Promoting Language and Literacy Engagement within a Preschool Spanish Language Program

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Abstract

This study focuses on the effectiveness of promoting preschool children’s interest in and engagement with Spanish language and literacy by means of a program offered through a children’s bookstore that exposed them to Spanish books, stories, and games. Considerable research indicates that the younger children are exposed to a second language, the better the long-term language benefits. An action research methodology was used to investigate which instructional activities promoted language and literacy engagement among toddlers whose parents come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Interviews with parents were conducted to understand perceptions of their children’s language learning and literacy engagement both in the Spanish class and outside. The findings suggest that children’s motivation towards language learning and literacy engagement can be enhanced through the implementation of a Spanish language program that includes engaging activities and appealing materials.
Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to all those who have made the completion of this thesis possible. Most importantly, I would like to thank the parents and their children who agreed to participate in this study. Without their willingness to be in the class and their attitudes, this study could not have been completed. Also, I would like to sincerely thank the Rainbow Caterpillar Bookstore (Happie and Hanoosh) with whom I worked for allowing me to use the premises of their bookstore. Your assistance and support was much appreciated.

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**Dedication**

Esta dedicación es para ti.

*Thanks for all your support, encouragement and happiness in this important moment of my life.*
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Chapter 1

Introduction

For about fifteen years I have been a language teacher. Since I was a pre-service teacher in Colombia where I taught English as a foreign language from pre-school to high school, I have noticed the importance of early exposure to languages. Even in my work as a Spanish teacher in private schools in the USA and as a trainer in foreign language pedagogy (e.g., Chinese, French, Italian, German, Korean, Japanese and others), I recognized that involving children at a very early age shows benefits years later and that bilingualism is associated with cognitive advantages from infancy through old age (Bialystok, 2005; 2007; Kovács & Mehler, 2009). Throughout my career, I have mostly worked with parents and children aged 0 to 3 years old. I have supported parents to foster bilingual literacy while singing songs and rhymes, repeating phrases and words from flashcards, and reading books in classes and at home.

As a practitioner, I have always been interested in how children learn second languages at a very young age, what the best practices are for early language teaching, and how I can foster learning a second language while preserving the learner’s mother tongue. Surprisingly, although there has been research using extensive and young populations, there has been little empirical research on different settings that are not academic related (e.g. foreign language learning centers for toddlers, home schooling, community learning centres, family groups, play dates and play groups); most of the research has been done in quantitative studies (Comeau, Genesee, & Mendelson, 2007; Genesee, 2008; Geva & Genesee, 2006; Paradis & Crago, 2000; Paradis & Navarro, 2003; Paradis, 2001; Paradis, 2007; Paradis, Nicoladis, & Genesee, 2000) in bilingual education or multilingual education in different contexts. This master’s thesis reflects my inquiry into how Spanish as an additional, international or second language is taught at a very early age.
and how children are engaged in the language learning. I also hope to provide a better understanding of concepts in children's engagement and motivation in different reading and literacy activities during parent-toddler interaction. To address the multiple issues present in my own classroom, the pedagogy used in the classes and the scope of this research project, I identified the following research question that is divided in three parts:

To what extent are story reading and related literacy activities effective in:

(a) maintaining students' interest and engagement in literacy activities?

(b) encouraging students from English home backgrounds to use Spanish in their responses to the story or questions posed by the instructor?

(c) eliciting linguistic responses in English or Spanish to questions posed by the instructor?

In other words, the aim of this research is to investigate and bring to light the engagement or motivation to literacy, as well as how the practices that occur in the classroom are connected to engagement. Additionally, they are meant to explore the parents’ perspectives of their children’s involvement in Spanish in the class and outside the class. I have closely examined the interviews with the parents and the observations of my own classes in order to better understand my own practice and how it best answers this main research question. I have interviewed five parents from a “Parents and Tots Class” program that I teach, I have observed 12 classes of 45 minutes approximately, audio recorded them, taken notes on my observations and, finally, I have taken the data and categorized it according to the themes that emerged during the analysis. The findings and implications of this research connect with the importance of role models in language learning, teaching practices in the classroom, and motivation towards literacy and second language.
Specifically, the current study is divided in the following sections. Chapter Two reviews the literature and the conceptual framework of literacy engagement and the importance of early reading. The next chapter describe the methods used to conduct the study and why action research is the most appropriate mode of investigation. Participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis are described. Chapter Four describes the findings of the study while Chapter Five discusses these findings and outlines conclusions and implications of the study.
Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter describes the main theoretical concepts that guide the research. I begin by outlining the concept of literacy engagement and the importance of print access as a predictor of reading achievement. I then proceed with a discussion of early reading and the impact of using dual language books used in diverse classrooms.

Literacy Engagement

Motivation towards reading or other literacy activities is a key factor for reading success. Guthrie et al. (1996) refer to the development of literacy engagement through an understanding of how motivations and strategies in literacy activities are integrated. In this way, intrinsic motivations will yield higher levels of conceptual learning than more extrinsic motivations. Also, Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn (1992) agree that reading engagement refers to the joint functioning of motivations and strategies during reading activities.

Research suggests that involving children in reading at ages 0 - 3 influences their language development and ability to read in years to come. Watson and Shapiro (1988) studied the relationship between parent–child discourse in an early de-contextualised language context (book reading) and the child's subsequent performance on different pre-literacy skills and other tasks. Parental and child lexical choice in book reading discourse was related to the child's subsequent performance in formal task contexts such as definition, and also in relation to the child's early concepts about print. In other words, a pattern of significant correlations was observed between parent’s and child’s lexical choice in book reading, and the child’s subsequent school related skills. Watson and Shapiro finally suggest that the child’s introduction to the language of schooling may begin long before school. Rosenquest (2002) reported that infants are
engaged in the content of books as early as nine months; they enjoy stories and rhymes that allow them to play with language sounds and patterns. Very young children are mainly engaged by books that have images that resemble their immediate environment.

Considerable research related to literacy engagement has been conducted at the preschool and primary school levels. Guthrie (2004) proposes that engagement in reading incorporates many points of view entailing motivational dispositions, cognitive strategies, conceptual understanding, and social discourse:

Engaged reading refers not to any form of effort hard work (such as completing a routine task quickly), but to dispositions for thinking deeply and using strategies for learning from text. Our definition of engaged reading begins with a simple behavioral indicator: frequent, focused reading. However, the behavioral indicator is insufficient. Students may read intently for extrinsic incentives, such as points, gold stars, or grades. In our view, these external incentives are insufficient for sustained engagement. In contrast, intrinsic motivation including such attributes as curiosity, involvement, preference for challenge, and desire to read — increases the amount of reading and contributes to achievement more strongly than extrinsic motivation. (p. 4)

Parents can also encourage children to read by borrowing books from the library, buying books, or attending parent-child literacy programs that strongly support parent involvement in child language development. Doyle and Zhang (2011) demonstrated that parents seemed very motivated to attend a program in language and literacy for their children where parents usually sing songs and read books to children. Parents frequently commented on rapid changes in their approaches to literacy interactions with their children that resulted in more enjoyable experiences for them and
their children. Also, parents and children seem to be more engaged with books when these are personalised. Kucirkova, Messer, and Whitelock (2013) observed seven native English speaking parents and their children aged between 12 and 33 months at home when sharing a book made especially for the child and noticed that their engagement was higher in terms of laughs and smiles compared to other children who were not involved in personalized books. As a conclusion, the more parents try to engage children with books by making the content more relevant for their lives, the more children become interested and curious about reading.

Stagg-Peterson, Jang, Jupiter, and Dunlop (2012) also demonstrated the efficacy of literacy-oriented programs for preschool children offered through the public library system. Programs in ten Ontario libraries were observed and data were gathered from 82 parents/caregivers through surveys and from observations of 65 of the 198 children who participated in these programs. Library staff were also interviewed to assess their perceptions of the efficacy of the programs. The programs were found to be highly successful in fostering children’s readiness for formal schooling and their motivation to read (demonstrated through attending to and asking questions about books being read). The children were observed to learn new vocabulary, demonstrate awareness of rhymes and the sounds of language, and engage with the narratives that were read by library staff.

Among others, Duke (2000) argues the type of print experienced has an important impact on literacy development. She demonstrated that the more access to print children of low socio-economic status have, the better their literacy skills in the later years in school. As a result, she concludes that children should be involved with literacy early in the schooling process. Neuman
(1999) found the proximity between children and books is critical to early literacy as children's concepts of print, writing, and narratives improved more in one year of an intervention consisting of expanded exposure to books than was the case for a control group who did not have this experience. Some of the reasons for this are the influence of parents, teachers, and/or caregivers in several literacy events. The more children participate in these literacy activities, the more they are acquainted with the role of literacy in their lives and this experience results in significant benefits for children's future achievement.

Later, Neuman & Celano (2001) found that “long before formal schooling begins, considerable variations in patterns of early literacy development are likely evident based on how print is organized in communities” (p. 24). Also, children develop a positive attitude to books once they are familiarized with print and experience long exposure. However, they also demonstrated that this positive outcome to literacy does not happen when children are less involved in reading-related activities.

Finally, Cummins (2011) argues that teachers must understand that sustained engagement derives at least as much from the social interactions around books as formal reading practices, therefore involving children with as many books as possible is necessary at a very young age and parents need to talk with their children about the books they read together. Cummins (2015) also proposes that children should be immersed in a print-rich environment to promote literacy engagement and achievement (see Figure 1). He suggests that students who are linguistically diverse will engage actively with literacy only to the extent that instruction scaffolds meaning, connects to their lives, affirms their identities, and extends their knowledge of academic language.
Similarly, early literacy engagement is considered in Veldhuijzen, Coates, Hervas-Malo, and McGrath's (2012) study where a group of mothers in Nova Scotia were given a free reading literacy package to use for reading with their babies. The results suggested that this intervention substantially increased engagement in literacy activities with children starting at birth and seemed to positively affect later language and literacy skills. It has been demonstrated that engaging children with print at an early age is beneficial and, therefore, involving children with books through reading them aloud with parents or at school will support academic development at school age.

**Early Reading and Dual-Language Books**

Krashen (2004) argues that when children start reading for pleasure good things will happen with respect to their later literacy development. By contrast, children who do not read voluntarily will not have a chance to benefit from this habit and will have difficulty in today’s world in terms of reading and writing. Krashen argues that his FVR (Free Voluntary Reading), or
reading with no external pressure, shows evidence of developing children’s oral ability; he supports his idea based on three previous studies of children using books in silent and free reading programs, and adolescents reading magazines of their preference (Pfau, 1976; Greaney and Clarke, 1975; Rucker, 1982). In brief, Krashen (2004) believes that the more children are exposed to books, the more they are inspired to read. Further, he holds that children read more when they see other people reading at school or at home.

Numerous research studies have reported that similar patterns exist for both first language and second language Reading development. For example, a report on the national panel on language-minority children and youth prepared by August, Shanahan, and Escamilla (2009) found that research on language minority students’ literacy development demonstrates similar patterns to research on monolingual literacy development. They also found that second language (L2) vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to L2 literacy development and that first language literacy is related to literacy development in English, including word and pseudo-word reading, reading comprehension, and reading strategies. Finally, they report the positive effects on literacy development in English of using children’s native languages in literacy instruction.

In a recent longitudinal replication of Cunningham and Stanovich’s (1997) research, Sparks, Patton, and Murdoch (2014) examined the influence of exposure to print in explaining individual differences on various measures of reading achievement and declarative (general) knowledge. 1st graders were administered reading, spelling, vocabulary, IQ, and listening comprehension tests and then followed to the end of the 10th grade. At this point, they were administered an IQ test and measures of reading comprehension, language ability, general knowledge, and exposure to print. Their findings showed the skills in 1st grade are predictors for success in 10th grade, thereby confirming the powerful, long-term benefits of providing children
with a fast start in reading. These confirm the importance of an early and fast start in reading engagement and reading-related activities. In other words, their results agree with Cunningham and Stanovich’s study (1997) in which it is suggested that an early start in learning to read is crucial for establishing a successful path that encourages a “lifetime habit of reading” (p. 94) and for avoiding the decline in motivation for reading that can have devastating effects on reading growth and cognitive development over time.

Likewise, in early literacy for bilingual children, reading dual-language books is important to gain meta-linguistic and cultural awareness, as well as for enhancing children’s cultural empowerment and identity. Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne, and Pfitscher (2013) analysed teaching and learning in dual-language books. They reviewed video clips to demonstrate how teachers and volunteer readers build on linguistic and cultural repertoires of emergent-literacy learners to help them gain metalinguistic awareness, cultural empowerment and identities as capable learners. Later, Naqvi, Thorne, Pfitscher, Nordstokke, and McKeough, (2013) showed that these dual-language reading practices have a positive effect on literacy achievement, motivation, and family involvement in children’s schooling.

Some other studies have also recognized the importance and utility of dual-language books as a bridge between the school and home. Sneddon (2008) argues for the positive impact on children's identity and confidence in a multicultural context, their achievement on literacy, and their parents’ involvement in the school. She concludes: “The outcomes of reading simultaneously in two languages appear to have been positive for all the children involved. They had in common a high level of motivation and pride in their achievements” (p. 79).

Although the use of books and specifically dual-language books is important in literacy engagement in children, it has been recognized that parents play a very important role in
developing language and literacy skills because they can enrich their children's experiences (Gregory & Williams, 2000; Kenner et al., 2007). Also, Bertelsen (2011) developed an action research project called "book baggie" that provided levelled books to parents to use at home to reinforce reading skills over a five-week period. The findings showed that children's reading growth increased, as well as the children's motivation and attitudes.

Finally, Hancock (2002) used a quasi-experimental design in which it was discovered that when children whose native language was Spanish were exposed to books written in Spanish, they scored significantly higher on a test of pre-literacy skills than did their native Spanish-speaking classmates who read books written in English. Hancock’s results of the study line up with findings of other studies that suggest successful development of pre-literacy skills in one language contributes to the development of pre-literacy skills in another language (Cummins, 1992).
Chapter 3
Methodology

This chapter attempts to provide insight and depth of understanding into the method I have chosen for this study, in conjunction with the background and conceptual assumptions previously discussed. A qualitative research inquiry based on action research best suits the discovery of how children at a very early age are engaged in literacy activities in a Spanish program. I will outline the justifications for the action research approach, describe the context, the participants, and the setting, as well as indicate the methods of data collection and analysis that I have adopted.

Action Research

This research followed a qualitative naturalistic approach because the aim was to examine the participants’ engagement in reading and literacy activities in 12 Spanish lessons for toddlers and parents. I created detailed descriptions of what was happening during the Spanish lessons by taking notes and listening to recorded audio.

Furthermore, I was guided by a reflective inquiry approach that combined elements of an action research approach. Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners in every job and walk of life to investigate and evaluate their work (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p. 7). Some of the questions that an action researcher asks include: What am I doing? Do I need to improve anything, and if so, how can I improve it?

This approach is appropriate since I am the teacher-researcher in the role of instructor and I reflected on my practice, how I teach, and how the class operated during the course of this study. I gathered information from the teaching/learning environment (Mills, 2011) – my class. This information was collected with a twofold purpose: (a) to collect data, and (b) improve my
own practice with the goal of improving students’ outcomes (toddlers’ literacy engagement or motivation towards literacy) and the lives of those involved (the parents in my class) (Mills, 2011, p. 5).

Action research involves gathering information about how a program works, how it is taught, and how well the students learn. This form of systematic inquiry is usually conducted by stakeholders such as principals, teachers, researchers, school counsellors, and others (Mills, 2011). As a teacher-researcher, I acted as one of the stakeholders, along with the parents. We both looked at the interactions of children in the classes and the activities with which they were involved.

In this study, I used the action research interacting spiral based on Kemmis and McTaggart’s (1988) work (see Figure 2), that was later reconceptualised by Stringer (1999) (see Figure 3).

![Action Research Interacting Spiral](image)

Figure 2. Action Research Interacting Spiral. Stringer (1999)
The cycles worked as follows: I carefully planned the Spanish lessons, implemented the lessons, monitored my practice while doing the reflections on observations, and listened to the audio recording to take notes. After that, I analysed relevant information from the notes and redirected on challenges or accomplishments that the class presented. I analysed what literacy activities engaged children the most, and finally I revised the plan and repeated it in the next session.

I conceived this process as a spiral cycle because I followed the ideas of a systematic plan proposed by McNiff (2013, p.38):

- identify a research issue (e.g., are children able to recognize words while the instructor shows a flashcard?);
- explain why the issue is important;
- monitor my own practice and gather data to show what the situation is like;
- take action;
- continue to gather data and generate evidence;
- state findings;
- test the validity, meaning by reflecting and preparing the activities I will confirm findings during my classes;
• explain the significance of the research;
• decide on potential future action…which may provide the basis of a new investigation …
and so on;

Setting and Participants

The study was carried out in a toddler’ program called Spanish Circle Time, currently running at a multilingual bookstore for children in midtown Toronto on Saturdays mornings at 11am. The classes are part of an ongoing language program for children in different languages; the participants were parents and children of the Spanish program. The parents and their children (see Table 1) were from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These parents have been attending a group class for a number of months and have expressed their willingness to participate in this study. In personal conversations, all the parents understand the importance of their children learning Spanish, since it is a language spoken by one of the parents or grandparents. For some other parents who do not necessarily have a Hispanic background, they believe that exposing their children to Spanish will be helpful in their children’s professional future. It is important to note that each participant’s name is protected by the use of pseudonyms. Each pseudonym was chosen after researching common names that resemble the original name and reminded me of the child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s Names (Pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Age at time of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viviana</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>28 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liliana</td>
<td>32 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>33 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Children’s Names and Ages
Instruments

This study used various data collection instruments in order to analyse the data and validate results in a consistent manner:

**Language lessons plans.** These were instruments to capture information related to the class that would be used for analysis and reflection. They are also a classroom artifact (Stringer, 1999), which were modified according to observations and reflections from previous lessons to promote engagement and elicit pre-literacy skills (see Appendix C).

**Audio recordings.** These provide a data source to capture events and interactions when the teacher is engaged in instruction. (Mills, 2011). I listened to the audio recordings and chose only relevant information for transcription and synthesis as emergent themes developed. There were episodes where children demonstrated engagement and interest in activities, or where a child was interacting with a parent or other children while I was asking questions about a literacy activity or a story reading.

**Field (observation) notes.** Using the audio captured in the class, field notes were used to keep a record of the situations happening in the class. These field notes were written up after the class had finished and I had the time to listen to the recordings at home. This was done to avoid data distortion or misinterpretations of the actions (McNiff, 2013) (see Appendix G).

**Survey.** One of the most common methods to collect attitudes, beliefs, opinions, motivations, and reactions is a questionnaire (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The survey was used to gather information about what the parents have observed (in class or at home) regarding their children learning Spanish. This survey helped to support data collected in the field notes and the interviews as a form of triangulation (see Appendix H).
Interviews. Interviews are a live method to gather data in the form of recorded audio of a conversation; for this study, I adopted an open-ended approach (McNiff, 2013). Interviews were carried out with parents to understand their perceptions and observations of their children’s early literacy experiences both during and outside the class. The questions were used to triangulate data that were collected in the survey and the field notes. Interview questions were given to parents one week before the interview so they could reflect on the topics and issues addressed in the questionnaire. Also, doing so gave them time to think about the answers beforehand (see Appendix F). The interview was done at the end of the 12 classes as a way to wrap up the program session.

Video recording. The Ethics Review Board at the University of Toronto approved videotaping of the class. Although parents expressed their willingness to do the video and share it for research purposes, videos could not be taken because of technical difficulties. These difficulties were (a) I did not manage to set up the camera to have a view of the whole class, (b) there was nobody who was willing to shoot videos, and (c) parents were a bit wary of videos.

Data Gathering and Data Analysis

The collection of data and its corresponding analysis (through Nvivo 10 software) was extracted from 12 Spanish lessons over two months (September and October 2014). Each lesson was structured in four stages that I call “play stations” (see Appendix C). While gathering the data, I was aware of using different strategies to promote engagement and elicit early literacy skills (Ford, 2010) to answer the research questions.

Strategies for literacy elicitation. In order to understand how children maintain their attention towards literacy activities or to encourage them to respond in either Spanish or English, I decided to use the following strategies:
a) Repetition: Exposing children to activities where multiple exposures to words are required to develop a rich understanding of their meaning and use; also, introducing interesting new words for children associated with immediate context (Bunce & Watkins, 1995; Tabors, 1997). This repetition is also done while singing songs with parental help.

b) Topics/Themes: Presenting vocabulary thematically helps children make associations between words and scaffolds students' learning (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Some of the themes used in this class were: colors, numbers, and shapes.

c) Reading: Adaptation of interactive Read-Alouds including explanations of targeted vocabulary can support word learning (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui & Stoolmiller, 2004), as can dramatic play organized around a carefully chosen theme (Barone & Xu, 2008; Tabors, 1997). For example, a theme matched a book. For the parts of the body theme, I chose the book called *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle.

d) Play: Most of the lessons used a play and an interactive game-based approach where the babies and parents are involved. Play can contribute to children's literacy growth and provide them with opportunities to have meaningful engagements (Christie, 1991). Parents were instructed to repeat and interact as much as possible with the children by practicing Spanish mini role-plays. For example:

   Child gives a shape object to parent and the parent responds: “*Es un triangulo* - it is a triangle. *Gracias* - Thank you” Also, parents can use a pretend microphone and ask child: “¿*Como te llamas? What is your name*?”
e) After each lesson, I described these role-plays and other literacy activities that I could observe, as well as reflections on my practice by writing them up on the field notes form (see Appendix C).

**Class materials.** Choosing the appropriate materials for this class was very important. Most of the materials used in the class were age appropriate and followed a specific theme (colors, numbers, shapes, animals, and actions). The materials used in the 12 lessons were the following:

- Board books and dual-language vocabulary books (Spanish-English) to read aloud. Although books were not used much in the lessons because of lack of time and distraction from students; a few books were used in order to motivate students to print;
- Flashcards: Picture cards of the different themes were used in order to convey meaning, whenever I sang a song or matched a word and a picture;
- Wooden Puzzles: These were used to match words and pictures, children were given a puzzle piece and ask to put it in the right space; for example children tried to place a shape or number as I was saying the name;
- Props: Games, puppets, musical instruments, toy microphones, ribbons, and other manipulatives: games make the classes more active. For example puppets served as role models when I used them as examples of the language children should say, musical instruments were used as an accompaniment when dancing or singing songs and other manipulatives such as ribbons, plush toys and foam blocks were used for children to hold while I was teaching the activities.

Finally, I analyzed the data using a content (Berg, 2009) and thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) of recurring themes. After reading and analysing the data set, I developed a set of categories or nodes using coding through the Nvivo 10 software (Charmaz, 2011; Friedman,
2012). These nodes were coded for emergent categories with the words, phrases, and concepts that recurred in the data as thematic piles. I started by dividing the codes into four main themes: (1) language learning, (2) language elicitation interactions, (3) role modeling, and (4) literacy activities or pedagogy in the classroom. Later, I refined these paying close attention to those activities that elicited language or encouraged children to respond either in English or Spanish. I also looked at teacher’s reflections, parents’ perceptions, and language learning practices in the classroom after further analysis of the data which showed the importance of gestures and sounds to catch students’ attention, the importance of movement and active activities due to children’s short attention span, the use of songs and music, repetition and consistency of topics and lessons.
Chapter 4

Results

The six main categories that emerged from the data analysis are described in this chapter.

Language Learning

One of the most important categories in the data analysis was how children learn the second language (Spanish). I noticed that after week 9, although children understood my questions in Spanish, they replied in English. For example in class number 10, Liliana put the toys away when I said in Spanish Liliana, “¿Guardamos los juguetes?” (Should we put the toys away?). She did not get any translation from her mother or additional prompts from me. She listened to me and immediately helped tidy up the room. It is worth mentioning that this routine has been consistent throughout all the classes, I pull out some toys for children to play with as a warm up activity and then, when finished, tidy up together. Another good example that demonstrates language learning is when Liliana demonstrates the ability to request toys or objects in Spanish. She was able to say "Para mi por favor, gracias Yecid" (For me please, thank you Yecid) after several weeks of repetition of the same pattern.

In another class, Liliana understood when I directed her to say hello to her mom and then to me: "Liliana dile hola a mamá, luego hola Yecid" (Liliana, say hello to mom, then say hello to Yecid). After this prompt, she greeted her mom and me by saying: "Hola, Mamá. hola Yecid." (Hello mom, hello Yecid). By class 9, she greeted everyone spontaneously, "Hola, todos" (Hello everyone). Drawing from the observation notes, children understand the questions in Spanish and then they respond in English. Something that happens very frequently with all the students is that whenever I ask a yes/no question, they nod to indicate yes or shake head to indicate no. This led me to conclude that although Spanish is not their first language, they understand what is being
asked. In the following excerpt from the field notes, this is evident: "¿Quieres el cuadrado?" (Do you want a square?), Viviana nods and says yes.

Additional evidence of language learning in this study is the interaction between me and the students while using material. For instance, when I show a flashcard and ask children to do the action (e.g. running, dancing, swimming, flying, or jumping), children and parents do the action. Then, I say "Paren" (Stop) in order to make them stop and show a different action flashcard. After several weeks of doing this routine, I noticed that children were able to say “Paren” (Stop) on their own. Viviana said "Paren" (Stop) with no prompting when we were doing the movement activity and this was very peculiar for her as she is very shy and does not say much in the class. In the same activity, Liliana was able to say "Correr" (running) when looking at the flashcard. She smacked the flashcards, said the word and did the action.

In another activity, Viviana also was able to say "Ojos" (Eyes) when we were singing a song about parts of the body. I sang the song, repeated it several times and pointed at different parts of my body. When I pointed at my eyes and pretended that I was blinking, Viviana said "Ojos" (Eyes) spontaneously. This spontaneity was also perceived in another activity when Viviana said “Caballo para mi” (Horse for me) for the first time in class number 4 when I showed a horse and asked her if she wanted to have the animal.

In another moment in the same class, Liliana points at her t-shirt and said "Butterfly" and I said "Oh, Mariposa", she replied by saying "Yeah, mariposa". This kind of language replication is very common and it was seen all through the 12 classes. Children said something in English, then I rephrased it in Spanish without expecting them to reply, and yet they repeated it in Spanish. On day 4, Liliana was singing the prepositions song (see Appendix D) on her own. I followed up and made a little pause and she continued the song.
The language learning examples described above can be verified through the interviews with parents. One of the mothers said: "She has learnt words, pronunciation and the ability to distinguish between English and Spanish [...] she uses words at home and when we play with Spanish words at home, she understands." Another mother said: "I know she [her daughter] has learned when she repeats words, especially unprompted [in class]."

Mariana's father recognizes the importance of early exposure to learning: "I can't say my child has learned anything, given her age (she was only 6-8 months old during the classes), but I am certain that as she becomes more verbal these classes will be perfect. All the activities are geared so well to immersion learning and language acquisition through play and song."

Carlos' father agreed with this when he said that this early exposure is already showing some results in his son: "When he wants me to pick him up he says *arriba* (up)." This is happening because in my class we always say "*arriba*" (up) when I am going to stand up for an activity, when I ask parents to pick up the child, or when they are walking up the stairs. This parent continued: "I also noticed that since we move to a two floor house, he says *arriba* [up] or *abajo* [down] when I ask him where his mom is if she is on a different floor."

Additional evidence of language learning during the class is demonstrated when we were singing a song about the shapes and I explained how squares, triangles, and rectangles have sides. I always sang "*El cuadrado tiene 4 lados*" (The square has 4 sides). After several classes, when I showed a circle puzzle piece, Jamie was able to say "*no tiene lados*" (it does not have sides) spontaneously.
Interactions Leading to Language Elicitation

A pattern of language learning by children was observed (see Figure 4) whereby they progressed from simple words or language acknowledgement to saying phrases or singing songs spontaneously. Below, I describe this sequence in detail.

**Nodding.** Children acknowledged understanding of the language by moving the head in recognition. For example, I asked a child/parent a yes/no question: "¿Quieres una manzana?" (Do you want an apple?), while showing a plastic apple. Usually, the child responds by nodding which suggests that the child has understood the question.

**Repeating.** Children repeat a word after the teacher and after several repetitions. For example, I say the word "Dile" (Say it) explicitly when I want the child to repeat.

Teacher: *Dile...manzana* (say it...apple)  
Child: *Manzana*  
(Observation note 5)

There were some cases in which child repeated the word "Dile" as well and also some parents explicitly asked their children to repeat the word I just said: "*Come on Liliana repeat...Manzana".*

**Prompting.** Teacher supports or helps children with the answer through prompting. It is a kind of scaffolding that I use in language learning activities. I usually ask a question and answer at the same time, I do not answer completely, but I initiate the answer and the child completes the answer.

Teacher: ¿*Quieres color rojo?* (Teacher pointing at a red ribbon)  
*ro......j* (re.....d)  
Child: *Rojo* (red)  
(Observation note 5)
Giving Choice. A teacher gives a choice to a child. I usually ask choice questions of children; interestingly, the second choice I give is the one that children choose to answer.

Teacher: ¿Quieres manzana o fresa? (Do you want apple or strawberry?)
Child: Fresa (strawberry)
(Observation note 5)

Asking Yes/No Questions. The teacher asks a question to elicit a yes or no answer. I ask questions to find out if the child understands the meaning of something (a shape, an animal, or a color). The question has to be accompanied by a gesture, a prop, or something to which the child can relate. In the following excerpt, I was showing a book and pretending it was a hat.

Teacher: ¿Es esto un sombrero? (is this a hat?)
Child: No
(Observation note 5)

Asking Open-Ended Questions. The teacher asks questions usually by using "what". I make sure to use this type of question when children already know some words, so I can confirm the child’s learning.

Teacher: ¿Que es esto? (What is this?) While opening arms and showing a plastic duck.

Child: Pato (duck)
(Observation note 10)

Talking Spontaneously. Children may say a word out of the blue, or sing a song for no reason. This is one of the final stages in learning. In this study, this spontaneity was evident in the following example. One day, Liliana sang the prepositions song while playing with the maracas, her parents and I looked at each other astonished. Also some parents expressed that this happens outside the class as well. For example, Viviana’s mom said: “I think my daughter quite enjoys it -- though she is quite shy and soft spoken during the class, being only two -- because
when we get home she's repeating the words and songs we learned in class." (Interview with parents)

**Teacher-initiated Strategies**

The following two strategies were used by the teacher to elicit language from children.

**Opposites.** During the analysis of the data, I noticed how children would learn vocabulary easier when I use opposites or words that are not related to the actual word being presented. For example, while I introduced a book to the children, I said: "Es una pizza...es un panuelo... es un sombrero" (It is a pizza...it is a tissue... it is a hat). At that point, the children laughed and said: "It is not, it is a book" and I said, "Si, es un libro" (yes, it is a book) and children repeated, "yes, libro". Another particular example is during the farm animals activity, I showed a plastic animal (e.g. a cow) and made the sound of another animal, the child immediately said that the sound does not belong to the animal. I would keep making noises of
other animals until the child finally says the correct word for the animal: "Cow" and I say "No es un cerdo, es una vaca, siiii" (it is not a pig, it is a cow, yesss). After several classes, children come to know this routine and demonstrate how they have learned some words as I make animal noises.

**Association.** Children have been learning through the association of the word and another object (flashcards, a toy or a physical movement). A very good example of this type of learning is when we play an animal game children recognize the animal toy when I show the flashcard. I give animal toys to all the children, then I show a flashcard and request an animal and the child who has the animal comes to me.

"¿Quién tiene el cerdo?" (who has the pig? chanted several times)

Child gives pig to me

(Audio notes 11)

Another example emerges when teaching the colors, I give each child a color ribbon and sing a song related to colors, then after that, I pull out a flashcard and ask for the color.

¿Dónde está el color verde? (Where is the green color? (chanted several times)

Child gives colored ribbon to me.

(Audio notes 11)

During this class, other children pointed at other objects in the class and said the color ("verde" while pointing to the carpet, or a t-shirt or an object of the same color of the flashcard). After several classes, the child comes to know this routine and quickly follows the activity and responds to my questions easily.
Other examples of these kinds of association or matching objects to vocabulary words are:

1. **Shape sorter games or wooden puzzles** where children have to say the word of the object and put it in the right place. I noticed that children find this game silly. For example, after week 4 Liliana tried to put the puzzle in the wrong order until I said where it should be placed. It seemed she is trying to teach or challenge me, as she likes to think that she is winning a game.

2. **Sound and word**, I gave a toy animal to each child and then I made an animal sound to see if the child with the toy animal responds and gives the animal to me:

   ¿Dónde está el cerdo? Oink, Oink (Where is the pig?)

   Child listens to the sounds and gives pig to teacher.

   (Audio notes 8)

3. **Part of the body and word**, I sang a song about parts of the body, and as everyone sings, everyone touches a part of the body. After, I asked children or parents to show one part of their bodies, either by showing on their own body or saying the word.

   Liliana ¿Dónde está la nariz? (Where is your nose?)

   Child listens and parent helps to show the nose.

   (Audio notes 8)

   In the same class, a sound matches a part of the body. For example, I touched my own face in order to show meaning of the word "cara" (face) in Spanish. Also I made sounds with the parts of the body to draw children’s attention to and motivate them to say a word (see table below based on observation notes).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of the body</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Pinch nose and making nasal sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>Pulling ears and make a noise: Wiggle, wiggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Blinking sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>Touching lips up and down and making sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Grumble sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Cha, cha, cha sound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Associating Words and Sounds

At the end of class 9, children already knew the word and which part of the body to point to according to the sound I made. Also, I pointed at different parts of the body and pronounced each word with an exaggerated gesture and sound, so the child tries to make the sound or pronounce the word.

(4) Activities that involve movement. I show a set of six flashcards with different actions (swimming, dancing, jumping, running, flying, and marching), I asked the children to smack the flashcard and say the word and then do the action. I noticed that this motivated children to say the words more often. For example, Viviana is not used to saying words in the class, but in this activity she smacks the card and says the word. Another example where children use their motor skills is when I use bubbles at the end of the class. I take the bubbles out, children get excited, I say “burbujas” (bubbles) several times, I sing a song to pop the bubbles with hands and feet, and then parents and children try to pop the bubbles with hands and feet as we all sing. By class 12, all parents and some children chant a song in Spanish without any prompting as they use their feet and hands to pop bubbles: "Burbujas con las manos, burbujas con los pies" (bubbles with the hands, bubbles with the feet). The following diagram (see Figure 5) shows the pattern
involved in children looking at an object or picture, then saying the word that represents the object or picture and then doing the action.

Figure 5. Language Learning through Association Pattern

Something to bear in mind is that although children are usually drawn by these sounds or movement activities, they also lose attention quickly. That is why it is important to maintain consistency and flow of sounds, noises, and movements in the classroom at all times.

(5) Exaggerated gestures and sounds. When I make exaggerated gestures to convey the meaning of words, as well as making silly voices and sounds, children’s attention is maintained during literacy activities in the class. Below, I will describe some examples of how exaggerated gestures and sounds are used in the class to draw children’s attention to understand their relationship with a word.

- Extending arms to mean something is big or using thumb and index finger to mean small.
  Teacher would say: "Wow, esta es una manzana muy grande" (This is a big apple) or “Esta es una fresa muy pequeña” (This is a small strawberry). This way, children learn the difference between the adjectives small and big.

- Onomatopoeias and other animal sounds are also important when conveying meaning or associating a word/object. When singing the animals song (En la granja de papá / Old MacDonald had a farm), I make the sounds of each animal and prompt students to make the sound and say the word: "El gato hace miau, miau, miau ¿Cómo hace el gato? (The
cat goes miau, miau, miau, how does the cat go?). I keep singing and making other animal sounds in order to keep a stream of sounds and language to avoid silence in the classroom. Some other onomatopoeias used in the class are when I make a "ding ding" sound whenever the children have a correct answer as when a child places the shape puzzle in the right place. I also make the sound of the train when transitioning from one activity to another because it signals the end of a set of “sitting down” activities into a movement activity. I make a "choo, choo train" sound several times and children and parents get up and go around the room making the same sound while clapping hands and saying: "Choo, choo, el tren, choo, choo el tren se va... se va de la estación" (Choo, choo, the train, choo, choo the train leaves... leaves the station). By the end of class, 12 parents know the routine and sing the song effortlessly.

- The uses of maracas in one of the songs is very important because children are always attentive to where the maracas sound is going. During a prepositions song I shake maracas to sing the song. Children follow with their own maracas by moving them up and down and the parents sing the song. By week 10, all parents and children know the song, say the prepositions, and follow with movements (see Appendix D for song).

- Clapping to the rhythm of songs is also important to keep the pace and reinforce words, pronunciation, or syllable discrimination and words in the sentence structure. I ask children’s names with a chant while clapping hands: "¿Cómo te llamas? (What is your name?) Each clap is a word /sound combination: ¿Cómo (clap) te (clap on lap) llamas (clap)?, (what is your name?). And the parents and children follow suit.

I also found that to make activities more interesting and appealing to children, I made silly voices and pretended to be something else. I pretended to be a teddy bear who is asking
questions to children in a high pitched voice; I also pretended to be a puzzle shape and talked to the children; I also pretended to be different characters when asking a name: "Me llamo Elmo, ¿Cómo te llamas?" (My name is Elmo. What is your name?) or sometimes I am other objects such as a pizza, a tissue paper, a hat, a book and pretend that I am speaking for them, these voices have a lower or higher pitched sound. I also change the rhythm or the pace of songs to make them more attractive to the children. The sillier the voices, the more engaged and interested children become in the activity. Once children are attracted to songs or story time while I use silly voices, it is easier for me to ask questions and elicit words from them.

It was interesting to note that tapping (knocking) on objects would attract children's attention, as well. I tapped on the puzzle board and made a silly voice to direct children’s attention to the shapes and then I practiced the pronunciation of the shapes. Also, I tap on the books and make silly voices as I open and close the book as if I were playing peek-a-boo. Children and parents said, "Abre el libro" (open the book) or “Pasa la pagina” (turn the page) as I tap on the book. After week 10, parents already know how to say “Abre el libro” when turning pages, they also encouraged their children to say this.

Parents also collaborated with me in making noises while marching (stomping feet), swimming (wiggling arms back and forth), flying (airplane, eagle or bird sounds), jumping, running and dancing, during a movement activity in which parents and children have to do an action and say the words. When conducting the dancing part of the class, I make the sounds of Latino music (salsa or merengue) and pretend I am dancing. Children and parents follow, singing and dancing. By the end of class 12, I asked children "¿Qué bailamos Salsa o Merengue?" (What should we dance Salsa or Merengue?) Parents and children always responded "Merengue".
Additionally, I make several sounds in order to specifically direct attention to a specific activity or when I want the children to focus on a specific word or pronunciation. In particular, some of the sounds are whistling or saying "tan tan tan" when presenting new materials such as a toy, flashcards, books, or any other objects. Also, when I want specific attention and children are wandering around in the classroom, I explicitly say “atención” (attention) with a loud voice. Some children would also say “atención” when they felt there was too much noise in the class (mothers chatting to each other or other children are crying).

Finally, there are a number of other activities that use association (word/object) to convey meaning. For example, I pretend to be hungry and make grumbling sounds. All children make these grumbling noises and sing the song about food (see Appendix D for song). Afterwards, I show a teddy bear and pretend he is also hungry, the grumbling sounds continue and the children have to give him food, making chewing noises as children and teddy eat. Children use fruit words in Spanish as they are feeding the teddy bear.

**Role Modeling**

In what follows, I will formulate a response to the research question: To what extent are the story reading and related activities effective in encouraging students from English home backgrounds to use Spanish in their responses to the story or questions posed by the instructor? The findings suggest that children would follow models in order to repeat a word or phrase. Children follow a model, then repeat a word or confirm pronunciation. In this section, I will describe the three different types of role models: parents/caregivers, teachers, and peers. I will explain them in this order because in the data analysis with Nvivo across the observations, audio notes, and parents’ interviews, parents or caregivers had 76 references in relation to role
modeling. Teacher as role model had 62 references, while peers (other children) as role models had 15 references.

Figure 6. Number of References for Language Role Modeling

Parents or caregivers as role models. The following excerpt of one of my observations in class shows a good example of the importance of parents for children and how they can be good role models: "Today, Viviana and mom are wearing the same polka dot shirt." A role model can be a parent or another adult in the class who is taking care of the child (e.g. Grandparent, babysitter or other relative). Any of these role models demonstrated support to children in repeating and practicing the language. The role of parents is very important. The more engaging, active, and responsive parents are when I ask questions, the faster their children respond or imitate answers. Parents are models for their children as their attitudes and behaviors are often imitated by their children (Arnberg, 1987)

Sometimes the parent may sing the song out loud and the child would hum or sing along. Other times, parents may prompt a child to repeat a word by saying it in English:
Can you say that? or Can you say "rojo"(red)? or simply "Say rojo"(red) or "Say it". Other times, parent insist their children should say phrases such as "por favor" (please), "gracias" (thank you), and "de nada" (you’re welcome) because they think that regardless the language, children need to learn manners. Conversely, there are times when a parent would insist on helping a child to repeat a word, but the child does not repeat, in spite of the parent answering for the child:

Teacher: Viviana, ¿Cómo estás? (how are you?)
Viviana: -No response-
Viviana's mom: Hola, muy bien (hello, very well)
Teacher addressing other child.
Teacher: Hola Carlos, ¿Cómo estás? (how are you?)
Carlos: -No response-
Carlos's dad: Muy bien!!!

(Audio notes 1)

Also, when a child fails to respond to a question posed by the teacher, the parent would take action and respond. For example, the teacher shows the maracas to a child and asks if she wants a green maraca or a red maraca. Since the child does not respond, the mother chooses for her child and says: "Verde" (green). After several classes of parents’ role modeling the answer, children learn the routines in the class and do not need much support from parents. They often do not need prompting and they are able answer to simple choice questions. Parents also have used translations as scaffolding in order to convey meaning and support their child to understand the questions posed by the teacher. Weeks later, the child is able to ask the same question to another child with the parents’ model:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher question</th>
<th>Parent translates to child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Quieres una manzana?</td>
<td>Do you want an apple?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué color quieres? rojo o azul</td>
<td>What Color do you want? rojo or azul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuántos años tienes tú?</td>
<td>How old are you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Parents’ Translations from English to Spanish

Behaviour modeling was also important in this study. A parent encourages a child to behave, listen, and repeat after the teacher. When the child does not follow the parent’s rules then some privileges are taken away, for example in one of the observation notes I read an excerpt about how a parent was asking a child to behave or they would take away the child’s teddy bear. When children feel that their privileges are being taken away, then they react and try to repeat in Spanish what their parent asks them to repeat. Also, parents tell children what to expect or not in class. A specific parent in class clearly states to her child to behave in class and not be disruptive if she wants to learn some Spanish. The mother asks her child not to smack on the flashcards, throw toys away, or have tantrums. The mother also says: "sit down and listen to el libro (the book)"

I noticed how parents use one of these behavior moments as an opportunity for language learning. For example, another mom says: "No Jamie, no grabbing Maracas" while the child was trying to take maracas from the teacher. When the teacher gives the maracas, Jamie’s mom asks her to respond, "Say gracias (thanks)”, the child then responds. Below is this exchange.

Mom: Jamie share…let Liliana do something together…

Child: share!!! (Jamie is sharing maracas with Liliana)

Liliana’s mom says: what do you say? Liliana says: gracias...

(Observation note class 3)
Parents are also involved in physical role modeling. This means they will demonstrate for children what actions accompany a word or a phrase. Three good examples of these are found in the study: First, a parent would sing a song about moving hands up, down, to the front, and behind. While using maracas, parents move their hands and children follow and sing the song (see Appendix D for song). While playing with bubbles, Viviana’s mother encourage her to pop bubbles with hands and feet as she chants and makes the movements. Viviana’s mother explicitly says the words: "con las manos, con los pies" (with hands, with feet). Second, in a movement activity, I showed an action flashcard (marching, jumping running, swimming, flying, or dancing), and parents do the action while prompting children to do the action with them. When a child does not understand, their parent takes them and helps to do the action. For example, the parent takes the child in the air and pretends they are flying. Other parents see this and do the same thing with their children.

In the same class, I make the sounds of a train and march around the classroom as if there was a train. Parents and children follow me while chanting "choo choo el tren, choo choo el tren se va a la estacion." (choo choo the train, choo choo the train goes to the station). Sometimes, the train goes "rapido" (fast) or "lento" (slow) to which parents respond by going fast or slow according to what I say, and then the children follow. Other times, I ask parents how they want the train to go and they ask their children: "Jamie el tren va rapido o lento?" (Julie, does the train goes fast or slow?).

In another activity, the teacher showed wooden shapes and a parent explained to her child how triangles have sides and circles do not have sides. The parent pointed at the sides of the triangle and touched the circle around the perimeter to demonstrate the difference. The child
noticed the difference and while showing a circle or an oval, responded spontaneously: "No tiene lados," (It does not have sides).

Teacher says: "El circulo no tiene lados..." (The circle does not have sides)

Mother says "El ovalo no tiene lados.....has not sides..." "circulos...no tiene lados..."

Child says: “No tiene lados”

(Observation note class 3)

During story reading time, parents frequently repeated words from the book as I read. For example, a mom repeated some words in Spanish from a book; she said "Sonreir" (smile), then showed a smile to the child and the whole class smiled. Several times parents repeated words after me as I read, then looked at the child and said the word: "Estrella is a star". Conversely, parents also supported the children by giving examples of the word or phrase that is being read. For example, while I was reading the book about colors, one of the parents pointed at objects of different colors that were appearing in the book:

Parent pointed at a yellow tile and says "amarillo"(yellow), then the child points at another object in the room and says "amarillo".

(Observation note class 4)

Additionally, parents ask questions in English and insert a word in Spanish to see if the child understands. In an activity about animals a parent asked: Can you tell me where "perro" (dog) is? The child would then find the dog in a set of flashcards and point to their mother with no response. Another parent said words or phrases bilingually: "Good job / Muy bien" or “give me five / dame cinco". One very interesting thing that I observed is that a parent usually makes child-like voices and statements to say the words in Spanish to see if the child would respond.
For example, a parent said, "Si soy una manzana verde," (Yes, I am a green apple). The child thought this is silly and repeated the word.

At the end of the class, we all sing the goodbye song. It was interesting to note that when all parents sang the song, some children hummed the song while others sang it. Yet when only one parent sang, not all the children would sing. Most of the time, I noticed that when parents are involved in repeating, singing, or chanting anything in Spanish, children would respond to teachers’ questions easily. Children looked to their parents to confirm answers. Most important is when both parents and teacher repeat and prompt the child to repeat as well. In several classes, both demonstrate vocabulary with a song or chanting:

Mom and teacher repeat together “...gato rojo...gato naranja....etc." (red cat…orange cat) Most children follow unison

(Observation note class 5).

Finally, the interviews show evidence of the importance of parents as role models. The following excerpts of parents’ responses demonstrate this importance:

"She [Maria] is exposed to Spanish mostly through her mother who speaks to her in Spanish as well as our Spanish-speaking nanny."

"She [Julie] uses words at home and when we [parents] play with Spanish words at one, she understands."

"He [Carlos] is a lot better at repeating the words I [parent] say in Spanish. When I lift him up and he wants me to put him down he says abajo (down)."

(Interview with parents)
Parents’ support and participation. Part of the role parents play as models is to support their children in any manner. Parents clearly expressed their support for the Spanish language program and the importance it represented for their children’s second language learning. Informal conversations with parents throughout the data collection time, as well as evidence from the interviews at the end of the class 12 demonstrated the importance of the Spanish class for them. Most of the parents were excited about the program and all agreed that having the class supported and encouraged them to maintain their heritage language. Other parents agreed that they come to the class because they want their children to learn Spanish for their future.

Parents also perceived that a bilingual approach towards learning the second language is the most appropriate for them at that time, since they can say the words or phrases in English and then rephrase them in Spanish. For example, one of the parents encouraged her daughter to say "Please and thank you, por favor y gracias." Other parents observed this and started asking their children to say this as well. Other parents explicitly asked their children to say words in Spanish. In the observation form I describe how a parent says "Say it", "Can you say it in Spanish?" or “Tell the teacher how to say it in Spanish” to her son.

Parents came to an agreement that exposing children to Spanish outside the class is important. For example, one of the parents listens to music in Spanish in the car and at home and he also watches Spanish TV programs such as "Dora the Explorer". Other parents have some friends or relatives who may speak some phrases in Spanish to their children; however, this is not common for all the parents since they also said that there are few resources, activities, or things to do that involve using Spanish outside the classroom. Jamie’s mother expressed the benefits of the class, specifically, the repetition and consistency of the language and the songs used:
[The repetition of] Animals all the time, [also] her aunt speaks Spanish with Jamie. She loves coming here [to class], and she sing the songs: Buenos días. It [the class] has been very good, she really likes it. (Interview with parents)

Also, in one of the classes, Viviana's grandmother mentioned that Viviana has counted the numbers 1-10 spontaneously several times at home.

Data extracted from the interviews demonstrated that some parents are concerned that their children are not learning. These parents say that their children do not say anything (in Spanish), they have the perception that learning means being vocal or repeating words or phrases right away. I told parents in the beginning of the classes that the learning process is a slow and long process and it is different for each child. One child may say something on the first day, whereas another child may not say anything in class for months, but say lots of things at home. This last one is the case of Viviana and Carlos who are shy in class, but whose parents have said that their children usually say words at home and sing songs. In order to educate the parents not to worry about this concern, I gave them a set of articles that talk about the importance and benefits of bilingualism at an early age.

One of the questions asked to parents during the interviews was about their feelings in the class and how their children feel about it. To this question, a parent answered, "I feel very comfortable being around other people who are teaching their kids Spanish. He [the child] really liked the class and had a good time singing and being around other kids. I think he felt happy during the class. I think he really likes it." This parent also recognised the importance of the activities in the class to help his son gain better pronunciation of the words since his home language is Spanish. He thinks the class has helped him improve his son's language abilities.
Another parent also agrees with the importance of the class for his daughter. Here is an excerpt of the interview:

I absolutely loved the Spanish classes. They were pedagogically perfect-- fun, engaging, personalized, the right blend of repetition and new activities. It was exciting for me to be around other parents who were trying to make sure their children had Spanish as a first or second language and it also helped me increase my own confidence in Spanish as well, both personally and in speaking Spanish to my daughter (her mother speaks Spanish as a first language and always speaks to our daughter in Spanish). (Interview with parents)

Generally, parents agree that their children have been happy in the class. One of the parents described his feelings about having his daughter in the class.

I feel very comfortable being around other people who are teaching their kids Spanish. He really liked the class and had a good time singing and being around other kids. I think he felt happy during the class. I think he really likes it. (Interview with parents)

Parents also recognized that although their children may not speak in class all the time or respond to my questions, they show excitement to go to class and they have learned much. Some of the parents have suggested continuing with the classes, but a change in the class theme should be considered. One of the mothers suggested that once the children know most of the songs and the vocabulary, I should use another topic. Other parents have expressed that it would be ideal if they can take their children to places where they can expose them to more “real language”. For example, Carlos’ parent said:
I think I should expose him to more Spanish activities. We usually speak to his parents in Mexico on Skype once a week but I think he needs structured activities to help him learn Spanish. He seems to understand almost everything I say in Spanish but I would like him to speak it more often. I also read some books in Spanish before going to sleep. I think he is starting to realize that I speak a different language to him but he seems to like it.

(Interview with parents)

**The teacher as a language role model.** In this study, the teacher is the second most important person in language learning for the child. Almost everything, the teacher does or says is done by the parents and subsequently by the children. I remember in one of the classes Liliana sat next to me grabbed a toy microphone and started singing the “hello” song to each of the children. This was something that I did on a regular basis at the beginning of the class. This made me think that I was also being a role model. Below, I will explain the ways I served as a language role model for children.

**Pronunciation role modeling.** One of the most important things that was found in this study was the key role of the teacher in teaching pronunciation. Basically, the teacher role models the outcome of the given vocabulary word, phrase or pronunciation feature in the class. For example, while I was teaching the vowels in Spanish, I pronounced the sounds of the letters to everyone in the class, then specifically asked parents to repeat and finally prompted children to do so as well. I would repeat this process several times.

Teacher showing letter A: (pronouncing) aaaaaaaaaaaa
Parents: (pronouncing) aaaaaaaaaaaaa
Children: (pronouncing) aaaaaaaaaaaaa or trying to imitate the sound.
The teacher sings a song after that and all in the group sing and repeat target pronunciation.
(Observation note 4)

Figure 7. Pronunciation Role Modeling Pattern

Another example is when I am teaching the pronunciation of names of shapes, I hold a child's hand and help him or her to touch the sides of a triangle while trying to encourage the child to pronounce: "Es un triangulo...TRIANGULO...TRI...AN...GU...LO" (It is a triangle.TRIANGLE..TRI...AN...GLE)

**Role modeling questions and answers.** I also modeled an answer to a question. I ask a question and then I answer it myself. The following excerpt shows an example of this method.

Teacher: Viviana ¿Cómo te llamas? (What is your name?)

Viviana: Moves head

Teacher pointing to himself: *Me llamo Vivi.* (My name is Vivi)

Viviana: Vivi

Teacher pointing at himself and repeating: *Me llamo Vivi.* (My name is Vivi)

Viviana: *Me llamo Vivi.* (My name is Vivi) (child has difficulty to say it)

Once a child is able to say his/her name easily, teacher prompts the child to ask the same question to parent.

Teacher: *Viviana, pregúntale a mama:* ¿Cómo te llamas? (Viviana, ask mom: what is your name?)
Viviana: Looks at mom

Teacher hands in a toy microphone: pregúntale a mamá: ¿Cómo te llamas? (Viviana, ask mom: what is your name?)

Teacher: ¿Como..(what's...) te... (your) llamas... (name)?

Viviana holding microphone and trying to ask mom: ....llamas?

Then teacher moves on to another child who is older and role models a more complete answer:

Teacher while looking at Jamie: Me llamo Jamie... y tengo 3 años (my name is Jamie and I am 3 years old)

Child: Me llamo Jamie... y...3 años. (my name is Julie ...and...3 years old)

(Observation note 5)

**Language role modeling.** Another very interesting finding emerged in the context of me trying to make children understand the concepts of para mi (for me) and para ella/ él (for her) when interacting in literacy activities that involve toys. I show a toy to a child and ask: ¿Quieres la vaca? (Do you want the cow?). The child nods and reaches for the toy, but the teacher will not give the toy until the child says the sentence: Yo quiero una vaca para mi por favor (I want a cow for me please). Since children frequently cannot say all the words in a sentence, I will break the sentence into chunks of language for children to repeat: “Yo quiero... (I want) una vaca...(a cow) para mi (for me)...por favor (please)”. While saying "para mi por favor" (for me please), I hold the child’s hand and point at him/her to make sure that the child understands that the toy is for him/her and not the teacher. After class number nine, three of the five children have already said the whole sentence when requesting a toy or an object: “Yo quiero (object name) para mi
In a similar situation, I give maracas to a child and say "para mi and for mamá", then
the parent repeats in Spanish "para mamá" and the child repeats "para mamá".

**Extension props as modeling.** On occasion, I would use a teddy bear as an extension of
my own role modeling. When the teddy says "hola" (hello) to children, the children reply to him;
the teacher asks teddy bear what his name is and teddy answers; and teddy asks questions to the
children and the child responds to teddy. Also, in one activity to teach food items, I pretend to be
the teddy bear. I pretend he is hungry and all the children have to give him food, but in order for
teddy to receive the food the children have to say the word in Spanish.

Teacher (as a teddy bear): "Tengo hambre (I am hungry) I need food."

Teacher gives a plastic apple to child and prompts her to say: "Manzana, para
Teddy."

Child gets the plastic food and gives it to Teddy and says: "Manzana"

(Observation notes class 5)

**Modeling teaching behaviours.** One interesting anecdote is how children imitate things
that I do in the classroom. For example, Liliana has imitated me several times. When I wanted to
explain that I or the teddy bear was hungry and put food under my shirt, then Liliana wanted to
do the same and prompted other children to do so. Liliana put the food under her shirt and said
"Look, I am hungry", I said, "tengo hambre" and the other children try to imitate behaviour and
repeat the language. On another occasion, I was hiding a little plastic pet animal in my hand and
showing it only to some children, when suddenly Liliana went to the toy bag, got a toy and did
the same thing by cupping the animal in her hand and showing to everyone while saying: "What
is this, guys?", then I said "¿Qué es esto, chicos?" and she says “Sí...esto” (yes…this)
During classes, I demonstrated how to do tasks. For example, I helped a child to point at a flashcard by grabbing his or her hand to touch the flashcard and say the word. After several classes, children understood the routine and learned how to point at the flashcard and say the word. Another time, I taught children how to do and say a "high five" and "low five" by saying "dame 5" and holding the child hands and clapping his own hand to demonstrate how to give a high five in Spanish. After several weeks children already knew how to do it and how to say it: "Dame...CINCO" said Carlos at the end of class.

During some story readings, I physically demonstrated some of the actions portrayed in a book. In this class, parents and children do the same action and repeat the word. While reading the book, From Head to Toe by Eric Carle, children practiced some actions and parts of the body. Below is an excerpt that shows evidence of this interaction. Figure 8 also shows the pattern that is followed.

Teacher pounding on chest: *Me golpeo el pecho*

Children doing the action: *Pecho* (chest)

Teacher: *Arqueo la espalda...arque* (I bend my back)

Parents and children chant: *Arqueo* (bend)

Teacher: *la espalda* (the back)

Parents and children chant: *La espalda* (the back)

(Observation notes 4)
Rephrasing. Evidence from the data collected showed that children tend to understand my questions, but answer in English. When this happens, I take the children’s answers and rephrase them in Spanish and see if the child repeats my statement. The following sequence exemplifies this:

Teacher: Lili ¿Quieres el triángulo? (Do you want the triangle?)
Lili nodding: Yes, yes, I want the triangle
Teacher: Yo quiero... el triángulo. (I want the triangle)
Lili: Yo quiero... el triangulo. (I want the triangle)

(Audio notes 1)

After rephrasing sentences, I always prompt children to say complete sentences rather than just a word, especially for the older children.

Teacher: Yo quiero el triángulo por favor. (I want the triangle, please)
Lili: Yo quiero el triángulo por favor. (I want the triangle, please)

(Audio notes 1)

Also, when doing an action activity, I would ask "Vamos a correr rapido o lento" (Should we run fast or slow). If the child answers "lento" (slow), then I would encourage the child to say the complete sentence: "Vamos a correr lento" (We're going to run slow).
Spontaneously, children would say words in English while in an activity, for example Liliana says "It's a chicken" when playing with various toys in the classroom, then I would rephrase it, "Si es una gallina" (Yes, it is a hen) and then Liliana repeats: "Si, gallina" (Yes, a hen). I noticed that after several classes, children kept saying words in English and expected me to say them in Spanish. In other words, it was like the children were trying to say, "How do you say this in Spanish?" Another example from the observation notes was while playing with ribbons of different colors, Liliana's favorite color is blue and she said: "My favorite" and then I said "Mi favorito." She repeated, "Mi favorito".

It was evident that the teacher became an important person in children’s’ language learning, while helping them with pronunciation, answering questions, translating from English to Spanish, or even demonstrating how to behave in class. Interviews with the parents support this claim. When I asked them whether they could recall any episodes in which child uses Spanish in the class, one of the parents answered: "She [Liliana] repeated after you, the instructor, and other children, the various verbs when we were on our feet, moving through swimming, jumping, etc."

**Peers as role models.** Analysis of the data showed that parents and teachers are the primary role models in the language learning experiences; however, other children in the class seem to be equally important as role models. I have noticed how a child follows what another child does whether it is a bad behaviour or pronouncing a word or sentence. As I saw this happening in the class, I started asking questions or prompted answers to the oldest child in the class and then asked another child. I showed a flashcard depicting an action (e.g., swimming), the older child hit the card and says "nadar" (swimming), we would do the action. Then I asked the other less proficient or younger child and he or she would look at the other child and respond
"nadare" (swimming). Figure 9 depicts how I ask questions to children in a clockwise direction (child 1 is the most proficient in the class and child 4 is the youngest). Child 2 sees what child 1 says and repeats it so that by the time I ask the same question to child 4, he or she has seen three models of answers.

![Figure 9. Peer to Peer Learning](image)

Children as role models can give examples or correct others about pronunciation or routines in the class. For example, Liliana was trying to put a shape puzzle piece in the right space on the puzzle board, when Jamie came and said "aqui" (here) while pointing to where the shape puzzle piece should be put.

Viviana (who was very shy) always follows behavior and language pronunciation after Jamie or Liliana smacks a flashcards and says an action word. In one of the classes, I showed an action flashcard to Liliana and said: "Mira Liliana, bailar" (Look, Liliana dancing), Liliana smacks the cards, said, "bailar" (dancing) and did the action; next I showed the flashcard to Viviana and immediately she smacked the card and says "bailar" (dancing). If this happened the other way around, Viviana would not say anything. In order to confirm this, another day I
showed another flashcard (e.g., jumping) to Viviana first and said "Mira Viviana, saltar" (Look Viviana, jumping). Viviana did not say anything until I showed the flashcard to Jamie first and then Viviana was able to say the word. Marie, who was the youngest in the group, looked at the others and what they are doing and tried to imitate them by humming songs and mumbling words.

Finally, interviews with the parents also confirmed the importance of their children being role models. One of the parents said the following:

Being at the age she is, I find she learns a lot from the other children and will often repeat words after them (she has especially caught on to the names of animals).

(Interview with parents)

**Active Engagement through Multimodalities**

In this section, I will describe the class structure and the main aspects related to literacy activities. After analysing the data and reviewing the main codes on Nvivo 10, several themes emerged that I describe below: How motivation influences language learning, the importance of gestures, sounds, music and movement in the class methodology, and the use of books as an initial print motivation to literacy.

First of all, I would like to mention that all the classes were taught around songs, chants, rhymes, and central themes. Presenting vocabulary thematically helps children make associations between words and scaffolds students' learning (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Within these themes, there is a lot of repetition of the songs and activities throughout the 12 observations in the classes. The main concepts related to literacy were: Spanish vowels sounds, numbers, farm animals, shapes, fruits, colors, parts of the body, other Spanish classic rhymes for the fingers,
and traditional English rhymes or songs translated into Spanish such as “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” and “Itsy Bitsy Spider.”

They feel that something is interesting and, therefore, they pay more attention when these features are included. I will give three specific descriptions of how this interest was evident in the classes.

**Gestures and sounds.** Sounds and noises call children's attention and focus them on activities. Sounds of maracas, clapping hands, whistling, saying words "Atención" (attention) or "mira" (look) several times, raising voices, and making silly voices through pretending to be a toy or a different character. Using onomatopoeia during the activities attracts the children’s attention. I used different sounds like animal sounds, transportation sounds, others sounds such as “tan tan ran tan tan” or “choo choo el tren”, and a “ding ding”. Tapping with my hands on a wooden puzzle, my head, or a book, and making noises with a toy microphone were very useful to keep children’s attention since they thought those sounds were silly. In personal conversations, the parents expressed how their children were happy and interested in the activities, especially when I acted silly and made lots of noises.

**Music, songs, and movement.** Data showed that singing songs, chanting rhymes, and being involved in music during literacy activities in the class are key factors in engaging and maintaining students’ interest in language learning. In the observations, I noticed how children demonstrated more attention, showed more interest in the activities, and were eager to pronounce some words. All the classes were developed around songs and specific themes that were repeated every class. New songs appeared once the parents and children knew most of the songs. Table 4 shows a list of the songs and themes used in the class:
Table 4. List of Songs and Themes Used in Class

During classes, I would prompt parents to help and support the songs by saying: "Ok, vamos a cantar 1,2,3 (Let's sing 1,2,3)." The parents would look at the lyrics on a poster I displayed on the wall and then they sang along. Younger children were more vocal (grunting) and older children would hum or sing the song with the whole class. Songs are accompanied by making sounds of animals or objects (such as the train), clapping hands to the rhythm of the song. Also exaggerated body movements were used to encouraged parents and children to be more physical (e.g., extending arms up to say: "arriba, arriba (up, up)" or going extra slow to say "lento (slow)"). I used this moment as an opportunity to elicit language from the children.
For example, I would say: "¿Vamos lento o rápido? (Should we go slow or fast)" or "Maracas arriba o abajo (Shakers up or down)," and the children would have to choose an answer.

Interestingly, the "hello" and "goodbye” song acknowledges children’s names by making the class more personal and setting the mood for a more welcoming classroom. I would sing the hello song to each child, parent, caregiver, and even a baby in its mother’s belly. During the "goodbye” song activity, children noticed that class is over and some cried because it seemed they were having fun and they did not want to leave class. I also noticed that if I sang goodbye to children, they would stop crying and join the group singing as well. At the end of class 12, children already knew how to say hello and goodbye in Spanish, so the children would say it to other children, other parents, and the teacher. In the interviews and survey, parents said that their children say "Hola" (Hello) and "Adios" (Bye) spontaneously sometimes during the week at home or to passersby.

Choral singing and repetition of songs demonstrated high interest in children following up. When parents all sing together the songs or the rhymes, all children would follow along, while in contrast, when parents do not sing, the children's attention would be minimal and they would not engage in activities. This usually happens when parents are getting to know each other and become friendlier, they start talking and chatting with one another, lose focus, and forget that singing is important. When this happens, I call their attention by saying: "Ok papás y mamás vamos a cantar 1,2,3 (Ok dads and moms, let's sing 1,2,3) and then parents re-engage and become more active in the class.

Usually, I use props while singing songs, so children have a referent of what they are singing. For example during the "La granja de papa" song (Old McDonald had a farm) I use plastic animals in order to convey meaning while singing. Figure 10 displays how I show an
animal (e.g., a duck), pronounce its name, and chant the word several times. Then I give the animal to a child eliciting language and sing a song along with parents.

![Show object, Pronounce word, Sing diagram]

Figure 10. Pattern for Eliciting Language through Songs

Also in table 5, I present a list of the props I use during the songs. I made sure that most of the props or materials are suitable and safe for children ages 0 to 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Props</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Las vocales (The vowels)</td>
<td>Plastic letters (vowels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los conejitos (Little Bunnies)</td>
<td>10 stuffed bunnies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La granja de papá (Old McDonald)</td>
<td>Plastic farm animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las figuras (The Shapes)</td>
<td>Wooden puzzle board and pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mí me gusta comer (I like to Eat)</td>
<td>Plastic fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los colores (The Colors)</td>
<td>Color ribbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los dedos (The Fingers)</td>
<td>No props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi lindo cuerpo (My Pretty Body)</td>
<td>No props or teddy bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los pollitos (The Chicks)</td>
<td>Game cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estrellita (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)</td>
<td>Laminated Cardstock stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La araña pequeña (Itsy, Bitsy Spider)</td>
<td>Laminated flashcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debajo de un botón (Under a Button)</td>
<td>Laminated flashcards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. List of Songs and Props
One interesting strategy that I use to elicit language from parents and children is to leave blanks while singing songs. I sing a song, then leave a blank, and a parent would fill in the blank with the missing word or phrase and I resume singing. I do this every class; however, only the most “advanced children” fill in the blanks. The following is an example of this routine while teaching a song about colors.

"Rojo, amarillo, azul y verde.
Negro, morado y ________________ (parent singing "anaranjado").
Blanco, marrón y _________________ (parent singing "rosado").
y al final el ________________(parent singing "gris")."

(Audio note 8)

Also, parents expressed statements about the importance of songs in the process of language learning with their children and how much they like being involved with songs and rhymes either in class or at home. One parent said that she plays YouTube videos because her native language is not Spanish and another parent said that the reason why her daughter has learned so much Spanish was because of singing songs in the class.

Additionally, at the end of class 12, children and parents already knew most of the songs without looking at the posters on the board. When I say that children learn the song, I mean that they hum the song, make noises imitating the song or show a sign that they are following their parents or me. Also, in the interviews with parents one of them said the following: “Just wanted to let you know that [...] this is unbelievable: the other night I heard her [Viviana] singing herself to sleep and she sang *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* in Spanish from start to finish. She also made it half way through the *Itsy Bitsy Spider* song. So great!” Also, some parents have said that the
consistency of singing the same songs over a period of time and the repetition of words and lyrics have helped them and their children to keep the songs in their minds.

In the class observations, the importance of movement during literacy activities in the class was also noticed. There was a lot of movement involved, as parents and children needed to be engaged in actions related to a specific vocabulary word, verb, or phrase. Usually movements are accompanied by the songs or chanting of phrases. For example, I wave hands when singing a hello or goodbye song, put hands on the forehead as if looking for something when chanting the phrase: ¿Dónde está? ¿Dónde está? (Where is it?) When looking for a toy or an object in the classroom or asking the question ¿Dónde está el color rojo? (Where is the red color?). Children then would show a red ribbon or point to something that is red in the classroom.

Another activity that involves movement is when I sing the parts of the body song. I prompt parents to touch some of the children's body parts. I sing the song, then I stop and say one part of the body, parents touch or move one part of their children’s body and sing. In one of the audio notes, I illustrate this by saying: “one parent gently moves child's ears, nose, hands and legs when prompted by me”.

Also during bubble time at the end of the class, I blow bubbles, sing a song about the bubbles and children and parents are encouraged to sing the song and use hands and feet to pop the bubbles. The parents say: "Con las manos, con los pies" (With hands, with feet) as they show children how to pop the bubbles with their hands and feet. In a very interesting observation, I noticed how a child would stomp on bubbles on the floor while saying: “Pies, pies, pies” (feet).

In the interviews, parents have also recognized how physical movement encourages children to enjoy activities and say words in Spanish, one particular parent stated: “When I lift him [Carlos] up and he wants me to put him down he says abajo (down).” Also, in the
observation comments from my notes, I wrote that keeping children moving helps to avoid
tiredness and boredom in the class since children have a low attention span; the classes need to
be moving at all times. The lesson plans clearly describe these moments in the class. There are
times when activities are sitting down at the carpet and then activities that involves some kind of
physical movement are done while standing up and going around the classroom.

**Books.** During the class, there was a special section called story reading. Unfortunately,
in this study, I only had the chance to do three story readings during the 12 sessions. Although I
recognized the importance of reading at a younger age, reading in this class depended on the
dynamics and mood of the class.

It is worth mentioning that the book routine worked better at the beginning of the class.
Children were feeling tired and bored towards the end of the class whereas in the beginning of
the class children seemed to be more attentive and focused on the book reading activity. At this
time, it was easier to elicit more language from children, for example during the colors book
reading, I asked a child about a color "¿Dónde está rojo?" (Where is red?). A parent would point
at something red and help the child to pronounce "rojo". Also, in this way the book reading is
related to a real object, a color that is in the room or a piece of clothing of that color.

The observation notes and notes from the audio demonstrated how books and physical
interaction were very important as part of the reading activities and very motivational in the
class. I carefully chose stories that involve some kind of movement. For instance I chose the
book *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle because the story involves moving parts of the body. As I
was reading the story, I was doing the actions or movements and prompted parents to say the
phrases and do the actions. I also included some sounds and noises along with the movements.
The table below shows a good example of how phrases from the book are related to actions I did in class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases from book</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soy un pingüino y giro mi cabeza</td>
<td>Parents and children turn their heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a penguin and I turn my head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy una jirafa y doblo mi cuello</td>
<td>Parents and children bend their necks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a giraffe and I bend my neck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un búfalo y alzo mis hombros</td>
<td>Parents and children move their shoulders up and down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a buffalo and I raise my shoulders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un mono y nuevo mis brazos</td>
<td>Parents and children wave their arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a monkey and I wave my arms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy una foca y aplaudo</td>
<td>Parents and children clap hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a seal and I clap my hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un gorila y golpeo mi pecho</td>
<td>Parents and children thump their chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a gorilla and I thump my chest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un gato y arqueo mi espalda</td>
<td>Parents and children arch their backs up and down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a cat and I arch my back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un cocodrilo y meneo mis caderas</td>
<td>Parents and children wiggle their hips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a crocodile and I wiggle my hips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un camello y doblo mis rodillas</td>
<td>Parents and children bend their knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a camel and I bend my knees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy un burro y pateo con las piernas</td>
<td>Parents and children kick their legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a donkey and I kick my legs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soy un elefante y pataleo  
I am an elephant and I stomp my feet

Yo soy yo y muevo mi dedo gordo  
I am I and I wiggle my toe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents and children stomp their feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and children pretend moving toes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Using Books for Modeling Actions

Before story time, I prepared the class by following Torelly's (n.d.) suggestions for choosing books for babies and toddlers. I chose books that feature brightly colored pictures of simple objects, simple texts, and good rhythms, and that were durable and made out of heavy cardboard, vinyl or washable cloth. Also, the books have to deal with stories in which I could do movement activities. During the classes, I followed a specific book routine: first, I prepared children and parents for the reading time by saying "Siéntense, siéntense, por favor si, si" (Sit down, sit down, please, yes, yes) at the same time as I am tapped on the floor so they understood what to do. After several weeks parents and children knew the routine and said "Siéntense" (sit down) spontaneously.

In the next part of the reading routine, I showed the book really quickly to everyone by making different sounds and noises and I prompted parents and children to say the word "libro" (book). Since then, every time I showed the book they said the word immediately. I also pretended that the book pages are stuck and I need the children's help to open the book. I prompted children and parents to say "Abre" (open) in order to open the book. Once everyone has said this, I opened the book and started reading. As I read the book, I might ask questions related to the story or the theme in the book. For example, they could be questions about shapes, colors, or numbers and ask parents to respond and support their child in responding: "¿Qué color
es la manzana? (What color is the apple?), ¿De qué forma es la ventana? (What shape is the window?), and ¿Cuántos animales hay? (How many animals are there?).

Finally, parents have also confirmed the importance of involving children with books and how highly motivated they are when the parent is reading to them. When asked about the things they do to expose children to Spanish one of the parents said, "I also read some books in Spanish before going to sleep. I think he is starting to realize that I speak a different language to him, but he seems to like it; [also] I read to him in Spanish before going to bed almost every day."

Through observations in the class it was evident that this specific child already knew the Spanish word for book –libro - whereas the others learned the word in the class.

**Repetition and Consistency of Activities**

During the data analysis, there were many codes or references to consistency and repetition (a total of 65 references). The observations and audio notes demonstrated that children would show more language advancement (recognition of words by singing songs and answering simple questions) by repetition of the activities and consistency within these activities.

Repetition of lyrics, rhythms, tunes, and sounds maintain the students’ interest in the activities. For example, I noticed that songs, chants, or rhymes should be repeated at least three times in order to elicit any language from children. This is what I call the "magic of three". I ask a question or model an answer by chanting it three times: ¿Dónde está? ¿Dónde está? ¿Dónde está? La nariz, la nariz, la nariz (Where is it? Where is it? Where is it? The nose, the nose, the nose), until the child understands that I am looking for the nose and that they have to point to their nose. Other examples of this occur by saying hello or good bye to children three times, or saying goodbye to objects three times to mark the end of an activity: "Adios, animales; adios,
animales; adios, animales." (Goodbye animals). This repetition of the statement makes children understand that the animals activity is finished and we need to move to the next one.

Repeating chants is also very consistent through the classes. I realized that I repeated words and invented my own chants in order to keep a constant stream of language. For instance, during a fruit activity, I showed a plastic fruit and then chant its name several times before giving it to the child or the parent. Other similar examples have been observed with the shapes, animals, colored ribbons, and bunnies (for counting). After several weeks of chanting the same words over and over, children spontaneously started saying words or would chant words on their own.

Repetition of activities and songs every class for a period of the 12 weeks were also observed. I did not introduce a new song or activity until making sure that children and parents have learned most of the songs or they felt that the activity was getting monotonous. During the interviews with the parents, they expressed that their children have already been showing progress in their language learning and it is because of that consistency. During an interview, a parent said “…he [parent's child] would repeat the name of the animal he got for the rest of the day [also] I've noticed he uses some words from the class like arriba, abajo, some colors, volar, correr and others." Another parent recognized that repetition is beneficial: "The week to week repetition is very helpful [...] because when we get home she's repeating the words and songs we learned in class."

Parents' comments, my audio notes, and observations are consistent in showing that repetition and regularity are key factors in reinforcing vocabulary and pronunciation. For example, while I was teaching the pronunciation of the vowels, I repeated several times the sounds of each vowel " i, i, i, i" (sound of letter i in Spanish) by showing the positioning of my mouth. Then parents repeated and encouraged the child to repeat, and after class 9, some children
tried to pronounce the vowels. Additionally, in another activity in the class I say "A ver, a ver, a ver... a ver que tengo aquí" (Let's see, let's see, let's see what I have here) and then a child spontaneously repeated the same pattern. In another observation, I describe how I use this pattern: “¿Dónde está? ¿Dónde está? ¿Dónde está? El perro, el perro (where is, where is, where is the dog?)” in order to ask where the dog is, and the children kept repeating spontaneously the same questions.

Finally, consistency was also referred to in terms of participation in the class and parents' attendance at class. This was very important for language learning. In some of my observation notes I stated that children who have been attending the program the most have shown more advancement in their vocabulary, repetition, and singing songs, while others who have attended less frequently are hesitant to repeat or say words and they seemed shy. For example, the phrase "Yo quiero (an object) para mí por favor" was introduced since the very beginning of all the classes and Liliana (who has been attending all the classes) was able to say the sentence completely and spontaneously as of class 12, whereas Viviana was not able to repeat or say the phrase at all by week 12 because she and her parents attended only 6 classes of the 12 (i.e., inconsistently).
Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which instructional activities focused on language and literacy (e.g., story reading) were effective in maintaining interest and engagement in a Spanish class with parents and toddlers. The research uncovered several factors during the twelve classes of data collection derived from observations of the children, reflections on my practice, and dialogues with parents. In this chapter, I will discuss these emerging categories and relate them to Cummins’ (2011) Literacy Engagement framework and other language and literacy practices that occurred in the class. Finally, I will describe how the strategies I used were helpful to elicit language during story reading.

The main findings of this study are as follows: (a) children and parents enjoyed the activities and most children showed evidence of active engagement even when Spanish was not a language spoken at home; (b) children who attended all or most of the sessions showed more evidence of learning and engagement than those who attended fewer sessions; (c) parents who attended most of the sessions showed strong engagement and in interviews talked about how they continued some of the activities/reading at home, thereby reinforcing children's interest and language learning.

Based on these findings, I propose an initial simple model for language teaching (additional language, second language, heritage language or a foreign language) to children ages 0-3. The following elements should be taken into account in any classroom in preschools, daycares, community centres, home schooling, private tutoring, or other setting where language is taught at an early age (0-3 years old). A class should include (1) songs, music and rhymes that are appropriate and appealing to children; (2) activities that include movement for both parents
and children; (3) the instructor should present activities by exaggerating gestures and sounds so children and parents understand the language; and, (4) the activities in the class should be consistent and repetitive in every class until children learn a topic, then move on to another topic.

Under these instructional conditions that foster high motivation among the children, parents will also be motivated to attend classes frequently which will reinforce the learning process through interactions at home. Parents can also encourage children to read by borrowing books at the library, buying books, or attending parent-child literacy programs that strongly support parent involvement in child language development. Doyle and Zhang (2011) for example, demonstrated that parents seemed very motivated to attend a program in language literacy for their children where parents usually sing songs and read books to children. Parents frequently commented on rapid changes in their approaches to literacy interactions with their children that resulted in more enjoyable experiences for them and their children.

Teacher’s Reflections

Following Pine (2009) I believe that the act of reflection within an action research paradigm is a cyclical process in which some situations in the classroom can change and improve and others that no longer serve or deserve a better focus can be eliminated. The study has involved a complete cycle of reflection on my own practice with me trying to improve these practices for the benefit of the children's language learning. Below, I will explain some specific reflections that helped me to gain better understanding of myself, my class, and my practice in relation to the children and parents. I analysed how my practice is targeted to elicit more language from children. This journey has shown a transformation from being a very passive and less conscious teacher to becoming a more aware and committed teacher who is always seeking to improve his practice.
Active engagement through chanting, songs and rhymes. First of all, I noticed that all my classes were most of the time in the target language (100% Spanish). Most of the activities were chanting phrases or inventing songs with every object or toy. For example, I took a book, showed it to parents and children, then I started to chant the name several times, "Libro, libro, libro, libro" (book), then the parents would follow and some children as well. The positive thing about having a class in which I chant every single word is that children and parents end up chanting in class and sometimes outside the class. In support of this approach, Veldhuis (1984) and Bergenson & Trehub (1999) have explored the importance of singing songs and chanting at a very early age. I also realized that "real" language in real life is not chanted. Although most of the language in class is chanted, I also tried to use language more naturally, so it would reflect the outside reality.

Also, while reading the observation notes, I noticed that the songs I was using were not eliciting much language from children. I wondered why this was happening. One day I realized the children sing songs in Spanish where the rhythm and tune are similar to traditional English songs. Then, I decided to translate two traditional English nursery songs from English to Spanish and adapt the rhythm. The songs were easier for children and parents to learn and sing. Other songs that are originally from the Spanish culture were also used because it was not possible to accommodate sounds, rhythm, and pace for similar words from English to Spanish. Since that moment, I used more songs that sound like the English version of the songs. In the following table, I present a list of the songs I used in my classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songs in English Translated into Spanish</th>
<th>Invented and Original Spanish songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old MacDonald had a farm / En la granja de papa</td>
<td>Las vocales (the vowels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itsy Bitsy Spider / La araña pequeña</td>
<td>Los números (the numbers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinkle Twinkle little / Estrellita</td>
<td>Las figuras (the shapes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Las frutas (the fruits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los colores (the colors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los dedos (the fingers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debajo de un botón (under a button)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los pollitos (the little chicks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mi lindo cuerpo (my beautiful body)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Titles of Songs Used in the classroom

**Older children as a resource.** Findings demonstrated that children can serve as models for other children. One child may look at the other and imitate what he or she has said. After several classes, I noticed that I asked questions or gave turns to the oldest or most proficient child in the class, then I would use this child as role model. After my reflection on class number 2, I started using this pattern in the literacy activities and by class number 12, the younger or less proficient children were responding equally with the other children. For example, during the actions activity, children have to hit flashcards, say a word, and do the action (e.g., jumping). By the end of the data collection, all children would hit the flashcards, say the word, and perform the
Older children noticed that I use them as an example for others. Liliana used to sit by me because she wanted to be “my helper” and be a model for the rest of the class.

**Parents as a resource.** Tabors (1997) suggested that languages are learned in social and interactive settings and that children learn from adults. Likewise, parents are role models for children by scaffolding their answers to questions, making them to repeat utterances, and translating questions. It was not until I read the audio and observation notes that I realized the importance of parents. I noticed that they could help me to elicit language from their children. On the first day of classes, I would tell the parents the importance of repeating and doing everything I do. For weeks 3 and 4 of the data collection, parents did not chant, sing or try to do what I was doing. Their children would not follow my instructions and I kept teaching my classes without noticing this.

One day, I had to be very drastic and talk to parents and re-engage them into receiving more support from them. After this day, parents noticed that when they participated more, their children participated more. Since that moment, the class became been more active, energetic and lively and even more when other relatives attended the class. One of the parents brought her grandparents to the class, and they supported the class by singing and doing activities in the class. All parents noticed the class energy was boosted. At the end of the 12 classes, I encouraged the parents to keep being role models to their children and involve other relatives or friends in activities using Spanish.

**Repetition, consistency of programs and timing of activities.** Key components that emerged as important for the success of the program were a constant focus on language interaction in the class, consistent attendance by parents, and time management. This is in line with Bunce and Watkins (1995) and Tabors (1997) who said that exposing children to activities
in which they are exposed to multiple exposures to words in order to develop a rich understanding of their meaning and use is beneficial for their linguistic repertoire. As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, the class was divided in different sections that I call "play stations." These were initially timed for 8-10 minutes each. Some of my comments from the observation notes pointed out that time was an issue: "Time of play stations should be brief to maintain engagement" which meant that each activity (play station) should be shortened because I felt that students were getting bored or disengaged in the activity and then they would move away from the circle. The week after this comment, I shortened the time of the activities. I noticed they were more dynamic and involved more movement, exaggerated gestures, and more sounds to attract children's attention. For example, the game about matching farm animal toys with their corresponding flashcards took too long and children would throw away the flashcards or chew on the toys. After my observations and reflections from the audio notes, I decided to give the toys to children first and collect them by making a sound and saying the animals' name, I noticed that this routine worked very well and helped out in the class dynamics.

**Gestures and sounds (e.g., whistling to call attention).** After listening to the audio and reading the observation notes, I observed the amount of time I used in order to grab students’ attention by whistling when I showed teaching materials. This situation made me aware of how much whistling I do, so in the following classes I minimized it. The consequences of this was losing children’s attention. Because of this consequence, I decided to continue making sounds and whistling when showing materials, especially when I noticed that children were distracted or not looking at me. It can be concluded that the more sounds and gestures accompanied the activities, the greater children’s interest in participating in the class.
Multimodal engagement through story time routine. Although, I did not use books much and the class was not targeted to teach literacy explicitly, children showed considerable interest in books. During the reading routing I gained insight in my own practice. According to my initial lesson plans, reading the story was at the end of the class. I prepared different book read alouds, but I noticed that children were tired and showed signals of being bored and they did not pay attention to the book reading. I decided to do the activity at the beginning of the class and see if it would change the children's attitude. To my surprise, all students were sitting down on their parents' lap and very focused on the reading. Since that moment, I decided that reading was to be done at the very beginning of the class. I could not have done this if I had not read the observation notes and specifically listened to the audio notes when I heard a parent say: “This is not working. Children are just not paying attention to him”.

The social interaction surrounding books appeared to be an important element in motivating children to take an interest in what was being read. This observation is supported by Veldhuijzen, Coates, Hervas-Malo, and McGrath's (2012) study in which a group of mothers in Nova Scotia were given a free reading literacy package to use for reading with their babies. The results suggested that this intervention substantially increased engagement in literacy activities with children starting at birth and that it has the potential to positively affect the development of later language and literacy skills.

Implications for Pedagogical Practice

The contributions of this study may be helpful to further examine the importance of parents in their children’s language learning. Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that parents are the number one role models to encourage their children to learn a second language or
additional language (e.g., Spanish in Canada). Therefore, parents should be key individuals when preparing and delivering the class.

Furthermore, this study also attempts to expand the options for second language pedagogy in contexts that are not school-based. It unpacks the layers that are at play in an action research project as an ongoing cycle: planning the classes, reflecting on those classes based on observations, listening to audio notes, and interpreting interviews with parents. The end product of the action research was to take action on my own pedagogy by improving teaching practices for every class. I was able to reflect on my own practice, create lessons that were targeted to elicit language from children, and prepare materials that were more motivational for children. In brief, the findings in this study show the feasibility of an early language and literacy initiative (e.g. Spanish) both for children who have exposure to the second language at home and those who do not. However, there are some suggestions that need to be taken into account and that I describe in the section below as implications.

My own reflections based on my field notes, analysis of the interviews and audio tapes suggested that a program of this nature should address the following issues: (1) what kind of materials are necessary to prepare a class, (2) what teaching methodology is appropriate, and, (3) what needs to be known about promoting motivation in the classroom. Data from this study evidenced that attention to appropriate materials, teaching methodology, and motivation not only maintain students’ interest and engagement in literacy activities, but they encourage students to respond to the instructor’s questions in either language regardless of the children’s home language.
**Class and materials preparation.** Before preparing a language class, any teacher would need to understand a few things: the population to work with, the setting (the school), and the needs in the class. Additionally, the following questions must be answered: What are my students’ ages? What are my students’ home languages? What type of school am I working in (private, public)? What are the needs of parents, students, and the community?

Then, once these questions have been answered, a teacher may proceed into a second phase which is preparation of the class. Observation notes demonstrated that I mainly used songs to elicit language, and since these implications are mainly for children at an early age, songs need to be chosen appropriately (traditional songs, lullabies, rhymes, etc). These songs may be translated into the target language (in this study, songs were translated from English to Spanish) according to tune and rhythm or the teacher can choose songs that are originally for native speakers of the language and then adapt them. Additionally, a teacher should find appropriate toys that may match the class or the songs’ theme. For example, if the theme is about animals, the teacher finds animal toys and chooses a song about animals (in this study, “Old McDonal had a farm” translated into Spanish), another example is the shapes theme in which a shape puzzle or a shape sorter is used along with a songs about shapes.

Other materials such as flashcards, games, books, props, and manipulatives may be used in the classroom to elicit language responses. For example, a toy microphone can help children to speak more confidently, plastic letters help to reinforce letter recognition, maracas or shakers help to get children's attention, bright and colorful pictures make it easier to relate words with objects, and plush toys or stuffed animals help as language role models for children.

**Teaching methodology.** A second important implication for teachers relates to the "how to”--what to do in class with preschool children and their parents. The notes on my observations
of classes showed the interactivity of the methodology. I call it "interactive language learning" because parents and children must be active participants by repeating and chanting songs and being physically involved by doing all the actions. This type of methodology uses some concepts of the natural approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) towards teaching languages, because children need to feel that language is not imposed but rather something that happens naturally. Also, following Krashen & Terrell's (1983) idea that language is acquired through comprehensible input, when a child is at a certain stage in language acquisition and he/she understands a structure, then a teacher needs to help him/her to move up to the next level (scaffolding). Thus, the i+1 concept may be applied, where i= the stage of acquisition and 1 is the next input. It was concluded that this concept was applied in the study when I engaged students and elicited language via questions in readings or activities, games or songs. I always tried to push children to the next level. If a child said a word, then I prompted him or her to say a complete phrase.

Motivation towards literacy. One of the recurring themes that emerged from the data collection of this study is motivation towards literacy. Findings corroborated that children learned because they feel attracted towards being involved in the language, to sounds, songs, rhymes, movement and books with big and bright pictures. Certainly, I took into account these aspects in my classes and I clearly described them in my notes on the audio recordings. I suggest that any teacher must tap into what the children like and ask these questions: Do they like games? Do the like books? Do they like sounds and movement? Once a teacher knows the answers to these questions, then the next part is to prepare a curriculum that accurately responds to those questions. In my classes, I took some suggestions from Pinnell and Fountas (2011) at a pre-K level about reading, early literacy, oral and visual interaction. I conclude that some of the
following resources that I used in my classes help to elicit responses and encouraged children to maintain interest in the activities.

- Oral stories
- Picture books
- Wordless pictures books
- Books with lots of repetition
- International books
- Books with texture padding and pop-ups
- Themes that reflects a variety of topics
- Repetitive dialogue in books
- Simple, large and clear illustrations in flashcards and books
- Listen actively to whoever is talking
- Act out sentences in rhymes or stories
- Use polite terms such as please and thank you
- Understand and use words related to familiar common experiences and topics (Pets, body parts, food, clothes, transportation, home, family and neighbourhood)
- Talk about one’s feelings
- Understands that print means meaning
- Distinguish between print and pictures
- Play with sounds of language
- Notice that letters have different shapes
- Understand the concept of a letter
With these implications, I hope to add to the body of knowledge in relation to the pedagogy of languages at an early age. Although this field has been under-researched, it has the potential to improve the teacher’s work in a variety of contexts (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual). I conclude that the findings of my study suggest that motivation is paramount, parents are important role models and carefully planned methodology supports learning.

**Assessment.** One of my ongoing teaching reflections and a main concern in this study is how to evaluate children’s learning. In several observation notes, I asked myself: “How should I assess vocabulary or pronunciation of children (ages 0-3 years old)?” I also noted that, “One of the best evaluations I can get is the parents’ comments on my teaching.” During the interviews, some parents have expressed how children have been singing songs spontaneously at home, in the car, or at different events, etc. This demonstrates to me that the children have been learning.

Although I cannot evaluate a process by means of the common instruments such as tests or exams, I have developed a progress update letter that I send to parents in which I briefly describe the children's progress in language learning from the beginning of the class until the end of the 12th class (See Appendix E). This example can be followed by practitioners of second language teaching without resorting to standard measurements or evaluations. A journal of observations can also be done and shown to parents at the end of each session.

**Pedagogy of activities.** After reading notes on my observations and reflecting on my own pedagogy, I conceived of several methodological changes in my practice. First, since I already said that there is not a formal way to evaluate children’s learning, I developed one way to assess whether children have learned or not. For example, I noticed that during the colors game, the children received colored ribbons and then they sang the colors song. There was no confirmation of learning the colors. A week after I decided to use flashcards to find out if
children could match a flashcard with the colored ribbons. Sure enough children were able to match an object with a word. Since that day most of the activities I have implemented have been matching games (matching a mother farm animal to baby farm animals and puzzle shapes to flashcards).

Below, I will document some other literacy practices that I have included, modified or eliminated from the class based on my own reflections from the observation and audio notes.

Bubbles are a good source for motivating the children and engaging them in language. I would blow bubbles and ask children and parents to chant a song about popping bubbles with hands and feet. I decided that this activity should be done at the end of the class rather than at the beginning in order to mark the end of the class. Now, children understand that when bubbles are being blown, it means it is time to say goodbye.

It is important to understand that most of the activities in the class must be short. Each activity should not be more that 5-7 minutes, otherwise children get distracted by other children, lose attention or just get bored. At the end of the twelfth class, I was able to measure how long each activity would last. However every class was different and I needed to adapt accordingly. What is important is to keep a constant pace of songs, use a flow stream of language, exaggerated gestures and sounds, and a lot of interaction among parents, teacher, and children.

I also developed a system of handing toys, showing flashcards, or giving turns in a clockwise manner. After several classes, parents and children learned the routine and were expecting their turn. This helped me to make the class more organized and communicated to children that they should be patient to wait for their turn. Some of the answers from parents have expressed that children have learned some manners and appropriate behaviors in the class as they learn Spanish.
I realized that simpler vocabulary must be presented to younger children and then once they learn, it is possible for them to move on to more complex concepts. By simpler vocabulary, I mean words that are one or two syllables and easier to pronounce (e.g. *fresa* (strawberry), *banana* (banana), *círculo* (circle), *vaca* (cow), *sol* (sun) etc.) and by complex, I mean three or more syllables and are more difficult to pronounce (e.g. *Octágon* (octagon), *naranja* (orange as a fruit), *anaranjado* (orange as a color), *caballo* (horse) etc.).

One of the main issues in the class was children's behavior. Once the children felt the activity was becoming boring or less active, they felt stressed and want to move around the class. They are distracted by other objects and like exploring their surroundings. Parents get anxious because their children “are not paying attention”, but I always tell them that is part of being a child, so children are still listening and learning. Some children need a lot of attention, they do not listen or pay attention to class, and sometimes disrupt the class despite parents telling them to behave better. A good example of this is when Liliana did not want to pay attention or do anything, she threw herself to the floor. Other children thought this behaviour was funny and they tried to do the same thing. When this happens I always call for parents’ help by saying "Liliana, con mamá, con mamá por favor" (Liliana go with mom, please).

I also noticed that during the class, if I had the toys and materials on the floor, the children become curious and want to have a look and they do not focus on the class. Since that moment, I decided to put all toys and materials in a box and a bag, so children would not peek and would focus more on the activities. As a conclusion, I realized that the fewer visual distractions there are in the classroom, the more children pay attention and therefore it becomes easier to elicit language.
Class size became very important. In my observations, there are advantages of having a full class (8 parents and 8 children). For example, there is a rich and full stream of language going on, as parents sing and chant all together, which children see and sing along. However, when there are fewer parents (and children), then surely there would be more opportunities for children to get individual turns. Audio notes showed that when there were more parents, class was nosier and when there were fewer parents (4 or 5), I had more opportunities to individualize the questions and elicit answers.

Another very important reflection for me as a teacher was that I was not sufficiently challenging some children who clearly showed advancement. I kept encouraging them to repeat the same words when I could have helped them to repeat more complete phrases or sentences. Now, this is something that I take into account, once a child already knows a word, I need to push him or her to complete the sentence or phrase (e.g., instead of waiting for a child to say a word (manzana – apple for example), I can prompt them to say the whole sentence (yo quiero una manzana por favor- I want an apple please). Also, I noted that during story reading, I was not involving parents in repeating words from the book as much as I wanted. So the cue I used to get their support was "Listo papás, conmigo... es de color azul, es de color azul [el caballo] (Ready parents, with me, it is of blue color, it is of blue color [the horse]). Finally, this made me aware of my lack of engagement with parents and children and from that moment on, for every class I always thought about how I can involve parents and children in more language participation.

Overall, this study generated a lot of awareness of my own practice and the need to be proactive in preparing the classes. It made me aware of being careful when choosing the appropriate materials such as books, songs, flashcards and toys for children. It was important for
me to always self-evaluate how the class is, and keep constant communication with parents about how they feel about the class because they can give important feedback to include in the lessons. This action research study has helped me to see my practice as a constant and ongoing cycle of planning, taking action, making reflections and observations, and planning again for the next session or class.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

Although the focus of this study was mainly on my own experience in my classroom, my intention was to understand how children are being engaged and motivated in language and literacy activities. Several limitations emerged as I was conducting the study and these will be outlined in this section. First were the limitations of the conceptual framework. Also, there were strengths and weaknesses in the study's methodology. This process of examining limitations has been an important one to me because I was able to consider the problem from different angles; specifically, the changes in my own teaching methodology and reflections on my future as a researcher.

The conceptual framework for this study was used as a filter through which the data collected (the interviews, audio notes, and observation notes) were analysed. Various aspects of literacy engagement (Cummins, 2011) were useful, but not sufficient to analyze the data, as I found that before any literacy engagement, I had to analyse motivation towards literacy. In order to better understand literacy engagement, I elaborated connections between the activities during my classes and Dörnyei’s (2001) framework in order to explain the findings. Also several studies (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014) demonstrated that literacy achievement and academic success are influenced by early exposure to books and this study reflects these findings in showing the extent to which, children were attracted to books that are
appealing in terms of pictures and book reading delivery. Unfortunately this study could not
demonstrate strong evidence of this engagement and, therefore, not many activities using books
were carried out in class.

Another limitation of this study was consistency. Although the program was very
consistent and regular for the twelve classes, the parents were not consistent in two ways. First of
all, some of the parents did not attend all the twelve classes; neither were parents particularly
punctual. I understand that there were many issues related to illness or family circumstances out
of my own control or even the parents’ control. This inconsistency limited the data that I was
able to analyze. Also, some children who were not consistent in attendance did not show
sufficient advancement in language learning, whereas those who attended all the sessions
participated more and showed more command of basic vocabulary.

Second, parents and children singing songs on their own either in class or at home shows
evidence that consistency matters. I could see that children whose parents regularly sing, chant
and participate actively in the class would demonstrate more language engagement, whereas
children of the other parents who did not show enough participation showed low levels of
engagement and motivation towards the class.

A limitation in the research design was the restricted number of classes. It would have
been very interesting to have more classes over a longer period of time, or more classes during
the week so I could have seen more evidence of literacy engagement. Indeed, it would have been
fruitful to have more classes to observe over a period of several months until children enter
preschool. Hence a longitudinal study would have been more appropriate to find more evidence
of the importance of early reading and early exposure to a second language.
One of the strongest points in this study's methodology was the action research approach I followed. As a teacher/researcher, I noticed aspects of my own teaching practice that I have never seen before, and I was able to reflect and change accordingly for the benefit of the class. Recording my observations and audio notes systematically was a way to improve myself and brought my teaching to a better level. For example, now I am more aware of timing the activities, I plan the lessons based on reflections on my previous classes, I talk to parents about the children’s language progress, and I am more conscious about how I use the language and how I am going to elicit more language from children.

The data collection methods provided the opportunity for triangulation of the information. As discussed in the methodology section, interviews with parents, audio notes and observation notes were taken, but I think taking videos would have yielded a richer set of data. With videos, I could have seen other behaviors, attitudes or observations of my own way of teaching or parents and children interacting with each other. Although the use of videos was approved by the ethics committee at the university, videos were not taken because I did not have anybody to take them while I was teaching and some parents seemed to have concerns about the possibility of being videotaped.

When designing this action research, I wanted it to inform my own pedagogy with the hope of shedding light on the body of literature on literacy engagement, motivation towards literacy and early exposure to print. Thus, this final section of the Conclusion summarizes the main recommendations for future studies.

As for directions for further studies, the present study was carried out with the hope that it would help cast additional light on the issues of learning second languages at an early age, maintaining student’s interest and engagement in literacy activities, and the effects of story
reading. Unfortunately, the scope of this study did not allow for a detailed investigation of this nature; therefore, in this section, I will recommend two specific areas for future studies: (1) more research in motivation for language(s) learning in the early years, and, (2) more research into the effects of exposure to book reading, parental reading, teachers’ reading and reading in other settings different from schools at an early age.

I believe more research should be carried with participants of ages birth to three (toddlers and infants). Although this study tried to address this theme, we need more evidence of the importance of involving parents in the process and the need to involve children in literacy (books and songs). The findings of this study may not have directly addressed the issues highlighted in the literacy engagement framework due to the limited scope of the study, but they provide some light on the importance of motivation towards literacy at a very early age. When reading of books was moved to the beginning of class, children showed an enthusiastic reaction demonstrating that engagement with literacy even in a second language can start at an early age.

Although there has been considerable research on family literacy (Murillo, Fink, & Allen, 2012; Farver, Xu, Lonigan, & Eppe, 2013; Torppa et al., 2011), one parent one language studies (So, 2007; Venables, Eisenchlas, & Schalley, 2014), and the importance of early literacy programs in libraries (Stagg-Peterson, Jang, Jupiter, & Dunlop, 2012), there has been little research focused on fostering children’s motivation for learning an additional language at an early age in non-academic settings. This study suggests that it is really important to motivate children to engage with literacy in different settings since this motivation is likely to increase later literacy engagement with its potential to increase academic success in the school years. This conclusion is supported by parents’ observations. Parents think that the more we expose children to books, the better their understanding of print words and enjoyment to literacy will be in future
years. Parents also said that the use of books in class was important because this increases children’s motivation to engage more with books at home. It would be of great interest to gather more detailed data about motivation for learning languages at an early age and the role of literacy exposure in this process.

I hope that the information presented in this study will open the door to more research on language teaching and learning in the early years as well as ways of fostering children’s motivation to get engaged with literacy. These are areas of research that are under-developed and have a lot of room to grow and expand.
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Appendices

Appendix A. Information Letter and Consent Form for Parents

Dear Parent,

My name is Yecid Ortega, I am a Master of Arts student in the Language and Literacies Education program in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE/UT. I am writing to see if you would be interested in participating in a research project related to the learning of pre-literacy skills in children ages birth to three years old. After reading the detailed information below, if you wish to participate in the research study, please complete and return the consent form attached to this document to me. Thank you very much.

Title of Research Project:
*Toddlers' Literacy Engagement in a Spanish Language Program*

Principal Investigator: Yecid Ortega, MA Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Purpose of the Study: My study investigates the effectiveness of maintaining children's interest and engagement in literacy activities and story reading.

Participants: I would be working with 6 parents and their babies from the Spanish program that I teach on Saturdays 11am. My study will include parents and children from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds from the Toronto area.

Benefits: The parents and children will be participating in the Spanish program for approximately 8-12 lessons at no cost. Children will have instruction in Spanish using different approaches (play-based, kinesthetic and musical approaches) that have already be proven to be effective in the children's language development. Parents will also get a report of their children's progress at the end of the project, support from the researcher on how to encourage language learning at home and a dual-language book to practice at home.

What participants will do: Parents and children have to participate in 12 proposed sessions, actively participate in the class by repeating, singing, chanting and dancing with their children. Parents act as a role models for their children. Parents report to researcher any language skills that children show or demonstrate outside the class (e.g. Children humming or singing songs, pointing to objects and saying words in Spanish or show desire to have more class etc). Although the sessions will be audio recorded, parents should not change the way they behave when they are in a regular class. Parents have expressed their interest in supporting this research by taking video of the classes.
Participants’ Rights

- **To Confidentiality:** All participants’ identities will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential through the use of pseudonyms in both the analysis of the data and the oral and written reporting of the findings. Only my supervisor, Dr. James Cummins, will have access to these recordings. This information will be kept on a password protected external hard drive in my home that will be locked in a cabinet and all data will be destroyed no later than five years from now.

- **To Ask Questions about the Research:** If you would like to ask questions about this research project, you may do so at any time. Please contact me (Yecid Ortega) at 647-774-1939 or yecid.ortega@mail.utoronto.ca, or you may speak to me directly. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. James Cummins, regarding questions at 416-978-0269 or jim.cummins@utoronto.ca. The University of Toronto also has an office regarding ethics if you want more information about your rights as a research participant, or to verify the authenticity of this research. You may contact the Office of Research Ethics at 416-946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca

- **To Withdraw at Any Time:** You may withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me. If you would like any student data collected, please indicate this by contacting me by phone or email, and I will do so promptly. **However, once my research findings are reported or published, you CANNOT withdraw.** Parents will receive a dual language book at the end of the study regardless of whether or not they participate in the full 8-12 sessions.

**Risks:** There are no potential risks in your decision to participate in this study.

Please read and sign the attached consent form if you are willing to participate in this study. Additionally, upon completion of the study, I will also provide you with a report of my main research findings detailing which activities were most effective at promoting pre-literacy skills and how this varied can be also applied at home.

Sincerely,

Yecid Ortega
OISE/UT

You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Jim Cummins, by email at jim.cummins@utoronto.ca, or by telephone at 416-978-0269. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca, or by telephone at 416-946-3273.

Thank you very much for your time.

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDS
I have read Yecid Ortega's letter describing the goals of the research project and I understand that my participation will involve the following activities and conditions:

**Activities**

- Attend the majority of sessions out of 12, participate as much as possible and provide any comment, feedback or observations on my child's language learning in the class or outside the class.
- Assist to the classes on time at 11am every Saturday and be ready to be a language role model for my child.

**Conditions**

- Any information gathered on parents and children, including their willingness to participate, will be kept strictly confidential and all participants’ identities will be kept anonymous during the collection, analysis, and reporting of the research data; no identifying information will be used in the reporting of the data either in presentations or in written research reports.
- I understand that data collected (video or audio) on students may be used in academic publications or presentations. However, no identifiable information related to participants will be included whatsoever.
- I will receive a copy of the research report summarizing the findings of the study.
- I may withdraw before the study is reported or published at any time with no penalty. However, once the study is reported or published, I may NOT withdraw.

______ YES, I agree to participate in the research

Name:______________________________________
Email:______________________________________
Signature:___________________________________
Date: _______________________________________

______ NO, I do not agree to participate in the research

Name: _________________________________
Date: _________________________________
Signature: _______________________________
Appendix B. Script of Email for Parents

Dear Parents,

My name is Yecid Ortega and I am an MA student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am sending this email to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study.

My study will examine the extent of effectiveness in maintaining children's interest and engagement in literacy activities and story reading. My goal is to understand what are those skills learned by children at an early age and what kinds of activities help to develop them.

In the study, you will be asked to participate actively in the class by singing, repeating, dancing and overall being a role model for your child. Each class will take 45 minutes. I will give you a comprehensive report of your child about the learning progress at the end of the study and a dual-language book. This study will help you to recognize and be aware of the importance of practicing Spanish at an early age.

I would like to invite you to a first session on Saturday, August 2nd 2014 from 11:00am to 11:45am, at our program location, in 165 Lauder Ave. (Off St. Clair avenue between Dufferin and Oakwood). In this information session, I will provide you with details on:

1) The purpose of the study
2) What you will be asked to do if you participate in the study
3) How I will keep your information private and how I will collect and erase your data
4) Information about the benefits you will receive if you participate and any risks involved
5) How you can agree to participate in this study

If you have any questions before the information session, I will be happy to answer them. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Jim Cummins, by email at jim.cummins@utoronto.ca, or by telephone at 416-978-0269. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca, or by telephone at 416-946-3273.

I look forward to meeting you on April 26th.

Best Regards,
Yecid Ortega
OISE/UT
**Appendix C. Sample Lesson Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Intro / Warm up:</strong></th>
<th>Children arrive with parents, children play with toys and blocks while others arrive to class, then teacher sings hello song and greets child and parent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book reading:</strong></td>
<td>After data collection it was noticed that book reading was more productive at the beginning of the session because of the children's short attention span.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities play station 1:</strong></td>
<td>In this first section of activities, two or three activities at the carpet are done, usually focus on themes such as opposites, numbers and letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement section:</strong></td>
<td>After the first section, children and parents feel tired of being on the carpet, so it is necessary to do an activity that makes them move. In this section, teacher encourages parents to march on circle and make a train noise, teacher encourages parents to go fast or slow, then stop. Teacher shows several flashcards in which children and parents pronounce the words and do the actions (swimming, dancing, marching, walking, running and flying).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities Play Station 2:</strong></td>
<td>Parents and children go back to the carpet for two more activities that are related to themes: colors, animals or shapes. Once teacher knows that both parents and children know the songs already, then teacher proposes a different song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap up:</strong></td>
<td>at the end of the session, teacher finishes up with a goodbye song, say good bye to each child and parent, then blow some bubbles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D. Songs

The Vowels / Las Vocales
Salió la A
Salió la A
Y no se a dónde va
Salió la E
Salió la E
no se a donde fue
Salió la i
Salió la i
Y yo no la sentí
Salió la O
Salió la O
Y casi no volvió
Salió la U
Salió la U
Y que me dices tú

Los números / The Numbers
Un conejo salta, salta, salta…
le gusta saltar….aja, aja, aja.
Dos conejos saltan, saltan,
saltan…
les gusta saltar ….aja, aja, aja

Los Animales de la granja / Old McDonald had a Farm
En la granja de papá E-I-E-I-O
Una vaca tiene ya E-I-E-I-O
y la vaca hace mu, mu, mu, mu.
E-I-E-I-O

Las figuras / The shapes
Las figuras, las figuras
las tienes que aprender. X2
El triángulo, el triángulo tiene 3 lados. x2
El cuadrado, el cuadrado tiene 4 lados. x2
El rectángulo, el rectángulo tiene 4 lados. Hay 2 largos y 2 cortos. x2
El círculo, el círculo. No tiene lados. x2

Las frutas / The fruits
A mí me gusta comer
A mí me gusta comer manzana
Yummy, Yummy, yummy !!!
A mí me gusta comer
A mí me gusta comer naranja
Yummy, Yummy, yummy !!!
y a ti , a ti, a ti
¿Qué te gusta comer?

Los Colores / The Colors
Rojo, amarillo, azul y verde.
Negro, morado y anaranjado.
Blanco, marrón y rosado
y al final el gris.

Los dedos / The fingers
Este dedito compró un huevito.
Este dedito lo hecho a cocer.
Este dedito le puso sal.
Este dedito lo revolvió
Y este gordo goloso se lo comió.
Y este gordo goloso se lo comió.

Estrellita /
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
Estrellita, ¿Dónde estás?
Me pregunto quién serás.
En el cielo y en el mar,
Un diamante de verdad.

Mi lindo cuerpo /
My pretty body
Que linda la cara que tengo yo.
Que linda es la cara que tengo yo.
Que linda la nariz que tengo yo.
Que linda es la nariz que tengo yo.
Que lindas las orejas que tengo yo.
Que lindas son las orejas que tengo yo.
Que lindos los ojos que tengo yo.
Qué lindo es el cuerpo que tengo yo…
Qué lindo y a bailar voy…
Chá, cha, cha / Chá, cha, cha

Los Pollitos /
The chicks
Los pollitos dicen
Pío Pío Pío
Cuando tienen hambre
Cuando tienen frío.
La gallina busca
El maíz y el trigo
Les da la comida
y les presta abrigo.
Bajo sus dos alas
Acarrucaditos
duermen los pollitos
Hasta el otro día.

La araña pequeña /
Itsy Bitsy Spider
La araña pequeña subió, subió,
Vino la lluvia y se la llevaron.
Salió el sol y todo lo secó.
La araña pequeña subió, subió
subió

Estrellita, ¿Dónde estás?
Me pregunto quién serás.

La araña pequeña /
Itsy Bitsy Spider
La araña pequeña subió, subió,
Vino la lluvia y se la llevó.
Salió el sol y todo lo secó.
La araña pequeña subió, subió
subió

Los Colores / The Colors
Rojo, amarillo, azul y verde.
Negro, morado y anaranjado.
Blanco, marrón y rosado
y al final el gris.

Los dedos / The fingers
Este dedito compró un huevito.
Este dedito lo hecho a cocer.
Este dedito le puso sal.
Este dedito lo revolvió
Y este gordo goloso se lo comió.
Y este gordo goloso se lo comió.

Estrellita /
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
Estrellita, ¿Dónde estás?
Me pregunto quién serás.
En el cielo y en el mar,
Un diamante de verdad.

Mi lindo cuerpo /
My pretty body
Que linda la cara que tengo yo.
Que linda es la cara que tengo yo.
Que linda la nariz que tengo yo.
Que linda es la nariz que tengo yo.
Que lindas las orejas que tengo yo.
Que lindas son las orejas que tengo yo.

Preposiciones / Prepositions
Arriba, abajo, al frente y atrás
(Repeat several times)
**Appendix E: Progress Update Card for Parents**

Language Progress Report

Date: xxx

Name: Jamie

Thanks to mom for being interested in the Spanish lessons for Jamie, after 10 lessons we could see how much she has advanced, she is able to count, say the colors, say the vowels, say the animals and the shapes. She also says hello and good bye, but the most important of all is Jamie can say the actions: bailar, correr, nadar, volar, saltar and marchar. She repeats phrases and sentences very easily and she can sing along with the other children.

Although, Jamie seems to be shy sometimes, she is a child who has shown a lot of potential for learning Spanish and go beyond the basics. I encourage parents to keep with the exposure at all times by listening to songs, watching videos and reading books in Spanish as much as possible. Take advantage of people who already speak the language such as family members or friends.

Thanks for being part of this program, looking forward to seeing you in the next session.

Yecid Ortega

Programs Coordinator
### Appendix F. Interview Questions for Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of exploration</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Questions</td>
<td>I really appreciate you taking some personal and professional time for this interview. Please know that your participation is completely voluntary and that you can stop this conversation should you think is inappropriate or pointless. As you may know I have always been interested in children's second language learning and this research deals specifically with your perceptions about your child's learning in the Spanish class and the progress they may have made or not. I'd like to know a little bit about you and your child(ren) and your relationship with other languages. So let me start with a very simple question: How and when did you decide that Spanish was the language to expose your child? Why not other languages such as French? Italian? German?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations on language in the classroom</td>
<td>How do you feel in the Spanish class? How do you think your child feels in the class? Does he/she like it? What activities do you think he/she finds more interesting/apppealing/motivational/fun? Do you think activities are useful? Do you think your child has learned anything (words, pronunciation)? How do you know when he/she has learned? Can you recall any episodes in which your child uses Spanish in the class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations on language outside the classroom</td>
<td>Do you expose your child to Spanish outside the class? If yes, what have you noticed in terms of Spanish learning? Any changes in their learning? Behavior? Motivation? Do you have any schedule or time to expose your child to Spanish (DVDs, Videos, music, Spanish language events)? Any specific time to show videos or listening to music? Can you recall any episodes in which your child uses Spanish outside the class? Humming, singing, pointing to objects and saying the names in Spanish etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>I guess we have addressed most of the questions I wanted to ask you. Are there any questions that you want to ask me about second language learning at a young age? Is there a way I can help you to better motivate your child with the second language learning experience? Any suggestions you may want to have for future research?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix G. Field Notes Form - Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Day#</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time and date</strong></td>
<td>10:00am / Saturday September 13th 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations on language</strong></td>
<td>Example: Child 1 was able to repeat the color after instructor and parent repeated the words several times. Then, we sang a song about colors and child repeats the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations on engagement and interactions in the lesson</strong></td>
<td>Example: Child 2 seems to be distracted by other toys in the room, when he feels bored or unfocused, he has the urge to explore the room and look for other &quot;interesting&quot; things to do. Finally, child is engage by the sounds I make with the puppet and now child wants to hug him, I ask child that the puppet only gets hugs in Spanish, I prompt child to say: abrazo (hug) , child says [abr]azo and hugs the puppet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Types of activities** | Hello song  
Name song  
Opposites song: Up/ Down -Front/Behind  
Colors song  
Puzzle activity  
Matching colors activity  
Movement routine: Choo-Choo train and action cards ( Jumping, running, swimming, dancing, marching, flying)  
Nursery rhymes song : Los pollitos dicen ( the little chicks chirp)  
Book routine  
Good bye song |
| **Other observations** | Vocabulary: Child matches the animal toy with a flashcards, spontaneously points to the flashcards with his finger.  
Print Awareness: Child knows that the book is not a hat: Teacher says: Esto es un sombrero ( This is a hat) Child says: Nooooo  
Alphabet knowledge: Mom asks child : What letter is this: A or O . Child does not answer |
Appendix H: Survey

I would like to know more information about you and your child's experience in Spanish outside the class. Please mark the frequency you see the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often does your child say words in Spanish spontaneously?*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How often do you talk to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How often do you watch TV or DVDs in Spanish?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often do you read books to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How often do you sing to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How often do you play songs to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How often do you go to events in Spanish (Play groups, storytime, parties, community gatherings etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How often do members of your family talk to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How often do friends or other people talk to your child in Spanish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If an affirmative answer, write the words that you have heard.

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
