

Robles, J. The Role of Play in Second Language Acquisition: A Bilingual Grandmother and a Preschool Child (2009)

This case study examined socio-dramatic play in Spanish (L2) with a bilingual grandmother, the researcher, as a potential influence on second language acquisition and use in a four and one-half year old child, the researcher's granddaughter. Prior to the case study the preschool child, a sequential bilingual, had not used her L2 spontaneously. The researcher and her granddaughter engaged in 16 sessions of socio-dramatic play in the child's L2. The play sessions were videotaped, transcribed, and coded to identify L2 use in the preschool child. During the 24 hours following the play sessions, the child's mother kept a record of the child's L2 use. The results demonstrated that the child began to use her L2 in limited, but spontaneous ways, advancing from the pre-production to early production stage of second language acquisition.

i

THE ROLE OF PLAY IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:
A BILINGUAL GRANDMOTHER AND A PRESCHOOL CHILD

By

Joyce C. Robles

A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Masters in Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May, 2009

Committee:

Bonnie Swierzbin, Ph.D., Primary Advisor

Anne DeMuth, M.A., Secondary Advisor

Marilyn Swedberg, M.A., Peer Reviewer

ii

Copyright by

JOYCE CARPENTER ROBLES

2009

All Rights Reserved

iii

To my husband, Frank, for believing I can do anything and always reminding me.

To our children and grandchildren for their love, patience, encouraging words,
and Godly

examples.

Especialmente, para Nina que es la luz de esta investigación.

(Especially, to Nina who is the light of this study.)

iv

*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward
the goal*

to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14

New International Version, Holy Bible

v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Bonnie, Anne, and Marilyn for graciously expanding my vision,
enhancing

my efforts, and edging me forward to discover a new place in the world of second
language teaching and learning.

Thank you to Bruno Dubric for permission to adapt and use his illustration of the
Zone of

Proximal Development from *The Brain from Top to Bottom*.

vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction

.....1

Origins of Interest	1
Rationale and Motivation	2
Professional Significance	7
Guiding Question	11
Summary	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review	13
Second Language Acquisition	13
Play in Children's Language Learning	18
Chapter Three: Methods	25
Introduction	2
Research Paradigm	26
Data Collection	27
Parent Questionnaire	27
Pilot Test	28
Planned Play	29
Video Recording	31
Coding Sheets and Data Analysis	32
Intermittent Interviews	34
Exit Interview	34
Participants	34
Nina's Family	35
Summary	3

Chapter Four: Results	39	
Introduction.....	39	3
9		
Parent		
Questionnaire.....	40	
Nina’s Spanish		
.....	42	
Planned Play		
.....	46	
Spanish Input		
.....	53	
Spanish		
Output.....	55	
Exit		
Interviews.....	75	
Summary.....	8	8
1		
Chapter Five:		
Conclusions.....	85	
Introduction.....	8	8
5		
Impact on the Participants		
.....	86	
Limitations of the Study		
.....	96	
viii		
Suggestions to Parents and Early Childhood		
Educators.....	96	
Summary.....	9	9
8		
Plan to Disseminate		
.....	99	
APPENDIX A		
.....	101	
APPENDIX B		
.....	102	
APPENDIX C		
.....	103	
APPENDIX D		
.....	104	
APPENDIX E		
.....	105	
APPENDIX F		
.....	106	

References	107
------------	-----

ix

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 More Knowledgeable Playmate in the Child's ZPD Supports Attainment of Skill.....	5
Figure 4.1 Length of planned play.....	47
Figure 4.2 Time of Planned Play.....	48
Figure 4.3 Change in Type of Spanish Utterance During Planned Play.....	56
Figure 4.4 Comparison of Types and Number of Spanish Utterances During Planned Play and Free Play.....	57
Figure 4.5 Total Spanish Utterances Spoken During Planned Play.....	58
Figure 4.6 Comparison of Spanish Utterances During Play Session and Following 24 Hour Period.....	59
Figure 4.7 Percentage of Code-switching of Initiations.....	69

x

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Research calendar.....	8
Table 2.1: Receptive Spanish Vocabulary.....	44

1

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Origins of Interest

When I was a girl growing up in Southern California, I reveled in the myriad colors and sounds of people and languages from many parts of the world. My playmates and classmates were from Mexico and Portugal, Japan and China, Italy, Germany and France. Frequent trips to Tijuana, Mexico with my family for shopping, dog races, and bull fights, not to mention my truck driver father's attempts at the *Berlitz Self-Teacher in*

Spanish record albums, whetted my appetite to speak Spanish. Even 1960's television impressed me with *The Farmer's Daughter* starring Inger Stevens, who played a bilingual Swedish-English speaking nanny. By the time I was thirteen, I had a burning desire to be multi-lingual. I began with weekly Spanish lessons in sixth grade from Miss Garcia, the kindergarten teacher. I studied German for the three years of junior high school and couldn't wait to enter high school where I had heard one could take three or four languages. To my dismay, there was a "one foreign language per student rule" and I had to make my choice. I chose Spanish as my family was living seven miles from the Mexican border town of Mexicali. My dream of being multilingual faded, but the bilingual attorneys who lived next door kept a little ember of desire for bilingualism burning. *Ándale*. (Go for it!)

As a college student, I met and later married a bilingual Spanish-English speaking man. My dreams of bilingualism were ignited, this time for our future children. Finishing up my degree in Speech Pathology, I faced a new reality of education. During

2

my clinical practicum, I noticed a marked bias against children who were in the process of becoming bilingual. Not only were these children receiving language therapy, but some were placed in special education classes. In 1976, I entered a bilingual teacher education program. My classes and teaching experience were filled with sounds of Spanish and English from lovely Hispanic and Anglo children learning each other's languages. Even so, my husband and I determined that we would raise our children monolingually in English to assure their academic success in an English-dominant society and school system. Our three daughters were excellent students and eventually learned Spanish through the public and private school systems, including College Spanish with *mom* as their instructor. Presently, all of our daughters use Spanish to varying

degrees, including an academic degree –B.S. Spanish—for one of them. *Qué chévere!*

(How great!)

Rationale and Motivation

Five years ago, there was a birth and a rebirth. My first granddaughter, Nina¹, was born and my desire to raise a child bilingually was reborn. The family dynamics

were different this time. Now there was one bilingual adult and four bilingual-biliterate

adults who could take part in Nina's acquisition of a second language. However, none of

these adults were speaking to Nina in Spanish consistently from her birth. Nina's mother,

maternal aunts and grandfather were most comfortable interacting with Nina in English

so English was established clearly as Nina's first language. Respecting the wishes of

Nina's mother, I spoke primarily to Nina in English.

¹ Nina is a pseudonym for the preschool participant in the research.

3

My interest is one of wanting my granddaughter to learn a second language from infancy as a form of additive bilingualism (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Additive bilingualism encourages the use of the home language by parents and others while

allowing the child to add a second language. Additive bilingualism does not imply that

the parents will learn the child's target language, although they may. The parents' most

important contribution is the rich context they provide for first language learning, supporting the child's cognitive and emotional development through a language the child

knows and understands (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Nina's family fits this description

with immediate and extended family members exploiting the first language for Nina's

growth and development, but also exploring her second language (Spanish) through their

own personal context as well as contexts shared with Nina. A form of additive bilingualism is sequential bilingualism, that is, acquiring a second language after the first

language is established, after the age of three years (Macrory, 2006). This is an appropriate description of Nina who, at age four years six months, has English as her

well-developed first language, and has a limited receptive vocabulary of Spanish words.

One of the shared contexts I have with Nina is her weekly visit to my home. She

enjoys an evening meal with me and my husband, plays with us, and then spends the night. On one of these occasions just before Nina turned four years old, she and I were mixing up a box of instant pudding. While she was carefully and slowly stirring the milk and pudding mix, I said “*Rápido, rápido,*” making a fast stirring motion with my hand in the air. Quickly, she caught on beating the pudding at top speed. Just before the pudding was splattered across all kitchen surfaces, I whispered, “*Lento, lento,*” offering a slow

4

stirring motion with my hands as a clue. Nina picked up the meaning of *rápido* (fast) and *lento* (slow) and with a grin asked, “Guma², can you say that again and I’ll go *rápido* and *lento*?” indicating with a hand motion the two speeds. I imagined it was the playful nature of our exchange that influenced the use of these two Spanish words. Subsequently, these became Nina’s two favorite words and she would ask to make pudding, using these words each time she visited my home. Alternating between *rápido* and *lento* produced an abundance of giggles and more than enough splatters of pudding.

I began to wonder about the role of play and language learning. Could play influence target language use in the preschool child? Play can take on many forms, but most always it promotes feelings of excitement and enthusiasm (Bacha, 2008). However, Berk (1994) says that play is more than a pleasurable experience. It is a tool that is crucial for the cognitive development of the young child. Play creates a metaphorical place for learning to occur, especially when assisted by more knowledgeable and experienced playmates. Originally focusing on first language learning, Vygotsky (1978) described the place that play creates as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The assistance that the more knowledgeable playmate (acting as mediator) provides is known as *scaffolding* (See Figure 2.1).

² *Guma* is Nina’s name for her grandmother, the researcher.

5

Figure 2.1 More Knowledgeable Playmate in the Child’s ZPD Supports Attainment of

Skill ³

It is in the ZPD where, especially in socio-dramatic play, the child attains levels beyond those he or she could attain alone (Lantolf, 2000). By engaging in socio-dramatic,

or make-believe, play with Nina, I could provide meaningful second language experiences scaffolding her ability to learn a second language.

Socio-dramatic play, with defined roles that relate to real life, can be planned spontaneity. Nina and I planned that we would make pudding, selected our ingredients,

and assigned each other a role, *chef* and *chef ayudante* (under chef.) When Nina was

stirring the pudding, she was the *chef ayudante*, under my direction. At other times, she

might pick up a pencil and stir the air to make pudding, explaining her actions with

words. In that moment, Nina would be spontaneously playing the role *chef* with a single

³ Source: Adapted from Dubuc, Bruno. (February, 2005). The Brain from Top to Bottom. Retrieved

February 14, 2009 from

http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/i/i_09/i_09_p/i_09_p_dev/i_09_p_dev.html#2.

Reprinted by permission of the author.

Using L2 numbers as nominalized adjectives

(pronouns)

¿Todos o Uno? (All or one?)

Tasks not yet in the learner's repertoire of abilities

More

knowledgeable

playmate L2 Counting: 1, 2, 3...

Tasks at the limit of the learner's abilities

6

prop taking on a new meaning. Bodrova and Leong (2003a) define *mature play* as sociodramatic

play that assigns new meaning to props and people and consider mature play vital to the learning and development of a child's first language. Mediators such as

teachers and other adults can enhance socio-dramatic play by planning with the young

actors as an initial element of play (Bodrova & Leong, 2003b). In future references, I

will use the term *planned play* to refer to socio-dramatic play times that have been

discussed and planned prior to the actual socio-dramatic play.

Young children show a preference among playmates. In first language learning and play before the age of three, Berk (1994) points out that the preferred playmate is

often Mother, but not for lack of peer playmates. After the age of two years, Mother initiates fifty percent of socio-dramatic play with children spending the other half of their time engaged in play with siblings and peers. The accessibility and privilege of playing with an adult relative supports the definition of mature play provided by Bodrova and Leong (2003a). At home, play with an adult relative can go beyond one short session, extending itself from one session to the next. Berk (1994) cited evidence that play with Mother lasts twice as long as solitary play. Furthermore, the play is open to revision, elaboration, and the integration of new roles. In my experience with Nina, I have watched her play *horse and rider*, in English, with my husband over many months. Each time they play they resume their roles, she as rider and her grandfather as the horse.

However, she has become a more articulate cowgirl and now saddles, bridles, kicks, and clucks, facilitating the ride with a rich equestrian vocabulary. In other words, she has

7

learned the language of the riding stable in her first language *straight from the horse's mouth* through dramatic play.

This brings me to the significant position of grandparents with regard to play and second language learning. Grandparents and grandchildren share a relationship that is distinct from the relationship that parents and children share (Arju, Greory, Jessel, Kenner, & Ruby, 2007). Grandparents may allow for greater spontaneity because they have more time to collaborate with their grandchildren, allowing for unique linguistic and cultural development. Gregory (2003) emphasizes that a sociocultural approach to language means recognizing that grandparents, along with siblings, aunts, and uncles are "important others" (para. 15) who scaffold learning. Grandparents, as "crucial mediators" (para. 18) of language, can offer the language or languages they speak to their grandchildren in the context of home. However, there is little research that specifically

studies grandparents' role with grandchildren in second language acquisition (SLA).

Professional Significance

Play has a role in SLA for teachers and students. As a college Spanish instructor, I have used play in structured ways such as role play dialogues to help my students

experience a variety of situations that they do not have access to in their immediate

environments. This play often stretched their skill level as unexpected language popped

up and they needed to negotiate meaning. At other times we have played board games,

also known as rule-based games, in the target language. In those moments, students

learned the target language forms that were used to move the game along and the

language to express the boundaries and limitations of the game. When I have substitute

8

taught in elementary, middle, and high school Spanish language classes, the students

clamour for the opportunity to play games, sing, and act out mini-dramas in the target

language. Young children in early childhood education programs can have similar

second language experiences through socio-dramatic play. They cannot literally become

mommies and daddies or librarians or carpenters at their young age, but socio-dramatic

play affords them the opportunity to step into those roles and manifest them more fully

with the help of more knowledgeable playmates, or play mentors, including teachers. A

kindergarten teacher who has taught for over 30 years in linguistically diverse classrooms

told me recently that her students learn almost everything from each other while playing

(S. Liddell, personal communication, January, 2009). Some teachers want to know if they

can justify that play is worth conserving in their classrooms for the sake of second

language acquisition, and other teachers, like me, want to include play and playfulness in

their classrooms because it is their style. Play is fun work that professionals from early

childhood teachers through college can consider important in second language

acquisition.

Gregory (2003) describes how socio-cultural theory (SCT) explains that there is a strong and unfailing link between culture and cognition as children and adults collaborate

in activities, tasks, and events. Socio-dramatic play is one important example of the

process of such “social collaboration” (Berk, 1994, p. 34). According to Bodrova and

Leong (2003b), in the past the home environment, with family members of various ages

and abilities, provided a sufficiently rich place for expanded language input. The home

environment was filled with multiple ages and intergenerational interaction and could

9

provide various registers of speech and examples of a variety of roles. For example,

children could observe older siblings involved in discourse with parents that requires

respect and a degree of formality and could also observe those same siblings collaborating with peers to do homework or have fun using an informal register.

Young

children could listen to and become interlocutors with their grandparents, receiving

instruction in the making of props, like how to make a doll from flowers, or social etiquette, such as how to behave in church. These varied interlocutors helped to develop

first language skills through play and work that provided new roles and strategies for

using pretense and exploration to develop language skills. Riojas-Cortez (2000) and

Gregory (2003) refer to what is shared at home in the child’s first language as their

cultural knowledge or fund of knowledge.

As active participants in their home language development, children learn from adults and others via dramatic play or observation in their first language, and

then

appropriate that internalized knowledge to other contexts in which they are learning a

second language (Gregory, 2005). For many children, the other context could be a school

environment in which they appropriate the rich first language fund of knowledge about

culture and language to access and attain second language skills. Gregory (2003) says

that if second language teachers could have seen the beautiful work Bengali-speaking children were doing in their native community language classes, they would have expected and supported the children in the production of similar work in their English classes. In terms of socio-dramatic play at school, children will act out the roles they have observed at home. Those roles will be more than just pretending to be mommy and daddy; they may involve unique identities for props, and culturally specific ways of negotiating roles. The home and the community can provide many mediators of language for young children, including parents, siblings, grandparents, peers and other adults. The professional teacher who is not aware of the home culture or who the mediators of language are in the home and community may miss this linguistic and cultural carry-over from home to school, especially in socio-dramatic play (Riojas-Cortéz, 2000). Young children use the target language words they hear others use. Taking another's words and using them in socio-dramatic play is one way young children make those words their own by relating them to their own context (Drury, 2007). Young bilinguals can often take over chunks of the target language through repetition in play, but Gregory (2005) does not consider such language as "merely copying, since he [the young bilingual] is also an active and successful partner in the conversation" (p. 233). Teachers should be aware that second language (L2) linguistic and cultural transfer can also occur from school to home. Children may observe target language use without verbalizing in the school environment, but later use the target language in a different environment such as at home to speak to themselves as practice for later more overt use with other interlocutors (Saville-Troike, 1988) or in role plays with siblings, even playing school (Drury, 2000). Drury describes this invisible learning in her ethnographic study of young bilingual children who demonstrated L2 competence at home, but did not do so in their nursery school or even in higher grades. The preschool

teacher and the parents may miss signs of second language development unless an

attempt is made by both to understand the other's environment. A key to second

11

language learning has been to recognize what is happening in the home in terms of sociodramatic

play of both home and school roles and help the child to "take on a new language and culture alongside the existing one" (Drury, 2007, p. 54). In this case study, I

am investigating whether planned socio-dramatic play in a second language can influence

second language use in other settings.

Guiding Question

The current research is a case study of Nina, my four and one-half year old granddaughter, who from birth has been exposed predominantly to English as her first

language and Spanish as a second, additive language. The research question is: Will

planned socio-dramatic play with a Spanish bilingual grandmother influence

Spanish use

by a preschool child in other settings? Evidence of second language choice was captured

through transcription and coding of audio and video recordings of planned play sessions,

parental coding and interviews about language choice in free play, and my field notes.

This evidence will help readers recognize how social opportunities such as planned play

in a second language can encourage and support second language use in preschoolers.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I have discussed my personal experiences learning Spanish as a second language and my interest in second language acquisition for my four year old

granddaughter. I have also recognized the unique place that the home and relatives play

in linguistic experiences, especially during socio-dramatic play. In Chapter 2, I review

the current literature on the differences between first language acquisition (FLA) and

SLA, along with the role of play and social affective relationships in SLA in the 12

preschool child. I will also discuss the role of motivation for the young child in SLA.

Finally, in Chapter 2 I will discuss case study methodology in SLA research. In Chapter

3, I will discuss the methods used to conduct my research as participant and researcher with a four and a half year old, my granddaughter. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of the research. In Chapter 5, I will provide conclusions that may be drawn from the research.

13

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Second language acquisition research on the young child finds its home primarily in the preschool context, where the greatest number of second language learners is readily observable. In Chapter 2, I consider literature based in socio-cultural theory that uses video-recordings, along with field notes, and questionnaires to document the features of first and second language acquisition, and the role of socio-dramatic play of preschoolers in the acquisition of a second language, along with the reasons children choose to use a second language. The cognitive, social and linguistic development and strategies that children use in acquiring a second language are cited (Wong Fillmore, 1979) and motivation is further discussed by way of the important long term case study of Caldas (2006). That study provides a rare glimpse from inside the home of the language professional as researcher/observer, as he documents the 18-year case study of his three children's simultaneous acquisition of French and English. Furthermore, I also consider literature that observes young children engaged in role-based play and offers evidence of *language play*. Finally, I consider work on intergenerational relationships and activities brought to light by Arju, et al. (2007), and discuss case study methodology. I am investigating the role of socio-dramatic play with a bilingual grandmother in second language acquisition and use in a preschool child.

Language Acquisition

14

First and second language acquisition may be similar or distinct, depending upon whether the acquisition occurs simultaneously or sequentially. A child who from infancy hears two languages, perhaps a different language from each of two parents, is said to

become a simultaneous bilingual. The child who acquires two languages simultaneously experiences the same sequence of development as if she were acquiring two first languages (Caldas, 2006; Tabors, 1997). The sequence of first or simultaneous second language acquisition begins with sounds and babbling, open and closed syllables, and progresses to first words. Subsequently, children recognize the grammatical requirements of language and develop utterances consisting of a few words that can represent multiple meanings, and then progress to phrases that add attributes and greater distinctiveness of use. For example, a child might say, *Get book* which could mean *Get me the book, please* or *I'll get the book*, and later might say *I get my book off table*. Parents are prone to enthusiastically prompt their children in the social aspects of language during this time, as well. Greetings and leave-takings are social conventions that parents teach their children at a young age. Who hasn't waited for a baby to say and wave, "Bye-bye?" Throughout the preschool years, children demonstrate their continued development of tenses and syntax, while they enrich their vocabularies and continue to engage in discourse. Language becomes fun and useful as the four year old rhymes, plays with words, and provides plenty of background information for the stories she recounts (Tabors, 1997).

When a child develops one language and then later acquires a second, she is said to be a sequential bilingual. The sequentially bilingual child, who acquires the second

15

language after the age of three or four, already knows much about language and its uses

based on the acquisition of the first language. Tabors (1997) says that the acquisition of the second language is more about discovering what the second language is vis-à-vis

what is already known about the first language. The young child who becomes sequentially bilingual has the advantage of a lower level of cognitive demand; that is, less

is required of her cognitively to acquire a second language. However, the young child also has less cognitive capacity than the older or adult bilingual because the intellectual knowledge of the young child is less sophisticated. For example, a preschool child will be expected to use her second language in a less sophisticated manner than a college student who is acquiring a second language. The young child who is a sequential bilingual will pass through stages of SLA. Those stages are: pre-production or silent period, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Hill and Flynn, 2006). The first two stages are characterized as pre-production: silence, head nodding, performing an act and early production: electing a word from choices, putting two words together, or using formulaic expressions or chunks that they hear often, but the grammar of which the child has not acquired. The length of these stages will vary from child to child, but the features of each stage are identifiable. Young children acquiring a second language may retain features of an early stage while exhibiting features of a more advanced stage (Krashen and Terrell, 1983; Hill and Flynn, 2006).

Code-switching is a linguistic behavior that young children use as they mature in acquiring a second language. McClure (1997) described code-switching in child bilinguals as a natural part of their bilingual development and as evidence of cognitive, linguistic, and social development. Koike (1987) explains that bilingual children generally use one of the languages much more than other and so demonstrate a clear understanding that they are using two separate languages and are not simply confused when they insert a word from one language into the other language. In their study of a young simultaneous bilingual from age one to three, Deuchar and Quay (1994) distinguished between code-switching and language choice in a very young bilingual based on features of one-word, two-word, and multi-word utterances. Looking at lexical and grammatical features, they concluded that when young bilinguals code-switch at the

multi-word stage they are performing more like adult bilinguals, revealing the linguistic resources they have available to them both lexically and grammatically. Socially, young bilinguals are similar to adult or more mature bilinguals when they choose the setting in which they will code-switch. Young bilinguals code-switch when they are in social settings with interlocutors who will understand them and not become upset with the sentences they have produced by code-switching (Koike, 1987). Child bilinguals use the knowledge they have about their first and second languages, including appropriate lexical and grammatical combinations and environments, to synthesize the two languages into comprehensible output as they code-switch.

The task of acquiring a second language requires effort on the part of the young child. Tabors (1997) describes the young emerging bilingual as aware of the energy and effort she has expended in the task, having taken the first three or four years of life to

acquire her first language. At age three, my granddaughter might have been providing

17

anecdotal evidence of that kind of awareness when she would respond to my attempts to communicate with her in Spanish with, "Can't you please just say it in English?" Preschool children learning a second language have been observed making a conscious election not to speak the language of the preschool class, opting instead for a school year of isolation and silence, or exercising only the first language (Tabors, 1997). While

young children can become part of a social group of peers that shares the first language,

they can also delay or minimize the use of the second language (Drury, 2007; Tabors

1997). De Houwer (2006) notes that even when children grow up with and acquire a

receptive knowledge of two languages, they often only speak one of the two languages.

The influences on second language acquisition and use are key to supporting the development of receptive and expressive linguistic acts.

Caldas (2006) provides evidence that children's motivation to use a second language is related to the value the child places on the social environment in which he

uses the L2 and the people with whom the language is spoken. In his unique long range case study of the acquisition of two languages, English and French, in his three children, Caldras provides an insider's perspective as he describes his children's school and home experiences and the language of each. He also gives his children-participants a voice as he shares their impressions of learning two languages. In his study, Caldras (2006) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the simultaneous acquisition of two languages of his three children. Caldras and his wife first elected the one parent, one language approach to the creation of simultaneous bilingual children. They soon realized that their children's language choice and output was related not only to the quantity of input, but also to the social environments and relationships they experienced in the each language. In his 18-year case study, he discovered that his children spoke the language of the people they most wanted to communicate with. Similar to Caldras, Tabors (1997) notes that social environments and relationships are important for second language acquisition. She reminds us that "wanting to communicate is crucial to SLA" (p. 81). One social environment for young children is the pre-school. Second language acquisition in young children is often studied in the context of a pre-school and young children are often observed in socio-dramatic play in their preschools; however, there is little research on the influence of play in second language acquisition. There is even less research on the influence play in a second language with a relative, and no research that I was able to find on the role of play in SLA with a bilingual grandmother.

Play in Children's Language Learning

Play is a rich context for cognitive, social, and linguistic development that applies to both FLA and SLA. Play also allows for the development and implementation of strategies for both FLA and SLA. Wong Fillmore (1979) described maxims that she

thought children were using in order to learn a second language. They were both social and cognitive in nature. Socially, a child might join with others and act like she knows what is going on. Cognitively, children might “assume that what people are saying is directly relevant to the situation at hand or to what [the child] or [the playmate] is experiencing” (p. 208). From that assumption children implement a strategy: to guess what the meaning or application of the language being used is. Berk (1994) considers play indispensable to cognitive development in that play creates the opportunity for

19 scaffolding to higher levels of performance. Teachers are often charged with the responsibility for this scaffolding (Bodrova and Leong 2003b), but it is possible for others to scaffold and co-construct learning and development. While much research documents the use of socio-dramatic play during second language acquisition in the preschool setting (Konishi, 2007; Tabors 1997, Riojas-Cortéz, 2000), there is evidence that play with relatives occupies a valid and often preferred experience in development, as well (Berk, 1994). Play can be motivating, providing enthusiasm for learning a new language through role-play and rule-based play such as board games (Kim & Kellogg, 2007). Within role-play we can find the phenomenon of *language play*, which itself is the object of play through silly productions, word exchanges, or outright jokes (Bell, 2005).

Play can even be considered work. It might be said that the first time play was taken seriously in early childhood development was when Friedrich Froebel, whose 1837 kindergarten served as the model for American kindergartens, designed gardens in which children played as a vehicle for learning. Manning (2005) interpreted Froebel’s philosophy on play as “the methodology by which the child works to achieve inner harmony and develop the skills he will need” (p. 373). The kindergarten environment that Froebel envisioned and implemented was filled with songs, games, stories and simple toys.

Play has continued to be considered vital in the development of children, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and linguistically. Socio-dramatic play can involve problem-solving exemplified in the negotiation of roles and how children move role20 plays forward. Educational theorists, psychologists and second language theorists (Froebel, 1974; Vygotsky, 1978; Tabors, 1997) support the idea that children use their natural creative instincts for development and that play is vital to a child's development. Bodrova and Leong (1996) report that young children actively and intuitively use problem solving to enhance their development. Vygotsky (1978) says that through play children interact with their environment making meaning out of the people and things, constructing knowledge out of significant toys and books and interactions with peers and adults. Vygotsky (1978) says, "Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child...play is itself a leading factor in development" (p. 101). It is in the zone of proximal development where the more mature playmate scaffolds the child's successful mastery of emerging skills and concepts so that the child moves beyond her current level to a new and higher level of development. Professional teacher training and judgment are considered by Bodrova & Leong (2003a) to be essential to effective scaffolding in SLA. Haworth (2006) states that "skillful teaching in an early childhood context clearly requires professional judgments about when and how to intervene in children's learning, how to facilitate its occurrence and when to allow it to just happen naturally" (p. 307). Yet, the informed parent or other adult playmate might well be able to overcome Bodrova and Leong's (2003b) admonishment to teachers that "we cannot become players as if we are also children" (par. 11). Naturally, classroom teachers cannot become players to the extent that they forfeit their responsibilities to redirect inappropriate actions of the children and guard their well-being in the classroom. Actually, all caregivers must maintain similar 21 responsibility; however, the home environment and play with an adult family member

might allow the caregiver to be playmate and maintain the responsibilities of guardian, especially in a one on one context. Gregory (2003) emphasizes that a socio-cultural approach to language learning will respect what family members offer the child, the manner in which they offer it, and the context in which it is offered. Therefore, the informed family member who is willing to take Bodrova and Leong's (2003a; 2003b) advice can readily be the playmate and mediator of second language learning when willing to co-construct socio-dramatic play, including imaginary props and situations, allow participants to have multiple roles and implicit rules, and not usurp the child's role in socio-dramatic play. In fact, since adults have already experienced socio-dramatic play as children (often as siblings), a time when Berk (1994) considers them "expert partners" in scaffolding (p. 37), non-professional adults might well remember such features and employ them nostalgically, if not instinctively. Arju et al. (2007) advises schools to look specifically to the role of grandparents in children's learning. Many grandparents assume responsibility for passing on intergenerational knowledge, including cultural and linguistic knowledge. Engaging with their grandchildren in a variety of activities from stories to cooking to outings, grandparents pass on their knowledge and create various contexts for learning, including the home. Ruby et al. (2007) documents how grandparents pass on specific skills, family history and cultural traditions through gardening, while Gregory et al. (2007) emphasizes the important linguistic contribution grandparents make to their grandchildren's learning through story-reading. Their diverse range of experiences creates a broad basis for

22

learning. While the literature depicts grandparents and grandchildren learning together, there is no research that I was able to find that portrays grandparents playing with grandchildren in a language that is not the home language, that is, a second language. Kinship relationships afford not only a broad basis for intergenerational learning,

but also privileged interactions to which academic professionals may not have access.

Play between a grandparent and grandchild who share their L1 reveals that children and their grandparents engage in a variety of interactions involving various communicative modes of language, touch, gesture and gaze. Touch seems to build security and confidence in the relationship and produces kinesthetic learning. Close family members are privileged to this appropriate, intimate kind of closeness that can scaffold learning a second language. Moreover, grandparents and grandchildren enjoy a relationship that is distinct from the one children enjoy with their parents. Grandparents and grandchildren tend to work together in more flexible ways than children and parents by accepting various levels of achievement (Arju et al., 2007).

Flexibility when it comes to language learning activities can make room for the important practice of language play. One of the features of socio-dramatic play can be language play. In contrast to more formal teacher interaction, language play, which occurs between teacher and student, other non-peers, or among peers (both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS)), is a creative effort on the part of the learner that offers more leniency of production. In other words, it can reduce the pressure of perfect performance. Language play may take on the simplest forms such as playful sounds or utterances or it may be more sophisticated. Language play can give rise to experimental voicing, such as when children try to sound like a prestigious adult, or it may involve humorous exchanges. Language play takes away the nervous tension that can impede language learning, and may serve to help children notice how to produce a sound, use grammatical structures, or master the social use of language. Instead of thinking of language play as something children do off task, it can be welcomed as the very thing that moves language learning forward (Bell, 2005).

The majority of research on SLA in the preschool child observes children

interacting with peers and/or teacher during play in the preschool context (Drury, 2007; Konishi, 2007; Riojas-Cortéz, 2000; Tabors, 1997). The adults in such research are defined as *teacher*, *intern teacher*, or *teacher's aide*. Researchers who themselves are participants are often considered teachers or at least teacher's aides by the young children. In the preschool context there are numerous activities in which the children participate. There is little research that involves an adult and a young child whose interaction is entirely playing and where the adult is not recognized by the young child as *teacher*. Additionally, although the parents' role in children's learning is widely recognized and researched, there is little research on the role grandparents play in grandchildren's learning, partially because Western societies tend to live in smaller nuclear families apart from grandparents (Ruby, 2007). Play groups bring together these smaller nuclear families. Souto-Manning (2006) used such a play group as the context for her study of children, play, and second language learning. Souto-Manning observed young children at play in a playgroup, and mediated interactions with their mothers about the bilingual development of her own young son, in contrast to the monolingual development of his playmates. Over a six-month period, interactions between mothers, mothers and children, and between children, were recorded. Through the researcher's mediation, mothers were able to consider second language acquisition as a positive move in cognitive development, ultimately embracing multi-lingualism as "a resource, rather than a deficit" (p. 445). The children, ages one to three, whose purpose was to play with one another, learned to mediate their own interactions with the one emerging bilingual child and also began to demonstrate their own value of a second language by learning at least ten new words from their bilingual playmate. The opportunity to discover the power of play in cognitive and linguistic development is motivating to me as a researcher in SLA as well as a grandmother who

wants to explore play with her granddaughter in her second language. Like Caldas (2006) who studied language acquisition in his own children, I want to take advantage of the holistic knowledge I have of my granddaughter's social, cognitive and linguistic skills in her first language while focusing on her second language acquisition during socio-dramatic play.

This case study brings together a grandmother and granddaughter for the purpose of socio-dramatic L2 play. The play is termed *planned play* to differentiate it from *free play* (all other social activities outside the planned play sessions) in which my granddaughter, Nina, engages. Planned play also connotes the characteristics of mature play as defined by Bodrova and Leong (2003a). I acknowledge the possibility of a double bind in that as researcher and grandmother/participant I have an established

25

relationship with my granddaughter/participant that is positive and itself motivating.

Therefore, it is impossible to completely isolate play as the only influence for second

language use, but since to date Nina has not experienced planned socio-dramatic play in

Spanish, nor has she chosen to use Spanish spontaneously, I am confident there is an

opportunity to introduce play as an influential variable in her second language acquisition. In an attempt to consider play as the one influence for Spanish use, my case

study provides episodic socio-dramatic play in Spanish for periods of 30 to 60 minutes,

twice per week for eight weeks.

I am investigating whether planned play in Spanish with a bilingual grandmother will influence Spanish language choice and use in other social settings. In Chapter 2, I

have reviewed literature on the importance of play, social and affective relationships, and

motivation in SLA of the young child. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the methods used to

conduct my research as participant and researcher with a four and a half year old, my

granddaughter. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the research results and in Chapter 5 present

conclusions that can be drawn from this research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Planned play in a target language and the twenty-four hour period following such play is the focus of this case study. In this chapter I justify my choice of case study

methodology to answer the research question, "Will planned socio-dramatic play with a

bilingual grandmother in Spanish influence Spanish use by a preschool child in other

settings?" I describe the preparatory steps taken to identify Nina's preferred sociodramatic

play, and her parents' attitude on second language acquisition. Nina and her family are introduced so that the reader can be aware of the attitudes and abilities with

regard to second language that are prevalent in Nina's world. I provide a description of

the pilot test, the recorded play sessions, and the intermittent consultation with Nina's

parents throughout the research experience. I also describe the coding and analysis of

language samples that were captured, and finally describe questions asked in the exit

interview with Nina.

Research Paradigm

The objective of the research was to plan and participate in socio-dramatic play sessions in Spanish with Nina because I wanted to discover the effect of planned sociodramatic

L2 play on second language acquisition, specifically Spanish use in other settings, in a four and one-half year old child. I wanted to find out whether planned

socio-dramatic L2 play with a bilingual grandmother could influence Spanish language

choice and use in other settings.

Case study methodology has often been used in the study of developmental bilingualism and was chosen by Lanza (1997) for her study on language mixing in infant

bilingualism for its dual characteristics of providing a holistic view comprised of a variety of sources of evidence and at the same time a focus on a small population, even

one individual subject. I chose a case study for those reasons and because it is appropriate for conducting detailed observation and interaction within a naturalistic

setting. In this case study, the setting was a naturalistic one of planned socio-dramatic

play times not unlike the kind of play that Nina and I already participate in, except that in this play I spoke to Nina only in Spanish. Nina was free to speak in any language she chose, or not to speak at all.

The case study effectively captured the linguistic and affective details of the planned play times through video recording, and its subsequent transcription and coding,

similar to Deuchar and Quay (1994), who used video recording and diary entries to study

a child from age one to three who was acquiring Spanish and English. The detailed

information I gathered facilitated analysis of the language used within the planned play

primarily to document Spanish use and to establish an approximate stage of second

language acquisition. The case study also permitted a holistic view of the participants.

The holistic perspective broadened the view of the transcribed and coded data because it

was coupled with information about personality, kinship relationships, and attitudes

present in the participant's world gathered before, during and at the conclusion of the

research via questionnaires, interviews and field notes. Caldas (2006) described his role

as father in the case study of his own children's bilingualism as providing insight that

28

comes from knowing the participants in a holistic way. Caldas also took on the roles of

participant/observer in his research. Like Caldas, I benefit from knowing my granddaughter in a holistic way, and I also took on two roles in this case study:

participant and researcher. I was researcher/participant investigating the acquisition of a

second language in my preschool age granddaughter through socio-dramatic play. I am

also a non-native speaker of Spanish, my second language.

Data Collection

The data that was collected about four year old Nina provided a picture of her parents' attitudes toward acquiring a second language, her play habits, her existing

Spanish skills, her response to socio-dramatic play in Spanish with her bilingual grandmother, her use of Spanish outside play sessions with the researcher, and her

responses to questions about the play sessions and acquiring a second language. To collect this data I used a parent questionnaire, videotaped play sessions and subsequent transcription and field notes for each play session, coding sheets of Spanish use during the play sessions and for the 24 hour period after each play session, completed by me and Nina's mother. I also interviewed Nina a little over half way through the sixteen play sessions and one week after the final play session.

Parent Questionnaire

Prior to the start of the planned play sessions, Nina's parents responded to a semistructured questionnaire (see Appendix A) to elicit information about Nina, including her exposure to languages other than her first language, the parents' thoughts on learning additional languages, Nina's favorite types of play (see Appendix B), and her normal

29

sleep, eat, and play routine within a 24 hour period (see Appendix C). They were asked

to give their thoughts on the research and allowed to get answers for their own questions

regarding the case study. I provided copies of all forms to be used during the research, the

calendar of planned play sessions (see Table 1.1), and the opportunity to experiment with

the digital recorder so that they might be aware of the experience their young child would

have and the resultant product.

Table 1.1

Research Calendar

Date Activity

November 20- 23, 2008 Pilot test at which time the parents' questionnaire, and coding sheets are tested for functionality and appropriateness.

November 27 – November 30, 2008 Adjustments to the research methods are made

based on pilot test results.

November 28, 2008 – January 30, 2009

Planned play sessions occur twice weekly over the eight week period.

Play sessions are 30 – 60 minutes long.

Intermittent meetings every two to three weeks

with Nina's mother to discuss coding and answer questions.

February 5, 2009 Open-ended interview with parents.

Pilot Test

The research was piloted over a one week period that included one planned play session and one 24 hour free play time period in which Nina's mother coded Spanish use.

Nina's mother received instruction in the use of the coding form (see Appendix D) and

30

was allowed a practice session in which she coded language examples to ensure her

accuracy in noticing Spanish use and accurately coding the same. The piloted play

sessions were recorded by me with the camera placed on a small portable tripod.

I

recorded field notes within 24 hours after the play session, and transcribed and coded the

play session Spanish use within two days after the session. Before beginning the actual

research, I met with the parents to review their and my impressions of how the pilot test

went and what adjustments might need to be made. No changes were made to the planned

play as a result of the pilot. Nina was happy and engaged in the pilot planned play, the

video recording equipment worked effectively, and I was able to provide Spanish input to

support the socio-dramatic play as a more knowledgeable playmate. The research began

the next week.

Planned Play

The planned play was co-constructed by Nina and me. The planning of sociodramatic

play was considered part of the planned play session paradigm as described by Bodrova and Leong (2003a) wherein children "plan their play scenario, negotiate and act

out their roles, explain 'pretend' behaviors, and regulate compliance with the rules" (p.

52). During the planning phase of socio-dramatic play, props are also collected.

The

repetition of themes in subsequent play sessions was allowed as a feature of mature play.

In repeating a theme, the preschool child is allowed to create, review and revise, elaborating on the imaginary situation, including the addition of new roles and/or new

purposes for the play props. Nina was free to direct the play in new ways should she

choose to, and I as the more knowledgeable playmate scaffolded our play to assist Nina

31

in enlarging the scope of our play, cognitively and linguistically. Planned play sessions

lasted from 30 - 60 minutes to allow time for the development of roles, plots, and resolutions (Christie & Wardle, 1992).

I spoke to Nina in Spanish throughout the planned play session, but Nina was permitted to use any language she chose or not to speak at all. I attempted to avoid

intentional corrective feedback or any directive to use her Spanish.

I often repeated an enlarged version of what Nina said. Repetition of some linguistic elements, choice questions, and yes/no questions were used to invite verbalization in Spanish. Other elements important to socio-dramatic play were coconstructed

during the planned play sessions such as the inclusion of language play that is, having fun with Spanish sounds, words or making jokes with Spanish.

An example of such language play would be calling something big when it was small or twisting the sequence of sounds in a word to have fun with the production. Nina

was allowed to direct the course of the planned play, even if it meant repeating a particular aspect of the play the entire time. Planned play sessions never ended before the

minimum 30 minutes of play. I concluded each play session by switching to English and

changing the activity to a completely different one, usually having a snack to eat. Shortly

thereafter, I would leave Nina with her mother.

Other Times of Interaction

During the research period, I used Spanish outside of the planned play sessions in

ways I had previously used it with Nina. That is to say, I greeted her in Spanish, asked

her for hugs and kisses and continued to give her directives in Spanish, as was my

32

custom. Other family members continued to interact in English and Spanish with Nina in

their customary ways with minimal greetings and requests. No intentional changes were

made in English or Spanish discourse in an attempt to promote greater Spanish use than

had previously been carried out.

Video Recording

The planned play sessions were captured on a digital video recorder for subsequent review by me, for the purpose of noting Spanish language input that might be matched to subsequent Spanish language output by Nina. This correlation of input and output allowed for accurate coding of output, for example, as formulaic or chunked, as opposed to novel or repeated. Field notes were entered as soon as possible after the planned play. The video recording was transcribed, coded and analyzed within two days after recording.

Coding Sheets and Data Analysis

Coding sheets (see Appendix D and Appendix E) were used to capture the nature of language used by Nina outside the planned play sessions and within the planned play sessions, respectively. The research question is concerned with the use of Spanish outside the planned play. Beyond identifying Spanish use or non-use outside the planned play, I was also curious to note the type of utterances Nina used and whether or not there was a change over the eight week study. Following Clarke (1999), utterances were classified by sound, word, phrase, and sentence, as well as, their use as repetitions, initiations, and responses with different interlocutors or practices to Nina herself, as self-talk. Sounds, words, phrases, and sentences were also coded if they were used in experimentation or for fun as language play (Bell, 2005).

Repetitions were target language utterances repeated after I spoke them, but they were important because they represented Nina using the target language as part of a valid discourse (Drury, 2007) and are used before other types of utterances in the early production stage (Flynn and Hill, 2006). Initiations were spontaneous target language utterances including single words, formulaic expressions, or chunks, and code-switching.

Each of these represent features of the early production stage of SLA, as well. Single word utterances can demonstrate progress away from reliance formulaic expressions

whose grammar the child has not yet acquired (Clark, 1999), and code-switching, which involves the insertion of a target language word in a first language utterance, is characteristic of developing child bilinguals (De Houwer, 1999). Practices, or self-talk, are times when the young bilingual is rehearsing the target language by focusing on the target language phonology, words, or longer utterances in private as learning strategies for later more public use (Tabors, 1997; Saville-Troike 1988). I have described Nina as a creative and talkative little girl and so thought she might engage in private speech, along with talking to other interlocutors.

Finally, I took a holistic view of the set of Spanish features to assign an approximate stage of SLA as pre-production or early production. Pre-production, also referred to as the *silent period*, is defined as the learner having minimal comprehension, nodding *yes* or *no*, drawing or pointing, but not speaking the L2. Early production is described as verbalizing *yes* or *no*, answering choice questions with one word, putting

34

two or more words together, and using repetitive language patterns or formulaic chunks of language (Hill and Flynn, 2006). A child may demonstrate the features of one or more of these stages of language acquisition as the features may overlap (McLaughlin, Blanchard, and Osanai, 1995).

Intermittent Interviews

Throughout the eight weeks of planned play sessions, I met informally with Nina's mother for an open-ended interview to pose and answer emerging questions regarding the planned play sessions and the subsequent 24 hour free play time. Together we considered adjustments to the schedule, the planned play, the coding forms, and the strategies for recording the planned play sessions. Only one or two changes were made to the schedule for planned play due to calendar conflicts. I did not share my journal entries with Nina's parents.

Exit Interview

Nina was interviewed at the conclusion of the research (see Appendix F). She was

asked if she had enjoyed playing in Spanish with me, if she knew any Spanish words, if she ever spoke Spanish with other people and if she would like to continue playing in Spanish. She was also asked her favorite type of socio-dramatic play. And finally, she was asked what advice she would give to her friends who wanted to learn to speak Spanish.

Participants

Nina is my four year old granddaughter. I am researcher/participant in this case study of Nina's response to planned second language play with me. Nina is a member of

35

a multilingual family. She has one sibling, an infant sister. Nina has had exposure to

English as her first language and Spanish as her second language since birth.

This study

uses Nina's Spanish as the target language.

Nina is an active four year old who enjoys playing indoors and outdoors with peers, imaginary friends, and adults. She has taken ballet lessons, participates in story hours at the public library, and attends weekly nursery and Sunday school classes at her English-speaking church. In English, she reads books, sings, makes up stories, takes on roles in socio-dramatic play, talks on the

telephone, observes computer use by adults, and does her own computer-based coloring pages. She does art projects alone and with her friends and relatives, molds clay, plays board games, and writes letters to friends and relatives. She participates in training my dog, mimicking my commands and doling out rewards in English. She has a large English vocabulary and routinely displays her latest vocabulary words for example, *hilarious*, *indestructible*, *incredible*, and *slobber*, commenting at times, "Can you believe I said that?" Nina's flare for drama, and her awareness of multiple languages is evidence of the influence her family members have on her. Therefore, they are described for the reader's greater understanding of their potential influence.

Nina's Family

Nina's father is a monolingual English speaker who learned some Spanish for the purpose of two medical mission trips to Nicaragua and one to Mexico. He reads to Nina

in Spanish and is able to understand very limited spoken Spanish. He has a positive

36

attitude toward Nina's exposure and acquisition of Spanish as her L2. Nina's paternal

grandparents are monolingual English speakers.

Nina's mother is trilingual-triliterate in English, Spanish, and French. She

primarily communicates in Nina's first language. She studied French in college and for one summer session in France. She has read to Nina in French, has used ballet terms, has counted, and has narrated some shared activities in French. Nina's mother also studied Spanish in college and in Spain. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Spanish from North Dakota State University. She has read to Nina, although recently Nina has outgrown most of the Spanish language books they have in their home, has given her limited directions such as *vente* (come here), and has prompted her to speak to other family members in Spanish using customary greetings like *chau* (bye). She has also provided a few opportunities for viewing videos in English, Spanish, and French. Nina's mother has a positive attitude about Nina's acquisition of multiple languages, but has expressed confusion about how she can support the process despite her formal and informal education in Spanish and French. Nina's maternal grandfather is a bilingual Spanish-English speaker. Although Spanish was his first language, he was not educated in Spanish, but rather in English. He does not read or write Spanish. He uses Spanish sparingly with Nina, but participates in Spanish language interactions when they are in progress. He often uses Chicano Spanish and offers a distinct variety of Spanish that in some ways is unlike the Spanish of the other family members. His attitude is positive and at times skeptical that Nina is learning Spanish. He will often react with surprise and obvious pleasure when Nina responds appropriately to spoken Spanish. Nina's maternal grandmother (the researcher) holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Pathology, and studied Spanish in elementary school, high school, and college. I consider myself bilingual-biliterate English-Spanish having earned a Multiple-Subject Credential in Bilingual Education in 1976 and taught beginning and intermediate Spanish since 1987.

Nina's maternal aunts both studied Spanish in high school and college. They use Spanish for about 5% of the communication they have with their family members, including Nina. They engage in occasional and limited Spanish language interactions

with Nina as interlocutors, but often code-switch. They have expressed regret that they

were not taught Spanish as children and so encourage efforts toward additive bilingualism in Nina, their niece.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I described the research methodology as observation of regular, episodic play for 30 to 60 minutes, twice per week for eight weeks. Through video and

audio recording, transcription, and coding, Nina's mother and I cooperated to document

planned socio-dramatic play sessions in Nina's Spanish and note subsequent use of

Spanish in the 24 hour periods following each play session. Coding sheets revealed the

type of language used and to whom it was directed. As a crucial element in language

development, Spanish play has been isolated to the greatest degree possible in attempt to

answer the question "Will planned socio-dramatic play with a Spanish bilingual grandmother produce Spanish use in a preschool child in other settings?" In

Chapter 4, I

will discuss the results of the research. In Chapter 5, I will provide conclusions that may

be drawn from the research.

39

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

In Chapter 3 I presented the research methods used to conduct this case study of

second language acquisition in a preschool child. Those methods were 1) parent questionnaires, 2) videotaped play sessions and subsequent transcription, 3) field notes

for each play session, 4) coding sheets of Spanish use during the play sessions and for the

24 hour period after each play session, and 5) exit interviews with Nina and her mother.

These methods were effective in answering the research question: Will planned sociodramatic

play with a Spanish bilingual grandmother influence Spanish use by a preschool child in other settings? This chapter begins with a description of Nina's Spanish

language experiences and abilities prior to the case study in order to provide a clear picture of her target language before and after the influence of socio-dramatic play. The results of the study follow the description of Nina's Spanish prior to the research. The results provide information for parents and other relatives who are interested in bilingualism in the young child as well as the role of socio-dramatic play in acquiring a second language. Early childhood teachers may also find these results applicable to the role of socio-dramatic play in acquiring a second language in the preschool child and the potential influence of a bilingual grandparent. Finally, these results are important to me personally because they have encouraged me to continue to weave together two important elements of my life: my love of languages and my love of fun times with children.

40 Parent Questionnaire

The Parent Questionnaire (see Appendix A) provided personal data about the participant, Nina, her family, her exposure to languages other than English, and her mother's thoughts on learning and speaking languages other than their first language.

The first section identified one sibling, Nina's eleven month old sister Sasha⁴, who was one of the interlocutors with whom Nina used her Spanish outside the play sessions.

The second section of the Parent Questionnaire related to Nina's exposure to other languages. Nina's mother indicated that they speak languages other than English to

Nina by reading her books in Spanish, French, German, and Italian and playing games such as *Lingo Bingo*, *Dora Charades* and *Memory* with her in Spanish and French.

Nina's mother also listened to foreign language CD's with Nina as part of their home school experience over a two month period, twice per week. Together they repeated the words, phrases, and expressions. Nina's mother described this experience as informal because they listened to the CD's while preparing lunch, eating, or cleaning up after a meal. I asked Nina's mother what Nina's response to the listening experience usually

was and she said, “Oh, she doesn’t want to stop or leave the room.” This section of the Parent Questionnaire also asked about any other people who speak Spanish to Nina. My husband and I were the only people named who primarily speak Spanish to Nina and the setting was described as “at the dinner table.” I questioned Nina’s mother about this response because she had told me about listening to CD’s, playing games, and reading to Nina in Spanish as well as speaking some Spanish to Nina directly. Nina’s aunts also

⁴Sasha is a pseudonym provided for the preschool participant’s, Nina’s, younger sister.

41

have spoken some Spanish to Nina, and Nina’s father has read bilingual books to Nina. Her mother explained that she considered the question to be asking who speaks native speaker-like Spanish to Nina. She considered the Spanish that she and her sisters speak to Nina to be very intermittent, often expressed in code-switching, and not in a natural communicative setting like a family eating dinner together commenting on the food or the day’s events, as my husband and I have done with Nina on occasion. Additionally, a few months before the planned play began one of Nina’s maternal aunts relocated to another city leaving only one of the maternal aunts as a potential Spanish interlocutor, thus lessening the number of potential Spanish speakers in Nina’s environment. This question and answer served to validate that although there is a potential for greater Spanish use and interaction in Nina’s life, Nina has had limited exposure to Spanish from the researcher and even less from other relatives. In answer to the question: “How does your child react or respond when she hears another language from someone else?” Nina’s mother summed up Nina’s response in a single word, “Undaunted.” These responses supported my identification of Nina as a sequential bilingual according to Macrory’s (2006) definition. Nina is a child acquiring a second language after the first language is

established and after the age of three years. Furthermore, the responses provided me with some idea how Nina might respond to being spoken to entirely in Spanish during sociodramatic play.

The third section of the Parent Questionnaire asked Nina's mother about her thoughts on learning a second language. Nina's mother indicated that she liked the idea of her child learning a language other than English. When asked, "Why?" Nina's mother

42

replied "[It is an] excellent skill, good for increased learning ability later, in order to

broaden her perspective." In response to the question, "What are your ideas about how

children learn other languages?" Nina's mother offered, "There are many ways, I'm sure.

I think how it's done and what the result is varies in different environments." I wanted to

find out if Nina's mother had experience with other children that speak two or more

languages. Nina's mother indicated that Nina's cousin who is 8 years old attends a

Spanish immersion school, but that the cousins do not play together and are only together

at holiday times for limited periods. Nina's parents' openness to Nina learning languages

other than her first language served as evidence that they would be willing and consistent

participants in the research, open to the methodology of using socio-dramatic play and

open to a variety of results. Nina's parents also provided a schedule of Nina's daily

schedule of rest, eating, and play so that we could coordinate the planned play with her

usual time of active play.

Nina's Spanish

Before considering the Spanish that Nina was exposed to during planned play, it is

worthwhile to consider her Spanish prior to the start of the case study. Nina has been

exposed to Spanish from various members of her family. The following list attempts to

describe the type of interactions and the approximate percentage Spanish represents of all

interactions of the specific types:

1) Spanish motherese from birth by her maternal grandmother is 5% of all motherese she hears.

43

2) Listening to Spanish language children's literature read by mother and father, maternal grandmother, and maternal aunts is approximately 10% of all literature that is read to Nina.

3) Viewing Spanish language videos is less than 5% of all of Nina's video viewing.

4) Being spoken to in Spanish by mother, maternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, and maternal aunts is about 15% of all oral language directed to Nina.

I have been the primary resource for Spanish language interactions with Nina since her birth. We have some Spanish language interactions that have become routine

and customary. Formulaic expressions include: *hola/chau* (hi/good-bye), *dile...*

(tell

her/him...), *gracias/de nada* (please/thank you,) and *¿Me quieres?—Sí, te quiero*

(Do you

love me?—I love you.) Some expressions that we use that convey a larger meaning are:

besitos (kisses, Give me a kiss, please) and *abrazos* (hugs, Give me a hug, please). Nina

and I have a contextualized use of the adverbs *lento* (slow) and *rápido* (fast) when mixing

instant pudding, which is probably her favorite second language interaction.

Nina's Spanish language experience are initiated by others, but she seems to enjoy the interactions, especially when she can play with the language. Nina has played with the sound systems of English and Spanish, laughing hysterically when she transforms something from Spanish into English; for example, *tíramela* (throw it to me) becomes *tree melon*, obviously aware that she has made a joke with her inaccurate translation. She will also try to produce a trilled /r/ in Spanish

44

with great enthusiasm and humor as her production becomes more and more like the sound of a toy truck motor and she collapses in a heap of giggles. Teasingly, Nina uses nonsense words with family members and explains that they are Spanish or French. She always laughs when she attempts this expert positioning behavior indicating another type of language play. When her great grandmother tried to explain to her that she (Nina) speaks English, Nina replied, "I'm *trying* to learn Spanish." At four years of age, this was the first time that Nina directly expressed her awareness that the two languages are distinct, and contrasted her abilities in Spanish compared to her abilities in English. Nina's known receptive Spanish vocabulary is displayed in Table 2.1

Table 2.1

Receptive Spanish Vocabulary

Nouns Adjectives Adverbs Formula

luz/luces (light/s) *Grande* (big) *Lento*

(slow)
Ayúdame. (Help me.)
mi hija (term of
endearment,
literally “daughter”)
Pequeño (small) *Rápido*
(fast)
Vente. (Come.)
Boca (mouth) *Mucho/a/s* (many, a
lot)
Dile. (Tell/say to
her/him.)
Nariz (nose) *Azul* (blue) *Abrázame.* (Hug me.)
Barba (chin) *Verde* (green) *Acuéstate* (Lie down.)
Ojos (eyes) *Amarillo* (yellow) *Despiértate* (Wake up.)
Orejas (ears) *Rojo* (pink) *Tíramela* (Throw me it.)
Pies (feet) *Blanco* (white) *Dame* (Give me.)
Tía/s (aunts) *Negro* (black) *Te quiero.* (I love you.)
Abuelito (grandpa)
Besitos (kisses)
Abrazo (hug)
Caballo (horse)
Perro (dog)
Gato (cat)
Numbers 1- 15 *¿Podría tener...?*
(Could I have...?)
Por favor (please)
Gracias (thank you)

45

Nina has offered some insight into her attitude about her limited second language skills. She has gone through periods when she expressed a preference for her first language over her emerging second language, perhaps frustrated at having to communicate with limited words and understanding in Spanish. At four years three months, Nina was reluctant to participate in conversations in Spanish (usually a receptive role) politely requesting, “Could you just tell me in English, please?” As time has gone one she has softened her position a little. At four years six months, she asked me why I speak Spanish. When I replied, “Because I think it is beautiful, like music,” she responded with, “Yes, it is beautiful, like music,” in a dramatic voice that seemed to try to express the aesthetic nature to which I had referred. Perhaps at this point she was

beginning to adopt my point of view as a Spanish bilingual. Just before the beginning of this case study, I was recounting the difficulty I had explaining a homework assignment to my college level English language learners to some adult family members. Overhearing the conversation, Nina's suggestion was, "Why don't you just tell them in Italian or French? Like you could say, *scusi* (excuse [me])." I think that Nina is beginning to see that language is about communicating and that there are multiple words that can be used to be able to understand each other. Considering the features of Nina's Spanish language experiences and skills, I would describe Nina's stage of second language acquisition as pre-production according to Krashen and Terrell (1983). At the onset of the case study she had not initiated interactions in Spanish, nor had she used Spanish spontaneously, that is, to describe her world either in private speech or to others. She would repeat any phrase she was told to

46

repeat after the Spanish prompt *Dile* (Tell him/her). She would also echo greetings, farewells, and expressions such as *Te quiero* (I love you) without the prompt *Dile*. The stages of second language acquisition, however, are not rigid, but rather, they are flexible (McLaughlin, et.al., 1995). Young children who are learning a second language can have features of more than one stage present at a time. Playing with the phonology of a second language and playing with meaning could indicate that Nina was moving toward the second stage of language acquisition, early production Hill and Flynn (2006).

Planned Play

Schedule

Nina and I began our socio-dramatic play in Spanish with mutual enthusiasm, but with opposite levels of Spanish language skill; I was the more knowledgeable and she was the beginner. that were Nina and I met for planned play a total of 17 times. A pilot test was followed by 16 additional meetings over an eight week period. The pilot data is not included in the planned play data, which includes planned play times, minutes of

planned play and Spanish use by Nina. Planned play occurred twice weekly. As shown in Figure 4.1, play lasted from 30 minutes to 56 minutes 41 seconds. The first six sessions were of the shortest duration.

47

Figure 4.1 Length of planned play

Planned play occurred at times that were appropriate to Nina's daily schedule.

My

experience with children and adults in second language settings is that target language

interaction can be fatiguing. I attempted to avoid scheduling planned play when Nina

might be tired or hungry. Nina's mother indicated that the Nina usually engaged in active

play between 8:30 A.M. and 10 A.M. and 12 P.M. and 2:30 P.M.. She engaged in quiet

play from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. and again between 4:30 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.

(See

Appendix C). Figure 4.2 shows that 13 of the 16 play sessions took place during Nina's

usual active play time. Two of the sixteen sessions occurred during Nina's quiet

time and one of the sixteen sessions went into a portion of Nina's usual nap time.

48

Figure 4.2 Time of planned play

Features

Nina's mother provided Nina's favorite types of socio-dramatic play to me prior to the start of the play sessions (See Appendix B). Following Bodrova and Leong (2003a) I collected this information to support the concept of mature play. I

collected

cardboard odds and ends that might become a variety of props for play and arranged a

play area in my living room suitable for the potential roles and play behaviors that might

be planned and developed. The environment looked like a home environment with toys,

books, paper, crayons, and scissors stored in a toy chest along with a few pieces of childsize

furniture that might be found in any grandparent's home

After the initial preparation for planned play, I never needed to consult the list of favorite types of socio-dramatic play for an idea of what to play. Nina had specific types

of play in mind each time she arrived at my home. The play themes were

Caballito

(Pony), *Perrito* (Doggy), *El salón de manicura* (Nail Salon), *Supermercado*

(Supermarket), *Biblioteca* (Library), *Perro de trineo* (Sled Dog), *Veterinario* (Veterinarian), *La tienda del tractor John Deere* (John Deere Tractor Store), *Ir a acampar* (Going Camping), and *La hora de cocinar* (The Cooking Show). Nina's favorite type of play was *Caballito* (Pony), which we played three times with some

variations on the theme each time. *Perrito* (Doggy) and *Biblioteca* (Library) were also

repeated themes with variations. The repetition of play themes allowed for the development of characters and plots, which is also characteristic of mature play (Bodrova

and Leong, 2003a). Three of the play themes seem to come directly from events in Nina's

life such as going to story hour at the library, grocery shopping, and a one-time visit to

the John Deere Tractor store. The other themes were related to Nina's life experiences

that include horses, dogs, cooking, and personal grooming. Two play sessions involved a

live dog. Bodrova and Leong (2003a) indicate that mature play includes varying roles.

Nina was quick to reassign roles to each of us during our play sessions, including the dog,

whose roles included being a guide dog during the day for nail salon clients and in charge

of a machine that polished customer's nails on the night shift.

Planned play followed a predictable pattern. Nina arrived at my home alert and bubbling over with a plan each time we met for play. Nina did not have to be instructed

by early childhood professionals to know that planning is a part of mature play (Bodrova

and Leong 2003a). As soon as she arrived at my home she began to tell me what we

would play, describe our roles and the roles of various props and imaginary participants,

name the role our dog was to take on, and how the play would progress. At these times,

Nina spoke English and I spoke Spanish. Normally, Nina had two or three play themes

50

planned for the day and I would have to negotiate her down to just one selection. Together we gathered our props, planned our roles, and I would redirect the play from the

planning stage into the acting stage by starting a dialog with Nina. The dialog that follows is the transcript of the initial moments of discourse playing *Caballito* (Pony) on

December 9, 2008.

R5: *¿Almohada?* (Pillow?)

N: Yeah.

R: *Buenas noches. Acuéstate. ¿Me acuesto?* (Good night. Go to bed. Do I go to bed [too]?)

N: Yeah.

R: *¿Es mi casa?* (Is this my house?)

N: Don't look at me. Say, "Good morning, little pony."

R: *Buenos días, caballito.* (Good morning, little pony.)

N: Pretend you're still sleeping. I'll get my leash and bring it over.

R: *Estoy durmiendo.* (I'm sleeping.)

I attempted to avoid intentional corrective feedback or any directive to Nina to use

Spanish. However, during four play sessions I explicitly told Nina to say something in

Spanish. Each time I began the instruction with a command word that I use often with

Nina *di* (say/tell) followed by an indirect object pronoun indicating to whom she should

direct her utterance. It is common for me as a grandmother to direct Nina in the appropriate thing to say on various occasions. During the play sessions, I fell back into

⁵R=Researcher, N= Nina, W= [*Wito*] is a childlike pronunciation of the Spanish word for grandfather

abuelito [*abwelito*], G=Grandpa

51

my more authoritative, directive grandmother role, momentarily. The first two directives

were during our first play session on November 28. We were pretending to do a cooking

show. I handed Nina a prop. She repeated my Spanish word.

R: *Dime gracias.* (Tell me thanks.)

N: *Gracias.* (Thanks.)

Later in this same play session Nina was making a pretend phone call to her grandpa

(*abuelito* /*wito*). When she was ready to hang up I told her to say good-bye to him in

Spanish. Nina repeated the Spanish word.

R: *Dile, "chau."* (Tell him "bye.")

N: *Chau.* (Bye.)

On December 19 while setting up for *Biblioteca* (Library) Snowfie, our dog, ran in with a

shoe and later stole a prop. I told Nina what to say to the dog because she was close to

her.

R: *Dile, "Dame."* (Tell her, "Give me [it].")

N: *Dame, dame.* (Give me, give me.)

R: *Dile, "Vente."* (Tell her, "Come.")

N: *Vente*, Snowfie. (Come, Snowfie.)

On January 5 we played *Veterinario* (Veterinarian). We enjoyed the company of a live

dog for this play session. I told Nina to instruct the dog to heel in English. Nina repeated

the English command to the dog.

R: *Dile, "Heel."* (Tell her, "heel.")

N: Heel.

52

At our January 13 play session Snowfie rushed in to join us to play

Supermercado

(Supermarket). Snowfie immediately gave me a dog kiss and Nina wanted one, too.

Nina responded with an English word. Nina ignored me and engaged the dog in play.

R: *Dile que te bese.* (Tell her to kiss you.)

N: Tug. (To the dog as they started to play tug of war.)

During planned play, props like baby dolls and books could retain their generic identities, but Nina also changed their assigned age, physical characteristics, relationship

to herself or me, and their roles. For example, two baby dolls changed from their generic

doll identity to becoming Nina's children and then became blind nail salon clients when

Nina wrapped a scarf around their faces to cover their eyes. Next, the identity of our dog

changed from just a dog hanging around the nail salon to an assistant who helped the

blind clients. The dialog that follows shows how our dog was assigned the role of guide

dog when we were playing *El salón de manicura* (Nail Salon).

R: *¿Cómo se llama?* (What's her name?)

N: Well, she works to help people, umm people who can't see. Like I have someone at my shop right there. (Points to two dolls with a scarf covering their eyes to blind them.) They're waiting for her.

R: *Están esperándola.* (They're waiting for her.)

N: Look at her. That's her little play when nobody's playing with her.

R: *Es cómica.* (She's funny.)

A few minutes later the dog was assigned the additional role of the nail dryer when

talking about the evening hours the nail salon was open.

53

R: *¿Por la mañana o por la tarde o por la noche? ¿Cuándo está abierto?* (In the morning, in the afternoon or at night? (When is it [the shop] open?)

N: When it's *noche*, too.

N: Well, we sleep. We go home from our shop. One person just stays. The shop, you know what?

R: *¿Qué?* (What?)

N: There's something cool about it. The dog stays and she can do it.

R: *No me digas. No manches*⁶. (You don't say. You're kidding.)

N: Well, um there's a machine...

R: *¿El perro?* (The dog?)

N: ...there's a machine that just makes it all on your nails and then she just blows on 'em.

R: *¿Hay una máquina?* (There's a machine?)

N: Yeah and then she just blows.

R: *¿Ella sopla?* (She blows?)

N: Yeah.

Spanish Input

Nina's socio-dramatic play was supported by me linguistically as her more knowledgeable Spanish-speaking playmate. Although I was more knowledgeable, I kept

my Spanish input simple, restating her English comments in Spanish with rising intonation to seek clarification from her, beginning a series like counting, and offering

⁶ *No manches*. (You're kidding.) In Mexico this expression is often used in a non-offensive way among

female peers to express disbelief. Some Spanish speakers use it in a more vulgar way.

54

her choice questions to invite her to speak Spanish. These types of discourse matched my

perception of her stage of language acquisition as early production described by Hill and

Flynn (2006).

N: Five.

R: *¿Cinco?* (Five?)

N: Yeah, *cinco*. (Yeah, five.)

R: *Necesitamos dos, tres...* (We need two, three...)

N: *Cuatro, cinco*. (Four, five.)

R: *¿Pequeña o larga?* (Small or long?)

N: *Pequeña*. (Small.)

R: *¿Todos o uno?* (All or one?)

N: *Uno*. (One.)

As I supported Nina's play, I was scaffolding her Spanish learning in her ZPD for the

successful mastery of emerging skills and concepts (Vygotsky, 1978). I continued to

provide these types of Spanish input throughout all sixteen play sessions, adding commands and strings of Spanish sentences as we progressed through the planned play

scaffolding her attainment of emerging Spanish skills at the limit of her abilities

(See

Figure 2.1). Commands were related to the context of our play because Nina was a dog, cat, or horse and I was her owner or trainer in at least six of the socio-dramatic play themes. Spanish commands included *siéntate* (sit), *vente* (come), *súbete* (climb up), *corre* (run), *búscala/lo/los* (look for her/him/them), *ladra* (bark), *no ladres* (don't bark), *mira* (look), and *no la mires* (don't look at her). During the fifteenth planned play, I spoke the longest string of L2 utterances that Nina had heard, ending with a yes/no question. In this planned play, *Perrito* (Doggy), Nina was my dog who was sneaking into my bed.

N: Go in your bed. That's not your bed, under there is.

R: *¿Es mi cama?* (Is this my bed? (pointing to a place under the piano)) *Las personas duermen aquí.* (People sleep here. (pointing to a different location))

N: Take a long nap. Don't wake up, okay? Don't get up. (Nina, who is a dog, covers me with blanket and crawls up in the chair to sleep with me. I pretend not to notice as I wake up from my nap.)

R: *Tengo sed. Voy a tomar agua. Tengo mucha sed y voy a tomar agua. hmmm ¿Qué es esto? Qué está en mi cama? Veo algo. Algo está en mi cama. ¿Qué es?*

¿Es mi perro? ¿Qué estás haciendo? ¿Dormiste conmigo? (I'm thirsty. I'm going to get a drink of water. I'm really thirsty and I'm going to get a drink of water.

Hmmm What is this in my bed? I see something. Something is in my bed. What is it? Is it my dog? What are you doing? Did you sleep with me?)

N: Uhuh.

Spanish Output

Nina's use of Spanish within planned play and during free play, which encompassed the 24 hours following planned play, provided evidence of Spanish use

and her stage of SLA. Figure 4.3 shows that during the 16 planned play sessions Nina's

Spanish use made a dramatic change. In the first planned play session she repeated me

56

eight times and responded to me only once. In the final planned play session she responded to me fifteen times and repeated me six times.

Figure 4.3 Change in Type of Spanish Utterance During Planned Play

Figure 4.4 displays Nina's Spanish utterances that were coded throughout the research. I will describe each type and provide examples from the transcribed video

recording of planned play and also from free play. Spanish utterances were identified by

type and by their use with an interlocutor as repetition, response, or initiation, and as

practice when Nina spoke them to herself. Language play is displayed separately and was

57

used both as self-talk and with another person. Code-switching and the use of formula or

chunks are included within initiations and responses, but will be discussed as distinct

features of Nina's Spanish output with examples provided.

Figure 4.4 Comparison of Types and Number of Spanish Utterances During Planned

Play and Free Play

Number of Spanish Utterances

At the onset of the study, I described Nina as being in the pre-production stage of SLA, observing and acquiring knowledge of Spanish. It was possible that Nina might

have chosen to remain silent during planned play, yet go on to use Spanish in another

context as some children did in Drury (2007). However, Nina used Spanish 98 times

during planned play (See Figure 4.5). Nina and I met for planned play 16 times, totaling

10 hours and 50 minutes of play (See Figure 4.1). The highest number of utterances

58

occurred during the final planned play on January 27, but the second highest number of

utterances occurred during the first play session on November 28. The lowest number of

utterances occurred during the fifth planned play and the thirteenth planned play.

Utterances did not increase over time, but rather were erratic in their quantity.

Figure 4.5 Total Spanish Utterances Spoken During Planned Play

Nina used Spanish a total of 27 times during the 24 hours following some of the planned

play sessions. High numbers of Spanish utterances during planned play were not followed by high numbers of Spanish utterances during the 24 hours following

planned

play (See Figure 4.6).

59

Figure 4.6 Comparison of Spanish Utterances During Play Session and Following 24

Hour Period

Characteristics of Spanish Utterances

I consider Nina's Spanish utterances within planned play and during the 24 hours

following planned play to be representative of the pre-production and early production stages of SLA as described by Krashen and Terrell, 1983, and Hill and Flynn, 2006.

Nina's Spanish utterances spoken during planned play and during the 24 hours following are provided with examples beginning with comments about the characteristics of the pre-production stage and continuing with a variety of early production features that were coded by me and by Nina's mother. The coding strategies and categories were adapted from other research in SLA in young bilinguals (Clarke, 1999; Saville-Troike, 1988; De Houwer, 2006; Bell, 2005) and will be discussed in relation to the results in Chapter five.

The pre-production stage.. Through field notes and the transcription process I noticed Nina's use of pre-production characteristics over the eight weeks of planned play although I did not count or code Nina's use of her first language during planned play.

Early in our planned play Nina responded to my Spanish input both verbally in her first language and non-verbally. There were periods of silence, yes and no head nods and numerous English utterances like *uhuh*, *yeah*, and *ok* with no additional linguistic information following them. The following examples are from my December 9 and 12, 2008 field notes.

R: *¿Almohada?* (A pillow?)
N: Yeah.
R: *¿Me acuesto?* (Do I go to bed?)
N: Yeah.
R: *¿Más comida?* (More food?)
N: Uhuh.
R: *¿Tienes hambre?* (Are you hungry?)
N: Uhuh.
R: *¿Qué tienes? ¿ un libro?* (What do you have? a book?)
N: Uhuh.
R: *¿Quieres leer un cuento?* (Do you want to read a book?)
N: Uhuh.

Additionally, on December 12 I wrote in my field notes that Nina continued to respond to yes/no questions with verbalizations like, "uhuh " and "yeah," but had also started to

offer longer answers and translate some of my words into English.

R: *¿No lo quieres?* (Don't you want it?)

61

N: Not that one.

R: *¿más tarde?* (later?)

N: Later.

When looking at a book about arctic animals she saw some bears looking in the water.

N: What are they doing?"

R: *Buscan pingüinos para comer.* (They're looking for penguins to eat.)

N: They're eating them?

I asked the name of a puppet name that Nina brought out to participate in our play.

R: *¿Cómo se llama?* (What's his name?)

N: Wilbur.

The early production stage. Characteristics of the early production stage include some of

the features of the pre-production stage such as responding to yes/no questions with a

first language yes or no or by responding with the appropriate action. Early production

features also include: sound experimentation, language play, privately practicing Spanish

words, answering with a single Spanish word in response to a choice question, repeating

single words or phrases, the use of formulaic chunks, and that are comprised of a single

Spanish word, formulaic expressions, and code-switching that combines English and

Spanish words in a single sentence or alternating between English and Spanish in longer

discourse (Hill and Flynn, 2006; McClure, 1977). Nina played with the phonology of

Spanish, expressed choices between two Spanish word options, repeated Spanish words,

and used the following three types of initiations: a single Spanish word, formulaic

62 expressions, and code-switching during planned play and during some of the 24 hour

periods immediately following planned play.

Nina experimented with Spanish sounds during the first planned play on

November 28, and also after planned play on December 13. During planned play, Nina

played with a string of Spanish sounds as if she were actually speaking Spanish to her

grandfather during a pretend phone call. When she finished with the phonological

language play she added an English explanation of what she had said. Nina's mother reported that on December 13, Nina engaged in self-talk using made up words that had the sound of Spanish words. Self-talk is also used in the early production stage to practice the target language in private. Nina practiced a single Spanish word during planned play and also when she was in a room alone at home within ear shot of her parents. The difference between practice and using a word repeatedly in discourse is first, that the utterance is not directed to another interlocutor and secondly, that the utterance is quieter and the young child may demonstrate some personal enjoyment or interest in the production (Tabors, 1997 and Saville-Troike, 1988). One instance of self-talk was on January 13 while Nina and I were playing *Supermercado* (Supermarket) which she named "The Food Little *Chanclas* (slippers/sandals) Present Store" to denote the various things she sold. Nina played with the word *china* (Chinese) practicing it over and over in a little sing-song voice quietly and to herself.

R: ¿*Es comida china?* (Is it Chinese food?)

N: Yes.

63

N: (to herself softly) *China, china, china, china.* (Chinese. Chinese, Chinese, Chinese.)

Nina also practiced a word while she was alone in one room of the house waiting for her dad to come in.

N: *Muchísimos, muchísimos.* (many [of something])

D: What are you saying?

N: That's Guma's word. It means *lots...* because of all the ballerinas [on my p.j.s].

Alone or with others, Nina seemed to be enjoying using Spanish. As a form of language play, Nina played with Spanish words purposely mispronouncing Spanish

names for the sheer delight of it saying, "*Moda Madita, Moda Madita* , (Rosa María,

Rosa María) and laughing hysterically, which was also quite contagious. One of the

funniest exchanges we had was in the car going home from planned play. It is funny

because she anticipated my response before I could say it, and then didn't stop the language play until we arrived at her home and her attention was diverted to other themes.

N: Guma, what do you have in your car that I like to listen to?

R: (Silent for a few seconds and just about to answer.) N...

N: ¿*No sé?* (I don't know?)

R: *No, no sé.* (No, I don't know.)

N: I knew you were going to say, "*No sé.*" (I don't know.)

R: You did? What does *No sé* mean?

N: It means you don't know something. What else don't you not [sic] know?

64

R: *No sé. ¿Qué no sabes tú?* (I don't know. What don't you know?)

N: *No sé.* (I don't know.) What don't you know? Let's just keep saying that!

R: *No sé. ¿Qué no sabes tú?* (I don't know. What don't you know?)

N: *No sé.* (I don't know.) What don't you know?

The language play described above was not coded or included as a response because I

wanted to keep language play as a separate category because of its distinct role in SLA

(Bell, 2005).

Responses comprised a large number of Nina's total Spanish utterances during planned play and represented a distinct change from her high use of repetitions in the first

planned play. Nina used Spanish to respond to me with a single Spanish word 18 times

and with a Spanish phrase once during planned play. These responses are different from

repetitions or imitations because they involved clarifying intonation or clearly represented a choice.

R: *Veintitres* (23)

N: ¿*Tres?* (3?)

R: ¿*Negro o blanco?* (Black or White?)

N: ¡*Negro!* (Black!)

R: ¿*Dormir?* (Sleep?)

N: ¿*Dormir?* (Sleep.)

R: ¿*Dónde duerme tu bebé?* (Where does your baby sleep?)

N: ¿*Tu bebé?* (Your baby?)

R: ¿*Dónde va a dormir tu bebé?* (Where is your baby going to sleep?)

65

N: ¿*Dormir?* (Sleep?)

R: *Dormir tu bebé* (Your baby sleep)

N: *Uh, ¿bebé?* (Oh, baby?)

Toward the end of the planning and setting up to play *Biblioteca* (Library) on December

19, Nina and I were going about the library counting the books we had set out. At that

point Nina used a Spanish phrase in response to my counting.

R: ...cuatro, cinco... (4, 5)

N: *por aca* (around/over here).

When we finished playing that day, Nina joined her grandfather and me for lunch.

Her

grandfather commented on the food. G: *Es bueno*. (It's good.) N: *Sí*. (Yes.)

One of the responses that Nina used was a formulaic chunk. The expression is a common collocation, but was incorrectly used on January 17 when we were playing *La*

tienda de los tractores John Deere, (John Deere Tractor store). We were setting up our

play area with items representing those Nina had seen during her one and only recent

visit to the tractor store. When I asked about where we could put some items, Nina

responded with a common collocation that wasn't correct for the discourse.

N: Toys, shirts, oh that, I know a place where we can set those.

R: *¿Dónde?* (Where?)

N: *¿Dónde fue?* (Where did he go?)

Nina's use of a chunk was something like a repetition except that she selected how she would use it. True repetitions comprised another large group of Spanish utterances. The repetition of Spanish words made up 29 of the 98 Spanish utterances

66

that Nina spoke during planned play. Nina repeated more Spanish words during our first

planned play than at any other time during the eight weeks. We were pretending to put

on a television cooking show, *La hora de cocinar* (The Cooking Hour). Since this was

early in our series of Spanish play experiences, I provided Nina with lots of Spanish

words for the baking and cooking ingredients and items she needed.

R: *Dime gracias*. (Tell me thanks.)

N: *¡Gracias!* (Thanks.)

R: *¿Azúcar?* (Sugar?)

N: *Azúcar o...* (Sugar or...)

R: *¿Harina?* (Flour?)

N: *Yeah, harina*. (Yeah, flour.)

R: *¿Abajo?* (Down?)

N: *Abajo*. (Down.)

R: *¿Más chocolate?* (More chocolate?)

N: *Más chocolate*. (More chocolate.)

R: *¿Delicioso? Rico*. (Delicious. Tasty.)

N: *Rico*. (Tasty.)

R: *Pastel del chocolate*. (Chocolate cake.)

N: *Pastel de chocolate*. (Chocolate cake.)

R: *Dile chau*. (Tell him bye.)

N: *Chau!* (Bye.)

67

Twice during the final planned play Nina repeated something I had said. The first time

she repeated my speech directed to someone other than to her. The second time she

responded with a repetition when I told her good night.

R: *Oso, vente*. (Bear, come here.)

N: *Oso, vente*. (Bear, come here.)

N: *Buenas noches*. (Good night.)

R: *Buenas noches*. (Good night.)

More repetitions occurred on December 2 while Nina and I enjoyed a little soup after playing together. We began to look at a Christmas clothing catalog. Nina repeated

me as I talked about the color names of the sweaters in the catalog. A little while later she

repeated two other statements I made that had nothing to do with the Christmas catalog.

The first was when I was looking for a change of clothes for Nina while she waited in the bathroom.

R: *No tengo* undies [for you]. (I don't have any undies [for you].)

N: *No tengo* undies. (I don't have any undies).

The second was my response to being told there was a tiger in the next room.

R: *Tengo miedo*. (I'm scared.)

N: *Tengo miedo*. (I'm scared.)

Nina didn't restrict her Spanish use to waiting for someone else to speak to her. She used three types of Spanish initiations during the case study: single words, formulaic

expressions, or chunks, and code-switching. Nina used single Spanish words during

planned play and afterward while looking at a Christmas catalog, during a bilingual story,

68

and as I drove her home one evening at Christmas time. To prompt me to move faster

during *La hora de cocinar* (The Cooking Hour) she said, *Rápido*. (Fast.) When she found

what she was looking for in the catalog she shouted *¡Aquí!* (Here!), as we came to the end

of a bilingual story, Nina named the final day of the week in Spanish, *sábado* (Saturday),

and on the way home at Christmas time she commented on the holiday lights and decorations saying *muchos, muchos* (lots, lots) and *venado* (deer), along with naming the colors of the lights she saw on houses. One other single word Spanish utterance was spoken to her dad while she was playing in the bathtub, *biblioteca* (library). This may have been a rehearsal because she was not playing or talking about the library or books amidst the bubbles and she offered no explanation.

The second type of initiation that Nina used during planned play, and later on, was a formulaic expression, also called a chunk, which is an utterance that is used without the speaker considering or being able to understand its grammatical components.

It is more complex than the L2 speaker could create on her own and is sometimes incorrectly used, as in the examples that follow. On December 16, Nina took her afternoon nap at my house after we finished our planned play. As we were walking down the hallway to the guest room, she noticed the guest bathroom lights had been left on by someone else. She used a formulaic chunk to express surprise and fell down on the floor as I had done a few hours earlier at her home when she operated the new light switch her father had just installed. The chunk she used as an initiation was from one of her bilingual picture books *Mice and Beans*. N: *¡No importa! ¡No importa!* (It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.) What she really wanted to say was *¡Qué sorpresa!* (What a

69 surprise!) as I had said when she surprised me by making the new light fixtures go on and off. A few days later Nina's mother recorded Nina's use of a formulaic chunk spoken to her sister and mother when she discovered the two of them dancing together. N: *Báilate*. (Dance.)

This is an informal command to a single person. The correct expression should have been *Bailen* (Dance [you two]).

The third type of initiation that Nina used in both planned play and at home during the next 24 hours involved code-switching. Figure 4.6 shows that code switching represented 75 percent of all initiations.

Figure 4.7 Percentage of Code-switching of Initiations

During the final planned play session *Ir a acampar* (Going Camping), Nina spoke
18

Spanish utterances during approximately 51 minutes of play. Ten of the eighteen
times

Nina code-switched inserting a Spanish word in an English sentence or
alternating

between English and Spanish sentences. We set up a tent of chairs and
blankets, prepared

⁷ *Bailen* is the plural command form used to address two or more in all Spanish-speaking
countries except

Spain. Nina would only have heard this form and not the form used in Spain.

70

the baby and called the dog to join us. Of course, we filled the tent with food,
which

attracted a bear.

Using an empty instant cocoa can as food we discussed what it was.

R: ¿*Chocolate?* (Chocolate?)

N: It's not *chocolate* (chocolate) it's a kind of food.

N: Cover for *chocolate* (chocolate)

As we prepare our play area we talk about what and who we need.

R: ¿*Grandes?* (Big?)

N: *Grandes* chairs and then two pillows (Big chairs and then two pillows)

R: *La bebé...y el perro* (The baby...and the dog.)

N: *bebé...*more treats lets this *perro* not come in (Baby...more treats lets this dog
not come in.)

We are invaded by a bear, but I had to ask a clarifying question to confirm the
bear's

identity since it looks very much like our dog.

R: ¿*Oso?* (Bear?)

N: Little *oso* and it's really loving some of the food I'm giving it so it's just
finishing it up so we always come . (Little bear and it's really loving some of the
food I'm giving it so it's just finishing up so we always come.)

We walk through the forest and talk about the scenery.

R: ¿*Muchos?* (A lot?)

N: *Muchos* trees. (A lot of trees.)

R: *Vamos a la casa.* (Let's go home.)

71

N: Head straight for the *casa* (home)!

R: ¡*Vamos a la casa!* (Let's go home.)

Upon returning from our walk in the forest we prepare to bed down in our tent.

R: ¿*Dónde va a dormir tu bebe?* (Where's your baby going to sleep?)

N: ¿*Dormir?* (Sleep?) (Responds to Spanish with Spanish word)

R: ¿*Dormir tu bebé?*... (to sleep your baby?)

N: Uh, ¿*bebé?* Uh she she's just gonna *aquí!* (Uh, baby? Uh, she she's just
gonna
here!)

N: Time to wake up... *Despiértate.* (Wake up.)

R: It's *poquito de...* (It's a few of ...English unintelligible)? (Researcher codeswitches)

R: *¿Poquito de qué?* (A few of what?)

N: *Poquito de* the littlest pets. (A few of the littlest pets.)

I recorded four other instances of code-switching during the first planned play on November 28. The code-switching examples occurred during *La hora de cocinar* (The

Cooking Hour) in a phone call to Nina's grandfather, who happened to be in the room,

and the second to an English-speaking aunt who was not present.

N: Hi Wito, Would you like to, can you just, wanna come over and help us cook?

Would you like to? We don't have very many helpers.

G: (Unintelligible from a distance.)

N: Oh, no, um just to have more... a cooking... *pastel* (cake)

72

N: Oh, oh, oh *sí* (yes). Yeah. *Sí* (Yes). Hmm. So can you just come over?

You can come over.

G: *¿Ahora?* (Now?)

To the English-speaking aunt:

N: Yes, *ahora* (now). Okay, bye!

N: Hi, um, whatcha doin'? Well, I'm just holding Allie. Wanna hold her? She's a baby by her size. She's so little, *bebé* (baby).

Nina also used code-switching outside of planned play, once with me and once to her

mother and infant sister. While Nina and I looked at a Christmas clothing catalog, she

began describing the reindeer's eyes and pointing to them: N: Look. Like Santa, *abiertos,*

abiertos, abiertos. (Like Santa, open, open, open). The second code-switch Nina directed

to me as part of an inquiry.

N: What are you doing, Guma?

R: I'm writing the story of you learning Spanish.

N: Oh, I'll tell you—*triste, contenta.* (Oh, I'll tell you—sad, happy.)

R: Oh, yes. Those are your two favorite words.

Nina used code-switching to address her mom and little sister when she found them

reading an English counting book *Butterflies.*

N: Hey, are you guys reading *Mariposas?* (Hey, are you guys reading *Butterflies?*),

and again when she was involved in socio-dramatic play with her mom in her first language.

73

N: Can you say, *despiértate?* (Can you say wake up?)

Output summary. Nina's Spanish use demonstrated features of pre-production and early

production stages in SLA according to Flynn and Hill (2006). The pre-production features that Nina displayed included non-verbal communication like head nods and

fulfilling a request and also using first language fillers like *uhuh*, *yeah*, and *okay*. Wong

Fillmore (1979) observed young emergent bilinguals following the lead of other preschool children, in other words, acting like they knew what was being verbalized in

the target language, before they actually understood it. Wong Fillmore (1979) developed

a set of maxims she thought the young children were employing as she observed them

acquiring a second language, one of which was to act like you know what you are doing.

My sense of Nina in our early planned play was that she was moving the play along

according to what she had in mind, acting like she knew what I was saying. I observed

that she did not make eye contact with me when I sought clarification in Spanish of what

we were doing, but used affirmative first language responses like *uhuh*, *yeah*, and *okay*,

to avoid conflict or impede her play . Parents, caregivers, and teachers may have experienced something similar when asking a child to stop playing and come to the table

to eat. The request is acknowledged with an affirmative: *yeah* or *okay*, but the child

continues with her own plan. The adult interlocutor has the sense that she was not heard;

that she was not effectively communicating. I had the sense that I was not being understood, but the socio-dramatic play moved on. By continuing to offering me an

affirmative response, Nina was able to continue to develop her second language skills as

74

an active participant and observer (listener) in the pre-production stage (Tabors, 1997;

Krashen and Terrell's 1983; Hill and Flynn, 2005).

In the first planned play session Nina used a large number of repetitions which are

characteristic of the early production stage (Hill and Flynn, 2006), but also may indicate

that the child is not quite sure of what is going on linguistically, and again is only acting

like it by imitating others (Wong Fillmore, 1979). In the case of repetitions with a

realistic prop there is a good chance that the child understands the single target language word that she repeats (Tabors, 1997). Knowing Nina holistically, I was able to discern which words she did not know when the props were generic objects taking on new identities. For example, when she was given the choice in *La hora de cocinar* (The Cooking Hour) between *harina* (flour) and *azúcar* (sugar), I knew that she did not know either one and only randomly selected one to keep the play moving. Even so, repeating my words helped her to practice the phonology of the language and because she knew something about baking from her first language experiences, she used that fund of knowledge to develop her second language skills (Riojas-Cortez, 2000; Gregory, 2003, 2005).

As the planned play progressed through the sixteen sessions, Nina continued to use linguistic and cultural knowledge from her first language, but began to demonstrate clearly that she was understanding more of the target language input. Nina's utterances changed from being English fillers, gestures, and repeated Spanish words she didn't understand, to providing responses in Spanish that showed understanding such as selecting a number that accurately represented a quantity of a prop like quilts to make our

75

tent, accurately restating my Spanish in English, and code-switching, that is, inserting a Spanish word in an English sentence. The following excerpt from the final planned play

A acampar (Camping) illustrates those features.

N: Follow me.

R: *Te sigo.* (I'll follow you.)

R: ¿Dónde están? (Where are they?)

N: Right there.

R: ¿Cuántas necesitamos? (How many do we need?)

N: I don't know how many we're going to need.

R: ¿Dos o tres? (Two or three?)

N: Lots of them.

R: ¿Dos o tres o cuatro? (Two or three or four?)

N: We don't know that's why I'm getting a couple.

R: *Ya tienes tres; cuatro es bastante.* (You already have three, four's enough.)

N: Yep, four is enough.

R: OK.

Making accurate target language choices and code-switching were indicators that she had developed further in the early production stage (McClure, 1997; Deuchar and Quay, 1994; Hill and Flynn, 2006). In Chapter 5 I will discuss the Spanish output in more detail and relate it to SLA research in the young child.

Exit Interviews

76

Nina's Mother

Prior to the final exit interview and throughout the eight weeks of planned play, it was natural for Nina's mother and me to talk informally about how the planned play and the Spanish use after planned play was developing. Nina's mother and father were always comfortable with Nina going to play and pleased that she was happy before and after the time she spent with me. Nina's mother was concerned that Nina was using Spanish very little within the twenty-four hour period immediately following planned play. She offered to keep additional records beyond the 24 hour period, but I decided that it would be too burdensome and would result in data that might be tied to experiences other than planned play. Nina's parents expressed no concerns about the planned play experiences and so we continued on throughout the eight week schedule without any changes.

The exit interview with Nina's mother was an opportunity to consider the planned play and Spanish use holistically and to invite her to comment freely on the experience her daughter had participating in the study. The questions related to the questions found on the Parent Questionnaire (See Appendix A), taking the planned play into account. The questions were:

1. Do you think that you have changed your use of Spanish with Nina?
2. Do you think that Nina has changed the way she reacts/responds to Spanish during the past eight weeks?
3. Have your ideas changed about Nina learning Spanish? If so, how?
4. Have your ideas changed about how children learn other languages?

5. What do you think about Nina playing with her grandmother in Spanish or others in the future?

77

6. What would you like to see happen in the future with regard to Nina's learning Spanish?

Nina was enthusiastic and dedicated to the socio-dramatic play we shared in Spanish. I wondered if the excitement and fun she expressed during planned play had

spilled over into other environments and perhaps having a contagious effect on her

parents, especially her mother. Nina's mother indicated that at home she had not changed

the way she used Spanish with Nina except that she might actually be using Spanish less

because the books they had in the home were intended for younger children and that Nina

was no longer interested in naming colors and counting, for example. She indicated that

Nina didn't really show an increased interest in the Spanish she did hear from her mother,

but that she really only heard snippets of Spanish such as code-switching when her

mother might say to her, "Open your little *ojos*...(eyes)". She recalled that when one of

Nina's aunts greeted her by saying *Feliz Navidad* (Merry Christmas), Nina pulled away

and did not respond in English or Spanish. However, Nina only has limited contact with

that aunt and would normally be shy toward people with whom she didn't spend much

time. Nina's mother said she could tell that Nina was consciously thinking about what

was being said when I spoke Spanish to Nina, but that it didn't seem to bother her at all.

With regard to her ideas about second language learning after the eight weeks of planned play in Nina's L2, Nina's mother shared that she thought you got out of language

learning what you put into it. However, she really did not know if the sixteen sessions

had been productive. "I haven't seen it come out of her so I don't know if she's learning,"

she confided, "I don't feel like I want to say, 'Don't stop'". However, she went on to

add, "I was thinking the other day that if we ever moved I might try to find a way for

78

Nina to keep on playing with some kids, or something like that, in Spanish.” She expressed the belief that true language learning had to come from the heart and the home.

Looking to the future, Nina’s mother felt that she might consider a language immersion school for Nina because she observed that Nina had not expressed a dislike for the experience. She thought that learning a variety of languages helps children to be open

to all kinds of learning. She would like to see Nina grow in her proficiency. Becoming truly bilingual is something she would leave up to Nina to work on when she was older as a lifetime skill. Nina’s mother would support such a decision because the people she knows who are bilingual are very secure. She concluded with, “We could achieve a lot now, but I don’t see a real benefit to her right now. It would be a lot of work for our family to do that.”

Nina

Nina’s exit interview gave me a glimpse of the way Nina perceived her own second language acquisition. At nearly five years of age, she was able to describe her linguistic abilities and also express her personal opinions about the experience of planned play in Spanish. Nina was never told that she participated in planned play in order to learn Spanish. We did not talk about her learning Spanish or how she was progressing in Spanish, but she seems to have expressed a sense of her own second language acquisition in the interview. She made reference to her progress and expressed her opinion of her Spanish skills. Finally, Nina offered her opinion about what her peers might think about learning Spanish. She seemed to take responsibility for teaching them. I wondered if she was imagining herself in my role as the more knowledgeable playmate. Nina’s style was

79

to answer the question and then add an explanation. Being a talkative little girl in her first language she usually embarked on a lengthy explanation or additional information that

has not been included fully because it does not relate to the interview question. Question # 1.

R: Have you enjoyed playing in Spanish with me?

N: Mhmmm, I like it a lot, but a little because when we don't get to play. I like it when we play and I don't like it when we don't play.

Question # 2

R: What's your favorite thing to play in Spanish?

N: I like 'em all.

R: If you could only play one thing what would it be?

N: I don't even know. We've never played it before. Well, it's *Max and Ruby* I know lots of stories of *Max and Ruby*. (She goes on to describe in detail how she would play this.)

Question # 3

R: Do you know any Spanish words?

N: Yes, some. Why do you ask me, why are you asking me these questions?

R: Because we're writing the story of learning Spanish.

Question # 4

R: Do you ever speak Spanish with anybody?

N: Not very much.

80

R: Somebody?

N: I'm not going to tell you, because it's you. (Laughs and giggles.) But don't write that, but if you write that just cross it out. (More laughing.)

R: You're not going to tell me who you speak Spanish with because it's me?

N: Yeah. If you write that you can keep it, but just cross it out. (Laughs.)

Question # 5

R: Would you like to play in Spanish some more? Would you like to play and I speak Spanish to you some more?

N: Yeah, because I understand a lot of words, but I, I understand a lot of words but I don't *know* em. (Nina's emphasis)

R: Oh what does that mean?

N: Don't know.

R: You understand a lot of words, but you don't know 'em? (Returns to talking about crossing out the previous answer.)

Question # 6

R: If one of your friends wants to learn to speak Spanish, how can they do it?

N: Teaching.

R: Teaching? Like what?

N: Well, teaching Spanish. But, I don't even know very much Spanish yet.

And if they ask and I don't know very much Spanish, what do I do? What do I say? Do I just run away or do I just not say anything? What do I do?

81

Nina begins to talk about how kids can't drive and get themselves to my house, but

finally returns to her friends and how they could learn Spanish by coming to my house to play.

N: I'm sure Mark would love to and Mathew and Luke, just those guys I know that much, maybe John^s.

R: Do you think they would like to play and I would just speak Spanish to them?

N: Yeah because they would, they would just start doing what I do 'cuz I understand the words but don't know them. They'll think that too.

R: Can they have fun?

N: They'll say the same thing.

R: What will they say?

N: The same thing, just right away what I said.

R: They'll understand but they won't know?

N: Yeah.

As my interview with Nina was drawing to a close, Nina was somewhat fixed on her

earlier statement *I understand but I don't know Spanish*. I wanted to end the interview on

a positive note demonstrating to Nina that she did in fact understand and know lots of

Spanish words, even if she wasn't the one speaking them. To accomplish this I asked

Nina to tell me the English for words that I said to her in Spanish Her responses were

quick and sure. She seemed surprised at her own knowledge saying, "Hey, I know lots of

⁸ Mark, Mathew, Luke and John are pseudonyms for Nina's peers.

82

these words." When she came to one she didn't know she said, "That's a hard one." We

established a strategy for the hard words.

R: Do you want me to skip that one?

N: Yeah. I'll just say skip it. Some of them are just hard.

As she seemed to become bored with the back and forth of English and Spanish, she

began to make jokes.

R: *Labios* (lips)

N: Lips. I got that one! You're talkin' with 'em. (laughs at how I gave away the answer by using my lips to speak the word)

Nina's sense of humor transformed the moment as it had so many times during our sociodramatic

play. It was a delightful way to conclude her exit interview.

Summary

In Chapter four I have presented the results of the case study of my granddaughter

Nina who engaged in socio-dramatic play with me, her bilingual grandmother, over an

eight week period. I wanted to know if socio-dramatic play with a bilingual grandmother

would influence her spontaneous use Spanish in other settings.

As a case study this research took a holistic view of a pre-school child's existing

second language and play habits, but also looked closely at how her second language acquisition might be influenced by socio-dramatic play in Spanish. The questionnaires completed by Nina's mother assisted me in conducting planned play at appropriate times to accommodate Nina's activity schedule and provided insight into the parent's thoughts on acquiring a second language and Nina's other language experiences. The field notes

83

added meaning to Nina's Spanish usage and transition from the pre-production into the early production stage of second language acquisition. The data collection through video recording, transcription and coding effectively provided evidence of Nina using Spanish during planned play with me. Nina's mother was able to use the Parent's Coding Sheet (See Appendix D) to document Nina's Spanish use during the 24 hour period immediately following planned play. That documentation indicated that Nina spontaneously used Spanish in other settings with her immediate family members.

This results of this case study have allowed me to consider Nina's mother's perspective on learning a second language, Nina's first and second language experiences and skills, and her personal view of those experiences and skills, along with my own perception and insight as a grandmother and a researcher. Nina's awareness and attitude about learning Spanish have evolved in the past twelve months. The holistic approach that the case study has allowed me to take into account these changes as part of the picture of Nina's second language acquisition. About nine months before the start of the research, Nina began expressing an awareness of two distinct languages and also a reluctance to take on the challenge of learning a second language (Tabors, 1997). Nina's mother described Nina as enjoying learning other languages nearly six months before the research began and so it seemed her earlier reluctance had subsided in some measure. By the time we began the case study and our planned socio-dramatic play times, Nina was

eager to begin our socio-dramatic play. Nina's response to Spanish continued to be

undaunted, as her mother had described her so that at the start of the case study, Nina was

an enthusiastic, albeit silent, four year old sequential bilingual (Macrory, 2006).

84

The results of the study show Nina changing from a young child in the silent, or pre-production stage of second language acquisition (Hill and Flynn, 2006) to a little girl

who was using Spanish in meaningful ways with an interlocutor, even in some ways like

adult bilinguals who code-switch with other bilinguals (Macrory, 2006). The changes I

observed were distinct: from primarily one English word or one-word Spanish repetitions

to Spanish responses that involved knowledgeable target language choices and codeswitching

which represent progress from one stage into the next, retaining features of the initial stage as described in SLA stages, and acting more like an adult bilingual (Flynn

and Hill, 2006; McLaughlin, 1995). The distinct changes and progress that I was able to

identify as a trained professional, however, were not apparent to Nina's mother. Nina, on

the other hand, was able to express an awareness of her own progress. Prior to the case

study, she told her great-grandmother that she was trying to learn Spanish. At the end of

the case study, she tries to convey her skills by saying that she understands but doesn't

know Spanish.

In the final chapter, the results will be developed further. I will discuss the impact the study has had on Nina, on me, and on her parents, and the implication of the results

for other families and early childhood educators of children acquiring a second language.

85

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the data collected on Spanish use by Nina, a young sequential bilingual, during and after socio-dramatic play with me, her bilingual

grandmother. In this chapter I will describe the impact of the study on the participants

and what we learned, provide my personal insight to families considering a second

language for their preschool child, offer suggestions to professional educators, and discuss the limitations of this study and its relevance to future studies of second language acquisition in the preschool child involving play and bilingual relatives. In this case study I wanted to find out if socio-dramatic play with a Spanish bilingual grandmother in a young child's emerging second language could influence Spanish use in other settings. I focused the study on my own granddaughter, whom I described as a sequential bilingual in the pre-production stage of SLA. I engaged Nina in socio-dramatic play twice per week from 30 to 50 minutes only speaking to her in Spanish. I videotaped the play, transcribed and coded the transcription. I asked Nina's mother to write down Nina's Spanish use on a coding sheet during the 24 hours following planned play. The results impressed me more than her mother. They showed that Nina would use her Spanish during socio-dramatic play with me and that she would also use it spontaneously at other times with other interlocutors within her immediate family. The results of this case study have had specific impact on Nina psychologically, linguistically and socially, and on me as a grandmother and educator. I hope that families and teachers of young children acquiring a second language will find the results insightful and useful.

Impact on the Participants

Nina

The planned play that Nina and I shared created a strong emotional bond between Nina and me, stronger than the bond we already had. Nina's mother noticed a change, as well. In the exit interview her mother revealed that she was surprised at Nina's ever present enthusiasm about going to Guma's to play in Spanish. She had imagined that Nina would become frustrated with her inability to fully understand me as I spoke only Spanish. However, Nina never expressed frustration due to lack of effective communication. Nina always had a theme in mind and never made the slightest negative comment about leaving her mother and baby sister for the approaching planned play. Her

enthusiasm, anticipation, and zeal for getting together caused me to reflect on my motive, research. I began to feel guilty about the thought of discontinuing our twice weekly times together when the study would conclude. One day I mentioned to Nina's mother that we would be done playing in two more weeks and wondered what would we do when I had to turn my time and attention to writing it up the research? Nina overheard that comment and shouted, "Done? What do you mean we will be done? Why are we going to be done?" Nina was shocked and upset. At that moment I realized that this planned play and the resulting acquisition of a second language was the realization of a relationship that should be guarded and nurtured beyond the case study. More than an objection over the cessation of an opportunity to have fun, or play, Nina was expressing a desire to be

87

with and communicate with someone she valued, like the value Caldras' (2006) own children placed on certain relationships by using their L2 to facilitate interaction with chosen interlocutors. Those relationships were ones the children valued highly; they were people with whom the children wanted to communicate. Tabors (1997) affirmed the idea of the importance of motivation in order for children to use their L2 by emphasizing that the young child's desire to communicate is vital. Nina's voiced concern points to the unique relationship that she and I were developing in our shared second language and beyond. Gregory (2007) says that the relationship grandparents and grandchildren enjoy goes beyond learning linguistic skills to the importance of the relationship characterized by shared touch, gesture, and gaze that establishes security and confidence present in intergenerational learning (Arju et al., 2007). The enthusiastic and positive emotional response Nina expressed toward planned play was coupled with linguistic change. As planned play progressed, Nina less

frequently used simple English responses like *uhuh*, *okay*, and *yeah*. Instead, she responded with more elaborate first language statements, one-word Spanish responses and code-switching. In answer to the research question: Will planned socio-dramatic play with a bilingual grandmother in Spanish influence the use of Spanish by a preschool child in other settings? Nina used Spanish twenty-three times in the 24 hour periods following planned play. Prior to planned play I had identified a receptive Spanish vocabulary of about 50 words (See Table 2.1) for Nina. Those words and formulaic expressions were recognized and responded to by Nina in isolation, but were never responded to within longer 88 discourse). This agrees with Krashen and Terrell's (1983) and Hill and Flynn's (2006) definition of the pre-production stage of second language acquisition in which the young child has minimal comprehension and virtually no speech production. By the end of our planned play, Nina's first language use changed alongside her Spanish use. Approximately two-thirds of the way through the sixteen times of planned play, she less frequently used English expressions such as *uhuh*, *okay*, and *yeah*. Instead, she responded more often with single Spanish words, or by code-switching, characteristic of the early production stage of second language acquisition (Flynn and Hill, 2006; Macrory, 2005). The change I observed could also be described as part of cognitive and social development wherein children listen and observe, acting like they know what is going on until they actually do understand what is happening (Wong Fillmore, 1979). In the initial planned play, when Nina was using *uhuh*, *okay*, and *yeah*, I had the distinct sense that she didn't really know what I was saying but was acting like she did to keep the play moving along. During the last third of planned play, Nina's longer first language responses and responses that involved code-switching, inserting Spanish words in English sentences, clearly communicated her understanding of the play. The following excerpt from the final planned play *A acampar* (Camping) shows how quickly Nina

reacted to my Spanish, restating it in English.

N: Follow me.

R: *Te sigo.* (I'll follow you.)

R: *¿Dónde están?* (Where are they?)

N: Right there.

89

R: *¿Cuántas necesitamos?* (How many do we need?)

N: I don't know how many we're going to need.

R: *¿Dos o tres?* (Two or three?)

N: Lots of them.

R: *¿Dos o tres o cuatro?* (Two or three or four?)

N: We don't know that's why I'm getting a couple.

R: *Ya tienes tres; cuatro es bastante.* (You already have three, four's enough.)

N: Yep, four is enough.

R: OK.

Video recording the planned play allowed me to revisit not only the transcription and

coded Spanish use, but to notice the features of mature play and also features such as rate

of response to get an overall feel for the gradual change in Nina's Spanish skills, both

receptive and expressive.

Nina progressed from pre-production into early production during the eight weeks of planned play. She used Spanish 98 times during planned play and 27 times during

some of the 24 hour periods following planned play. Like the children of other studies

(Tabors, 1997; Clarke, 1999; Berk, 1994), Nina used Spanish to form responses, repetitions, and initiations. Saville-Troike (1988) considered repetition and imitation as

learning strategies for SLA while Clark (1999) found that the use of single words replaced reliance on chunked language and provided a basis for further language development. Nina experimented with the sounds of Spanish by using the phonology in

90

ways she could not use the sounds of English as part of the SLA process in the early

production stage (Tabors, 1997 and Saville-Troike, 1988). She also explored Spanish by

playing with sounds, phrases, and sentences which Bell (2005) described as that which

moves language acquisition forward, and she used Spanish in self-talk as private practice

for later overt use among or with other interlocutors (Saville-Troike, 1988). Like many

child bilinguals Nina used code-switching, not because she didn't know the English word that was switched with a Spanish word, but because young bilinguals know their interlocutor will understand the lexicon of both languages and will not be upset with them for code-switching (McLaughlin, 1995). All of these utterances represented new linguistic events that did not occur before Nina participated in planned play in Spanish with her bilingual grandmother. Understanding Spanish more fully and producing Spanish utterances in simple forms occurred alongside another change that took place within Nina, a social change that had to do with her self-perception. Nina's mother told me in one of our informal weekly meetings that she felt Nina's idea of herself was changing. She sensed that Nina was seeing herself as a Spanish-speaker and part of a Spanish-speaking pair. Tabors (1997) recognized a psychological factor in the SLA of young children, that is, "wanting to become like the people who speak the language they are trying to learn" (p. 13). Nina's mother mentioned that Nina wanted to dress like me and was very upset when I got my hair cut shorter than hers. I had not considered that Nina would change the way she thought of herself as a result of our planned play in Spanish.

91

In conclusion, the impact of planned play on Nina has been three-fold: she has strengthened an intergenerational bond with her grandmother through planned sociodramatic play in their common second language, she has increased her receptive and expressive skills in Spanish during and after playing with her grandmother, and she has begun to see herself as a Spanish speaker. Two weeks after the end of our planned play Nina visited my home while her mother made preparations for her fifth birthday party.

She invited me to play with her as we had done in previous weeks.

N: Guma, will you play with me?

R: I can't right now because I'm writing the story of how you are learning Spanish.

N: I don't want to learn Spanish. I just want to play Spanish 'cuz when I play Spanish I'm learning Spanish.

Nina's final sentence is interesting because she was never told the reason for playing with

me in Spanish. As a researcher, I asked Nina's parents and other relatives not to talk to her about learning Spanish⁹. Tabors (1997) suggests that children know that they have put forth effort in first language acquisition and that there is a conscious awareness that acquiring a second language will also require effort. Perhaps it was the expenditure of mental energy that Nina is referring to when she mentions *learning*.

The researcher

The case study research that I have conducted with Nina has truly been a capstone experience for me because it has synthesized the practical and the theoretical with first-

⁹ There were two occasions when Nina inquired into what I was doing and I mentioned writing the story of

Nina learning Spanish. However, I attempted not to relate our play to learning Spanish.

92

hand experience. In the most practical sense, I have worked through the challenges of

using a stationary digital video camera on a tripod to capture the lithe and quick movements and voice of an active four year old. I have learned through trial and error

how to transfer the video to safe storage and retrieve it once again for the painstaking

transcription process. I have been overjoyed at discovering I could synchronize the audio

recording with the typed transcript and I have been in utter despair when I couldn't

synthesize the numerous video segments into one composite presentation. All of this

detailed manipulation kept me focused on exactly what it was that I was observing.

Repetitiously and meticulously I worked with images and sounds to identify specific

features of second language acquisition in one preschool child. In the end, terms like

code-switching or language play, initiation and response, had precise and vivid meaning

for me as a professional in second language acquisition because I was witness and

documenter of their use.

Conducting this case study has not been a matter of maneuvering the hurdles of a

requisite assignment, but rather my own familiarization with the foundational theories,

progressive stages, and the potential benefit of second language acquisition for the young bilingual child. Prior to embarking on this study, I was very familiar with only one or two names in second language acquisition, although I could recognize a few more from prior reading. Today I think that I could discuss second language acquisition in the preschool child with Tabors, Gregory, and Caldas among others, even though my part would be to receive, more than to give, information. As a speech pathologist and the mother of three young daughters, I read numerous articles on language acquisition and

93

then watched intently for signs of language acquisition in our children. I valued everything I observed from babbling to jargon to telegraphic speech and full sentences, and considered common phonological substitutions such as /w/ for /r/ as normal, confident that the children were developing strong and effective first language skills. An increased foundation in second language acquisition literature, followed by careful observation, recording, transcribing and coding of Nina's second language features, has developed a similar confidence and expectation in me as a grandmother and as a researcher for Nina's second language skills. The fact that I was a novice at research did not apparently impede or sabotage the natural and innate response this little girl demonstrated in the rich context of socio-dramatic play with comprehensible Spanish input. As I have woven the academic with the experiential, I am amazed and excited about what the future might hold for Nina. I feel a greater sense of responsibility to support bilingualism in young children. My interest and investment has been transformed from a personal bias to an informed choice knowing that additive bilingualism can yield greater cognitive function and enriched experiences for my granddaughter and other children. I am confident that with her parents' support she will use her abilities well. I hope that I can support not only my own granddaughter, but also other teachers and families as they explore second language acquisition in the young child through socio-dramatic play.

Whether a relative, a classroom aide, or a preschool teacher, taking on the task of consistently playing with a pre-school child, in the child's target language, requires cognitive, physical, and emotional energy and stamina. As a college Spanish teacher, I

94

have played with my students to support their target learning, but I have always coupled the play with direct instruction in both English and Spanish. In other words, I could rest from my Spanish play and use our common first language, English, to instruct, clarify and verify their Spanish language learning. In this case study, I was restricted to using only Spanish and to only playing, as opposed to direct instruction about Spanish use. Those two restrictions were more imposing than I thought they would be from cognitive and physical perspectives. Even though I was accustomed to speaking to Nina in Spanish, the occasions were limited and predictable as described in earlier chapters. Prior to the case study, I spoke to Nina in formulaic ways and she reciprocated. If there were times when she didn't understand me, she didn't really have to let me know because the discourse was over almost as soon as it was begun when she simply repeated whatever she was instructed to repeat. During the planned play, Nina continued to play with me no matter what I said to her, but the initial planned play was often filled with English responses from Nina like *uhuh*, *ok*, and *yeah*. It was mentally challenging and physically tiring for me as an interlocutor to have to carry so much of the responsibility for the target language use, especially during early planned play. Parents who place the responsibility of providing comprehensible L2 input (Krashen and Terrell, 1985) on grandparents or on their spouse should consider the mental and physical energy that it will require being the more knowledgeable L2 speaker and in the case of socio-dramatic play, the playmate. Early childhood educators are probably already aware of the energy

they use in their classrooms, but perhaps this study will encourage them to justifiably

95

seek additional help including grandparents and bilingual aides to ease some of their responsibility for second language input.

Nina's Mother

During the exit interview, Nina's mother alluded to her own awareness of the burden of trying to facilitate and support Nina's second language acquisition.

Although

Nina's mother has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and enjoys bringing other languages

into the home in the form of picture books and music, she felt that consistently providing

comprehensible Spanish input would require too much energy at this point in their lives.

Nina's father is a monolingual English speaker and would also be isolated from conversation when Spanish was being used. Nina's mother was not overly impressed

with the data she collected on Nina's Spanish use after planned play. Unlike Nina, who

was able to express an awareness of her second language acquisition and was pleased

with the many words she knew and how she could understand Spanish when spoken to

her by me, it was hard for Nina's mother to appreciate the change from pre-production to

early production stage in Nina most likely because of a lack of information about second

language acquisition. In contrast, Nina's mother was very impressed with the babbling

and handful of words Nina's 12 month old sister was producing at the time of the case

study. Even though it was difficult for Nina's mother to see what she considered significant second language progress in her young daughter, she expressed a desire to

build on the experiences of planned play in Nina's Spanish. Nina's mother has known

bilingual adults and sees them as confident and secure, therefore, she would like to

support her daughter's second language experiences now so that Nina herself might be

96

able to choose to become bilingual in the future. She also recognized that her daughter

had begun to redefine herself and the linguistic aspects of her kinship relationships. I

suggested that Nina's refined identity as related to her emerging Spanish should not be

treated as an isolated experience that one might leave behind, inconsequentially. Four

weeks after the final planned play Nina and her family moved to another city four hours

away from me. I was able to provide Nina and her family with a resource that offers

Spanish to preschoolers in a home daycare setting with a native speaker.

Limitations of the Study

This case study was a holistic look at one preschool child engaged in planned sociodramatic

play with her bilingual grandmother over an eight week period. Although I wanted only to consider the influence of socio-dramatic play on Spanish use, it was

impossible to separate social and affective components from the play. The time, attention

and attitude that I directed toward Nina may mean that the results cannot be interpreted as

solely influenced by play. As I have described, the emotional bond between Nina and me

grew stronger, Nina began to identify with me as a Spanish speaker, and used her

Spanish. These psychological and social factors may well have influenced Spanish use.

Furthermore, the single case cannot predict results for other children and other bilingual

relatives who engage in similar activities, but there are many families with bilingual

relatives who may be available to interact with young children and provide additional

data to fill the gap that exists on the role of grandparents and second language acquisition

in preschool children. I encourage second language professionals and students to consider

97

additional research within their own bilingual families and with the bilingual families in

their communities.

Suggestions to Parents and Early Childhood Educators

Parents and teachers of young children who are acquiring a second language may

not be aware of what second language acquisition looks or sounds like, especially when

the child is going through a silent period. The silent period is one of little or no second language production. The young child who is making choices by pointing when spoken to in the target language, who follows through to physically comply with a request given in the target language, or nods his or her head in response to yes/no questions in the second language is producing the signs of progress toward learning the target language. Silence, in this sense, is golden; that is, it is valuable and parents and teachers who are made aware of the behaviors associated with this first stage of second language acquisition can be encouraged when they observe them. Acquiring a second language is not an effortless event. Tabors (1997) suggested that even the young child recognizes the effort it requires. My suggestion to parents and early childhood educators is to consider how the acquisition of a second language will benefit the young child in relation to the effort that will be expended in the process. If the adults involved are ready to support the young child psychologically, socially, and linguistically, then they should plan how they will utilize the human and other resources available to them to create fun times of second language use centered on play. Multiple native speaker playmates, both young and old, relatives and non-relatives, would enrich the experience for the young child and lessen the full load of responsibility for 98 comprehensible L2 input on just one person. Sufficient time to develop play is also essential. Mature play requires a minimum of thirty minutes (Bodrova and Leong 2003a); my experience in this case study would agree with thirty minutes to be a minimum and sixty minutes to be a more adequate amount. Adults at home and educators in school settings may find that time is a precious commodity divided among many goals and objectives, but as a dear friend and early childhood educator for over thirty years advised me, "I do hope they [the young second language learners in the class] learn something

from me, but they learn more from playing and interacting with each other. Absolutely they need to play...!" (S. Liddell from personal communication, March, 2009). I invite parents and grandparents who have the opportunity to engage preschool children in second language experiences such as play for the purpose of acquiring a second language, to recognize the potential for building strong relational bonds from the experience and if a family begins such an endeavor, they should consider how they will sustain the L2 relationship long term.

The positive reaction that Nina's mother showed toward the handful of words her one year old could speak in her first language and the more neutral reaction she had

toward the Spanish utterances that Nina spoke during and after planned play, may point to a need for parents to have more information on second language acquisition and how it

compares to first language acquisition in young children. Parents may want to seek out

other groups of parents whose children are learning a second language for support and

information sharing. Parents can gain understanding and appreciation for the process of

second language acquisition like the parents Souto-Manning (2006) met with in her son's

99

playgroup. Early childhood educators might consider providing second language acquisition information to parents whose children are involved in second language

acquisition in their preschools, as well as parent support groups where they can share

observations and questions with other parents and untrained professionals.

Summary

The idea for this case study was born out of my personal desire to invest time and energy into the enrichment of my own knowledge of second language acquisition in a

young child and to document that experience with my granddaughter as a lifetime memory. The first hand experiences of participant and researcher in this case study have

made other case studies more alive and relevant to me. The shared experiences with my

granddaughter are now recorded and documented as part of our family history.

We can

revisit them whenever we like thanks to current technology. I am happy to share this

study with other families and other educators who care about children and the work of

children which can be play, as they acquire a second language.

Plan to Disseminate

To share what I have learned through about the role of play in second language acquisition I would like to share the details and learnings from this study to both parents

and professionals. First I would like propose a workshop for parents and early childhood

educators to the Fergus Falls Early Childhood Education program. For many years, the

former director and I shared a dream of bringing second language learning opportunities

to the youngest members of our school district and their families. A workshop in which

parents could learn what second language looks and sounds like could encourage them to

100

support second language acquisition in their own children and also inform their understanding of second language of immigrant children who they encounter in their

community and other settings. To the professional and pre-professional community of

teachers of English as a second language, I would like to submit an article to be considered for publication to the *MinneWITESOL Journal*, a publication of the TESOL

affiliate of Minnesota and Wisconsin teachers of English as a second language.

Finally,

in order to benefit from an exchange of a variety of new perceptions, ideas, and questions, I will consider requesting an opportunity to present a report on the research at

the Minnesota TESOL conference.

101

APPENDIX A

Parents' Questionnaire

This Information is About the Child Participating in the Research:

1. Please provide information about the child who will participate in the research.

Name:

Name she likes to be called:

Birth date: _____

Age today: _____ years _____ mos.

Siblings of Participant:

2. Please provide information about siblings of the participating child.

Name: _____

Birth date: _____

Age today: _____ years _____ mos. Today's Date:

These Questions Are About Exposure to Other Languages Besides English

3a. Do you ever speak a language other than English to your child?

3b. If you do, what other language/s do you speak to her?

3c. Would you describe when you speak the other language/s to her?

3d. How does your child react or respond when she hears another language from you?

4a. Does anyone else speak another language/s to your child?

4b. If someone else does, please name the person, describe the relationship to your

child and what language/s is/are spoken to her?

4c. Could you describe when others speak the other language/s to her?

4d. How does your child react or respond when she hears another language from someone else?

These Questions Are On Your Thoughts on Learning/Speaking Languages Other Than

English

5a. Do you like the idea of your child learning a language other than English?

5b. Why or why not?

5c. What are your ideas about how children learn other languages?

4. Do you know any children that speak two or more languages?

5. If so, does your child ever play with those children who speak languages other than

English?

102

APPENDIX B

Favorite Make-Believe Play¹⁰

¹⁰ Make-believe play is a parent-friendly term that is synonymous with socio-dramatic play.

Name of

Play/Activity

Description Props/Toys Playmates

1. Most

favorite:

Littlest Pet

Shop

Sets up and plays with *Littlest*

Pet Shop. Creates family

scenarios.

Littlest Pet Shop

figurines.

Self and anyone

who will play

including stuffed

animals and dolls

2.

Baby

Sister/Baby

Brother

Takes care of her *baby brother*

Max or Henry

Doll or bear,

bottles, blankets,

etc.

Same as 1

3.

Tea Party

Tea set items Tea set items Same as 1

4.

Christmas

Wraps presents, gives them

and opens them

Books, wrapping

paper

Same as 1

5.

Birthday

Wraps presents, eats cake Same as 1

6.

Re-enacts

Movies

Pretends to be the characters

Max, Ruby, Angelina Ballerina

Same as 1

7.

Caballito

Pretends to be a horse or ride a
horse.

Blanket and

pretend saddle

Any person

This Chart is a Description of Your Child's Favorite Types of Make-believe Play

Please use this chart to describe your child's top ten favorite types of socio-dramatic

play. Describe the toys or props she uses, and who she likes to play with during those

play times. The *least favorite* is still an activity your child would like to do, but would

choose it last given the other nine options. Estimations are appropriate.

APPENDIX C

Participant's Activity Schedule

Use the legend that follows to indicate your child's usual schedule.

A: Asleep W: Wakes up

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner S: Snack

P1: Mostly active/ physical play e.g. running, climbing, dancing

P2: Mostly quiet play e.g. reading, coloring, viewing video

NP: Play not recommended during this time.

104

APPENDIX D

Parent's Coding Sheet with Examples

Use this chart to record examples of Spanish language use.

Include all examples for the 24 hour period after each play session.

Use a new chart for each new 24 hour period. You will have two sheets per week.

Coding:

PL: Playing with Spanish sounds, words, phrases to be silly or humorous (noted by her

own laughter, smiles, obvious amusement)

PR: Practicing tries out sounds, words, phrases to master them (not for amusement)

RPT: Repeating something heard (book, video, song, conversation) simple or complex,

expanded or reduced, to self or other

RSP: Responds in Spanish to Spanish. Ex: --¿Quieres más? Nina --Sí. – Vente. Nina—Ya vengo.

RE: Responds in Spanish to English. Ex: --Would you like more? Nina --Sí.

IN: Initiates in Spanish. Ex: Nina—Me gusta.

S: Spanish sound Ex: Trilled /r/

W: Single Spanish word spoken Ex: *sí, besito, chau, rojo, por favor, gracias, lento, rápido*

PH: Spanish phrase spoken: Ex: *Ayúdame, vámonos, con gusto, muchos colores*

S: Spanish sentence spoken: Ex: *Quiero leche, Vamos a jugar, ¿Dónde está? ¿Podría tener más jugo? No llores.*

Examples may include multiple categories. Ex: R, W (to self)

Record the examples using codes and descriptions here.

Check one of the boxes below

Planned

Play

Session #

1 Feb 1,

2007

Examples

Date: Feb.

2, 2007

Ex.

Type
Use
codes
above.
Example:
What did she say?
What was happening at the
time?
Any other comments you
would like to add.

To
Self during
private
play,
reading,
video
watching,
etc.

To 1 Peer
or
Sibling

To 1
Adult

To
Peer
Group
(2 or
more)

To Adult
group (2
or more)

EX: PL -
S

Tried to trill "r", watching
video, laughing at herself
X

EX: W -
RPT

Chau, leaving her aunt,
repeated her mom
X

105

APPENDIX E

Planned Play Coding Sheet

Use this chart to record examples of Spanish language use

Include all examples during the 30 - 60 minute planned play session.

Use a new chart for each planned play session.

Coding:

PL: Playing with Spanish sounds, words, phrases to be silly or humorous (noted
by her
own laughter, smiles, obviously amused)

PR: Practicing tries out sounds, words, phrases to master them (not for
amusement)

RPT: Repeating something heard (book, video, song, conversation) simple or
complex,
expanded or reduced, to self or other

RSP: Responds in Spanish to Spanish. Ex: --¿Quieres más? Nina --Sí. – Vente. Nina–
Ya vengo.

RE: Responds in Spanish to English. Ex: --Would you like more? Nina --Sí.

IN: Initiates in Spanish. Ex: Nina—Me gusta.

S: Spanish sound Ex: Trilled /r/

W: Single Spanish word spoken Ex: *sí, besito, chau, rojo, por favor, gracias, lento, rápido*

PH: Spanish phrase spoken Ex: *Ayúdame, vámonos, con gusto, muchos colores*

S: Spanish sentence spoken Ex: *Quiero leche, Vamos a jugar, ¿Dónde está? ¿Podría tener más jugo?*

Examples may include multiple categories. R: Researcher N: Nina

Record the examples using codes and descriptions here.

Check one of the boxes below

Planned

Play

Session

Date:

Ex.

Type

Use

codes

above

Example:

What did she say?

What was happening at the time?

Any other comments as appropriate.

To

Self

To Researcher To:

Props

To:

Imaginary

playmates

106

APPENDIX F

Nina's Exit Interview

1. Have you enjoyed playing in Spanish with me?
2. What's your favorite thing to play in Spanish?
3. Do you know any Spanish words?
4. Do you ever speak Spanish with anyone? If yes, who?
5. Would you like to play in Spanish some more?
6. If one of your friends wants to learn to speak Spanish how can they do it?

107

REFERENCES

Arju, T., Greory, E., Jessel, J., Kenner, C., & Ruby, M. (2007). Intergenerational learning between children and grandparents in East London. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 5, 219-243.

Bacha, J. (2008). *GenkiEnglish.net*. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from GenkiEnglish.com: <http://www.genkienglish.net/playandaffect.htm>

Bell, N. (2005). Exploring L2 language play as an aid in SLL: a case study of humour in NS-NNS interaction. *Applied Linguistics*, 26 (2), 192-218.

Berk, L. E. (1994, November). Vygotsky's theory: the importance of make-believe play. *Young Children*, 30-39.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. (2003a). The importance of being playful. *Educational Leadership*, 50-53.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. (2003b). Building language and literacy through play. [Electronic version]. *Early Childhood Today*, 18 (2).

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. (1996). *Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Caldas, Stephan. (2006) *Raising bilingual-biliterate children in monolingual cultures*. Tonawanda: Multilingual Matters.

Christie, J., & Wardle, F. (1992, March). How much time is needed for play? *Young Child*, 28-32.

Clark, B. (n.d.). *First and second language acquisition in early childhood*. Retrieved August 21, 2008, from CEEP Collaborative of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: <http://www.ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/katzsym/clark-b.html>

Deuchar, M., & Quay, S. (1994, March). *Language choice and code-switching in a young bilingual*. Paper presented at the Annual Sociolinguistic Society, Lancaster, England.

108

De Houwer, A. (2006). Early understanding of two words for the same thing: a CDI study of lexical comprehension of infant bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 10.3, 331-343.

De Houwer, A. (1999). *Two or more languages in early childhood: some general points and practical recommendations*. Retrieved February 12, 2009 from Center for Applied Linguistics: <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/earlychild.html>

Drury, R. (2007). *Young bilingual learners at home and school*. Sterling, VA, USA: Trentham Books Ltd.

Dubuc, Bruno. (May 23, 2005). The brain from top to bottom. In *thebrain.mcgill.ca*. Retrieved February 14, 2009, from http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/i/i_09/i_09_p/i_09_p_dev/i_09_p_dev.html#2.

Froebel, F. (1974). *The education of man*. Clifton: Augustus M. Kelley.

Gregory, E. (2005, November). Playful talk: the interspace between home and school discourse. *Early Years*, 223-235.

Gregory, E. (2003, November). Getting to know strangers: a sociocultural approach to reading, language, and literacy [Electronic version]. *Reading Online*, 32-36.

Gregory, E., Arju, T., Jessel, J., Kenner, C., & Ruby, M. (2007). Snow White in different guises: interlingual and intercultural exchanges between grandparents and grandchildren at home in East London. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 7 (1), 5-25.

Hill, Jane, & Flynn, Kathleen. (2006) *Classroom instruction that works for English language learners*. Alexandria, VA, USA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kim, Y., & Kellogg, D. (2007). Rules out of roles: differences in play language and their development significance. *Applied Linguistics*, 28 (1), 25-45.

Konishi, C. (2007). Learning English as a second language: a case study of a Chinese girl in an American preschool. *Childhood Education*, 267 (6).

Koike, D. (1987). *Code switching in the bilingual chicano narrative*. *Hispania*, 70 (1), 148-154.

Krashen, S.D., & Terrell, T.D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. London: Prentice Hall Europe.

109

Lantolf, J. P. (ed.) (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lanza, E. (1997). *Language mixing in infant bilingualism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Macrory, G. (2006). Bilingual language development: what do early years practitioners need to know? *Early Years*, 26 (2), 159-170.

Manning, J. P. (2005). Rediscovering Froebel: a call to re-examine his life and gifts. *Early Childhood Education*. 32 (6), 371-376.

- McClure, E. F. (1977). *Aspects of code-switching in the discourse of bilingual Mexican-American children*. (Tech. Rep. No. 44). Cambridge, MA: Berancek and Newman.
- McLaughlin, B. (1995). *Fostering second language development in young children: principles and practices*. Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved February 2, 2009, from <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/ncrcds04.html>.
- McLaughlin, B., Blanchard, A.G., & Osanai, Y. (1995). *Assessing language development in bilingual preschool children*. [Electronic version]. Foreign Wives Club. Retrieved March 31, 2009, from <http://www.foreignwivesclub.com/pages/articles/art3p1.html>
- Riojas-Cortéz. (2000). Mexican American preschoolers create stories: sociodramatic play in a dual language classroom. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24 (3).
- Ruby, M., Kenner, C., Jessel, J., Gregory, E., & Arju, T. (2007). Gardening with grandparents: an early engagement with the science curriculum. *Early Years*, 27 (2), 131-144.
- Saville-Troike, M. (1998). Private speech: Evidence for second language learning strategies during the "silent period." *Journal of Child Language*, 15, 567-590.
- Souto-Manning, M. (2006). Families Learn Together: Reconceptualizing Linguistic Diversity as a Resource. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33 (6).
- Tabors, P. (1997). *One child, two languages*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- 110
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wong Fillmore, L. (1979). Individual differences in second language acquisition. In C.J. Fillmore, D. Kempler, & W. S-Y. Wang (Eds.), *Individual differences in language ability and language behavior* (pp. 203-228) New York: Academic Press.