use of bookreading strategies were significantly associated with children’s levels of receptive vocabulary at the age of three and at entry to kindergarten. Moreover, they discovered that the overall quality and responsiveness of the home environment was the most consistent predictor of children’s language and literacy skills. Thus, children develop

their language and literacy skills in a home environment where a primary caregiver demonstrates emotional and verbal responsiveness, accepts the child's behavior, organizes the environment, provides academic and language stimulation, and participates in literacy events with the child.

In her one-year descriptive study, Purcell-Gates (1996) reported the correlations between uses of print and emergent literacy knowledge of children at ages four to six in 20 low-income families. The sample consisted of ten African American, seven Caucasian, two Hispanic, and one Asian American families. Clearly, all the families in the study used print for various purposes in their daily activities and pursuits. Some of the families lived busy and satisfying lives with very little mediation by print. The majority of the print used in the homes was reading container texts such as cereal boxes and milk cartons, flyers, coupons, advertisements, movie or TV notices, writing grocery and to-do lists, and signing names. The results indicated that children constructed their knowledge about the semiotic and functional nature of written language through direct mother-child interactions around print. Children developed concepts about print, the written register, and the alphabetic principle when they experienced print embedded activities. They were directed to those activities, or literate others engaged them in those activities. These print embedded activities involved texts at the more complex levels of written discourse found in storybooks, novels, magazine articles, and newspapers.

Volk and de Acosta (2003) investigated the syncretic literacy events of three bilingual, mainland Puerto Rican kindergarteners and the network of adults and children in their homes who supported their literacy development. According to them, syncretism is "a creative process in which participants draw on texts from diverse contexts and, by

putting them together in novel ways, reinvent cultural practices” (p. 8). Young children were able to initiate their own learning through sociodramatic play, such as playing school and “McDonald’s.” Beyond that, they connected their family literacy practices with religious practices, community practices, and popular cultural practices as well as bilingual practices. Volk and de Acosta also found that oral recitation, repetition, and memorization for religious literacy events were important literacy practices for the children. Thus, children and family members created syncretic practices by drawing on oral language and written texts from the home, school, church, and popular culture.

Another ethnographic study by Rodriguez (2006) explored the language and literacy practices of seven Dominican families living in the New York City. The first group included three Dominican families with mothers born in the Dominican Republic, all living in poverty. The second group included four families with parents who had a higher educational background than the first group and who had at least one child diagnosed with a language disability. The findings indicated that all of the families engaged in literacy practices in their daily lives. Their literacy events included reading the mail and newspapers, reading and responding to information, reading and writing to complete homework, and reading for pleasure. All of the families owned at least one television set and enjoyed watching TV, singing, and listening to music. Within the two groups of Dominican families, there was variability in the literacy practices of the individual families. They differed with respect to the availability of literacy materials in the homes and the types of reading or writing activities that occurred. The young children in most of the families did not even have basic literacy materials, such as pencils, notebooks, paper, and crayons until they went to school. Thus, they had to

borrow literacy materials from parents or older siblings. The number of books available in each home depended on the families' financial situations and the parents' educational backgrounds. Only one family had a computer with an internet connection in the home. Regardless of their income levels and educational backgrounds, all of the mothers highly valued their children's education and parental involvement in that education.

Wang, et al. (2002) conducted a qualitative study to compare the characteristics of the literacy-related activities initiated by Native American families in the United States and Chinese families in China. They investigated how adults support their young children's early literacy development in these two cultural contexts. The participants were two groups of 20 pairs of mothers and four-year-old children on a reservation in South Dakota and in Nanjing, China. The findings indicated that 43% of the Chinese mothers' whose interactions were literacy-related, compared to 10% of the Native American mothers' interactions were literacy-related. The Chinese mothers were more likely to initiate print-based literacy interactions, whereas the Native American mothers preferred interactions related to the oral narration of children's personal stories, family stories, and oral folk tales. The Chinese mothers were also more likely to explicitly direct their children's attention to the print-based literacy activities, focus on the specific aspects of literacy events, and expand on their children's answers in literacy-related aspects. In contrast, the Native American mothers were more likely to provide implicit support, spend more time providing the context relevant to the literacy event, and accept the children's version without expansion. In sum, this research illustrated how parent-child interactions and the emphasis of literacy skills vary from context to context related to the cultural values and traditions of literacy: explicit vs. implicit, contextual vs.

specific, elaborative vs. non-elaborative, prints vs. oral narratives, and literacy competence vs. meanings in daily life.

Both the Netherlands and the United States are similar since both populations include culturally and linguistically diverse immigrants. Leseman and de Jong (1998) investigated the relationships between home literacy practices (opportunities, social-emotional quality, mother-child cooperation, instructional quality of shared bookreading) and early reading achievement. For this longitudinal study, they recruited 89 children at the ages four to seven from Dutch, immigrant Surinamese, and immigrant Turkish families. In the Netherlands, children start kindergarten at age four and stay in kindergarten for two years before formal instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics begins in first grade. The researchers found that mothers in all groups used higher level utterances (explanations, evaluations, and narrative extensions) and picture labeling and describing utterances. In particular, Surinamese and Turkish mothers asked their children to repeat or complete sentences in a literal way, whereas Dutch mothers evaluated the narration and extended the narrative or topics. Turkish mothers used the pictures in the book less to support book reading and the comprehension process. They had difficulties in dealing with their children's spontaneous reactions to the book reading event. They considered children's looking at pictures and turning pages as inappropriate behaviors. For both Surinamese and Turkish parents, religious literacy is often the most important kind of literacy. Turkish mothers may see literacy as sacred and avoid pictures in picture books. Home literacy was strongly determined by socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic factors. In addition, the parents' own literacy

practices determined the opportunities for young children's involvement in literacy-related interactions.

In his study, Van Steensel (2006) explored the relations between children's home literacy environments and their literacy development in the first phase of primary education. The participants were 48 native Dutch families and 68 ethnic minority families from Turkey, Morocco, Somalia, the Netherlands Antilles, Iraq, Surinam, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Egypt, Yemen, and Poland. He found that as the level of education increased, the number of families with a rich home literacy environment increased. Most families engaged children in school-related literacy activities frequently and learned new literacy practices, such as shared bookreading, singing children's songs, and going to the library as a result of acculturation (Berry, 2006; Berry 2007) in Dutch society. Van Steensel also reported that children whose parents or older siblings frequently engaged in individual literacy activities had significantly higher scores than children whose parents or older siblings did less reading or writing for personal purposes. These particular groups exhibited different cultural paths to literacy, which in turn influenced different literacy outcomes on school-based literacy tests.

Family literacy is practiced in many ways during children's early years. Cultural beliefs and values influence literacy practices as well as parent-child interactions in the home environment. Regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicities, or nationalities, parents value and support children's education. The onset of formal schooling is when many parents begin to use more varied strategies and spend more time concretely supporting their children's school-related work. It is clear, therefore, that formal schooling influences parental involvement in literacy activities with their children.

Taylor (1983) also reported in her study of white middle-class families that there is a noticeable shift when children start to learn to read and write in school. In other words, reading and writing then become the specific focus of attention in home literacy practices. Families that have their own cultural way of literacy adopt a new way of literacy to support their children's school literacy practices in the mainstream culture.

Bilingualism and acculturation in family literacy. Families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may practice home literacy differently because of their beliefs and traditions. Some of the families may speak more than one language in the home. This might affect their children's literacy experiences. There are so many terms for describing people who learn languages other than their first language. Ortega (2009) explains that the term *bilingual acquisition* or *multilingual acquisition* refers to the process of learning two or more languages relatively simultaneously during early childhood. In this case, a child learns a language or languages (mother tongue, first language, or L1) from parents, siblings, and caretakers during the critical years of development that is from the womb to about four years of age (Ortega, 2009). Therefore, the term, *second language* is used to refer to any language learned after the *first language*.

Young children who develop phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatics in a second language can be considered bilingual even before they actually begin to use the language themselves (Tobars & Snow, 2001). Tobars and Snow (2001) clarify the nature of bilingualism by introducing four different bilingual environments which affect children's language outcomes in their first language and bilingual status. In the first bilingual environment, a child lives in an environment with a powerful influence

of English and is exposed to English-language media and popular culture to varying degrees. However, the child's bilingual status is monolingual in the first language because the family members and the community use the first language exclusively with the child. In the second bilingual situation, the environment is similar to the first environment. The crucial difference is that the child and his/her family live in an English-speaking community. When the child is situated in the first language at home, he or she has a good chance of some knowledge of English phonology and even vocabulary from community sources by the age of three. In this case, the child's bilingual status is *incipient bilingual*. In the third bilingual environment, the child's family members use one language, and his/her caretakers use another inside or outside the home. In another case, some or all the family members use two languages regularly. The bilingual status of a child who is being raised bilingually in a bilingual community is *emergent bilingual*. The fourth bilingual environment is similar to the third environment, but the language of the community is predominantly English speaking. In this environment, a child maintains receptive abilities in the non-English language but develops productive abilities only in English. The child sees his or her significant others using the societal language and often shifts rapidly to operating in a single language. The bilingual status of the child is an *at-risk bilingual* because the child acquires the home language along with English but may lose control of the home language.

Families make decisions about how much they want to use their original language in the home and how much they want their children to learn their heritage language in the mainstream culture. Language competence is necessary to function in a social context and a school setting. When two cultures intersect, cultural groups,

families, and individuals have to make cultural and psychological changes. This process is called acculturation (Berry, 2007; Sam & Berry, 2006). “Acculturation could also entail ‘rejection of’ or ‘resistance to’ cultural elements and not simply the ‘adoption’ of foreign cultural elements” (Sam, 2006, p. 11). Berry (2006) conceptualizes four acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. When individuals do not maintain their original culture but strive to be part of the mainstream culture, they assimilate. In contrast, when individuals maintain their original culture and avoid contact with the mainstream culture, they are using a separation strategy. If they maintain their original culture, but at the same time maintain contact with the mainstream culture, they are integrating. Lastly, when there is little possibility of cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with the mainstream culture, they become marginalized. The reason for migration, the purpose of migration, the age at migration, the cultural context, and other factors may influence a family’s decision-making process and its acculturation process. Families also have to decide whether they want their children to be able to develop their biliteracy skills and abilities.

Digital media in family literacy. Within the framework of family literacy, it is necessary to include electronic formats because the definition of literacy itself has been evolving rapidly as new informational and communication technologies appear in the global society (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000). Nowadays, it is not uncommon to see a toddler playing with his/her parent’s iPhone or iPad. Young children in a digital age know how to handle digital devices much better than young children a few generations ago because they have grown up in the digital media environment. They

may see an older sibling communicating on Twitter, texting to a friend on cell phone, or a parent reading a novel on a digital book. They may actually use a computer, DVDs, or video games or talk to their parents at some distance through Skype in the home.

Naturally young children learn how to turn a computer or a talking book on and off, click on icons, and scroll a touch screen as earlier generations learned how to turn pages and read from left to right. They develop digital literacy, which includes conventional emergent literacy skills, the psycho-motor skills needed for keyboarding and cell phone use, and the problem-solving skills needed for navigating Google sites and using the iPhone (Blanchard & Moore, 2010).

Even though more than 75% of school-age children in the United States use a computer at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003), the conventional literacy still plays a major role in homes, schools, communities, and work places. However, more options are available in the digital age. The use of digital texts was 14% of the total number of texts for reading and writing by both adults and children (Purcell-Gates, 2010). This suggests that digital literacy has not replaced the conventional literacy of paper, pencil, or books. In fact, adults favor digital literacies in interpersonal communication, public writing, school, and shopping, while both adults and children favor digital literacies in entertainment, information, and self-motivated education (Purcell-Gates, 2010). According to Takeuchi (2001), results from a national survey of more than 800 parents of children ages three through ten revealed that the media activities parents reported doing most with their children were watching TV (89%), reading books (79%), and playing board games (73%). Forty-percent of parents believe

that the use of digital media is replacing the time children spend in actual face-to-face conversations.

Parents and teachers are eager to prepare young children for the digital age. The computer has become one of the tools available for learning in the home. In elementary schools, a computer center and a technology class have become part of classroom routines. Hillman and Marshall (2009) present six domains for evaluating digital content: interactivity, digital literacy, global citizenry, appropriateness, results, and participative nature. It is the role of adults to evaluate the quality of digital content and model how to search, find, analyze, and organize the plethora of information. Young children benefit from digital media if they are actively engaged in digital experiences rather than passively viewing or listening to it. They can also communicate in real time with people from various backgrounds around the world. Thus, through active engagement in quality digital experiences, young children expand their conventional literacy world.

In their research, de Jong and Bus (2002) reported that the regular book format was more supportive of learning about story content and phrasing than an electronic book format. Electronic books, including CD-ROM storybooks, talking books, interactive books, and computer books are widely used in the home with young children and in classroom settings. They are typically attractive to young children because they have sounds, animation, and games that young children can interact with. De Jong and Bus found a decrease in reading texts in subsequent sessions when four- and five-year-olds were clicking icons in the electronic books. They also found that games distracted children's attention from reading the text regardless of their reading levels. Thus, the

electronic book format may in fact be less efficient for supporting internalizations of story content. The researchers concluded that the use of electronic books is not a replacement for regular books but rather a useful addition to regular book-reading sessions at home and in classrooms. The use of digital media would be more effective if children were provided with scaffolds which direct their attention to the target skills and purposes.

Another study was conducted to investigate specifically preschoolers' reading engagement and communicative initiations comparing different shared bookreading conditions. In their study, Moody, Justice, and Cabell (2010) observed the reading behaviors of 25 preschool-age children during adult-led electronic storybook, child-led electronic storybook, and adult-led conventional paperback storybook. Their findings showed that children demonstrated significantly higher levels of persistence during the adult-led electronic storybook compared with the adult-led conventional storybook condition. Also, children were highly engaged in the child-led electronic storybook condition. This suggests that the use of electronic storybook enhances children's reading engagement regardless of the presence of an adult, but that the adult-led electronic storybook reading provides assistance for children's labeling and use of story comprehension references. Children also produced more labeling references during the adult-led conventional storybook condition than the adult-led electronic storybook condition. Thus, adult assistance plays an important role in scaffolding children's active reading engagement both in electronic and conventional storybook reading.

Researchers have begun to look closely at the effects of digital literacy experiences specifically on emergent literacy. The studies of de Jong and Bus (2002)

and Moody, et al. (2010) showed the importance of adult mediation in sustaining young children's attention and getting them actively involved in storybook reading regardless of the use of technology. In this sense, children are apprentices (Rogoff, 1990) in digital and conventional media until they develop maturity to become independent learners.

Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy has been studied from different angles based on various schools of thoughts. Psycholinguists view literacy development as a natural process in a natural environment without direct instruction. Whereas, cognitive psychologists view literacy development as sequential development of discrete stages. Sociocultural researchers believe that children advance their knowledge through interactions with adults and more competent peers. In the next section, different perspectives that influenced emergent literacy research are discussed.

Emergent literacy perspectives. A new paradigm for understanding young children's literacy development appeared in New Zealand when Marie Clay first conceptualized emergent literacy in her doctoral dissertation in 1966 (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Until then, reading readiness based on the maturationalist perspective prevailed. According to the maturationalist view, "readiness to read was the result of neural ripening. The mental processes necessary for reading would unfold automatically at a certain point in development" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. ix). This view suggested waiting until a child was ready. In her research, Clay (1967) studied five-year-olds' early reading behaviors and concluded that interactions with written texts should not be withheld from five-year-olds based on the assumption that they are not developmentally ready. She questioned the developmental discontinuities in the maturationalist

perspective and advocated developmental continuities from emergent literacy to a child's independent reading and writing.

In the United States from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, two schools of theorists and researchers conceptualized the reading process from the perspectives of linguistics and psycholinguistics. Linguists and Psycholinguists viewed learning as a natural process, occurring within the human mind. The linguist Norm Chomsky claimed that "human beings are biologically programmed to acquire language under favorable conditions" (Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 38). He proposed a theory reacting to the inadequacy of behaviorism and Lock's blank slate doctrine (Pinker, 2002). According to this theory, children are born with a special ability (Universal Grammar) to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). This Universal Grammar consists of a set of principles that would be universal to any language. When children are exposed to samples of a natural language, their internal cognitive device is activated. Therefore, children naturally acquire the language by being exposed to the natural language and become proficient in oral language without any instruction before formal schooling.

This paradigm shift in language acquisition influenced the view of reading theorists and researchers in psycholinguistics in the 1970s. Frank Smith and Kenneth and Yetta Goodman contributed to a paradigm shift in literacy development by shedding light on the "emergence" of early childhood literacy and young children's "sense-making strategies" to literacy (Gillen & Hall, 2003, p. 5). Kenneth Goodman calls mistakes made by children while reading "miscues" (Goodman & Goodman, 1994, p. 621) because they provide information about the reading process that children are

experiencing while reading. Based on his observation of children reading words in story contexts rather than in word lists, he concluded that children read words and comprehend texts using context knowledge and bringing their prior knowledge (Hall, 2003). Goodman described reading as “a psycho-linguistic guessing game” (p. 38). In other words, when readers encounter unknown words or do not understand what they are reading, they guess what they might mean using the context knowledge and their own prior knowledge.

Frank Smith also suggested that readers make informed predictions about a text based on what they already know about the language and world. He argued that “reading was not something that you are taught, but rather something you learned to do as a consequence of belonging to a literate society and that there were no special prerequisites to learning to read” (Hall, 2003, p. 39). His claim that readers do not use the alphabetic principle to decode sound in order to identify words was controversial and found to be inaccurate (Hall, 2003). Yetta Goodman also views written language as having the same functions as oral language, which includes the need to inform, to communicate, to interact with others, and to learn about the world (Hall, 2003). These psycholinguistic theorists and researchers conceptualized the reading process as a natural process without any direct instruction and claimed that children learn to read and write by being exposed to meaningful contexts.

Gillen and Hall (2003) describe this paradigm shift as “a revolution that demanded a reevaluation of literacy as something that moved beyond any conventional ability to read and write” (p. 6). Researchers during this period found that young children gave much attention to print in their environment, participated in print in their

own ways, and developed hypotheses about how print worked. Thus, they had come to believe that early literacy development began during very early childhood rather than at the beginning of formal schooling. However, they simply applied the innatist theory to written language. Their assumption was that “learning to read was not so much a matter of being taught, but a matter of arriving at facility as a result of a predisposition to seek understanding within a language-rich environment” (Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 39). They believed that writing is parallel to oral language and different only in mode (Hall, 2003). Alexander and Fox (2004) point out that these psycholinguists overgeneralized the innatist view of oral language to written language. Do children learn how to read and write in the same way as they acquired oral language in a natural environment?

Around the mid-1970s, another school of theorists and researchers with a cognitive psychology background joined the reading research community. These theorists and researchers were interested in the internal structures and processes of the human mind and focused on the construction of prior knowledge which was influenced by Kantian philosophy. According to this information-processing theory, human minds were explained as having computer-like functions, such as input, storage, retrieval, and output. They focused on text-based factors such as prior knowledge, attention, memory, interpretations, comprehension, and strategic processing (Alexander & Fox, 2004). One of the debates about the reading process is whether children progress through reading stages or not. Cognitive psychologists follow the stage model which views orthographic knowledge as key for novice readers, whereas psycholinguists support the non-stage model which minimizes the importance of orthographic knowledge (Hall, 2003). All cognitive psychologists agree on the importance of decoding words.

Scholars from a cognitive psychology background focus on outcome-based investigations in quantitative research (Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 1999). They examine the relations between emergent literacy factors and conventional literacy skills for later literacy development. They also emphasize sequential development of discrete stages and view the constructs of literacy as components (Yade, et al., 1999).

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) argue that “conventional literacy consists of a set of skills that must be taught and learned” (p. 865) by using the analogy of learning to play the piano. They go on to argue that one can be taught to read at any age from late preschool through adulthood based on the evidence of successful adult literacy programs. Thus, there are two distinct groups of scholars: those who view literacy development as a natural process in a natural environment, such as Goodman, Smith, and Sulzby, and those who view it as sequential development of discrete stages, such as Whitehurst, Lonigan, and Sénéchal.

Around the mid-1980s, a paradigm shift again occurred as a result of the inadequacy of the information-processing theory guided by the computer metaphor. The information-processing theory did not explain the reading process in particular contexts involving particular populations. From the sociocultural perspective, the mind is not like a computer, but shaped by culture. Therefore, the reading research community adopted the ethnographic and qualitative inquiry methods advocated in social and cultural anthropology (Alexander & Fox, 2004). Based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), sociocultural theorists and researchers studied literacy events in a naturalistic setting, such as classrooms and homes and the social interaction of particular individuals in a particular context at a particular time.

Vygotsky carefully observed how children develop language skills and grasp new concepts when they talk to and listen to their peers (Mooney, 2000). His sociocultural theory has changed the way we conceptualize about children's interactions for knowledge construction. Before Vygotsky's theory became widespread, researchers and educators followed Piaget's theory and believed that children construct their own knowledge through physical interaction with the environment. In contrast, Vygotsky believed that children's interactions with adults and more competent peers contributed to advancing children's knowledge. Accordingly, children need assistance (scaffolding) from adults or other peers to advance from the *actual* developmental level to the *potential* developmental level. Vygotsky explained the distance between the actual developmental level at which children can solve a problem on their own and the level of potential development at which children can solve the problem under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1987). Once the internal developmental processes are internalized, then children can solve the problem on their own.

Based on his longitudinal qualitative case study of two infants' language development, Bruner (1983) concluded that language and culture cannot be treated separately because culture consists of symbolic procedures, concepts, and distinctions that can only be made using language. In other words, adults transmit the culture by teaching a child "how to say it" (p. 120) as well as what is canonical, obligatory, and valued among the members of the cultural community. Bruner also explains that learning literacy is social and cultural even when others are not physically present, such as reading a book. Both Bruner and Rogoff (1990) discuss "intersubjectivity" which is

defined as knowing the minds of others in their community through language or other non-verbal signs, such as actions and gestures (Hall, 2003). If two people do not understand each other, they negotiate meanings. Children are naturally good at learning the practices and activities of their parents and peers around them in their cultural and social community. Bruner and Rogoff explain that children learn cultural practices and develop their cognitive abilities through apprenticeships which include guided participation in social activity with knowledgeable members of the culture who support, challenge their understanding of skills in using the tools of culture (Bruner, 1983; Hall, 2003; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

Many theorists and researchers attempted to conceptualize how young children develop literacy skills from various theoretical perspectives underpinned by different schools of thought. A new perspective then springs from the previous opposing perspective to modify a missing element. However, all of the perspectives seem to have the common goal of uncovering the process of literacy development and looking at it from different angles. Alexander and Fox (2004) explain that each era weights physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions differently. Each perspective is correct and helpful from its own theoretical orientation because it focuses on only one of the elements within the reading process.

Oral language and written language. Language consists of both oral and written aspects (Sulzby, 1986). During the last several decades, literacy scholars from different theoretical backgrounds have argued about whether oral language should be included in literacy development. Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, and Colton (2001) defined written language as behaviors that involve interactions with printed artifacts and

oral language as those behaviors and knowledge in the linguistic domain such as vocabulary, comprehension, and narrative knowledge. These two domains influence each other and are mutually enhanced by each other (Sénéchal, et al., 2001), despite having different sub-skills. For example, children increase their vocabulary by reading books, and oral language helps them understand written texts. Sulzby (1986) argues that oral language and written language are closely connected. In her research, she found indication of children's knowledge on written language in their oral delivery form and that of their oral language in their written delivery form. She explains that oral language is a face-to-face verbal discourse. The basic nature of oral language is that the message is transient and cannot be reviewed, and it depends greatly on the present physical, linguistic, and paralinguistic context. In contrast, writing is permanent, can be reviewed, and is frozen in time and location. In writing, ideas and events have to be described in linear order, and its wording needs to be specific for the audience. Since writing is decontextualized, it has to be more effective than speech. However, some speakers often use oral language that has features more appropriate to written language. Based on Sulzby's view of oral language and written language, these two domains are interconnected in our daily life.

Purcell-Gates (2001) argues that the notion of emergent language is based on written, but not oral language. In her study, five-year-olds performed two tasks: talking about a recent birthday party and pretending to read a story told by pictures in a wordless storybook by making it sound like a book story. The findings showed that the children did not tell the researcher about a birthday party in the same way as they pretended to read a story. Thus, the language used for each task was different in its

vocabulary, syntax, and degree of decontextualization. Purcell-Gates concluded that this knowledge of written language came from being read to by their parents. She suggested that experiences with written language in the home environment are critical for emergent literacy knowledge.

It is questionable to what extent written language is only acquired through instruction or emerges naturally in a print environment. Geary's (1995) explanation of cognitive development clarifies the ambiguous relation between oral language and written language. According to him, there are two general types of cognitive abilities: biologically primary cognitive abilities and biologically secondary cognitive abilities. The former refers to abilities that "have evolved largely by means of natural or sexual selection" (p. 24). These abilities develop naturally across cultures. In contrast, the latter reflects "the co-optation of primary abilities for purposes other than the original evolution-based function" and appears to develop "only in specific cultural contexts" (p. 24). These abilities develop slowly and with effort and occur only in informal or formal instruction. The development of secondary abilities requires continuous practices and explicit instruction. The development of oral language is universal in various cultures, but the development of written language is not. Thus, according to Geary reading acquisition is considered biologically secondary.

Based on Geary's (1995) view, innatists apparently focus on the development of biologically primary cognitive abilities, and sociocultural theory focus on the development of biologically secondary cognitive abilities through social interactions in a meaningful context. Reading acquisition does not naturally emerge like language acquisition in a cultural environment, and therefore it needs to be taught explicitly.

Children's comprehension of written language largely depends on their effective use and understanding of oral language (Flint, 2008). It appears that different sub-skills within written language, such as print awareness and print knowledge, may emerge like oral language without instruction. Oral language may influence the development of comprehension of written language, and shared bookreading may promote the written language register.

Constructs of emergent literacy. Young children learn symbols and signs in an environment and understand that print has a meaning long before they actually begin to write. Even their scribbles resemble their own written language (Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1982) and contain a message (Goodman, 1986). Yetta M. Goodman (1986) believes that children are "making sense out of or through print" (p. 5) when they are reading and writing. The beginning of reading and writing is print awareness. Based on the psycholinguistic view, Goodman presents five roots of literacy as a metaphor for the beginnings of reading and writing in children based on her research findings and conclusions. The five roots of literacy include print awareness in situational contexts, print awareness in connected discourse, functions and forms of writing, oral language about written language, and metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness about written language.

According to Goodman's (1986) five roots of literacy, young children begin their reading development without being noticed because reading is a receptive process. Although there is no difference in the ability to read environmental print based on ethnic, geographic, racial, or linguistic differences, there are differences based on chronological ages. Young children increase their abilities to read environmental print as they get

older. The availability of materials with written language is varied in families and cultures. Around age four, children develop knowledge of book handling: the purposes and functions of books, the directionality of print and books, and the function of print in books. Young children perceive themselves as not being able to read, but able to write and begin to differentiate writing from drawing. They also develop oral language about written language, such as letter, number, or word, over a period of time and advance toward conventional forms. Finally, children begin to talk about how language works. The five roots of literacy show that children develop concepts or principles about how written language makes sense as members of a literate society.

Various experts have attempted to define what emergent literacy is and what constitutes emergent literacy. Purcell-Gates (2001) defines it simply and clearly as “the development of the ability to read and write written texts” (p. 8). She also offers definitions of emergent literacy given by different researchers: “any combination of phonemic awareness, the alphabetical principle, concepts of print, purposes for reading and writing, print as a semiotic system, concept of story, Piagetian stages, mother-child oral interactions around book reading, vocabulary development, oral language development writ large, invented spelling, symbol development, literacy play, storybook reading styles, and literacy as social or cultural practice” (Purcell-Gates, 2001, p. 8).

There are many sub-skills that make up emergent literacy. Based on the cognitive psychology perspective, Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) categorized the components of emergent literacy into two domains: “inside-out” and “outside-in” processes (p. 854). The inside-out processes are the knowledge of graphemes, phonological awareness, syntactic awareness, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, and

phonetic spelling. They represent children's knowledge of the rules for decoding a text into correct phonological representations. The outside-in processes include semantic, syntactic, and conceptual knowledge, understanding and producing narrative, knowledge of standard print format, and pretending to read. These processes represent children's understanding of the context of a text they are trying to read. Whitehurst & Lonigan explain that these two domains are important for reading development at different points of the reading acquisition process. Children need inside-out skills at the beginning of the reading acquisition process when they learn to decode text. Outside-in skills are also necessary when children learn to read more advanced texts for meaning and enjoyment. In particular, inside-out skills need to be explicitly taught to children who did not have much exposure to print before formal schooling.

After reviewing various scholars' components of emergent literacy, Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, and Colton (2001) proposed constructs of emergent literacy. They distinguished between procedural knowledge (knowing how) and conceptual knowledge (knowing why). Procedural knowledge includes children's knowledge of letter names, letter-sound correspondences, word reading, and invented spelling. In contrast, conceptual knowledge consists of children's knowledge of the acts of reading and writing, the functions of literacy, self-perception of learning to read, and emergent reading in context. Sénéchal, et al. distinguished language and metalinguistic skills as separate constructs from emergent literacy constructs. This division of constructs is very much similar to the inside-out processes and the outside-in processes Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) proposed. It is agreed that oral language and emergent literacy are

distinct constructs, but they are related and that emergent literacy consists of two constructs: the technical aspect and the comprehensive aspect.

Which of these constructs is the most crucial during the preschool years for developing later reading skills? Lonigan, Burgess, and Anthony (2000) examined the predictive significance of preschoolers' oral language, print knowledge, and phonological sensitivity for later emergent literacy skills and reading in their longitudinal study. The results showed that the global construct of phonological sensitivity (sensitivity to words, syllables, onset-rhyme, and phonemes) significantly predicted children's decoding skills in kindergarten and first grade. In contrast, print concepts and environmental print did not predict other later emergent literacy skills or reading skills. The study suggests that phonological sensitivity, not phonemic sensitivity, is the strongest predictor of decoding skills.

Emergent literacy practices. Shared bookreading is discussed in much literature on family literacy. The purpose of shared bookreading is based on parental beliefs about emergent literacy. Researchers and scholars (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2001) from a cognitive psychology background promote specific parental strategies during shared bookreading. They believe that teaching certain pre-literacy skills will improve children's literacy skills needed later in formal schooling.

Shared bookreading. Reading aloud, shared bookreading, and bedtime storyreading appear to be widely advocated, in fact accepted without question, and popularly implemented in the homes, preschool programs, and formal schools in various ways. In reality, less than fifty percent of parents in the United States reported that they read daily to their children from birth to five years (Duursma, Augustyn, & Zuckerman,

2010). It is generally believed that the primary benefit of shared bookreading is children's literacy development. Duursma, et al. (2010) advocate shared bookreading because children learn to recognize letters, understand that print represents the spoken word, learn how to hold a book, turn the page, start at the beginning, and learn reading from left and right. Just as important, shared bookreading promotes a positive relationship between parent and child, a love for reading, and positive attitudes toward literacy. Snow reports that mothers' speech to their children during shared bookreading was more complex, longer, and more elaborated than during topic-introducing utterances (Snow & Ninio, 1986). However, descriptive and anecdotal reports from ethnographic and case studies do not pinpoint the exact cause-and-effect relations between shared bookreading and specific aspects of literacy skills (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Scarborough and Dobrich's (1994) extensive review of research suggests that shared bookreading during the preschool years may make a weaker or more indirect contribution to literacy acquisition than is usually thought.

Canadian scholars, Sénéchal and her colleagues have conducted extensive empirical research studies and reported the effects of shared bookreading for developing specific skills. In their quantitative research, Sénéchal, LeFevre, Hudson, and Lawson (1996) examined whether the knowledge of storybooks was related to the vocabulary scores of preschoolers of ages three to five. Reflecting on the limitations of self-reported frequency of shared bookreading, Sénéchal et al. developed checklists in which parents and children were told to identify the authors and titles of children's books. This measure was based on their assumption that parents and children know more authors and titles if they are exposed to children's books many times. However, it is questionable

whether this method can completely remove parents' social desirability bias since parents tend to inflate their estimates based on what they think would be socially acceptable (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Both memory capacity and attentiveness may affect the results of recognizing book authors and titles during shared bookreading. The findings showed that parents' familiarity with children's books predicted a similar percentage of variance in children's receptive vocabulary and unique variance in expressive vocabulary. Children's familiarity with children's books was a strong predictor of receptive and expressive vocabulary.

The results of the above studies indicate that preschoolers develop their vocabulary if they are frequently exposed to shared bookreading. What aspect of shared bookreading specifically affects preschoolers' vocabulary development? Sénéchal (1997) conducted a similar quantitative study using more specific measures of shared bookreading for preschoolers' vocabulary development. Each group of 30 children of ages three to four experienced one of three experimental conditions: a single-reading condition, a repeated-reading condition, and a questioning condition. In the repeated-reading and the questioning conditions, a storybook was read to children three times. Children in the questioning condition were asked to label target items with novel words introduced during bookreading. Sénéchal found that the repeated-reading condition enhanced children's receptive and expressive vocabulary, whereas actively responding to questions during repeated-bookreading facilitated children's expressive vocabulary more than their receptive vocabulary. This active participation, especially labeling illustrations of new words and answering questions, helped the preschoolers to comprehend and produce more words than other children who passively listened to a

story. These results support the previous research results. The chief difference is that parental questioning provided children with opportunities to practice retrieving the phonological representations of the words (Sénéchal, 1997). Accordingly shared bookreading appears to affect only preschoolers' vocabulary.

Children's active participation is more beneficial to them than passive listening to a story read by an adult. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2001) initiated a five-year longitudinal study to investigate the relations among home literacy experiences, language, and literacy development in 1994. In the initial phase of this research, Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas, and Daley (1998) investigated the correlations between parental instructions about reading and writing in the home and the development of kindergartners' oral and written language. Parent teaching was measured by the self-reported frequency of teaching their children to read and to print words. This analysis revealed that shared bookreading predicted only oral language skills, whereas parent teaching predicted only written language skills. Thus, in order to support preschoolers' emergent literacy skills, shared bookreading would not be sufficient. Additional support in the form of teaching may also be necessary.

In the second phase of this longitudinal research (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2001), the results indicated that parents' teaching about literacy (the alphabet, invented spelling, and decoding simple words) was the key home literacy practice for children's early reading success. Parental teaching facilitated early literacy skills, but this advantage was not maintained without the additional support provided by shared bookreading. The researchers encourage parents to read to their preschoolers and to continue to read to their emerging readers to maintain and develop their early literacy skills. In the last

phase of this longitudinal research, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) again reported that shared bookreading was related to children's receptive language development, whereas parents' reports about teaching were related to children's early literacy skills. This suggests that children's acquisition of specific literacy skills in the home may require the assistance of a parent or an older sibling.

In these longitudinal studies, parents were asked to complete storybook exposure checklists and an extensive questionnaire about home literacy experiences at the beginning of the study. Storybook exposure measured by checklists was unrelated to parent teaching because parents who read frequently did not necessarily teach their children to read and write. Focusing on specific reading strategies and quality parent-child interactions may facilitate children's vocabulary development and emergent literacy skills. However, the recognition of authors and titles of children's books for measuring exposure to storybooks and the frequency of literacy skills taught at home do not illustrate the quality of parental teaching.

Some researchers looked closely at which parental styles are the most effective during shared bookreading. Reese and Cox (1999) assessed the relative benefits of three styles of shared bookreading for four-year-old children's emergent literacy in New Zealand. A six-week intervention was conducted in the participants' homes. The describer style (low demand and interrupting) focused on describing pictures, the comprehender style (high-demand and interrupting) focused on story meaning, and the performance-oriented style (high-demand and noninterrupting) introduced a book in the beginning and discussed story meaning in the end. The describer style resulted in the greatest benefits for children with lower initial vocabulary skills and children with

higher initial comprehension skills. Whereas the performance-oriented style was also beneficial for children with higher initial vocabulary skills and children with lower initial comprehension skills. Thus, parental styles of shared bookreading need to be differentiated according to children's initial skill levels. This implies that parents need to be sensitive to their children's initial skill level and the next level so that they can provide scaffolding within the zone of proximal development.

Parental beliefs in shared bookreading. Based on the findings from the previous research, shared bookreading is not related to written language development but rather to oral language development. The reason is that parents do not draw attention to print and often do not teach their children specific reading skills and strategies necessary for reading (Phillips & Norris, 2008) when reading with their children. Anderson (1995) explained in his research how parents' different perceptions of literacy acquisition determine the purpose of shared bookreading. Parents who held more traditional views of literacy acquisition pointed out letters and letter sounds and discussed them during shared bookreading. Parents who held an emergent literacy perspective emphasized meaning and enjoyment and did not draw children's attention to print during shared bookreading. In fact, some of the parents appeared to believe that attending to print during shared bookreading would be harmful to the children's literacy development. Anderson concluded that the children in the emergent literacy group might have a broader view of reading than being able to read particular words or particular books and recognize that they are unable to do this. Thus, parental beliefs about the role and importance of shared bookreading determine the parental emphasis of certain skills.

Parental styles of bookreading also vary according to cultural traditions and beliefs. For example, shared bookreading is not a common culturally practiced activity in many Chinese families (Wu & Honig, 2010). Wu and Honig (2010) examined 731 Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about reading aloud to children between the ages of three and five years. The results showed that Taiwanese mothers valued more moral and practical knowledge gained from shared bookreading. This emphasis on moral knowledge came from Confucian ideas about the importance of harmonious relationships and morality in family and social interactions. In contrast, American parents viewed positive emotions during joint bookreading as more important. Maternal education also played an important role in influencing both maternal reading beliefs and home literacy practices. Highly educated parents themselves read more, and their enjoyment for reading provides a positive role model for their children. When children see their parents reading books, magazines, or newspapers, they are more likely to imitate their parents' behavior. It is clear that different aspects of shared bookreading are emphasized in a different cultural context.

If the purposes of shared bookreading are to facilitate listening skills, develop oral language (vocabulary and narrative skills), expose children to the written language register, and instill a love for reading, children do not need to draw attention to print. In particular, "the literary 'text' in picture-book reading is the picture and not the written word" (Snow & Ninio, 1986, p. 122) for very young children who are beginners in shared bookreading. Young children at first do not realize that stories in books are written or printed and mostly respond to the pictures. They often believe that the pictures tell the stories (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). Snow and Ninio (1986) suggest that

parents need to introduce reading the text to their children many months after shared bookreading is established as a picture discussion activity. After being exposed to picture books many times, young children begin to notice printed marks in the picture books.

If one intends to develop older preschoolers' literacy skills, more explicit print-referencing strategies and storybooks with salient print may be necessary for experienced picture-book readers. "Learning is maximized by focusing children's attention on the aspects of the writing system that need to be acquired" (Levy, et al., 2006, p. 91). Children's active engagement in print is more effective than passively listening to adult reading for development of literacy skills. The parental styles of shared bookreading vary according to the purposes promoting different aspects of language and literacy development. Developmentally appropriate activities and parental strategies that support the literacy activities need to be considered for the different ages of preschoolers. Clay (1991) warns overly eager parents to refrain from over-instructing and over-correcting their child. She suggests that parents follow their child's curiosity and interests and support what he or she is trying to figure out. Having positive experiences with books during preschool time is the most valuable preparation for school literacy learning.

Dialogic reading intervention. A large number of parents do not know specific teaching strategies that get their children actively involved in literacy activities, even if they already have positive attitudes toward school and learning (Cook-Cottone, 2004). Dialogic reading intervention trains parents in specific techniques that they can use during shared bookreading. These techniques are 1) to ask *wh*-questions; 2) to follow

correct answers with another question; 3) to repeat what the child says; 4) to help the child as needed; 5) to praise and encourage; 6) to shadow the child's interest; and 7) to ask open-ended questions and expand the child's comments (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). Some empirical evidence indicates the effectiveness of dialogic reading intervention, particularly in specific skills.

Hargrave and Sénéchal (2000) compared the effects of regular shared bookreading and dialogic reading after a four-week daycare and home intervention with preschoolers between the ages of three and five. The results revealed that preschoolers in the dialogic reading group demonstrated significantly greater gains in language than did preschoolers in the regular shared bookreading. Particularly the use of *wh*-questions showed a significant effect. The researchers explained that the questioning technique provided the preschoolers with opportunities to structure responses, to use language, and to improve their language skills. A very similar research study was conducted with five- and six-year olds in 10 preschools in the rural area in Bangladesh (Opel, Ameer, & Aboud, 2009). Opel, et al. (2009) found that dialogic reading significantly increased preschoolers' expressive vocabulary. The regular shared bookreading group acquired very little new expressive vocabulary because the teachers did not clarify the meaning of new words responding to children's questions and instead used simpler phrases for children's understanding. One of the reasons for the effectiveness of shared bookreading lies in the adults' teaching techniques, which made a significant difference in the children's acquisition of language.

Another study compared the effects of an eight-week dialogic reading intervention and an alternative treatment on the fictional narrative skills of five- and six-

year-olds (Lever & Sénéchal, 2011). This study is different from the two studies mentioned above because Lever and Sénéchal (2011) looked at the effect of dialogic reading specifically on the children's fictional narrative skills. To measure children's fictional narrative skills, the story elements of a story grammar in children's narratives were analyzed: introductions, settings, characters, emotional/cognitive responses of the characters, events, conflicts, solutions, reactions to events, and conclusions. The researchers found that the children in the dialogic reading group produced narratives that were better structured and more appropriately decontextualized than children who were in the alternative treatment group. The eight-week dialogic reading intervention helped children produce character names, initiating events, internal responses, internal plans, and reactions in narrative retelling tasks. The questioning techniques used in the study emphasized elements of story knowledge. Thus, the areas that adults intentionally taught resulted in the development of specific skills.

These empirical studies show that even short-term intervention made a difference in children's language and narrative knowledge. However, it is debatable whether these effects will persist or are just temporary. In their long-term follow-up study, Huebner and Payne (2010) investigated whether parents who received instruction in dialogic reading when their child was two or three years old continued to use the techniques as their children grew older. The shared bookreading of dialogic reading parents was evaluated more than two years after the instruction and compared with that of a control group that had no instruction. The results show that two years after receiving specialized instruction parents used on average 90% more dialogic reading behaviors than parents without any such instruction. Using dialogic reading techniques promoted

greater child participation in telling a story. Furthermore, parent-child interactions provided children with exposure to linguistically complex and cognitively challenging literacy experiences. Huebner and Payne point out that parents may know the importance of shared bookreading but need even more information about how to use it for parent teaching during the preschool years.

These empirical studies illustrate the importance of teaching parents how to support their children's literacy experiences by focusing on developing specific literacy skills. "Parental coaching in printing, letter names and sounds, and reading is critical to the development of written language concepts" (Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006, p. 91). In general shared bookreading is positive, but shared bookreading with quality parent-child interactions and scaffolding techniques turns out to be much more beneficial for young children's language and literacy development. With quality interactions and techniques, children have more opportunities to hear complex language and new words. Scaffolding helps them speak and think more about the story they read with their parents. This kind of shared bookreading is parallel to child learning based on the perspective of sociocultural theory. Thus, the role of trained parents in shared bookreading becomes crucial and determinative.

Children's attentiveness to print. A large number of the research studies reviewed so far focused on intervention and the role of parental behavior during shared bookreading. These studies suggest that there is no clear connection between shared bookreading and the development of print knowledge and reading skills. Does children's behavior during shared bookreading contribute to their development of literacy skills? Justice and Lankford (2002) conducted eye-gaze analysis to uncover

how frequently preschoolers looked at print during shared bookreading. They found that preschoolers infrequently attend to print when looking at storybooks. Preschoolers looked at print zones (areas on storybook pages containing print) on average only four percent of total fixations per storybook reading and spent time in print zones for only two point five percent of total visual attention. When a storybook with more words per page and smaller print was used for shared bookreading, children fixated on print less frequently and spent less time in print zones. Even when the researcher read a storybook with fewer words per page, larger print, and contextualized print embedded within illustrations, they looked at print only about six percent of total fixations and spent time attending to print for little more than five percent of total visual attention. Other similar studies also found that preschoolers rarely attended to print, but focused more on illustrations during shared bookreading regardless of the arrangement of print and illustrations (Evans and Saint-Aubin, 2005; Justice, Skibbe, Canning, & Lankford, 2005). These results pinpoint why shared bookreading does not indicate a clear connection with written language: it is due to children's general lack of attention.

The research mentioned previously shows that preschoolers attend more to salient print in a picture book. In their research, Evans, Williamson, and Pursoo (2008) used only picture books with salient printed words in unusual fonts and colors: illustrations and text on left or right facing pages. They examined the effect of adult pointing to each word while reading to draw the attention of preschoolers of ages three to five. The results indicated that children paid attention to the text less than four percent of the print-looking time over a two and a half minute reading session in all three age groups. Whereas, children spent a significantly greater percentage of time

looking at the text when pointing was used in all three age groups. The results also revealed that both the print-looking time and print recognition increased from three to five years of age. Evans et al. concluded that it is clear that children pay much more attention to the illustrations than to the print during shared bookreading and that shared bookreading appears to be more of a listening activity than a time to explore print. One of the reasons for preschoolers' inattentiveness might be developmental. According to Bus, van IJzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995), reading to young preschoolers is different from reading to older preschoolers because young preschoolers do not yet show much interest and book orientation. Thus, Evans et al. suggest that pointing to the words during shared bookreading may be one parental behavior that increases children's attention to print.

The study conducted by Justice, Pullen, and Pence (2008) also supports parental behavior which draws children's attention to print. Their study investigated the differential effects of adult verbal and nonverbal references to print on four-year-olds' visual attention to print during shared bookreading. The results indicated that children's visual attention to print was significantly increased when adults read to them using explicit verbal (posing questions about print) and nonverbal (tracking print with finger) print references. The researchers suggest that both verbal and nonverbal print-referencing strategies are one way to increase preschoolers' contacts with print during shared bookreading.

Emergent writing. Perhaps the most studied example of emergent literacy development in young children involves print awareness and print knowledge. Young children accumulate their knowledge about the writing system by observing what adults

write and print in the cultural context. In order to understand the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reading and writing, Harste, et al. (1982) suggested that we need to pay attention to the linguistic, situational, and cultural context in which that processing occurs. In their research, they collected uninterrupted writing samples from three four-year-olds attending a preschool program. The children were told to write everything they could write. The scribbles of Dawn from the United States looked like English. Najeeba from Saudi Arabia wrote lines, letters, and dots from right to left, that resembled Arabic. The writing sample of Dalia from Israel resembled Hebrew. These children had already developed print awareness in their own first languages.

These findings showed the sociopsycholinguistic nature of the written literacy process and provide clear evidence that “a) written language, like oral language, is learned naturally from ongoing natural encounters with print prior to formal language instruction; b) children in literate societies are actively involved, at a very young age, in understanding and controlling their worlds of print; and c) children’s perceptions of print are not only organized, but systematic and identifiable” (Harste, et al., p. 108). Young children construct their own knowledge about the forms and directionality of written language and imitate adults’ writing in their own way before starting formal literacy instruction.

Children begin to distinguish the characteristics of written form from scribbles as their exposure to print increases. They have not yet discovered the sound-letter relationships when they begin to write letters (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). Gentry and Gillet (1993) introduced the first five stages of invented spelling: precommunicative, semiphonetic, phonetic, transitional, and conventional stages. At the precommunicative

stage, spelled words can be read only by the speller immediately after it is written. Children at the semiphonetic stage begin to demonstrate phonetic spelling, but not fully. They often spell words with initial consonants. Phonetic spellers spell all of the sounds they hear in the word even though they are not correct conventionally. At the transitional stage, children write not only what English sounds like but also what it looks like. Finally, conventional spellers know the English orthographic systems and how it works. One sees that children gradually improve their spelling knowledge. However, according to Gentry and Gillet, it is not necessary for a child to go through all of the stages sequentially.

Many quantitative studies on emergent and early literacy development show the effects of certain parental behavior on a child's language/literacy skills or the effects of certain language/ literacy skills on later reading achievement. These studies indicate what works for literacy development, but they lack full descriptions of the process of parental teaching and literacy development at certain ages of preschoolers and in certain contexts. Several researchers (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Neumann, Hood, & Neumann, 2009; Neumann & Neumann, 2010) used a case study methodology to investigate how parents scaffold emergent literacy skills in the home based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective.

In their longitudinal case study, Neumann, et al. (2009) described how a parent scaffolded her young child's emergent writing and letter knowledge in the home prior to formal schooling. The child was introduced to print through an informal approach in which the mother used environmental print spontaneously when he was two years old. The environmental print used included labels on food packages, brand names on

products, text and labels on clothes, and any other written materials in the environment. The mother engaged the child in the same print, letters, and words in a repetitive but meaningful way to promote print awareness. The child was able to distinguish print from non-print and was introduced to story books at the age of two and a half. The mother helped her child learn letter shapes by using a multisensory approach, such as tracing letters with a finger while saying the word. She also moves the arm and hand following the letter shape while saying “up,” “down,” “around,” and “across.” She encouraged her child to trace plastic and magnetic letters, form letter shapes with modeling clay or cookie dough, and scribble and draw on a chalk board.

At the age of four and a half, the child was able to write most of the alphabet letters on request. By the age of five and a half, he was able to write letter strings (pre-phonetic spelling). By the age of six, he was able to spell words phonetically and write sentences using correct upper and lower case letters independently. The researchers point out the importance of parental sensitivity, responsiveness, guidance, and attention to literacy needs as well as the use of environmental print and a multisensory approach. This research showed how a parent can structure activities in which a child can actively engage in literacy practices in daily parent-child interactions.

In kindergarten, children receive early literacy instruction in classroom. However, some kindergartners who lack literacy experiences in the home prior to school entry benefit from instruction which is geared toward emergent literacy skills. Bodrova and Leong (1998) developed Scaffolded Writing for at-risk kindergartners and reported the effectiveness of this method in a case study. Scaffolded Writing is a combination of materialization and private speech as scaffolds for supporting children’s emergent

writing. For materialization, tangible objects or physical actions are used to represent a concept or strategy. In their case study, a highlighted line was used to materialize the concept of word. All the scaffolds were removed once children were able to perform the task without assistance. The findings showed that the use of a highlighted line and private speech produced more advanced writing compared to the level of writing the children produced without assistance. Children demonstrated more advanced forms of writing, increased the use of invented spelling, and increased the length and quality of messages.

Parent-child joint writing (Neumann, et al., 2009) is known to be one of the effective methods to promote children's emergent writing. Aram and Levin (2001) recruited 41 children of ages five to six from a development town in Israel and analyzed the nature of maternal mediation of writing in Hebrew. The results showed that there were significant correlations between the level of maternal mediation and children's literacy competencies. When children were skilled in their letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and grapho-phonemic mapping, their mothers mediated writing at a higher level by using their skills. In contrast, some mothers made demands below their children's actual level because they were not aware of their children's literacy level and cognitive abilities. Thus, the low level of mediation resulted in a child's low level of literacy skills. Aram and Levin concluded that cognitively advanced children are likely to have parents who are sensitive to their children's actual level and challenge them to their potential level from an early age on. It is necessary not only to know what strategies to use and how to help children, but also when to provide children with the

right scaffolds to advance their literacy skills from their initial level to their potential level.

This literature review illustrates that parents and other family members certainly play an important role in developing young children's emergent literacy skills before they start formal schooling. All parents value their children's literacy development. To various degrees, parents provide their children with print-rich environments, quality scaffolds, access to necessary resources, various opportunities, and affective support in the home. They also serve as role models for their young children. However, the variations of family literacy practices depend on parents' values, beliefs, and cultures. Some parents could support their children's emergent literacy skills better if they knew very specific strategies and had the materials to implement these strategies in their homes. Young children gradually develop an interest in the written language. Parents need to be sensitive enough to identify their children's progress and how and when to use the strategies and materials to maximize their children's emergent literacy development. Specific strategies facilitate targeted skills.

Many studies investigated the relations between pre-literacy skills and conventional literacy skills in a quantitative design. They focused on the outcome from a cognitive psychology perspective. There is a need to address a process of young children's literacy development in a descriptive design. It would be helpful to include less commonly studied cultural groups because literacy cannot be separated from its cultural contexts. In their lives, young children make a significant amount of learning in one year. Lumping several ages of young children in a study does not reveal their literacy development in detail. Thus, the current study focused on two four-year-olds'

emergent literacy experiences, their parents' support, materials, and parent-child interactions in the two families from an understudied cultural group. The findings suggest strategies that other parents can implement with their young learners in their own homes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study examines two preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences in the bilingual home setting. Through the lens of social theory of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), the emergent literacy experiences and interactions between the child and his or her family member are described in detail. "Only by examining interactive events between adults and children in more detail have researchers begun to understand the dynamics of the association between social interactions and literacy development" (Reese & Cox, 1999, p. 20). The purpose of this study is not to determine the correlation of parental behavior and children's literacy outcomes or the causality of emergent literacy performance. Rather, the purpose of this qualitative study is to learn what emergent literacy experiences one Libyan American preschooler and one Syrian American preschooler experience in the bilingual home setting and how the families support their preschooler's emergent literacy experiences in the bilingual home setting.

The two major questions guiding this study are: (1) How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in two bilingual home settings impact the emergent literacy practices of a Libyan American child and a Syrian American child? (2) What support did family members provide for these two children as they developed emergent literacy practices in their bilingual home settings? These families are bilingual, speaking both English and Arabic in the home. The Libyan American family lives in a rural area, and the Syrian American family lives in the suburb of a large city in the Southeast.

Research Design

The qualitative research methodology was used to describe preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences and the scaffolds that parents provided for their preschooler in the bilingual home setting. I chose a multi-case study design because I am interested in "insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (Merriam, 1998, pp. 28-29). By using this design, the home literacy practices of children of age four were explored in a naturalistic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) rather than in a manipulated laboratory setting. I focused solely on learning about the young children's home literacy experiences with their family members, not trying to judge what family literacy practices are the most effective for emergent literacy development. Therefore, I observed both the literacy events the children were experiencing and the interactions between them and their family members who supported literacy experiences in their daily lives.

Naturalistic observation in a qualitative approach allowed me to provide extensive descriptions of a wide variety of literacy activities in which the children interacted with written language (van Steensel, 2006). Each case provided data tied to a particular context – an individual family. However, these two cases are bound together (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2006) by bilingualism in English and Arabic. Only two cases were investigated because the descriptive reports of family literacy practices needed to include several literacy events over several months both in detail and in depth (Creswell, 1998). In order to increase trustworthiness and see a fuller picture from different angles, I used the "triangulation" (Stake, 2006, p. 33) of data sources (a questionnaire, digital-

recordings, audio-recorded interviews, home visits, artifacts, photographs), member checking, peer debriefing, audit trails, and the recursive method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researcher's Role

I am the principal investigator in this study. My research interest in family literacy practices developed while I was teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students in public elementary schools in the United States. In particular, when I was assigned to teach kindergarten, I realized how little knowledge I knew about my students' literacy backgrounds and needs and felt a growing need to learn the most effective classroom literacy strategies for young children's early literacy development.

I grew up with two parents and one older brother in Japan. My father taught social studies in junior high schools for over 30 years. My mother taught primary grades in elementary schools for 30 years. I completed my K-16 education and worked at a university for four and a half years. I came to the United States in my late 20s to participate in an international program. I lived with an American family for three years, and they treated me as their daughter. After completing my master's program, I have taught in American public elementary schools for 18 years. I have always been curious about how my family members and other caregivers in my early childhood helped me construct who I am and what I am capable of doing and becoming. When I compare friends, colleagues, and students in my country with those in this country, I realize that the values and practices differ from culture to culture, and even within individual families that also share the same culture, religion, or society. I am fascinated with learning about different cultures other than my own because of my relatively monocultural experiences in Japan.

Since I come from a cultural background different from that of the participants in this study, I did my best to reduce the chances of biases and misinterpretation of data. I constantly ask myself whether I am not misinterpreting the data and not choosing only data I am looking for. Additionally, I asked two peer debriefers to check the accuracy of my interpretation and conducted member checking with the adult participants. Although I am passionate about this research topic both for this study and beyond it, my identity is always present in my academic writing.

Context of the Study

The micro-context of this study is the two homes of Arabic-English bilingual families with a preschool-age child of age four. Increasingly the population in the macro-context of this study has become culturally and linguistically diverse. In this general area, there are several mosques, Islamic private schools, and stores due to the growing Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking Muslim population. I have taught for four years at a public charter elementary school that was opened in 2005 in the same area. The school offers an Arabic program and attracts many Arabic-speaking bilingual families and Muslim families. As a primary-grade teacher at the school, I am interested in my majority students' language and their literacy development. I am also acquainted with Arabic-English bilingual faculty members who have preschoolers.

These Arabic-English bilingual families came from various geographical areas, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Most parents belong to the middle class, speak English fluently, and are originally from another country or the second generation of immigrant parents. However, in many cases their children were born in the United States. The degree of their acculturation (Berry 2006; Berry, 2007; Sam &

Berry, 2006) depends on their reasons of immigration, the arrival ages in the United States, and their linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participants and Sampling

The participants in this study were two preschoolers of age four and their bilingual families. The age group was chosen because this study focused on young children's emergent literacy experiences prior to formal schooling. Since I am a qualitative researcher, I wanted to tell audiences stories about people with whom they are less familiar. Thus, the participants were selected through purposeful sampling to find participants who were relevant for this study and from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 1998). The sampling criteria were as follows. First, I selected Arabic-English bilingual families who had older children with grade-level or above grade-level reading and writing skills. Second, I selected families with a child of age four. Third, in order to incorporate two cultural contexts in a multi-case study (Stake, 2006), I selected two families from different Arabic-speaking nationalities. These cases provided different perspectives about their family literacy practices because they might be influenced more by their cultural, socioeconomic, educational backgrounds, or acculturation strategies (Berry, 2006) than their language background.

In early March, I began to recruit participants via a gatekeeper, who is a teachers at the school where I teach. She volunteered to participate in my research project and suggested another family with a four-year-old child. This family, she suggested, did not respond to my request. In late March, I recruited another family based on another teacher's recommendation. The parents in both families were willing to help me with

my research project because they also had a similar experience in their graduate programs.

The Libyan American family consists of five family members: the focal child, father, mother, and two older brothers (ages eight and ten). At the beginning of this research study (March, 2011), the focal child was four years and seven months. He has been in preschool since he was three years old. His father moved to the United States for political asylum 25 years ago. The father teaches Arabic at the university level. The mother moved to this country with her family when she was seven years old. She teaches special education at the elementary school level. Both parents have a Master's degree, and the family belongs to the middle class. At home, the parents and children speak both Arabic and English. They also use Arabic for religious purposes: prayer, reciting the Qu'ran, and reading the hadith (sayings) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH – Peace be upon him). The focal child usually speaks English and understands Arabic very well.

At the beginning of this research project, the second son told me that his father did not want to be filmed because he was afraid that someone might see it and would come after him. Although Libya's civil war began in February 2011, Muammar Gaddafi's government was still in control of some parts of Libya until mid-September 2011. Due to a death in the father's family in Libya in September 2011, the mother participated in all the recordings, interviews, and a home visit with her three children.

The Syrian American family includes five family members: the focal child, father, mother, older sister (age six), and younger sister (age one). The focal child was three years and eleven months at the beginning of this research project in March 2011.

Table 1

Descriptions of the focal children and their families

	Libyan American Family	Syrian American Family
Focal Child		
Age (as of March 2011)	4 years 7 months old	3 years 11 months old
Sex	Male	Female
Preschool Experience	Since 3 years old	Since 3 years old
Languages		
Language 1	English (all the time)	English (all the time among children)
Language 2	Arabic (sometimes)	Arabic (all the time between parents and children)
Family Members		
	Father	Father
	Mother	Mother
	Older brother (age 10)	Older sister (age 6)
	Older brother (age 8)	Younger sister (age 1)
Nationality		
	Father from Libya	Father's father from Syria
	Mother from Libya	Mother from Syria
Residence in the United States		
	Father – 25 years	Father was born in the U.S.
	Mother – 27 years	Mother – 8 years
Parents' Education		
	Father – Master's degree	Father – Master's degree
	Mother – Master's degree	Mother in college

She turned four years old in May 2011. The school year 2010-2011 was her first year in her preschool. The father was born in the United States, but his father immigrated to this country in the 1960s to study at the university level. He speaks Arabic fluently, has his Master's degree in accounting, and is licensed as a certified public accountant (CPA). The mother was born in Syria and moved to the United States in November 2003 after marrying in Syria. She came to this country speaking no English. She finished her

English as Second Language (ESL) program at a university in May 2011 and started college in the following fall semester. The family belongs to the middle class. Both English and Arabic are used in all forms of communication in the family.

Data Collection

Data collection began in late March 2011 and was completed by early December 2011. Data sources included a questionnaire about the families' demographic information, digital-recordings of family literacy events, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with the parents, home visits for contextual data, the preschoolers' writing samples, such as notes and drawings, and photographs of literacy activities, materials, and the home environment. All the data sources were used to answer the two research questions. I kept a researcher's journal to record the audit trail, notes, and reflections. After recruiting two participating families through purposeful sampling in March 2011, I handed a consent letter and an assent letter to the mother of the Libyan American family and a consent letter to the mother of the Syrian American family. The assent letter was for older siblings who were old enough to understand the content of the letter. The parents of young children gave me permission for their children's participation in this research project. The families understood that their personal identity would not be released in the report.

Within the first two weeks after receiving the consent letter and assent letter, I sent a questionnaire (see Appendix A) on their demographic information, such as family members, home languages, and the origin of country. After receiving responses to the questionnaire, I had a brief meeting with the mothers individually to explain how to digitally record their family literacy events in the home. Later, I followed up on this

Table 2

Timeline of the Procedure

Dates	Activities
March 7, 2011	Received an IRB approval
March 2011	Recruited participants Sent a consent letter and a student assent letter to participating families Sent a questionnaire
April 2011	Recorded family literacy events
May 2011	Recorded family literacy events Transcribed recorded family literacy events
June 2011	Recorded family literacy events Transcribed recorded family literacy events
July 2011	Recorded family literacy events Transcribed recorded family literacy events Conducted an informal interview and a home visit Conducted data analysis
August 2011	Recorded family literacy events Transcribed recorded family literacy events Conducted data analysis
Late-August – Mid-October	Interruption due to family emergency in Japan Conducted data analysis
October 2011	Conducted data analysis Worked with peer debriefers
November 2011	Conducted data analysis Worked with peer debriefers Conducted semi-structured interviews and home visits
December 2011	Conducted a semi-structured interview and a home visit Conducted member checking Wrote a rough draft of the dissertation
January 2012	Completed a final draft of the dissertation

procedure in writing and provided a tentative schedule for the digital-recordings, interviews, and member checking.

Because children's literacy experiences and parent-child interactions spontaneously occurred in the home, it was not possible to record every single literacy event that occurred. I prepared one camcorder and one tripod for each family to keep at home. I asked the parents to record any family literacy events whenever they occurred in the home in the months of April, May, June, July, and August 2011. In this manner, neither interrupted nor influenced their daily interactions and behaviors in the natural setting. I asked the families to allow me to transfer their digital-recordings to my computer for transcribing them each time they recorded two to three family literacy events. The digital-recordings were transcribed immediately after receiving them from the families. I also requested that they save their preschoolers' writing samples for data collection.

In the middle of this research project, I had to interrupt the procedure for a total of nine weeks. For three weeks in June, I was visiting my father who had been ill for a year. At the end of August, I suddenly had to fly to Japan and stay for six weeks due to my father's illness and death. I resumed the procedure in mid-October. The Libyan American family also had a death in the family who still lives in Libya around the same time I had a family emergency. The father flew to Libya and stayed until December 2011. There were difficulties and delays in arranging interviews and home visits because of the mother's busy schedule.

After transcribing all the digital-recordings of the family literacy events, I created semi-structured open-ended interview questions based on the questionnaire and

Table 3

Recorded Family Literacy Events

Dates	Activities	Duration
Libyan American Family (approximately 60 minutes)		
April 18, 2011	Working on a phonics worksheet with the older brother	5: 06
May 19, 2011	Shared bookreading with the oldest brother	9:19
May 31, 2011	Calendar making and phonics on a computer with the mother	7:59
May 31, 2011	Drawing pictures and writing words with the mother	10:42
August 6, 2011	Shared bookreading with the mother	12:57
August 7, 2011	Shared bookreading with the mother	13:10
Syrian American Family (approximately 76 minutes)		
May 1, 2011	Shared bookreading with the father	5:35
May 1, 2011	Shared bookreading with the father	7:50
May 1, 2011	Shared bookreading with the older sister	6:17
May 18, 2011	Shared bookreading with the mother	5:50
May 18, 2011	Writing the alphabet with the mother	8:40
May 18, 2011	Playing with a toy laptop computer with the mother	3:35
May 18, 2011	Shared bookreading with the mother	6:05
May 18, 2011	Independent reading during study time	8:14
July 7, 2011	Pretending to be a teacher at a computer	2:49
July 8, 2011	Participating in the older sister's Arabic lesson	13:30
July 8, 2011	Shared bookreading with the older sister, friend, and mother	7:28

transcriptions (see Appendix B). On purpose, I did not interview the families until all the digital-recordings were done because I was afraid that the content of the interview questions might influence their family literacy practices. In other words, the parents might feel that things in the interview questions are what they are supposed to do. First, I conducted a 60-minute informal interview with the whole Syrian American family in their home in July. In November, I conducted one 60-minute and one 90 minute in-depth semi-structured interviews with the entire Syrian American family in their home. I received the focal child's writing samples from the previous several months at the second home visit. During the third home visit, I took photographs of literacy-related places and toys in the home, plays, and shared bookreading activities. For the Libyan American family, I interviewed the mother for 30 minutes at work once and for 150 minutes in the home in early December. While visiting the home, I took photographs of literacy-related places and games in the home and the focal child's activities. I borrowed the child's preschool scrapbook to scan his writing samples. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed to seek for emerging themes.

Data Analysis

The first phase of data analysis was to transcribe and code the digitally-recorded family literacy activities. While analyzing the digital-recordings of the family literacy events, I coded all the family literacy activities from two angles based on the two research questions. First, I read all the transcriptions carefully asking myself, "How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in the bilingual home setting impact the emergent literacy practice of the Libyan American preschooler and the Syrian American preschooler?" All the focal children's emergent literacy experiences were highlighted in

the text and categorized in the margin for the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family. Next, I read all the transcriptions carefully again focusing on the second research question, “What support did family members provide for these two children in developing their emergent literacy in the bilingual home setting?” All the family members’ scaffolds in the interactions between the focal children and their family members were also highlighted in the text and categorized in the margin of another set of the transcriptions for the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family.

After this process, I created a preliminary code book using the categories written in the margin of the transcriptions. I simplified the categories to make codes and added the definitions of the codes and examples of codes to be consistent in using them. Referring to the preliminary code book, I carefully read all the transcriptions again and reviewed all the categories in the margin. During this process, I finalized the codes for the code book (see Appendix C). A copy of the coded transcriptions for the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family and the code book were handed to each of two peer debriefers who are also school teachers and familiar with young children. I requested these peer debriefers both in person and in writing to check the accuracy of my interpretation of the raw data.

After I received feedback from the two peer debriefers, I reviewed their comments and corrections and integrated them into the transcriptions and the code book if necessary. Upon completion of coding, the coded data were organized in data summary matrices to look for emerging themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to answer each of the research questions, I created two separate matrices for the first question and the second question. Each matrix was divided into the Libyan American

family and the Syrian American family for a within-case analysis. In order to seek emerging themes and find any patterns, small categories were collapsed into larger categories, and insignificant categories were eliminated carefully. The recurrences of themes were indicated “high” (16-33 recurrences), “medium” (7-15 recurrences), and “low” (1-6 recurrences).

For this part of data analysis, there were issues for solely depending on the coded data since the transcriptions described many of the discrete moments of an entire literacy event. First, the transcriptions were unable to describe on-going behaviors and noises occurring behind the background. For example, it was extremely difficult to record on-going behaviors when multiple people were simultaneously engaging in literacy activities. Second, the transcriptions did not show all the non-verbal communications, facial expressions, the tone of voice, the group dynamics, the intensity of a behavior, and contextual information. Therefore, while analyzing the organized data, I carefully watched all the transcriptions and the digital-recordings several times. I took notes on what was missing in the transcriptions.

A within-case analysis was conducted to see particularity at each site. Cross-case matrices (see Appendix D) were created by combining two families next to each other for each research question. Subsequently, a cross-case analysis was conducted to compare and contrast the two cases for similarities and differences (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) by color-coding. I further analyzed whether the similarities and differences were due to the families’ common linguistic background or just personal preferences or choices. Most of the Arabic words presented in the transcriptions are

sounds of the Arabic alphabet. I asked the families to translate some phrases in Arabic into English during the interviews and member checking.

The second phase of the data analysis was to transcribe and code audio-recorded interviews. After transcribing and reviewing the data from the first interviews, I created a second set of interview questions to ask the parents to clarify and elaborate on their responses. After completing all the interviews and transcribing them, I organized the parents' comments by categories in within-case matrices and cross-case matrices (see Appendix E). This time coding was clearer since the data were already organized mostly by the interview questions. The major categories were the focal children's literacy experiences, the parents' literacy experiences, educational values, their roles in their children's literacy experiences, the socialization among the siblings, and the family's cultural practices of literacy. Again, both a within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis were conducted to see the particularities of each case and the similarities and differences between two cases.

Children's writing samples that the parents saved for several months were analyzed to see what emergent writing experiences they had. The photographs I took during the home visits were also analyzed for the children's emergent literacy experiences and the home environment. The third phase of the data analysis was to combine all the themes from the digital-recordings and audio-taped interviews in a cross-case matrix (see Appendix F). Data from the children's writing samples, home visits, and photographs were also added to the matrix to see a fuller picture of the families' home literacy practices. Toward the end of this study, I sent my written findings to the families for member checking to see whether there was any

misunderstanding and misinterpretation in my data analysis. I specifically asked the parents to clarify what I may have misunderstood, elaborate on missing data, and make any changes and corrections. Revisions were made based on the feedback from the families in the final draft of the findings.

Trustworthiness

How do all qualitative researchers in the naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) demonstrate that their research findings are trustworthy? How can a human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with prior experiences and personal values and beliefs be objective in reconstructing the reality that the participant constructed? Lincoln and Guba (1985) present the “means whereby the naturalist’s alternative trustworthiness criteria may be operationalized” (p. 301).

Credibility. There were five techniques that I used to increase credibility. Through *prolonged engagement*, I was immersed in the field long enough to “detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 302). The participants may have said things to please me or to manipulate the actual situation. Through my prolonged engagement and presence, it was difficult for them to continuously maintain desirable behavior and actions. Prolonged engagement was also important for me to establish trusting relationships with the participants so that I was able to capture their reality as much as possible. In this study, it took approximately eight months to collect the data, excluding the interruptions due to my family emergency. The Libyan American family has known me for several years and the Syrian American family for several months prior to participating in this research project. The participants trusted me to digitally record their family literacy practices in

the home and ask personal questions because of our established relationships outside this research project and the prolonged engagement.

Digital-recordings made it possible to conduct *persistent observations* of the family literacy events. I watched the digital-recordings several times to look for the data that would help me answer the two research questions. It would have been much more difficult for me to review the participants' non-verbal data and ongoing events if I had done on-site observations by taking notes. *Triangulation* was established by using different sources, different methods, and multiple investigators (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Triangulation* enabled me to see a larger picture that I would not have seen if I used only one source of data. Through *peer debriefing*, my "biases are probed, meanings explored, the basis for interpretations clarified" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). For data collection, I included a questionnaire, digital-recordings, audio-recorded interviews, home visits, the children's writing samples, and photographs of literacy activities, materials, and the home environment. The peer debriefers pointed out biases that I was not aware of. The last technique was *negative case analysis*. This helped me refine working hypotheses "in light of negative or disconfirming evidence" (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). Both expected and unexpected data were invaluable.

Dependability. I was able to establish dependability by being accountable for my own choices, decisions, and practices. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the metaphor of the tasks of a fiscal auditor for describing the audit trail in research studies. I kept detailed and accurate records of my research procedures. I used a researcher's journal to write my choices, decisions, questions, and practices in this study.

Transferability. I provided “thick description” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 125) that depicted everything I saw in the recordings and in the home visits so that a reader can understand the contexts, events in the contexts, and my findings. Thick description also enables other researchers to replicate my research in another research setting and “to determine whether the findings can be transferred” (Creswell, 1998, p. 203).

Confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified procedures such as the audit trail, member checking, and peer debriefing. In this study, I recorded details of the procedure in the researcher’s journal, worked with two peer debriefers, and conducted member checking.

This study examined only two cases of home literacy practices in Arabic-English bilingual families from the middle class. If I had chosen families from a different social class, the findings would have been different. The findings in this study are not necessarily transferable to a similar population in the United States. However, the descriptions in detail and in depth enable readers to transfer information to other settings and to decide whether the findings from this study can be transferred to their own population in a similar context (Creswell, 1998).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study examined the home literacy practices of one Libyan American family and one Syrian American family focusing on the emergent literacy experiences of two four-year-old preschoolers. Two research questions guided me through this entire research project. How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in two bilingual home settings impact the emergent literacy practices of a Libyan American child and a Syrian American child? What support did family members provide for these two children as they developed emergent literacy practices in their bilingual home settings? Quantitative data would show only a partial picture of home literacy practices. In this study, a broad and complex picture of the home literacy experiences of the two preschoolers and their family members' support emerged from the triangulation of the data sources and the descriptive findings.

This chapter is organized into three major sections; the findings from the within-case analyses for the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family and the cross-case analysis between these two families. Within each section, the findings answering the two research questions are reported. In order to describe a fuller picture of the families' literacy practices, the contextual and background information is reported in detail for each family. It includes an introduction to the family members, the home environment, and the parents' experiences and values in literacy. There is a slightly thicker description for the Libyan American family than for the Syrian American family even though I spent more time with the latter. This is due to the Libyan American mother's fast-paced talk without her children's interruptions during the interviews.

The Case of the Libyan American Family

The mother of the Libyan American family is a special education teacher at the school where I teach. During the 2008-2009 school year, I taught her second son in the first grade. He was excellent in reading fluency and comprehension. I always wondered how he became such a strong reader. When I was looking for participants, I consulted the mother. Immediately she volunteered to participate in my research project and even suggested another family with a four-years-old son.

The mother was born in the United States and went to preschool in Libya and kindergarten through second grade in Switzerland. The family moved to the United States when she was eight years old. They moved to several states. She has a Master's degree in Education. She speaks both English and Arabic, but she said that her English is stronger than Arabic. The father was born and grew up in Libya and moved to the United States for political asylum in his early 20s. He also has a Master's degree and teaches Arabic at the university level. Due to the February 17th Revolution and a family death in September 2011, he flew back to Libya to be with the family and stayed there until late December 2011. At the beginning of this research project in March 2011, the oldest son, Abdullah was ten years old, the second son, Ameen was eight years old, and the focal child, Ahmed, was four years and seven months old. These children were all born in the United States and speak both English and Arabic.

In early December 2011, I visited the family to interview the mother, take some photographs of the home environment, and collect Ahmed's writing samples. The home was located outside of the suburban area. While driving along miles of a winding two-lane road, I saw many farms with cows, horses, and goats. When I arrived at the house,

the mother was waiting for me. The three children were playing in the spacious one-acre backyard. The family lived in a cozy ranch-style house surrounded by nature. Inside the house there were many books with golden Arabic writing on them in bookshelves in the family room. A large Libyan flag was draped on a wall. On the south side of the house there was a sunroom with embroidered sofas, a rug, and a low table surrounded by windows on three sides. I interviewed the mother in the brightly sun-lit room. Ahmed was very excited to see me and showed me his Qur'an, prayer rug, Libyan flag, bedroom, picture books, drawings, and toys. While his mother was preparing a drink and a snack for me, Ahmed waved a handmade Libyan flag up and down chanting repeatedly "Go away, Gaddafi!" in Arabic. After the interview with his mother, he took me on a tour of the house. Unexpectedly, the family invited me to a homemade Libyan dinner. The mother shared more personal stories with me while we ate.

Ahmed shared a bedroom with his brothers, where there were three beds, a five-shelf bookcase, a stack of games next to the bookcase, and a bulletin board with photos of the children. Each child was assigned one shelf to store his books (Figure 1). There were many drawings, writings, art work, award certificates, and cards in both Arabic and English on the refrigerator in the kitchen. This was a place where the children celebrated their accomplishments. The children's computer was kept in the dining area where the parents were able to see the computer screen from the kitchen. A TV set was in the family room where the bookshelves with Arabic books were arranged along the walls on two sides of the room. During my visit, Ahmed's older brothers were

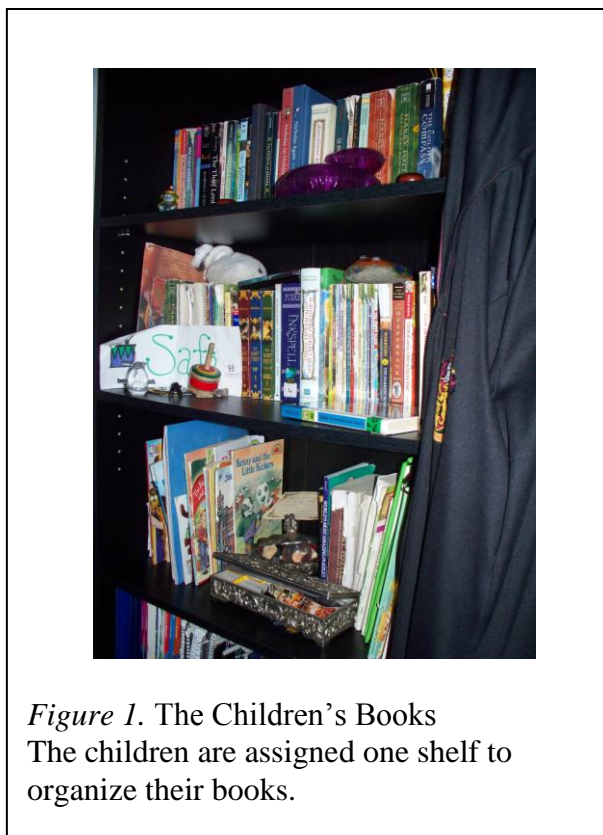


Figure 1. The Children's Books
The children are assigned one shelf to organize their books.

individually doing their homework at the dining room table or at a table in their parents' bedroom.

Preschooler's Emergent Literacy Experiences as Multimodal Process

Ahmed's emergent literacy experiences in the digital-recordings include phonics worksheets used for homework at his preschool, shared bookreading with his mother and brothers, using starfall.com and pbskids.org on the computer, drawing pictures and labeling them, and learning the alphabet in Arabic. He pretend-plays Harry Potter or some other adventure outside with his older brothers just like their mother did when she was a child. He also plays with number puzzles, colors, and draws. When I visited, Ahmed was working by himself using a variety of boards to make pictures of dinosaurs.

These boards were number coded for different colors. He was placing adhesive mosaic pieces on the written numbers.

In May 2011, Ahmed had just begun to read words and simple sentences, such as “A rat sat on a mat.” He likes to do pretend-reading, but sometimes gets frustrated because he cannot read some words. His strongest patterned behavior demonstrated in the digital-recordings was expanding the content in books to much more advanced knowledge for his age. Another very strong patterned behavior was asking questions. His intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and socialization with his older brothers contribute to his emergent literacy experiences at home. The drawings, writings, and art work on the refrigerator (Figure 2) illustrate how multimodal the preschooler’s emergent literacy experiences are.

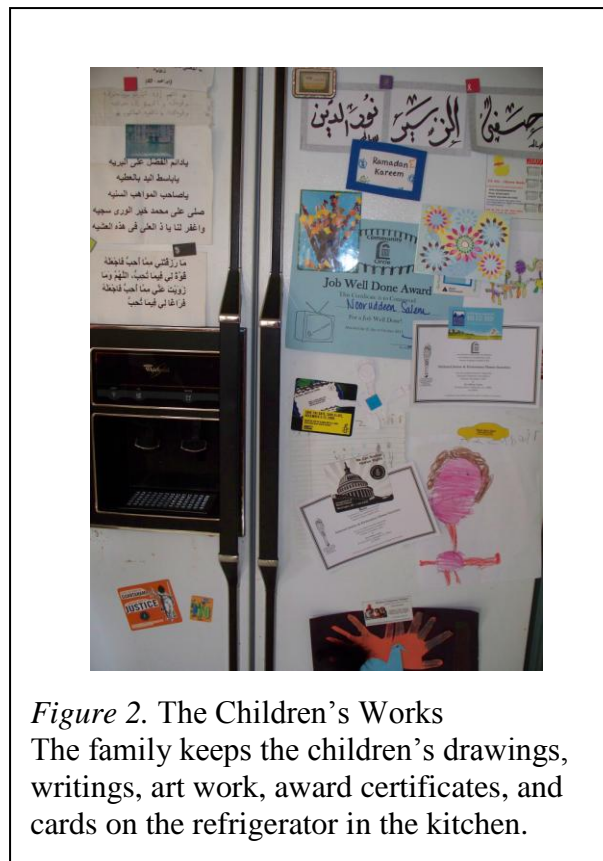


Figure 2. The Children’s Works
The family keeps the children’s drawings, writings, art work, award certificates, and cards on the refrigerator in the kitchen.

Comprehension through illustrations and listening. The family has an established daily routine for reading at homework time in the evening and at bedtime for at least 15 minutes. Ahmed experiences shared bookreading with his mother and/or older brothers at bedtime every day. He also chooses to read books by himself or pretend to read by imitating his older brothers. One day Ahmed grabbed his older brother's book, *The Olympians*, and said, "It's my book. I'm gonna read it." He was actually just looking at the book and making up a story. In one situation he got frustrated and asked his mother, "Mom, can you read this book for me?" He wanted to read fluently like his brothers, but he was still in the process of becoming a reader.

Ahmed has all kinds of books including some hand-me-downs and Arabic books. His favorite books include the Franklin series, Mercer-Meyer's *Little Critters*, books about dinosaurs and animals, and song books such as *Down by the Meadow*. He loves the book *Sperm Whale*. Since he was two years old, the family has been reading dinosaur books. He reads his animal books over and over and enjoys pretending to read even though he really cannot. All of the children often read non-fiction books but also have much fiction as well. The books are chosen both by the children and the mother. They tend to select books about animals, such as whales, camels, horses, and sperm whales. The family buys their books both at bookstores and at library book sales. The mother avoids buying books with TV characters such as *Sponge Bob*.

Ahmed has his favorite books, and the family reads the same books to him more than once. He has learned to mark a page by folding the edge so he can come back to the same place later. One day he chose to read his favorite book, *Dinosaur Train*. He started, "Mr. and Mrs. Pteranodon lived in a nest." But he could not read the next

sentence and orally expressed his frustration, “I can’t read it. Do it again. Read it to me.” The mother asked her oldest son to read the story with him. The brother was lying down on a bed next to Ahmed and reading the book without paying attention to him. Even though Ahmed was flipping the pages in another book and not paying attention to the story in *Dinosaur Train*, he was able to interject the names of characters, describe them, and repeat a line in the text.

Brother: “Mr. And Mrs. Pteranodon lived in a nest. (continues reading for a while)

Ahmed: (interjects the names of the characters) Tiny, Shiny, Dawn.

Ahmed and Brother: Tiny, Shiny, Dawn.

Ahmed: Shiny has a shiny beak. Tiny has big blue eyes. Dawn has big black eyes.

Brother: You are right.

Brother: “The egg bursts open.” (continues to read)

Ahmed: (flipping the pages in another book, not paying attention to the story)
(TV loud in the background)

Ahmed: (playing with a necklace) The Giganotosaurus.

Brother: (continues reading and begins to use an accented voice)

Ahmed: No, only blue spots. Green with blue spots.

Brother: You are right. (continues reading)

Ahmed: (playing with his necklace and making a noise) Oooooo!

Brother: (continues reading)

Ahmed: And green eyes.

Brother: (yawning, continues reading)

Ahmed: (not looking at the book, playing with his necklace, making a noise, putting it in his mouth, found another book, and looking at it by himself)

Brother: (continues reading, yawning)

In this shared bookreading event, Ahmed was not looking at the text at all from beginning to end. He was busy playing with another book and his necklace. However, he was listening to the story, was familiar with the text, and interacted with the story by interjecting part of the text and describing its characters. His repetitive use of the same story enhanced his oral vocabulary, rhythms, and language.

Preschoolers as novice writers. Ahmed writes and draws every day at home. During one holiday season, he wrote letters to be sent to his extended family. From preschool, he brought home sound-picture recognition worksheets for homework, uppercase letter practice sheets, coloring sheets, cut-paste art work, and drawings. One of them was his first writing, “my castle” with a drawing of a pink castle with windows (Figure 3). This piece was saved in his scrapbook.

The main writing activities at this age are drawing, copying, forming letters, and circling a picture for recognition. One of the writing activities Ahmed did with his mother’s assistance in the digital-recordings was to draw pictures and label them with words. He drew pictures on a lined notepad with a pen at a table. First, he drew pictures of a dinosaur, a baby lion, and boxes. He named the dinosaur Alien and described it saying, “Sharp teeth,” and “This is the biggest dinosaur of all.” He also described the baby lion, “1, 2, 3, 4. . . . Lions have four legs like cats and tigers and dogs.” The

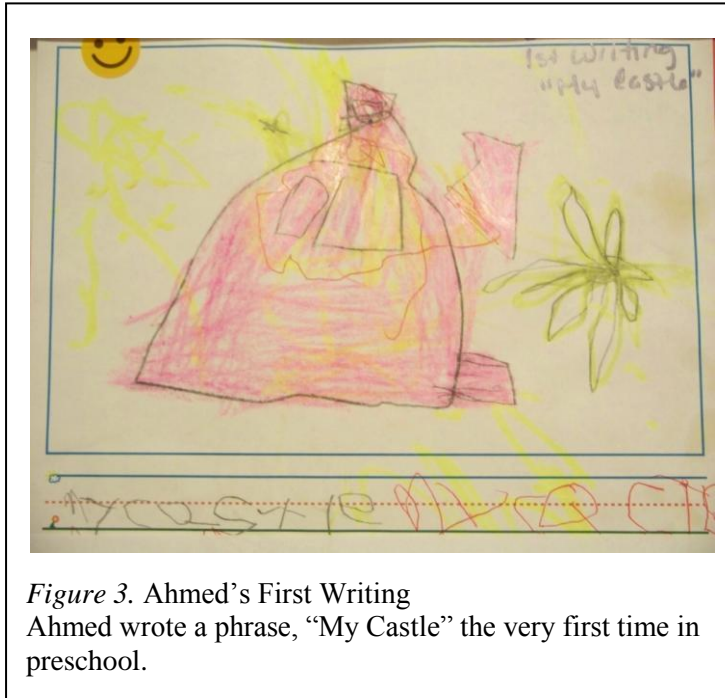


Figure 3. Ahmed's First Writing
 Ahmed wrote a phrase, "My Castle" the very first time in preschool.

mother tried to have him spell words for the pictures, but he insisted on drawing pictures of animals. He went to his bedroom to get a book about dinosaurs so that he could spell the word correctly. Finally, he decided to write a T-Rex. Whenever he was trying to spell a word, his mother's sounding out letters helped him spell the word correctly. However, he was able to spell his own name without any assistance.

Technologies mediated by parents. Ahmed uses the technologies found in the home, such as the home computers, the mother's iPhone, iPods, the DS (video games), and the Wii. Even though he does not really know how to use the DS, he pretends to know how to do it. The mother and Ahmed often email relatives and friends together. The children use the computer for homework every day. They use a Harry Potter website which allows them to do many kinds of activities, but the computer time for non-school related activities is limited to 30 minutes each day. They are not permitted

to view You Tube. The parents encourage their children to read books as opposed to using the computer.

Ahmed can turn on the home computer, open the Internet Explorer, and start his favorite websites (Figure 4). At home he uses starfall.com to practice literacy skills. This website provides young children with different levels of reading activities and math concepts. One day Ahmed worked on the “Zac the Rat” story. He sang a song along with the computer and repeated the words while watching the animations that practiced a variety of sentences with the short *a* sound. The rhythmical song easily stuck in his mind. He read all of the sentences by himself, such as “Zac is a rat,” “Zac sat on a can,” “The ants ran to the jam,” “Zac had a pan,” “Zac had a fan,” “The ants ran and ran,” and “Zac had a nap.” When he was not sure how to read the word “nap,” he sounded out each letter and then blended them all together. He also described what was going on in the animations and extended his knowledge about ants. If he could not read a certain



Figure 4. The Children’s Computer
Ahmed works on phonics, reading, and math at
starfall.com and pbskids.org.

sentence, he could click each word to hear the sound. The fast-paced computer program kept his attention focused on the animations.

When he was using a calendar maker and a phonics activity on starfall.com, Ahmed paid attention to the animations on the computer screen all the time. Sometimes he did not respond to his mother's requests and questions because he was so engaged with the computer program. This calendar maker activity provides all children with many interactive tasks. The computer program talked and responded to Ahmed by praising him. He was able to repeat after it, sang a song with it, and received a positive response from it. The next excerpt illustrates how the mother scaffolded this literacy activity.

Ahmed: (reading a message on the screen while the mother was talking to him)

Happy losing tooth.

Mother: Oh.

Ahmed: Tooth like me.

Mother: You have already lost two teeth.

Ahmed: I lost one huge tooth.

Mother: Really.

Ahmed: What is the happy face?

Mother: What about making a happy face when we are going to Washington.

We are going to Washington, maybe on the 14th. Look where is
Number 14.

Ahmed: 14, 14, 14. (chanting)

Mother: The 14th is a special day because we are going to Washington. 14.

Ahmed: Is this 14?

Mother: No.

Ahmed: It this 14?

Mother: Yep. Ding, ding, ding! Good job!

Ahmed: Where does this star go?

Mother: I don't know.

Ahmed: That's a big star.

Mother: It says, "Mark any special days this month." Is there any special day
this month?

Ahmed: Yup.

Mother: What?

Ahmed: The little star goes with the mommy big star.

Mother: Okay. Choose a picture for your calendar.

Ahmed: (choosing a picture)

Mother: Uuuu, that's nice.

Ahmed: Uiiii!

Ahmed practiced the months, the days of the week, and dates and marked special days such as birthdays and a losing-tooth day with a happy face, a little star, and a big star. This activity allowed him to personalize the content. For example, he marked the day when he would be going to Washington, DC to see his grandparents. The computer activity was meaningful because Ahmed received his mother's help and interacted with her via the content. This allowed both of them to talk about personal things.

Phonics as school literacy practice. Ahmed experienced emergent literacy in his preschool. He learned to read very simple words in English from the *Bob Book* series. He also had to complete his homework with his mother and brother's assistance. In one of the recordings, Ahmed was learning letter-sound correspondences and vowel sounds at home because of his homework from preschool. He was recognizing objects that had the long *a* sound. The worksheet showed nine pictures of a cake, grapes, an airplane, a can, a train, a pig, a snake, a boat, and a steak. He was sitting on a sofa with his brother, holding a clipboard with the worksheet on it, and circling pictures with the long *a* sound. At first, he did not know how to complete the assignment. His mother and brother sounded out the long *a* sound several times for him to hear the sound. After he recognized the sound represented by the picture of a cake, he was also able to recognize the long *a* sound in the rest of the pictures much more easily. He also realized that his name started with A. The mother explained that the A in his name was the other *a* sound like apple. In this literacy event, he practiced the targeted sound by hearing it repetitively and often repeated what his mother and brother said.

The mother said that she never taught Ahmed specific school literacy skills. However, she and her second son scaffolded the phonics task from preschool by sounding out words, giving him hints, and pointing to the pictures.

Brother: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa lu. A- tail. Good job.

Ahmed: Circle it. I'm gonna make a Japan circle. (circling a picture)

Brother: Okay. Now what's this word? (pointing to the picture)

Ahmed: Train.

Brother and Subject: TRaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaainnn. TRaaaaiiin.

Ahmed: Circle it. Train cycle. (circling the picture) OK, OK, OK, OK, OK. . . .

Brother: Okay. Now what's this? Pig. P I G. (pointing to the picture) Does it have A? What's this? AAAche.

Ahmed: Snake? (circling the picture)

Brother: Now what's this? B – Boat. (pointing to the picture)

Ahmed: Boat.

Brother: No, it doesn't.

Ahmed: No.

Brother: What about this? St ...AAAche.

Ahmed: Steak. It has it.

Mother: It has the A sound.

Ahmed: A sound.

The mother and the brother also used a lot of praise and yes/no and open-ended questions. The brother clapped his hands when Ahmed completed his homework. This interaction between Ahmed and his family members illustrates constant and intensive responsiveness, assistance, and feedback to Ahmed's comments and actions. During the first digital-recording of the phonics homework, the mother instructed the brother not to tell Ahmed the answers. She also told him to look for the long *a* sound anywhere in the word, not only at the beginning. The brother used an exaggerated voice and sound to enable Ahmed to hear the sound clearly. During the second digital-recording of the same literacy event, the brother took over his mother's role. Simultaneously Ahmed's mother helped him to learn the long *a* sound and also helped his brother to become a better helper.

Family Literacy Practices

The recurring patterns of familial support in the digital-recordings include verbal directions, praise, encouragement, content-oriented instruction, both yes/no and open-ended questions, responsiveness, and sounding out letters and words. The mother is the family member who most supports Ahmed. Her fast-paced oral directions keep him attentive during his literacy activities. All three children in the family are very close to one another. Since Ahmed has a ten-year-old brother and an eight-year-old brother, he is exposed to things that older children like. They often read together, and the older children read to Ahmed two or three times a week. Usually Ahmed prefers to read with his mother. The father informally teaches him Arabic playfully. The family mainly uses picture books, websites on the computer, paper and a pencil, and books in Arabic during their home literacy practices.

Learning through social interactions. Even though the mother has intentionally chosen a variety of family literacy events for the recordings, more than half of the family literacy events was shared bookreading. The mother said in one of the interviews that the purpose of shared bookreading was simply for bonding with the child. The parents are always busy taking the three children to school, bringing them home, helping them with homework, feeding them, and taking them to soccer games. They value the time they have together and believe in letting the children enjoy being children at home. During shared bookreading the mother points to words in books if there are words Ahmed is able to recognize. She also had him pronounce every other word in books, such as his Dr. Seuss and rhyming books. The mother allows Ahmed to choose the same books until he gets tired of them. Some books are shared among the children.

At the end of his bedtime shared bookreading, Ahmed often begs his mother to read more pages. During shared bookreading he shows a lot of affection by wrapping his arms around his mother's neck, climbing onto her lap, and leaning against her. Shared bookreading provides an opportunity for the whole family to enjoy being together emotionally and physically more than anything else.

When the mother was reading and showing him an atlas about animals, Ahmed asked many questions. The focus of shared bookreading was not on the text in the book. Rather, he talked about his prior knowledge about animals that went beyond the content in the book. The following excerpt illustrates how Ahmed shared his prior knowledge about animals with his mother.

Ahmed: Mama, a goose is a bird?

Mother: Yeh, did you know that the giraffe is the tallest animal in the world?

“It can grow to more than 5 meters, 16 feet tall.” Wow!

Ahmed: Baby brontosaurus do not stop growing until they are bigger than mom and dad.

Mother: Really? “A giraffe can live without water for longer than a camel.” I didn't know that. Did you know that?

Ahmed: Yeh.

Mother: You did? “It can run faster than a horse. A giraffe can clean its ears with its very long tongue.”

Ahmed: (stretching tongue to imitate a giraffe) Like this.

Mother: (laughing) That's like somebody picking his nose. Uh, gross. Don't do that.

Ahmed: Mama, you know, some birds like to eat ticks. That means dirty stuff.

They like to eat ticks off rhinoceros.

Mother: Remember what that's called. That relationship is called? Sy. . .

Ahmed: Symbolus.

Mother: No. Sym-bi-o-tic. Symbiotic relationship. The bird helps the rhinoceros to clean the ticks off its back. And the rhinoceros gives birds ticks to eat.

Ahmed: Mami, some birds that eat ticks drank the blood? They really do it for real.

Mother: Where did you watch that one?

Ahmed: (Points to TV) Last time it was morning. I put it on Animal Planet (TV show). The 3rd Animal Planet that we have and I saw it.

Since Ahmed is very passionate about animals, he interrupted his mother's reading many times to share what he already knew about the topic. He also connected the content with his personal life. When the mother was showing different countries in the Mediterranean, he said, "Mama, you know, Umar lives in Turkey." By making such connections, shared bookreading was not only for passive reading or getting information. But also it serves as a platform for creating conversations between the mother and Ahmed about things he wanted to share and remember from the past experiences.

Ahmed is interested in reading books. His interest and curiosity are nurtured in his socialization with other family members. The three children themselves spend quite a lot of time together. Ahmed, who is the youngest, learns many things just by socializing with his ten-year-old and eight-year-old brothers. He develops his emergent

literacy by imitating his family members and doing things together with them. For example, he imitated his brothers when they were doing their homework. When the mother was reading a magazine, he looked at it with her. He is surrounded by role models who show him an interest in and love for learning and reading.

Parental scaffolding strategies and sensitivity. Reading an atlas was exciting for all the family members. They talked about animals, countries and cities in the world, the oceans, and the places where their relatives live. The content of the atlas was expanded to more advanced science concepts. The mother constantly directed Ahmed's attention to the atlas. She often pointed to the illustrations on the page and said, "Look!" "Look what I found," "Let's read," "Let's finish this," and "No. Listen," to get him stay focused on the content. She taught new concepts beyond the book and corrected him when Ahmed misunderstood what she read. When Ahmed was talking about some birds eating ticks off rhinoceros, she taught him a more sophisticated word in the expression, "a symbiotic relationship." He asked many questions during shared bookreading. The mother always responded to his questions and sometime gave him an open-ended response, such as "Let's see," and "Maybe." Shared bookreading was more for learning about what Ahmed was interested in and discussing the topic with him than teaching any specific literacy skills. Shared bookreading focused on the illustrations and meaning but not on the text per se.

The mother teaches and helps her children with homework mostly in English. Because the father grew up in Libya, he is more involved in teaching his children Arabic than teaching them English. It is hard for the mother to divide time among her three children. The mother used to devote more time to the older children helping them

complete their homework each evening. Since they have become more independent and can follow their routines on their own, she has more time for Ahmed. She makes a conscience effort to read more with him.

The mother selected an activity which was at Ahmed's level when he worked on phonics at starfall.com. She directed him to go to "Zac the Rat." This activity focuses on the short *a* sound and provides the audience with a variety of short sentences with the sound.

Computer: (song) AAAA.

Ahmed: (singing the song with the computer) AAAA.

Mother: I like the song.

Computer Screen: Zac the Rat

Ahmed: Zac the rat. Zac the rat.

Computer Screen: Zac is a rat.

Mother: Read it. Read the sentence.

Ahmed: Zac is a rat.

Mother: Good job!

Computer Screen: Zac sat on a can.

Ahmed: (looking at the animation) He fell down.

Mother: Read the sentence.

Ahmed: Zac sat on a can.

Mother: Good reading.

Computer Screen: The ants ran to the jam.

Ahmed: The ants ran to the jam.

Mother: Nice reading, Ahmed. Next one.

Computer Screen: Zac had a pan.

Ahmed: Zac had a pan.

Mother: Good!

Ahmed: (looking at the animation) That's funny.

Computer Screen: Zac had a fan.

Ahmed: Zac had a fan.

Mother: Good reading.

Computer Screen: The ants ran and ran.

Ahmed: The ants ran and ran. (looking at the animation) All the ants are
running to the ant net.

Mother: To the what?

The mother redirected Ahmed's attention to the sentence on the screen rather than to the animation. When he paid attention to the animation and forgot to read the sentence, she reminded him to read it. Every time he was able to read the sentence correctly, she praised him saying, "Good job!" or "Good reading." This mother's careful scaffolding and positive comments built Ahmed's confidence in reading. Even when he encountered an unknown word, he sounded out each letter and was able to read a whole sentence by himself.

Ahmed apparently liked drawing more than writing letters. When he was drawing animals, the mother attempted to let him label the pictures with words several times. He decided to name the dinosaur Alien and asked her if she knew how to write Alien. Their conversation continues in the next excerpt.

Mother: You try. Aaaaalian.

Ahmed: I'm gonna do something.

Mother: Finish your sentences first. Did you change your mind?

Ahmed: Yes.

Mother: Write a new sentence. What's your new sentence?

Ahmed: A box.

Mother: Huum.

Ahmed: With a hugest box star on it.

Mother: A box on a box. That's a sentence. You can write it! A box on a box.

Ahmed: Mama, can you draw a lion?

Mother: Lion. You can. You draw good lions. A lion in a box.

Ahmed: I'm gonna draw a baby lion in a small box.

Mother: OK. . . . Uuuuu, nice! That looks nice.

Ahmed: 1, 2, 3, 4.... Lions have four legs like cats and tigers and dogs.

Mother: How about a tail? Now write your sentence. One sentence. I'll help you spell.

The mother encouraged Ahmed to spell words by sounding out a word, directly telling him to write, and offering him help. However, he continued drawing pictures. She never interfered with his decision and encouraged him to do what he wanted to do. She even turned the drawing activity into a guessing game.

Ahmed: Wait, I need to draw another animal.

Mother: I know.

Ahmed: What?

Mother: Guess what I'm thinking 'cause it's a tall box. What do you think it is?

In a tall box.

Ahmed: A dinosaur.

Mother: Maybe. I wasn't thinking of a dinosaur. Dinosaur is a good one. I was thinking of a lion like from that movie.

Ahmed: You mean Penguin from Madagascar?

Mother: The other one.

Subject: Madagascar?

Mother: Yah, there is a lion and tall one is. . .

Ahmed: Hippo? You mean giraffe?

Mother: Yes.

Ahmed: No, I am gonna draw a dinosaur.

Mother: Okay. A lion and a giraffe, a dinosaur. I almost said giraffe.

Ahmed: (drawing a dinosaur)

Mother: That is a nice dinosaur.

Ahmed: Sharp teeth.

Mother: Do you know how to spell dinosaur?

Ahmed: No. Do you?

The mother was thinking about drawing a giraffe in the tall box, and Ahmed enjoyed guessing what she was thinking. However, in the end he wanted to draw his own favorite animal, a dinosaur with sharp teeth. He was not interested in spelling words on his own and asked her if she knew how to spell them. She even suggested getting a dinosaur book to find out how to spell the word. She did not tell Ahmed how to spell

words and always had him try to spell words on his own. In this literacy event, the mother and Ahmed co-constructed sentences that described his pictures, and she negotiated with him about what he was going to do next.

When Ahmed decided to spell T-Rex, the mother sounded out the word and corrected him by saying he should use a line slash. Also, she scaffolded his spelling by asking several open-ended questions, “What makes the *e* sound?” “What makes the vowel sound? Every word has to have a vowel sound. What makes the *e* sound?” When Ahmed wanted to spell lion, she sounded out the letters and asked an open-ended question, “L. . . ah ah ah. What makes the ah, ah, ah sound? N, N, N.” She corrected his letter formation and asked him to evaluate what he wrote, “Oh, that’s not N. Fix it. Good try. It looks like an M but you fixed it. Right? Okay. Are you done? What do you think?” When he spelled box and his name, he sounded out the letters and spelled the words correctly all by himself. Independently he was applying the strategies his mother had shown to him.

Transmission of literacy. The mother’s love for reading developed within her family when she was growing up. Her family had a strong desire for learning to read because they had been deprived of education during the Italian colonization of Libya from around 1911 through 1947. Libyan boys and girls were pulled out of school after the Italians came to Libya. Only Italian children had educational opportunities. She emphasized that her father was very influential in her education. He always took his children to libraries and encouraged them saying, “Read, read, read. . . write down words you don’t know.” Although her maternal grandfather was an orphan, he worked hard and educated himself. He spoke fluent Italian and Arabic. On her paternal side,

her great-grandfather was the only person in his village who was able to read before the Italians came to Libya. People came to him to learn to read the Qur'an. He also taught his son (the mother's grandfather) how to read. Because he had no formal education after the sixth grade due to the Italian occupation, he wanted his children to experience and profit from higher education.

Both of Ahmed's parents love reading. The father reads whenever he finds time. He reads a couple of books at a time and flips through magazines. In particular, he reads many books on Islamic law, etymology, and the Arabic language since he teaches Arabic at the university level. He also reads newspapers in both Arabic and English. The mother reads a variety of genres such as fiction, literature, politics, history, culture, and education materials about child development. Both parents read the Qur'an.

The mother naturally shares her love for books with her children. She takes her children to a local library if there is a story time or some other events. On the weekend at least twice a month, the family regularly goes to a bookstore to have hot chocolate and look at a pile of books chosen by each family member. The mother also often experienced going to a bookstore with her father when she was growing up. Even though they did not always buy books, they spent time sitting surrounded by books and looking at them. The mother also promotes their love for books by talking about everyone's favorite books and animals. She often asks Ahmed what his favorite books are and shares with him what her favorite books are. One day Ahmed asked his mother, "All the books are created by humans?" She said, "Yes." He continued, "As long as created by me?" She told him that he could create his own book if he wanted.

The children do not actually see their parents writing by hand as much as they used to do because a lot of communication these days is via email or typing on a computer. However, the parents play an important role in transmitting their values for books and literacy in their daily life. They value literacy by doing small daily things such as making scrapbooks, displaying the children's accomplishments on the refrigerator, and having many books with golden Arabic writing (Figure 5) in the family room. The mother told me that those books were the only possessions they would like to take with them when they return to Libya. She continued that she did not care about taking any furniture to Libya and that they would get locally-made furniture there. The family has a practice of not throwing books and not putting them on the floor.

Since she also experienced formal schooling in Libya, Switzerland, and the United States, the mother sees the differences in the instructional approaches among the three countries. The school which the mother attended for two years in Switzerland focused on memorization and direct instruction. In Libya, schools require children to memorize a vast amount of material.

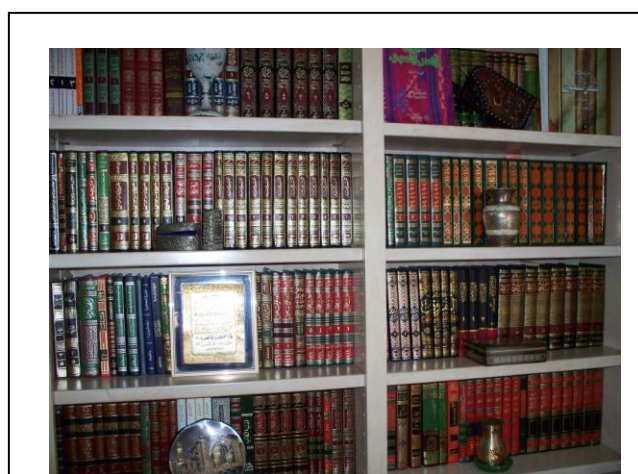


Figure 5. Arabic Books
The father's Arabic books on Islamic laws, history, and politics in the family room

The mother said that American instructional approaches make learning fun and center-based. She did not want to put an inordinate amount of stress on her children. When Ahmed was in preschool, she was not worried about him learning to read. She wanted him to have pre-learning skills, develop a love for reading, and establish the habit of reading. She did not teach Ahmed specific literacy skills at home, but she expected him to learn whatever was taught at preschool. Instead of putting pressure on their children and teaching them school literacy skills, the family gives them choices for their own learning and recognizes the children's progress as often as possible. For example, on one occasion everyone danced and said, "Good job, Ameen," when the second child read a text correctly.

Maintenance of first language. The parents speak Arabic to their own children and English to their friends. There is a lot of code switching and combining Arabic and English words. For example, they add the present and past progress *-ing* to Arabic verbs. In public, they correct their children in Arabic. The father speaks to the children in Arabic much more consistently than the mother, but even he is using more English these days. He informally teaches his children Arabic by telling stories and sharing things in Arabic with them, such as silly rhymes and word games. The parents also teach their children reading, writing, and Qur'an memorization during the summer. The father believes that children need to be trained to pronounce Arabic sounds when they are young in order to acquire good pronunciation. He teaches the children how to make certain sounds in Arabic. The mother teaches them both Libyan and classical Arabic because there are variations in Arabic language. At school the children learn formal

Arabic. Sometimes she also teaches them Italian words inherited from the Italian colonization of Libya.

The family's three children are learning Arabic each day at school. Ahmed went to an Islamic preschool for two years where Arabic was taught for 40 minutes daily. Ahmed's writing samples include Arabic alphabet worksheets (Figure 6), coloring sheets, and art work from preschool. Ahmed can speak Arabic, but he chooses not to speak it to his parents at home. His listening comprehension is much more developed than his speaking. English is his stronger language. His mother wants him to be fluent in reading and speaking Arabic. However, there is a little more delay for Ahmed than the other children because of the influence in the English-speaking environment. When the oldest son was very young, Arabic was spoken all the time in the home. When the

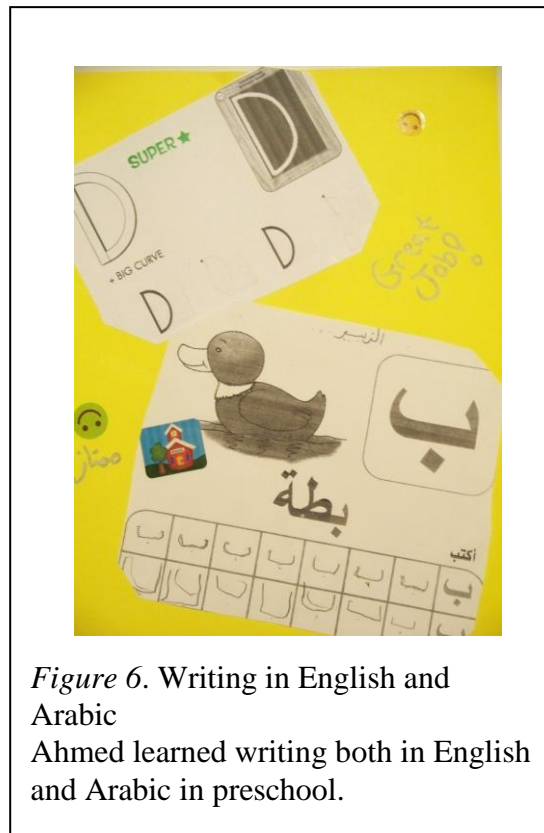


Figure 6. Writing in English and Arabic
Ahmed learned writing both in English and Arabic in preschool.

second son entered preschool, the two sons began to use more English. Because the older brothers speak English with each other, it has been hard for Ahmed to continue to speak Arabic. The more the children are immersed in the English speaking environment of school and the larger society, the harder it is for the parents to maintain a sustained use of their native language, Arabic. They continue to teach their children Arabic at home.

When Ahmed was very young, he learned Arabic sounds by repeating his mother. This year he has been slowly learning three-letter sequences using a textbook sent from Libya. The three-letter sequences change if it is a past or present tense. They become words and then complicated sounds. Ahmed uses the first book to pronounce Arabic sounds pointing to each letter and illustration (Figure 7). After the first book, the second book becomes progressively harder. It is relatively easy to learn letters and sounds in Arabic because there are no irregulars in the writing system. The following excerpt illustrates how Ahmed practices Arabic letters and sounds with his mother regularly.

Mother: Look. A-la-mah. . . a-la-mah. . .

Ahmed: Alamah, alamah.

Mother: No, you have to go like this. A-la-mah. . . like that.

Ahmed: Alamah.

Mother: No. You have to hold it until you count to six.

Ahmed and Mother: A-la-mah.

Mother: Here you have to go like this. Look.

Ahmed: A-la-mah



Figure 7. Arabic Practice
Ahmed uses a textbook sent from Libya to learn Arabic letters and sounds.

Mother: Oh, no. I am wrong. This is alef. La-mima. . . Like that. So you have to go like. . . alef-la-mim. . . like bakara.

Ahmed: Alef?

Mother: Yah, so you have to go alef-la-mim.

Ahmed: Alef-la-min. (counting with fingers)

Mother: Good try. Now you do this one. Come here. You do this row. Ready?

Mother and Ahmed: Alef-la-mim.

Mother: That's it. Ready? Last one. So it is kind of fun.

Mother and Ahmed: Alef-la-mim-ra.

Mother: Try it by yourself.

Ahmed: Alef-la-mim-ra.

Mother: Hey, five! That was good.

He learns from his parents not only how to read in Arabic but also the right intonation, pronunciation, and rhythms for sounding out certain letters. When he was trying to write his name in Arabic, he wrote from left to right just as in English. This is backwards from an Arabic point of view since it is written from right to left. His mother had to show him how to write his name correctly in Arabic. Arabic is necessary for reading the Qur'an and conducting their religious rituals. Ahmed has learned the Arabic language and literacy mostly from parental instruction and his own keen observation of the people in his family.

Religious literacy practices. The family uses Arabic for religious practices, such as prayer, reading the Qur'an, and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH – Peace be upon him). The children learn the Qur'an only by listening to it at home. In Libya children are expected to memorize texts to learn the Qur'an. The parents believe that their children would learn the Qur'an if they were immersed in Arabic. The family does different prayers for different times of the day together so that the children can learn them easily without being pushed to memorize written texts. The oldest son learned to read the Qur'an fluently just by picking it up and reading it. Ahmed once got frustrated when his mother introduced him written words in the Qur'an.

When he was in preschool, Ahmed had a teacher who taught him the Qur'an using signs as if they were a made-up sign language. He memorized a good amount of one chapter in the Qur'an. The mother said that his teacher praised him for having memorized the Qur'an. Sometimes he was even able to correct a mistake made by her. According to her, it is difficult to memorize and recite the Qur'an because it is crucial to use the right rhythm, the right intonation, the right grammar, and certain keys.

Summary

After reviewing all the recordings, interviews, home visit, writing samples, and photographed activities, I have come to realize that the family is using a vast number of literacy strategies with Ahmed and the other two children in the home. These strategies for the preschooler's emergent literacy experiences are not limited to typical teaching strategies, but also include the parents' values and attitudes toward literacy, the positive home environment, and the trusting relationships among family members.

Above all, the mother always shows an interest in what Ahmed does. She often asks him, "What are you doing, Ahmed?" "What are you reading?" "What are you going to write?" "What is that?" "What is your favorite book?" and "Any other favorite books?" In this way she invites Ahmed to talk about what he is doing and what he likes. Second, she also stays very positive and praises him whenever he does things correctly. When she corrects his mistakes, she gives specific feedback so that he can correct them. Third, she always has Ahmed spell words and solve problems on his own. She gives him numerous opportunities to try things out all by himself. She is solely a guide and a facilitator for him. Fourth, she is sensitive enough to know the exact level of Ahmed's literacy skills and tries not to put stress on him. She scaffolds literacy activities so that Ahmed can feel successful. Fifth, the family treasures their cultural heritage and the Arabic language. This is obvious in the entire house, the conversations, and the shared bookreading. They often talk about Libya and their relatives and friends. They are very proud of being who they are and where they are from. Sixth, the family values books and literacy very much because of their family's limited educational opportunities in Libya. They appreciate opportunities for learning and having resources. Seventh, the

family celebrates even small positive things. The children feel safe, valued, and successful in their positive home environment. Lastly, more than anything else, the family members are all very close to each other. They make a concerted effort to create family time. The children are not pushed to be high achievers, but are encouraged to find out and be who they really are. They spend a lot of time playing together.

Ahmed started his formal schooling in August 2011, which was after having recorded his literacy events in the home in April, May, and August. His mother reported that he began to pick up a book and try to sound out words around the beginning of November 2011. The family celebrated his reading a book independently with a lot of excitement.

The Case of the Syrian American Family

I became acquainted with the Syrian American family after they moved from another state to the school where I teach in January 2011. I met the parents and their three daughters for the first time in December 2010 when they were given a school tour by the executive director of the school. The father is the second generation of Syrian immigrants. He grew up in the United States. His father came to the United States in the 1960s to study at the university level. He speaks Arabic fluently. He has a Master's degree in Accounting and works for a company as a certified public accountant (CPA). The mother was born and grew up in Syria. After they married in Syria, she moved to the United States in November 2003. When she arrived in the United States, she did not speak English. She completed her English as a Second Language (ESL) program in May 2011 in order to attend a college. She began to take college courses in Fall 2011.

At the beginning of this research project in March 2011, the oldest daughter, Mia was six years old, the youngest daughter, Layla was one year old, and the focal child, Sarah was three years and eleven months old. Mia was in the first grade in the 2010-2011 school year. She takes Arabic every day at school and twice a week in an afterschool program. Sarah started going to a preschool where Arabic was taught when she was three years old. These three daughters were born in the United States and speak both English and Arabic.

In July 2011, I visited the family to get to know each person better. I drove on a road with many new strip malls on each side. I arrived in a newly developed residential area in which middle-class and upper middle-class families live. This suburban area is located about a 45-minute drive from the capital of a Southeastern state. When I rang the doorbell of this two-story house, the whole family welcomed me. We all sat down in the living room and talked informally about our families, work, the three children, and my research project. Next to the living room there was a family room with comfortable seating and a large TV screen. On the wall there was a silk tapestry with the 99 names of Allah (God of Islam) written in beautiful Arabic calligraphy. There were a breakfast area and a kitchen with a new refrigerator on the first floor. The second floor served as the family's private quarters.

Mia was very quiet and helped her parents take care of the younger sisters. Layla had just started to walk, and the mother had to watch her closely. Sarah liked to get attention from her father by climbing up on his lap and talking to him. She drew me some pictures of the sun, butterflies, the house, the windows with blinds in the living room, and her family members, and even wrote her name on one of the drawings. The

family offered to help me with my research project at any time. We had seen each other at school before, but this one-hour informal home visit gave us an opportunity to feel more comfortable on a personal level. In November 2011, I visited their home twice for interviews. Both times the whole family was present in the living room and treated me with a cup of Turkish coffee. During the first interview, they gave me some of Sarah's writing samples that they had saved for several months for my research project. During the second interview, the children took me upstairs to show me their rooms, toys, and books for taking photographs. The children were more excited than usual because of my visit.

Sarah shared her bedroom with Layla. The bedroom was filled with toys and games (Figure 8). There were a bookcase with Sarah's books on one of the shelves (Figure 9), a bunk bed with a slide, a princess chair, a kitchen set, a shopping cart, a large inflated pool with a lot of plastic balls in it, and large-size educational toys for



Figure 8. Sarah's Bedroom
Sarah shares a bedroom with her younger sister. There are many toys and games in the bedroom.



Figure 9. Sarah's Books
Sarah's bookcase in her bedroom

learning numbers and alphabet letters. The family did most of their literacy-related activities and homework in Mia's bedroom. It had a bed, a work desk, a computer, and a chalkboard on an easel. The family checks out books from a local library and reads them once. They also buy books and read them several times.

Preschooler's Emergent Literacy Experiences as Multimodal Process

Sarah's father, mother, and oldest sister provided her with shared bookreading experiences every day until August 2011. During the 2011-2012 school year, the number of shared bookreading events had been reduced to two or three times a week because the mother resumed going to school. Sarah and Mia take turns being read to because they have different preferences in books. The family visits a public library once a month to check out 20-30 books. The books are mostly for the oldest daughter to read. Sarah has not learned the letter-sound correspondences and cannot yet read texts. However, she flips through pages and pretends to read a book next to her sister or independently. She even pretends to read a book to her one-year-old sister. At the time of the digital-recordings, she was learning the alphabet and sang the ABC song. She practiced forming the letters and matching uppercase and lowercase letters. Because her oldest sister Mia was in the first grade, she brought home school literacy practices by talking like a teacher, reading a book to her sister, and having an Arabic lesson with her school friend at home. In one of the digital-recordings, Sarah insisted on being a teacher in front of the computer and teaching everyone in the family. She is curious and highly motivated to learn. When the parents are writing or reading, she just sits with them and asks many questions. She likes to check the mail and opens envelopes.

Comprehension through illustrations and listening. Sarah has established a habit of flipping through pages to look at pictures for about 15 minutes every day. Her parents and older sister read her children's books, such as *Dr. Seuss, A Cat in a Hat, Dora, Curious George, and Fancy Nancy*. Her favorite is *Dora*. In her pretend reading she mainly turns pages, looks at the pictures, and guesses what the story is about. When reading a book to her baby sister, she creates a story based on the pictures in the book. The patterns of Sarah's behavior that recur most during shared bookreading are comprehension through pictures and asking questions about stories. She understands stories by listening and looking at the pictures simultaneously. When Sarah's father read her the story, *Curious George Circus Act*, sitting on the floor in her older sister's bedroom, she was very interested in the book that had a flip window on each page. She attended well to the illustrations and interacted with the book by opening the flip windows to see what was happening in the story.

When the father was reading another story, *Caillou, the Phone Call*, Sarah was looking at the illustrations closely to try to comprehend the story. The next excerpt shows how she understood the story by looking at the illustrations and remembered it by the illustrations.

Father: Working. Good job! So but she was really busy. Did it make Caillou sad or happy?

Sarah: Happy.

Father: That made him sad. Do you remember he wanted to talk to his mom, but she was busy.

Sarah: Can I see? (grabs the book from his hand)

Father: Yah. You can see.

Sarah: (flipping the pages)

Father: Do you remember he walked away sad? He was sad. (pointing the picture on the page) Sometimes people are really busy. We always have to remember our kids and family.

Sarah: And I just remember when he was sad.

Father: There is another one when he was sad?

Sarah: Yah. (flipping pages)

Father: Show me.

Sarah: (shows the page)

Father: That one?

Sarah: (nods)

Father: I think you are right.

When her father skipped a page, she was able to point out which page he had skipped. She also pointed out the exact page where the main character was sad.

Sarah responded orally to her mother and demonstrated the expansion of her knowledge about being polite when the mother read the story, *Let's Be Polite*, sitting next to her on a bed. Layla was making a lot of noise in the background. The following excerpt illustrates how well Sarah comprehended the story by rephrasing the content in her own words and providing her own example.

Mother: (reads a book) "When I sit down for breakfast, I try to be polite. Words like please."

Sarah: Can you just say please?

Mother: “And ‘May I?’ Meeting a friend in the sandbox they ask, ‘May I play, too?’” So you have to ask “Can I play, too?” “Let’s just talk with them in a nice way.” Okay?

Sarah: We need to ask so we can play with them.

Mother: Yes.

Sarah: If we say no, they just go away.

Mother: Good job! Good job! I would like that. “At the park we love to swing. We take turns. You see. You see. That tiger on the swing and that bear is pushing that tiger. You see that.”

Sarah: His dad is saying it’s time to go.

Mother: Good job! Or actually, he might say “Have fun son. Take your time.” “We take turns. You see? I give my friend a gentle push. Gentle push.” (holding Sarah’s chin and turns her face to the mother) Do you know what that means? Gentle push.

Sarah: Like slowly. (says with a slow hand movement)

Mother: Good job! Good job! (hugs Sarah) “And then he pushes me.”

Sarah: Slowly.

Mother: “Slowly. A boy needs helps and kindly asks, ‘Can you please get that ball?’ ‘Glad to help.’”

Sarah: They are helping him.

Mother: Yeh. He is gently asking for help, nicely.

Sarah: Nicely, not like . . . I need that ball. Not like that, “I need it. I need it.”

Sarah simultaneously listened to her mother and looked at the illustrations to comprehend the story. She also asked a question related to the content and used her own body movement to express “slow” motion. The mother’s positive comments and praise encouraged Sarah to talk more about the story and her interpretation. Shared bookreading for her is not passive listening but active co-constructing meaning with her mother.

Sarah has established a habit of independent reading when her mother is busy helping her sisters. For example, when the three girls were in the same room, Layla was looking at books and flipping through the pages on a bed, and Mia was working on her homework at a computer desk. Sarah sat on a bean bag in the corner of the room and was looking at the picture in a book by herself. The mother had to watch Layla so that she would not fall off the bed and help Mia with her school work. The mother was always dividing her attention among her three daughters to monitor their progress. When Sarah got her mother’s attention, she asked her a question about the content of the story and described what was happening in the story. She insisted on continuing to read the book and even asked her mother whether she could read another book when her mother told her to take a break. In this literacy event, the mother was helping her three children like a teacher. Sarah has learned to wait for her turn to talk to her mother and to do her work independently.

Sarah expressed a strong intrinsic motivation for reading books. When Mia was about to read a book, Sarah said, “I am going to read, too.” She imitated her older sister and started reading a book. “*Caillou, the Phone Calls. Caillou, the Phone Calls.* Daddy, daddy, what does it say?” She remembered the title of the book from the

previous shared bookreading experience with her father, but could not read the text by herself and asked her father to read it for her. On this occasion, she became competitive and tried to get her father's attention.

Preschoolers as novice writers. Sarah draws every day. When I visited the family, she drew me three pictures. One of them included the sun, the house with a triangular-shaped roof, the window with blinds in the living room, a butterfly, the five family members, and me (Figure 10). She used *Handwriting without Tears* at her preschool last year and also used a pre-K resource book at home. She brought a lot of worksheets from her preschool and Sunday school. Her writing samples include practice sheets for writing her name, the alphabet letter, curving lines, the short *i* sound at the beginning and middle of words, the word families of *-an* and *-og*, coloring, listening comprehension, an AB pattern, sorting different sizes, Arabic alphabet letters with the recognition of the beginning sound, and Islamic concepts. The family does not keep all of her papers since there are so many. But they keep only what they call special papers in her treasure box. One of the writing samples (Figure 11) had many words and pictures including her own name. She drew the sun, a bird, a flower, people, and the ground. But she could not remember what she wrote.

Both Sarah and Mia like to draw or write on a chalkboard. When Sarah starts to write on the chalkboard, Layla comes up to scribble on it next to her (Figure 12). Sarah can form the letters of the alphabet correctly responding to her father's requests. She also practices writing the alphabet for homework. One day, she sat at a computer desk and started to practice writing the first five letters of the alphabet on a notepad. When she could not form an E by herself, her mother held Sarah's hand and a pencil and



Figure 10. Sarah's Drawing at Home
Sarah drew me some pictures when I visited the family.

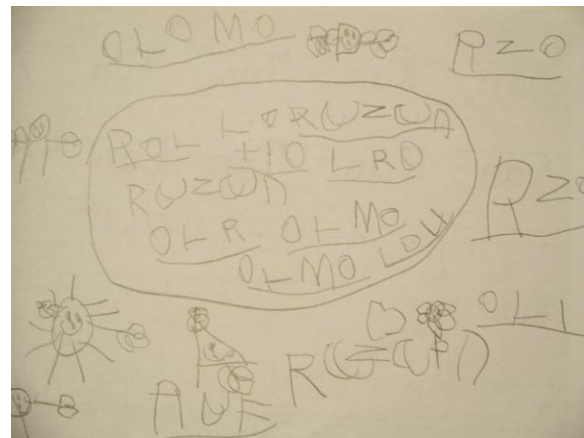


Figure 11. Sarah's Writing in Preschool
Sarah brought this writing from her preschool.



Figure 12. Writing Letters on the Chalkboard
Sarah was writing the alphabet letters on the blackboard. Layla joined her.

showed her how to shape an E saying, “Okay. Almost, but you see, it’s too big, the other line. Keep it small. Okay. Like that. Do a line. And one, two, three.” In this literacy event, it took almost eight minutes for Sarah to write the first five letters of the alphabet. She tried to form the E correctly and asked her mother for help. She erased

what she had written and tried it again. The mother gave her specific feedback, “This one is much better than that,” although she was busy taking care of Layla in the same room. Suddenly Sarah said, “Mama, I’m doing my homework.” “I know my homework. Mama, I am not drawing on the desk!” shouted Sarah and showed the desk to her mother. She asked her mother again to help her with the E. The mother again showed her how to form the E. After receiving individual attention, Sarah could write the E by herself and showed her mother what she had written. She sang the alphabet song to what she had written. This literacy event occurred on May 18, 2011, which was very close to her fourth birthday. At this stage, Sarah was just beginning to learn the letters of the alphabet and their names.

Technologies mediated by parents. The family has a computer, cell phones, children’s games, electronic games called *Operation*, and learning games for the children. They often use these technologies in the home. At home Sarah watches cartoons on TV for one hour a day maximally and more on weekends. She uses the family’s computer to look at pbskids.org, a cell phone to play games, talking books, and a toy laptop computer. In one of the digital-recordings, the mother helped Sarah with the alphabet games on her toy laptop computer. Even she had to figure out how to use it. The following interaction illustrates how the mother and her child were together trying to figure out how to use the laptop to play games.

Mother: That’s your book. It’s Barney time!

Sarah: Barney time! I can do it by myself.

Mother: I know you can.

Mother: (setting up a game on her talking book)

Computer Game: Mat.

Sarah: Mat? I don't know how.

Mother: I don't know how. (figuring out how to do the game)

Sarah: I don't have to do this.

Mother: No. Missing letter?

Computer Game: Missing letter.

Sarah: No, I know that. No, do this first. Do that. First.

Mother: Lower letters? Okay.

Sarah: Do this first. Do match first. Okay? (telling the mother) Match, match.

Computer Game: Match the capital letters and the small letters.

Mother: The capital letters and the small letters. Okay. Match them together.

Sarah: M, M, M. . .

Mother: Good job! (opens her arms and claps her hands) She did it! Clap your hands, Layla. No, no, no. (telling the youngest daughter not to touch the laptop computer) Y, Y. . . No, no, no. So. . .

Computer Game: Y, Y, Y.

Mother: No, no, no. That's not right. No, no, no. You are doing so good.

Sarah: Mama, no, you want me to do all of them.

Mother: The missing letter? You want to the missing letters?

Sarah: No, you want me, okay? We will do all of them.

Mother: Okay.

Sarah: Okay?

Mother: Okay. (walks away)

Sarah: I did it.

Computer Game: You did so well.

Sarah matched uppercase and lowercase letters and found missing letters on the laptop. She also knows exactly where she needs to go to find games and videos on the cell phone. The father said that the children watch their parents use technologies and have actually become more skilled at getting around on a computer than the parents.

Oral language as part of emergent literacy. Children at this age engage in sociodramatic play using toys and simple household materials. Sarah and Layla's bedroom is filled with many large- and small-size toys and functions as a play area. When I visited the family for the third time, the children took me upstairs and played with their toys. Sarah prepared a cake and a drink in the toy kitchen and served me the special treat. Layla also joined Sarah to play in the kitchen. Sarah showed me her books, put on her princess crown, and sat in her princess chair. She got her toy cell phone and a shopping cart and said, "I am going to Target, Walmart, and Costco." She picked up her baby doll and put it in the baby seat of the shopping cart (Figure 13). After leaving her bedroom to pretend to be going to the first store, she chose some groceries by looking at the labels. While shopping, she used her toy cell phone to make a phone call. She acted like a busy housewife who was taking care of her baby and driving around to different grocery stores. When I asked the little housewife if she had finished shopping, she said, "No. I still have to go to Walmart and Costco." As she was busy with her shopping, her sisters were in the hallway and on the stairs watching her. The three children were pretending that Mia and Layla were in jail because they were staying behind the railings of the stairway. After Sarah came back to her bedroom, she



Figure 13. Sarah's Sociodramatic Play
Sarah pretends to go grocery shopping with her baby doll, looking at product labels, and talking on a cell phone.



Figure 14. Sarah's Sociodramatic Play
Sarah takes care of her baby doll.

took care of her baby (Figure 14). This type of sociodramatic play gives the children an opportunity to develop oral language based on their daily life and to become a novice member of the family and community.

One day Sarah was playing school with her father and older sister. She sat at the computer desk and wanted to show them an apple on the computer. She said, "I want to play class. I want to do computer. So at lunch you got to see it." Part of Sarah's play school is illustrated in the following excerpt from the digital-recording.

Sarah: Hi. Sit down.

Father: So, what's going on Teacher Sarah? In your class will you teach them
(her students) English or Arabic?

Sarah: Both.

Father: Both. Now, what if they don't speak Arabic?

Sarah: They won't get to eat.

Mia: (laughs)

Father: They don't get to eat? What if they are not hungry?

Sarah: What?

Father: What if they are not hungry?

Sarah: They can't eat. But if they are hungry they can.

Father: Oh, okay. What did you do today?

Sarah: I'm gonna teach you guys. . . something you guys can play with.

Okay? (coming back to the computer)

Father: What did you do today?

Sarah: I'm gonna teach. . . Okay?

Father: Okay. Tell me what you did today.

Sarah: No. Because I'm the teacher....

Sarah was trying to teach her students something they could play with on the computer.

However, the computer was not working at that time. She was facing the blank

computer screen and using her imagination. Based on her preschool experiences, she

has learned to use teacher talk and punish students who do not follow the teacher's

directions. Because she was the teacher, she refused to answer her father's question.

After this interaction, she insisted on doing play school using the computer and suddenly

became hysterical.

Family Literacy Practices

Learning through social interactions. The three children socialize very much by playing and fighting together. They like to watch videos together. Sometimes they argue about which video they are going to watch because each of them has a different preference. They take turns watching their favorite videos. They also like to sit down and read books with each other. Mia likes to read to Sarah, and Sarah likes to read to Layla. Mia uses her finger to point to the text while she reads to Sarah (Figure 15). On one occasion, it was hard for Mia to keep Sarah's attention during shared bookreading. When she was reading the story, *Party Time with Abby*, she was holding the book toward Sarah like a teacher so that she could see the illustrations. However, Sarah was crawling away, getting two books, and flipping the pages. She continued disturbing her sister. Mia reads books fluently to Sarah but has not yet developed any strategies



Figure 15. Shared Bookreading with the Older Sister Mia reads a story to Sarah pointing to the text in the book.

to hold her attention. Sarah opens up a book and makes up a story by looking at pictures. Layla sits down with her sister and likes to be read to. The children often read together and learn literacy behavior from each other. The older siblings are role models for the younger siblings.

Parental scaffolding strategies and sensitivity. There were some occasions when Sarah could not pay attention to the reader during shared bookreading. When Mia was reading a picture book to Sarah, the latter could not pay attention and exhibited off-task behavior. Sarah began to disturb her sister by hitting the book and walked away to get her own book from a cabinet. She was reading it by herself next to Mia who continued to read to her sister. On another occasion the mother was reading a story with Mia and her school friend. Sarah was part of the group, but they were reading the story at their own pace, not hers. She could not read along with them and disturbed them occasionally because she also wanted to be involved. Suddenly she asked her mother whether she could write something on the chalkboard. She continued writing on the board for about five minutes while her mother and the other girls were reading the book. Apparently Sarah got actively involved and paid attention when she had a one-on-one shared bookreading experience with her parents who were able to adjust the reading pace and monitor her comprehension. The techniques the parents used and the group dynamics in the shared bookreading events made a difference in Sarah's participation, attention, and comprehension.

The father's expectation for share bookreading is that Sarah understand the stories. During shared bookreading, he tries to capture Sarah's attention. When the books they choose are long, he makes up a story to accompany the pictures because

Sarah's attention span is still short. The purpose of shared bookreading is to keep Sarah occupied with something useful and to have her learn and enjoy stories. The following excerpt illustrates several strategies Sarah's father used to keep her attentive to the story, *Caillou, the Phone Call*.

Father: "I have work to do. Please give me a minute to get off the phone."

Does it sound like daddy sometimes?

Sarah: Uhumm.

Father: Let's see. "Caillou was sad."

Sarah: Why?

Father: Because his mommy was on the phone. And he wanted to talk to his mommy, but his mommy said that she's busy. So he was sad because he wanted to tell her something. But she was on the phone. Let's find out more. Okay?

Sarah: (nods)

Father: Let's see. (continues reading the story) A lots of calls. (continues reading) "I love it when you draw for me. I love it when you draw for me." (whispering to Sarah) (continues reading) She is very busy. It must make him sad. Right?

Sarah: (nods) Let's see. (turns the page)

Father: Let's see. (continues reading) "He turned and walked away."

Sarah: Why?

Father: Because he was sad that she wouldn't talk to him. (continues reading) Caillou is going to answer the phone? You answer phones at home?

Sarah: (nods)

Father: (continues reading)

Sarah: (nods) (touches the picture)

Father: Do you want to see the puppy?

Sarah: (nods)

Father: (continues reading) That's the book about Caillou. So Caillou was on the phone. He wanted to talk and talk and talk. But his mommy was really really busy. So what do we know about this? We have to make time for people that we love. Right?

The father connected the story with their personal life to make it more interesting for Sarah. He often said, "Let's see." "Let's find out more. Okay?" "Right?" to get her attention. When she asked questions, he explained to her what was happening in the story to make sure she understood it. At the end of the story, her father explained the story's lesson. In the same digital-recording, he sometimes gave her his attention by looking at her and kissing her on the head. He often asked yes/no questions, such as "Do you like this book?" "Do you remember he walked away sad?" Mia was recording this literacy event on the side and interjected twice to urge Sarah to answer comprehension questions. The interaction between Sarah and her father is described in the next excerpt.

Mia: Okay. Daddy is going to give you some questions.

Father: Can I give you some questions?

Sarah: (nods)

Mia: And you have to try to answer them.

Father: Let's see. I am going to ask you easy ones first. Is Caillou a boy or a girl?

Sarah: A boy.

Father: A boy. Who was talking to him? His mom or dad?

Sarah: His mom.

Father: What was his mom doing?

Sarah: (no response) (lying on the floor)

Father: Was she swimming? Stay over here. Was she swimming?

Sarah: (shakes her head)

Father: Was she working.

Sarah: (nods)

Father: Working. Good job! So but she was really busy. Did it make Caillou sad or happy?

The father used A or B questions and open-ended questions to ask her about the characters and the story. When Sarah could not respond to his question, he adjusted his *wh*-question to an A or B question. She was able to remember the story better and answer his questions if she was given prompts. When she misunderstood the content, he followed up explaining the text and pointing to the picture on the page.

Sarah's mother gave her a lot of praise with an exciting voice and a body language such as clapping hands, opening her arms, and showing surprise in her face. Also, she used open-ended questions to invite Sarah to respond to her questions and scaffold her answers. The next interaction shows how she formed questions so that Sarah could answer easily.

Sarah: Where's his mom?

Mother: Maybe she is at work.

Sarah: No. She is at home.

Mother: Maybe she's at home. Maybe relaxing. Right? Okay. "When someone does a nice thing for me I smile and say. . ."

Sarah: Thank you.

Mother: Good job! Good job!

(everyone paying attention to Layla because she started walking by herself)

Mother: All right. "It's always best to be polite in everything I do."

Sarah: We say thank you.

Mother: Yes. "We say thank you." So you have to be. . .

Sarah: Polite.

Mother: Polite. So two things you have to say. . .

Sarah: Polite.

Mother: Say thank you.

In the same digital-recording, Sarah's mother often praised her for using her own words to explain the concept of the story. She said, "Good job! Good job!" "You are awesome!" To get Sarah's attention, she held Sarah's chin and turned her face toward her. She used a lot of praise, positive comments, and yes/no and open-ended questions, showed affection, and sometimes repeated what Sarah said to reassure her. When she was helping Sarah set up a game on her toy laptop computer, she said, "I am going to give you the right one." She carefully chose an activity for Sarah's level. The parents

know their preschooler's current level and structure a literacy activity so that she would not feel frustrated.

Transmission of literacy. The father reads a lot of articles from newspapers and the internet and books related politics both at home and at work. He also likes to write about politics very much. Recently he published a 600-word article for a local newspaper about the recent events in Syria. He completed his Master's degree right before the family moved from another state. The mother attends a college to earn a degree in the current state where they reside. Once the oldest child told me that everyone in the family goes to school. The parents' own actions show their children the importance of education.

Sarah attended a private preschool during the 2010-2011 school year. Since the school did not take the youngest child, it was difficult for the mother to drop off the three children at three different schools. To make her life easier, the family found a different preschool that Sarah and her one-year-old sister could both attend. The family makes an effort to divide their time among the three children for their education. Since Mia is in school and reading more, she gets more time from her parents than her younger sisters do. The parents want to see all of their children very well educated although they do not put any pressure on them about future interests and careers.

During one of the interviews the father talked about the cultural differences between Syria and the United States. In the United States, both men and women work. In Syria women stay at home all day long and take care of their children when they come back from school. Men work and do the grocery shopping. Children do not get many things outside of school. When friends get together, the men and women stay in

distinct locations. When the mother talked about her own childhood experience, she remembered that her mother did not read to her and that she had read all by herself. In Syria, people do not do shared bookreading at bedtime. However, parents value academics and teach the Qur'an.

The father believes that his family balances both American and Syrian cultures, but noted that the children's academic learning is more Americanized. Particularly their family literacy practices and frequent praise are more Americanized. The father added that Arabic people could be just as affectionate with children as Americans are. The family becomes more Arabic when they get together with their Arabic-speaking friends. The father explained how the family had become more Americanized. When the mother came to the United States, she was 18 years old and learned her behaviors and ideas in the American environment. In fact, many things the family does also reflect how the father was reared in the United States.

Maintenance of first language. Both English and Arabic are used interchangeably in all forms of communication at home. However, to maintain their heritage language the parents speak to their children in Arabic as much as possible, but the children more naturally communicate with each other in English. Arabic is also used for their religious practices. Sarah recites the Qur'an and is exposed to oral language in Arabic at home and learns Arabic and Islamic concepts in her preschool and Sunday school. She goes to her preschool from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday and Sunday school from 10:20 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The preschool teaches Arabic every day. At her schools she practices writing the alphabet in Arabic (Figure 16) and learns Islamic concepts by coloring, cutting, and pasting. On one occasion, Mia

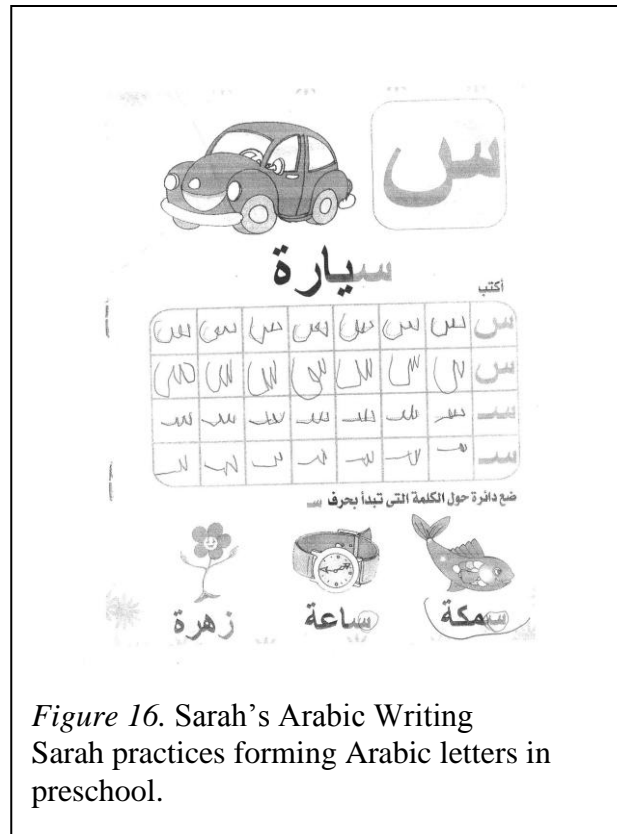


Figure 16. Sarah's Arabic Writing
Sarah practices forming Arabic letters in preschool.

and her school friend were learning Arabic from the mother. First, Sarah was watching the Arabic lesson and later participated in the lesson. The mother used a chalkboard in Mia's bedroom to write letters and words in Arabic. She was teaching the Arabic alphabet and words that begin with the letters. Sarah tried to get her mother's attention by interjecting "And then after Mia, it's my turn?" and "You did it backwards," even when Mia wrote a word correctly. She raised her hand saying, "Me, me!" when the other children were raising their hands quietly. The older children were moving from individual words to sentences. Sarah asked if she could write on the board twice, but her mother did not respond. She tried to write *bappa* but said, "I don't know how to make it." Their interactions continue in the following excerpt.

Mother: Now, Mia, tah, tah.

Mia and her friend raise their hands.

Sarah: (shouts out) Tafa!

Mia: I was going to say that.

Mother: One more.

Friend: (raises her hand) Talah.

Mother: That's your name. Ana. . .

Mia: Tarbush. . .?

Mother: Tarbush?

Sarah: I said that first. I keep saying it first. (trying to get her mother's attention)

Mia: Taubush? Can I see that? (trying to find a word in a book)

Mia looks at the book.

Mother: Talah, give me a word with Tah.

Friend: Talah.

Sarah: I said it first.

Mother: Talah. You can.

Mia: That's so easy.

Friend: I know. That's the only Arabic word I knew (with Tah).

Mother: Tut.

Sarah: Tut!

Sarah: Temer.

Mother: No. Raspberry.

Mia: Temer.

Mother: Temer. Good job.

Apparently she was getting frustrated because she did not get attention and could not understand what the older children were doing. This excerpt shows how frustrated she was about having to be a peripheral participant for a long time and how competitive she became to get the mother's attention. Sarah shouted out the answers without raising her hand and wanted to be the first one who said the right answer.

Sarah speaks and understands Arabic, but does not read or write it. Sometimes she puts together an Arabic alphabet puzzle. When the first child was at Sarah's current age, her Arabic was much better than Sarah's. The parents have to work hard to improve Sarah's Arabic because she really likes to speak English and does not like to respond to her parents in Arabic. When she asks her father to play with her, he says no because she speaks only in English. If she speaks to them in Arabic, the parents reward her.

The family's goal for their children is that they be able to read and write in Arabic. However, it is much more challenging to get the children to speak Arabic because they speak English to each other at home and outside the home. When Sarah was little, the mother was in school and the family spoke more English. Sarah speaks English to her sisters all the time. The parents are trying to correct this and make a constant effort to immerse their three children in Arabic. They put Arabic cartoons in the car when they drive long distances. The mother also plays Arabic songs on the CD player so that the children can listen to the sound of Arabic even though the children do not understand the meaning of the lyrics. At home Sarah hears Arabic and recites the Qur'an focusing more on oral than on written language.

Summary

The parents are the primary people who assist Sarah's emergent literacy experiences since the children are still young. They spent approximately 50 percent of their structured family literacy time in the digital-recordings for shared bookreading. Although only the oldest child is in formal education, all three children often read to each other. Through daily parental support and the older sibling's influence on school literacy, Sarah has established the habit of choosing a book, sitting with it, and flipping the pages to look at the illustrations. Even the one-year-old child has learned to look at books independently. At this age, it is appropriate to understand stories by listening and looking at illustrations. The parents make sure that their children have plenty of books to read at home and have each child choose books reflecting their own interests.

Since the children are seven, four, and one years old, the family provides many resources that are age-appropriate and helpful for emergent and early literacy development. Sarah is surrounded by educational toys, games, books, and the parents' everyday technologies such as a computer and cell phones with various functions. She continues to develop oral language through daily interactions, games, sociodramatic play, and shared bookreading. She uses games on her toy laptop computer for matching uppercase and lowercase letters and finding missing letters. She also uses toys and objects in the home to engage in sociodramatic play. She uses the chalkboard and a notepad to practice writing the alphabet. She uses the home-living center to become a member of her family and community. She draws pictures to construct meaning. It is natural for Sarah to learn emergent literacy skills through this multimodal process.

The recurring patterns of familial support in the digital-recordings include verbal directions, praise, both yes/no and open-ended questions, and responsiveness. During the literacy events, the parents often asked questions to help Sarah comprehend the text and remember the stories. They also used verbal directions to keep her attention to the task at hand. More importantly, they were flexible and sensitive enough to adjust the length and content of stories to Sarah's current level and the types of questions he asked by observing her responses. In order to make sure that she understands the story, they often stopped in the middle of a story to summarize what was happening.

One sees, first and foremost, that the parents provide their three children with an abundance of affection and praise and a positive home environment. Although the mother is often busy caring for her three daughters simultaneously, she manages to divide her attention among the three of them. She is very excited about her three daughters' making progress each in her own way and shares this excitement with them. The parents use a reward system to encourage their children's reading and good behavior in the home. When they earn 25 stickers, they get a prize. When they make bad choices, they have to start it over.

The parents transmit their appreciation for education to their children. At home the three children see their parents doing homework, reading books, and writing papers. The parents expect their three children to be well educated but give them freedom to choose what they want to do in their lives. They support their children's education and literacy development in many ways.

The parents see themselves as more Americanized in their family literacy practices because of the father's upbringing in the United States and the mother's arrival

age in the United State. However, they also maintain their cultural heritage in the home and community. The parents expect their children to be able to speak, read, and write Arabic. Each day they make an effort to immerse them in the Arabic-speaking environment even though it is difficult to have them speak Arabic among themselves.

The Findings of the Cross-case Analysis

The Libyan American family and the Syrian American family share a similar family structure and cultural context, but they are different in their home environments, values, and degrees of acculturation. Both families consist of two parents and three children and have extended families in other states and their native countries. All of the parents are well educated or currently in school and speak both English and Arabic. Their children were born in the United States and speak both English and Arabic. The Libyan American family has male children who were ten, eight, and four years old, whereas the Syrian American family has female children who were six, one, and four years old at the time of data collection. Both focal children have had similar experiences in their preschools learning English, Arabic, and the Islamic concepts. Their age difference of eight months, their gender, and their siblings' ages made differences in their emergent literacy experiences and choices of picture books.

Both families are integrated into an American neighborhood although they live in different environments. The Libya American family lives in the country side, whereas the Syrian American family lives in a residential area. The choice of the residential locations is partly based on their values. The Libyan family values simplicity, nature, and relationships with the family members. The children enjoy outdoor activities in their backyard. Their family time and celebrations of small positive things are very

important to the family. In contrast, the Syrian family lives in a modern American home. The parents provide many resources and learning opportunities for their children. The oldest child takes *karate* lessons. Sarah goes to Sunday school to learn about Islam. Even the one-year-old child goes to her preschool with her older sister. The parents show affection and give their children a lot of praise and attention. Both families take their children to bookstores and local libraries. These parents create a positive and supportive home environment for their children.

Table 4

Cross-case themes

Libyan American Family	Syrian American Family
Preschoolers' Emergent Literacy Experiences as Multimodal Process	
Comprehension through illustration and listening	Comprehension through illustrations and listening
Preschoolers as novice writers	Preschoolers as novice writers
Technologies mediated by parents	Technologies mediated by parents
Phonics as school literacy practice	Oral language as part of emergent literacy
Family Literacy Practices	
Learning through social interactions	Learning through social interactions
Parental scaffolding strategies and sensitivity	Parental scaffolding strategies and sensitivity
Transmission of literacy	Transmission of literacy
Maintenance of first language	Maintenance of first language
Religious literacy practices	Religious literacy practices

Table 4 compares and contrasts the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family in terms of their preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences and parental support in their own family literacy practices. In the following section, I analyze the similarities and differences between these two families according to the themes that emerged from the data.

Preschooler's Emergent Literacy Experiences as Multimodal Process

Researchers who study older children and adults' literacy development look at conventional reading and writing. Whereas researchers who study young children's literacy development acknowledge multimodal communication systems, such as oral language, art, gesture, singing, writing, drama, and so forth (Rowe, 1994). Young children use many strategies to construct meaning and represent concepts and ideas. The preschoolers in both families used drawing, singing, chanting, recitation, technologies, and sociodramatic play as well as oral language in their daily literacy experiences.

Comprehension through illustrations and listening. There are many commonalities in the two preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences, but they express different preferences and interests in the selection of books. They are both highly motivated to read, curious about books, and like to ask many questions about the content of books. They also answer questions and retell stories in their own words. In particular, Ahmed extrapolates the content of books he knows to related topics since he loves animals. These children have already established routines for shared bookreading and independent reading. Their reading at this age involves pretending to read by looking at illustrations and making up stories. They already know how to handle books and

understand the directionality of print and books. They distinguish texts from illustrations in books. Even though they have developed phonological awareness and can recognize the alphabet, they are not ready to decode written text. They have been developing print knowledge and basic phonics by doing preschool assignments and homework.

About half of the children's emergent literacy experiences in the home is shared bookreading with their parents or older siblings. During shared bookreading, both children comprehended stories by listening and looking at illustrations. They negotiated and co-constructed meanings by interacting with their parents. The parents in this study emphasized meaning and enjoyment and did not focus on print. Ahmed likes to read the same books more than once. He naturally memorizes part of a book's text and can recite it and describe the characters. Sarah actively engages in meaning construction when she receives one-on-one attention from her parents. Group learning has made her responses and behavior more competitive. The parents have established a secure emotional connection with their preschooler and provided age-appropriate interactions without any excessive directions and corrections. Thus, the positive and safe home environment has facilitated the preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences.

Preschoolers as novice writers. Ahmed and Sarah are at different stages in writing due to their eight-month age difference. Both children still draw pictures that represent words and concepts. Sarah's focus at this stage is to learn how to form letters. Her mother helped her by holding her hand and a pencil to show how to form the letters. Ahmed is learning how to spell words by using strategies such as sounding out letters and words. His mother showed him how to construct sentences based on the pictures he

drew. Both children were able to write their names. It is common for young Arabic-speaking children to get confused with the directionality of the writing systems in both Arabic and English. Some children not only write in the wrong direction, but also write completely backwards producing a mirror image. The children both have done a lot of coloring, drawing, cutting, pasting, circling the right answers and forming letters in their preschools as well as at home. In both families the parents kept their children's selected writings in special places such as on the refrigerator, in a scrapbook, or in a treasure box.

Technologies mediated by parents. The preschoolers use computers, computer games, toys, and cell phones with ease as part of their daily literacy activities to different degrees. Ahmed was more exposed to older children's literacy experiences and more academic content because his brothers were ten and eight years old. The brothers were able to use technologies independently for their homework and entertainment every day. Ahmed observed them using technologies and also played with computer games with them. It was natural for him to imitate his brothers' daily literacy experiences. Sarah also knows how to use and navigate the computer and the parents' cell phones. However, the use of a computer and TV is monitored, limited, or guided by the parents in both families. The purpose of using media devices is more for learning than mere entertainment. Activities with technologies do not replace conventional shared bookreading, drawing, writing, and imaginary play, but they are additional options for the children.

As Ahmed's case illustrates, he was too involved in activities on the computer to respond to his mother's comments. His mother's reminders redirected his attention to the text below the animation on the computer screen. From this one sees that any digital

media can be an effective tool for children to increase their interest in literacy learning and active engagement. However, adult mediation can make the best use of technologies in a learning situation. Parents can direct their children's attention to targeted skills and talk about stories and animations which children might be just passively viewing or listening to if they do not receive any assistance and feedback from adults.

Phonics as school literacy practice. Ahmed worked on phonics because it was part of his homework from his preschool. His mother and brother helped him to complete his task by showing how to sound out each letter and blending them together. In this way, he was able to match the letters and the sounds. At the time of this study, Ahmed was at the end of preschool for four-year olds. He was making a transition to learning literacy skills in formal schooling. In contrast, Sarah had just started her fourth year. She was learning the letter names by singing the ABC song, but had not yet learned the sounds.

Oral language as part of emergent literacy. The two preschoolers use oral language when they engage in shared bookreading, puzzles, games, technologies, sociodramatic play, and daily conversations with their family members. By reenacting stories and imitating household chores, they have developed more complexity in their oral language. They also increase their vocabulary and broaden their knowledge by talking about what they already know and listening to their parents and older siblings. The parents play an important role in providing quality talk for their children by using rich and varied vocabulary, prompting, and questioning. The preschoolers have just begun to make a transition from oral to written literacy. The development of their oral

language is a foundation for developing reading writing skills later. Young children who have developed oral vocabulary can connect oral language with written language more easily. Based on the data collected from the two families, the preschoolers use various modes of literacy for understanding and meaning making.

Family Literacy Practices

Learning through social interactions. The preschoolers sometimes experienced emergent literacy alone. However, they gained more knowledge and skills from social interactions with more competent parents and older siblings. They observed their role models using more complex language and advanced skills and sharing broader knowledge with them. They also participated in literacy activities through guided participation, interactions, and joint construction of meaning with their parents and older siblings. The parents were the one who determined appropriate literacy practices, activities, and materials for their children and monitored their progress.

Socialization with both the parents and the older siblings plays an important role in the preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences. The older siblings bring school literacy practices home and share them with their younger siblings. The parents and older siblings obviously serve as role models for the preschoolers since children like to imitate what they do. The older siblings also learn how to help their younger siblings by observing what their parents do with them. Ahmed is exposed to things that older children do because of the age differences between him and his older brothers. His older siblings are already independent learners and do not require much of their parents' time. The mother can spend more time with Ahmed. He does not need to compete with his brothers for his parents' attention. In contrast, Sarah and her sisters often play together

under her parental supervision and compete to get parents' attention. Because of their immaturity, they often argue and fight. Thus, the age spacing among the siblings, the birth order, and the gender of the preschoolers made a difference in their choice of activities, topics, materials, and the amount of time with their parents. The wider the age spacing is among the siblings, the more advanced and mature is the content to which the preschooler can be exposed. The closer the age spacing is, the more time the preschooler spends with her young siblings, and sometimes he or she becomes competitive in order to get the parent's attention.

Parental scaffolding strategies and sensitivity. The parents in both families frequently used verbal directions, praise, and questions and showed responsiveness. They also had established routines for homework, shared bookreading, bookstore and library visits, and other literacy events. The parents used various strategies to maintain and redirect their children's attention to literacy practices since the preschoolers still have a limited attention span. For example, the Libyan American mother used fast-paced oral directions, specific feedback, and encouragement. Ameen and his mother used an accentuated voice to sound out letters and words for Ahmed. The Syrian American parents adjusted stories for Sarah's level and monitored her comprehension to make additional adjustments. They also provided their children with many concrete realia that represent abstract concepts, hands-on activities, and a reward system because their children are younger than the children in the Libyan American family. The mother used a dramatized voice and positive body language to express her surprise and excitement. In both families, the parents used affective strategies such as physical

proximity, sensitive tones of voice, eye contact, and positive comments. They also used content-oriented instruction to explain and expand the content of books.

The purpose of shared bookreading for the preschoolers is to enjoy stories and facts in books, but most importantly to enjoy the conversations between the parent and the child using books as tools for family communication. None of the parents teach specific literacy skills during shared bookreading. Rather, they respond to their children's interests and questions and are helping them develop a love of reading. For the Libyan American family, literacy is not simply about reading and writing skills. It is also for talking about books and sharing the joy of good stories and favorite topics through books. Any push to have their children advance beyond their peers was not observed at all in either family.

The parents whose child is a strong reader demonstrated various scaffolding strategies to enhance their children's literacy experiences. Without realizing it, they were using most of the dialogic reading strategies. They are by nature skilled teachers because they are themselves strong readers and had positive literacy experiences with their parents when they were growing up. The parents' skills to get their children actively involved in literacy activities make a difference in the preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences.

Transmission of literacy. The Libyan American mother's strong values for literacy come from her own experiences in childhood and her family's experiences under Italian colonization. The parents do not want to put pressure on their children by having them memorize a lot of materials or teaching them school literacy skills at home. The family emphasizes the importance of Arabic. They treasure their books and teach

their how to handle them. Because the family is planning to go back to Libya, the parents are transmitting their values, cultural heritage, and the Arabic language to their children.

On the other hand, the Syrian American parents have integrated American culture into their life style. They set a good example for their children by going back to school and support their children's literacy activities at home. Even though the mother did not have strong support for her literacy development when she was growing up based on the American middle-class standards, she is actively involved in teaching their children in both English and Arabic. The parents in both families show the importance of literacy and education by actually doing many literacy activities with their children in their daily lives.

Maintenance of first language. All the children are considered bilingual since they learn English and Arabic relatively simultaneously during their early childhood (Orgeta, 2009). The parents of both families say that the more children they have, the more English they speak among themselves. Since the children spend more time in school where they speak English with their peers all day long, they use more English at home with their siblings who have had the same experiences. Although the two oldest children, Abdullah and Mia, consistently spoke Arabic at home when they were only children in the families, they began to speak more English after their siblings were born. Since Ahmed and Sarah hear more English at home than the oldest sibling did at their age, their English is much stronger than their Arabic. Both of them do not respond to their parents in Arabic at home.

In order for these children to maintain their parents' native language, in both families the parents make an extra effort to use Arabic as much as possible at home and outside of the home. They send their children to an Islamic preschool and a school where Arabic is taught every day. They want their children to be biliterate as well as bilingual. In particular, the Libyan American parents teach their children good pronunciation and variations of Arabic at home. Ahmed regularly practices Arabic sounds and letters at home. Thus, both of their oral and written Arabic may become at risk in the English-speaking environment without their parents' extra effort.

Religious literacy practices. The children memorize and recite the Qur'an as part of their daily religious rituals. Ahmed seems to receive more exposure to Islamic beliefs and specific aspects of the Arabic language at home. The difference between the two families may lie in their degrees of acculturation and future plan. Some Muslims strictly observe and practice Islamic laws and others prefer to melt into the American context and become part of the larger culture (Haddad and Lummis, 1987). In Islam, it is important for young children under seven to play and explore, and they are not required to strictly practice the Islamic rituals (Syeed & Ritchie, 2006). Therefore, the preschoolers' religious literacy practices are mainly for oral recitation of the Qur'an and daily prayers.

Summary

These two families have demonstrated similarities and differences in the preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences and the parental support. Each family's specific values, future goals, and children's ages set them apart in the home environment, emphases in their shared bookreading, and Arabic teaching. These children are highly

motivated, curious, and responsive. Their parents create a positive and effective learning environment by giving their children verbal directions, affective support, and varied forms of questions. They are also attentive to their children's needs by responding to their questions and comments and by repeating their utterances in order to acknowledge them. They do not teach specific literacy skills to their preschoolers. However, the children are sufficiently exposed to school literacy practices when they enter preschool and when the older siblings bring them home from school.

The cultural aspect of these two families' literacy practices is mostly to use Arabic in their religious practices. I expected to see more diverse cultural practices of family literacy in these homes. However, since at least one of the parents grew up and experienced formal schooling in the United States, their family literacy practices seem to be similar to those found in many average American families. The longer the children experience schooling in the United States, the more conscientious the parents have to be in order to maintain their own cultural heritage. The force of acculturation is strong among the second generation who was raised in the English-speaking environment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes this study and enumerates important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. It provides a discussion of the limitations, recommendations for further research, and implications for action. I began this study in March 2011 because of my interest in young children's literacy experiences after having taught children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds for many years. As Vygotsky (1978) emphasized, children's learning begins long before formal schooling, and individual differences in early literacy skills lie in the children's previous experiences during their preschool years. Parents play a crucial role in nurturing their preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to learn what emergent literacy experiences one Libyan American preschooler and one Syrian American preschooler have in the bilingual home setting and, in particular, how the families support their preschooler's emergent literacy experiences in the home environment. I constantly asked myself the following two research questions. How did the texts, tools, and technologies available in the bilingual home setting impact the emergent literacy practices of a Libyan American preschooler and a Syrian American preschooler? What support did family members provide for these two children in developing their emergent literacy in the bilingual home setting? I focused especially on the sociocultural aspect of the families' home literacy practices through the lens of the social theory of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The two families being studied opened their homes and shared their

personal information with me for the demographic questionnaire, digital-recordings, audio-recorded interviews, home visits, collection of the artifacts, and photographing. All the data collected from these multiple sources were used for the within-case and cross-case analyses.

Many studies on family literacy have focused on low-income families, working class families, and families who speak other languages (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Heath, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Studies of educated families are sometimes overshadowed by these groups. In this study, in contrast, the parents are well educated, speak two languages frequently, and live in a middle-class neighborhood. The findings from this study may challenge some typical assumptions about the literacy practices in different cultural contexts.

Sociocultural Contexts of Preschoolers' Emergent Literacy Experiences

Sociocultural theory and the emergent literacy perspective both emphasize the importance of literacy development prior to formal schooling and the role of parents (Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003). Long before formal schooling starts, young children develop their emergent literacy skills in a multimodal fashion in various informal daily contexts. In this study, the detailed descriptions and excerpts from the digital-recordings illustrate how the more competent family members interacted with their preschooler and helped him or her navigate the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The children construct their knowledge and learn new skills and values through social interactions with other people. Thus, early social learning is, as one would expect, foundational for later literacy learning in formal schooling. In this study, the children

learn from their parents home literacy practices, both their societal and first languages, the use of Arabic in religious practices, and educational values. They learn school literacy practices and societal language from their older siblings, teachers, and more competent peers in preschool and Sunday school (Figure 17).

Confirming Bandura (1977), the preschoolers in this study learn literacy knowledge and skills from observing and hearing their family members, imitating what they do, and eventually accurately reproducing literacy behavior when they are given

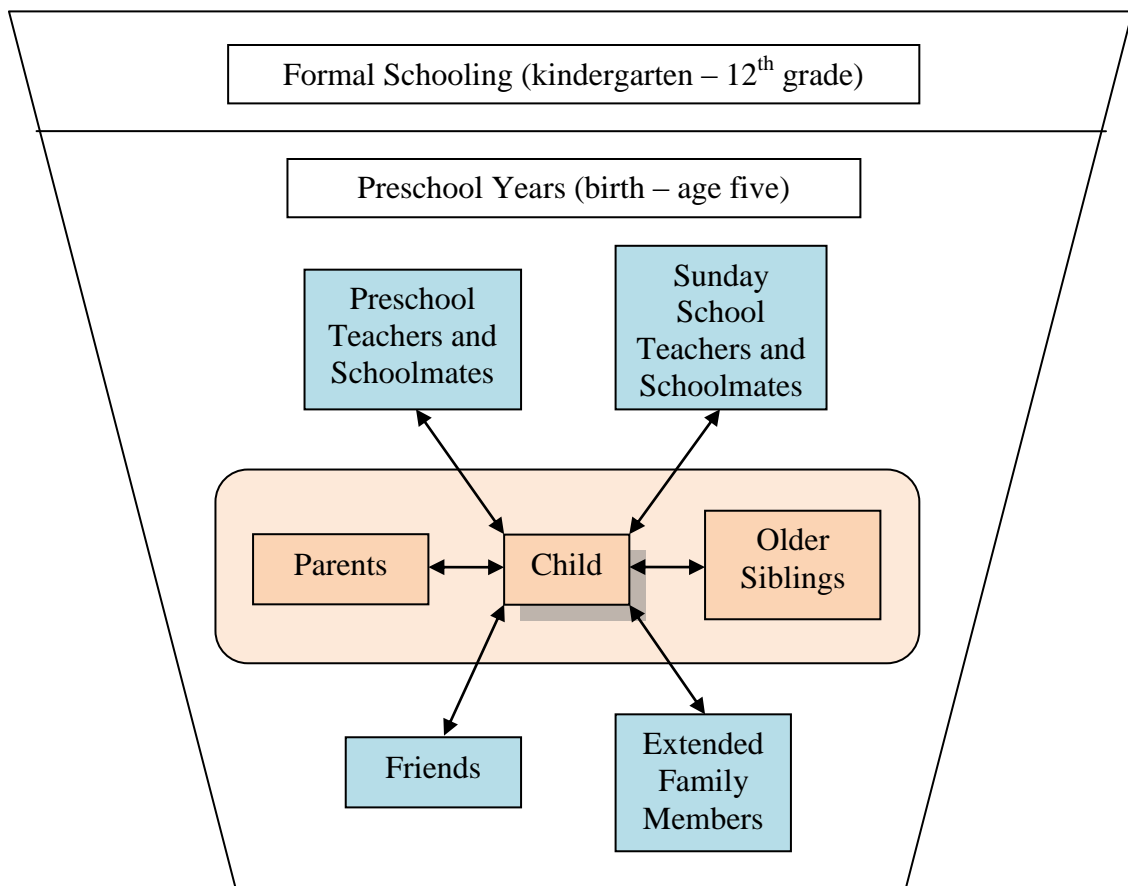


Figure 17. Sociocultural Contexts of Preschoolers' Emergent Literacy Experiences

The focal child constructs his or her knowledge and learns new skills and values through social interactions with other people. This early social learning is foundational for later literacy learning in formal schooling. The child's sociocultural contexts described in this study are shaded in pink.

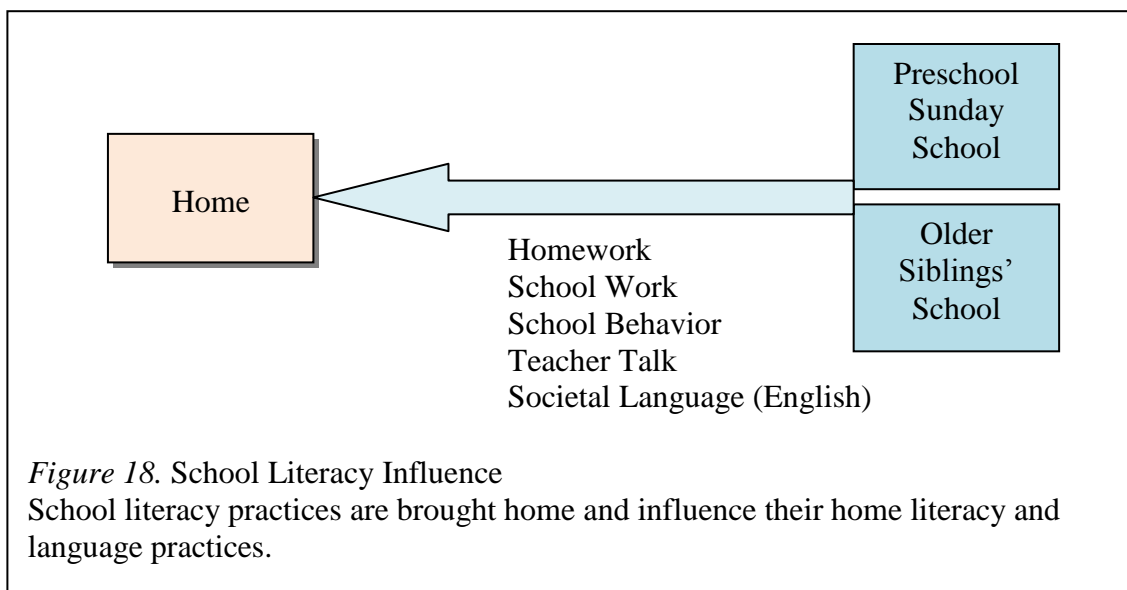
praise, positive comments, and encouragement. They are legitimate peripheral participants who are learning to become full members in the literacy world (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In terms of language socialization, they accomplish this through language practices in both English and Arabic to gain literacy knowledge and skills relevant to memberships in the mainstream social group and the Arabic-speaking community.

The parents in this study promote their children's active engagement through joint participation. They create supporting situations by effectively using questioning, rephrasing, and elaborating skills. These are more effective strategies than just repeating the same question when the child does not respond. More importantly, as Rogoff's (1990) ideas on apprenticeship show, these parents choose developmentally appropriate activities based on their children's current levels of literacy skills. They also provide manageable small steps for them and structure their involvement. As many researchers (Heath, 1983; Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008; Tabors & Snow, 2001) emphasize, the quality of the interactions and scaffolding techniques are critical for young children's literacy development. Also, emotional and verbal responsiveness and sensitivity are critical factors (Aram & Levin, 2001; Roberts, Jurgens, and Burchinal, 2005). These parents are sensitive enough to make necessary changes in their support and promote meaningful literacy experiences that also take into consideration their children's interests.

The families in this study use two languages and multiliteracies (Kenner & Gergory, 2003) for different purposes: English for the mainstream culture and schooling, and Arabic for religious practices and personal affairs. The two families are similar in

valuing education and literacy, modeling literacy behavior, maintaining their native language, providing a positive home environment, and demonstrating Americanized literacy practices in English. They differ in how they emphasize certain aspects of literacy. This is largely influenced by their future plans. The Libyan American family emphasizes Arabic literacy skills so that their children will experience a smooth transition to a new life for the coming school year in Libya. In contrast, the Syrian American family emphasizes oral language in Arabic because they see their preschooler's Arabic at risk in the mainstream culture. Thus, how literacy is constructed and valued is complex and varied in the two families.

Scholars (González, et al., 2005) discuss the importance of including children's home literacy practices and resources in a classroom setting. In contrast to this, Cairney (2003) points out that understanding how school literacy practices shape home literacy practices needs to receive more attention. In this study, the two families show how the children bring school literacy practices home, and this influences their home literacy and language practices (Figure 18). The preschoolers brought phonics practices via their



preschool homework. They have already learned to set a time for shared bookreading and completing homework. Sarah acted like a teacher when playing school with her family members. Ahmed's older brother was teaching him phonics skills like his mother who is a school teacher. The preschoolers and older sibling(s) in both families bring their societal language, English, home and use it as a social tool extensively. The parents divide their time among their three children but spend more time helping their child with school work. They also use school literacy practices when they help their children with literacy. As a result of social interactions with more competent people in the social group, these preschoolers are already exposed to school literacy practices prior to formal schooling. They can focus on their tasks better with their parents' scaffolding than when they experience emergent family literacy alone. Thus, the role of more competent people in emergent literacy experiences is critical for building a solid foundation for their children's literacy skills needed in formal schooling.

Transmission of Educational Values

The actions and words of significant family members are highly influential for young children. The parents in this study are educated and provide rich literacy experiences for their children. This supports Van Steensel's (2006) finding that educated parents are more likely to provide a rich home literacy environment. When the children see their parents and older siblings often engaging in literacy activities, this serves as a positive role model for them (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Van Steensel, 2006; Wu & Honig, 2010). The transmission of literacy occurred when the children were actively engaged in daily literacy events as Saracho (1999) reported. In Taylor's (1983) ethnography, the parents' educational values and belief in literacy derived from

the individual families' life stories and their religious beliefs. The parents in this study themselves experienced their own parents' appreciation of education and literacy when they were growing up. They are now passing on their values to the next generation by doing in their own ways what their parents did for them or what they wish to have done. In particular, the Libyan American mother expressed strong values and beliefs about teaching her children literacy skills and valuing books based on her family history and her own experiences as a child. Her values and beliefs are reflected in the daily home literacy events, such as shared bookreading, bookstore visits, and book handling.

Americanized Family Literacy Practices

In some cultures including my own, parents do not show as much physical affection and give as much praise to their children as parents in other cultures do. Wu and Honig (2010) found different emphases in Taiwanese and American parents during shared bookreading. This finding shows that literacy practices are situated in cultural contexts and based on their beliefs. The families in this study are similar to the American parents in Wu and Honig's study because they value positive emotions more than moral and practical knowledge. The Syrian American father mentioned that Arabic people could be just as affectionate to their children as Americans are. The Syrian American father said that his wife learned the art of frequent praise in this country. Frequent praise and positive comments are not necessarily observed in other cultures. How one expresses affection and such things certainly depends on cultural contexts.

The Libyan American mother reads books at bedtime each evening. Although the Syrian American parents do not read books at bedtime, they often do shared bookreading with their three children. They said that bedtime storyreading is not part of

Syrian culture. In American education and even in family TV programs, bedtime storyreading is popular and promoted. However, parents from other cultures do not necessarily practice this. The parents in both families said that they do not teach their preschoolers any specific literacy skills at home. They have never participated in a family literacy program in the United States. However, by nature they already implement most of the dialogic reading strategies in their homes. They ask *wh*-questions, repeat what the child says, help him or her as needed, praise and encourage, shadow his or her interest, ask open-ended questions, and expand his or her comments (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000).

As Anderson (1995) explains, parents' different perceptions of literacy acquisition determine the purpose of shared bookreading. Both families in this study believe that the purpose of shared bookreading is to understand and enjoy stories. This is similar to Anderson's finding that parents who held an emergent literacy perspective emphasized meaning and enjoyment and did not draw children's attention to print during shared bookreading. Possibly, the parents in this study have a more relaxed attitude toward their children's literacy development but also sensitive enough to know what is developmentally appropriate for their four-year-old children.

I expected to see more culturally specific literacy practices in the families. I found, however, that their family literacy practices are influenced by American practices of family literacy. I also discovered that within the same families, the mothers and the fathers have different comfort levels of teaching English to their children. From this study it is apparent that the parents' arrival ages in this country make a difference in their comfort level in speaking English or teaching their children in English. Their

educational level and degree of biliteracy also affect how much they emphasize the importance of literacy and how they support their children's literacy experiences.

Diminishing Use of First Language

Immigrant families come to the United States from different countries with different historical backgrounds for different reasons and at different ages. They vary in their English proficiency, cultural values, and where they are in the acculturation processes (Berry, 2007; Same & Berry, 2006). I learned that the acculturation process of the preschoolers in this study occurs early in their lives as a result of socialization with older siblings who have experienced an English-speaking world. These children are growing up in an emergent bilingual environment (Tobars & Snow, 2001). However, they are possibly becoming at-risk bilingual (Tobars & Snow, 2001) because of more exposure to the English-speaking community, schooling, media, and popular culture (Sofu, 2009; Tobors & Snow, 2001). The Libyan American mother said in one of the interviews, "The TV is in English, everything is in English." It is challenging for the parents to maintain their native language at home even if they try to immerse their children in that language.

This study is similar to Orellana's (1994) qualitative study with three children of ages five and six. These children had one native English-speaking parent and one native Spanish-speaking parent. Spanish was used for almost all interactions at home and at school, and none of them spoke English before attending preschool. Orellana found that parents made an effort to expose them to Spanish in a variety of ways and to motivate them to use Spanish. However, all three children reversed their language dominance within three years and had less capacity to speak in Spanish at ages five and six than

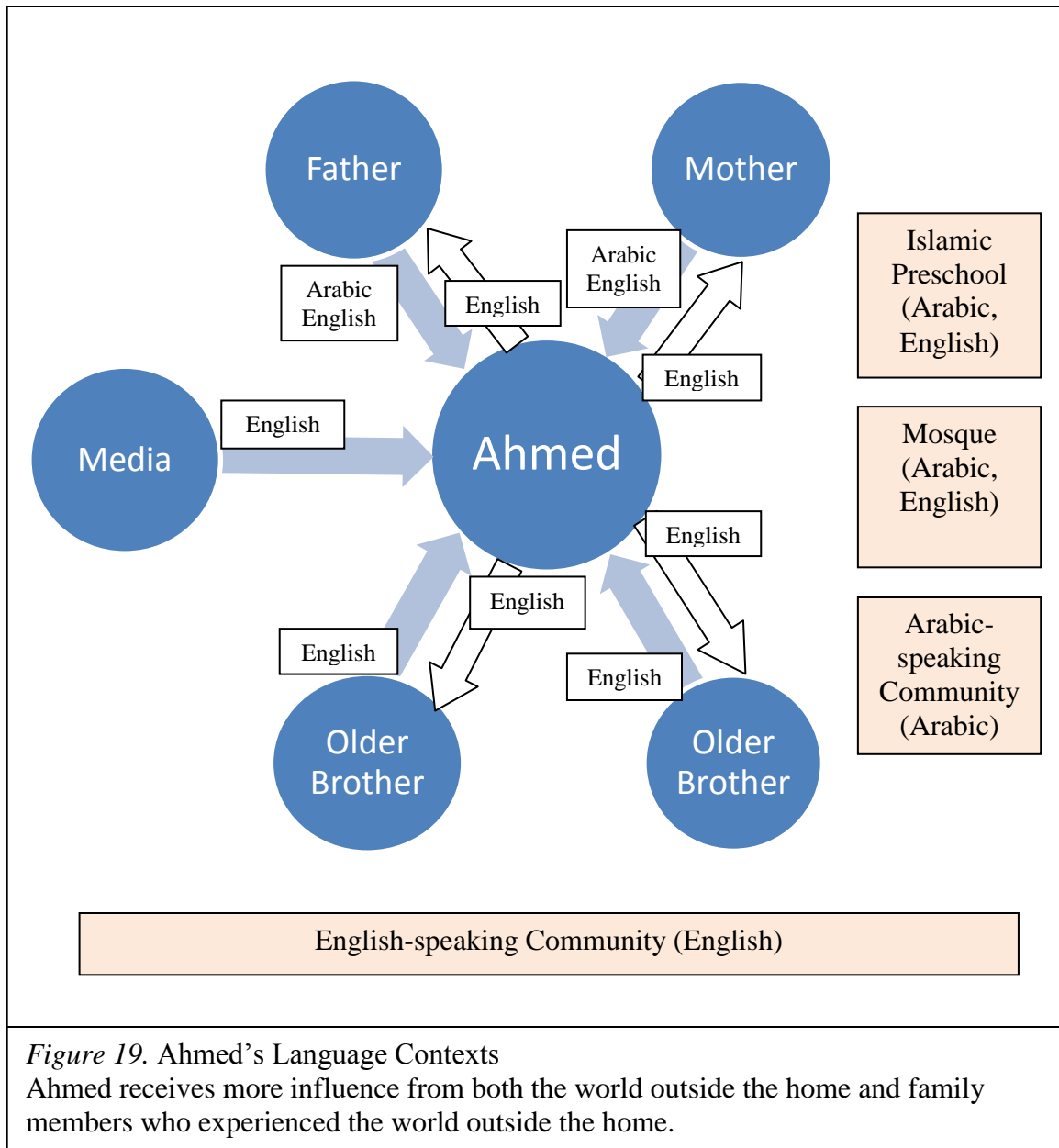
when they were at ages two and three. Orellana reported that children did not lose their first language despite the strong English influence in the home, school, and larger society

Orellana's (1994) findings indicate how influential school socialization is in young children's lives. In the current study, both children also attended preschool and shared the same school culture with their older siblings. In both Orellana's and this studies, the children were influenced by the English-speaking culture much more than their parents' daily use of first language at this early stage. Attending preschool is the onset of the children's speaking more English. In the Syrian American family in the current study, the mother's own schooling encouraged the family to speak more English. In both cases, the children and family members use more English for their own conversations in the home as a result of increased time for interacting with the world outside the home.

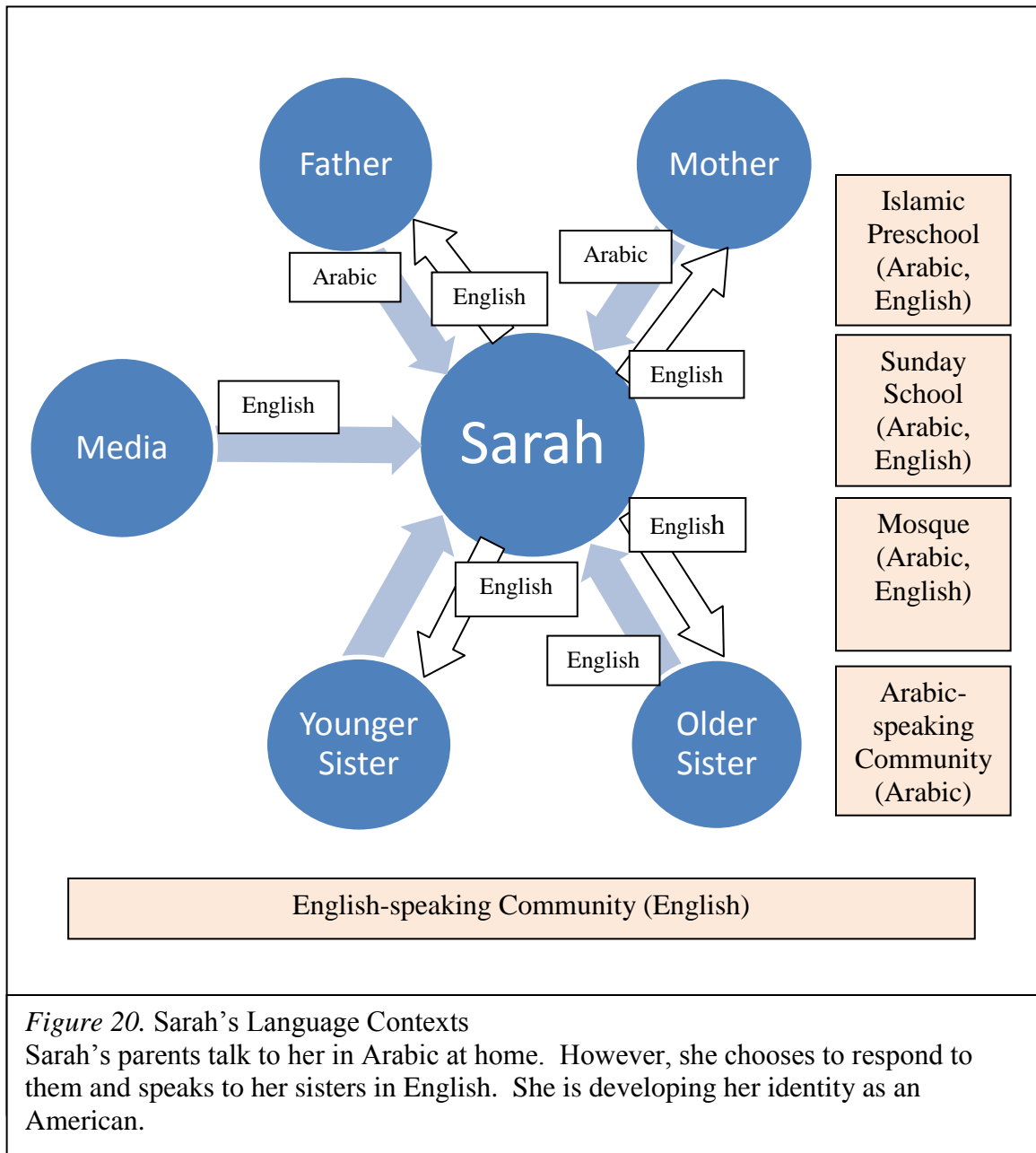
The diminishing use of first language in this study is also similar to the finding of Portes and Hao's (1998) study. Their context was the area in Florida where contemporary immigrants were concentrated, and the participants were 5,266 eighth- and ninth-grade second generation immigrants. They found that despite differences across nationalities the participants had a significant knowledge of English and preferred using English. Moreover, only one third of them were fluent bilinguals. Although the participants' families and peers in the ethnic community supported the preservation of their native language, the number of second-generation immigrants who were fluent bilingual decreased with time because of the influence of English monolingualism. Portes and Schauflyer's (1994) conducted a similar study in Florida with 2,843 eighth-

and ninth-grade second generation immigrants. Their findings showed that the preservation of native languages varied inversely with the length of U.S. residence and residential locations. They also indicated that only places where immigrant groups concentrate and manage to maintain their cultural heritage would have their native language survive past the first generation.

In contrast to Portes and Schauffler's (1994) finding, the families in the current study do not live in a place where their cultural group clusters. There are some mosques, Islamic schools, and middle-eastern stores in the macro context of this study. However, Arabic-speaking immigrants reside in neighborhoods where the mainstream culture is dominant. Although they share the same language and religion, they are not necessarily native speakers of Arabic nor do they come from the same ethnic groups or nationalities. Even in their Islamic preschools and some of their religious services, English is widely used because it is the common language for those who come from different linguistic backgrounds. Thus, the second-generation immigrants receive more influence from both the world outside the home and family members who experienced the world outside the home (Figure 19 and Figure 20). As the figures indicate, the children in this study are exposed more to English than to Arabic throughout a day. Even though they attend an Islamic school to learn Arabic and interact with Arabic-speaking people in their communities, the amount of time for such interactions in Arabic is a small part of a day. Even when they are at home, they mostly play with their siblings, hear and watch TV, and play computer games in English. The influence of living in an English-speaking environment is powerful.



If parents come to the United States as adults and/or involuntarily, they may have more difficulties in supporting their children's emergent literacy experiences in English at home. They may choose more consciously to maintain their native language and cultural values than immigrant parents who came to this country as children. In this study, one of the parents in both families came to this country as an adult and is married



to a spouse who experienced formal schooling in the United States. In this case, the families are more willing to adopt the mainstream American culture for the sake of integration and their children's education. The pressure of the social world in which they live, work, and learn is pervasive.

Conclusion

From my study of the two preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences during their fourth-year, it is clear that learning becomes more meaningful and focused when the children receive assistance and feedback in the interactions with their parents and older siblings. The preschoolers are not developmentally ready to attend to print during shared bookreading. They need to be directed to print by pointing (Evans, et al., 2008; Justice, et al., 2008). However, they make meaning and construct knowledge through illustrations and listening. They have acquired phonemic awareness, print knowledge, and basic technology skills in their daily family literacy practices. They develop their emergent literacy skills by using various texts, tools, and technologies through a multimodal process.

We, as researchers and educators, sometimes tend to make assumptions about families from cultures different from our own. Much literature has focused on differences in family literacy practices between various cultural groups and the mainstream culture. However, I see more similarities than differences in the literacy practices between these two families and the mainstream American culture. In fact, these families are more Americanized than I thought at the beginning of this study. The parents of the Libyan American family and the Syrian American family are not concerned to teach their children certain literacy skills, but they naturally use techniques to keep them on task, questioning skills to enhance their oral language and comprehension, and sensitivity (de Jong & Leseman, 2001; Saracho, 2000) to their children's current level of literacy. Additionally, the parents create a positive atmosphere that allows their children to try out new things on their own. They give their

children much affective support, materials and tools, and many opportunities to experience literacy. Many interactions and conversations happen both during family literacy events and ordinary daily events (Saracho, 1999).

The cultural practices of family literacy discovered in this study are the two families' bilingualism in everyday conversations, the use of Arabic for their religious rituals, and the preschoolers' novice-level biliteracy in Arabic and English. These families use English and Arabic for different purposes. This is similar to the Vai people in Liberia who use three forms of literacy for different purposes (Scribner & Cole, 1981). They use Vai for traditional economic and social activities, English for modern economics and the government sector, and Arabic for Islamic religious affairs. The Libyan American and the Syrian American families use English for their daily life and schooling and Arabic for their personal life and religious practices. Most of the time, they use English and Arabic separately. However, they sometimes code-switch and mix two languages when they are around their family members and Arabic-speaking friends.

These findings mean that the immigrant families' bilingualism and religious literacy practices add richness and variation to their children's emergent literacy experiences and their family literacy practices. The children also bring school literacy practices home. In other words, immigrant families have an extensive literacy world because of the additional language and literacy practices they have learned from the mainstream culture to their own. Formal schooling does not simply replicate the richness of literacy practices that young children experience at home (Cairney, 2003). It can only supplement and enhance them.

In their study on the diversity in family literacy scholarship, Compton-Lilly, Rogers, and Lewis (2012) found that White female scholars who dominate the field of family literacy studies often lack any substantive concern with diversity in many family literacy studies. The current study focused on preschoolers of a specific age from a non-European cultural group which has been less commonly studied. It was conducted by a bilingual and biliterate researcher who is also from a non-mainstream culture in the United States. I feel that my cultural and linguistic backgrounds helped me examine closely and better understand the cultural and linguistic aspects of these two families' home literacy practices.

The major findings in this study include the preschoolers' emergent literacy experiences as a multimodal process, social interactions for advancing knowledge and skills, the parents as natural teachers, the transmission of values based on Islamic beliefs and personal, historical, and political backgrounds, Americanized family literacy practices, and diminishing use of first language. These findings depict a different picture from much previous literature about home literacy practices of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Many studies have not discussed the Americanized literacy practices of immigrant families, nor have they described the richness of family literacy practices in two languages and multimodal literacies. Family literacy practices are complex and varied because each family member brings different experiences to the mix, and they influence each other's literacy practices through social interactions. This combination of factors creates many different ways of literacy practices among families. It is impossible to categorize individual families' literacy

practices simply based on any single factor such as culture, language, ethnicity, religion, or race.

Scholars and educators need to be cautious not to overgeneralize about all families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Assumptions based on stereotypes do not lead to a full understanding of immigrant families' needs. Some families might be more educated and/or Americanized than others. Still others might maintain their cultural practices rather strictly. These decisions are made based on their political, religious, or personal beliefs, values, and prior experiences. It is crucial to get to know individual families' backgrounds to better understand and respect their cultural practices of family literacy if one hopes to fulfill the needs for their children's literacy development.

Limitations

The limitation of this research is that the families' literacy practices were not continuously observed or digitally recorded in the home. The literacy events in all the digital-recordings were selected by the families. Although I explained the purpose of this study and my expectations for the digital-recordings to the families at the beginning of the study, the families might have had different expectations from mine. I refrained from repeatedly instructing the families how and what they needed to record digitally. The advantage of using digital-recordings for data collection is that it reduces response bias issues associated with survey data and parents' misinterpretation of written questions (Haney & Hill, 2004; Purcell-Gates, 1993). A researcher can also view the same literacy events more than once to observe on-going behavior, background or contextual information, and simultaneously occurring events in the background. The

disadvantage of using digital-recordings is that they could include literacy events that may not have occurred if the camcorder was not in the house (Haney & Hill, 2004).

The possibility of social desirability may motivate parents to modify their usual way of doing things during family literacy events in order to be acceptable to the researcher (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Parents may also exclude literacy events that they do not consider to be literacy events. They might add literacy events for convenience or even avoid them at times when the focal child is tired and uncooperative. Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) point out that “it cannot necessarily be presumed that representative samples of behavior have been observed” (p. 255). To solve this issue, many emergent literacy researchers studied their own children in their homes because they have easy access to all parts of their lives (Purcell-Gates, 1993).

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, it is apparent that American school literacies found their way into these two families’ homes. The children brought their school literacies home and implemented them at home, and their parents also helped them with the school literacy practices. Even the language spoken in schools entered their homes and prevailed among the children and their siblings. More research could focus on how American school literacy practices impact immigrant families’ home literacy practices. The findings could affect how educators teach in their classrooms. The degree of acceptance of American school literacies in the home might differ in individual families. When researchers consider cultural differences among immigrant families, they need to include not only nationalities, ethnicities, race, values, beliefs, but also parents’ educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, the reason of immigration, the arrival ages in the

United States, the length of U.S. residence, linguistic backgrounds, and parents' native countries' history and current affairs. In order to avoid assumptions, misinterpretation, and misunderstanding based on researchers' own cultural backgrounds, it would be advantageous to collaborate with a co-researcher who is from the target culture and can mediate cultural experiences.

I recommend prolonged engagement and the inclusion of more bilingual immigrant families of different nationalities that have perhaps been understudied. The findings would reflect a broader spectrum of family literacy practices, and more family literacy practices and strategies would be shared with readers. Prolonged engagement may decrease participants' desirable behavior or actions. Young children's first language maintenance in bilingual families could be investigated in a longitudinal study. Future research could include different numbers of siblings and sibling spacing to investigate how socialization among siblings in the home could have impact on their first language maintenance. Since English is the world language for economy and global society, how could first language maintenance be different if immigrant families lived in different countries where a non-English language is dominant? How could it be different if they lived in a country where a strict language policy is implemented or a foreign language is not accepted?

The use of digital-recordings is more natural than observations since the children in both families were very excited and proud to exhibit themselves when I visited their homes. The preschoolers and their siblings in this study were fascinated with the camcorder. They wanted to operate it, be filmed, and see themselves on screen. They may act differently from usual in the presence of a camcorder. I recommend asking

parents to hide the camera when they record their family literacy events so that the children would not be aware of being filmed.

Taylor (1986) and Purcell-Gates (1993) both expressed a concern about the intrusiveness of observing a family's private life. Purcell-Gates addressed the issue of a non-family member going into participants' homes for observation, which is an incredible invasion of privacy for most people, regardless of income or education level. When a researcher works with families, he or she should be sensitive to their privacy, cultural and historical backgrounds, and personal schedules. If a participant does not want to be filmed for some reason, observations might be an option. In this study, I tried to be as careful as possible about the participants' family situations since civil rights movements began in both Libya and Syria in 2011. The Libyan family also had a major change in the family situation. Unfortunately, the civil rights movement in Syria has intensified in 2012. The Syrian American mother's hometown has been destroyed, and her brother has joined the civil war. These political events in their native countries affect the lives of those who live in the United States.

Implications

I am not in a position to dictate what parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should do with their children to promote their early literacy development in their homes. As the literature reviewed in Chapter Two shows, parents in various cultures value and emphasize different aspects of literacy passed on by their parents and grandparents, such as an oral tradition (Heath, 1983; Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2002), syncretism of varied literacy practices (Volk & de Acosta, 2003), practical literacy practices (Rodriguez, 2006), and print-based, direct, and explicit

literacy practices (Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2002). However, this study can help us think about some of strategies that parents can implement in their homes. The parents in this study, without their knowledge, used most of the dialogic strategies when they worked with their preschoolers. These techniques are 1) to ask *wh*-questions; 2) to follow correct answers with another question; 3) to repeat what the child says; 4) to help the child as needed; 5) to praise and encourage; 6) to shadow the child's interest; and 7) to ask open-ended questions and expand the child's comments (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). Additionally, the parents helped their children to understand the content and expanded it to more advanced content and/or a personal level. They were responsive to their children's questions and comments. They were sensitive enough to scaffold literacy activities for their children's current level. The families passed their literacy values to their children by way of demonstration. More importantly, they spent time talking with their children about their homework, literacy activities, games, and library or bookstore visits. They also gave their children freedom to explore what they wanted to do.

The parents in this study are also struggling to maintain their native language despite strong pressure from the world outside the home. The preschoolers choose not to respond to their parents in Arabic. When I was visiting the Syrian American family, Sarah kept saying that she liked to speak in English and just nodded to her father's requests and comments in Arabic. Their Arabic proficiency is more receptive than productive at home. As Orellana's (1994) example shows, these children are not losing their first language, but English is becoming stronger. Eilers, Pearson, and Cobo-Lewis's (2006) case of first language maintenance in Miami suggests that insistent use

of first language in daily discourse makes it possible to improve children's proficiency. If parents allow English to replace their first language at home, they easily lose it. Thus, parents play a key role to maintain their first language at home.

This study has been an invaluable learning experience for me. It has helped me connect young children's literacy experiences during the preschool years and those in formal schooling. As a classroom teacher, I have implemented some of the strategies that the Libyan American and Syrian American parents use. My own case can be used as an example for teachers who work with young children. I have reduced the number of worksheets and let my kindergartners have more opportunities to express themselves in their oral language and to make meaning by drawing. We spend more time for shared bookreading, technology, listening, discussions, sharing, social interactions, and games. I use more prompting questions to elicit their prior knowledge and experiences and to promote their critical thinking skills. I also listen more to what they want to say than what I had planned to say. I give them more ownership for their own learning by letting their curiosity and interests lead activities and discussions.

It is important for adults to give young children opportunities to hear complex language, a large vocabulary, and advanced concepts so that they can gradually move up to the next level from the current level. By nature young children tend to bond with adults around them and imitate what the adults do and think. The adults, especially the parents, could be resources that share knowledge and skills if they would make a conscious effort to spend more time with the children. Interactions with peers are also important because they share more interests and familiar topics than adults. The interactions with 20 students in a classroom setting are different from parents'

interactions with several children of their own in a home environment. However, teachers can learn what literacy practices individual students' families value and are implementing in their homes. Parents are often eager to learn school literacy practices that improve their children's school literacies. If one sees mutual respect and appreciation of both home and school literacies in a complementary fashion, this will certainly have a positive impact on young learners' literacy development.

Teacher education programs can play an important role in preparing preservice teachers ready to accept and work with students from various cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. In particular, preservice teachers who have not had much contact with the world outside their own culture could have misconception and stereotypes toward people from cultural groups differed from their own. Teacher education programs can provide both preservice and inservice teachers with many opportunities to interact with students and parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Personal interactions with people from other cultures could have a strong impact on changing and improving misconception and stereotypes. Implementing home visits, questionnaires, and cultural activities is the first step to open up a door to unfamiliar cultures.

Afterthoughts

In my own kindergarten class, which I mentioned at the outset of this study, one sees that kindergartners have progressed in many aspects of early literacy skills at their own pace in only 90 days of formal schooling. Sarah who struggled to hold a pencil can form letters but still has difficulty using the lines on the primary writing paper. Ibrahim who wrote his name from right to left can write words correctly, but occasionally still

writes some letters backwards. Caroline who reads chapter books is moving up to the first grade starting at the beginning of the second semester. Most of the kindergartners started to read the beginning levels of their guided-reading books with ease. When they encounter unknown words, they sound out letters and blend them together. They also use invented spelling to express themselves. Most of them like to make their own small books by drawing, adding texts, and putting them in the classroom library for their classmates to read. However, some students are still struggling with letter-sound correspondences after having worked on the skills for the first several months. Nevertheless, they finally began to read the first level of guided reading books. As Clay (1991) said, “the complex process of learning to read is slow-growing from the first encounters of listening to preschool stories to the independent reading of the young school child” (p. 29). These kindergartners are still making a transition from emergent literacy to early school literacy. They have established independent reading habits, but they still depend on the illustrations for comprehension. Sometimes they bring me a book to show me sight words they have discovered. It takes many months of practice before they become fluent readers.

These children are steadily moving toward becoming readers even if the process is slow for some of them. Due to the class arrangement based on ages in many schools, it is normal to have a wide spectrum of prior literacy experiences and literacy abilities. In American society everything is supposed to happen quickly, and we tend to be impatient about young children’s progress. However, regardless of the amount of parental support they receive prior to formal schooling, they are able to make progress at their own pace if the teacher provides them with rich emergent literacy experiences in

the classroom, taking their cultural, linguistic, and developmental differences into consideration. If both parents and teachers take more time to watch their children's progress carefully, help them sensitively, listen to them with curiosity, talk to them with colorful language, respond to them enthusiastically, and celebrate their accomplishments with excitement, we will all enjoy seeing and experiencing their literacy emerge and flourish.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Questions about your child (main participant)

1. Your child's sex: ___ male ___ female
2. Your child's age: ___ years ___ months
3. Does your child attend any preschool or daycare program?

If yes, how long?

If no, with whom does your child stay during a day?

4. What language(s) does your child speak?

Language 1. _____

Language 2. _____

Language 3. _____

Language 4. _____

5. How often does your child speak the language(s)?

Language 1

all the time sometimes in public (school) other _____

Language 2

all the time sometimes in public (school) other _____

Language 3

all the time sometimes in public (school) other _____

Language 4

all the time sometimes in public (school) other _____

6. How often does your child use a book for reading and looking at pictures and texts? _____

7. How often is your child read to?

8. How often does your child go to a library or a bookstore?

9. What kind of books does your child like to choose?

10. Does your child read and/or recite the Qur'an?

11. How often does your child draw, scribble, or color a picture at home?

12. Does your child participate in any literacy-related activity outside the school?

(e.g. writing a letter to grandparents, watching TV, playing with a computer game, using a cell phone, using the Internet, email friends)

Questions on the family

1. Please list the family members who live in the household daily.

Relationship to the main participant

Age

Example: sister

two years old

2. What language(s) are used by family members in the household for daily communication?

3. What language(s) are used for religious practices?

4. How do you use the religious language? (example: reading the Qur'an, memorizing and reciting verses, discussing the meanings of verses, copying verses, etc.)

Questions for you (the parents)

1. Where are you from and how long have you lived in the United States?

2. Why did your family move to the United States?

3. How often do you read a book, a newspaper, magazines, or any other texts?

4. What kind of books, newspapers, magazines, or any other texts do you like to read?

5. What technologies do you have in your household? (e.g. computers, cell phones)

6. What are your educational backgrounds?

Father

Mother

7. What is your opinion about your child's education?

Please write any other comments you would like to make for me to better understand your child, family, education values, and home literacy practices.

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Questions about the child

13. How often does your child use a book for reading and looking at pictures and texts?
14. What is the main activity your child does with a book at this stage? (e.g. pretend reading, looking at pictures, pronunciation, word recognition, labeling)
15. How often is your child read to?
16. What kinds of books do you provide for your child?
17. How often does your child go to a library or a bookstore?
18. What kinds of books does your child like to choose?
19. Does your child use any technology in the home? Which ones?
20. Does your child speak or read another language?
21. Does your child read and/or recite the Qur'an?
22. How often does your child draw, scribble, or color a picture at home?
23. What literacy-related activities or games does your child do at home? (e.g. putting a puzzle together, playing with the alphabet cards, spelling on a keyboard)
24. When you are writing a note, a list, a journal, a check, a form, or any other text, what does your child do?
25. When you are reading a book, a newspaper, junk mail, bills, a magazine, or any other text, what does your child do?

26. Does your child participate in any literacy-related activity outside the school?

(e.g. writing a letter to grandparents, watching TV, playing with a computer game, using a cell phone, using the Internet, email friends)

27. How has your child's preschool program prepared your child for literacy?

Questions about the parents

8. How often do you read a book, a newspaper, magazines, or any other texts?

9. What kinds of books, newspapers, magazines, or any other texts do you like to read?

10. What technologies do you have in your household? (e.g. computers, cell phones, iPad, children's game software)

11. How often do you use technology in the home?

12. How do you read a book to your child? (e.g. asking questions, inviting your child to join, pointing to the text, having your child flip pages)

13. What is the purpose of shared bookreading? (e.g. enjoyment, teaching skills, etc.)

14. Do you read the same story several times or read a different story each time?

15. When your child draws or scribbles something on a sheet of paper, what do you do with it?

16. Do you praise or reward your child when he or she is involved in learning to read? What do you say or do?

17. How do you divide your time for literacy among your three children?

18. What do you want your child to be able to do in literacy at this stage (before formal schooling)?

19. What is your opinion about your child's formal education?
20. What are your expectations for your child's learning literacy skills in Arabic?
21. Tell me anything that would help me better understand your child's literacy experiences in the home, family members' support, and your education values of your child's literacy.

Questions about the family members other than parents

1. How often do your children play together?
2. Does any of the child's siblings read in front of the child or read together with the child?
3. How often do they read together?
4. What kinds of literacy activities do you ask your older child to do with the child?
5. Who else does literacy activities with your child?

Questions about cultural practices of literacy

1. In terms of family literacy practices, what differences do you see between your culture and American culture?
2. What are your literacy experiences with your family in your childhood?

APPENDIX C

Code Book

Category	Definition (Example)
<u>Child Codes</u>	
Arabic	Use of Arabic
Attention	Attention seeking behavior/utterance (Mama!)
Book handling	Holding a book or flipping page in the right order
Book talk	Talking about a favorite book (I like Dinosaur Train.)
Chanting	Chanting part of text (Dog, dog, dog...)
Choice	Making a choice for a literacy activity (I am going to read a book.)
Clarification	Asking for clarification (Is this right?)
Comprehension-picture	Comprehend text based on animation or illustration
Comprehension-listening	Comprehend text based on listening
Computer	Working on a computer
Connection	Making a connection to child's experiences (B is for Ben.)
Correction	Correcting reader's mistake (That's not a dog.)
Description	Describing a picture in a book (An elephant has a long trunk.)
Drawing	Drawing a picture to show comprehension or words with certain sounds
Expansion-knowledge	Expanding content knowledge after reading basic information (Insects – Insects have six legs.)
Extension	Adding a word or words to a family member's utterance (Mother: We saw a cat. Child: Yesterday.)
Help	Needing/asking for help (I cannot spell the word.)
Interaction	Interacting with text (Tiny, Shiny, Dawn.)
Interest	Showing an interest in a text or a book (I know this one.)
Labeling	Labeling of objects or events (It's a monkey.)
Motivation	Showing motivation (I want to read this book.)
No response	Not responding to a family member
Noticing	Noticing patterns (Cat has the same sound as mat.)
Off-task	Showing off-task behavior
Play school	Playing school as a teacher or a student
Phonics	Connecting sound with pictures/letters
Pointing	Pointing a text or a picture
Prediction	Predicting what comes next (I think he will pass the test.)
Pretend reading	Pretending reading a book. (Once upon a time...)
Question	Asking a question (Is a penguin a bird?)
Reading	Reading text independently
Reciting	Reciting text from a book or a poem (Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around.)
Referring	Referring to text (It said that the car was blue.)
Repetition	Repeating reader's utterance (Reader: A cat sat. Child: A cat sat.)
Request	Requesting a family member to do something (Can you read this for me?)
Response-non-verbal	Nodding or shaking head
Response-non-word	Non-word utterance (Eeeee.)
Response-one word	Single word utterance (Dog.)
Self correction	Correcting own mistake (I will erase it.)

Response-phrase	Multiword utterance (I want more.)
Self talk	Talking to self while reading or looking at illustration
Singing	Singing to the text
Sounding out	Sounding out letters to pronounce a word (Mmm...aaa...ppp. Map.)
Spelling	Spelling words
Writing	Writing letters or words
<u>Parent Codes</u>	
Affection	Display of affection by hugging, kissing, and cuddling
Affirmation	Acknowledging that the child is right (That's right.)
Arabic	Teaching child Arabic or talking to child in Arabic
Attention	Getting/redirecting child's attention (Look!)
Book talk	Talking about a favorite book (My favorite book is <i>Dinosaur Train</i> .)
Choices	Giving child choices for literacy activities (Do you want to read or write?)
Complex language	Use of more complex/sophisticated language
Connections	Making connections to child's experiences (Your grandpa has the same name.)
Conversation	Talking about the topic in the book (The girl was sad.)
Correction	Disapproval or correction (No, it isn't a dog.)
Directives-nonverbal	Request for nonverbal action
Directives-verbal	Request for verbal action (Say it again.)
Encouragement	Encouraging child to read a book or work on literacy skills (Go get your book.)
Expansion	Expanding child's utterance with added elements (Child: Dog. Mother: Big dog.)
Feedback	Giving specific feedback (Write this bigger than that.)
Help-comprehension	Explaining what child did not understand (A spider is not an insect because it has eight legs.)
Help-computer	Helping child with a computer game
Help-handwriting	Showing how to form a letter
Instruction-w	Teaching literacy skills – handwriting (Write a straight line.)
Instruction-r	Teaching literacy skills – reading (The father gave her a hug.)
Instruction-ph.	Teaching literacy skills – phonics (Knock begins with the N sound.)
Instruction-con.	Teaching content knowledge through text (The Pacific Ocean lies next to California.)
Interaction	Interacting with text (Tiny, Shiny, and Dawn.)
Interest	Showing an interest in what child is doing in literacy (I want to see what you wrote.)
Labeling	Labeling of objects or events (It's a monkey.)
Modeling-read	Reading aloud to child not requiring a response (Once upon a time...)
Modeling-write	Showing how to form a letter (Write a straight line, then...)
Modeling-sound	Sounding out letters for child (Cccc...aaa...ttt.)
Modeling-Arabic	Modeling in Arabic (alef-la-min...)
Negative comments	Making a negative comment about the child's performance (You don't know it.)
New words	Introducing a new word (A daisy is a kind of a flower.)
No response	Not responding to the child's utterance
Pointing	Pointing a letter or an illustration
Positive comments	Words and behaviors that create motivation (I know you can do it.)
Praise	Praising child's performance (Great job!)
Questions-yes/no	Expected answer is yes/no or nod of head (Do you know that one?)

Questions-wh.	Expected answer is a name or an action (Who is that? What is it doing?)
Question-a/b	Asking an A or B question (Was he sad or happy?)
Response	Responding to child's question or comment (Yes, it eats insects.)
Response-open	Responding to child's question or comment with an open-ended statement (Let's see. Not seven, but...)
Repetition	Repeating child's utterance (Child: Want milk. Mother: Milk.)
Rewarding	Promise a reward after the completion of a task (You can play when you are done.)
School	Playing school (You are the teacher. Teach me how to spell words.)
Singing	Singing a text to or with the child
Sounding out	Sounding out letters to pronounce a word (Mmm...aaa...ppp. Map.)
Summary	Summarizing a story or part of a story
Support	Supporting child's utterance
Tracking	Tracking print with finger while reading
Voice	Use of dramatized tones of voice (Wow!)

APPENDIX D

Digital-recordings – Child
Cross-case Analysis

Recurrences: High (16-33), Medium (7-15), Low (1-6)

Code	Family A	Family B
Attention	Low	Medium
Book handling (flipping pages)	Low	Low
Book talk	Medium	
Chanting	Low	
Choice	Low	Low
Comprehension-pictures or animation	Low	Medium
Comprehension-listening	Low	Low
Computer-pretend		Low
Connection	Medium	Low
Correction	Medium	Medium
Description	Medium	
Drawing	Medium	
Expansion-knowledge	High	Low
Extension to the speaker's utterance		Low
Help	Low	Low
Interaction (with text)	Low	
Interaction (with computer)	Low	
Interaction (with a book)		Low
Interest	Low	Medium
Labeling	Medium	
Motivation	Medium	High
Motivation-Arabic	Low	
No response	Low	Low
Noticing-phonics	Low	
Off-task	Low	Low
Play school		Low
Phonics - Matching sounds with pictures	Low	
Phonics – Making letter-sound correspondences	Low	
Pointing		Low
Prediction		Low
Pretend reading	Low	Medium
Question	High	High
Reading		Low
Reading-computer	Low	
Reciting-Arabic	Medium	
Repetition-speaker's utterance	Low	
Repetition-reader's utterance	Low	Low

Repetition-computer sound	Low	
Repetition-Arabic	Low	
Request		Low
Response-non-verbal	Low	Medium
Response-non-word	Low	
Response-one-word	High	High
Response-phrase	High	Medium
Response in Arabic		Low
Self correction		Low
Self talk		Low
Singing	Low	Low
Sounding out	Low	
Writing words	Medium	
Writing letters		Medium
Writing words in Arabic	Low	
Writing letters in Arabic		Low

Digital-recordings – Family
Cross-case Analysis

F-father, M-mother, B-brother, S-sister

Recurrences: High (16-33), Medium (7-15), Low (1-6)

Code	Family A	Family B
Affection	Low-M	Low-F, Low-M
Affirmation	Low-M, Low-B	Low-F
Arabic use	Low-M	Low-F
Attention	Medium-M, Low-B	Low-F, Low-M
Adjustment		Low-F
Book talk	Low-M	
Choices	Low-M	
Complex language	Low-M	
Connections	Medium-M	Low-F, Low-M
Correction	Medium-M	Low-F, Low-M
Directives-nonverbal		Low-M
Directives-verbal	High-M, Low-B	Medium-F, High-M, Low-S
Encouragement	High-M	Low-F, Medium-M
Encourage to use Arabic	Low-M	
Explanation	Low-M	Low-F, Low-M
Expansion		Low-F, Low-M
Knowledge expansion-content	Low-M	
Feedback	Low-M, Low-B	Low-M
Help-computer		Low-M
Help-handwriting		Low-M
Instruction-w	Low-M	

Instruction-ph.	Low-M	
Instruction-con.	High-M	Low-F
Instruction-w in Arabic	Low-M	
Instruction-r in Arabic	Low-M	
Interaction with text	Low-B	
Interest	Medium-M, Low-B	Low-F, Low-M
Labeling	Low-M, Low-B	
Modeling-read	Low-M, Medium-B	
Modeling-read in Arabic	Low-M	
Modeling-write in Arabic	Low-M	Low-M
Negative comments		Low-M
New words in Arabic	Low-M	
No response		Medium-M
Pointing	Medium-M, Low-B	Low-F
Positive comments	High-M, Low-B	Low-F, Medium-M
Praise	High-M, Low-B	Low-F, High-M, Low-S
Questions-yes/no	High-M, Low-B	High-F, Medium-M, Low-S
Questions-wh.	Medium-M, Low-B	High-F, Low-M, Low-S
Questions-a/b	Low-M	Medium-F
Questions-open-ended	Low-M	Low-M
Response	High-M	Low-F, High-M
Response-open	Low-M	Low-M
Repetition	Medium-M	Medium-F, Medium-M
Rewarding	Low-M	
Singing	Low-M	
Sounding out	Medium-M, Medium-B	
Summary		Low-F, Low-M
Support in Arabic pronunciation	Low-M	
Voice		Low-M

APPENDIX E

Interviews
Cross-case Analysis

common themes – pink, different themes - blue

Libyan American Family			Syrian American Family		
Themes	Subthemes	Descriptions	Themes	Subthemes	Descriptions
Child			Child		
emergent reading	daily reading routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily independent reading time • daily bedtime shared bookreading (at least 15 minutes) 	emergent reading	daily reading routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flips through pictures about for 15 minutes every day • Sometimes the parents read her book or the older sister reads her book.
	shared book-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every day at bedtime with the mother 		shared book-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every day until August and two to three times after the mother started school again
	comprehension through illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looks at pictures and makes up a story • pretends reading • sounds out 		comprehension through illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flipping through pages and looking at pictures
	repetitive reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads the same books more than once (marks books by folding the edges) 		repetitive reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads purchased books several times
	books of Ahmed's interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabic books • brothers' books • animal books • dinosaur books (since Ahmed was two or three years old) • sperm whale (his favorite) • non-fiction/fiction/song books 		books of Sarah's interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Seuss • A Cat in a Hat • Dora • Curious George, • Fancy Nancy
emergent writing	novice writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writes letters to his extended family • writes noted in his scrapbook 	emergent writing	novice writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used <i>Handwriting without Tears</i> at her preschool last year • uses a pre-k resource book • brings a lot of worksheets from her preschool and

					Sunday school
multi-modal literacies	drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily drawing • coloring 	multi-modal literacies	drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draws every day
	puzzles, games, socio-dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number puzzles • games • imaginary play • outdoor activities • pretend play (Harry Potter, book-based characters) 		puzzles, games, socio-dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puzzles • games • playing with toys • pretend play
	technology experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knows how to use the home computer • the mother's iPhone • the GS (video games) • the Wii • starfall.com, pbskids.org, Harry Potter website • email with his mother 		technology experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a computer to look at PBSKids.org • knows exactly where she needs to go to find games and videos on a cell phone • uses talking books • The children watch their parents use technologies and get better than them on a computer. • watches TV (cartoons) for one hour a day maximum and more on weekends
learning through social interactions	imitating family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imitates his brothers doing homework • reads magazines with his mother • imitates his parents 	learning through social interactions	imitating the older sister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children often like to sit down and read together. • Mia likes to read to Sarah sometimes. • Sarah likes to read to Layla sometimes. • Sarah opens up a book and makes up a story. • Layla sits down with her sister and likes to be read to.
	shared experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shares the same books with his older brothers • The boys play together in the frontyard and backyard. They play games, puzzles, Scrabble, and Harry 		shared experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children play 50% and fight 50 % together. • Mia and Sarah like to draw or write on a kids' chalkboard. • They read together, watch videos together, and argue

		<p>Potter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do pbskids.org or starfall.com together. • They read books together. • Ahmed is exposed to things older than he is. 			<p>which video they are going to watch.</p>
bilingualism	use of Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chooses not to speak Arabic • understands Arabic 	bilingualism	use of Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks Arabic, but does not read or write. • sometimes puts an alphabet puzzle together.
	use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English as Ahmed's stronger language 		use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • really likes to speak English and does not like to respond to the parents in Arabic • The children speak English to each other. • Sarah speaks all in English to her sisters.
biliteracy	reading in Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read three-syllable words last year 	curiosity	interest in literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sits with the parents and asks a lot of questions when they are writing or reading • likes to check mail a lot and opens envelopes from curiosity • likes to ask questions
religious practices	learning the Qur'an at home and in preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • went to Islamic preschool • learned the Qur'an, Arabic (40 minutes), and English • listening, memorizing, and reciting the Qur'an • learned through signs • learned the right rhythm, the right intonation, certain keys, the grammar 	religious practices	learning the Qur'an at home and in preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recites the Qur'an • goes to Islamic preschool and Sunday school
Parents			Parents		
parental strategies	not teaching specific literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • never taught Ahmed how to read • never taught his how 	parental strategies	not teaching specific literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably he teaches specific skills without realizing it.

	skills	to sound out		skills	
	reading strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pointing to words having Ahmed pronounce every other word 		sensitivity to Sarah's current level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The father tries to keep Sarah's attention when he reads a book to her. He makes up a story to the pictures in books when the books are long.
	choosing literacy activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid TV books such as <i>Sponge Bob</i> 			
positive home environment	celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> had a little dance for reading a book by himself hang spelling tests, pictures, and writings on the refrigerator celebrate little positive things 	positive home environment	rewards & praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep some of Sarah's special writings in her treasure box When Sarah is good (including reading), she gets 25 stickers and gets a prize. When she is really bad, the parents rip off the sticker sheet and she has to start it over. Parents' praises are more Americanized. Arabic people could be very affectionate with kids. It can be the area similar between American culture and Syrian culture.
providing literacy experiences	bookstore/library visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take their children to a bookstore twice a month and look at a pile of books having a hot chocolate take them to a library book sale take them to a library for a story time 	providing literacy experiences	bookstore/library visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visit a public library once a month to check out 20-30 books
	making an effort to spend more time with Ahmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> were used to spend more time for helping the older children with their homework The older children are now more independent and know their routine. The mother tries to 		spending less time with Sarah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The oldest child gets 80% because she is in school. Sarah gets 15% and Layla 5%. It used to be close to 50/50. As the older child is in second grade and reading

		make a conscience effort to read with Ahmed. She is trying to do more for him.			more, she gets more.
	father's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He teaches his children Arabic informally. The mother does most of the teaching, but he reads, tells stories, and shares things in Arabic. • He didn't grow up here and doesn't want to teach them the wrong way. 			
family members as role models	parents' reading as role models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The father reads all the time and reads everything. He reads religious books, books about laws, books about etymology, languages based books, Arabic newspapers, and English newspapers. • The mother reads a couple of books at a time and flips through magazines. She reads fiction, easy reads, books on politics, history, literature, culture, and child development. • The parents both read the Qur'an. 	family members as role models	parents' reading as role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both parents' going back to school • The father reads many articles from newspapers and the internet and books about politics. • He also likes to write and recently published a n article for AJC about the event in Syria.
use of technologies	technologies in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer • cell phone • Wii for Netflixs • iPods 	use of technologies	technologies in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer • cell phones • children's games • electronic games called <i>Operation</i>
	monitoring their children's use of technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring what is on the screen from the kitchen • not allowing them to view YouTube • 30 minutes each day for non-school related activities • encourage bookreading 			
maintenance of heritage	parental expectations for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expect Ahmed to be a fluent in reading, writing, and speaking 	maintenance of heritage	parental expectations for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family makes a big emphasis on Arabic because the

language	Ahmed's literacy proficiency in Arabic		language	Sarah's literacy proficiency in Arabic	children can speak it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their expectations are to be able to read and write in Arabic.
	parental beliefs for teaching Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The father believes the importance of teaching young children the Arabic sounds. want them to learn and read the Qur'an without a heavy focus on memorization 			
	difficulty in maintaining Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The oldest son used a lot of Arabic. The second son also used lot of Arabic until pre-K, and then they began to use English more. With Ahmed it has been harder since the brothers speak English. The parents still speak Arabic with them. She focuses more on reading. In the summer they do reading, writing, and Qur'an memorization. The TV is in English, everything is in English. 		difficulty in maintaining Arabic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge for the children is to be able to read and write it. At home the parents speak Arabic as much as possible, but it is much more challenging to get the children speak Arabic. The parents put Arabic cartoons in a car when they drive a long distance. It's hard for the children to understand Arabic songs, but they listen to the sounds. When the oldest child was Sarah's age, her Arabic was much better than Sarah's. To get Sarah's Arabic really good, they really have to work hard. When she asks the father to play, he says no because she speaks only in English. If she speaks in Arabic, they reward her. The preschool teaches Arabic every day.

	bilingualism in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk to the children in Arabic and Friends in English lots of switching and combining (add <i>-ing</i> to Arabic verbs) • The father is more consistent speaking to them in Arabic, but even he is using more English these days. 		bilingualism in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Sarah was little, the mother was in school. They spoke more English. They are trying to correct it and speak Arabic to Sarah as much as possible. • The parents speak the youngest child all in Arabic.
	Arabic instruction in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The father teaches Ahmed Arabic very informally like a game (especially the sounds) • The mother teaches Ahmed Libyan, the formal Arabic, and words borrowed from Italian. • teach Arabic sounds, three-letter sequences 			
transmission of literacy	parents' values for literacy and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • love reading and always read • in a literacy-rich environment • balance memorization and center-like approached for more motivation • do not push memorization • easy-going mom • don't want to stress out their children 	transmission of literacy	parents' values for education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value education • push education, but not what their children have to do
	parents' beliefs for shared book-reading – bonding time and cultivating a love for books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared bookreading for bonding time • The mother wanted him to have pre-learning skills, love to read, sit down with a book, and look at it. 		parents' beliefs for shared book-reading – meaning and enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared bookreading for keeping Sarah occupied with something useful and having her learn, even for entertainment • comprehension of stories
	parent's childhood experience – father's influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mother grew up going to a bookstore with her father and looking at books • The mother experienced pre-schooling in Libya and went to French 		parents' childhood experiences – being independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mother's mother did not read. She did all by herself. • In Syria, people do not do bedtime story reading at all. But academics are

		<p>school for two years in Switzerland. She also experienced formal schooling in several states in the United States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her father always taking her and her siblings to libraries was very influential. • Her father always said, “Read, read, read...right down words you don’t know.” 			<p>important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They teach the Qur’an a lot.
	deprivation of education in Libyan history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libyan children were pulled out of school because of Italian colonization. • Her grandfather spoke fluent Italian and Arabic. He was an orphan, but worked hard and educated himself. Because he was deprived, he wanted children to go through Master’s level. Even before the Italians, her grandfather was the one whom people came to learn to read the Qur’an. 		children’s in Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Syria women stay at home all day long and study with children when they come home from school. • In Syria children do not get a lot of things outside the school.
	book handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not throw books • do not put books on the floor 		Americanized practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family is very balanced, but becoming more Americanized. • The family is more Arabic when they get together with their friends. • Literacy practices are more Americanized. When the mother came to the states, she was young and picked up everything. Everything she experienced in this environment is American.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lot of things are how the father grew up in the states.
	family's future plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• planning to move back to Libya			

APPENDIX F

Digital-recordings, Interviews, Writing Samples, Home Visits, Photos
Cross-case Analysis

common themes – pink, different themes - blue

Libyan American Family		Syrian American Family	
Themes	Subthemes	Themes	Subthemes
Child		Child	
multimodal literacies		multimodal literacies	
curiosity	showing interests	curiosity	showing interests
	showing motivation		showing motivation
inattentiveness	off-task behavior	inattentiveness	off-task behavior
comprehension through illustrations and listening	comprehension through illustrations	comprehension through illustrations and listening	comprehension through illustrations
	comprehension through listening		comprehension through listening
	pretend reading		pretend reading
	labeling pictures		pointing
reading routines	daily reading routines	reading routines	daily reading routines
	shared bookreading		shared bookreading
	repetitive reading		repetitive reading
emergent reading	books of Ahmed's interest	emergent reading	books of Sarah's interests
	book handling		book handling
	making connections		making connections
	making corrections		making corrections
	expanding knowledge		expanding knowledge
	asking questions		asking questions
	repeating reader's utterance		making predictions
	book talk		
	Ahmed's own choices		
	describing characters		
	interacting with text		
novice writing	writing words	novice writing	writing letters
			self corrections
drawing	drawing	drawing	drawing
games	puzzles, games	games	puzzles, games
technology experiences with parents' help	navigating programs and games	technology experiences with parents' help	navigating games and videos
	interacting with computer (with mother's help)		toy laptop computer (with mother's help)
	repeating computer sounds (with mother's help)		talking book
oral language	nonverbal responses	oral language	nonverbal responses
	one-word responses		one-word responses
	one-word responses		one-word responses
	singing		singing
	sociodramatic play		sociodramatic play

	repeating speaker's utterance		extending speaker's utterances
	chanting		self-talk
phonics	identifying sounds	phonics	
	sounding out		
(school literacy)	preschool work	(school literacy)	preschool work
	preschool homework		
learning through social interactions	imitating family members	learning through social interactions	imitating the older sister
	shared experiences		shared experiences
	more attentive with parents		more attentive with parents
	asking for help		asking for help
	no response		no response
bilingualism	use of Arabic	bilingualism	use of Arabic
	use of English		use of English
	showing interests		response in Arabic (during lesson)
biliteracy	writing words in Arabic	biliteracy	writing letters in Arabic
	reading in Arabic		
	repeating Arabic sounds		
religious practices	learning the Qur'an at home and in preschool	religious practices	learning the Qur'an at home and in preschool
	recitation		recitation
Parents		Parents	
parental strategies	not teaching specific literacy skills	parental strategies	not teaching specific literacy skills
	redirecting attention		redirecting attention
	making connections		making connections
	correcting child's mistakes		correcting child's mistakes
	giving directions		giving directions
	giving explanations		giving explanations
	giving feedback		giving feedback
	pointing		pointing
	yes/no questions		yes/no questions
	wh-questions		wh-questions
	A or B questions		A or B questions
	repeating child's utterances		repeating child's utterances
	reading strategies		sensitivity to Sarah's current level
	choosing literacy activities		expanding Sarah's utterances
	book talk		helping with handwriting
	giving choices		summarizing
	use of complex language		
	expanding content knowledge		
	labeling pictures		

	singing		
parental teaching	teaching how to write words	parental teaching	teaching how to write letters
	teaching phonics		
	teaching concepts		
positive home environment	affection	positive home environment	affection
	keeping/displaying child's work		keeping child's work
	affirmation		affirmation
	encouragement		encouragement
	showing an interest in what child is doing		showing an interest in what child is doing
	positive comments		positive comments
	praise		praise
	responsiveness		responsiveness
	rewards		rewards
	celebrations		use of dramatic voice
providing literacy experiences	bookstore/library visits	providing literacy experiences	bookstore/library visits
	making an effort to spend more time with Ahmed		spending less time with Sarah
family members as role models	parents' reading as role models	family members as role models	parents' reading as role model
monitoring/helping with technologies	technologies in the home	use of technologies	technologies in the home
	monitoring their children's use of technologies		helping with computer use
maintenance of first language	parental expectations for Ahmed's literacy proficiency in Arabic	maintenance of first language	parental expectations for Sarah's literacy proficiency in Arabic
	modeling		modeling
	difficulty in maintaining Arabic		difficulty in maintaining Arabic
	bilingualism in the home		bilingualism in the home
	belief against memorization		putting on music in Arabic while driving
	Arabic instruction		showing DVDs in Arabic
	encourage to use Arabic		sending Sarah to Sunday school
	Arabic books in the home		
transmission of literacy	parents' values for literacy and education	transmission of literacy	parents' values for education
	parents' beliefs for shared bookreading – bonding time and cultivating a love for books		parents' beliefs for shared bookreading – meaning and enjoyment
	parent's childhood experience – father's		parents' childhood experiences – being

	influence		independent
	deprivation of education in Libyan history		few materials for children in Syria
	not putting books on the floor		Americanized practices
	moving back to Libya		