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This study examined the influence a home/school audiobook program had on the home reading experiences and retell abilities of three ESL (English as a second language) kindergarteners. The three Spanish-speaking students and their families were interviewed to discover (1) how students felt about using the audiobooks and (2) what parents observed about their children's experiences using audiobooks. Data was also collected from student retells the stories from the audiobooks. Finally, anecdotal evidence from the classroom helped determine how using audiobooks affected the students' engagement with books. The main findings were that 1) students' experiences with audiobooks varied, 2) students' English language proficiency may affect their retelling of stories more than the use of audiobooks, and (3) parents observed that their children developed positive attitudes towards books and reading.

HOW AN AUDIOBOOK LIBRARY PROGRAM INFLUENCES BOOK  
INTERACTIONS OF THREE ESL KINDERGARTENERS

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The United States has a literate society, a society that requires its members to read and write in order to communicate and function effectively. Members of such a society develop reading and writing skills, or literacy skills, early in childhood and continue to use and improve those skills throughout life. The awareness of literacy has been found to develop in children before conventional print reading occurs (Sulzby, 1985). According to Sulzby & Teale (1991), storybook interaction is an activity, used in literate societies, which has positively contributed to literacy knowledge and language development of preschool-age children. Children's reading experiences at a young age contribute to their literacy abilities and good literacy abilities contribute to frequent reading experiences. Therefore, it is important that young children, such as kindergartners, are given ample reading opportunities in school and at home. This allows them to be active participants in their literacy learning, increase their reading volume and literacy abilities, and eventually contribute to a highly literate society.

Reading with young children is one way that many teachers and parents in the United States provide literacy exposure to children who have not yet learned to read. Reading to pre-readers exposes children to print and encourages literacy development. Furthermore, reading to young children amplifies interest in reading and enhances the development of vocabulary; it encourages the understanding of written language and its

functions (Morrow, 1989). These types of interactions with books allow children to gain experiences involving the world, language, reading, and writing long before they can read and write themselves (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). The interactions with books or literacy activities in general can occur any time from birth to when formal literacy instruction starts.

The concept of book interaction as a literacy activity before actual reading instruction begins is one of the foundations of the emergent literacy perspective. The emergent literacy perspective believes that literacy starts to develop as soon as reading and writing are introduced (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). For some children, reading and writing is present from the day they are born, while other students do not experience reading and writing until they are in a formal school setting. Exposure to reading and writing knowledge is essential for growth in reading and writing abilities, regardless of when and where it starts. Emergent literacy skills begin when exposure to reading and writing occurs. Sulzby & Teale (1991) discuss the book experience of young children as important for the development of emergent literacy skills and subsequent language abilities, reading interest, and early success in reading.

#### Developing Reading Skills at Home and School

The emergent literacy perspective places importance on the home literacy experiences and school experiences children have in their literacy development (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Because a kindergartener's reading ability has been influenced by informal home literacy experiences and formal pre-school experiences (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998), it is important to examine the benefits of reading with young children in terms both school and home reading experiences. Most studies pertaining to home

literacy have examined the influences of home literacy experiences on reading or pre-reading skills and behaviors. These studies found that home literacy experiences influence print awareness (Aulls & Sollars, 2003; Weigel, 2006), reading comprehension (de Jong et al., 2001), reading fluency and accuracy (Hindin & Paratore, 2007), and vocabulary development (van Steensel, 2006). Some home literacy activities which promote the development of these literacy skills include student engagement in reading, listening to stories, and availability of books. (Blum et al., 1995; Koskinen et al., 2000; Ramos & Krashen, 1998; Scarborough et al., 1991).

Many of these studies have included English Language Learners (ELLs) as a subgroup or variable but few studies have focused on ELLs' home reading experiences. A large portion of Blum, et al. (1995) and Koskinen, et al. (2000) considered ELLs in their studies of home/school literacy opportunities through the use of audiobooks. Both studies found that the use of audiobooks at home were particularly beneficial for ELLs.

Although book-rich classrooms are readily available to students at school, book access may or may not be available or used in some home literacy environments (Koskinen, 1994; Pressley, 2002). Home/school reading programs have been developed to provide parents and children with literacy resources in the home. Educators recognize the positive affects and attempt to provide resources for families to continue or advance these experiences for children. Many educators implement classroom or school programs to promote and support literacy experiences in the home. Some of these literacy programs include literacy bags or book bags. For example, Dever & Burts (2002) studied the affects of family literacy bags and found them to be well-received by parents and students. Other programs include parent training and parent-child activities such as

Paratore & Jordan's (2007) review of a program called Building Language Together which involved parental training sessions and activities. Studies outline several home-school literacy programs (Richardson et al., 2008), but very few have employed audiobooks as supplemental materials specifically for ELLs and their families.

I am interested in the effects of a home-school library literacy program which utilize audiobooks as a method of book reading. Blum et al. (1995) & Koskinen et al. (1999, 2000) are among the very few empirical investigations considering the use of audiobooks with ESL students. All these studies found audiobooks (or books on tape) to motivate and provide students, particularly ELLs, more reading opportunities than when no audio support was offered. Blum also found audiobook listening experiences increased reading fluency and accuracy. Although few empirical investigations have involved the use of audiobooks with students, other articles have been written on the subject. Clark (2007) and Wolfson (2008) suggest a number of advantages students may have when using audiobooks, such as increased comprehension of written material, being able to build on prior knowledge and imagination, and increased listening skills.

My study focuses on how an audiobook home reading program influences reading opportunities, reading/listening comprehension and home reading experiences of ESL kindergarteners. The study looks at the reading portion of emergent literacy skills and home literacy practices while investigating student and parent responses to the audiobooks as well as considering some school factors.

#### Terms and Definitions

This study is concerned with the reading component of emergent literacy. Young children experience reading in many different ways before school and in the primary

grades. Researchers and educators use terms such as storybook reading (Otto, 1993), shared reading (Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990) and repeated reading (Hindin & Paratore, 2007). All these forms of reading were considered as interactions with books in this study. Storybook reading will be used in this study to encompass all these reading terms. The term 'audiobooks' is used in this study and represents an audio-recorded version of a storybook. The students listened to the audio-recorded version of storybooks in an mp3 format played on an mp3 player.

The goal of the study is to examine influences on student interactions with books. Examples of interactions include (but are not limited to): listening to stories read to them, looking at books, reading various age-appropriate sightwords in stories, asking questions about books, asking to be read to, or retelling stories to peers, siblings, or adults.

According to Snow, Burns, & Griffin, (1998) kindergarteners start to understand the forms and functions of letters, identify certain sounds in a word (e.g. beginning sounds), know the parts and functions of a book, start to track words when read to, and retell or reread stories as they hear them. Students at this stage may or may not be reading text. Therefore, this study does not assume that students will be reading the words of the stories, instead it looks at other reading behaviors (as outlined by Snow, et al., 1998 and Otto, 1993) as defining interactions with books.

Another explanation worthy of note includes the audiobook program. The home literacy program used in the study was created by the researcher and a colleague in attempt to address the need for reading opportunities as home. Its creation was based on informal data from home background forms indicating limited-English students are not engaging in reading or literacy activities as often (per week) as their native-speaking

peers. Its methods are supported by a grant received by the state teachers union in March of 2008. The program includes students checking out one bag of five books and an mp3 player per week. Each book in the bag had an audio version on the mp3 player. The purpose was to increase the frequency of reading at home by allowing more independent reading to occur. Some book bag and mp3 player contained an additional book written and read in the families' home language, thus promoting native language development as well as progress in English.

#### Role of the Researcher

I was involved in the investigation as an active participant researcher. The participants were students in my classroom. I was able to observe and question them consistently. I was in direct contact with the participants for 55 minutes each day. During this time, I planned and implemented all activities. The students participated in a program called Kindergarten Language Academy (KLA). The KLA program is an intensive language program the goal of which is to develop and enhance reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in English. The lessons presented in this class incorporate regular kindergarten curriculum with a focus on language and literacy. The students in this program participated in a total of 75 minutes of language instruction with 45 minutes of lunch and recess. At the end of this time period, all students attended a regular half-day kindergarten class for two and one-half hours.

#### Background of the Researcher

I currently teach ELLs at a kindergarten center in a suburban school district. This is my second year in this particular school district and building. I started my teaching career as a second-grade classroom teacher where I taught a couple of ELLs. I thoroughly

enjoyed teaching these students in particular, so when I got an opportunity to be an ESL teacher, I took it. Since then I have taught ESL classes to students in various grades in three different districts.

Last year, I discovered that many of my ELLs were reading at home one to two days per week for approximately five minutes a day. I was concerned by this discovery which prompted my interest and work to increase the amount of time my ELLs spend reading at home. In order to provide some reading exposure in the homes of all ELL families, especially those who do not speak English, the inclusion of the books' audio supports was deemed necessary and interesting. With further knowledge of the complexity of the topic, I also became interested in students' responses to using audiobooks, their reading comprehension skills of the stories they listened to, and how audiobooks may affect home literacy experiences. Ultimately, I was curious about the audiobook experience method and possible influences on audiobook interactions.

It is important to note possible biases in this research. My motivation for creating the home literacy program comes from my belief in literacy practices. From reading literature on the topic and my own experience, I believe the more students read or experience the process of reading through shared reading or repeated reading strategies, the better readers they will become. I also believe in introducing literacy concepts (including phonemic awareness, phonics, conventions of print, selecting and evaluating of reading materials) early in the students' kindergarten experience as they provide a firm base for developing language skills, particularly in reading, in kindergarten and primary grades.

Another potential bias comes from the fact that I am conducting this research through an emic perspective; I am conducting the study in my own classroom. My involvement in selecting participants, conducting interviews, and analyzing the data, presents some potential for biases to occur. Qualitative research designs require precise and systematic practices for data collection and analysis to reduce potential biases (Merriam, 1998). The methods and analysis of data used in this study will reduce some biases; however, it is possible some may still occur.

Finally, another potential bias worthy of note is the nature of kindergarten students and their desire-to-please teachers and other adults. It is important to recognize the possibility of desire to please answers from students. In other words, students tend to affirm teachers' reactions and tell them what they want to hear. Purposeful and skillful questioning during interviews may help reduce this potential bias.

### Guiding Questions

I am interested in learning more about how ESL kindergarteners' involvement in a home/school audiobook library program influences their interaction with books. Other questions guiding this research include:

1. How do students describe their experiences with audiobooks?
2. Do audiobooks impact students' ability to retell stories?
3. How do parents describe the influence of the audiobooks at home?

### Summary

In this study, I investigated how ESL kindergarteners experienced listening to audiobooks at home and how students described the program; how experiences with audiobooks affected students' ability to retell, and how parents perceived and reacted to

the use of audiobooks in the home. I investigated these concepts in terms of student responses and reactions, school practices, and parent perspectives. Children's literacy development includes literacy experiences, specifically time spent engaged in reading activities, as a predictor of emergent literacy abilities in the primary grades. A central role of the educational institution is to promote student learning and achievement however possible. This program may be a beneficial method in promoting home literacy practices in ELL families.

In Chapter Two, I will review relevant literature on literacy development, effects of reading to young children, reading in the home, the use and benefits of audiobook experiences, and home-school literacy programs. Chapter Three explains the case study approach for this study following three ESL kindergarteners as they interact with audiobooks at home. Chapter Four contains the results showing interesting findings regarding the students' ability to retell, level of interest in using the audiobooks, and home reading practices. Some students were able to retell stories better than other students. Not all students were highly interested in listening to stories with the audiobooks. However, parents reported students using the audiobooks frequently at home with noticed changes in reading preferences, interests, and ability. Chapter Five discusses realizations and implications of the study. For example, oral language proficiency played a bigger role in the study than expected. Furthermore, the study makes a case for the purchase and use of audiobooks with ELLs.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The study explores how a take-home audiobook library program influenced ESL kindergarteners' interaction with books. Interaction with books in the study included looking at the pictures in a book, reading or trying to reading some words, listening to the words, and sharing enthusiasm for book experiences in other environments (e.g. asking parents about books or the library) (Otto, 1993; Snow, et al., 1998). This chapter will review literature about storybook reading, literacy practices in the home, and the use of audiobooks with English Language Learners (ELLs). The chapter is organized into two sections. The first section reviews literature about the benefits of storybook reading at home and at school. The second section presents current home-school literacy programs and discusses the potential effect of using audiobooks in these literacy programs.

### Storybook Reading and the Effect on L1 Literacy Development

Storybook reading, or reading to kids, is a common activity for teachers and parents to do with young children. Reading aloud, taking turns reading, re-reading stories, and listening to books on tape or CD are examples of the types of literacy experiences young children do independently and with adults. The benefits of these experiences are well researched (Elley, 1989; Morrow, 1990; Pressley, 2002).

### Reading to Children Helps Foster Emergent Literacy

Clay (1967) defines emergent literacy as literacy development during the pre-school years. In some homes, adult/child storybook reading is a regular event which helps foster emergent literacy. In other homes, storybook reading is not part of children's regular literacy routines (Teale, 1986); many of these children receive literacy exposure in the school setting. Regardless of where children are exposed to books, the act of book reading is a beneficial activity for the emergent literacy of young children (Pressley, 2002). Storybook reading benefits children's development of specific emergent literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, recognizing the sound structure of the language (as cited in Pressley, 2002). Other benefits of storybook reading include the development of decoding skills and reading comprehension (Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990), storytelling skills (Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1997), vocabulary skills (Elley, 1989; Pressley, 1998; Sénéchal, 2006; Trinkle, 2008) and world knowledge (van Kleeck, Stahl, & Bauer, 2003).

Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith (1990) investigated the effects of a storybook reading program on literacy abilities on half-day kindergarten students attending an extended day intervention program. During this program, four classrooms provided traditional instruction involving the prescribed reading readiness program (control group) and four classrooms provided teacher-directed reading and storytelling activities (experimental group) involving interactive story reading, recreational reading periods, repeated readings, story retelling, and reading for pleasure. The study compared students in each of these classrooms on measures recall comprehension and attempted reading events. During recall events students were to answer questions focused on story structure,

setting, and plots. During the reading task, students were asked to read aloud while investigators looked for reading behaviors including reading that sounded like written language versus reading that sounds like oral storytelling, pointing at print versus pointing at pictures, tracking print versus not tracking print. The authors found that the students who engaged in the storybook reading program out-performed other students on recall comprehension tasks as well as the number of attempted reading behaviors portrayed. However, there was no difference between the groups on standardized reading tests. The authors note that the control group did have books read to them, but had limited opportunities to discuss the books. This concept reinforces the importance of talking to others on recall comprehension and attempted reading abilities.

#### Storybook Reading Impacts Long-Term Success

Storybook reading and other home literacy activities have longitudinal effects on literacy abilities (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Pressley, 2002; Scarborough, Dobrich & Hager, 1991). In two studies conducted by Cunningham & Stanovich (1998), reading volume, or the frequency of independent (out-of-school) reading (or print exposure) was examined in relation to reading ability in first grade, then compared to reading volume and ability scores in eleventh grade. Participants were native English-speaking first-grade students. The first study examined the contribution of reading volume to reading ability (reading comprehension), verbal intelligence (vocabulary), and general world knowledge. To measure reading volume, the participants were asked to pick familiar book titles from a list of read and made up titles. Other standardized tests measured reading comprehension, vocabulary, and general knowledge. The authors found that reading

volume was a strong predictor of vocabulary and knowledge differences in first-grade native-English speaking students.

The second study was conducted ten years later when 27 of the original first graders were in eleventh grade (see Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). The authors used three standardized measures of first-grade skills (i.e. reading ability, intelligence, and general knowledge). All measures of reading ability in first grade predicted eleventh-grade reading volume. However, interestingly, first-grade intelligence measures did not predict eleventh-grade reading volume. This study is evidence that “an early start in reading is important in predicting a lifetime of literacy experiences” (p. 14). As Cunningham & Stanovich (1997) pointed out, storybook reading experiences can have indirect effects on future literacy experiences.

In a similar, but more recent study, Sénéchal (2006) examined the relationship between home literacy environment and kindergarten, grade one, and grade four literacy skills. The authors examined 60 French-speaking students in a longitudinal study that compared students’ storybook exposure and literacy teaching experiences at home with their L1 literacy abilities in kindergarten, first-grade, and fourth-grade. Literacy measures included (but not limited to) kindergarten vocabulary and fourth-grade reading comprehension and reading for pleasure (see Sénéchal, 2006 for further information on literacy measures). Reading for pleasure (or reading motivation) was measured by a questionnaire which students completed based on how often (per week) they read for pleasure at home. The authors found storybook exposure at home in kindergarten is related to kindergarten vocabulary skills and kindergarten vocabulary skills are a predictor of fourth-grade reading comprehension skills. In addition, she found a long-

term relationship between storybook exposure (as oppose to parental teaching of literacy skills) and fourth-grade reading for pleasure (or reading motivation). Clearly, as Cunningham & Stanovich (1997) found, storybook reading exposure was indirectly related to future reading comprehension skills. It is important to point out that in these studies these relationships were significant after eliminating other variables such as parental education. These studies suggest how storybook reading at home has some effect, perhaps only an indirect effect, on long-term literacy skills - specifically in the areas of vocabulary and reading comprehension.

#### Storybook Reading Impacts Motivation

Storybook reading experiences also influence motivation to read. As previously highlighted in Sénéchal (2006), storybook exposure, not teaching of literacy skills, was related to students reading for pleasure (or reading motivation). Furthermore, Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell (1994) studied the motivation to read by asking 330 native-English speaking third- and fifth-graders about their reading preferences, habits, and behaviors. Their results indicate four aspects of literacy learning that contributed towards the students' motivation to read: 1) prior experience with books, 2) social interaction with books, 3) access to books, and 4) book choice. The study had important implications about the literacy environment of classrooms, schools, homes, and communities. The implications of the study indicate that providing book-rich classrooms, opportunities to choose and talk about books, and opportunities to have prior experiences with books are important aspects of motivating students to read.

### Book Access Impacts on Literacy Skills

Storybook reading at home is part of the literacy environment children experience and home literacy environment has predicted literacy skills in preschool (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). A critical part of a home literacy environment is the child's access to books, or the availability of print. This point is highlighted in research done by Aulls and Sollar (2003). The authors explore the relationship between home literacy experience (as perceived by parents) and reading abilities in first-grade. Home literacy experiences in this study were described in terms of the availability of print to the child and the frequency and quality of print interactions. Each home in the study was evaluated on these two aspects and scores were given as follows: rich-rich (Aulls & Sollar, 2003), rich-moderate, moderate-rich, and moderate-moderate (see study for more specific information on the classifications). Students from these homes were evaluated on five aspects of reading ability: print awareness, book and code knowledge, reading accuracy, reading fluency, and the use of reading strategies.

The authors found that students from rich-rich environments (rich access to print and rich print interactions) scored significantly higher on measures of print awareness and book and code knowledge than students from moderate-moderate home environments. However, few differences were found between rich-rich students and moderate-moderate students on reading accuracy, reading fluency and the use of reading strategies and no significant differences were found between the other classifications of home environment. In other words, students who have print available to them in their homes and can interact with print have higher scores on print awareness and book and code

knowledge as compared to students who do not have as much print available or opportunities to interact with print.

### Storybook Reading and the Effect on L2 Literacy Development

Much of the literature reviewed in this chapter has highlighted the effects of storybook reading on native-English speaking students. The development of emergent literacy skills has been found to be similar for children learning to read in their first language and for those learning to read in a second language (Lightbown & Spada, 1999) While few studies extrapolate on these aspects, it is important to examine the studies that do exist on second language literacy and how storybook experiences influence such L2 reading and language development.

### Second Language Learners and Storybook Reading

Second language learners develop language and reading skills from experiencing storybook reading at school and home. Much of the research has focused on the storybook reading experiences of ELLs in school. Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, & Share (1993) studied the effects of reading to young children in their second language (L2) on L2 vocabulary development, storytelling skills, and listening comprehension. The study took place in 12 kindergarten classrooms in the Middle East where students' first language (L1) was Arabic and second language (L2) was Farsi. Students were randomly selected for experimental and control groups. Students in experimental groups were taught the regular language arts curriculum as well as experienced 15 minutes of storybook reading a day, while control groups were taught the language arts curriculum only. The authors found that students in the experimental group had significantly higher scores on tests of vocabulary and listening comprehension than those students in the

control group. Since neither the language arts curriculum nor the storybook reading aspect was studied in isolation, it is difficult to attribute the gains of the experimental groups to simply storybook reading and not other aspects of the language arts curriculum.

Furthermore, Elley (1996) studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' reading comprehension abilities in a shared reading and silent reading format and compared the scores with a control group. The study was conducted for five months in Sri Lanka where English is taught as a second language starting in third grade. The study was conducted in 20 primary schools with fourth and fifth grade students. Teachers in the experimental groups were given 100+ books for their classrooms and were trained on how to incorporate these storybooks into the language curriculum. Control groups were not given the extra books and had limited training on using storybooks in their classroom. All students were given reading and writing tests in English. Findings indicated that the students in classrooms with more books, who were engaged in shared reading and silent reading experiences, had higher reading comprehension scores than those students in the control group. In other words, storybook reading experiences in L2 (English) positively influence reading skills in L2.

#### Home Literacy Activities and L2 Literacy Skills

While the studies were done with second language learners in the school setting, limited research studied the concept of storybook reading at home with ELLs and its influence on L2 reading and language skills. Existing research which studied general home literacy practices found that linguistically and culturally diverse families engage in literacy practices. However, these practices may not look like those practices in mainstream American homes (Teale, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Ortiz & Ordoñez-

Jasis, 2005). Perry, Kay, & Brown (2008) studied Hispanic families and found that parents “actively modified school-based literacy activities to support their children’s intellectual and moral education” (p. 110). Thirteen Hispanic parents in this study used a literacy program, from the school, which included literacy games, children’s books, and instructions for use. The data were gathered through journal entries and anecdotal records. According to these methods, the parents incorporated the school-related literacy activities into existing cultural practices and beliefs. Most of the parents characterized activities as ‘fun’ and ‘a way to connect with family. They used activities to emphasize cooperation and respect rather than focusing on vocabulary or phonetics. Furthermore, children in these families looked to adults to make decisions about what and when the parents and children would read together.

Teale (1986) studied the home literacy environment of Hispanic families. He observed families in their homes interact and engage in literacy (both read and writing) activities. He found that general literacy practices did occur in these families but many of the activities did not include storybook reading. In addition, Reese and Gallimore (2000) found that the bedtime reading ritual so prevalent in mainstream American society is infrequently practiced in immigrant Latino households. These studies discussed the lack of access to storybooks (in L1 and L2) as one factor in the limited reading practices.

Hammer, Miccio, & Wagstaff (2003) supported these findings in their study of the home literacy environments of ELLs and L2 literacy achievement of preschoolers. They studied the home literacy experiences and literacy achievement of Spanish-speaking families and their children for two years while the children attended Head Start. Home literacy questionnaires asked parents to rate the frequency of numerous literacy activities,

including independent and dependent storybook reading practices and the number of literacy materials (i.e., books) in the home. Literacy achievement was measured by standardized pre-school literacy assessments testing knowledge of environmental print, concepts of print, and letter knowledge. All children were tested in English. The authors did not find significant relationships between home literacy activities (as a whole) and emergent literacy achievement. In fact, all students scored 1.25 standard deviations below average on the literacy assessment. Furthermore, all families reported having ten or fewer books in the home and reading with their children one to four days a week. The authors discuss how lack of books in the home may have contributed to limited home storybook reading experiences and, perhaps indirectly, the low literacy scores.

#### L2 Oral Language as a Factor in Reading Development

As previously discussed, storybook reading in L2 has some influence in the development of reading skills in L2. Other factors have affected L2 reading and language skills, namely oral language abilities. In other words, L2 reading comprehension skills have been linked to L2 oral language skills. Students with higher oral language skills in their second language tend to comprehend stories better than those with limited oral language skills. Peregoy and Boyle examined the link between L2 reading comprehension and L2 oral language ability of six ELL third graders in their 1991 study. Oral language ability was measured based on grammatical complexity, well-formedness, informativeness, and listening comprehension. Reading comprehension was evaluated based on multiple choice questions of text.

Results indicated ELLs who were better at comprehension questions had more sophisticated oral language skills (specifically in the areas of well-formedness and

listening comprehension) than did students with fewer reading comprehension skills. In other words, “oral language proficiency in young English-language learners in the elementary grades is positively linked to reading comprehension” (p. 133). However, it is important to note that links between oral language skills and reading comprehension may also be influenced by contextual factors such as home language use, literacy experiences, and socio-economic status (Geva, 2006).

### Home/School Literacy Programs and ELLs

English reading skills improve when ELLs engage in storybook reading practices. However, lack of reading practices occur in ELL families due to many factors one of which could be the limited availability of books in L1 or English, as these studies have discussed. A home/school reading program is one way schools can provide reading material for these families. These programs often involve students in home literacy practices through the exchange of school literacy materials. In most programs, students brought literacy materials (e.g. books, games, journals) home for a short time and then exchanged them for new materials. Other examples of home/school literacy programs include multi-leveled book bags, intergenerational literacy bags, bilingual books, and art packs. These programs have become a staple of American education’s influence on home literacy practices.

There are research studies showing the effects of using home/school literacy program on language and literacy achievement for native-English speakers and ELLs. Many of these studies looked at the opinions and use of a home-school repeated reading program in which students borrow previously-read books for home reading (Blum, et al., 1995; Hay & Fielding-Barnsley, 2007; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; Koskinen, et al., 2000).

Dever & Burts (2002) as well as McCullough (2002) investigated the effects of family literacy bags in which the family gets a bag of books and other literacy materials to use for one week and exchanges it for a new bag. In McCullough's study native-English speaking students in an early childhood center received bookbags with a variety of books, props, and activities to use at home. Parents were interviewed about their opinions and use of the bookbags. The author found that parents reported positive feelings about the program. In addition, 75% of families stated that it increased the time they spend reading with their children. Although the literacy abilities of these students were not assessed, the author discussed the use of the bookbags as a vehicle for supporting and guiding children towards success in literacy.

Research is mixed about the effects of home/school literacy program on the literacy and language achievement of second language speakers. Some studies show that many home-literacy programs have positive affects on the literacy development of language minority students (Blum, et al., 1995; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; Koskinen, et al., 2000). For example, Hindin & Paratore (2007) explored the effectiveness of a home repeated-reading program on reading accuracy, reading fluency, and independent reading skills of five native-English speakers (NES) and three non-native-English speakers (NNS) all in second grade. Data were collected through audiotapes recording reading at home and school, an informal reading inventory and teacher and parent interviews. Pre-study and post-study interviews evaluated students' initial reading and language practices, while the final interview evaluated parent opinions and current reading behaviors. Reading skills were evaluated using pre- and post-study standardized reading tests, running records, and words-per-minute tests. The authors found all students,

regardless of native language, made progress in reading fluency, reading comprehension, oral reading, and word reading by participating in the repeated-reading program.

A few studies have found direct relationships between other-language speakers and English literacy achievement. Many of the relationships between home/school literacy programs and literacy achievement were affected by other factors such as limited-English, lack of literacy materials (Hammer, et al., 2003), maternal education, ethnicity/culture and gender (Gauvain, Savage, & McCollum, 2000). Clearly, there is a need for more research regarding the use of home/school literacy programs with second language students and families. Perhaps second language learners need to have more support when reading at home in English; audiobooks may help to bridge the gap between reading experiences of ELLs and those of native-English speakers.

#### Audiobook Use with ELLs

Few studies have been conducted regarding students using audio support when reading (or listening to) books at home. Blum, et al. (1995) & Koskinen, et al. (1999, 2000) are among the few to do empirical research on using audio support at home. They studied the effect of a home-school audiobook library program on literacy development. Blum et al. used a single-subject reversal research design to examine the effects of home-based repeated reading with an audio-model on the reading fluency and self-monitoring behaviors of five first-grade ESL students. Data were collect in three parts: baseline one, intervention, baseline two. The intervention was the use of audio support. No audio support was provided during the baseline data collection times. Participants in this study got opportunities to reread books at home with and without audiotape assistance. Results indicated that participants made substantial growth in reading fluency or their ability to

read and comprehend more difficult texts in English, especially when the audiotapes were sent home. Furthermore, all participants increased the frequency of reading book at home and were excited about wanting to learn to read.

In a similar study, Koskinen, et al. (2000) studied 162 first-graders, including native and second-language English speakers. Variables in the study included book-rich classrooms and home reading support with and without audio support. Students were evaluated on various reading comprehension and motivation measures. They compared these students' scores on comprehension and motivation measures with a control group. Results showed that students in book-rich classrooms, and with home audio support for reading, scored significantly higher in the areas of reading interest, social interaction, and behavior with books than students in book-rich classrooms without the audio support for reading at home. In addition, within the ELLs group, they reported reading more when using audiobooks than when not using them. With the use of audiobooks, students were able to participate in reading activities, even using difficult material, without direct parent assistance.

The use of audiobooks may be an effective instructional practice. Bomar (2006) claimed that audiobooks help expand vocabulary and reading fluency. Furthermore, von Bon, et al. (1991) listed benefits of the use of audiotaped books but many of these claims were not supported by empirical investigations. They were educated claims of successful pedagogy.

Successful literacy development starts with the home literacy environment. In some homes, children may have limited access to books, which may limit the children's literacy experiences (Krashen & Ramos, 1994). The use of audiobooks in the home may

provide some access to books in a way that allows children to read the books (Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000). With limited research in this area and huge potential for success, there is a need for further investigation into the use and effect of audiobooks in the homes of ESL families.

My study addressed these issues. The purpose of my study was to examine the effects of an audiobook home reading program on ELLs' interactions with books. My specific research questions were:

1. How do students describe their experiences with audiobooks?
2. Do audiobooks impact students' ability to retell stories?
3. How do parents describe the influence of the audiobooks at home?

#### Summary

This chapter reviewed literature regarding the research conducted on storybook reading and L1 and L2 literacy and language development. The research provides evidence that storybook reading at school affects literacy and language development of native-English speakers and second language speakers. The more students engage in storybook reading, the better reading skills they have. The literature is not as clear about the specific effects of storybook reading in the homes of second language learners. It is suggested that limited access to books and other literacy materials may be a factor in few home reading opportunities for some native-speaking and second-language learners. Teachers have attempted to promote literacy experiences in the homes through home/school literacy programs that benefit most students. One type of home/school literacy program is the use of audiobooks with ELLs; however, very limited research has

been conducted to show if and how these programs are successful. The present study attempts to address this need.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This study focused on the influences of an audiobook reading program on ESL kindergarteners' interactions with books. The purpose of the study was to examine, through interviews and retelling sessions, how three ESL kindergarteners made use of an audiobook reading program at home. The guiding questions in the study were as follows:

1. How do students describe their experiences with audiobooks?
2. Do audiobooks impact students' ability to retell stories?
3. How do parent describe the influence of the audiobooks at home?

### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the methods used in the study. First, a description and rationale for methods used is provided as well as a discussion of the research paradigm. Second, the data collection techniques are described including a comprehensive portrayal of participants, setting, and techniques. Third, a detailed procedure is provided including information about the participants and the audiobook library program. Next, this chapter will discuss how the data were analyzed including information on reliability and validity. The last section discusses the ethics I considered in conducting this research.

### Research Paradigm

The purpose of the research was to study how three ESL kindergarteners make use of an audiobook reading program and if this audiobook reading program influenced

students reading comprehension, as measured by retells, reading participation, and reading interest. The study did not include a hypothesis or preconceived notion of its results. It did, however, consider school and home experiences with books as essential influences in the literacy development of young children. Thus, studying students in school and gathering data about interactions at home were critical components in this study. As a result of this conceptual framework, a research paradigm of qualitative guidelines was required. Qualitative research is purposeful, holistic, reflective, descriptive, flexible, and interdependent on researcher and design (McKay, 2006; Merriam, 1998). In the study, methods were used to describe how literacy comprehension and interest was influenced by audiobook use. There were no predetermined interactions hypothesized. The predetermined aspects of this study involved the selection of participants and the salient and specific literacy behaviors and retelling components.

### Case Study

The research paradigm of this inquiry followed the guidelines of applied, qualitative research in the form of a case study. According to Merriam (1998), a case study examines the interaction of factors of a phenomenon using holistic description and explanation. Case studies are used when it is impossible to separate the entity studied from its variables. Furthermore, in education, case studies are used to identify specific issues or programs in practice, to present information about a topic which has not been researched thoroughly, and to better understand a specific program. In this study, reading comprehension, participation, and interest were examined as they may or may not pertain to a new audiobook reading program. The study also was concerned with how certain instructional methods, performed by teachers, influenced the reading interest and

participation demonstrated by students and how these aspects influence reading comprehension in the form of story retelling skills. With many potential variables, a case study was deemed an appropriate research design for this study.

This research paradigm was selected for several reasons. First, the purpose of the study was to learn about the influences on reading interactions which cannot be predicted or assumed in advance. Next, qualitative research requires the researcher to be reflective in practice as well as flexible in methods. Delgado-Gaitan (2004) discusses how reflexive practice and flexibility in research promotes effective communication with ESL students and families. Finally, this paradigm ensured comprehensiveness of the study. When studying a multi-dimensional subject such as interactions with and influences on books and reading, all factors, which may be considered variables to control in a quantitative study, require careful consideration.

### Participants

The participants in the study reflected a sample of convenience. Participants were recruited according to the following criteria; students: 1) were enrolled in half-day kindergarten plus an extended day language program, 2) qualified for ESL services, and 3) received a score of two or three on the retelling portion of the Pre-LAS (Duncan & De Avila, 2000). The participants' language experience before preschool was Spanish. The participants were all between the ages of five and six. Actual age associated with the appropriate child's pseudonym because of the developmental differences between these ages.

Trish

Trish is an energetic five-year-old girl who turned six three weeks after the study ended. She lives with her mom, dad, and one older brother. She tells her teachers how much she likes school and it shows with the frequent smile she displays. Trish and her brother were born in the United States and have lived in the area most of their life. Trish attended preschool and summer school for one and a half years before entering kindergarten in the same district she goes to school in now. Trish's parents both are native Spanish speakers. They both speak some English. Her mother prefers to have an interpreter during conferences, but her father does not feel he needs an interpreter.

Maddy

Maddy is a quiet and thoughtful five-year-old girl, who turned six after the study ended. Maddy lives with her mother, father, and older sister. She was born in the United States and has lived in the area all her life. She loves princesses and the color pink. Even though she has limited oral language abilities in English, Maddy is willing to take risks with her expressive language. She attended preschool for one-and-a-half years before entering kindergarten in the same district she attended during the study. Her mother and father are native Spanish speakers with very limited English proficiency. They consistently requested interpreters for conferences.

Julian

Julian is a fun-loving boy who turned six-years-old before the study started. Julian lives with his mother, father, older sister, aunt, and uncle. Julian and his sister were born in Mexico and moved to the United States when he was three years old. Julian loves Spiderman cartoons and books. Julian has limited oral language abilities in English but

this did not prevent him from using the language. He attended preschool for one year prior to entering kindergarten in the same district he attended during the study. Julian's parents are native Spanish speakers with very limited English abilities. They consistently requested interpreters for conferences.

### Setting

The study was conducted at a kindergarten center in an upper-Midwest suburban public school district. The building is an elementary school containing ten half-day kindergarten classrooms. The total student population was 400 with 55 students qualifying for ESL services. The study took place in the school during an extended day language program called KLA (Kindergarten Language Academy). The KLA program provided specific language instruction to students with very-limited to limited English proficiency. Participants studied in the KLA program for two hours before going to their regular kindergarten classroom.

### Data Collection

According to Merriam (1998), case studies typically use a variety of data collection methods. A case study paradigm requires comprehensive, holistic, and descriptive data collection and analysis procedures. Therefore, the study made use of interviews, story retells, anecdotal records, and observations as techniques for data collection.

### Interviews

Interviews are used in research to collect data on background information, reported behavior, and opinions and attitudes (McKay, 2004; Merriam, 1998). The purpose of the study designates importance to both background information, beliefs, and

opinions regarding home literacy practices and book experiences; therefore, interviews were an appropriate method. Freeman (1998) highlights two different types of interviews: structured and unstructured whereas Merriam (1998) adds a third type: semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews include set questions or topics to be discussed but allow for flexibility and deviance from the questions in the form of probes, restatements, and clarification questions. Since interviewing students and parents about their observations and opinions are of a personal nature, flexibility and comfort was important; thus, both student and parent interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format.

Student interviews. Student interviews took place during retelling sessions. These interviews focused on eliciting information about the books the participants read with the mp3 players. They also provided more information on which books the student liked or dislike, how they felt about using the mp3 players, and how they liked listening to the books on the mp3 player (see Appendix B). The student interviews took place directly after the student retelling sessions (see Appendix D & E).

Parent interviews. Parents also participated in an interview during the middle of the study. The parents chose where their interview would take place. This choice encouraged parents to feel comfortable during the interview. Maddy's mother and Trish's parents chose to participate in the interview at school. Julian's mother decided it would be best to do the interview at their home.

### Story Retell

Participants engaged in five retelling sessions over the data collection time frame. Story retells were done to provide information on how well the students comprehended the stories. During these sessions students were given the opportunity to choose a book

from their bag to retell. The researcher looked for the ability to retell the important events showing intimate knowledge and comprehension of the story. Retelling rubrics were set up to evaluate student's knowledge of vocabulary and main events of the stories. The story that was chosen as well as the information they provided was written and audio-recorded for accuracy and further analysis.

### Anecdotal Records and Observations

Researcher anecdotal records were used to record book interaction and interest, and students' opinion on the audiobooks. I was a participant researcher in that I collected the data and took anecdotal records but also taught the students. The anecdotal records I collected as a teacher were important, authentic methods of observation and assessments used in a case study. I collected anecdotal and informational data through book checklists, student daily record sheets, and student booklists. The book checklist recorded if and how a book is read in the classroom. It included a list of books sent home with the students and which of those books were read to the students in the classroom. The book checklist provided the study with data on which books the students chose to retell, were favorite books to read again, and if these books were read in school or not. The daily record sheet was done daily by the students in order to keep a record of which books they read the night before and subsequently, the books they were not reading. Other data collected regarding the book interactions at school and in the classroom were conducted by my carefully constructed and diligent researcher observations. Any notes and observations done by me were taken in the form of comments on individual student behavior at school.

## Procedure

The study took place over a period of 14 weeks. However, prior to the start of data collection, baseline assessment and training the students to use the equipment was required. The assessment activity required participants to retell a story they had previously heard. This retelling activity was taken from the Pre-LAS (Duncan & De Avila, 2000). It included telling the students a story based on four pictures and having the students retell the story. This assessment was given to evaluate the participants' current retelling abilities and to ensure some ability to express verbal retelling skills during data collection.

The participants also engaged in three days of training on the features and use of the mp3 player. The following activities were completed with all students in the KLA classroom not just the participants. On the first day of training, I introduced the mp3 player, described some features, and explained its purpose. During this time, the students got a chance to manipulate the mp3 player and explore its features and purpose. More specifically they practiced using the on/off button and changing the volume.

The second day of training included teacher-modeled use of mp3 player with the books in the bag. I showed the mp3 player to the students and modeled how to find the books they wanted to read on the mp3 player. This required lots of modeling and small group work by me and a paraprofessional in the classroom. The students practiced using the features from the first day of training as well as changing the audio-recorded story. The students were required to find a certain story on the mp3 player. They had to move the change-book feature and listen for the title of a certain story. Once they found this story, I modeled how to listen to the story and read the book at the same time.

At the third and final training session, headphones were introduced and the students were given more time to ask questions, change the books on the mp3 player, and practice reading and listening at the same time. During this time, I and other trained professionals observed students and helped when needed. At the end of this training, I was confident in the students' ability to use the features on the mp3 player as well as to know how to read a story and listen at the same time. These training sessions occurred one to two weeks before the students took the first bag home. The participants' had the opportunity to take one bag home per week for two weeks before data collection began.

The study lasted for 14 weeks in which all data collection and some of the data analysis occurred. Throughout the 14 weeks, I constantly: kept data logs on the books in the participants' bags, observed and recorded interaction with books at school, prepared and implemented daily record sheet, conducted one student interview and retelling session per week, conducted one parent interview the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the study and analyzed some of the data.

During the study, the participants complete the Daily Recording Sheets (DRS) and five interviews and retelling sessions. On the DRS, students check the books they read on the previous night. This was done two to three times per week. I encouraged the students to report the books they read honestly in order to minimize answers given simply to please me. It did not matter whether they read all the books or no books. In addition, once a week I conducted either one or two interviews and retelling sessions. The students participated in one of these sessions every other week. The procedure for these sessions remained consistent; however, the questions changed. First, the student retold the story while I took notes and audio-recorded it. Last, right after the retell session, I asked

students the interview questions. During this time, I took notes and audio-recorded (separately from the retell) the interview.

In addition, the parents participated in one interview. Parents were contacted via phone and letter regarding the interview two weeks before it occurred. This communication allowed me to set up the interview date but also to give the interview questions to the parents in their preferred language. This provided parents with some knowledge of the content covered in the interview with the hope of encouraging a comfortable, conversational atmosphere. The interviews were audio-recorded and took place either at school or in the home. Similar questions were asked at each parent interview (see Appendix C). The semi-structured interview format used for these interviews allowed me to change or add questions I felt were necessary to gather more information.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was an on-going process completed by me to ensure completeness and comprehensibility of the data as well as to inform future data collection events.

### Interviews

The interviews were audio-recorded and analyzed soon after they were completed. First, each student interview was transcribed in its entirety to ensure completeness. After each interview, anecdotal notes were recorded with important, relevant observations, surprises in data, and possible changes in questions or procedures. Changes to the interview questions were made before the next interview took place. All data in each interview were carefully examined for reoccurring themes across interviews

as well as other data collection techniques. Emerging themes in the student interview were compared to those themes in other in retells and parent interviews.

Each parent interview was transcribed with regard to the prepared (and unprepared) interview questions. Then, I looked at the data to see what information stood out that was relevant to this study. After this data were recorded I compared it to the emerging and existing themes from other methods of data collection.

### Story Retell

The story retelling sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed soon after the each event. The transcription included the story retelling session in its entirety to ensure completeness. The retelling sessions were transcribed and saved. As with the interviews, the retelling transcriptions were analyzed against a rubric. Four different retelling rubrics were used to analyze comprehension. These rubrics were based on the genre of the book. Retelling a fiction story required students to describe the beginning, middle, and ending events in the story. Retelling a non-fiction story evaluated students on their ability to talk about key vocabulary and facts in the book. The retelling rubric for a decodable book and vocabulary-specific fiction story included the students' ability to use key sightwords and vocabulary from the story. See Appendix D and E for samples of the retelling rubrics. These rubrics were created by me based on the retelling performance of native-English speakers. The transcriptions and rubrics were compared to data obtained from interviews and anecdotal records.

### Anecdotal Records and Observations

I took anecdotal records and recorded observations throughout the study. I used these notes to confirm or diminish emergent themes from interviews and retelling

sessions. Observations are very important and authentic aspect of qualitative research that it was important to that my observations connected with data from parents and students. I updated the book checklist continuously and compared book selection and preference between participants. I, then, compared each participant's notes specifically about book preference and MP3 player usage with notes from the parent interviews. At the same time, I used DRS to record observations about how the DRS's validity and student's reaction to recording books they had read. Finally, I studied the recorded notes taken during the student interviews and retelling sessions and compared them to written notes about book preference and MP3 player interest/usage. I noted reoccurring patterns and themes within all my observations and anecdotal records as a whole and used data to support or refute emerging themes from other data collection techniques, or triangulating the data.

#### Verification of Data

I addressed reliability and validity in this study through different methods. First, the constant review of data and revision of collection methods were done throughout the study. Next, data and data collection procedures were analyzed by the researcher, a peer investigator, and advisors to ensure a comprehensive and descriptive study. Finally, I documented and described data through comprehensive means enabling a future researcher to replicate the study (McKay, 2006).

Lincoln and Guba (as cited in McKay, 2006) discuss methods to achieve internal validity in qualitative studies. Several of these methods were used in this study. First, I triangulated the data throughout the data analysis process. Each emerging theme was examined and compared to other themes in all other data collection techniques. Second, I

consistently reexamined the data collection techniques, making the changes needed to ensure my techniques were gathering the intended data. Finally, results of the data collection methods were reviewed by a peer investigator with intimate knowledge of the research design and purpose. This intra-study review helped strengthen the validity of the study's methods and procedure.

### Ethics

All procedures and methods in this study were conducted to guarantee respect and privacy of participants. The following steps were taken to ensure these rights: 1) submission and approval of a Human Subjects Proposal by Hamline faculty, 2) approval of research by school district officials, 3) communication that participation in the study is completely voluntary, 4) communication of the right to terminate participation at any time during the study with no consequences to the parents or child, 5) use of pseudonyms throughout the entire study, 6) consent letters parents signed with information of the purpose of the study and participants rights (Appendix A), and 7) explanation of the study's purpose and procedure.

### Summary

This study made use of a qualitative research design. It was a case study in which three students participated in interviews and retelling sessions regarding the use of an home/school audiobook library program. The data collection methods included student interviews, retelling sessions, parent interviews, and researcher notes and observations. The data was analyzed and triangulated according to reoccurring themes. The theme discovered about individual student's English proficiency was related to reading comprehension and student responses. Another theme discovered pertained to the

student's home literacy experiences and was related to frequent use and enjoyment of the audiobook program. Chapter Four presents the findings in more detail.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of a case study examining the influences of a home audiobook library program on storybook interactions. These data describe the following questions:

1. How do students describe their experiences with audiobooks?
2. Do audiobooks impact students' ability to retell stories?
3. How do parents describe the influence of the audiobooks at home?

The data are presented according to the research questions and the methods used for data collection: a) retell sessions, b) student interviews, and c) parent interviews.

### Student Description of Experiences with Audiobooks

In student and parent interviews, the data indicated that the audiobooks were used and of interest to students and families.

### Student Interviews

The student interviews described various levels of interest in and use of the audiobooks. Students were given options as to what was their favorite part of bringing home the audiobook bags. Table 4.1 shows the student responses.

When asked what her favorite part of taking home the audiobooks, Trish expressed a fondness for listening with the mp3 player as opposed to just looking at the books with no audio support. During each interview, she responded with listening to the stories on the mp3 player. Julian was interested in the mp3 player and the headphones.

Table 4.1

*Favorite Part of Audiobook Experiences*

	Trish	Julian	Maddy
Looking at pictures	0	0	0
Playing with MP3 player	0	0	0
Listening to stories with mp3 player	4	1	1
Using headphones	0	3	0
Other	0	0	3

He responded once to listening with the mp3 player and three times to using the headphones. Maddy also reported an interest in listening with the mp3 player, but more often she reported wanting to read the books without the mp3 player, answering this question with “I like to read to myself”. There was a mixed response when answering this question. Trish and Julian always chose options that included the use of the mp3 player or headphones; however, three times out of four, Maddy chose options that did not include the MP3 player as a favorite part of the audiobook program.

A different question asked the students to choose whether they would like to listen to a story on the mp3 player or look at a book without the mp3 player. Limited options and actions were provided to simplify the question. Responses to this question were similar to the previous question. Trish responded with interest in using the mp3 player during each of the interviews. In addition, most of the Julian’s responses included

listening with the mp3 player. Maddy reported wanting to listen without the mp3 player and read stories independently by using her brain.

R: Do you like listening to the mp3 player and reading...or just reading by yourself?

M: Reading by myself.

R: With the mp3 player? Not with the mp3 player?

M: Not with the mp3 player.

R: How can you read these stories...if you can't listen to the mp3 player?

M: Because I have my brain.

In the next interview, she reinforced the idea of reading independently (without the mp3 player) but expressed interest playing with the mp3 player. So, there is evidence of some interest in the mp3 player, but perhaps not as a method for reading. However, interestingly, Maddy's mother reported Maddy listening to the mp3 player every day and sometimes twice a day. This discrepancy in data may indicate that Maddy did not understand the question during the student interviews or that she was using the audiobooks not as a source of enjoyment but as a method to help her become a more independent reader.

It was clear from the student interviews that there was mixed interest in listening to stories on the mp3 player with, perhaps, English proficiency and individual learning styles as factors.

### Parent Interviews

All three parents reinforced reports from the students that their kindergartener used the audiobooks frequently and showed excitement and interest in listening to the

mp3 player. Most parents reported that their child was interacting with the mp3 player or books everyday or almost everyday. Sometimes the students listened or read two or three times in one day. Maddy's mother explained, "Sometimes she read a whole book and then eats or plays then comes back and reads more. She takes the bag out everyday (at least once a day) and listens for a while." Similar comments were made from Julian's mother: "On Thursdays, when he gets his bag, he listens and listens. He also listens/read on Saturday. He reads one or two stories. Then does something else and comes back to read more that same day."

The students expressed excitement and interest in listening to or reading their books as reported by all the parents. Julian's mother said, "He shows immediate interest when having the mp3 player stories...he loves to read the stories with the mp3 player." These feelings were expressed in other ways as well. Trish's parents discussed Trish's disappointment when she would forget her mp3 player bag at home after spending a weekend at her grandparent's house. They continued to say, "When she gets home on Thursday, she is all excited and shows her mom all the new books she can listen to...she loves to share all the books with everyone that day."

Not only did students use the mp3 player and books frequently and showed excitement about using them, parents also reported students' interest in reading, going to the library, and looking at books in stores had increased after having experiences with the audiobook program. Maddy's mother said, "When we are at a store, she wants us to buy books for her." Julian's mother reported more interest in literature since starting the audiobook program. "He reads more. More interested in look at books and trying to read

them, especially Spiderman and other comics. He is more interested in other books from school and the local library even if he can't read them.”

According to the parents of these three children, the audiobook library program had an effect on the frequency of reading in English at home, the excitement about reading and listening to books, and the interest in reading or getting other books. All of these actions and feelings increased while students participated in the program. It was not known if these behaviors and feelings continued after the program was completed.

#### Audiobook Impact on Retelling Ability

Audiobook reading had varying impact on the retelling ability of these three students. According on the data, level of English proficiency seemed to be a factor in students retelling abilities. The data indicated that Trish performed better on retelling tasks than Julian and Maddy. Table 4.2 shows the level of English proficiency of the three participants as prescribed by the Pre-LAS.

#### Retells

Students participated in five retelling sessions. Patterns emerged among the data concerning the books students chose to retell and the ability to retell the story, which correlate with level of English proficiency. The students were asked to retell the story from the beginning. They were allowed to look at the book while they retold the story.

Table 4.2

*Level of Oral Language Proficiency in English*


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<u>Student</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Maddy	Level 1	Beginner
Julian	Level 1	Beginner
Trish	Level 2	Intermediate

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Retell choice. Overall the most frequent books chosen to retell were the decodable reader books. Eight out of fifteen total books chosen to retell were decodable readers. Table 4.3 shows which books the students chose to retell.

Table 4.3

*Book Chosen to Retell*


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	<u>Decodable</u>	<u>Fiction</u>	<u>Vocabulary-Specific</u>
Maddy	1	2	2
Julian	4	1	0
Trish	3	2	0

---

Decodable reader books contained very simple sightwords and vocabulary which allows students to read the words. Other vocabulary words were explicitly supported by

the pictures. Most of these stories did not have a developed plot but rather help students practice reading words that are becoming familiar to them.

Decodable reader retells. During retells of the decodable readers, the students frequently reread the stories (reading the words) instead of retelling the story (using their own words). These data correlate with the student's level of English proficiency. Julian and Maddy reread the decodable readers after being asked to retell them. Trish also reread two of three decodable readers; however, there was a difference between Trish and Julian in using vocabulary to produce a complete story. Julian retold one of the decodable readers but, according to anecdotal records, when he came to an unfamiliar word he paused and looked at me. This action resulted in a fragmented story, with important vocabulary missed.

Trish reread two decodable readers. In contrast, she was able to replace unfamiliar vocabulary words with other words that made sense. Trish read "Dad can fix" when 'fix' was suppose to be 'saw'. 'Fix' makes sense in this context. On the other hand, Julian was not able to do the same. While reading the same sentence, Julian read "Dad can..." with a pause where 'saw' should have been. During this pause he looked at me for help and eventually moved on. Julian did not have the vocabulary to replace the word 'saw' with a word that made sense.

Trish retold the other decodable reader with limited references to the words on the page. All three participants used the pictures to help them retell or reread the decodable readers. This was evident in the other retells as well.

Fiction story and vocabulary-specific retells. All other stories chosen to retell fell in the categories of fiction story or vocabulary-specific fiction story. The students were asked to

retell the story. I was looking for students to tell parts from the beginning, middle, and end and give an explanation of the plot. The text of these stories was too difficult for students to read, but with the use of the audio and visual (i.e. mp3 player and picture) support, I wanted to see if students could still comprehend and retell the stories. Student varied in their ability to retell these stories. Again, this variability seemed linked to oral language proficiency. Maddy missed the plot in all four of the retells in these genres. She retold the story according to the pictures and mentioned various parts of the beginning, middle, and end, but without mentioning the plot.

R: Do you remember The Two Brave Raccoons? Ok... tell me that story then...can you tell me what happened in there?

M: First they were walking to the tree...and they fall in house...they get in...and found toys...and found a boy picture...and then get out.

R: Why did they leave? Do you remember?

M: They don't have any toys...they don't have any food...they don't have any pictures...

The story concluded with the raccoons getting scared in the house and running away. She did not talk about this event until I asked explicitly.

R: Did something scare them?

M: Yeah.

R: What scared them?

M: The person...that was open the door.

Julian also missed the plot when retelling a fiction story. He retold the story solely based on the pictures and vocabulary. He paused frequently and did not clearly

communicate other events in the story. This story was *Slowly, Slowly, Slowly, Said the Sloth*, by Eric Carle. It is about a sloth hanging from a tree in the jungle and doing things very slowly. Animals come up to the sloth and ask questions but it does not change how the slow the sloth acts. This is part of what Julian said about the story.

J: umm...this animal say hi to slowly slowly...

R: mmm-hmmm. Ok

J: ...and he was walking...and he see a slowly, slowly holding a tree...(like the pictures in the story)

R: ok...what else happened in the story? Keep going...what happened next in the story?

J: next?...slowly, slowly and two birds see a big snake with his big tail...and....slowly and these birds here is a scare for this big snake...and...(long pause)

Julian's response was not relevant to the text of the story, only the pictures. He did not discuss any plot or main idea.

In contrast, Trish was able to retell two fiction stories with great detail. She talked about the beginning, middle, and end of the stories as well as the plot. She clearly understood the books she was listening to and could communicate that understanding during the retelling sessions.

R: Go ahead and retell the story to me. What happened in the story?

T: In this story, one day he mom, Mickey gets some socks. And he put on but it was too big. And then his dad go a shirt, a clean shirt, and he put on...but it was too little. And then he brother of Mickey, he put on a clean pants, but it was too

big. And then he's sister grab a clean shirt but it was too little for her. And then everyone said, what's going on? And the mom got new socks, clean, but it was too big. Dad grabbed a clean shirt and it was too small...and he brother of Mickey, he grabbed a clean pants but it was too big.

And then, Mickey made some baskets with the clothes that goes with them (the family members), but then he traced dad and his mom and his brother and he put them clothes in the basket. Then the pictures of family that he traced, he put next to the baskets...and the clothes that was he's brothers he put in his brother's [basket]. His dad's [picture] he put next to the dad's [basket]. And his mom's [basket] put it next to the picture of his mom.

Maddy and Julian were not able to tell retell these stories with such accuracy. However, Trish was able to demonstrate understanding through retelling the story. It is unclear whether Maddy and Julian could comprehend the stories but were not able to express this knowledge or if they did not comprehend the stories in the first place.

### Student Interviews

Students easily picked a story to read again; however, it was difficult for students to express their reason for enjoyment. The students were asked to identify a book they would like to hear again and why. I was looking for students to express some comprehension of the story when stating their reason of enjoyment. Seven out of fifteen responses were specific to the cover or title, not the story.

R: If you could pick one story...one story...to listen to again, what story would you want to listen to again? Which story? (student points) Clifford.

R: Why would you like to listen to Clifford again?

M: because the dog scared the lion.

The event did occur in the story. This book was not read in school, so I assumed she had engaged with it at home. Other reasons for picking the book of enjoyment related to the title and pictures of the story.

R: If you could pick one of these stories again to read or listen to with the mp3 player, which story would you pick?

(student picks up a book) (*A Tree for all Seasons.*)

R: Why would you pick that one?

J: because it is lots of things for leaves.

The story *A Tree for all Seasons*, by Robin Bernard, is a non-fiction book about how trees change in different seasons. The pictures show what happens to the leaves. Julian's response indicated some level of knowledge but with limited words to express that knowledge.

Only Maddy and Julian picked the story because they could read it (a decodable reader). Trish did not choose decodable readers and could express reasons that indicated more knowledge or enjoyment of the fiction stories she did choose.

R: if you were to pick one of these stories again, what story would you like to pick? (student points)

R: That story...A Cat at School

R: Why? Why would you want to read that story again?

T: because I like it because cats doesn't go in school.

R: Cats really don't go in school...it's kind of a silly one, isn't it?

The story is about cats going to school. Trish was able to relate it to real life and express knowledge of the story.

#### Parent Perceptions of the Influences of Audiobook Experiences

The audiobook program influenced reading experiences for the students and their families according to responses in the student interviews and parent interviews.

#### Student Interviews

All three students indicated that they listened to the stories with a member of their family either with the mp3 player or using the books. The type of interaction with the family member was not specified in the interview; however, follow-up questions did provide some more specific information. Julian reported listening with family during all five interviews. Since his family does not speak or read any English, he explained the English stories to his family in Spanish.

R: Who, if anyone, listened to the stories with you?

J: umm...my dad...

R: Did he understand them in English?

J: No.

R: No. He probably didn't understand them in English.

J: No. I need tell him.

Julian used expressive Spanish skills to tell the story to his father.

All three students also reported using the mp3 player, listening to, or reading the stories with their siblings. During one interview, Trish mentioned that her brother used the mp3 player at times.

R: Who listened to the stories with you? Did anyone? Who?

T: No one.

R: Just you? Did your brother listen?

T: My brother was reading the book with my mom because mom said that my brother needs to read this book because my brother doesn't know how to read this book.

R: oh. So he was practicing that book.

T: and this book too

R: and that book too. So, did he like that book too?

T: and my brother said he read this book in school

During the parent interview, Trish's parents confirmed how the older brother would use the mp3 player to practice reading some of the harder books in Trish's bag. The mp3 player and the books provided to students seemed to encourage engagement in literacy practices by parents as well as siblings.

### Parent Interviews

The parent interviews contained questions aimed at gathering information about the family in general as well as specific student behavior with the books and mp3 players. Parents reported positive opinions of the audiobook library program, confirmed family participation with the mp3 player and books, and spoke in favor of the Spanish books.

General opinions of the audiobook program. All parents interviewed indicated that they liked the audiobook program for a couple of reasons. First, parents mentioned the fact that they could not read books or speak well in English, so the mp3 player book bag allowed their children to learn more English.

Julian's mother said the following:

It is very practical. It's good for me because I don't know how to read or write in English, so...gets support through the program.

Trish's parents reiterated similar feelings but more specifically about English pronunciation. This is what Trish's mother said:

She has more opportunity to practice. Because I does not pronounce English words correctly. So Trish gets more time to practice hearing the words correctly. Sometimes when she asks about something in English, and the parents don't know, the mp3 player helps her know more English.

Parents also mentioned how the program encouraged their own development of reading, writing, and speaking skills in English. Trish's mom said, "The mp3 player helps me. Because I try to read some of the stories to her, I can't read very well (in English), so it help me a lot, especially with pronunciation."

Family literacy and oral language. To see if the audiobook program had any affect on family's literacy experiences or students oral language ability, the parents were asked if they listened or read the stories and if their kindergartener ever discussed or asked question about the stories. These questions addressed if the audiobook program stimulated any conversations or reading experiences at home. These activities may have contributed to family literacy experiences as well as opportunities for students to use spoken language (either in L1 or L2). The parents reported students asking questions and sharing (or telling about) the books. Julian and Maddy's mother both reported shared book experiences occurred with siblings more so than the parents. Nonetheless, according to the parents, the book experiences created some dialogue and reading experiences between the students and older siblings and sometimes the parents.

This information correlated positively with the level of English proficiency of the student and the parents. Julian and Maddy have more limited English abilities and spoke about the books (in English) less than Trish, a more proficient English speaker. Trish's English abilities may have contributed to her ability, willingness, and opportunity to tell about these stories. According to Trish's parents, she loved to share all the books with everyone. "She likes to share the book. She will share it with her grandparents," Trish's father said explaining that this did not occur before she started bringing the audiobooks home.

Development of literacy skills. The parents reported a difference in their kindergarteners reading or writing ability after they started the audiobook program. Trish and Julian's parents commented on how these students were transitioning from looking at the pictures in a story to being able to reading words. Julian's mother said, "Before he would ask someone to read it to him, but now he is saying, 'no, I will read it to you'." Trish's parents made similar remarks saying, "Before she tried to just look at pictures. Now she tries to read the words." Both quotes addressed the students' awareness of print, a critical step in reading development.

In addition Maddy's mother reported how Maddy started reading more since she started taking the audiobooks home, but Maddy also started writing more. "She is more interested or excited about writing or spelling after having experience with reading," Maddy's mother explained. Maddy's experience with reading may not have significantly affected her reading or writing ability but it did have an effect on her interest in reading and writing, according to her mother.

Spanish books. Finally, all parents made positive comments about the Spanish books available to their child. The students made requests for the parents to read these stories, promoting and encouraging L1 literacy. Trish's parents made only one short comment about the books in Spanish, whereas Julian and Maddy's parent made more enthusiastic comments about these books. For example, Trish's mother said simply "Yes. She says, 'Mom you can read in Spanish, so you can read to me'. She was excited because it [the book] was in Spanish."

In contrast, Julian and Maddy's mothers made more comments about these books. According to Julian's mother, Julian showed "a little more" interest in books in Spanish because his parents were able to read them to him. In response to a follow up question about listening to Spanish books with the mp3 player, Julian's mother said, "He will listen to the Spanish book on the mp3 player, and then go to mom and say, 'Mom! Read this to me!'" Even though Julian continued to use the mp3 player to listen to Spanish books, he also enjoyed and encouraged his parents to read those books to him. Maddy's mother brought up the Spanish books without a direct question about them. She said, "Sometimes, when they get books in Spanish, Maddy gets very excited. I will get to read a book in Spanish to her." According to these quotes, it is evident that the books in Spanish were of interest to all students, particularly for the students and parents with more limited English.

### Summary

The results of the study were varied with variables ranging from English proficiency level to individual learning styles. However, one aspect was clear and consistent: the mp3 players and books were used and enjoyed by these three students.

According to the students and parents, students listened to the stories at home.

Engagement in the stories promoted dialogue between families and students. Level of English proficiency affected the students' ability to retell the stories. Students with more limited English struggled with retelling the stories and retold them according to pictures, whereas the student with more English skills was able to retell the stories including aspects of the main idea or plot. It is possible that students with more limited English understood the stories but did not have the oral language skills to communicate that knowledge. These findings and more will be explored and discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

A common practice of kindergarten teachers and parents is storybook reading. Books are read to students everyday in many kindergarten classrooms. In addition, reading with children at home is often encouraged by teachers and pediatricians in our culture. Teachers attempt to support the notion of reading at home, regardless of home language, by implementing home/school literacy programs. Through these programs, students and family members get opportunities to read and do different literacy activities. Providing ESL students with audio support for reading of books in English is one way to encourage use, enjoyment, and language learning at home.

This study looked at how an audiobook library program influences three ESL kindergarteners' interactions with audiobooks books at home. The results of the study suggested three findings:

1. Student experiences with audiobooks are unique to the individual.
2. Audiobook experiences had a varying impact on retelling abilities.
3. Parents felt their children used and enjoyed audiobooks at home.

In this chapter, I will discuss these findings, reflect on the limitations of the study, explore the implications for ESL teaching and learning, and provide recommendations for future research.

## Findings

### Student Description of Experiences with Audiobooks

The study found that students used and enjoyed listening to, reading, and sharing their mp3 players and books (audiobooks). The students told me they liked listening to the books or just looking at the books. Either way these students were engaged in looking at, listening, or reading a storybook at home. Their parents had similar comments about the mp3 players and/or the books, reporting that the audiobooks were used everyday or almost everyday. This finding is similar to that of Blum, et al. (1995) and Koskinen, et al. (2000). Blum found audiotapes were particularly useful for ESL students, with increases in reading for ESL students during the audiotape intervention. In Blum's study, as in this study, parents made specific comments about the accompaniment of the audio support, recognizing it as a helpful tool for engaging in storybooks in English.

The students' frequency of use and opportunities to experience a variety of books contributed to their access to books. Access to books or the number of books in the home is a factor in the amount of opportunities children have to read at home. Koskinen, et al. (2000) investigated whether increasing access to books (in the classroom and at home) is a sufficient supplement to the literacy instruction and achievement of second-language learners and native English-speaking students. The authors found that the availability of books was a significant factor in students' literacy achievement and reading interest, particularly for ELLs. In addition, Koskinen and Shockley (1994) examined reading motivation and found that access to books is one of three main factors in reading motivation. It seems that the more books students have to look at or listen to at home, the more likely they will participate in storybook reading practices at home. In addition,

pleasure in reading is a motivating factor for children and adults to read. It is very probable that the more children and adults enjoy reading, the more reading occurs. Perhaps giving students opportunities to access and enjoy books encourages reading motivation and practices.

#### Audiobook Impact on Retelling Ability

Experiences with audiobooks did not increase retelling abilities. My results indicate that oral language ability in English was a factor in student's ability to retell stories. I found that the student with higher oral language skills in English outperformed the other students on retelling tasks. As noted in the transcriptions, Trish, unlike Julian and Maddy, repeated phrases and even struggled to express certain vocabulary but was able to convey understanding of the parts of the stories and the plots. It is unclear whether oral language was the sole factor in the ability to retell or if students simply did not comprehend the story in the first place. However, there is some evidence of the former. Peregoy & Boyle (1991) examined the oral proficiency skill and reading comprehension skills in English of elementary ELLs. Their results indicated that high comprehenders had more sophisticated oral language skills than low comprehenders. This research supports the notion that English oral language skills are linked to English reading comprehension skills. The use of the audiobooks, in terms of contributing to reading comprehension in English, may have been more advantageous for Trish, a more proficient ESL speaker.

However, oral language did not affect students' ability to share or ask questions about the audiobook experience with family members. All students asked questions or talked about the audiobooks with a family member. Julian and Maddy, less proficient-English speakers, asked questions about the English stories to their older, more English-

proficient siblings. Trish shared with and asked questions to her mother, father, brother, and grandmother. It is unknown how many conversations took place in English or Spanish at home, however (and, perhaps, more importantly) it seems to have stimulated communication in both L1 and L2. For this reason, the audiobook program was advantageous for all students: it encouraged oral language in L1 and L2.

#### Parent Perceptions of the Influences of Audiobook Experiences

The availability and use of audiobooks in the homes of these three ESL families changed home reading practices in four ways. First, many members of the family listened to the audiobooks. Students and parents reported that the kindergartener, parents, and siblings all listened to the audiobooks. Second, the students told the stories or asked questions about the stories to their parents or siblings. These conversations simulate language (L1 or L2) use. Third, parents observed differences in their child's literacy behaviors. All of the parents reported that students asked about books more, wanted to buy books more, or wanted to go to the library more after having listened to the audiobooks. Finally, the availability of books in Spanish (L1) affected family participation in home reading experiences. The students and parents expressed interest and enjoyment in the books in Spanish. Providing some books in these students' L1 promoted L1 literacy and family involvement.

Research supports the notion that parental involvement in home literacy practices is important and affects various reading skills (Morrow, 1997; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006) regardless of home language or culture (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005). In Weigel, Martin, & Bennett's study, home literacy environment was examined and related to pre-school children's emerging literacy and language skills. The authors found that the

frequency of experiences with literacy and language activities positively correlated with children's print knowledge. Furthermore, the children were more interested in reading the more they experienced reading activities.

### Implications for Teaching

Storybook reading at home is an important part of literacy achievement. There are multiple methods in which schools or individual teachers have tried to promote reading at home. Some programs involve children and parents in many different literacy activities and games, some with complex reward programs. These are successful home reading programs; however, they may not encourage the participation by limited English students and families. We need to include broad home-reading programs which allow flexibility and meet the needs of all students. The study provides some implications for teachers of ESL students, classroom teachers, and administrators in encouraging book interaction by ELLs at home.

First, the study provides some support for the purchase and use of books with audio versions or a method to play the books, particularly for use with English Language Learners. The audio versions of books allow ELLs to interact with books, by either reading or listening to stories. This audio support can be used in the classroom or as a method of encouraging students (particularly ELLs) to read in English at home. As reported in Blum, et al. (1995), ELLs receive "substantial benefit from the opportunity to practice reading books with audiotapes at home" (p. 553). Many teachers implement excellent home-reading programs which benefit many native-English speakers; however, adding an audio-version of their books to their existing program will enhance substantial reading opportunities for all students regardless of home language.

The study also highlights the importance for teachers to consider students' abilities (including oral language proficiency) and learning styles when creating, implementing and evaluating comprehension-focused activities. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to be aware of the types of books they are having students read and to consider what their expectations for students. What types of books are you sending home with your students? Storybooks? Decodable readers (books the students can more or less read)? Are you expecting them to gain some comprehension skills from the experience? Is it simply for reading pleasure? These are some questions teachers may want to consider when developing and implementing home/school reading programs.

#### Limitations of the Study

The small sample size is one limitation of the study. There were only three participants in a case study format. The number of students and the research design does not allow for generalization of results. It is unclear what affects an audiobook library program would have on different participants. Another limitation is the affect of asking five and six-year olds to provide accurate recall data. Berk (2000) explains that students under the age of six-years old have trouble recalling thoughts from previous events. Limited recall ability may have given limited data. Also, given is the fact that data were gathered only about the use of the mp3 player bag at home, there is no comparative data between reading books with the mp3 player and reading books alone.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Although the study does present some promising implications, it would be advisable to replicate the study with a larger sample sizes, including various ages and proficiencies of students. It would be helpful to include more parent interviews, perhaps

pre-program and post-program, to investigate pre-post behaviors and opinions. Further research may also include single-genre, such as fictional picture books, book-bags when encouraging simple, plot-focused reading retells and experiences. It would be interesting to see any difference with reading practices or comprehension when only able to read/listen to fictional picture books. Another recommendation for further research would be to investigate any differences in English-speaking students and parents attitudes towards audiobooks and those attitudes of non-English speaking families. Furthermore, studies could be done with high-risk native English speakers. Perhaps the use of audiobooks in low-income districts would encourage the use and enjoyment of reading at home as it did in this study.

### Summary

In this study, I looked at how implementing a home audiobook library program influences reading opportunities and reading comprehension skills of three ESL kindergarteners. I have learned that audiobooks can be a sufficient supplement to home reading practices if the intent of the audiobooks is to stimulate reading opportunities rather than promoting reading comprehension development. I also learned that providing audiobooks to ESL kindergarteners does not guarantee that students will increase any reading comprehension skills. Two out of three of the students were not able to successfully retell many of the stories. It maybe a coincidence (or not) that the student who was able to retell the stories accurately had higher speaking and listening skills in English than the former students. I was unable to make a definite correlation between listening to audiobooks and reading comprehension. Perhaps too many other factors were involved such as oral language ability. In addition, I learned that these limited-English

speaking parents liked the audiobook program and saw a change in their child's reading behaviors and preferences while using it. Benefits of the program maybe numerous but thoughtful, purposeful, and meaningful implementations of audiobook programs are essential.

APPENDIX A

Consent Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Molly Wellner and I am an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in your child's school. I am finishing my Master's Degree at Hamline University. As part of my school work, I am doing a research project. I want to ask our permission for you and your child to take part in my research.

My research looks at how students interact with books at school and at home. The students will be involved in an audiobook program in which they will take books home, read them, and then exchange them for new books. I hope to learn more about the effectiveness of this program. I also would like to know if using audiobooks change children's interaction with books. Your child will participate in four short interviews and story retelling sessions. I will ask your child about the books they read at home and how they like the books. These interviews will take place during the school day. It is possible for some changes in goals and methods to occur.

I am also interested in your thoughts and perceptions about your child's interaction with books at home and the audiobook program. Your opinion and experiences with your child at home are important to this research, so you will be asked to participate in two short interviews in the language of your choice. Each component of the process is strictly voluntary. You may choice not to participate at any time with no consequences to you or your child.

You and your child's identity will be protected in the research and results. All questionnaires and interviews will remain confidential throughout the study. Interviews may be recorded for review later only. I will not use your name in the interview. There will be no permanent information recorded on your child as well. The final product will be a printed, bound capstone (thesis) that will be shelved at Hamline's Bush Library and available online. I may also publish or use my findings in the future.

I have permission to conduct this study from my principal, Greg Lange, District 112's Superintendent, Mr. David Jennings, and Hamline University School of Education.

Keep a copy of this letter and return a signed copy. If you have any questions, please call me at 952-556-6442. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Molly Wellner

---

Dear Mrs. Wellner:

I give my permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child) to participate in your research project.

I understand that this research studies how an audiobook program influences children's book interactions. I know my child and I will participate in interviews focused on the purpose of the study.

Signed,

---

(signature of parent/guardian) (firma)

---

(date) (fecha)

APPENDIX B

Student Interview

Student:		Date:	
----------	--	-------	--

Questions

Coding 1st 2nd 3rd  
4th 5th

1	These are the stories that were in your mp3 bag this week. Point to the books you liked to read and the ones you did not like.	
Response:	Liked	Disliked
Titles		
2	If you could pick one story to listen to again, which story would you pick?	
2a	Why?	
3	What is your favorite part of listening to these stories?	

Response:

4	Who listened to the stories with you?
---	---------------------------------------

Response:

5	Where do you put the mp3 player at home?
---	--

Response:

APPENDIX C

Parent Interview

Audio-Record Code		Comments/Notes
Names:		
Dates:		
Interview #:		
Questions		Response/Comments
1	Tell me about your family.	
2	When _____, brings the books home, have you noticed him reading more?	
	<i>How has his behaviors changed?</i>	
3	Have you listened to any of these stories?	
	<i>Does _____ ask questions about you questions about the stories?</i>	
4	Do they listen on the weekends?	
	<i>When do they usually listen to the stories?</i>	
5	How many times, do you think, _____ listens to the mp3 player?	

6	Have you noticed any differences in how _____reacts to listening to the stories on the mp3 player?	
	<i>Is he/she more excited about reading or ask about books more?</i>	
7	Where does the mp3 player go at home? (Where do you keep it?)	

APPENDIX D

Student Retell Rubric: Decodable Reader

Student:		ReT Number		
Book:				
Critical Elements				
1	Uses key sightwords	Yes	No	Some

Notes:

2	Uses key vocabulary words	All	Some	None
---	---------------------------	-----	------	------

Notes:

3	Tells events from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.	All	Some	None
---	---	-----	------	------

Notes:

5	Does the student tell the story using their own words or do they read the words printed on the page?	Reads words	Uses own words	
---	--	-------------	----------------	--

Notes:

APPENDIX E

Student Retell Rubric: Fiction Story

Student:		ReT Number	
Book:			
Critical Elements		Yes	No
1	Identifies characters in the story.	Yes	No

Notes:

2	Tells events from the beginning of the story.	Yes	No
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Notes:

3	Tells events from the middle of the story.	Yes	No
---	--	-----	----

Notes:

4	Tells events from the end of the story.	Yes	No
---	---	-----	----

Notes:

5	Does the student tell the story using their own words or do they read the words printed on the	Reads words	Uses own words
---	--	-------------	----------------

	page?		
--	-------	--	--

Notes:

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