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THE EFFECTS OF CROSS-AGE TUTORING ON THE ORAL  
FLUENCY OF THE LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENT

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education: Teaching English As A Second Language

---

by  
Joan Elizabeth Wilson  
September 1993

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Joan Elizabeth Wilson  
September 1993

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Approved by:

  
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Date

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# The Effects of Cross-age Tutoring on the Oral Fluency of the Language Minority Student

## Abstract

This project reports on a study that investigated the effects of cross-age tutoring on the oral fluency of 32 language minority California 6th grade students utilizing three categories of English conversation prompts. Results indicated that Limited English Proficient (LEP) subjects outperformed Native English Only (NEO) subjects in a cross-age tutoring setting on one of three prompt categories and demonstrated a positive attitude towards cross-age tutoring.

## Dedication

I dedicate this project to my mother, Gertrude West, the eternal optimist, for being able to patiently and lovingly encourage me to pursue this project and believing in me with a dauntless faith.

## Acknowledgements

Deep appreciation is expressed to Dr. Esteban Diaz, Professor of Education, CSUSB; Dr. Lynne Diaz-Rico, Assistant Professor of Education, CSUSB; Dr. José Hernández, Assistant Professor of Education, CSUSB - Facilitators all!

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I am indebted to the dedicated colleagues of Kelley Elementary School who persevered through many countless hours of teaching me the computer graphics programs needed for this project. A special note of thanks to the sixth grade students without whom this project could not have been completed.

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Sincere thanks to the members of my project committee at CSUSB; Dr. T. Patrick Mullen, Professor of Education and Kathryn Z. Weed, Assistant Professor of Education.

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## Chapter 1

### THE PROJECT'S GOAL

#### Introduction

The purpose of this project is to review both historical and recent research that indicates that children may become competent and fluent speakers when the practice of cross-age tutoring is combined with an explicit oral fluency foundation. This project will focus on this theory. In addition, the project will explain the components that make up the theories of communicative competence and second language acquisition in education.

The focus of this project will be in answering vital questions that teachers encounter when trying to provide an adequate second language acquisition program. The area of concern for this study is the effects of cross-age tutoring on the oral fluency of language minority students. The project will begin with an introduction to the historical perspective and recent research that shows what the trends are and have been in the field of cross-age tutoring. Few studies combine

cross-age tutoring and oral fluency. A review of communicative competence and second language acquisition will be included to give the reader some knowledge of the scope and breadth of this field within regular education settings as well as bilingual settings.

This project will incorporate the explicit oral fluency method of Eric Keller and Sylvia T. Warner, (1988) as explained in the book, Conversation Gambits: Real English Conversation Practices, and the use of cross-age tutoring in the classroom setting. This will enable readers who may wish to duplicate this project to combine cross-age tutoring and oral fluency practice in order to provide a well balanced second language acquisition program for the more advanced language minority student.

The question, "How best do we teach our language minority students oral fluency?" has been puzzling to both English as a Second Language (ESL) and mainstream classroom teachers. The language minority student must experience the same high-quality instruction, high expectations for student performance, and meaningful materials and activities as native speakers do if they are to participate in the fullest educational experience the schools can offer (English-Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, 1986). It is estimated

that a minimum of 3.4 million children, and possibly more, are limited in the English language skills needed to succeed in schools designed for English-speaking majority children (English-Language Arts Framework and Criteria Committee, 1987). The number of language minority students is growing daily.

Schools in many states are struggling to find ways to meet this real educational concern. There is a necessity to address the needs of the vast numbers of language minority students in order to make oral fluency more attainable, and to assure that all language minority children receive an educational opportunity. A communicative-based, cross-age tutoring program is one strategy for helping children with limited-English-proficiency to achieve oral fluency in a second language. This strategy could be integrated with cooperative learning grouping strategies.

#### Definition of Terms

1. Active participation: (covert/overt behavior) using techniques to foster the consistent involvement of the minds of the students in their learning.
2. Acquisition: relates to language gained via unconscious effort; a natural, informal process.

3. Communication competence: the ability to accomplish one's personal goals in a manner that maintains a relationship on terms that are acceptable to all parties (Adler R. B. & Towne, N., 1990).

4. Communicative competence: knowledge needed by a speaker or hearer of how to use linguistic forms appropriately (Hymes, 1971).

5. Comprehensible input: understandable and meaningful language that enables second language acquirers to expand their language skills. It is characterized as language which the second language acquirer already knows ( $i$ ) (input =  $i$ ) plus a range of new language which is made comprehensible through the use of pictures, realia, dramatization and other strategies.

6. Comprehension: (Bloom's Taxonomy - Level #2, 1956) The learner is expected to communicate an idea or thing (event) in a new or different form, to see relationships among things, to project the effect of things. Examples: A. Comprehend - to retell, to translate, to restate; B. Interpret - to define, to explain, to infer; C. Extrapolate - to project, to propose, to calculate.

7. Cross-age activity: any act or work exchanged between students of different ages.

8. Cross-age tutoring: any age student assisting

the progress of another age student - usually an older student assisting a younger student.

9. Fluency: a complex concept defined as language that produces stretches of connected discourse (Reid, R. & Gilbert, F. 1986).

10. Intermediate fluency stage: one of the natural second language acquisition stages during which an ESL student can demonstrate the ability to respond with expanded sentences using prepositional phrases, descriptive words and connectors in natural, unrehearsed situations (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

11. Language minority student: a student who speaks a native language other than the language spoken by the majority of the school population.

12. Low anxiety: a state of the student where his/her apprehension is at a minimum.

13. Motivation: an inducement or incentive of a person's will or drive to do something that will satisfy a need or desire

14. Oral fluency: an ease of speaking without obvious "halting" (Galvan, M., 1986).

15. Prompts: words or phrases that help people to express what they are trying to say such as 'I'd like to know...'



### Purpose of the Project

This project is designed to make oral fluency more attainable for the language minority student by implementing English conversation practices in a cross-age tutoring program. The English conversation practices are designed to develop and enhance communication skills. In the approach used in this project, the teacher emphasizes oral fluency by teaching common words and expressions (prompts) in contexts and for specific purposes to ensure communicative competence.

Cross-age tutoring is a perfect vehicle for improving the language minority student's oral fluency and communicative competence. Cross-age tutoring programs can be easily implemented; therefore, teachers can take full advantage of the opportunities, encouraging language minority students to participate in oral activities using English conversation practices that will lead toward communicative competence.

English conversation practices incorporated into this project will consist of three sets of prompts using oral fluency approaches to second language acquisition. This study will require only materials accessible to the teacher and student, thus eliminating the investment in costly equipment. It will provide comprehensible

activities which the language minority student can explore with minimal preparations from the teacher.

The cross-age tutoring approach of the project will enrich the conversation practices by providing communicative opportunities facilitated by prompts to enhance oral fluency of the language minority students. This project will differ from other cross-age tutoring programs in that it emphasizes the use of prompts which allow the ESL teacher to develop the conversational skills of language minority students. Such prompts and related conversational practice through cross-age tutoring will lower the student's anxiety level, and help the language minority student convey meaningful information and aid communicative competence in English.

#### Statement of Objectives

The study developed using cross-age tutoring will complement the ESL curriculum, and only require materials readily available to the teacher and students. These materials are appropriate for sixth grade students at the intermediate fluency stage of language production. The study is restricted to conversation practices employing prompts at the language minority student's level of language production and interests when engaged in

cross-age activities with kindergartners. The conversation practices using cross-age tutoring will present situations in which the language minority student will focus on particular prompts to ask for information from a kindergartner. These prompts will be used in a language experience-like approach in which sixth grade tutors record and dictate stories from kindergarten tutees. The language minority student will also use prompts to show interest in the kindergartner's contributions to the activity. The study is designed to stimulate the student's growth in oral fluency as well as encourage self-confidence, motivation, and a low anxiety level which will, in turn, promote communicative competence during cross-age tutoring.

The purpose of the conversation practices using a cross-age tutoring approach will be to provide the language minority student with comprehensible prompts to be used in activity-based situations without the need for expensive equipment or added teacher preparation. The greatest values will be to: 1) interest the language minority student in cross-age tutoring, 2) enhance communicative competence and 3) teach oral fluency in a comprehensible manner.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Literature

#### Introduction

This literature review presents current research that indicates that children become competent and fluent presenters, when cross-age tutoring is combined with oral fluency and communicative competency, assisting the language minority student in acquiring a second language. This literature review will present studies in the teaching of language minority students. In addition, the project will explain four major components that make up the foundation of language minority students' programs. These components will include cross-age tutoring, oral fluency, communicative competence, and second language acquisition in education. The literature review will begin with an historical perspective and then recent research of each of these components. The historical perspective will take the reader through 1982 while the recent studies will review with 1983 through 1991.

## CROSS-AGE TUTORING

### Historical Perspective

Most research on cross-age tutoring indicates that the academic skills of the tutors improve as much or more than the skills of the tutored. Several major reviews of such studies that support this premise have appeared. Cloward (1967), Rosenshine and Furst (1969), Ellson (1975), Devin-Sheehan et al. (1976), and Fitz-Gibbon (1977) all concluded that tutorial programs not only contribute to the academic growth of the children who are tutored but probably contribute to the growth of the children who provide the tutoring as well.

Cross-age tutoring also develops academic skills by enhancing self-esteem. Gartner, Kohler, and Riessman (1971) speak of the importance of the "building of self-respect" in the learning process, and McWhorter and Levy (1971) stress that a tutor "experiences success in an academic situation" and that the success can help a tutor develop positive attitudes toward self.

The fact that cross-age tutoring works has been well documented by the studies of Dillner (1972), Elliott (1973), and Robertson (1971). Cross-age tutoring

generates academic and social growth, acceptance of responsibility, increased self-worth, and social understanding. At the same time, it meets individual needs, provides individual attention, and is academically productive while being personally enjoyable (Dillner, 1972; Elliott, 1973; & Robertson, 1971).

By becoming the teacher, the tutor assumes a teacher's characteristics of competence and fluency. According to Allen (1976) this role theory implies, in effect, that one becomes what one does.

However, one study that does not seem to support this role theory is that by Willis and Crowder (1974). In their study of cross-age tutoring, the tutor group did not show any gains over the control group in their role as teachers. Tutors in the program received considerable training, and the tutoring was done in a highly structured situation. In speculating on why the tutors did not show the expected gains, the authors suggest that the structure and training interfered with the relationship between the tutor and the tutored. They posit that less structure would perhaps have helped develop "positive, flexible relationships" between the tutor and the tutored and would perhaps have helped tutors gain more academically.

This suggests that a less formal role, more that of a

friend than teacher, might allow for more tutor development. This theory may have some validity since it has elements of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The expectation of tutoring makes friendships more likely to occur than would otherwise have been the case and may help tutors develop confidence and esteem. This in turn develops the tutor's competence and oral fluency.

Gartner, Kohler, and Riessman (1971) also pinpoint the advantage of the relationship between teaching and learning to the tutor. In their study they say that "every child must be given the opportunity to play the teaching role, because it is through this role that he/she may really learn how to learn." They present their concept of insight development during the tutoring process as

the opportunity of observing another in the process of learning, perhaps leading him to reflect upon his own learning process.... This opportunity may increase his own awareness of the patterns of learning, for in order to teach another he may need to call upon his own experiences in learning and how he learned (1971, p. 62).

Thelan (1969) also speaks to this concept of insight

development, seeing the tutor not just as a teacher but as a researcher, "conducting an investigation into the teaching-learning process." (p. 229)

Related to the idea that teaching is a learning process enhanced by a tutor's self-esteem is the concept of "locus of control." This is the basis for a theory offered by Chandler (1975). According to this theory, individuals who feel they are in control of their lives and environment (so-called internals) tend to be more academically successful than those who believe more in luck or chance or who tend to be dependent on others (so-called externals). The need, according to Chandler, is for a program that moves the externals "toward internal locus of personal control," and he sees tutoring by low-achieving externals as a way to effect this change (p. 335). The act of tutoring will help a student, at least an external, become more active in the learning process and may result in "increased motivation and learning for the tutor" (p. 336).

This idea of learning for the tutor was also explored in the studies of Lippitt and Lohman (1965). They said that insights are developed during the cross-age tutoring process about one's own abilities and skills rather than into the subject because cross-age tutoring gives the cross-age tutors an opportunity to "test and develop



their own knowledge." Through tutoring cross-age tutors are able to see their oral fluency abilities and communicative skills develop in order to present their knowledge and understanding of a subject to another person.

Morgan and Toy (1970) arrived at a similar conclusion. They found that tutoring provides "identification with the problems and process of teaching" and found that this process is related directly to learning.

Another process of tutoring that is related to learning, the utility theory, refers to how the knowledge of tutoring skills is used by a cross-age tutor. Reading skills, for example, are used by a cross-age tutor not just for reading but also as the focus of the tutoring session. As such, the knowledge or skill to tutor takes on greater significance; there may be more motivation for the cross-age tutor (who is the learner) and the result may be that the subject is more readily learned or understood better. Lippitt and Lohman (1965) talk about the "significance" of the knowledge the cross-age tutor has. Expanding a bit on this concept Gartner, Kohler, and Riessman (1971) stress the utility of the tutor's knowledge, a utility that gives greater significance to the knowledge and promotes understanding.

It is easy to imagine a tutor developing a greater respect for knowledge because it is significant, useful, and a medium of exchange. With this respect for knowledge tutors can improve their understanding and learning.

Bargh and Schul (1980, p. 595) working with college students, speculated that one reason that tutors might improve their understanding or knowledge was the "verbal and nonverbal reinforcement given by the student," where "smiles, nods, and statements such as... 'I understand now' would enhance the learning of the tutor." They looked at academic tutoring and, though they also speculated that reinforcement from the tutored may enhance the tutor's learning, their results indicated that the act of tutoring itself was not what improved the tutor's learning. It was rather the interaction between the tutor and tutee which enhanced the learning. This learning took place particularly when the tutors dealt with the material orally. Bargh and Schul theorized that "verbalized stimuli were more likely to be remembered than nonverbalized stimuli." (p. 595)

In 1977 Hartley applied powerful review methods to the literature on tutoring. Applying meta-analysis to findings on mathematics teaching in elementary and secondary schools, Hartley showed not only that the

effects of tutoring were positive, but that they were stronger than effects from such other individualized teaching methods as computer-based instruction, programmed instruction, and instruction with individual learning packages. Hartley also showed that the effects of tutoring were especially strong in some types of studies and relatively weak in other types.

Cohen and Kulik (1981) reviewed Hartley's analysis. They concluded that since her analysis was restricted to the area of mathematics education and cognitive gains, she could not determine whether tutoring had positive effects on attitudinal and affective outcomes of teaching. Finally, Hartley's analysis suffered from a methodological weakness. She combined effects on those being tutored and on those providing tutoring. The results of these effects should have been described separately as outcomes for student tutors and outcomes for student tutees.

A meta-analysis of 65 school tutoring programs done by Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) revealed positive effects on the academic performance and attitudes of both those who received tutoring and those who served as tutors. Students gained a better understanding of and developed more positive attitudes toward the material covered in the tutorial program.

### Summary of Historical Perspective

Only Willis and Crowder (1974) and Bargh and Schul (1980) show that cross-age tutoring does not work if the situation is too highly structured. It does not work when the tutors are overly-trained. These researchers conclude that the act of tutoring itself does not improve the tutor's learning. However, the bulk of the research studies reviewed here indicates that tutoring works if the tutors experience favorable results. It works when there is positive self-esteem. It works if the tutors remain flexible and are willing to be friends and teachers. It works when the tutors get personally involved in academic achievement and are given the freedom to teach in their own personal way. It works when the tutors gain skills and abilities to present knowledge after being involved in the teaching/learning process. It works when the tutor feels useful and there is interaction between the parties. Thelan (1969), Gartner, Kohler, and Reissman (1971) and Hartley (1977) all support a theory of cross-age tutoring.

### Recent Studies

Several studies since 1983 also support the idea that cross-age tutoring has a positive impact on the tutor. Wheeler (1983) worked at matching abilities in cross-age tutoring. Eleventh graders with minimal reading abilities were assigned a primary child who was considered a slow reader. The tutoring program expanded to include students with math difficulties as well. Wheeler found that when abilities were matched, the learning may be greater because the student tutors not only pulled together for book discussions, but pulled together for competency skills, debates, and passed their own courses. While Wheeler's study focused on high school age students, Ellis and Preston (1984) designed a project in which fifth graders tutored first graders using wordless picture books. They found that in the case of a bilingual first grader who was not speaking complete English sentences, the tutor encouraged words and phrases from the child. They speculated that in bilingual programs, both languages could be developed.

Also in 1984, Maher and Bennett researched a cross-age tutoring program in which pupils enrolled in the special education programs of a high school and classified as emotionally disturbed served as cross-age

tutors to pupils enrolled in the special education programs of an elementary school and classified as educable mentally retarded. This research program endorsed the cross-age tutoring as a practical and potentially effective approach to providing supplemental instruction for mildly handicapped pupils in public schools. The pupils who served as the cross-age tutors showed marked increases in the completion of academic work assigned them in their classes and in the accuracy of their performance on tests and quizzes taken.

Recent reviews of tutoring programs in special education settings have concluded that both cross-age and peer tutoring configurations appear to be promising types of interventions for social and academic benefits (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Richter, 1985; Scruggs & Richter, 1985). Researchers Osguthorpe, Scruggs, & White (1984) state that both cross-age and peer tutoring represent effective and versatile interventions for special and remedial settings, and certainly appear to be positive alternatives to independent seat work or practice activities. Scruggs & Osguthorpe (1986), working with learning disabled (LD) and behaviorally disordered (BD) students acting as tutors of younger LD and BD students, found that students employed as cross-age tutors gained general decoding skills, but did

not gain in skills that were a direct component of the tutoring activities, as did their tutees. In contrast, peer tutors and tutees gained in both specific and general reading skills. It was found, however, that cross-age tutoring may hold more potential for social gains. When this study is looked at from the language minority tutorial setting, the potential for social gains could serve as a catalyst for an ESL cross-age tutor to develop oral fluency skills in order to maintain a relationship between tutor and tutee.

Berliner and Casanova (1986) believe that cross-age tutoring not only gives students opportunities to work with each other, but it also shifts the responsibility for learning beyond the teacher, to the students themselves. Because it closely resembles the family situation of the older helping the younger, it is probably preferable to peer tutoring. This shows that cross-age tutoring in the school setting could be a preferable environment when patterned after the family situation. In the case of many of the Hispanic language minority students this would resemble a familiar role they are already often called upon to use in the family setting - the older helping the younger (Peñalosa, 1980). As cross-age tutors this role could help language minority students become competent presenters by

functioning in a familiar setting.

Sassi (1990) also concentrated on older students helping younger students. He invited a group of kindergarten students to visit another school and learn from some sixth grade students. Due to this tutoring experience, the kindergarten students developed better verbal skills, and used their imaginations. Both the tutors and tutees used technology as a common ground for learning. The sixth grade tutors were to introduce their young peers to the world of computers. The tutors enriched their skills in punctuation and spelling. They also developed a sense of responsibility for providing effective learning experiences to the younger children. The kindergarten class was also better prepared for their upcoming computer instruction in the first grade because they had lessons from their own private tutors. This study points out the effectiveness of a kindergarten - sixth grade cross-age tutoring span with academic benefits and enriched skills for both tutors and tutees.

Labbo & Teale's (1990) investigation into cross-age reading, provided opportunities for fifth graders to improve their own reading by reading stories to very young children. Although considered only a pilot study because of the small number of students involved and the lack of an adequate control group, the investigation did



suggest that a cross-age reading program is a promising way of helping poor readers in the upper elementary grades to improve their reading. If reading can be improved in this way, could not oral fluency and communication skills of language minority students also improve in a cross-age tutoring program?

### Summary of Recent Studies

Studies since 1983 support the idea that student to student tutoring is favorable. It is favorable when abilities are matched. It is favorable when used in a bilingual setting. It is favorable and helps the retarded. These views are supported by the statistically significant studies of Wheeler (1983), Ellis and Preston (1984), and Maher and Bennett (1984). Only Scruggs and Osguthorpe's (1986) study shows that peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring both help academically, but the cross-age tutoring may allow for social gains that the peer tutoring does not.

### Summary of Cross-Age Tutoring

Much of this review has presented studies focusing on: 1) the tutor (role, esteem, and locus of control),

and 2) the process (reinforcement, utility, and insight into subject or self or the teaching learning process).

Some theories do assume more relative importance. Certainly role, insight, locus of control, and esteem all may play a part in a tutor's learning, but perhaps most important is simply time on task. Tutors spend more time on the activity than nontutors, trying to make it comprehensible and time then becomes one of the mechanics of the situation and a significant variable.

Time on task varies with each tutor as learning to be a competent and fluent presenter of the materials used becomes a very important factor when working with language minority students and comprehensible input. Cross-age tutoring would appear to be one way of allowing a language minority student more time to use the newly acquired language. Only the project of Ellis and Preston (1984) made any reference whatsoever to the bilingual aspect of tutoring. More research is needed to know the effects of cross-age tutoring on the language minority student both as tutor and tutee.

## ORAL FLUENCY

### Historical Perspective

Oral fluency in this review will be defined as an ease of speaking without obvious 'halting' (Galvan, 1986). This review will show that oral fluency is an integral part of speaking, listening, and pronunciation when language minority students are trying to achieve communicative competence.

In 1976, Loban conducted a study which showed that the process of fluency is a characteristic with individual difference and does not change with age in the range of the subjects he studied. In the same year, Wong-Fillmore reported that oral fluency of limited English proficient (LEP) speakers is dependent upon the degree to which they have been exposed to people using English for a full range of uses. If LEP speakers hear English used in limited functions, they are likely first to learn set phrases and chunks of language, and only later to manipulate the components of the language system productively (Wong-Fillmore, 1976).

There are two major currents that run through any ESL course in oral communication (Murphy, 1991). The first

current focuses upon elements of phonological accuracy, a subset of both speaking and listening skill development, while the second focuses upon broader aspects of interpersonal communication, namely fluency in speaking and listening. Based upon needs analysis of such factors as the students' educational and social goals, their proficiency levels in oral language, and their preferred learning styles, the sound system can be introduced, examined, and practiced (p. 60).

Stevick (1978) wrote over a decade and a half ago that in the teaching of pronunciation,

all too often, self-consciousness leads to tension, tension leads to poor performance, poor performance leads to frustration, frustration leads to added tension, and so on around a downward spiral.  
(p. 146)

Thus it was that Eslava & Lawson (1979) developed person-to-person communicative practice activities such as project work in order to alleviate some of the downward spiral effects. Meloni & Thompson (1980) helped focus oral language through oral reports. Donahue & Parsons (1982) used role plays to focus upon broader aspects of interpersonal communication. Scarcella (1978)

says that practice in sociodrama is of fundamental importance to oral focuses.

### Summary of Historical Perspective

Early studies such as Loban's (1976) fully encompasses the research trends presented here. His study indicates that oral fluency is achieved through the same steps regardless of age. Oral fluency is achieved through "hearing" the sound system of the language. Oral expression must be valued by the learner and must be meaningful while he/she is allowed to operate in a tension-free atmosphere in order to enhance performance.

### Recent studies

Garber (1984) worked on motivation strategies for oral expression. His work showed that two points must be kept in mind when structuring the classroom environment. The first is that any activity that may be devised *must* have meaning for the student. Any opportunity for oral expression that is created must be one that is valued by the learner.

Second, the occasion for oral expression must be particularly well defined so that the student has a

workable structure within which to formulate and then express ideas. In order to eliminate many poorly defined structures for oral expression, Yorkey (1985) attempted to delineate these structures by providing practice for gaps in information as the students encountered them.

Pennington & Richards (1986) further extended the idea of oral expression. They believe that practice on segmental levels needs to be integrated with broader level communication activities in which speakers and listeners engage in a process of exchanging meaningful information. This concern emerges partly in response to the literature on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which emphasizes purposeful and meaningful uses of language in L2 classrooms (Murphy, 1991).

While previous studies investigated the exchange of meaningful information, a study conducted by Streim & Chapman (1987) asked whether lexical availability affects the length, complexity, order of mention and fluency of children's utterances. Specifically, they attempted to determine whether manipulating discourse support and word frequency would cause utterances to vary in length, complexity (as indexed by number of verbs), number of words preceding the target word, or fluency. Unlike the early studies of Loban (1976), these results showed that the number of responses containing the target word varied

with age and the number of responses interacting with discourse support varied as well. Earlier studies varied with age and discourse support condition and fluency varied with discourse support condition. Streim & Chapman's (1987) findings suggest that the availability of words, or their referents, in working memory may alter the syntactic organization of a to-be-formulated utterance and make subsequent production of the utterance more fluent - but only if the word or referent is available before the process of formulation begins.

In order to make the oral production more fluent, listening instruction should play an important role in oral communication curricula. Chamot (1987) says that little attention is given to the student's listening abilities in other academic preparatory courses. For this reason listening and connections between listening, speaking, and pronunciation emerge as central components of ESL oral communication. Simulations were the oral communication activities used by Crookall & Oxford (1990) to help make the connections between listening, speaking, and pronunciation.

A conceptual framework proposed by Murphy (1991) emphasizes that focused attention upon a single component of oral communication is insufficient. The theory of language that underlies Murphy's framework acknowledges

that oral communication is a composite of interconnecting language processes. Attention to one area of oral communication ought to be complemented by attention to others as systematically as possible. Each subset of oral communication needs to be incorporated within any informed curriculum design.

### Summary of Recent Studies

Recent studies show that oral fluency is achieved when one listens well, practices speaking, and improves pronunciation. The search for ways to integrate the areas of speaking, listening, and pronunciation will prove imperative as ESL teachers and methodologists attempt to clarify theoretical approaches, curriculum designs, and classroom practices while providing diverse opportunities for the development of oral language proficiency for second language learners of English.

### Summary of Oral Fluency

While this review offered many different approaches to attain oral fluency, some important work has been done toward providing the learner of a second language actual experiences other than through simulations or other



contrived situations to develop oral fluency. More research is needed to implement real life situations that provide the practice for oral fluency with immediate relevance and importance. Perhaps the focus of these relevant situations could be linked to the effects of cross-age tutoring in order to study oral fluency of the language minority student. If the person-to-person activity used in cross-age tutoring can be made relevant to both the tutor and tutee then perhaps the purpose for oral fluency takes on new importance and significance. There would be no need to contrive situations in which fluency needs to be practiced and instead oral fluency could be put to real use tutoring another person.

## COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

### Historical Perspective

Communicative competence is the knowledge needed by a speaker or hearer of how to use linguistic forms appropriately (Hymes, 1971).

Most of the studies reviewed here deal with the communicative competence of the young child. Avrom Noam Chomsky was an American linguist who revolutionized modern linguistic theory, especially the analysis of language acquisition. He was a proponent of transformational grammar. His view of competence was associated exclusively with knowledge of rules of grammar.

Hymes (1972), however, put forth a theory of communicative competence that comprised knowledge (and abilities) of four types:

1. Whether something is *possible*;
2. Whether something is *feasible* by virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether something is *appropriate* in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated
4. Whether something is in fact done, actually

*performed*, and what its doing entails (p. 281, his emphasis).

Hymes (1972) has suggested that factors such as memory and perceptual strategies should be included in the notion of communicative competence. He also includes probability rules of occurrence in his communicative competence model that seems to be an important aspect of language use that is ignored in almost all other models of communicative competence. Hymes (1972) explicitly and Campbell and Wales (1970) implicitly adopt the notion that a distinction exists between communicative competence and performance. According to these theorists, this latter notion refers to the actual use of knowledge of the rules of grammar.

The communication skills of language minority students necessitate a fuller understanding of communicative competence and (communicative) performance. Communicative competence is a relationship between knowing the rules of grammar - grammatical competence, and knowing the rules of language use - sociolinguistic competence. Communicative performance is the realization of the above-mentioned competencies and their interaction in actual comprehensible discourse. Almost all researchers dealing with communicative competence maintain this distinction between communicative

competence and performance. One exception is Kempson (1977), who adopts Chomsky's (1965) strong position that competence refers exclusively to rules of grammar and identifies the notion of communicative competence with a theory of performance. Kempson reasons as follows:

"A theory characterising a speaker's ability to use his language appropriately in context, a theory of communicative competence, is simply a performance theory" (1977:54-55).

These theories of communicative competence posit interesting views that warrant careful consideration of communicative competence and performance of language minority students as cross-age tutors. However, another view that must be considered is that of grammatical competence in conjunction with communicative competence.

One of the first empirical studies dealing with grammatical competence and communicative competence in a rigorous manner is that of Savignon (1972). She studies the communicative skills and grammatical skills of three groups of college students enrolled in an introductory audiolingual French course in the United States. These groups will be referred to as the communicative competence (CC) group, the culture group, and the

grammatical competence group respectively. She found that although there were no significant differences at the .05 alpha level among groups on tests of grammatical competence, the CC group scored significantly higher than the other two groups on four communicative tests she developed. Her reported finding that the CC group did just as well on the grammatical tests as the other two groups suggests that attention to basic communication skills does not interfere in the development of grammatical skills.

Wong-Fillmore's (1976) study of five new arrivals to the United States from Mexico addressed the effects of basic communication skills of the foreign language child and examined the communicative competence of second language (L2) children. These children were paired with Anglo peers and their communication was taped over a period of a school year. The children increased their knowledge of the target language remarkably. Sometimes this increased knowledge was inadequate in getting across intentions but the peers were able to fill in the gaps. As the limited English proficient (LEP) students became fluent English proficient (FEP) students, they learned to manipulate the components of the language system productively. This manipulation of the components helped the students hone in on their grammatical as well as

communicative competence.

Munby (1978) claims the view that communicative competence includes grammatical competence and is to be preferred to the view that it does not, since the former view logically excludes two possible and misleading conclusions: first, that grammatical competence and communicative competence should be taught separately, or the former should be taught before the latter; and second, that grammatical competence is not an essential component of communicative competence. This second reason is important because there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar. Both sets of rules are necessary to communicate effectively. The theoretical framework that underlies Munby's model of communicative competence consists of three major components: a sociocultural orientation, a sociosemantic view of linguistic knowledge, and rules of discourse. His sociocultural orientation component is based on Hymes' work. Hymes presents his sociocultural component as "what the social meaning or value of a given utterance is." An utterance may be inappropriate in a particular social context (e.g. saying *good-bye* in greeting someone). Munby's sociosemantic view of linguistic knowledge is based on language as semantic options derived from social structure. This allows speakers to

realize what they can say (semantic option) as determined by what they can do (social structure). Munby's last component, rules of discourse looks at coherence. It concerns itself with the relationships to be derived from contextual meanings of spoken expressions.

The sociocultural, sociosemantic and rules of discourse components, although not named as such, were investigated by Miller, Chapman, and Bedrosian (1977) who concerned themselves with the peer-related communicative interactions of the mildly developmentally delayed children and found that they commonly exhibit expressive language problems. They concluded that unusual difficulties in child-child communicative interactions were to be expected for mildly delayed children, even in comparison to nondelayed children matched in terms of developmental level. These results were generally consistent with those of Kamhi and Johnston (1982) who found that minimal differences existed between developmentally delayed children and a developmentally matched group of nonhandicapped children in interaction contexts not including peers. When viewed in the light of language minority students working with a second language, should difficulties in communicative interactions be expected in a cross-age tutoring program when compared to native language speakers of the same

grade level working in a like program? This possibility should be carefully considered.

In 1973, Shatz and Gelman conducted a study comparing the interactions of nonhandicapped children's speech to peers (or adults) with children's speech interactions with younger children. They found that the adjustments made by both interactions parallel each other. This study was reviewed to see if communication skills would differ when speech interactions of different age levels were compared. Since the adjustments made by the different age levels parallel each other, it would be interesting to see if the same findings could be rendered to the speech interactions of the language minority cross-age tutor when the communication skills may differ due to the use of a non-native language. A means of testing these speech interactions could prove quite valuable.

A study which provided a means of testing communicative competence was suggested by Morrow (1977) through the use of discrete-point testing that may be expected to address the learner's competence in assessing a communicative interaction in the following terms:

- A. The settings to which it might be appropriate.
- B. The topic which is being presented.



- C. The function of the utterance.
- D. The modality (or attitude) adopted by the speaker/writer.
- E. The presuppositions behind the utterance.
- F. The role the speaker/writer is adopting.
- G. The status implicit in the utterance.
- H. The level of formality on which the speaker/writer is conducting the interaction.
- I. The mood of the speaker/writer. (p.28).

It is important to note that Morrow includes grammatical accuracy among the evaluation criteria for integrative tests but excludes it for discrete-point tests of communicative competence. These criteria can be an assessment tool of the communicative competence of a cross-age tutor when evaluating the communicative interaction that takes place in a tutoring session.

Canale and Swain (1980) propose a theoretical framework for communicative competence and examine its implications for second language teaching and testing. They posit that the study of sociolinguistic competence is as essential to the study of communicative competence as is the study of grammatical competence. Communicative competence is viewed by them as a subcomponent of a more general language competence, and communicative

performance is viewed as one form of more general language performance. Thus their tentative theory of communicative competence minimally includes four main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. This theory focuses mainly on verbal communication skills. Canale's (1983) objective to this entire theoretical framework is to "prepare and encourage learners to exploit in an optimal way their limited communicative competence in the second language in order to participate in actual communication situations" (Canale 1983:17)

### Summary of Historical Perspective

Early studies have shown that communicative competence is achieved when the learner uses language in context as presented in the third component of Munby's (1978) model. Memory and perceptual strategies of communication skills should be included in a communicative competence model as reflected by the work of Hymes (1972). While Chomsky (1965) and Morrow (1977) believe communicative competence is based on a knowledge of the rules of grammar and grammatical accuracy, other researchers such as Canale and Swain (1980) point to the

importance of including socio-cultural orientation, sociolinguistic competence, and a knowledge of the rules of discourse as well.

### Recent Studies

Savignon's (1972) earlier mentioned research was followed by work in 1983 in which she defines communicative competence as "dynamic, interpersonal, context specific, relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved" (Savignon, 1983:9). Thus, the communicative adjustments attempted by language minority tutors and tutees involved in context specific activities could be strongly influenced by their interpersonal cooperation.

Both Guralnick and Weinhouse (1984) and Guralnick and Groom (1985 & 1987) identified deficits in peer-related social competence and play interactions of young mildly delayed preschool children with nonhandicapped preschool children in mainstream playgroups. They concluded that communicative adjustments occurring in accordance with the characteristics of one's companion are important aspects of any assessment on communicative competence. Although this study focused on mildly delayed and nonhandicapped children the fact that communicative

adjustments are made between these children parallels the communicative adjustments sometimes attempted by language minority students when trying to be competent and fluent presenters in social and academic settings.

The studies of Levy (1986) and Levy, Schaefer and Phelps (1986) both concluded that participation in sociodramatic play centers builds the language competence of young children when the play centers are carefully designed to include a variety of themes and props. These studies were conducted with nonhandicapped kindergarten age students and 3- and 4-year-old children. Being as play centers can build the language competence of young children, perhaps the interaction of a cross-age tutor at play with a kindergartner can build the language competence of both the tutor and tutee. This might be particularly beneficial if used to build the language competence of language minority students. Much oral language production takes place while at play. This could enhance language competence.

Isbell and Raines (1991) conducted an observational study in which they investigated the effects of three types of play centers on the oral language production of young children. The play centers included blocks, housekeeping and a changing thematic center. The children were both male and female ranging in age from

4.8 to 6.2 years of age. The study examined language fluency, communication units, utterances and vocabulary diversity. Results showed that the subjects were more verbally fluent, used more communication units and produced more diverse vocabulary in the block center, followed by the changing thematic center, with the least language produced and less diverse vocabulary used in the housekeeping center. The results suggest that the block center can effectively provide young children with opportunities to use their language fluently and to use more diverse vocabulary. The block center could be used to provide language experiences for young children with less fluent language and less diverse vocabulary. This study could help determine the kinds of activity centers that should be developed for language fluency of minority students involved in cross-age tutorial programs.

Language competence leads to interactive communication; therefore a communicative approach to language teaching starts with a theory of language as communication, which implies that the goal of language teaching is to develop "communicative competence." The underpinnings of this approach include a commitment to the role of teaching in which the interactive process, in turn, requires activities which promote learning and support the learning process. They should be activities

that students perceive as real communication in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks (Richards & Rogers, 1986). In any approach which stresses oral communication it is important to reduce student anxiety in the second language (L2) environment. Horwitz (1990) reminds us that many college students who are not specifically prone to foreign language anxiety may still suffer from communication apprehension (fear of public speaking). He finds that the more interesting an activity, the more likely that students will be able to forget their self-consciousness and become involved in achieving the communicative goals of an activity.

#### Summary of Recent Studies

Recent studies have shown that communicative competence is strongly dependent on interactive communication. Most of these studies involved children at play who encountered a stress-free environment in which to communicate.

#### Summary of Communicative Competence

Further research is warranted to discover the influence of play centers on young children who are more

diverse in culture and socioeconomic level. Results from such investigations could provide the additional information necessary to form appropriate group composition that would encourage the oral language production of individual children. Wong-Fillmore (1976) studied the social interaction of second language (L2) children and their communicative competence. Horwitz (1990) was one researcher who addressed the effect of the foreign language classroom and attempted to attend to the affective domain in the foreign language classroom by shifting the instructional focus to the learner. Perhaps an investigation should be conducted to examine the communicative competence of L2 children working as cross-age tutors because cross-age tutoring could be tailored directly to the instructional focus of both the tutor and tutee.

Other research issues that could be addressed are the following:

A. Not only may learners be cognitively unprepared to handle certain aspects of communicative competence in the second language, but native speakers of the second language may vary their level of tolerance of grammatical and sociolinguistic errors according to the age of the learner, other things being equal.

B. Investigation of the construct, content, and

concurrent validity of various communicative tests now available is needed in determining the extent to which levels of achievement on such tests correspond to adequate or inadequate levels of communicative competence in the second language as perceived by different groups of native speakers for different age groups of learners. This testing is relevant to the proper placement of language minority students into existing ESL classroom programs. When ESL programs do not exist the tests could provide a focus to establish a program that best meets the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

C. Savignon's (1972) data give no information on the learners' 'flexibility' in handling communicative functions and interactions on which they have not been drilled.

D. Without motivation, learners who have an adequate level of communicative competence may not have the desire to perform well in the second language. Investigations are needed to differentiate why such students may do quite well on more competence-oriented communicative tests but quite poorly on more performance-oriented ones. The relevance of this issue is to find methods to motivate the learners to a performance-oriented level commensurate with their competence-oriented communicative level.



## SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN EDUCATION

The fourth component of the literature review will address second language acquisition in education for the language minority student.

### Historical Perspective

The Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act) 1975 defines its target group as language minority children with limited English proficiency, without regard for their individual language usage. The Supreme Court decided in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) that it was a denial of equal educational opportunity for the school districts not to provide special programs for students who do not understand English.

Regarding the responsibility to teach others who do not understand while learning a second language, Cazden (1976), in her study of language contexts for bilinguals, says:

We all learn something best by having to teach each other; self-confidence is built when a

child can successfully fulfill such a leadership role; the community is strengthened when members understand that having particular knowledge or skill entails a responsibility to teach others who don't. (pp.74-90)

The research of Cummins (1979) identifies an underlying language proficiency in bilinguals. Bilinguals, in his view, do not have a separate store of concepts in each of their languages, but rather a single store of knowledge which can be expressed in either language. According to this inter-dependence hypothesis, what is learned in the way of concepts is learned only once, and thereafter transferred to the second language whenever adequate proficiency in it has been acquired (Cummins, 1979). This is important because when concepts are transferred to a second language the ability to expand the vocabulary of the second language also takes place thus expanding the acquisition of the new language.

Research and accumulated experience make it clear that the acquisition of a second language in all its dimensions takes many years (Cummins, 1981)

Whether learning English as a native or second language, a person can be expected to progress through a series of linguistic stages, from the simplest one-word

utterances to the most complex grammatical construction. The fact that a student is at a low linguistic stage in no way indicates that he/she is incapable of mastering more sophisticated language (Gonzales, 1981).

Among the approaches to second language instruction is one that may be classified as communicative-based. In communicative-based instruction, goals, teaching techniques, and student evaluation are all based on behavioral objectives defined in terms of abilities to communicate messages (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979). This has led the profession to modify the use of other approaches in the direction of communicative-based approaches, especially when teaching a second language to language minority children. In addition, these approaches are based implicitly (or sometimes explicitly) on the same theory of language acquisition, namely, that in order to acquire a language, students need a rich acquisition environment in which they are receiving comprehensible input in low anxiety situations (Terrell, 1981). The input provided in an activity is comprehensible, drawing on concepts that the learner already has developed through the first language and engaging aspects of cognitive/academic language proficiency available from the first language (Kessler and Quinn, 1981).

Meanwhile, making the classroom a safe place to take

a risk encourages student participation in the activity. This in turn relates to a low affective filter, contributing positively to the language acquisition process. This type of input corresponds closely to Krashen's (1982) view of optimal input - comprehensible, meaningful, and relevant to the language learner.

The interaction of the language acquirer with peers who are native speakers of the second language also serves to generate input. When a cooperative learning atmosphere has been established, children can feel free to correct and help each other, rather than compete with each other.

#### Summary of Historical Perspective

Cazden's (1976) study shows that best second language learning comes from teaching each other. The second language learning needs to be communicative based. Interaction of second language learners needs to take place in a real rather than contrived situation, and a stress-free environment. Cooperative learning can be employed to provide a stress-free environment where second language learners can communicate with native speakers.

### Recent Studies

It seems that language used for conversational purposes is quite different from language used for school learning, and that the former develops earlier than the latter (Snow, 1983).

In Krashen's theory, focus on the meaningful use of language is requisite to the language acquisition process. Krashen and Terrell (1983) devised the Natural Approach, a methodology which emphasizes that language acquisition occurs in only one way: by understanding messages. They specifically state that:

We acquire language when we obtain comprehensible input, when we understand what we hear or read in another language. This means that acquisition is based primarily on what we hear and understand, not what we say. The goal, then, of elementary language classes, according to this view, is to supply comprehensible input, the crucial ingredient in language acquisition and to bring the student to the point where he/she can understand language outside of the classroom. When this happens, the acquirer can utilize the real world as well as the classroom, for progress. (p. 1)

Chamot's (1983) theory predicts that second language acquisition will occur in subject matter classes taught in the second language if the child can follow and understand the lesson. She also believes that children need to acquire experience and expertise in the functional use of language in all areas of the curriculum.

On the other hand, Cummins (1984), found evidence that while children may pick up oral proficiency in as little as two years, it may take five to seven years to acquire the "deconceptualized" language skills necessary to function successfully in an all English classroom. A child's English skills may be judged as "adequate" in an informal conversation, or even on a simple test, but this may not mean that the child's skills are adequate for understanding a teacher's explanation of a concept.

Oral proficiency in informal conversation and the pivotal role of social interaction in second language acquisition is supported by the study done by Wong-Fillmore (1985) of Mexican immigrant children in the United States. She reports that students who are not proficient in the target language do not provide adequate models for each other. This is not to say, however, that all non-native peer grouping should be avoided. On the

contrary, such groups can provide comfortable environments in which the students can practice giving output and negotiating for meaning. The danger, it would seem, comes when non-native peers are the *major* source of input during the language acquisition process. Perhaps it is Porter (1986) who sums it up best:

though learners cannot provide each other with the accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input that native speakers can provide them, learners can offer each other genuine communicative practice, including the negotiations for meaning that may aid second language acquisition (1986, p. 220).

Effective second language learning can be related to two principles:

1. The interrelationships between graphic and linguistic realizations of meaning (as well as the interrelationships between the linguistic modes) can be exploited to make communication clearer and lower the language barrier for students who are learning subject matter knowledge in a second language (Early, 1989).

Both components of this principle (graphic and linguistic) are used in the project presented in Chapter

3, although the linguistic factor figures more prominently than does that of the graphic factor.

2. Effective learning of a language means, among other things, "learning to use a language to socialize, to learn, to query, to make believe and to wonder" (Rigg & Allen, 1989).

In the teaching of ESL, speaking, listening, and pronunciation need to be placed within the broader context of oral communication. It falls to the teacher to decide when to work on pronunciation, when to work on broader skills of interpersonal communication, when to emphasize either speaking, listening, or pronunciation, and when to aim for varying degrees of integration. Murphy (1991) says that well-informed decisions are grounded in (a) familiarity with the related literatures; (b) discussions of issues raised in the literature with colleagues; (c) teacher experimentation with different instructional options at the levels of approach, design, and procedure; and (d) regular revision of the curriculum. These efforts should eventually lead to competent and fluent presenters in both social and academic settings. The competency and fluency of the presenters lies at the core of any course in oral communication designed for speakers of English as a second language.



Such a course in oral communication designed for ESL speakers using real English conversation practices is presented by Keller and Warner (1988). This work presents prompts that aide the natural sound and flow of an English conversation. These prompts are used to introduce a topic of conversation; to link what one has to say to what someone has just said; to agree or disagree; to respond to what one has heard. Keller & Warner (1988) posit that if conversation occurs without the use of prompts, "people will think we are very direct, abrupt, and even rude...They (prompts) show our attitude to the person we are speaking to and to what (s)he is saying" (p. 4).

The work of Keller & Warner (1988) uses three kinds of prompts: opening, linking, and responding. **Opening prompts** are used to help introduce ideas into a conversation. They are not only used to start a conversation, but also to introduce new ideas during a conversation. **Linking prompts** are used to move a conversation in a different direction, or give someone else a chance. Linking prompts are designed to reduce misunderstanding between people because Keller and Warner (1988) find that misunderstanding "comes from *how* they (people) say something, not *what* they say" (p. 35). **Responding prompts** allow one to agree or disagree at

different levels, to show surprise, disbelief, or polite interest. Successful conversations depend partly on how one responds to what other people say. Keller & Warner (1988) also posit that when practicing the prompts, the language is more important than the content of what is said.

These prompts used in conversation practices could serve as the design of an oral communication course for fluent English proficient students. Oral fluency gained in such a course could be perfected in a cross-age tutoring program. The cross-age tutoring program could develop the communicative competence of second language learners by providing an avenue for them to practice conversations using prompts learned in second language acquisition.

### Summary of Recent Studies

As in communicative competence, speaking, listening, and pronunciation are also important components of second language learning. Recent studies show that second language acquisition is achieved based on understanding. Sufficient time is a necessary component to allow the second language learner to connect the various processes of language learning to a cognitive level of acquisition.

This cognitive level can be enhanced by the design of a curriculum incorporating the understanding of prompts and then using the prompts in conversation practices. These practices can then be made real by utilizing them in a cross-age tutoring setting to benefit the social and academic progress of all students involved.

### Summary of Review

The exploration of several theoretical positions of cross-age-tutoring, oral fluency, communicative competence, and second language acquisition on language learning and utilization provide a base from which a framework for interactive oral communication can be developed through cross-age tutoring. Opportunities must be provided for students to practice using language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture. Active communicative interaction among students must take place. Opportunities should be provided for students to practice carrying out a range of functions likely to be necessary in dealing with others in the target culture. Cross-age tutoring is one way in which this can be accomplished. Obviously, if second language students are never given the opportunity to use language beyond the sentence level in classroom practice

activities, the development of these and other important discourse skills will be neglected. Again, cross-age tutoring opens up that avenue whereby the second language learner can practice some of the newly acquired language in a true-to-life setting with real life results.

### Chapter 3 THE PROJECT

This project, *The Effects of Cross-age Tutoring on the Oral Fluency of Language Minority Students*, was developed to integrate real-life situations in a cross-age setting for fluent English proficient students. A variety of prompts were included to allow for individual differences in language ability and interest. The English conversational practice activity was chosen to challenge the cross-age tutors to use a variety of prompt sets, such as opening prompts and responding prompts with their kindergarten buddies. Furthermore, the study allows for English conversation practices in a relevant activity. Cross-age tutors develop oral fluency and communicative competence in their second language, English. This project works with and begins to answer the question: "How best do we provide opportunities for our language minority students to develop oral fluency?"

#### Procedures and Specifications

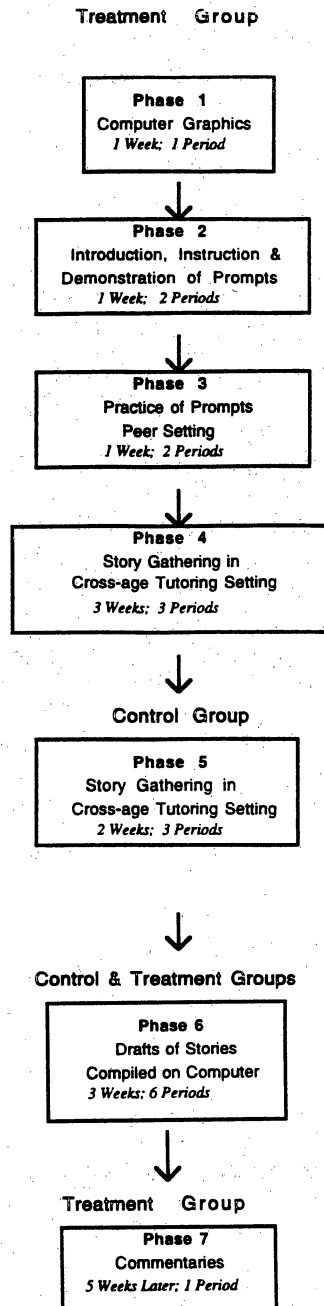
The real life activity emphasizes basic communication competence through the concept development of prompts as

a means to achieve oral fluency. The activity consists of using 'Asking for Information' prompts (Set 1), such as "*I'd like to know...*", 'Telling a Story' prompts (Set 2), such as "*First,*" and 'Showing Interest' prompts (Set 3), such as "*Right.*" Set 1 has four prompts, Set 2 has nine prompts and Set 3 has six prompts. (see Appendix A)

These prompts are available in the work by Keller and Warner (1988) mentioned in Chapter 1. Both the cross-age tutoring and the prompt activities are a supplement to the district adopted program. Each activity asks the language minority student to work with someone in order to engage in conversations. Each set of prompts in Keller and Warner's book has from three to sixteen prompts.

The activity used in this project and shown graphically on the next page, centered around the gathering of a story based on the cross-age tutor's computer generated picture from the computer program "Kidwriter" by J. & J. Pejsa (1984) (see Appendix B) and the tutor's ability to use the prompts to help elicit a story from the kindergarten buddy. The activity includes steps that lead to the development of oral fluency, using suitable phrases or prompts to develop a story, and listening to other people to show interest. The 'Showing Interest' set includes three different responses. The

## Graphic of Project



cross-age tutor could simply use one of the phrases in the 'Showing Interest' set, such as "OK," or use the phrases *while* the kindergartner is speaking, wait for pauses or for the kindergartner to finish speaking. This and other activities like it consists of ideas and situations that could be developed as supplemental language and conversation activities in conjunction with any ESL program.

The prompts, chosen by the teacher, were arranged by topic and activity to enhance the different stages of language fluency among the cross-age tutors.

### Construction of the Project

A thorough research of the literature was made to attain cross-age tutoring activities and studies, including oral fluency references, communicative competence projects and second language acquisition programs. A true-to-life situation was chosen which could be completed with a minimum of preparation by the teacher and completed independently by language minority students with a fluent level of English proficiency. The same procedure was used in gathering the data from both the cross-age tutors' group and the control group of native English speakers. This included a triad composed



of: (1) a kindergartner (the storyteller), (2) the cross-age tutor using a prompt such as "Could you tell me...?" (the prompt user) and (3) a data collector (the prompt counter).

The prompts chosen were brief, using clear and concise language. Only the language minority students were asked to practice the prompts once among themselves using the triad format. The practice included all sixth graders as storyteller, prompter and collector. Because this activity was going to use only pictures to generate a story from a kindergartner, only wordless picture books were used for practice with the peer group. The teacher circulated and observed to see that the task was properly understood and meaningful practice was attained by all subjects. A review of their tally sheet was discussed so the students could see how well their practice had gone.

#### Data Needed

To obtain the necessary data the project included:

- 1) Introduction to and instruction  
in the use of prompts
- 2) Practice with several prompts
- 3) A real life activity
- 4) A compilation of a final product

- 5) A group of cross-age tutors
- 6) A control group

In order to utilize a design of two groups - a control group and a treatment group (2) X prompt use frequencies (2) X oral fluency levels (3) several phases were initiated which are explained in detail under Methodology in this chapter. Prior to the cross-age tutoring periods the subjects created a computer generated picture using the computer program entitled "Kidwriter".

### Subjects

The subjects came from an elementary school serving K-6 students from three cities in Southern California. The student population of the school was 879 at the time of the study. The school profile of ethnic population was 434 Hispanics (49.4%), 249 Anglos (28.4%), 170 Blacks (19.44%), and 26 Others (2.6%). The school services 146 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The students came from a middle socio-economic level in the communities served by the school. Of the fourteen elementary schools in the district - the school used in this study ranked seventh.

There were 16 subjects (9 males & 7 females) in the treatment group ranging in age from 10 to 13 years. They were all of Hispanic ethnicity. There were 16 subjects (9 males & 7 females) in the control group also ranging in age from 10 to 13 years. There were 5 Caucasians, 6 Afro-Americans and 5 Hispanics. All 16 subjects of the control group had English as their native language. All participating subjects were sixth graders. Some subjects in both groups also used the services of an instructional aide, a library clerk, a health aide, and a counseling intervention specialist. An instructional aide worked with 12 subjects in the treatment group and 7 subjects in the control group. The library clerk worked with all subjects from both the treatment and control groups. A health aide worked with 1 subject from both the treatment and control group. A counseling intervention specialist worked with 3 subjects from the treatment group and 1 subject from the control group. Working with all subjects in the treatment group only was a bilingual instructional aide. One male subject in the treatment group required the services of 2 instructional aides for the visually handicapped. The treatment group was enrolled in a bilingual sixth grade class numbering 28 students. The control group was enrolled in a non-bilingual sixth grade class numbering 27 students.

The kindergartners tutored by the treatment group were enrolled in a P.M. kindergarten of 30 students with 17 males and 13 females. They ranged in age from 5 to 6 years. The kindergartners tutored by the control group were enrolled in an A.M. kindergarten of 32 students with 11 males and 21 females. They ranged in age from 5 to 6 years.

### Methodology

Preparation and execution of the project's phases then proceeded as follows:

#### Treatment Group

**PHASE 1** - Creation of computer generated graphics for picture storytelling. Time: 1 fifty minute period

#### WEEK 1

#### PERIOD 1

A period was scheduled in the computer lab so the subjects could prepare their computer generated graphics for the storytelling activity of phase 3.

PHASE 2 - Introduction, instruction and demonstration of prompts by teacher. Time: 2 forty minute periods

WEEK 2

PERIOD 1

The teacher introduced the subjects to a definition of prompts. Instruction in the use of prompts for opening conversations, for linking conversations from one subject matter to another, and for responding to people while engaged in conversations was discussed and demonstrated through spontaneous conversations with subjects as volunteers throughout the lesson. The teacher concluded the lesson by having subjects copy down a set of six linking prompts entitled 'Demanding Explanations' which they were to practice for one week.

WEEK 2

PERIOD 2

Once the subjects were familiar with the format of using prompts, a second lesson introduced them to the opening and responding prompts needed for the project activity itself. Three sets were introduced. They included:

1. Four opening prompts entitled 'Asking for Information'
2. Nine opening prompts entitled 'Telling a Story'

3. Six responding prompts entitled 'Showing Interest'  
(See Appendix A)

The subjects were given the rest of the week to familiarize themselves with the prompts and were encouraged to try them out on one another.

**PHASE 3** - Familiarity and practice of prompts using wordless picture books to elicit story from own peers in triads. No cross-age tutoring used during this phase.  
Time: 2 fifty minute periods

WEEK 3

PERIOD 1

The teacher formed selected triads of storyteller, prompter, and data collector. The triads were selected in order to ensure that only language minority students were practicing the prompts. The prompter could use his/her sheet of prompts if they still felt insecure. Each group was given two wordless picture books from which the storyteller was to tell a story while the prompter used the prompts from the various sets of prompts to keep the storytelling and conversation alive. The only member of the triad with a list of the prompts was the data collector, whose task was to tally the prompts.

**WEEK 3****PERIOD 2**

A second period was used to rotate the triad once to enable the storyteller and prompter to switch roles. The same data collector was used for both periods.

**PHASE 4** - Use of computer generated pictures and prompts in cross-age tutoring setting eliciting stories from kindergartners. Time: 3 weeks of thirty minute periods, Tuesday through Thursday.

**WEEKS 4 - 6**

Subjects went to a bilingual kindergarten class as a cross-age tutor to work with their kindergarten buddy. They were supplied with their computer generated graphic, a pencil, a piece of paper, their knowledge of opening and responding prompts, and one data collector equipped with a data sheet and pencil. Only two triads worked each period. A span of three weeks was necessary as some afternoon periods were cancelled due to school-wide activities. The periods were also limited to afternoon sessions for the language minority group since the kindergarten class met in the afternoon.

### Control Group

The control group was not taught the prompts nor did they work with the same group of kindergartners. They gathered their stories in a separate session.

**PHASE 5** - Triads formed of native English speakers for cross-age tutoring setting to elicit stories from native English speaking kindergartners. Time: 2 weeks of thirty minute periods, Tuesday through Thursday.

### WEEKS 7 - 8

No instruction on the use of prompts was used with this group. The only supplies were a computer generated picture, a piece of paper, and a pencil. The same triad format of cross-age tutor, kindergartener as storyteller, and a data collector was used for the native English speakers as well. The control group was different in that they were limited to morning cross-age tutoring sessions as the kindergarten they worked with was a non-bilingual a.m. kindergarten.



## Control and Treatment groups

Tally sheets of prompt use frequencies were gathered from each group. The treatment group had two tallies collected from each participating individual - one for their practice session and one for their cross-age tutoring session. The control group had only one tally sheet collected during their cross-age tutoring session.

**PHASE 6** - Rough draft copies of the elicited stories were collected from both groups for transcription to the 'Kidwriter' computer program for final publication by the cross-age tutors. Time: 2 - 3 periods of computer lab for 2 - 3 weeks

## WEEKS 9 - 11

Subjects from both groups used computer lab periods to proofread, transcribe and compile stories gathered from their kindergarten buddies. From these compilations storybooks were published for each kindergarten.

**PHASE 7** - Student commentaries on the usefulness and helpfulness of the prompts collected from Treatment Group students. Time: One 30 minute period.

## WEEK 18

Subjects from the Treatment Group wrote a commentary on how the prompts helped them with the task of gathering a story from their kindergartner in the cross-age setting. Recollection of the number of prompts remembered was also recorded in their commentaries. (see Appendix C for examples)

### Data Collection

Levels of oral proficiency were investigated and recorded for all subjects in the treatment and control group. These levels were based on the Individual Proficiency Test (IPT) published in 1979 and 1982 by Ballard and Tighe. Notes were taken as to the language status of all subjects participating and were divided into three groups: English Only (EO), Bilingual Fluent English Proficient [(FEP) a mastery level], and Bilingual Limited English Proficient (LEP). Both the FEP and LEP designations were based on the resource specialist's bilingual files, family language survey sheets and IPT tests as recorded by the school district in the Language Assessment Center. The EO designations were based on the family language surveys and teacher interview of

subjects.

The IPT was used to determine levels of oral fluency and English language proficiency. The tally sheets were used and data collected to determine the frequency use of the prompts. A portfolio of the subjects' work while using the prompts was kept for publication of their collected stories. With these data, the study will give results of oral fluency in a cross-age tutoring setting.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The Treatment Group was composed of sixth grade tutors referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP). The Control Group was composed of sixth grade tutors referred to as Native English Only (NEO). Both groups worked with kindergarten tutees. The first hypothesis states that the LEP Treatment Group will use more prompts in English with kindergarten tutees than the NEO Control Group.

For each LEP subject, two statistics were calculated: (a) the mean number of prompt uses and (b) the ratio of prompt uses in the training session to the total number of prompt uses in the cross-age tutoring session.

Figures in this project are presented in pairs. The odd number figures always refer to the LEP Treatment Group while the even number figures always refer to the NEO Control Group.

The Wilcoxon Test was used to compare treatment and control groups on cross-age tutoring total prompt use. For both the LEP and NEO groups there was no significant differences when considering the total prompt use for each subject (see Figures 1 & 2).

Figure 1

TREATMENT GROUP

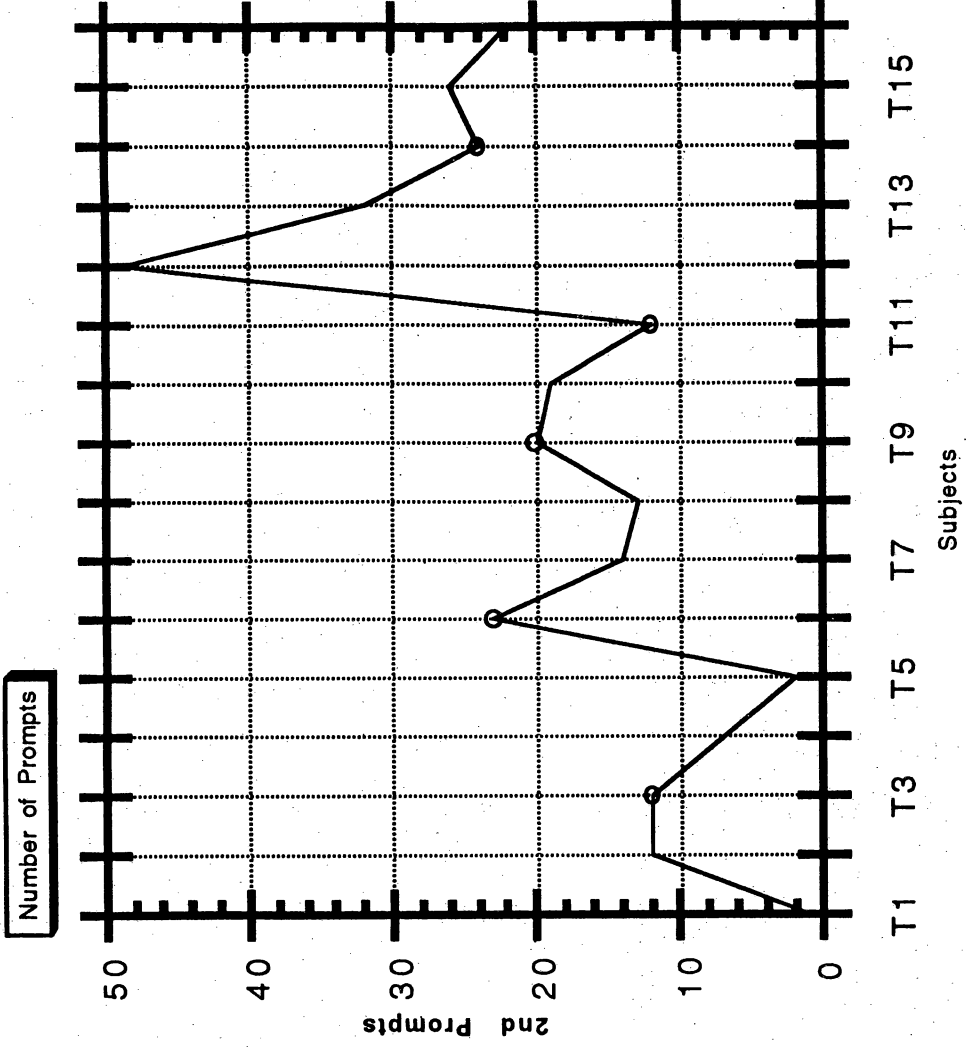
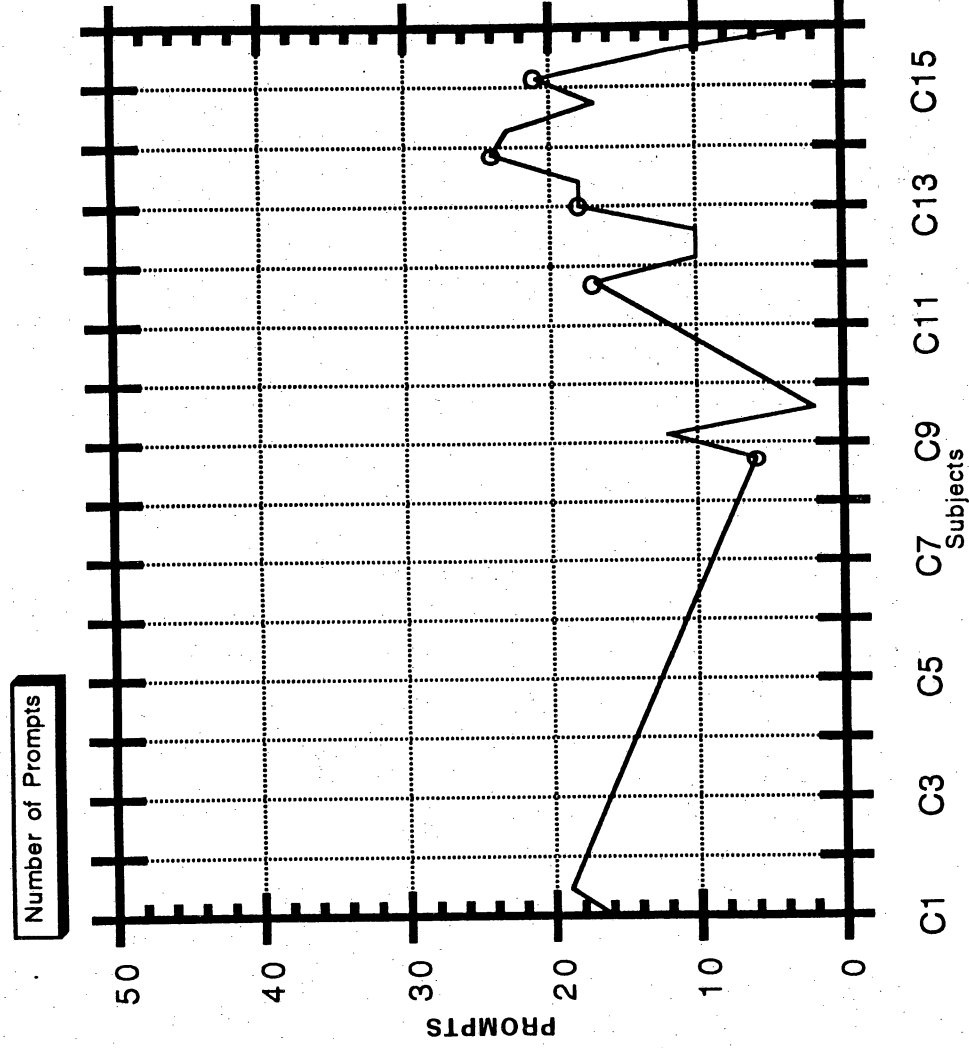


Figure 2

CONTROL GROUP



This same test was run three other times in order to compare treatment and control groups when the total prompts were broken down into three categories. These categories included: (1) 'Asking for Information', (2) 'Telling a Story', and (3) 'Showing Interest'.

The total use count of each prompt in the 'Asking for Information' (1) category of the LEP treatment group is represented by Figure 3 while the total use count of each prompt in the same category (1) of the NEO control group is represented by Figure 4. No statistically significant differences were found between treatment and control groups in the "Asking for Information" category.

The total use count of each prompt in the 'Telling a Story' (2) category of the LEP treatment group is represented by Figure 5 while the total use count of each prompt in the same category (2) of the NEO control group is represented by Figure 6. The Wilcoxon Test was used to compare treatment and control groups frequency count of prompt use in the 'Telling a Story' category. The value yielded from this test was 19. When checked with a table of Wilcoxon's probabilities for significance a value of 21 or less proved to be significant at the .05 level. Therefore this comparison proved statistically significant beyond the .05 level of significance. Thus it was concluded that the treatment group's (LEP

Figure 3

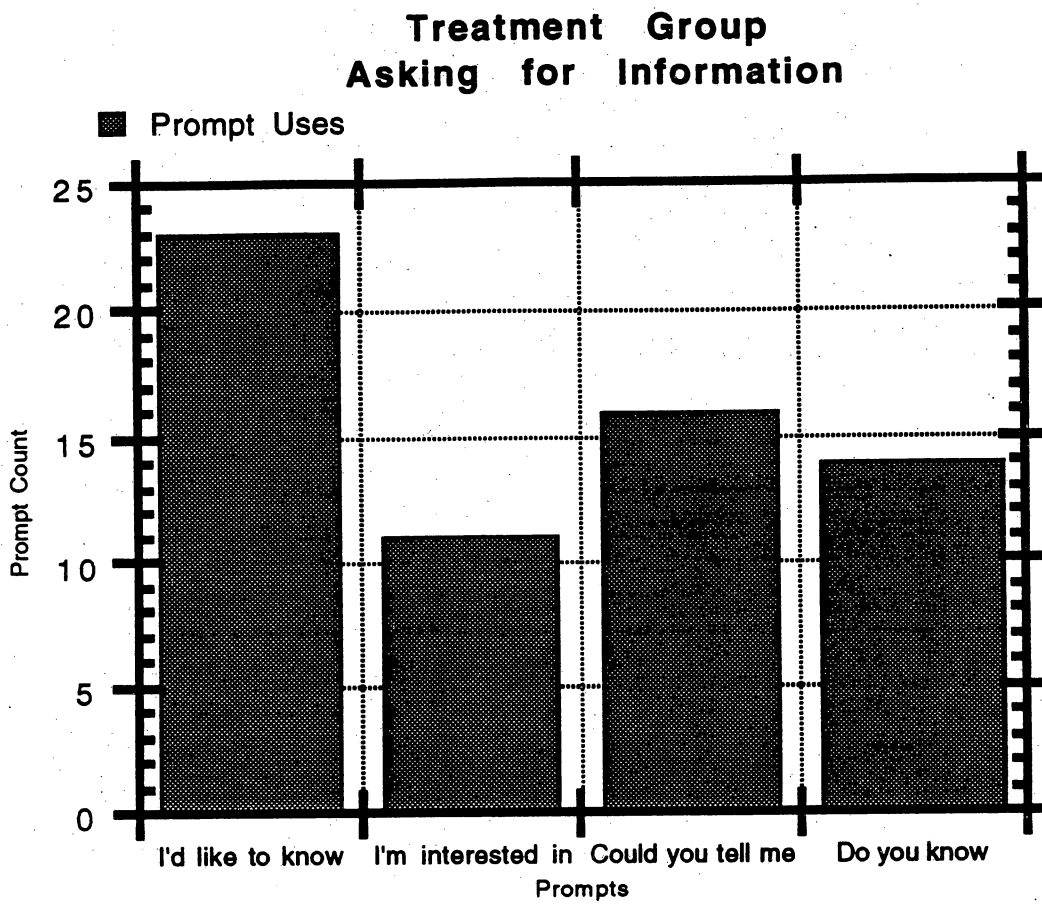




Figure 4

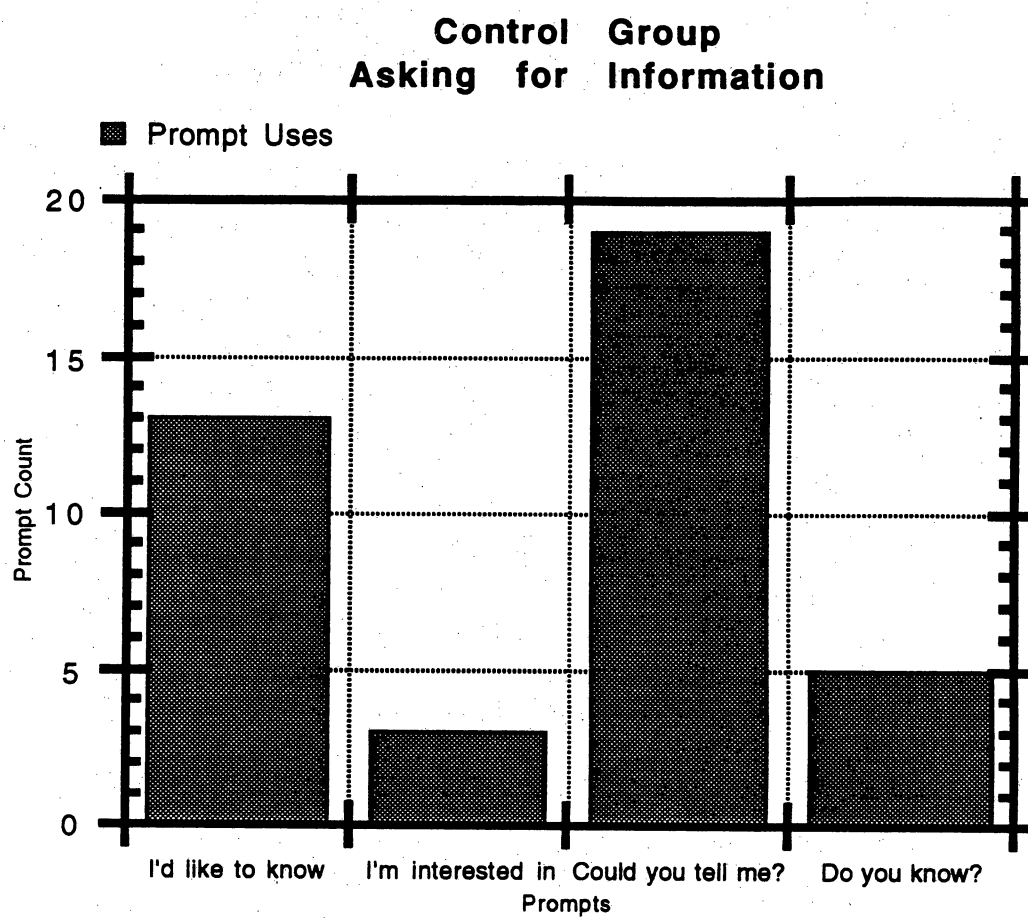


Figure 5

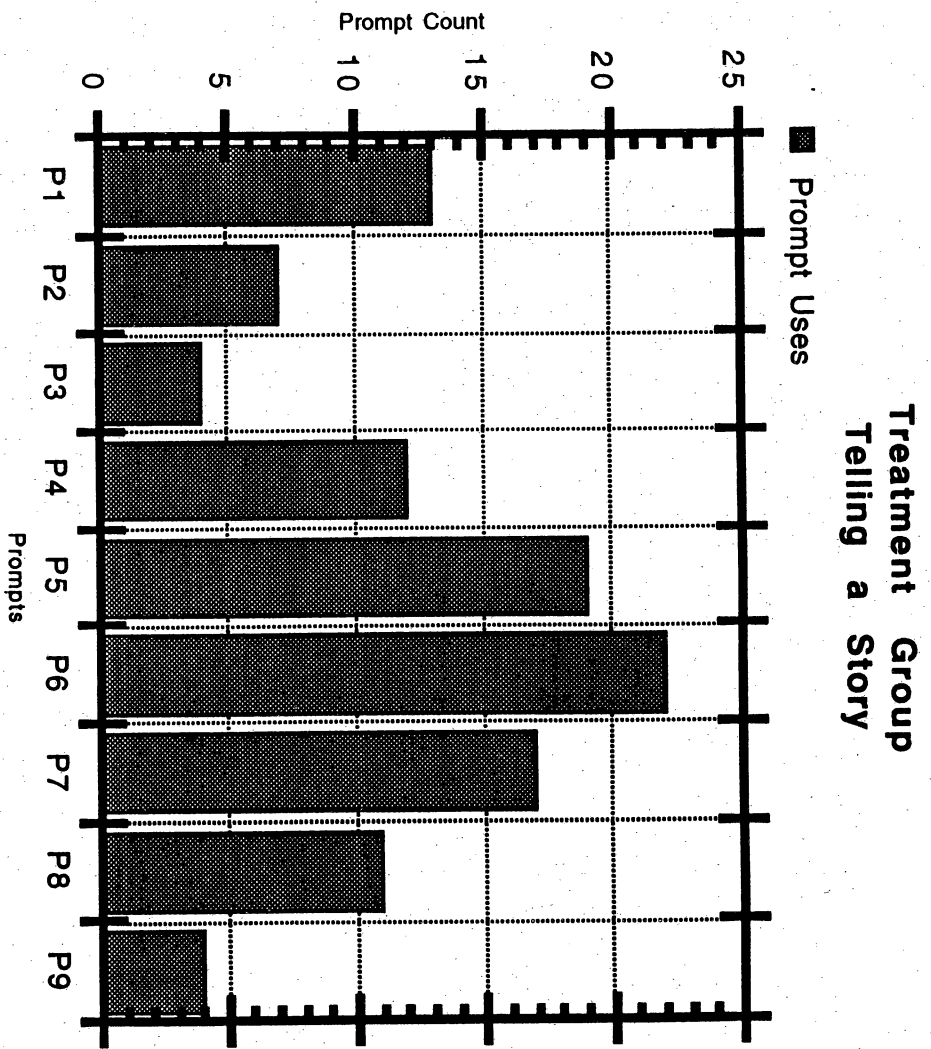
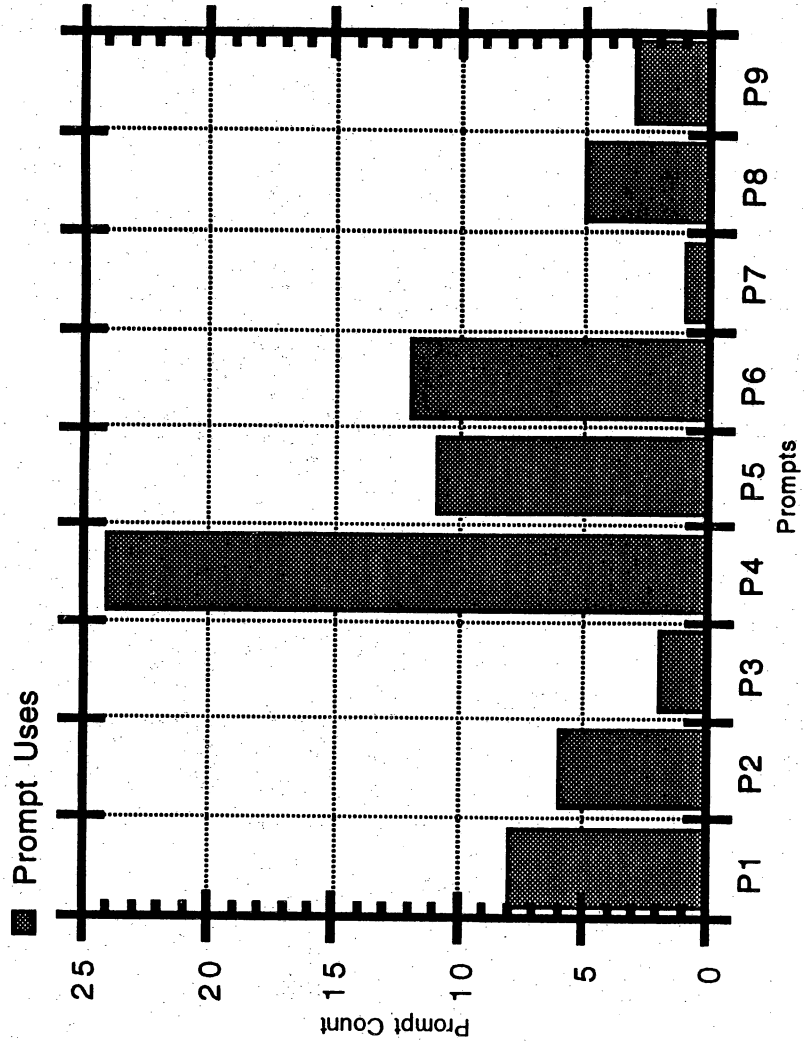


Figure 6

### Control Group Telling a Story



students) prompt uses for the 'Telling a Story' category was significantly more frequent than that of the control group (NEO students).

The total use count of each prompt in the 'Showing Interest' (3) category of the LEP treatment group is represented by Figure 7 while the total use count of each prompt in the same category (3) of the NEO control group is represented by Figure 8. No statistically significant differences were found between treatment and control groups in the 'Showing Interest' category.

For each LEP and NEO subject, post Individual Proficiency Test (IPT) levels were calculated and pre IPT levels of LEP students only were also calculated for statistical purposes. Figure 9 shows the IPT level of each subject in the LEP group while Figure 10 shows the IPT levels of each subject in the NEO group. IPT I score levels are designated by letter score levels from A through F and M. These letter score levels are also assigned three English speaking designations based on grade level at the time of testing. The sixth grade subjects of this research were based on testing for third through sixth grades. The three designations for these grade levels were: (1) NES (Non-English Speaking) with corresponding letter score levels of A, B, and C, (2) LES (Limited English Speaking) with corresponding letter

Figure 7

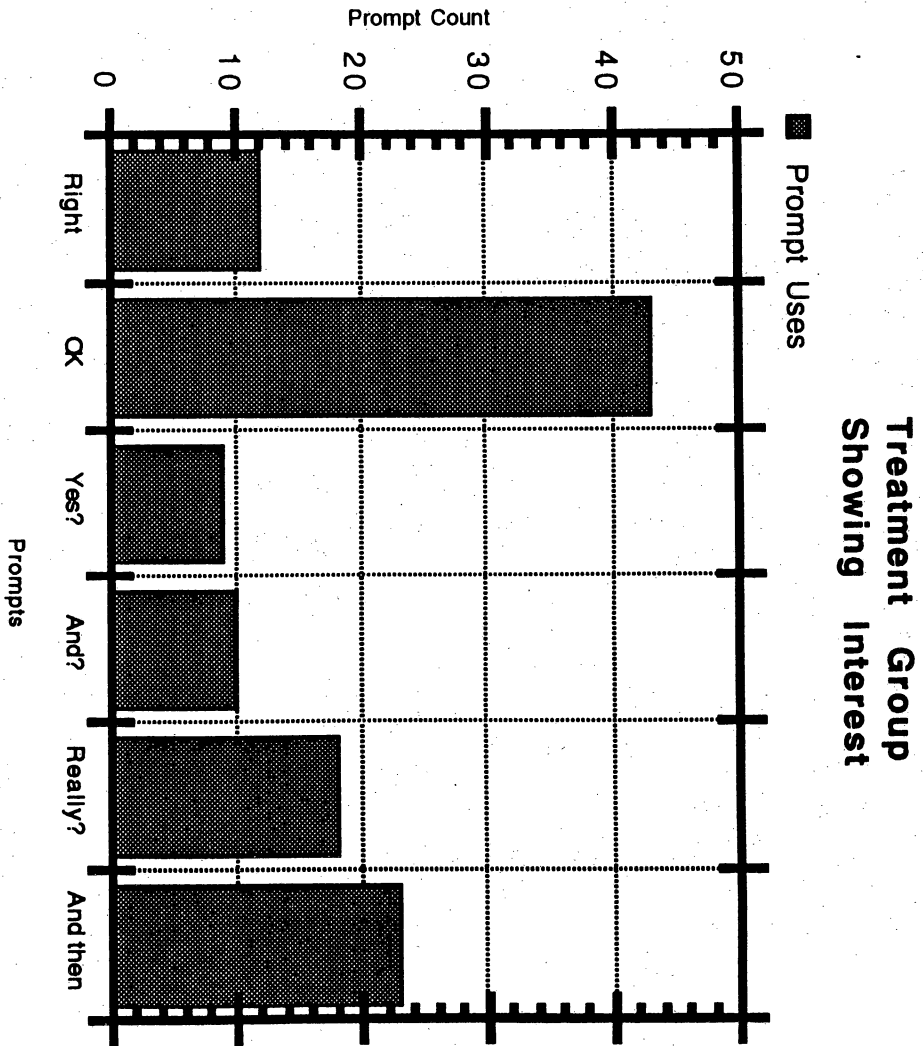


Figure 8

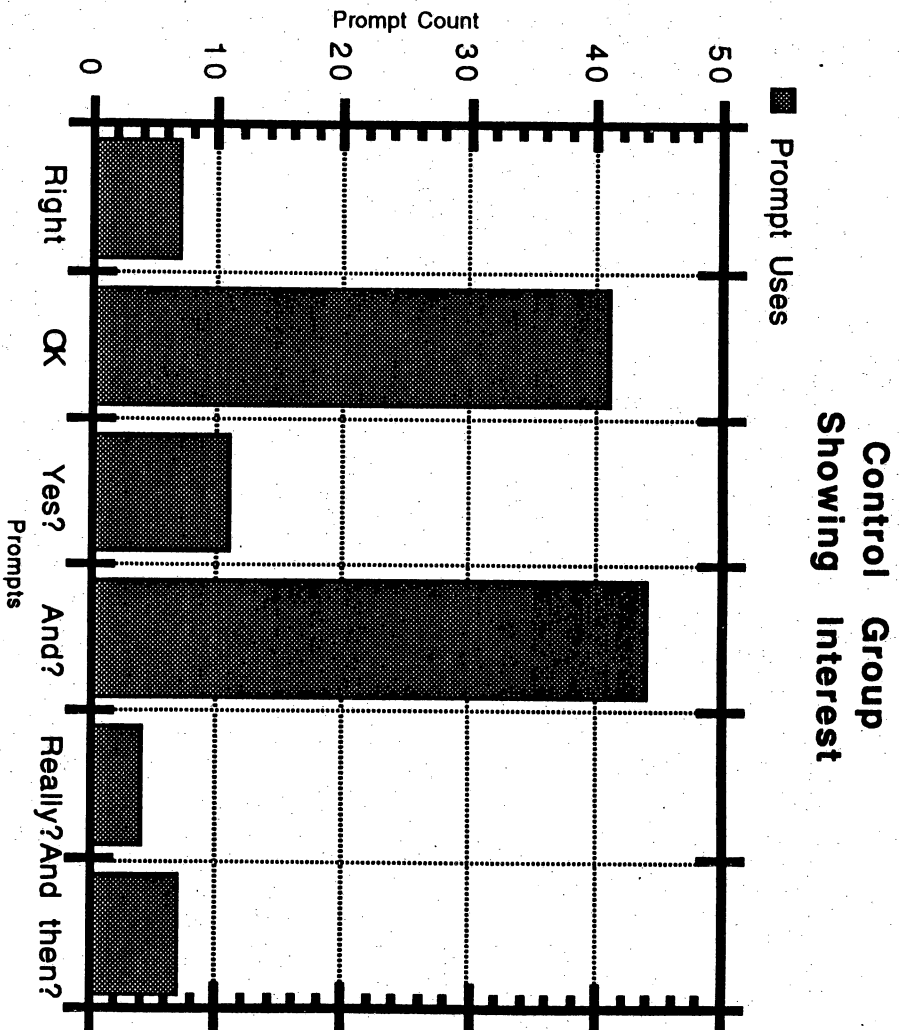
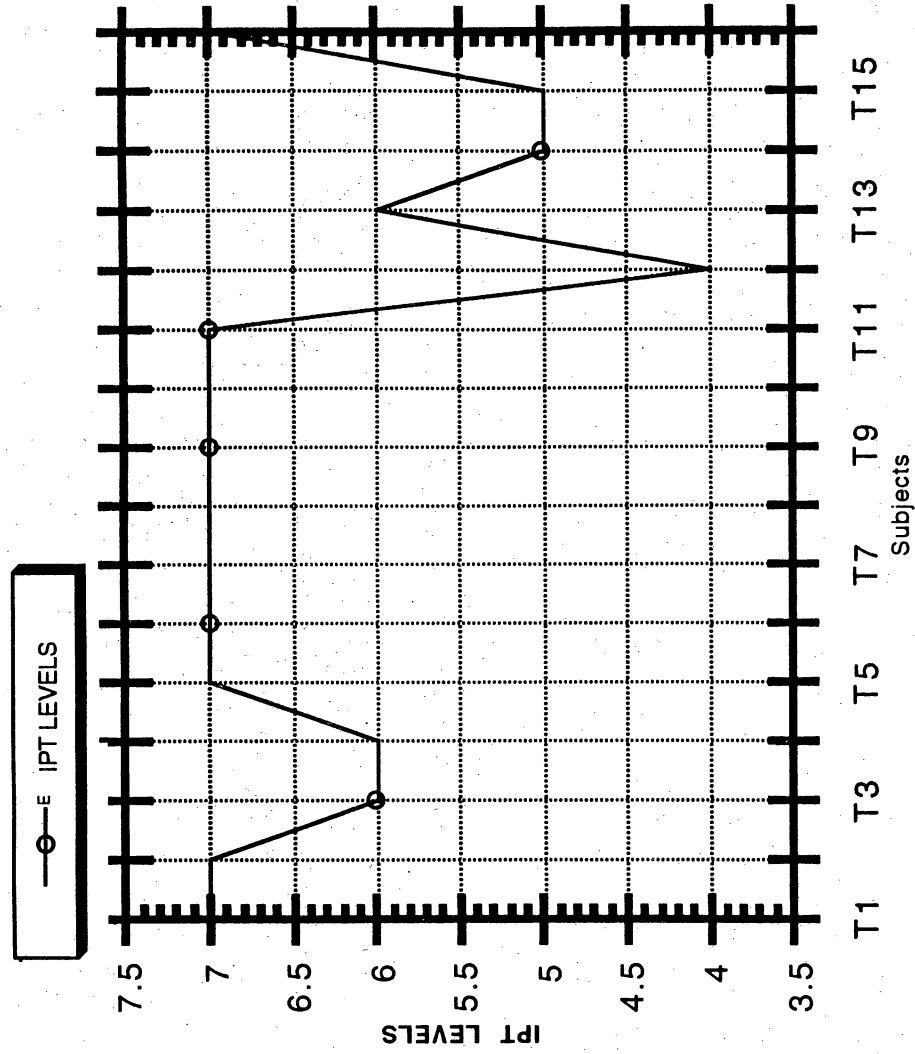


FIGURE 9

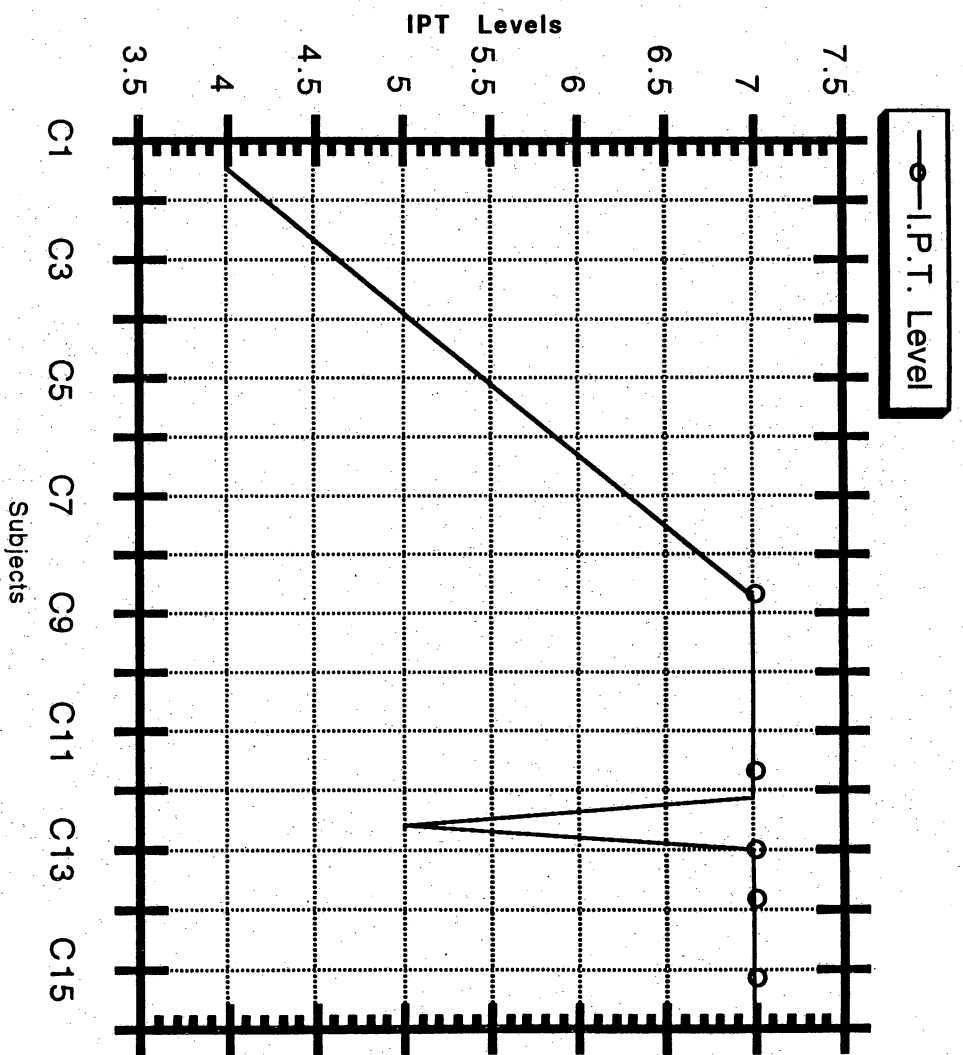
TREATMENT GROUP



Subjects

FIGURE 10

CONTROL GROUP





score levels of D and E, (3) FES (Fluent English Speaking) with corresponding letter score levels of F and M. M also was designated as 'Mastery of Test.'

In order to be able to use these designated levels for statistical purposes, it was necessary to assign a numerical value to the letter score. These numerical values and designations were as follows:

SCORE LEVELS	DESIGNATIONS	NUMERICAL VALUES
A	NES	1
B	NES	2
C	NES	3
D	LES	4
E	LES	5
F	FES	6
M	FES	7

With these numerical values assigned, the Wilcoxon Test was used again to compare treatment and control groups on IPT levels. The comparisons were calculated two times on the following combinations: (1) LEP post and NEO post, (2) LEP pre and NEO post. One more comparison was calculated to compare pre and post IPT levels of the LEP group alone. No statistically significant differences were found between any of the post to post or

pre to post IPT levels.

For this reason, descriptive analyses were used to supplement the Wilcoxon Test. A review and discussion of the treatment groups' practice session and tally sheets was held to see how well the practice had gone. This generated more interest for the cross-age tutoring activity and they looked forward to trying their prompts in the real-life situation, gathering a story from their kindergartner for future anthologies as a whole language teaching activity.

For all prompts used, a mean of frequency count for the treatment group was compared with a mean of frequency count for the control group. During the training sessions, the treatment group was using more prompts than the control group (a mean of 16 pre-treatment of LEP compared with a mean of 14 post control of NEO) When post treatment was compared with post control prompt use they were different with an LEP mean of 18 and an NEO mean of 14. The cross-age tutoring prompt use frequency counts recorded from the two groups were comparable (288 treatment, 226 control) as shown in Figures 1 & 2 where total prompt use of each subject can be seen.

Seven weeks after the cross-age tutoring story-gathering activity with kindergartners, a statement was collected from the treatment group commenting on the

usefulness of the prompts for their English conversations with their tutees (see Appendix C). They had remembered a mean of 8 prompts of the 19 prompts originally used.

The proofreading, revision and compilation of the story with graphics done during Phase 2 of the project, included an anthology of the joint efforts of kindergartner and cross-age tutor stories into book form (see Appendix D for 2 sample stories). The anthology for the school library helped make the activity more true to life and also gave the project purpose in the eyes of the cross-age tutors.

It was not possible to make a totally satisfactory matching of subjects on IPT levels. The NEO group was expected to all be M (Mastery) level because they were all native English speakers. Consequently, only post IPT levels were collected and recorded from the NEO group. Only at *that* time and after the cross-age tutoring, story gathering activity, was it discovered that 3 of the NEO students were actually at a LES level. The intention had been to compare LES & FES levels from LEP subjects against all FES levels from NEO subjects. The mean post IPT level was 6 for the LEP group and 7 for the NEO group. Both of these mean scores were FES designations. The IPT levels indicate no statistically significant differences between treatment group and control group

subjects.

The total prompt use count for each of the three categories for the LEP treatment group is represented by Figure 11 while the total prompt use count for each of the three categories for the NEO control group is represented by Figure 12. Figures 11 and 12 represent a stair-step pattern of prompt use which indicates an increase of oral fluency of the treatment group (LEP) when compared with the control group (NEO). Data collected on categorized prompts corroborate this hypothesis: There were statistically significant differences between treatment group and control group subjects in the frequency count of 'Telling a Story' prompt uses in the cross-age tutoring setting.

A second hypothesis investigated whether LEP subjects who gained frequency counts of prompt uses from pre to post sessions also gained in IPT levels. Eight LEP subjects qualified for this investigation.

One subject gained 2 IPT levels. Four subjects gained 1 IPT level. Two subjects maintained same IPT levels. One subject regressed 2 IPT levels. This may be significant although it must be remembered that this accounts for 50% of the NEO group. The IPT levels did not measure gains in oral fluency for 6 of the more proficient subjects who had ceiling scores of 7 on the

Figure 11

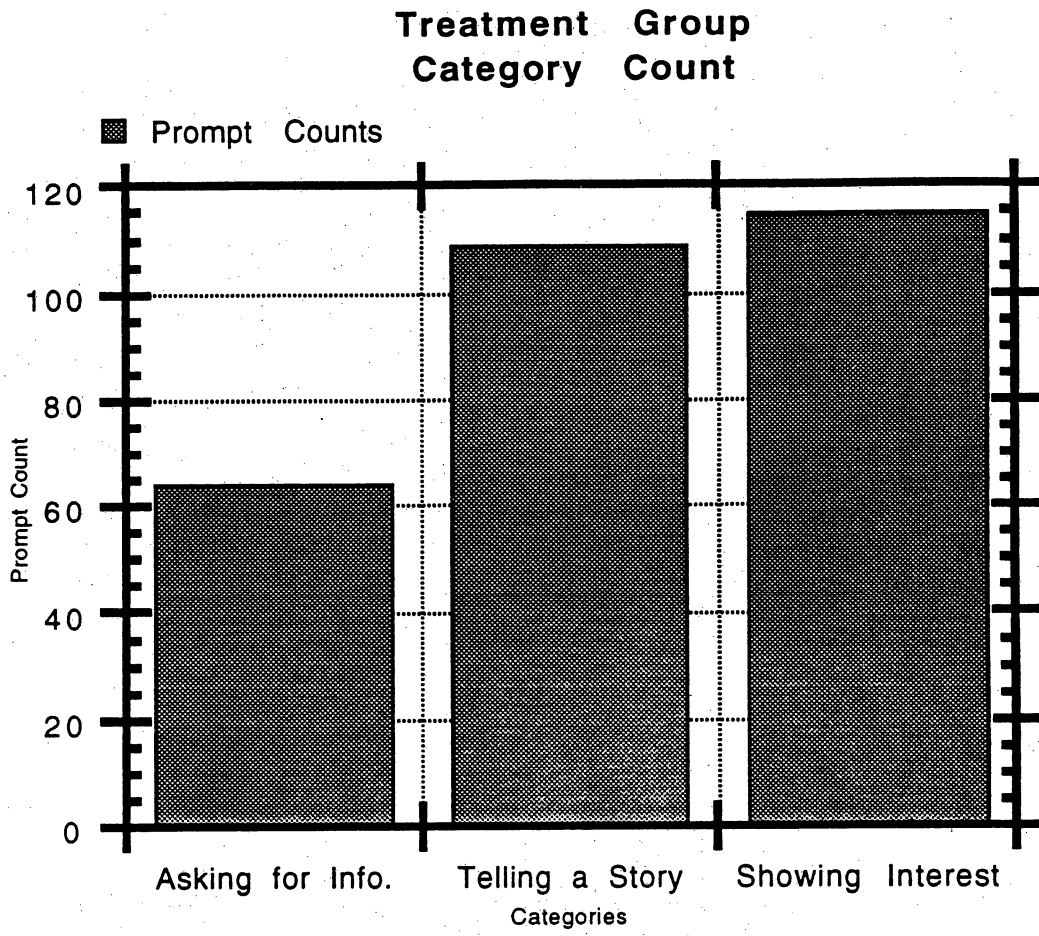
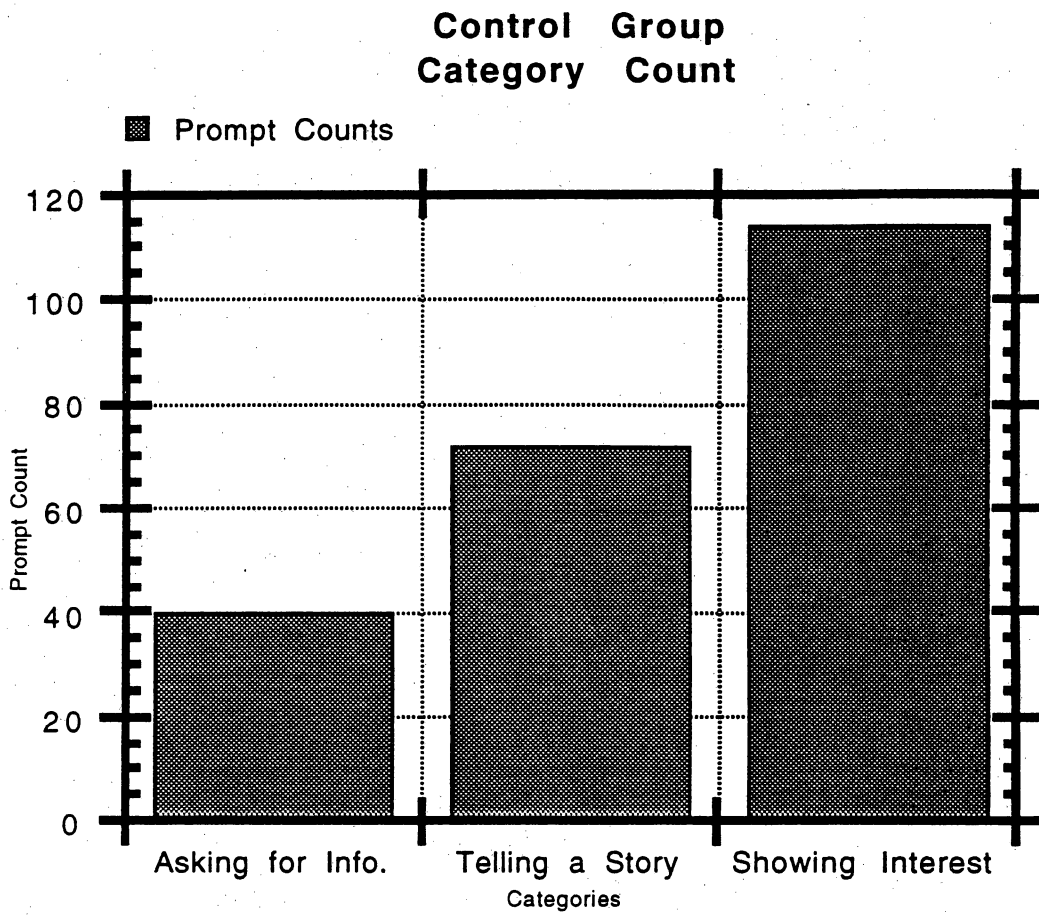


Figure 12



pre and post IPT levels were 0. Thus the IPT level measures used in the research may not have been sensitive enough to reflect differences.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Interpretation

The effectiveness of the cross-age tutoring sessions as an oral fluency technique for language minority students was examined. An attempt to enhance oral fluency was made through the use of prompts as a means to communicate more competently while acquiring English as a second language.

This project showed significant differences in the treatment and control groups in frequency of prompts used to kindergarteners in the cross-age tutoring setting when using 'Telling a Story' prompts. However, differences between treatment and control groups were not evidenced when the subjects were observed in use of 'Asking for Information' prompts and 'Showing Interest' prompts. It is possible that the significant use of the 'Telling a Story' prompts by the treatment group simply suited the activity and eased the flow of conversation for the language minority student so as to help him/her with the oral fluency of the task. It is also possible that the competence to communicate was enhanced by the use of



prompts. All subjects were able to successfully record, compile and transcribe a story from their kindergarten tutee. Being as all subjects used prompts, it is also concluded that the prompts were helpful in successfully completing the activity.

A comparison of treatment and control medians of frequency counts for prompts used with kindergartners in the cross-age tutoring session indicates that subjects in the treatment group were using the same amount of prompts with the kindergartners as those in the control group. However, after comparing the means and finding a difference of 4 points, the treatment group was using more prompts with their kindergartners than the control group. One possible explanation for the difference between treatment and control groups is that the receptivity of the LEP students to using prompts with their kindergartners may have increased as a result of the practice sessions among their own peers, which focused on increasing oral fluency and providing a means of increasing communicative competence with the use of prompts.

## Conclusions

The inability to investigate the gains or losses in IPT levels point up the difficulty of finding tests that are sensitive measures of English acquisition. The language proficiency test used in this research did not differentiate enough among the subjects to allow testing the significance of IPT levels. Future investigations should use tests that are sensitive enough to make it possible to correlate language proficiency with data on linguistic interactions. In addition, the language proficiency test used was not sensitive to the kind of language that children might acquire through communication in a natural setting. An important contribution to more effective studies in second language acquisition would be the developing of a suitable measure of communicative competence and oral fluency that can be implemented with students in the elementary grades.

An incorrect assumption was made regarding the language proficiency of the native speakers in the control group. It was assumed that all native speakers would be at a Fluent English Speaking level. Having made that assumption, no pre-test was run on the NEO subjects of the control group. Only a post-test was run and at that time it was discovered that some native English

speakers were actually Limited English Speaking. Therefore, some results may have been skewed. It is, therefore, the researcher's recommendation that pre and post tests be run on native English speakers as well as second language acquisition students.

Although there were no statistically significant differences between the pre and post tests of the treatment group, this (LEP) group did make some gains in their IPT levels. The gains seem to attest to the effectiveness of the cross-age tutoring technique for language learning along with the use of the prompts as an effective tool for English conversation both in practice and cross-age tutoring settings.

The results from this research show how difficult it is to increase the oral fluency of English that LEP Hispanic students speak to their kindergarten tutees. The cross-age tutoring helped to increase the students' English language proficiency or to prevent it from decreasing except in the case of one subject who did decrease the level of proficiency by 2 levels. The prompt-use training, however, was strong enough to change the language-interaction patterns of the subject. All subjects in the treatment group were able to successfully use the 'Telling a Story' prompts to a significant degree to gather a story from each of their kindergartners.

Seven weeks following the last cross-age tutoring session, the treatment group had remembered a mean of 8 prompts of the 19 prompts originally used.

The publication of the students' stories and donating the book to the school library, where all their peers can see and read their works, raises the self-esteem of the language minority student and encourages them to develop further communicative competence through the oral fluency that comes from the practice of conversational prompts.

### Implications

These findings suggest that cross-age tutoring may be an effective means of encouraging interaction between language minority students acquiring English and their tutees. This may in turn enhance English language proficiency. The findings also indicate that cross-age tutoring may be a promising ESL technique for developing the oral fluency and communicative competence of the language minority student. While the study provides a source for English conversation practices and a relevant activity for cross-age tutors which appears to facilitate the development of oral fluency and communicative competence of a language minority student working with English as his/her second language, the study also points

out the difficulty of properly assessing the language minority student's oral fluency due to the lack of a measurement tool sensitive enough to measure the communicative competence of the elementary student.

**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

**PROMPTS****ASKING FOR INFORMATION**

I'd like to know... \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in... \_\_\_\_\_

Could you tell me...? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know...? \_\_\_\_\_

**TELLING A STORY**

First, \_\_\_\_\_

First of all, \_\_\_\_\_

To begin with, \_\_\_\_\_

Then, \_\_\_\_\_

After that, \_\_\_\_\_

So, \_\_\_\_\_

So then, \_\_\_\_\_

At the end, \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, \_\_\_\_\_

**SHOWING INTEREST**

Right. \_\_\_\_\_

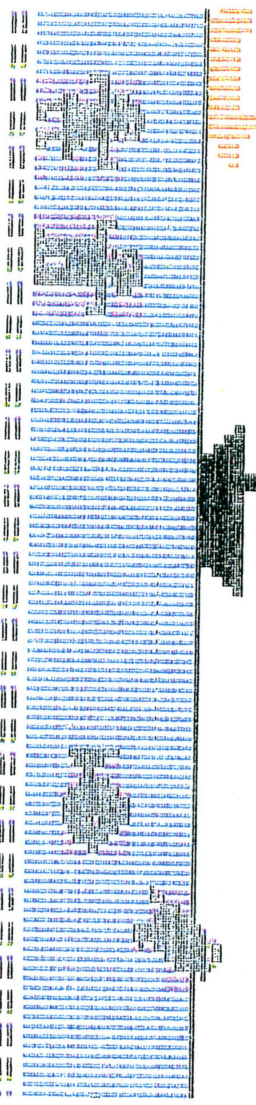
OK. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes? \_\_\_\_\_

And? \_\_\_\_\_

Really? \_\_\_\_\_

And then? \_\_\_\_\_



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Appendix B  
Kidriter Graphic



Appendix C  
Student Commentaries

Example of students' Commentaries on the prompts, 7 weeks after the cross-age tutoring sessions

5-7-93

Without the prompts I would not have been able to make my kindergartner talk. The prompts made it easier to get the story from my kindergartner. I remember five prompts.

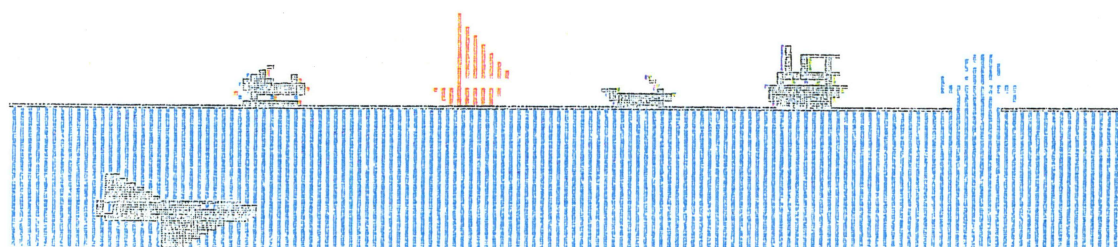
The prompts helped me and my kindergartner too. It was easy to answer the questions. I used some of these prompts, for example, I used , 'and then', 'yes', 'then', and 'so.' These are all of the prompts I remember .

I remember about 4 prompts.

Appendix C  
Student Commentaries

Well while trying to learn them I was practicing with a friend. The prompts helped me because when I got stuck I could tell my adoptee "I'd like to know" or "could you tell me." My adoptee did a great story. He understood when I told him some part of the prompts. I learned them all a long time ago. Now I know around 10 prompts.

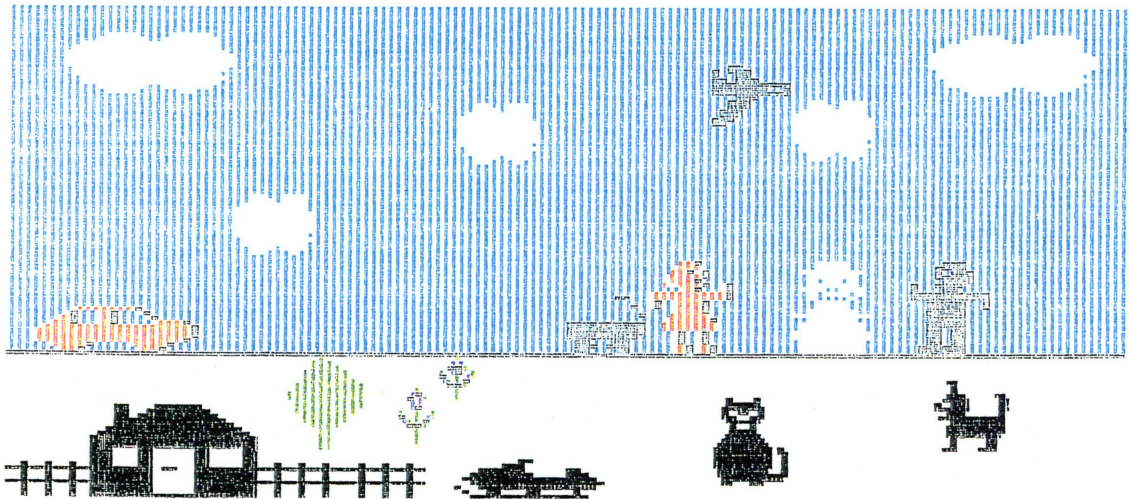
Appendix D  
Sample Stories



=====  
One day an airplane drowned in the sea  
because it was too heavy. Then a boy  
drowned. I came in a boat to help him.  
That was the end of the day.

Story by Juanito/K  
Graphics & compilation by Paul/6 TG/S1

Appendix D  
Sample Stories



=====  
 There are people in the snow. There  
 also is a dog and cat. The people live  
 in a house. The people have an orange  
 car. When they looked up to the sky  
 they saw an airplane and also clouds.  
 There are children playing.

Story by Juan/K

Graphics & compilation by Jose/6 TG/S11

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