

THE LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF

THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

by

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School of Education

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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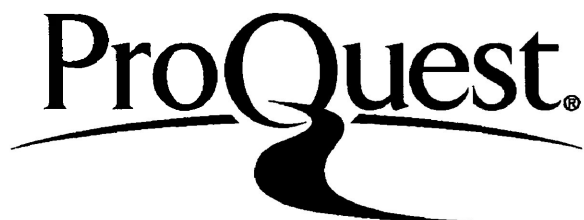
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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my maternal grandmother

VIOLET CAROLINE WHEAR CHENIER

who, more than anyone, has taught me to  
adapt to change and roll with the punches.

In her ninety-second year she continues  
to be an inspiration to all who know her.

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## ABSTRACT

The study describes the language learning environment of children in senior kindergarten. It focuses firstly, on the child and the contexts in which s/he uses language in the classroom, secondly, on the teaching-learning process and thirdly, on parenting behaviours which contribute to language development.

An ethnographic field study was carried out in two senior kindergarten classrooms in one school during the 1986-87 school year. The study was comprised of two phases and incorporated both quantitative (traditional) and qualitative (naturalistic) methods of research.

During Phase 1, data were collected from the early identification developmental checklist and system speech/language screening for all senior kindergarten children in the participating school. Classroom observations were made to gain background information on the students in each class, instructional methods, and setting. A theoretical/purposive sampling of six children was selected for the more in-depth second phase.

Phase 2 data were collected through classroom observations of the individual children, analysis of documents and interviews with the children, their parents, the teacher

and others. A profile was compiled on each child to illuminate the child's language development.

Findings suggest some commonality to the parenting that either enables or disables the development of speech and language centring on variety of experiences, family stability and television viewing habits.

There were indications that a more traditional curriculum in the kindergarten with elements of both the "academic" and the "child-centred" philosophies with some emphasis on "readiness" and "skill development" but at the same time adaptation of the curriculum and teaching techniques to accommodate individual differences assists in language development. Modelling and reinforcement and the frequent use of nursery rhymes and productive thinking skills were among the most effective means.

In preparation for further learning, structure, routines and rules provide the security for the children to take risks. Provision of many opportunities for active involvement in meaningful language learning situations and a balance of skill development with open-ended activities provide the opportunity for creativity and varying levels of difficulty. An over-emphasis on worksheets, however, may be counter-productive.

A well-organized parent volunteer program in the kindergarten contributes greatly to both the comfort level in

the classroom and the development of a cooperative community atmosphere throughout the school.

It appears that early identification procedures in the kindergarten are not entirely effective in identifying the children at-risk due to language delay. There are indications that administrators and teachers should examine assessment and programming practices with an eye to providing the information and resources necessary to implement differentiated curriculum to address the varying degrees of language development of school entrants.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

This study is an ethnographic case study. It describes the language learning environment in a senior kindergarten and young children's use of language in that context. It identifies both parenting and teaching behaviours which appear to stimulate and support oral language development. Respondents were children enrolled in a senior kindergarten in a school board, population 18,000, in a city in Northwestern Ontario, Canada.

The design for the study was emergent (Bodgan & Biklen, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1981). Initial research questions and methods proposed were modified in the light of ongoing data collection and analysis. The design incorporated two phases. In Phase I, the researcher observed the cooperating teacher's morning and afternoon kindergarten classes. One class was then selected for further study. Observations of the whole class continued until the researcher had gathered sufficient data to select a theoretical/purposive sample (Lincoln & Guba, 1981) of six children for intensive study. The sample included three proficient language users and three considered at-risk due to their observed lack of language proficiency.

Methods for data collection included participant and non-participant observations, formal and informal interviews

(Patton, 1980) with teachers, students, parents and other school personnel, and analyses of documents such as results of the "Early Identification Developmental Checklist" and others included in the school records. In addition, the researcher supplemented the data generated through ethnographic means with sociometric and television surveys of all students in the chosen (morning) class.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe the language learning environment of one senior kindergarten classroom in an attempt to identify those teaching/parenting behaviours that stimulate and support oral language development. Insight gained into the environment, the program, the early identification process and successful teaching/parenting techniques served as a springboard for developing models for instruction and support to teachers.

To this end, findings provided answers to the following questions:

1. What opportunities does the senior kindergarten program provide for oral language usage both in the physical and social contexts?

2. How do more proficient and less proficient language users differ in availing themselves of these opportunities?

3. What functions of language do the children use to communicate?

4. What differences exist in the functions of language

used by more proficient and less proficient language users?

5. What strategies does the teacher use to observe/evaluate a child's oral language development?

6. What modifications does the teacher make to her program on the basis of ongoing observations of children's language development (i.e. new experiences, centres, interactions with children, resource people, materials and other resources)?

7. What parenting/teaching behaviours contribute to oral language development in young children?

a) Is there some commonality in parenting styles of those senior kindergarten students who enter school with a higher than average facility with oral language?

b) What opportunities does the senior kindergarten program provide for oral language acquisition? (i.e. What teaching strategies does the teacher use to facilitate oral language development?)

### Rationale

There are several reasons for undertaking naturalistic inquiry of this type:

1. Language development plays an important role in preparing a child to function as a person and member of social groups such as the family, peers and the community. This role is supported in home and school. We, therefore, need to understand parent/teacher behaviours which best support language development.

2. Some children enter school at risk. Therefore, we need effective curricula and assessment techniques consistent with the nature of language learning to facilitate their development.

3. Personal observation in my professional role supports the contention that at-risk school entrants need nurturing and effective programs. While both ministries and boards of education are working towards that goal, considerable work has yet to be done in describing language learning environments in the kindergarten setting and programs and teaching behaviours which teachers use.

4. My own personal observations support concerns regarding assessment and programming which are articulated in the literature: a) the need to recognize the importance of oral language proficiency to the acquisition of written language skills; b) the need for educators to keep abreast of current research; c) the need for appropriate screening, assessment and programming methods; and d) the need for a multidisciplinary approach to determining and addressing language learning differences.

This study, then, addressed specific concerns identified by the researcher as having significant bearing on the effective adaptation of school entrants. Centring around language acquisition and proficiency, these concerns relate to efficient and appropriate assessment and programming in the senior kindergarten classroom. The problems of discrepancy in

developmental levels of classmates, premature exposure to complex and abstract processes, system primary division organization and staffing and program evaluation were investigated within the context of the language learning environment of one senior kindergarten classroom and in relation to the existing relevant literature.

The Nature of Language. Language is voiced thought. At the same time it is also the tool with which we think and learn. It is simultaneously the precursor and the product of thought. Language includes both oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) processes. Listening and reading are the two components of receptive language and writing and speaking of expressive language. The processes are based on four language systems: semantic (meaning), syntactic (structure), graphophonemic (sound/symbol relationships) and pragmatic (function or context of situation Lund & Duchan, 1983; Watson, 1988). Although speaking and listening seem to be more "naturally" acquired processes and writing and reading more imposed, in our society, whole language (the development of all four aspects at once) comes very early for most (Doake, 1988; Glaser, 1989; Goodman, 1980; Goodman, 1986; Wells, 1986).

Exposure to print and the concomitant expectations emerge shortly after birth for many. Oral language is the first to develop and there are indications that, for most individuals, a certain degree of proficiency must be attained in receptive

and expressive oral language before one can be expected to interpret or use written expression (Olson, 1983; Wren, 1983).

Research (Olson, 1983; Wren, 1983) indicates that without a certain basic level of competency in oral language, both expressive and receptive, most individuals will have difficulty in acquiring any facility with expressing their own ideas and understanding those of others in written form. This has implications for curriculum design.

Young children initially communicate orally. They learn language by actively using it in concrete situations through interaction with those around them (Wells, 1986). Development in oral language is related in large part to the quality and quantity of meaningful language experiences sustained by the child. It is influenced as well by the children's intellectual, physical and social-emotional development (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984).

All school curricula are language-based to some degree (Ontario, 1985a). For children to experience successful learning, they will need to be able to use language effectively in increasingly complex tasks and for a wide range of purposes. Therefore, the programs offered to children, particularly in the primary years must provide opportunities for young children to develop language proficiency. The evaluation of children's language and of their language programs must reflect the nature of language learning (Hart, Walker & Gray, 1977; Lund & Duchan, 1983).

Personal concerns. My personal observations as an educator and my professional reading, particularly the issues articulated in the literature concerning young children at-risk, prompted me to conduct this investigation of the language learning environment of school entrants. I shall begin with a discussion of my observations because it is they that led me to the literature. I shall then address issues gleaned from the literature which provide support for this work.

Since graduation from teachers' college I have served as a classroom teacher, remedial reading teacher, itinerant specific learning disabilities teacher, in-school special education resource teacher, and as vice-principal with responsibility for the primary division. For the past eight years I have been an itinerant teacher-consultant first in the area of enrichment/gifted and presently as a speech and language teacher. In this latter position I provide assessment, programming and direct service to children, teachers and parents in ten elementary schools.

My interest in early language began in my first year of teaching when I had thirty-nine grade two students whose reading levels ranged from non-reader to grade four. This frustrating experience - after all I was trained to teach grade two content and use grade two materials with students in grade two - forced me to think about early language development and the parenting techniques that contributed to the

discrepancies in "readiness" of school entrants. In the late 1970s I served on both the original and revision committees which developed the school board guidelines for an early identification process. I became aware of the difficulties and frustrations kindergarten teachers experienced as they implemented the development checklist (McCuaig, 1981; McCuaig & Essa, 1981).

My roles as enrichment support person and, most recently, itinerant speech and language teacher provided me with the opportunity to meet students, observe students in their classrooms, review programs and to develop a broad perspective on the interrelationships between and among students and teachers, classrooms and schools, schools and the system, and my system in relation to others and the Ministry of Education. From this experience and related professional development activities, have evolved several long-term personal and professional concerns most of which centre around the nurturing of young children and the need for a preventative approach to learning problems involving early diagnosis and intervention as well as changes in early childhood curricula.

Through these roles, in particular my work with young children at-risk (McCuaig & Essa, 1981), I began to recognize the importance of providing young children with educational programs which support and foster language development. Although attention is now paid by the Ministry and the boards to young children at-risk, we are not yet addressing their



needs as early nor as thoroughly as we might support and foster language development.

### Issues Articulated in the Literature

The literature identifies a number of issues which must be addressed by educators if they are to develop effective language learning environments. These issues include: (1) procedures used for early and ongoing identification and the concomitant danger of labelling; (2) the premature exposure of young children to abstract concepts many of which rely on proficient language usage for comprehension (Barbe, 1985; Egertson, 1987; Epstein, 1981; Ontario, 1977; Senior, 1986) and (3) the appropriateness of programming at the junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and grade one levels (Adams & Connors, 1978). These issues are discussed below.

Assessment. Some evaluation procedures presently used to design children's curriculum may be inappropriate. Keogh and Becker (1973), Keogh (1977) and Simner (1983) suggest that traditional indicators of potential academic difficulty are not accurate and that there are other more effective criteria by which educators can identify at-risk children. Basic indicators include level of competence and concomitant confidence in the use of oral language (Olson, 1983; Wren, 1983).

In 1979 the Ontario Ministry of Education mandated the early identification of young children's needs (Ontario, 1979, 1980, 1983). One recommendation generated by the evaluation

of a ministry-sponsored pilot study of early identification in Windsor stressed that all children identified as high risk or high potential at the junior and senior kindergarten level whose needs were met through the implementation of support strategies would not come under the application of Bill 82 but should still have their needs (though considered temporary) met (O'Bryan, 1979). Since Bill 82 is legislation ensuring that exceptional children receive appropriate programming, this placed early identification under general curriculum policy and guidelines rather than special education. This has had both beneficial and detrimental side effects. Funding is not as readily available for special projects and children not identified as exceptional but in need of intervention are not ensured appropriate programming.

The literature indicates a trend toward ongoing formative evaluation through observation. Certainly Ontario's recent Early Primary Education Project (EPEP) (1985a) report and Shared Discovery (1985b) reflect this. To this end, in response to the Ministry mandate, the school board in question has implemented a developmental checklist to be used in the fall of senior kindergarten. As an adjunct to this, the four educational assistants with responsibility for speech and language have in recent years instituted a language screening of each child. The intent of this assessment is to identify areas where each child may need qualitatively and/or quantitatively differentiated curriculum to meet his/her individual

needs. It is assumed this will lead to such adaptations as grouping within the classroom to facilitate skill development in those exhibiting significant delay. The screening also enables identification of high risk, and to some extent high potential, children who may require further assessment and/or special programming. The checklist lends itself to more comprehensive monitoring of the developmental process of each individual child as it is administered near the beginning of the senior kindergarten year and again, where appropriate, at the end. This program was reviewed in 1986-87. This study assisted in that endeavour.

In the province of Ontario, several other factors work against the development of effective language learning environments. Firstly, there is the disparity of developmental levels of children entering school together. Secondly, it is common practice to expose young school entrants to certain academic skills before achievement of basic proficiency in prerequisite skills. Thirdly, it is possible that the organization of primary education into lock-step chronologically aged grades is inappropriate. Fourthly, programming and staffing procedures are questionable given the dearth of administrators with early childhood education experience and/or training. These concerns are reflected in the literature (Church, 1961; Courtland, 1984; Gettinger, 1984; Hannay & Stevens, 1984; Morgan, Hofstra, Black, & Skinner, 1979).

Importance of Oral Language Proficiency. Evidence of the

relationship between oral language proficiency and academic success suggests the need to generate significant changes in educational practices. In her discussion of research findings of the 1960s and 1970s, Simon (1981) maintains that:

This strong relationship established by researchers among knowledge of morphology and syntax, oral language, auditory processing, and reading skill certainly indicates that children who are experiencing language deficiencies need developmental programming prior to or at least concurrent with their reading instruction. (p.66)

The importance of oral language proficiency and quality nurturing in the early years is becoming recognized as a concern world-wide. The situations in different countries around the world were outlined in the report of the Fourth International Symposium on Learning Problems held in Toronto to discuss early identification and intervention (Ontario, 1982). Great strides are being made in Sweden and research is being conducted in Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Some attempts are being made to provide better initial school experiences for children. The Head Start, developmental kindergarten and transitional class programs in the United States are well known examples (Dale & Ingram, 1981).

Ontario Ministry philosophy has extended the early identification emphasis to include ongoing monitoring of children's progress through classroom observation (Courtland, 1986). This is a reflection of the recognition being given the importance of play (Bergen, 1987; Geller, 1982; Pellegrini, 1986; Tough, 1978, 1979; Weininger, 1979; Westby, 1980,

1986). My study was based on this trend toward more informal and ongoing formative evaluation as presented by Nash (1979) and recommended in Shared Discovery (Ontario, 1985b), the concern shown in the literature for appropriate early identification and resultant programming rather than labelling (Keogh, 1977), the Ministry's encouragement of more emphasis on early childhood in their Early Primary Education Project (EPEP) (Ontario, 1985a) and of the shared discovery approach (Ontario, 1985b), and the decision of the school board in question to evaluate their early identification procedures. The study's focus on oral language is supported by comments in a Provincial Review Report (Ontario, 1986) from the Ontario Ministry of Education which states:

In the context of ministry policies and guidelines for programming, it is questionable whether there are any aspects of curriculum for young children that are not essentially language-based or, at least, language-related. In order to provide teachers with appropriate information on which to base learning opportunities, assessment strategies must reflect the central, holistic, and integrative nature of language and make use of the first-hand, concrete, and personal experiences of the individual child. (p.11)

Educational research in many different areas relates to the concerns addressed in this study. Recent teacher effectiveness research focuses on details of the classroom and on student-teacher interactions (Bickel & Bickel, 1986) and indicates that the teacher is the one most important factor in the student's environment. Other researchers pointed out the danger of labelling as an integral part of early identifica-

tion (Barnsley & Thompson, 1985; Senior, 1986). The substantial amount of literature supporting the reality of this concern has been documented (Madden & Slavin, 1986).

Seefeldt (1985a), Doud & Finkelstein (1985), and Egerston (1987) question kindergarten programming practices, particularly recent trends toward telescoping grade one curriculum into senior kindergarten. The work of Epstein (1981) and Toepfer (1979) on brain growth periodization and studies cited by Anderson, Manoogian and Reznick (1976) call for administrative changes particularly in how students are grouped and the nature of in-service provided for teachers regarding appropriate techniques (Wayman, 1978). This body of literature also points to the need for consultants and specialists at the elementary level especially where attempts are being made to "mainstream" children with special learning needs (Rhodes, 1979).

Parenting and teaching styles/behaviours are important factors in oral language development (Chan, 1981; Wells, 1986). My study focuses upon this phenomenon in an attempt to gain insight into how oral language development in young children can best be maximized prior to their introduction to academics. It was hoped this investigation would suggest instructional strategies which promote oral language competency and confidence in young children and, in so doing, provide them with a firmer footing on which to build all future learning (Benbow & Stanley, 1983; Breen & Breen, 1985).

Educational and social service agencies are becoming increasingly aware of the need to become more involved in assistance to parents of young children both directly and indirectly (through provision of daycare and instruction in parenting) to ensure better quality nurturing of the young (Ontario, 1985a).

A number of factors influence a child's success in school. One very important one is the child's proficiency with oral language (expressive and receptive). It has long been an assumption among educators that oral language development is prerequisite to the development of written (i.e. listening and speaking must precede writing and reading). This is often not reflected in educational practice, however (i.e. a basic proficiency in oral language is not always ensured before a child is expected to engage in writing and reading, processes which involve the understanding of abstract symbols).

Though some contend there is little empirical evidence to support the theory that a basic level of proficiency in oral language is needed in order to acquire other skills (Wiig & Semel, 1980), there seems little question that oral language proficiency is a distinct advantage (Goodman, 1980; Goodman & Goodman, 1980; Olson, 1983; Simner, 1983; Turton, 1975; Wren, 1983) and as such should be of prime concern to those who are care providers of the young.

This study investigated the language learning environment of the senior kindergarten child. It furthers our understand-

ing of how children learn language based on the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Chomsky and Halliday (Donaldson, 1979; Schickedanz & Sullivan, 1984; Thorn, 1974; Tough, 1979; Wells, 1986), and the strategies which are being implemented both at school and at home to promote oral language development.

I decided to conduct an ethnographic study because the design and methods facilitate study of the language process and classroom dynamics and because the approach is consistent with techniques recommended by the Ministry of Education and The Lakehead Board of Education for the ongoing observation of children's language development.

#### Research Design and Methodology

The study was an ethnographic case study conducted in one classroom and focusing on six individuals within that classroom. An emergent design was generated by inductive analysis of data collected through naturalistic observation, interviews and perusal of classroom documents.

#### Definitions

Several definitions are outlined here to clarify the perspective from which the researcher has approached her task.

Language. Language is voiced thought. At the same time, it is also the tool with which we think and learn; simultaneously the precursor and the product of thought. It is a systematic means of communication; in this study a combination of vocabulary, syntax and articulation into recognizable patterns that are used for communication. Language has two



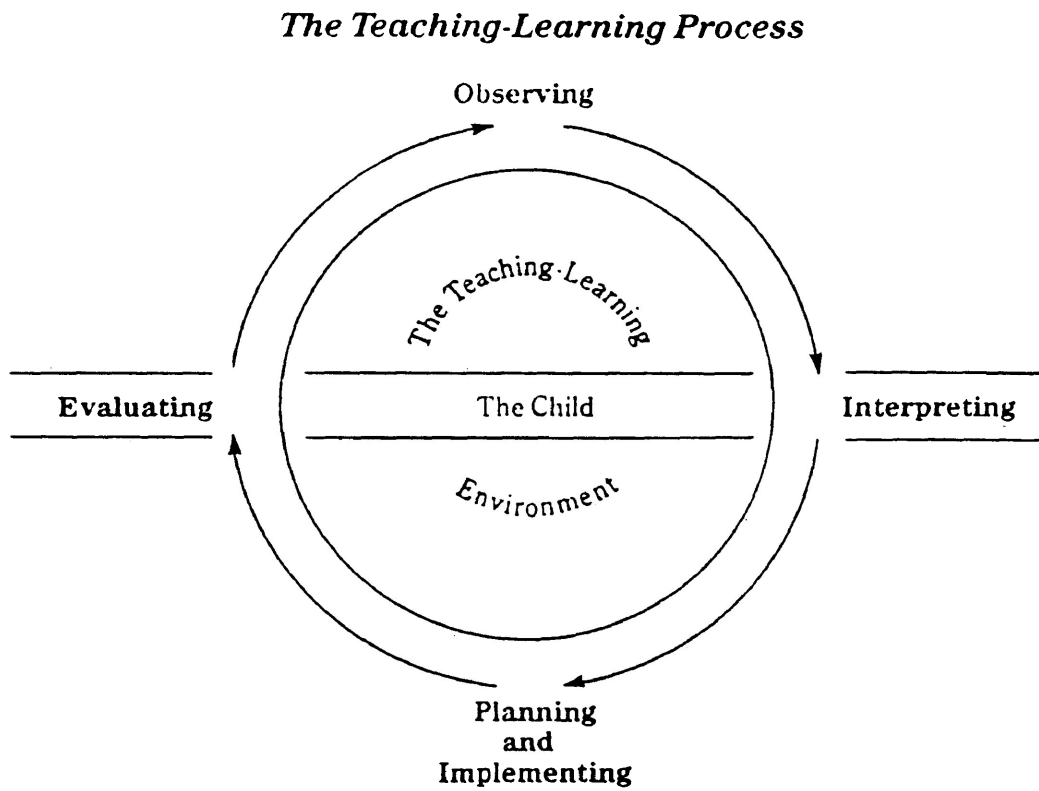
components: expressive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading). The emphasis in this study is on oral expression (speaking).

Environment. For the purpose of this study environment is defined on the basis of the premise that an individual is the sum total of his/her experience. In that context, the environment in which the child learns language has a significant effect on that learning. The community, people, family life style and the classroom curriculum as well as the physical environment of the school and home are all factors in the language learning of the child. The emphasis in this study is on the language learning environment, specifically the classroom environment (see Figure 1), physical and personal.

Junior kindergarten. In Ontario, parents have the option of enrolling their children for two and one-half hours daily in the school year in which they turn four by the first school day in September. Junior kindergarten is not officially a prerequisite for senior kindergarten; it is not offered by all boards of education in Ontario.

Senior kindergarten. Children enrolled in school the year they are five years old by the first school day in September are usually placed in the senior kindergarten level. In most situations this is a half-day (two and one-half hour) program. Similarly, since the mandatory school age in Ontario is age six by the first school day in September (Ontario,

THE LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



from Shared Discovery (Ontario, 1985, p. 12)

1988), children not having attended kindergarten may be enrolled directly in grade one for a full-day program.

Function. Language function in this study refers to the child's ability to use language to his/her own purpose. The taxonomy used is that developed by Staab (1983) and incorporates functions previously developed by Tough (1978) and Halliday (1975).

Early identification. In Ontario, the identification of special learning needs of individual children has been mandated since 1979 (Ontario, 1979). The emphasis has been on early identification and intervention to accommodate individual differences in children. In most cases, there has been a move toward avoidance of labelling and to viewing such needs assessment as curriculum and programming assistance rather than a special education placement function. Many boards, including the one in question, have chosen to use such devices as developmental checklists rather than formal assessment techniques. However, such needs assessments do serve as screening procedures that may lead to further, more formal, evaluation of children during their early school years. The board of education involved in this study has recently expanded the early identification from senior kindergarten to the entire preschool and primary division from junior kindergarten to grade three.

#### Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that:

1. the preschool experiences of kindergarten children vary;
2. parenting affects "readiness";
3. experience (hinging on opportunities for interaction) and intelligence are the two main factors in cognitive/language development, and oral language development, therefore, is affected by both intelligence and environment;
4. lack of oral language facility is a detriment to the development of self-concept and self-confidence which directly affects the acquisition of other skills;
5. the level of oral language development in young children is usually a reliable predictor of general cognitive development;
6. multiple misarticulations are usually an accurate predictor of a general language delay; and
7. for most children in Thunder Bay school entry is kindergarten (arbitrarily senior kindergarten for this study).

#### Significance of Study

This study furthers our understanding of the language learning environment of the senior kindergarten, the program, teaching/parenting behaviours, and assessment. It adds to the store of information available to educators. It is through this understanding that we will gain insights into the type of curricula and teaching practices which effectively monitor and facilitate language development, particularly for children at risk.

### Limitations

This is an ethnographic case study in which the observations are restricted to one site and to six children. This makes generalization situation specific (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). The information contributes to the cumulative body of knowledge relating to oral language development in young children.

Parent behaviours were self-reported and information regarding preschool skill development was dependent on the parent's recall.

### Summary

This chapter has presented the origins and basic premises upon which the study was formulated and has as well briefly outlined the procedures followed and provided definitions to assist the reader in perusal of the study. Chapter Two expands on the rationale. Articles, books and studies relating to early language acquisition, assessment and programming as well as the influence of certain parent and teacher intervention strategies are reviewed. The research design and methodology are discussed in Chapter Three. Findings are discussed in Chapter Four. They include general observations regarding the physical environment and program and language usage within those contexts. Also included are profiles on each of the six students in the purposive sample. Interpretations of the findings are based on the original research questions. Finally, Chapter Five offers conclusions,

implications and recommendations stemming from the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Related Literature

Chapter Two presents the review of related literature and is organized into three sections. The first addresses theories on the nature of language and language learning and the development of the processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It reviews several studies which are conceptually and/or methodologically related to this research study. Then the first section notes the implications of the research on language development for teaching and parenting. The second section discusses the literature on teaching, parenting and the relation between effective language use and school achievement. The final section presents the Ontario context; the initiatives and programs which have been developed on the basis of what is currently known about the nature of language and language learning.

#### Language and Its Importance

Language is a social instrument or tool that helps human beings live, work and play together. It is the mutually agreed-upon arbitrary vocal symbol system developed by a culture to communicate. A language system is comprised of four sub-systems: graphophonemic, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic. All of these are interrelated and interdependent. The first three are structural components (sounds, meaning and grammar) and the fourth deals with the functional component (uses) of language (Lindfors, 1985; Pinnell, 1985).

### Components of Language

Basic sounds or phonemes (thirty six in English) are combined to form morphemes, strings of sounds that convey meaning. Morphemes are not always words but are often combined to form words. The rules for combining words into acceptable phrases and sentences are the syntax of a language and the grammar is a formal description of syntactic rules. Semantics refers to the expressed meanings of words and sentences and has at least two components (appropriate use of words in social contexts and in sentences). Pragmatics deals with the use of language appropriate to the situation. "Linguistic competence exceeds language performance" with the child often knowing a rule but unable to use it (Yussen & Santrock, 1978, p.254).

### Language and Language Programs

Language is a total system (Clay, 1986; Goodman, 1986; Jaggar & Smith-Burke, 1985; Tough, 1978; Wells, 1986) involving four processes: listening and speaking (for speech communication) and reading and writing (for print communication). A curriculum emphasizing speech and neglecting print or vice versa is inappropriate. Much of written language is dependent on the oral language skills both of the writer and the reader and oral language skills continue to become more sophisticated as an individual becomes acquainted with the written form of his language.

To provide support for language development, the effec-



tive curriculum provides experiences for students which involve them in meaningful or authentic language tasks. The language processes in such programs are used simultaneously, rather than separately. Lynch (1982) suggests that "language is indivisible and should be taught, learned and practised that way from the primary grades through university" (p.3).

There is considerable evidence that integrated programs are not the norm. Lynch (1982) states that findings of the 1979 National Inquiry into the Arts in Education in Canada, a two-year study conducted by the Canadian Council of the Arts in Education,

show that with few exceptions (one of these being the College of Cape Breton, Sydney), schools, colleges and universities across Canada are seriously neglecting, if not totally ignoring, the study and practice of language as speech. (p.4)

She notes that this does not acknowledge the most important instrument or tool human beings will ever learn to use and violates "both the social nature of man, and the social nature of language" (p.4).

#### Early Language Development

The development of language is closely related to the development of thought. Metalinguistics or children's understanding of language develops along with their production and use of language.

Hixon, Shriberg and Saxman (1980) have contributed to our understanding of early language development. They describe the normal stages of development. Children move from

vocalizations to verbalizations, from crying to vowel-like noncrying sounds (both reflexive rather than intentional) to a more varied babbling in the second six months of life. The prelinguistic knowledge about language develops to the point "that by the age of one year the child knows a great deal about how language is used to signal the different roles and relationships of persons in his environment" (p.10).

The next stage of expressive language development would be production of jargon which copies the cadence and rhythm. It is the child's practice of fluency and conveys emotional content but sounds like nonsense. Two-word utterances of modifier and noun; operator and lexical (vocabulary) item such as "Here chair." or "Want cookie." usually appear at between sixteen and twenty months. Three words are combined to describe ideas of events such as "Daddy go bye-bye." at twenty-one and twenty-two months.

Language processing and comprehension skills are developing at the same time. Between seventeen and thirty months, children point to pictures of objects such as a cup, chair, star or table on request and can label related objects such as socks, pants, or shirt. Between sixteen and thirty months, children discriminate between two related requests such as "Give me the cup; give me the plate." At twenty-three and twenty-four months children will respond to simple requests such as "Show me ..., Pick up ..., Give Mommy ...", point to body parts and respond to questions for biographical and other

information such as "What is your name?" and "What does a cow say?" At the same time, the children have discarded jargon, decreased sound and word repetition (echolalia), refer to self by proper name and produce sentences with from two to four words.

Prepositions such as "to, in, on, under" are understood by twenty-two to thirty-two months. By three years of age most children identify pictured objects when their function is indicated such as in "Show me the one that you wear." or "Point to the one that you eat." By this age speech quickly gains sophistication and children can tell their own sex, indicate age by holding up fingers, count to three, and repeat five to seven syllable sentences, two to three nonsense syllables, and two to three digits.

Most three year old children can give the use of common objects and produce phrases and sentences with personal pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, and/or adverbs. Spoken vocabulary would also include regular noun pronouns and most of the vowels and diphthongs would be properly articulated as well as the consonants: /p,b,m,w,t,d,n,h/. Many other consonants may be heard at times but use is not consistent; errors of omission, substitution, and distortion may occur. Ninety percent of speech should be readily understood.

A three year old speaks in short sentences and has a vocabulary of about nine hundred words. By age five all speech should be understandable and /k,g,f,v/ sounds used with

fair consistency except in blends such as /gr,cl,st/. The amount of spontaneous speech varies with environment and experience. By six /l,s,z,ch,sh,r/ begin to show themselves regularly and by seven the child should be speaking standard English.

### Language Difficulties and Disorders

Some children enter school, however, lacking the expected competency (Clark, 1975). A kindergarten class may have a wide range of language proficiency levels (Hillerich, 1981). Language delays may occur in preschoolers for many different reasons. The most common communication disorder among school age children is in articulation or the ability to produce speech sounds correctly. An articulation impairment may be one or more of three types: omissions, substitutions, and distortions. The cause may be either an organic or a functional problem. Organic causes result in a physical inability to produce sounds correctly. Some organic causes are: hearing loss, cleft lip and palate, and cerebral palsy. Articulation disorders may be functional in origin where the child has the physical capability to produce the sound correctly but does not. Poor speech models and poor speech production habits are the most common functional causes. Organic causes require the intervention of a speech pathologist to provide therapy and/or assist teachers in designing educational programs which address the particular needs of the individual child (Hixon et al., 1980).

Other communication disorders requiring the intervention of medical personnel (audiologists, speech pathologists, physicians and surgeons) are voice disorders and disorders of speech flow. Pitch, intensity or quality characteristics of the voice atypical for the speaker's age or sex may occur as problems of breathing (abnormal breathing patterns during speech), phonation (difficulty in the larynx causing breathiness, hoarseness, monotone and inappropriate pitch), or resonance (impaired quality of sound: nasal or denasal). Causes of voice disorders can again be either organic or functional. Physiological changes in the body as the result of diseases such as cancer, emphysema, severe allergies, or asthma, growths on vocal folds (tumours, vocal nodules, and polyps), cleft palate and hearing loss can affect the voice. Functional disorders where there is no physical problem causing the disorder include: improper usage of breathing, sound production, or vocal quality mechanism and are characterized by too high or low pitch, too loud or too soft intensity, nasality, and hoarseness or huskiness (Hixon et al., 1980).

Dysfluency or stuttering is characterized by behaviours that interfere with forward-moving speech and are considered abnormal by the listener. These may include repetitions, prolongations and other behaviours as well as secondary characteristics such as jerking movements and slapping the knee. Cluttering is a term used for a variety of presumably

neurological conditions that can affect fluency, rhythm and rate. Cluttering behaviours are often difficult to separate from stuttering. The basic differences in clutterers are evidence of a central language imbalance and characteristic indifference to the speech problem. A fourth of the research done in this area was done in the decade of the seventies and it is hoped clinicians will soon be able to predict which type of stutterer will best profit from which type of therapy (Hixon et al., 1980).

Language disorders may occur in either expressive (initiation) or receptive (response) mode. The child may have difficulty with any one or more of several facets of oral language such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence memory, or sociolinguistics: the more functional aspects of language. While articulation, voice and fluency have more affect on the social aspects of the child's development including their self-concept and their willingness to participate and take risks, language disorders often have a more direct affect on the academic process as language is the tool by which most people not only learn but show others what they have learned (Clay, 1984).

#### The Movement Toward Whole Language

In the mid-1970s a shift occurred in the nature of the research questions which researchers were asking about language development and language processes (Bush & Giles, 1975). New questions challenged researchers to explore

research designs which were congruent with the new questions (Weir & Benegar, 1985). Thus, Goodman and Goodman began to study the reading process with readers engaged in the act of reading. Working independently and with graduate students such as Carolyn Burke, they began to develop new insights into the reading process, for example, the concept of "miscues" (Goodman & Goodman, 1980), and to generate theories of the reading process (Goodman, 1980; Goodman, 1986). Their work on reading evolved towards a holistic emphasis and sparked a new direction for reading research. Researchers followed their lead away from the hierarchical arrangement of skills derived from analysis of the processes used by mature readers to examination of teachers' instructional assumptions (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) and those of young learners. Attention was focused as well on the analysis of the various instructional models, old and new, and on what was known of cognitive development and language learning.

In presenting his perception of whole language and its legacy for the 1990s, Pearson (1988) identified commonalities among the various interpretations of the whole language approach. In his perusal, as an informed observer from outside the movement, of the works of the Goodmans, Harste, Burke, Clay and others, Pearson found a consensus on fifteen different characteristics.

. As an approach to language instruction/learning, whole language is natural rather than unnatural. The use of

language experience and children's literature rather than basal readers is preferable because pre-primers do not contain the language children use.

Whole language is functional as opposed to dysfunctional. One should never ask a child to engage in a literacy activity without a clear purpose other than the one that says, "Do it because I told you to." Language activities should be for enjoyment and information.

. Whole language teachers is authentic and genuine while basals are stereotypic. Meaning does not reside in printed words. Children and teacher should talk through the story together and retell stores.

. Whole language is contextualized. Reading and writing cannot be divorced from the context in which they occur without confusing children as to their function.

. The whole language approach to teaching/learning is empowering. It is a grass roots political movement with decision making at the classroom level and less power resting with administrators and publishers.

. Whole language is integrated and interdependent. Various literacy skills and other language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening are simply different facets of the same phenomenon. Learning any one process promotes learning in the others.

This approach has a personal or social dimension. Every act or creation of meaning is personal. To share



meaning we have to agree upon what we mean and, through that agreement, communicate with each other.

Whole language is indivisible and holistic. In divisible and componential theory (skill teaching) reading is a complex process, easy to take apart and not easy to put back together.

. The curricular perspective of whole language is that language is an integral part of all subject areas even Art. In other words, reading is not something to be taught during a specific daily time period.

. Using the whole language approach involves relevance and ownership. The former leads to the latter. Pearson finds this theory a throw-back to 1) the British Infant School Movement of a decade and a half ago, 2) the journal Progressive Education published from 1900 to 1954, and 3) the philosophy of John Dewey.

. Whole language theory has an epistemological perspective. There is tension between the battles for personal and social meanings; between logical positivist theory (There is a real world out there.) and the phenomenological perspective (There is no phenomenon unless there is someone to experience the phenomenon.). Everyone has a right to his/her own interpretation, but there are also social (shared) meanings.

. Whole language proponents believe that meaning does not reside in text. The text on the page is an epiphenomenal mixture of ink and paper; there is no "text" (meaning) until

someone reads it. Pearson finds this in keeping with the thinking of semioticians such as Umberto Eco.

. The whole language movement is political. It deals with the question of who controls the curriculum and maintains that teachers and students ought to have a lot more power.

. The movement also deals with teachers as reflective and reflexive learners. The first thing about what they do; the second are able to turn in on themselves and look at themselves from the outside.

. Whole language teachers provide authentic texts and assignments. Students must engage in functional language activities with purpose using the kind of language "real" people use.

Pearson (1988) suggests that the whole language movement has had the most effect on the teaching profession since the question of whether to teach reading by the phonics or whole word method. As do many others, however, he tends to emphasize the written mode and neglect the importance of speaking and listening.

There is much research which contributes to our understanding of language. Included are studies done on the function of language, young children's reading and writing and on cognitive/language development in early childhood.

A number of researchers have studied language development in terms of function of language. Halliday (1975) observed his son Nigel's development from birth through age twenty-four

months. He classified Nigel's speech into three stages comprising two classes: 1) mathetic or learning; and 2) pragmatic or demands for response. He then used seven categories of functions to identify development during the three stages. During stage 1, from nine to sixteen months, instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions were used. Between sixteen and a half and eighteen months, stage 2, Nigel began using the heuristic function. At stage 3, eighteen months, the imaginative and informative functions were added. Halliday stressed the point that form follows function.

## FIGURE 2

### HALLIDAYS' FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

#### Classifications of Intention

1. instrumental or "I want"
2. regulatory or "do as I tell you"
3. interactional or "me and you"
4. personal or "here I come"
5. heuristic or "tell me why"
6. imaginative or "let's pretend"
7. informative or "I have something to tell you"

from Assessing children's language in naturalistic contexts

(Lund & Duchan, 1980, p.49)

Halliday's research provides a framework for the dis-

cussion of the development of language and metalinguistics. He divides the continuum of language learning beginning at age one and ending with the adult system into three phases. The outstanding feature of the first is function. In the second, or transitional phase, two more functions emerge: the pragmatic or language as doing performed in an intruder role and the mathetic or language as learning performed in an observer role. The third year begins the third phase and the beginning of the adult system. It is characterized by two basic functions: ideational arising from the mathetic and interpersonal arising from the pragmatic. A third function, the textual, serves the other two (Hixon et al., 1980).

Dore (1974), working from a different framework but still studying the single-word stage of development, identified the following nine classifications of intent: labelling, repeating, answering, requesting action, requesting answer, calling, greeting, protesting, and practising. In a later study of older preschoolers' utterances, Dore (1979) produced a more encompassing classification system which fitted intentions into a broader theory of conversational acts. He incorporated theory, conversational characteristics and grammatical structure. His three primary functions include: conveying content, regulating conversation, and expressing attitudes and are modeled after those suggested by Bühler (1934): propositional, evocative, and expressive.

Tough (1978) has provided considerable useful material on

the evaluation and programming aspects of early language development. Much of this evolved from her involvement as director of the Schools Council Communication Skills in Early Childhood Project, School of Education, University of Leeds in Great Britain. Tough expanded on the work of earlier researchers to develop a framework for fostering children's use of language. This incorporated seven categories: self-maintaining, directing, reporting, reasoning, predicting, projecting, and imagining. Tough's classifications of language usage which served as the conceptual codes in the data analysis of children's functions of language in this study are outlined in Figure 3.

Staab (1983) used Tough's categories in designing strategies and activities to encourage the pragmatic skill development in young children. Her suggestions were used when analyzing the teacher interventions and learning activities observed in the classroom under study.

The research on language suggests that language is learned in meaningful contexts. Young children are immersed in context-specific language situations which support meaning-making. Language is a social event. Children learn language through interaction with others (Furrow, Nelson, & Benedict, 1979; Ginott, 1965; Savic, 1979; Weiss & Gray, 1985). Over time, they construct the implicit rules, the cuing systems, which govern their use of language. Wells (1986) and Harste (1984) argue that socio-economic status (SES) is not the

**A framework for fostering children's use of language**

**1 Self-maintaining**

*Strategies*

- 1 Referring to physical and psychological needs and wants.
- 2 Protecting the self and self-interests.
- 3 Justifying behaviour or claims.
- 4 Criticizing others.
- 5 Threatening others.

**2 Directing**

*Strategies*

- 1 Monitoring own actions.
- 2 Directing the actions of the self.
- 3 Directing the actions of others.
- 4 Collaborating in action with others.

**3 Reporting on present and past experiences**

*Strategies*

- 1 Labelling the components of the scene.
- 2 Referring to detail (e.g. size, colour and other attributes).
- 3 Referring to incidents.
- 4 Referring to the sequence of events.
- 5 Making comparisons.
- 6 Recognizing related aspects.
- 7 Making an analysis using several of the features above.
- 8 Extracting or recognizing the central meaning.
- 9 Reflecting on the meaning of experiences, including own feelings.

**4 Towards logical reasoning**

*Strategies*

- 1 Explaining a process.

- 2 Recognizing causal and dependent relationships.
- 3 Recognizing problems and their solutions.
- 4 Justifying judgments and actions.
- 5 Reflecting on events and drawing conclusions.
- 6 Recognizing principles.

**5 Predicting\***

*Strategies*

- 1 Anticipating and forecasting events.
- 2 Anticipating the detail of events.
- 3 Anticipating a sequence of events.
- 4 Anticipating problems and possible solutions.
- 5 Anticipating and recognizing alternative courses of action.
- 6 Predicting the consequences of actions and events.

**6 Projecting\***

*Strategies*

- 1 Projecting into the experiences of others.
- 2 Projecting into the feelings of others.
- 3 Projecting into the reactions of others.
- 4 Projecting into situations never experienced.

**7 Imagining\***

*Strategies*

- 1 Developing an imaginary situation based on real life.
- 2 Developing an imaginary situation based on fantasy.
- 3 Developing an original story.

\*Strategies that serve *directing*, *reporting* and *reasoning* serve these uses also.

from Talking and Learning (Tough, 1979, p.23)

determining factor in effective language use; instead, language use is related to the quality of literacy encounters experienced by children. Wells (1986) concludes that the children in his longitudinal study who were most successful in terms of school achievement were those who, in the preschool and early school years, appreciated the literacy functions and had opportunities to: 1) use language for a variety of purposes; 2) interact with others; 3) hear stories read and to read stories themselves; and 4) write in a risk-free environment to test their hypotheses. These observations pose significant implications for parents and teachers responsible for the language learning environment of young children and the tenure that much of the child's curriculum, formal and informal, should be language-oriented (Dale & Ingram, 1981).

#### Teaching and Parenting Behaviours as They Relate to Language Development

Much attention has been devoted to early childhood education in the last three decades due in part to the technological advances which grew out of the Second World War and in part to the considerable increase in numbers of children born during the post-war years (Webster, 1984). However, this increased interest in the nurturing of young children is not reflected in the amount of research in the field. Where articles in popular magazines and professional journals have increased (Webster, 1984), the amount of scientific research being conducted in the field is relatively

less (Dale & Ingram, 1981; Fox, 1983; Gallagher & Sanders, 1980; Staab, 1983). Only four ERIC (Educational Resources Information Centre) studies in the past twenty years dealt specifically with language development and parenting in relation to school achievement at the primary level (Kaufman, 1972; Kifer, 1977; Kravetz & Phillips, 1969; Webster, 1984). These four resources as well as Bogdan & Biklen (1982) were instrumental to the development of the content and format of the parent interview guide used in this study. Variables affecting the young preschooler were generated from these sources and others (Chan, 1981; Thom, 1978).

#### Home

Webster (1984) dealt with the apparent shift of parent expectations for pre-school children in the United States. She described an observational study of three preschool classes (Head Start, nursery school and kindergarten) and the results of a survey sent to the parents of children in the South Dakota Project Head Start, a day care centre and the nursery school setting. Classroom observation revealed the academic nature of all three situations. Reading groups and simple arithmetic worksheets were observed in use in the kindergarten. Instruction in number concepts, shapes, colours and writing numerals was given to students in the Head Start classroom. The reading of language experience stories was an activity observed in the private preschool. Survey results indicated that parents of three and four year olds perceive



not only traditional play experiences but also beginning reading, writing and mathematics, and learning to sit still, listen attentively and do seat work as prerequisite to entering kindergarten. Webster considered this a reflection of a national shift in parent expectations, one that should be addressed by early childhood educators.

Research in the late 50s and early 60s clearly demonstrated the possibility of the very young child's mastery of such complex learnings as the abilities to read and to master complex mathematical concepts (Leeper, Dales, Skipper & Witherspoon, 1974). Along with affluence and the complexity of a technological society came a situation where those persons without special skills and advanced education were greatly disadvantaged. Many children coming from disadvantaged homes were often two to three years retarded at school entrance and researchers found that those lacking the learning environment common to middle-class children found the gap hard to bridge (Garvey, 1984). This resulted in a renewed interest in the young child on the part of the schools, parents and society. This interest has accelerated recently (Webster, 1984). However, most parents seeking preschool experiences for their child believed the services offered by play schools, day care centres, nursery schools and kindergartens were equal. Webster argued that such diverse experiences can lead to further differentiation in skill development acquired by school entrance (Hillerich, 1978, 1981).

Kravetz (1969) evaluated a special pre-kindergarten to grade two program in New York which was designed to provide an overlay of staff and services to those provided in other poverty area school projects. The stated objectives of the program included academic achievement, parental involvement and better communication among the grades with an emphasis on reading and speech. A direct relationship was found between parental interest and involvement and the success of the program.

Kifer (1977) reviewed the literature on the influence of home and school environments on learning in children. He cited studies such as that done by White (1975) which support the hypothesis that the home environment is the major predictor of school achievement.

### Home and School

A number of studies address the importance of early language development to achievement in school: Wren's (1983) discussion of oral language as the key to successful reading; Donaldson's (1979) rethinking of Piagetian theory and investigation into research on metacognition and metalinguistics; Almy's and Genishi's (1979) report on recent intellectual development theories; and Wells' (1986) report on a longitudinal British study. All point to the importance of qualitative nurturing of the young at home and at school. These works have provided support and inspiration for much of the theoretical framework on which this thesis is based.

The way adults were reared carries over into the relationship with their own children. They often treat their own children as they were treated or, resenting the way they were treated, attempt to treat their children differently. The manner chosen becomes all important if, in fact, readiness for reading depends on nature, nurture, maturity and training. Regarding the importance of qualitative nurturing, Almy (1964) said:

Intelligence, rather than being fixed by genetic factors at birth, emerges as it is nurtured. Each stage of development carries with it possibilities for the acquisition of new abilities, new ways of processing information. Unless each of these abilities is sufficiently exercised as it emerges, it will not develop fully and it will contribute little if at all to the demands of the next stage. (p.4)

Almy's (1964, 1979) research on the relationship between cognitive growth and language and Nash's (1979) research on the relationship between play and language development were incorporated into the theoretical framework of recent Ontario Ministry of Education support documents such as Shared Discovery (Ontario, 1985b).

Donaldson (1979) cited considerable research paralleling and elaborating on that of Piaget. Where Piaget considered language and thought as separate, she argued that language plays a major role in cognitive development.

Olson (1983) based much of his recent work involving the relationship of thought and language on the assumption that children's talk indicates when transfer to reading is appro-

priate. This supports the readiness factor presented by Wren (1983). Thorn (1974) also supports the shift to studying language development not in isolation but in relation to thought and learning.

Several studies have shown the effects parenting and teaching behaviours can have on children's language development (Cardosa-Martins & Mervis, 1985; Cavanagh, 1979; Chan, 1981; Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985; Wells, 1986). There seems to be considerable support of the notion that much of the child's curriculum, formal and informal, should be language-oriented (Dale & Ingram, 1981).

Many call for the study and teaching of language in meaningful context (Donaldson, 1979; Schickedanz & Sullivan, 1984; Wells, 1986) and language research of the past decade urges us to focus less on the form of language and more on its social function and meaning (Pinnell, 1985). The parent survey and interview questions in this study were designed to assess the part this type of activity has played in the early experiences of the group under study.

Many researchers suggest ways in which parents and teachers can enhance the language learning of the child (Brewster, 1976). Beaver (1982) suggests that children's reading and rereading a quantity and variety of books results in a positive change in rate of language development. Geller (1982) extols the value of poetry in exposing children to the sounds and rhythm of language. In a 1974-79 New York study of

word play possibilities she found that play with verbal nonsense is very significant in early childhood years and that the primary motive in the succeeding age/stage of development is the potential for ambiguity in the English language. This points to the value of the use of nonsense poetry, humour and word games as motivational devices in language lessons (Petty, Petty & Becking, 1985; Wood, 1985). Whitin (1983) advocates the use of Mother Goose to meet children's aesthetic needs in terms of the sounds of language. She notes that the child's love of the sound of language precedes understanding.

### School

Some researchers investigating teacher behaviours have articulated observations about the influence of teacher behaviour on language development. Dillon (1983) urges teachers to increase opportunities for language usage in the classroom and Boomer (1985) has definite ideas about what the ideal classroom for language development would be. Teachers are the key component in any program from the way they arrange the environment and the materials and techniques they choose to use to the underlying philosophy upon which their decisions are based. This is especially true today in an era when individual teachers have more autonomy than they have had for more than half a century. Regan (1985) and Biemiller (1986) conducted longitudinal studies of how primary teachers perceive their students and found that teachers' views of children tended to focus more on undesirable characteristics

than on desirable ones. Biemiller (1986) discovered that the kindergarten teachers' perceptions of children's academic achievement, self-direction, risk taking ability, resistance to distraction and language persisted with succeeding classroom teachers until grade four. This finding points to the need for careful and informed observation during the early identification process. Most of these findings were supported by the provincial authorities in recent reports such as EPEP (Ontario, 1985a) and support documents such as Shared Discovery (Ontario, 1985b).

#### Disadvantaged

The concept of "readiness" is problematic to establishing a supportive language-learning environment. Sirkka-Liisa Rauramo began monitoring the school careers of three groups of children in 1980. Her early findings indicated "personality factors" (verbal I.Q., psychological well-being, self-concept) accounted for 55 percent, and environmental factors in the home and family accounted for 26 percent of the children's reading achievement (Seifert, 1984).

Oral language is the principal symbol system accessible to the preschool child (Donaldson, 1979; Wren, 1983) and underprivileged or bilingual homes often produce school entrants with relatively inadequate language skills (Bernstein, 1961; Wren, 1983). Wren also differentiates between the terms "different" and "deficient" (p.106) often used to describe the language of inner city children. Many children

are language delayed due to lack of stimulation; others have different dialects due to different experiences and/or environments (Cardosa-Martins & Mervis, 1985; Garvey, 1984); and some have organic or functionally caused language disorders or speech impediments.

Wren (1983) identifies three groups of factors which are crucial to reading skill acquisition: "(1) the nature of reading or learning to read, (2) the child and his/her background, and (3) the method of instruction" (p.102). She notes the need to be skilled in auditory analysis of words prior to mapping sounds onto visual symbols and the importance of having a broad base of grammatical knowledge prior to decoding and comprehending; that "reading requires language on multiple cognitive levels" (p.103). In summary she argues that reading is a complex group of skills that may be taxing to the average child and overwhelming to the culturally, economically or linguistically disadvantaged, a belief supported by Bernstein (1961).

Simner (1983) outlined how most traditional warning signs of school failure showed only marginal correlations with subsequent reading achievement. He concluded that there are five effective warning signs of school failure:

1. in-class attention span, distractibility, or memory span,
2. in-class verbal fluency,
3. in-class interest or participation,
4. letter or number identification skills, and
5. printing errors. (p.14)

Although Simner maintained that basic language skills

(i.e. oral vocabulary and labelling, identification of colours and parts of the body, correct spoken grammar and fine auditory discrimination) are not, as previously thought, necessarily good predictors of school success, it is interesting to note that his first three indicators all have verbal/self-concept/confidence components. This would indicate that receptive and expressive language are important factors in academic readiness. Also his data indicated that labelling or word finding did, in fact, have a correlation of .54 with school achievement. A correlation of .50 was used as the criterion for identification of effective warning signs.

#### The Ontario Context

Such findings may have contributed to changes in Ontario educators' approach to early childhood. Recent Ministry policies and support documents are based on research on child development, language development and recognition of the need to provide services to those at risk.

The recently distributed Report of the Early Primary Education Project (EPEP) (Ontario, 1985a) touches on several matters pertinent to this study. It supports many of the statements made in previous studies such as Living and Learning (1968), a controversial document often referred to as the "Hall/Dennis Report" and viewed by many as the antithesis of the "grey book", the Programme of Studies for Grades 1 to 6 (Ontario, 1938), from the late thirties to the early sixties. Dennis' thought-provoking work led to the present



curriculum documents and to the teachers' federations commissioning a study of primary education reported in To Herald a Child (LaPierre, 1980). This, in turn, prompted the Report of the Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade One Task Force (Ontario, 1983).

Of particular relevance to this project are the problems brought to light by the 1983 study and reiterated in the most recent report:

1. the discrepancy between the philosophies and practices that prevail in the kindergarten years and those in Grade 1,
2. the lack of organized, cooperative planning by teachers,
3. the dearth of in-service programs, and
4. the displacement, due to staff redundancy, of highly qualified early childhood teachers by those with greater seniority but fewer qualifications. (p.32)

In discussing challenges for the future, the EPEP report states that "parents are the first educators and have a powerful influence on their children" (p.24). It goes on to say the "involvement of parents on a continuous basis is particularly important in the processes of early and ongoing identification and program planning" (p.25) but that economic pressure, lack of familiarity with the system and unsuccessful experiences in their own formal education may keep those

parents whose help is most needed from visiting the school (p.26). The report calls for "a real effort to shift emphasis from remediation to prevention and enrichment" (p.26), a position strongly supported by Keogh and Becker (Keogh, 1977; Keogh & Becker, 1973).

EPEP devotes several pages to "Linking School and Community Services to Support the Family" (p.52-65). Recommendation 28 recommends the establishment of Family Resource Centres and addresses the need for parenting skills, suggesting that Ministry-funded courses be offered by schools under Continuing Education provisions (p.61). This study may facilitate the liaison between agencies by identifying some of the more effective parenting/teaching behaviours related to development of oral language skills.

A 1981 report, Learning Abilities: Identification and Intervention Practices, presents findings of a Ministry of Education study. All school boards in Ontario were surveyed to determine present early identification practices, the intervention programs in operation for children with special needs and to collect a representative sample of identification and intervention materials. Over 80 percent of Ontario boards had a common focus explicit or implicit to all or most of their stated goals in that they all "linked the identification of potentially 'at risk' children to the implementation of preventative and compensatory programming" (Ontario, 1981, p.25). Some concern was expressed that the new identification

procedures and materials focused on the traditional readiness characteristics of motor, sensory, perceptual, language, cognitive and socio-emotional development. The issue of how a child learns or approaches the school situation was secondary and addressed only after identification had taken place.

In addition to the primary thrust which was to gather information regarding early identification of learning disabilities in Ontario, the commission sought to identify major trends, emphases and issues in the field from an international perspective. The report discusses research in the other Canadian provinces, Britain and the United States. One chapter is devoted to this wider field and outlines in every case the development of a similar deficit model resulting from standardized testing's inadequacy in a diagnostic-prescriptive sense (Ontario, 1981).

#### Need for Change in Assessment and Programming Practices

Recent literature pertaining to early language development as a result of environment and as a prerequisite to academic achievement then, would lead one to believe that more emphasis should be placed on identifying and improving individual children's level of development and skills acquisition (Good & Beckerman, 1978; Nurss & Hough, 1985). The inadequacy of quantitative analysis particularly where normed tests are used with very young children (Almy & Genishi, 1979; Simner, 1983) points to the need for more inclusion of the observation and interviewing techniques of the qualitative and

naturalistic approaches to research (Weininger, 1979; Westby, 1986). Support documents such as Shared Discovery (Ontario, 1985b) assist teachers in adapting their curricula to meet this need. The following chapter explains how these methods were used in studying the language learning environment of one senior kindergarten classroom.

## CHAPTER THREE

## Research Design and Methodology

Design

This study investigated the language learning environment of the senior kindergarten child by focusing firstly, on the children and the contexts in which they use language in the classroom and secondly, on the teaching process. Attention was directed to the functions of language used in informal play/social situations (Tough, 1979; Wells, 1986; Westby, 1980, 1986), scheduled classroom activities, teacher interventions, interviews and spontaneous conversation.

The study was comprised of two phases (see Appendices A and B) with data collection through observation occurring during the winter term of the 1986-87 school year. Through observation, interviews and analysis of documents the researcher addressed research questions centring around opportunities for oral language usage, how proficient and non-proficient language users differ in participation and language function and what teaching/parenting strategies appear to enhance language development.

Research Questions

1. What opportunities does the senior kindergarten program provide for oral language usage both in the physical and social contexts?

2. How do more proficient and less proficient language users differ in availing themselves of these opportunities?

3. What functions of language do the children use to communicate?

4. What differences exist in the functions of language used by more proficient and less proficient language users?

5. What strategies does the teacher use to observe/evaluate a child's oral language development?

6. What modifications does the teacher make to her program on the basis of on-going observations of children's language development (i.e. new experiences, centres, interactions with children, resource people, materials and other resources)?

7. What parenting/teaching behaviours contribute to oral language development in young children?

a) Is there some commonality in parenting styles of those senior kindergarten students who enter school with a higher than average degree of facility with oral language?

b) What opportunities does the senior kindergarten program provide for oral language acquisition? (i.e. What teaching strategies does the teacher use to facilitate oral language development?)

### Sample

All 50 kindergarten students in the school, 25 in each of the morning and afternoon classes, were respondents in Phase I. From these, three high functioning and three low functioning language users in the morning class were chosen for more in-depth study using classroom observation and interviewing

strategies (Phase II).

### Design

A naturalistic design was chosen to investigate the problem. The design of the study was emergent and contained two phases. Phase I included observation of morning and afternoon kindergarten classes to select a theoretical/purposive (Lincoln & Guba, 1981) sampling of children for Phase II and the analysis of documents collected by the school in accordance with board policy for screening senior kindergarten children. The documents included:

1. The Lakehead Board of Education Early Identification Developmental Checklist (see Appendix C1)
2. the speech/language screening: vocabulary test and language sample (see Appendix C2)
3. registration information available in the Ontario School Record Card (OSR)

Information from the OSR, speech/language screen, classroom displays and worksheets and notes to parents were valuable supplements to observations made in the classroom and information gained through interviews.

Phase II methods included observations of the theoretical/purposive sample of six children during large and small group activities in the classroom, the development of a profile of each respondent, interviews with their parents and the development of a two-part survey questionnaire for parents of the six respondents. Interview questions and other

naturalistic techniques employed in the field study were developed as the design emerged from data collected.

A process log was maintained throughout the study to facilitate use of an emergent design. Changes made to the design were based on decisions arising from a constant-comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the data as the study progressed. The ongoing analysis pointed to the expansion of data through such activities as interviews with other individuals in the setting.

Two questionnaires (see Appendices D1 and D2) were developed from a list of variables (Thom, 1978) affecting preschool child development. The variables had been generated by several studies involving parental input through questionnaires (Kaufman, 1972; Kifer, 1977; Kravetz & Phillips, 1969; Webster, 1984) and an Ontario study of characteristics of children at school entry (Ontario, 1979). The parent interviews using the questionnaires were piloted and revised prior to distribution.

The survey, a quantitative data technique, fulfilled in this study a naturalistic inquiry role (Andis, 1982). It was used to expand the data on individual students, assist in codification of data and to identify specific concerns to be addressed in the parent and teacher interviews.

### Field Entry

Prior to beginning the study I obtained permission to take an educational leave. One member of the board's educa-



tional leave committee, an elementary school principal, asked that his school be involved in the study. The reputation of this school as progressive made it a logical choice when I narrowed my student to one school from my original plan of using all board senior kindergartens in Phase I and a sample of six for Phase II. It was then a matter of his enlisting the kindergarten teacher's support.

A subsequent meeting was held in June 1986 with the classroom teacher, principal, vice-principal and speech/language teacher at which the design for the study was outlined and the support and cooperation of all concerned confirmed. Tentative plans were made to meet again with the teacher to discuss the matter further, especially my presentation at her "meet the teacher" parent meeting in September.

At the initial meeting with the teacher, she expressed the concern that my presence in the classroom be made as unobtrusive as possible. Since she had a well-organized parent volunteer program, it was suggested that I carry out some of the duties normally performed by them so that I would have a recognized role in the classroom. It was also agreed that for the portion of the elementary school year following cessation of university classes I serve as a volunteer for part of the day. This would also give me an opportunity to further peruse school records and consult with staff. The teacher also requested my assistance in designing a math/language centre for her to add to her curriculum the next year.

In retrospect, the dual role as researcher and resource person was difficult to accomplish with in-class sessions draining valuable time that could have been used for data analysis.

At the meeting with parents in September I explained the study to them and answered questions.

### Methodology

#### Process Log

A process log was kept to document an emergent design generated by the constant-comparative method of data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A notebook was used to record the emergent design of the study. Included were ongoing theoretical reflections on the study, observations, readings and the resulting decisions. Daily observations in the classroom were recorded as well as any relevant information gleaned from readings and course work. Records were also kept of frequent sessions with the faculty advisor who also served as thesis committee chairperson. Some log entries were composed directly on the computer when convenient. The timeline was updated on a regular basis. The process log served as both a record of events as well as a device to facilitate decision-making as the work progressed.

#### Data Collection

Field notes were composed with the use of note-taking and tape recorder. Phase I observations were general observations of language usage of the two classes in various small and large group activities. Phase II observations began with the

two-a-day plan (Wills, 1972) but often capitalized on spontaneous events and focused on others of the purposive sample than those chosen for that particular day. Classroom displays, the Ontario School Record (OSR) card, the speech/language screen and interviews also provided data.

Field notes generated by classroom observations (four scribblers and twenty-two tapes) were transcribed directly using a Commodore 64 computer and the Paperclip word-processing program. First the written notes were compiled, each day in the field on a separate program. Following the initial entry of notes into the computer, additional information from the tape(s) for each day was dubbed in. This confirmed the accuracy of observations and allowed for necessary corrections.

Journal entries were entered similarly with a separate program for each day. All journal entries were not put on the computer. Most were hand-written in a three-ring binder. The process journal summarized what had been accomplished thus far, what reflections had been made and any resultant decisions and/or changes in procedure.

Phase I: General observations. Initial observations were done in both the morning and afternoon classes. Notes were taken about the physical environment. Classroom work on display was photographed and discussed with the artist-author. Informal discussion with the classroom teacher at the end of the day was recorded.

Reflections on these experiences and how data were used to make decisions regarding Phase II were recorded in the process log.

Phase II: Classroom observations of purposive sample. The classroom was visited three mornings a week, usually Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Observations were made of large group sessions, teaching strategies/interventions, and individual interactions.

For individual observations of the sample of six children to be profiled, initially a two-a-day method (Wills, 1972) was used whereby a different two of the sample of six would be the focus for each visit. The focus shifted, on occasion, to other respondents, spontaneous activities and conversations.

Large group sessions were observed for the purpose of studying the overall social environment of the sample group. Observations of the six individuals and of teaching strategies and interventions were often made in this setting as well as small group sessions. Small group session observations documented interaction between the six children and their peers, teacher and other adults. Observations of the individual children were made in large and small group situations as well as on a one-to-one basis.

Sociometric test. A sociometric test was administered to all children in the morning class. The method chosen was developed by Bowd (1973). It involved asking a few simple questions such as "Who are five people in your class whom you

would like to play with?" and recording responses on a frequency chart. The six targeted students were requestioned later the next term to see if likes and dislikes had changed appreciably. The sociometry was used to gain insight into the social environment of the respondents.

Television survey. Observations made in Phase I indicated that television comprised a considerable amount of the content of conversation in the classroom. The teacher also capitalized on the children's knowledge of and interest in television and rented videos. A concern related to this was the obsessive preoccupation of one of the boys with the more violent aspects of television such as seen in ninja and "Rockwars" shows. A survey (Walling, 1976) previously used with grade six students was revised for this specific classroom situation (Appendix E) and conducted with the 25 morning students. Questions evolving from answers to the survey were used in the student interview (Appendix F) in Phase II and subsequently discussed with parents in the parent interview.

Interviews with students. The interview format was piloted with three students who were not in the sample. All three were observed to be high functioning language users. The questions from the sociometric test were repeated in the interview to determine any changes in likes and dislikes. Also included was a section with questions specifically formulated to test functional use of language. Initial data analysis and the literature review had indicated this as an

area of concern. Most of the information requested paralleled that requested of the parents. Revisions were made to the questions asked based on the reactions and responses of the three students used in the pilot. Interviews mainly followed what might be termed the standardized open-ended interview format (Patton, 1980).

Parent survey and interviews. Parents were surveyed as to their child's early skill development, preschool experiences, abilities and interests. The parent interview format using the questionnaires was piloted and the questionnaires were piloted with mothers of two of the three students used in the student interview pilot.

Parents were interviewed in August following the kindergarten year so that feedback might be given them. No one chose the option of having the interview at a time when both parents could be present. In every case only the mother attended. The interview included both standardized open-ended and forced-choice questions (Patton, 1980). In each case, their responses on the questionnaire and their child's responses to questions in the student interview were discussed.

### Data Analysis

The analytic induction (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) approach to data collection and analysis was an ongoing process throughout the study (see Appendix G). Initially, data from observations were analyzed to select the sample to be used in

Phase II. Screening test results were compared with insights gained through ethnographic means. Data were coded and then analyzed to ascertain any patterns arising from the data (Hannay & Stevens, 1985; Patton, 1980). Information gained from interviews and classroom observation of oral language activities was used to compile profiles on each targeted child.

Category generation. Patterning began to appear even from the initial general classroom observations and, so, a list was generated at that time. Subsequently, as more information was gathered the list was altered to accommodate changes in my perception or focus. A comprehensive list was compiled after transcription was completed. Figure 4 illustrates the categories which emerged.

Initially, eight preliminary categories were identified each with three or more sub-categories. Then language contexts were examined under large group and small group activities. This generated another eight headings under large group and five under small group. Figure 4 outlines coding at this point. This was used as a tally sheet for recording data analysis using the one hundred and eighteen possible codes.

For a second analysis of the transcripts coding was simplified as in Figure 5 to forty-one categories under five headings with a letter code for each one. This again was used as a tally sheet for recording data for analysis.

Purposive/theoretical sampling. Phase I observations

CATEGORY TALLY SHEET

<p><u>Configurations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one to one</li> <li>small group</li> <li>large group</li> </ul> <p><u>Content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vocabulary</li> <li>topics - number</li> <li>frequency</li> <li>television</li> <li>play</li> <li>sports</li> <li>toys</li> <li>school task/activity engaged in</li> <li>wall displays</li> </ul> <p><u>Syntax (structure):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sentence length</li> <li>verb tense</li> <li>pronouns</li> <li>two words together</li> <li>conjunctions</li> <li>contributions</li> <li>verb-ing</li> <li>verb phrases</li> <li>noun phrases</li> <li>simple sentences</li> </ul> <p><u>Articulation/Phonation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>age appropriateness</li> <li>differences in large and small group (subsect)</li> <li>differences in structured situation and spontaneous speech</li> </ul> <p><u>Pragmatics/Function (Holiday/Tough/Staab):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-maintenance</li> <li>directing others</li> <li>self-direction</li> <li>reporting</li> <li>reasoning</li> <li>predicting</li> <li>imagining</li> </ul> <p><u>Activities/Centres:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>those generating dialogue</li> <li>language differences from one situation to another</li> <li>play versus academic activities</li> </ul> <p><u>Teacher interventions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number and kind</li> <li>teacher-directed group discussion</li> <li>teacher-elicited choral response</li> <li>modelling</li> <li>repeating of directions</li> <li>rewording of directions</li> <li>simplification of directions</li> <li>use of "code words"</li> <li>questioning - type and frequency</li> <li>difference from one situation to another</li> <li>difference from one student to another</li> </ul> <p><u>Television influence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>amount in conversation</li> <li>amount in programme (reinforcement, motivation)</li> </ul> <p><u>Participants:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher</li> <li>student</li> <li>parent</li> <li>parent volunteer</li> <li>student volunteer</li> <li>researcher</li> <li>speech/language teacher</li> <li>public health nurse</li> <li>librarian</li> <li>principal</li> <li>vice principal</li> <li>dental technician</li> </ul>	<p><u>Large Group:</u></p> <p>opening exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- O'Canada</li> <li>- Lord's Prayer</li> <li>- attendance</li> <li>- finding own name</li> <li>- book end/or nursery rhymes, songs</li> <li>- "special child" bulletin board work             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- letter recognition</li> <li>- sound-symbol association</li> <li>- sight vocabulary</li> <li>- number recognition</li> <li>- rote counting to twenty</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- following directions</li> </ul> <p>religious instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discussion</li> <li>- vocab. dev.</li> <li>- reasoning</li> <li>- predicting</li> <li>- cause and effect</li> </ul> <p>directions for activity centres</p> <p>directions for artwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual intervention</li> <li>- following directions</li> <li>- questioning by student</li> </ul> <p>physical education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- socializing</li> <li>- flexible grouping</li> <li>- free play</li> </ul> <p>music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teacher-directed discussion</li> </ul> <p>closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- choral speaking</li> </ul> <p><u>Small Group:</u></p> <p>directed art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one to one intervention of parent volunteers</li> <li>- personal conversations</li> </ul> <p>theme centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- topics - body</li> <li>- shells</li> </ul> <p>free art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- materials provided</li> <li>- suggestions made</li> </ul> <p>paint centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- directed</li> <li>- non-directed</li> </ul> <p>play centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- water table</li> <li>- dining table</li> <li>- toy and book storage</li> <li>- kitchen</li> <li>- clichee</li> <li>- video</li> </ul>
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## FIGURE 5

## CODING TALLY SHEET

<b>Configurations</b>		<b>Language Components</b>	
OO - one to one		V - vocabulary	
SG - small group		A - articulation	
LG - large group		PG - pragmatics	
		SY - syntax	
<b>Participants</b>		<b>Interventions</b>	
T - teacher		I - intervention	
S - student		L - lecture	
P - parent		PR - praise/positive reinforcement	
PV - parent volunteer		TECR - teacher-elicited choral response	
SV - student volunteer		FD - following directions	
R - researcher		M - modelling	
SLT - speech/language teacher		C - correction	
PHN - public health nurse		NR - negative reinforcement	
LT - librarian		SS - social skills	
PR - principal		VL - values	
VP - vice principal			
DT - dental technician			
<b>Activities/Contexts</b>			
SE - scheduled event		WT - water table	
TDGD - teacher-directed group discussion		DA - dining area	
CS - choral speaking		TBS - toy and book storage	
B - book		K - kitchen	
DA - directed art		C - climber	
TC - theme centre		IC - informal conversation	
FA - free art		WC - work centre	
PC - paint centre		CPRD - cut and paste reading ditto	

NB: coding by letter including: configuration, participants, context, activity, intervention, etc.

e.g. O.TS.WC.CPRD.TI.C might be: one on one .  
teacher and student . work centre . cut and paste reading  
ditto . teacher intervention . correction

were intended to elicit a sample of three students who demonstrated proficient language facility and three with less efficient language facility.

The researcher rated the children in each class as high, low or average and then chose what appeared to be the nine lowest students and nine highest students. From this analysis, it appeared that the morning class had a number of English speaking children in need of assistance with speech and language where the afternoon class had a number of English as a second language users.

The results of this analysis were confirmed by the classroom teacher in all but one case. Graham, she felt, was not one of the more proficient language users. The decision to include him, however, had been made because an obvious articulation problem did not appear to hinder his facility nor his eagerness to participate.

The decision was made to use the morning class for observation. The classroom teacher had already purposely placed any known speech problems in this class so that they would have easy access to the speech/language teacher who was scheduled to visit the school one morning each week.

Several potential candidates were eliminated before the six respondents were selected. Reasons for exclusion included: participant in a speech/language program, an organic speech impediment, exceptional linguistic ability beyond age norms, new registrant in class, familial relationship to

researcher, child of friends of researcher and previous professional intervention in language development.

Internal sampling. The decisions made to do the television survey with only the morning class, to focus observations on only six of the children and to code only some of the transcripts for detailed data analysis could be termed "internal" sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p.63).

Time sampling. The choices to use the middle term of the school year for field observations, to do general observations on three different days and both the first and second half of the morning plus the attempt to choose a representative sample of transcripts keeping in mind the six targeted children and the day of the week are examples of "time" sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p.63).

Final analysis: coding/charting. Final coding was done on a sample of the transcripts available (ten were chosen). An effort was made to include an equal number of Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and to ensure that the six targeted children had fairly equal coverage. One extra transcript was included because it contained the rest of the sociometric test begun the day before.

Student profiles. Information was gathered on the six targeted students of Phase II in several ways: analysis of documents (OSR: including registration, junior and senior kindergarten report cards, Early Identification Developmental Checklist and speech/language screen), parent interviews,

student interviews, informal conversation, television survey, informal discussion with teacher, and classroom observation in the large and small group situation. An attempt was made to observe each in both large and small group activities and during structured and spontaneous events. The researcher also capitalized on any opportunities to engage any of the six in conversation.

#### Teaching/parenting strategies and language contexts.

Information was gained through classroom observation and interviews with parent, student and teacher. The teacher supplied a copy of the monthly calendar distributed to parents and the researcher was free to keep copies of any seatwork given the children and to photograph classroom displays. A matrix was developed to assist in analysis of data relating to these components of the classroom program.

#### Liaison with Other Universities

This researcher made a personal visit to the Department of Language and Culture at the University of Arizona in Tucson during the study. Interviews with Ken and Yetta Goodman and three of their graduate students were very productive in terms of both substantive and methodological information applicable to this study.

I also attended a Teachers About Whole Language (TAWL) meeting at which Dr. Ken Goodman made a presentation. While there, I had the opportunity to converse with educators involved in action research in the area of whole language in

classrooms in that region.

The work begun in the 1970s by the Goodmans and their colleagues led to significant instructional implications for language teaching and learning. The Goodmans are major contributors to the concept of whole language. They and their graduate students have been using an ethnographic approach in the conduct of their research. They have found the emergent design characteristic of naturalistic research best lends itself to the study of language learning and teaching because both are processes.

In addition to those at the University of Arizona, I also had access to the most recent work of Dr. Carol Westby of the University of New Mexico and the graduate students of Dr. Lous Heshusius of York University. Dr. Westby, I met at an international conference of the Council for Exceptional Children. At that time we discussed my proposed thesis and she was very willing to have me use her work. Subsequent telephone conversations resulted in her sending me drafts of her research reports and suggested readings which I found most helpful. I attended a research seminar conducted by Dr. Heshusius at Lakehead University and subsequently was able to peruse two masters theses done under her supervision.

#### Summary

Methods used in this study were ethnographic and qualitative in nature. The design was emergent and changes were generated by the research questions and ongoing analysis of

data. Investigation of the language learning environment in terms of teaching/parenting techniques, language function and group dynamics focused on observations of the six respondents. The following chapter presents the findings of this investigation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Findings and Interpretation

Chapter Four provides a discussion of the findings and interpretations of the language learning in one kindergarten classroom. For the purpose of this analysis, the people with whom the six children interact are considered part of their language learning environment. The findings are organized under the following general headings: physical and social environment, program, language contexts, teaching/parenting strategies, effects of configuration on oral language development, pre-school experiences, television survey, sociometry and profiles of students observed individually.

#### Language Learning Environment

##### The Setting: Physical and Social Environment

Greatly affecting the development of any child are the people with whom the child interacts within the physical environment in which the child is placed. As one's social environment is so often dictated by the physical environment and its particular atmosphere, I have chosen to discuss in this section some aspects of the environment of the class including interactions between the six students, with their care givers and with others with whom they come in contact. As part of the physical environment then, I include the classroom, the school, the school community, the board of education, the neighbourhood and the city.

The community. This study was conducted in an urban

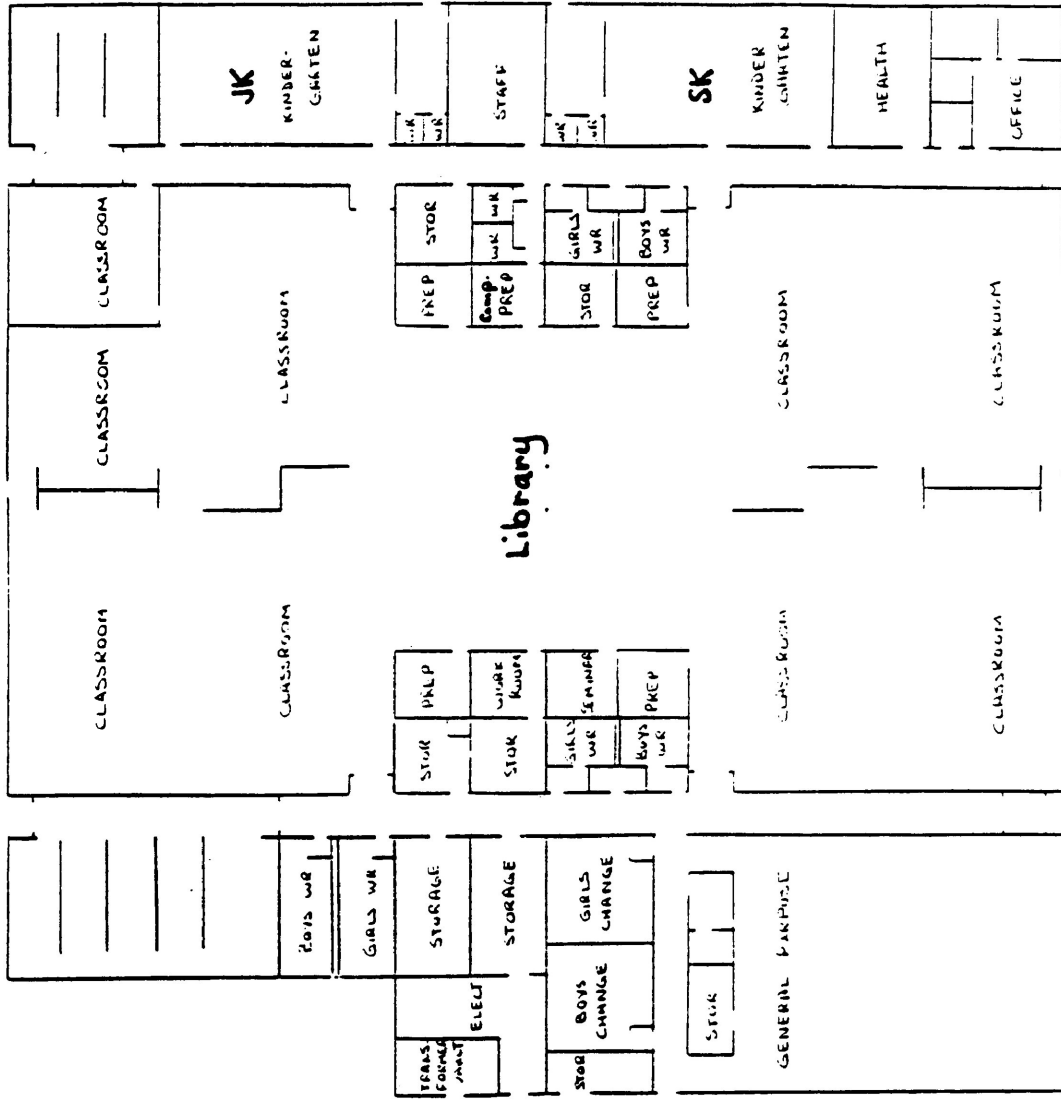
school with a population of approximately three hundred students. The school is one of 42 elementary schools under a public school board with 25,000 students. The neighbourhood consists of a majority of middle class families and some subsidized housing. The city, at 100,000 plus, is the largest community in a two hundred mile radius. This generates a certain number of native students from outlying remote communities in many of the schools including this one. In addition, there are many other ethnic groups including large percentages of Slavs, Italians and Finns in the community contributing to varied language backgrounds.

The school. The classroom chosen for the study is a self-contained classroom within an open-concept school (Figure 6). The school was constructed as a square with a hall around the perimeter on three sides. Offices, storage rooms, the staff room and the junior and senior kindergartens are situated on the outer walls. The inside of the hall has a computer room, washrooms and divisional planning rooms. The central open area houses a resource centre/library surrounded by grade groupings from grades one to six with 50 to 60 of each grade level divided between two teachers. The number of staff is large due to an unusual number of part-time/job-sharing situations.

The atmosphere. Students in the school were involved in a range of activities. Both junior and senior kindergartens were included in "options", occasions when the entire school



SCHOOL LAYOUT



was grouped to pursue less academic endeavours in small cross-graded interest groups such as bicycle repair, baking cookies, knitting and golf. The custodian, of Scottish descent, often came to school early to bake fresh scones in time for the staff's morning coffee break. On Valentine's Day, the principal and vice principal delivered pastry treats from a rolling cart to adults within the school. In all such activities adult volunteers were included and treated as an integral and important part of the school community. A cooperative/collaborate style of teaching/learning prevailed and these children were exposed to a friendly atmosphere which manifested itself in various ways. Thirteen volunteers regularly visited the kindergarten classroom.

Other care givers were welcomed into the classroom as well. Dental workers and others from Public Health were frequent visitors and easily fitted into the routine. The vision and hearing screening team from the Public Health Unit happened to be in the school while I was. I had the opportunity to interview them on their views of certain aspects of the kindergarten language learning environment. I was also able to gain insight into others' perspectives through interaction with staff, the speech and language teacher and parent volunteers. Thus, some triangulation of findings was made through the perceptions of people not actively involved in the children's education on a regular basis.

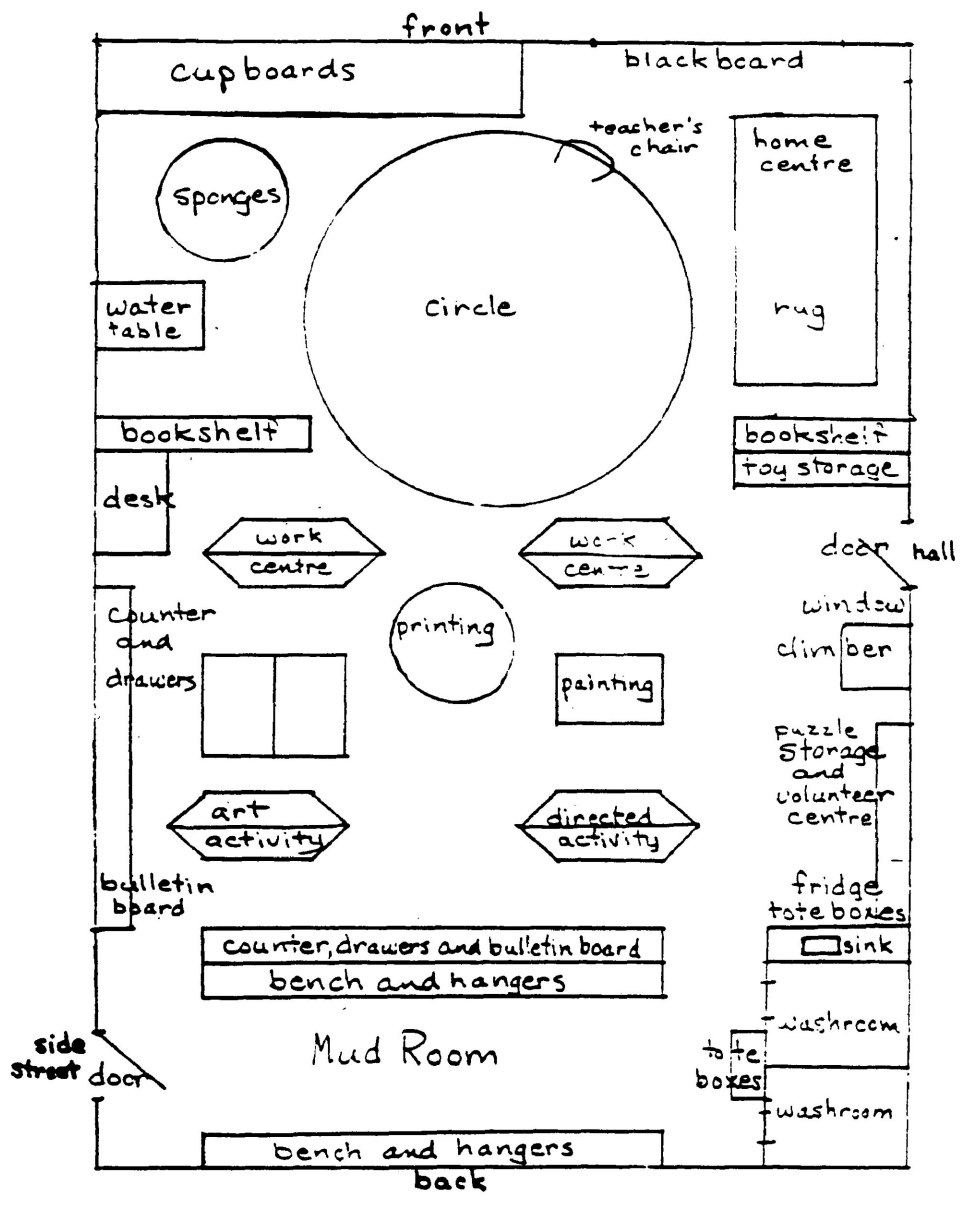
The attitude of the classroom teacher in this case

reflected the philosophy of cooperation generated by principal and staff. She was very accommodating as far as my study was concerned and in reflecting on my tenure in the classroom said she welcomed "an extra set of ears and eyes." The teacher's attitude reflected the firm but caring atmosphere of the school.

The classroom. The senior kindergarten was housed in a large self-contained classroom on the perimeter of the school. Figure 7 shows the classroom layout. Access was gained through a glass door from the hallway leading to the school office or directly from the outside through a door into the mudroom. Children arrived at this outside door and place any outdoor clothing, packsacks and bags they had brought from home on an assigned peg above benches along the two longest walls. The short wall opposite the door was banked with stacks of trays each marked with a child's name in which the children kept the week's work and their "inside" shoes. The back wall of the classroom proper had two doors with a bulletin board, cupboards and a counter in between. to the left was a counter and sink and to the right was a work table. Puzzles were stored above another worktable on the inside wall and a small wooden climber with a platform large enough for two or three children to sit on was next to the door into the hall. On the opposite side of the room was the teacher's desk backed by cupboards with a bulletin board above. This part of the room contained tables set up for doing crafts, artwork and

FIGURE 7

CLASSROOM LAYOUT



pencil and paper tasks.

Opposite the classroom door was a small divider containing shelves and delineating the play area which included a sand table, a water table and a plastic wading pool containing large sponges used as building blocks. Another similar divider was to the right of the door. It contained books and toys and partially enclosed a carpeted reading area. This rug continued to the front of the room where a home centre with a table and four chairs and wooden toy appliances were set up. Along this wall were a bulletin board with children's names listed in groups of four, a monthly calendar, a list of letters and another of sight words. The front wall had a bulletin board upon which children's artwork was displayed. Central to the front half of the room, a circle was inlaid in the tile. At the top of the circle was a large rocking chair and a box of books.

Program: The Prepared Curriculum

The classroom teacher provided an underlying structure to the day by having a set routine for each day. Within this she tended to organize activities on a theme approach.

The teacher was usually in the mudroom ready to greet children as they arrived. Much spontaneous and informal conversation took place as outer clothing was removed and belongings were stored on hooks or in "cubbies" or assigned bins. Student and parent volunteers were often present at this time as well and participated very naturally. The day

officially began with children gathering on the circle at the front of the room. A sharing time followed any opening remarks or announcements from the intercom. Opening exercises from the office often included "jazzercise" for which student volunteers from grade six came and joined the circle to provide models for activities. Pictures brought from home of family trips or classroom activities were often passed around at this time and discussion was led by the teacher.

Following this, a drill was usually led by the "special child" (monitor) for the day. Student name cards were scattered in the centre of the circle. The special child would call out each name and that child would come and retrieve his/her name card and place it in the pail. If the monitor encountered names he/she did not recognize, the teacher took over. The monitor would then move to the side bulletin board and with a pointer drill the letter names and sounds displayed there and then the list of sight words from the pre-primer that had been introduced thus far.

At this point, the teacher would take over and, while the monitor would take the attendance folder to the office, drill the children with counting by one's, two's, five's, ten's and backwards. All drills were done with the entire group responding chorally.

FIGURE 8  
Typical Day's Schedule

Opening Exercises  
Jazzercise  
Bulletin Board Drill  
Religious Instruction  
Directions for Activity Centres  
Directions for Worksheets  
Work Centres  
Free Play  
Closing

The teacher would then move back to the circle and present the Bible story, book or nursery rhymes for the day. A teacher-led discussion followed. A song or two were often sung at this time. The teacher then moved to the easel and the group shifted bodies and focus to the worksheets displayed there. Oral directions for the worksheets for the day were supplemented with a demonstration both by the teacher and by chosen members of the group. Reminders about mistakes made before were frequently made. Little tricks and cue words for colouring and cutting were reinforced as well.

Children moved to work centres following receipt of directions for the academic worksheets. Other centres were directed art, theme centre, free art, paint centre, and play centre. Activities at all centres were usually designed

around a thematic unit which might last anywhere from one day to a week or more. Parent volunteers were often employed in supervising directed activities which freed the teacher to circulate and assist those encountering difficulty. The schedule for each month was sent home on a monthly calendar.

### Language Contexts

Language contexts, those situations in which oral language was observed, were generated mainly by the established curricula provided by the teacher. The program was fairly evenly divided between large group and small group (usually four to eight) activities. Figure 9 outlines the contexts in which the children's language was observed.

Language use varied greatly between small group and large group activities. Small groups were much more flexible and language was much more spontaneous. During large group activities most of the language was teacher-directed. Any language from the children was elicited and most of the language was teacher-talk or lecture.

### Teaching/Parenting Strategies

Observed techniques utilized by the teacher and strategies employed by the parents that appeared to affect oral language development directly are listed below. Strategies employed by the parents were obtained through the interview process using survey questions developed after compiling a list of possible variables (Figure 10) affecting early childhood development. Others were observed while watching



**FIGURE 9**  
**ACTIVITIES AND LANGUAGE CONTEXTS**

<b>LARGE GROUP</b>	<b>SEMANTICS</b>			<b>PRAGMATICS</b>		
	<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>	<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>ARTICULATION</b>
1. Opening Exercises - O'Canada - Lord's Prayer	- day's activities			- patterning		- correction - remediation - modelling
2. Attendance - incidental comments during activity	- shoes - clothes - friendships - relations	- from vicarious experiences		- reinforcement	- remediation - short term memory	- pronunciation
3. Bulletin Board - Sound Symbol Assoc.	- categorization	- words containing sound		- patterning		- remediation - correction - mechanics
- sight vocabulary	- abstract and concrete concepts	- controlled				- pronunciation - enunciation
- letter recognition		- letter names - words containing sound				- choral speaking
- number recognition		number names				- choral speaking
- note counting				- patterning		- choral speaking
4. Jazzercise	- exercises	- movements - verbs		- patterning	- following directions	
5. Religious Instruction - teacher directed story, discussion, songs	- values	- new words - meanings - biblical		- story sense - sentence sense	- predicting - cause and effect - asking for clarification - reasoning	- choral speaking

FIGURE 9 (continued)

LARGE GROUP		SEMANTICS		PRAGMATICS		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- day's activities</li> <li>- specific instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- verbs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- projecting</li> <li>- reasoning</li> <li>- predicting</li> <li>- imagining</li> <li>- self-maintaining</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- correction</li> </ul>
6. Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for activity centres (agenda)</li> </ul>					
7. Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for seatwork (agenda)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- specific instructions</li> <li>- possible problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cue words</li> <li>- verbs</li> <li>- nouns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- remediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clarification</li> <li>- reasoning</li> <li>- remediation</li> <li>- predicting</li> <li>- projecting</li> <li>- reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- remediation of pronunciation</li> </ul>
8. Physical Education Structured Lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- terminology</li> <li>- equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- modelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- following directions</li> </ul>	
9. Free Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual conversations</li> <li>- socialization</li> <li>- flexible grouping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- equipment</li> <li>- television shows and characters</li> <li>- role play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- labels for toys, equipment, procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- peer modelling</li> <li>- questions</li> <li>- commands</li> <li>- directing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regulatory</li> <li>- interactional, imaginative, personal</li> <li>- teacher's suggestions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- peer correction</li> </ul>
10. Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- song</li> <li>- instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- future activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- controlled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- patterning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- directing</li> <li>- informing</li> <li>- projecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- choral speaking</li> </ul>

FIGURE 9 (continued)

SMALL GROUP		SEMANTICS			PRAGMATICS		
		CONTEXT	TOPICS	VOCABULARY	STRUCTURE	FUNCTION	ARTICULATION
1. Directed Art	- themes	- nouns - verbs - prepositions	- adult modelling - sequencing	- logical reasoning	- correction - remediation	- holidays	- work habits
	- current activity						
	- television						
	- work habits						
- one to one	- work habits	- work habits	- peer and adult modelling	- directing - criticizing		- television	- work habits
- adult (parent volunteer)	- evaluation	- nonsense play with words	- modelling	- similar to physical education - directing			
- personal conversations							
- group interaction							
2. Theme Centre	- books	- usually related to theme	- nouns - adjectives - theme-related	- questions - commands	- considerable conversation depending on topic - projecting - same as physical education (flexible grouping) - logical reasoning	- pronunciation of new vocabulary	
	- concrete material						
- incidental teacher intervention							
3. Free Act	- materials	- word play	- verbs - nouns - prepositions		- same as directed art	- correction - remediation	
	- parent volunteer to help personal conversations	- materials procedures					
4. Paint Centre	- often directed terms of subject	- technique procedures/rules	- individual conversation - vicarious	- peer modelling	- much the same as free play but tended to be less conversational		

FIGURE 9 (continued)

SMALL GROUP	SEMANTICS			PRAGMATICS		
	CONTEXT	TOPICS	VOCABULARY	STRUCTURE	FUNCTION	ARTICULATION
5. Work Centre - teacher intervention	- word play - television - activity, procedures	- verbs - new words related to work	- peer modelling - teacher modelling - reading	- criticizing - directing	- sight words - pronunciation - enunciation	
6. Play Centres - water table	- activity	- individual conversation - nouns - verbs	- commands - questions	- same as paint centre		
Dining Area - often used for reading - 2 or 3 playing	- home life - manners	- individual conversation	- sociolinguistics	- more pedantic role playing		
Textbook Storage				- game rules - often isolated play		
Kitchen	- none	- none	- none	- none	- none	
Climber - tended to attract certain individuals (two allowed with stuffed animals, lengthy and funny conversations ensued)				- role playing with stuffed animals - jokes - funny conversations		

FIGURE 10

VARIABLES AFFECTING ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Socio-economic status (quality and number of experiences, model of language, quality of daycare, teacher expectations)	Quality of daycare (quality and number of experiences, comfort with age peers)	Personality (willingness to participate, verbosity)
mother's job	home/outside home	Former schooling
father's job	informal/formal	exposure to large group situations
Father's/mother's (parent/child expectations, value given education, experiences exposed to)	language in home	Sunday school
education	language of instruction	library story hour
hobbies	Geographical location (opportunities available)	nursery school
interests	urban/rural	skating/hockey/dancing/gymnastics/swimming/skiing/music
community development	inner city/suburban	
Family rank	Physical development	Neighbourhood
number, age and sex of siblings	age	playmates
only child	sex	cultural opportunities
middle child	size	Teaching style of teacher
eldest child	Health	nursery school
Relationship with relatives (quality and number of experiences, comfort level with age peers)	nutrition	JK
grandparents	chronic conditions e.g. ear infections	Intelligence (teacher/parent/child expectations)
cousins	birth: easy/difficult	Lifestyle
aunts and uncles	Stability of family relationship	TV
	two parent/one parent	kinds of toys
	unsettled financially and/or emotionally	travel
		discipline
		exposure to books

interactions between parent volunteers and the children.

. The majority of teacher-student interactions occurred in large-group/lecture situations.

. Frequently, the teacher elicited a choral response wherein the teacher used one of three methods to have students respond as a group with usually a word or a small phrase. For instance, the teacher would pause and drag out the word. This appeared to be a signal for the children to respond with her. They could differentiate between that signal and a pause for effect. They also recognized a rhetorical question requiring no response.

Another method employed by this teacher was used to teach the students to follow directions. She introduced special terms for specific directions that were used frequently e.g. "tickle" to denote light colouring, "bumper line" to signify dark outline and "copy cat" for "read after me". She repeated directions slowly as she demonstrated the task to be done.

Students were often asked to come and demonstrate all or a part of the task and less proficient students were often asked to demonstrate and/or repeat the directions.

Productive thinking techniques, particularly those of fluency (brainstorming) and flexibility (categorization), assisted in vocabulary building and provided opportunities for practising oral language skills. This type of situation also lent itself to intervention with less proficient language users.

. Intervention and evaluation were done mainly on an informal basis except for the testing of the sight vocabulary. Evaluation was ongoing and interventions with individual children were spontaneous in nature and tended to grow out of the specific situation. For instance, if a child was having difficulty with following the directions for a handwork assignment, the teacher might sit beside him or her and assist. Some children were identified through the Early Identification Developmental Checklist but this type of assessment was usually left until the end of the year. There was not much use made of external resources such as the zone support team.

#### The Sample

The following section describes the selection of the purposive sample chosen for observation in Phase II, the results of data collection techniques employed to gain information, and the six student profiles.

#### The Children

The purposive sample was comprised of three boys and three girls. Jordan, Terrance and Fern were considered to have less language proficiency than Tara, Simone and Graham.

Selection of the sample was done following five observation sessions in each of the two senior kindergarten classes in the school. The first decision made was to choose one class from which a smaller sample would be chosen. The teacher, in consultation with the junior kindergarten teacher

and on the basis of registration information, had placed those children in possible need of the services of the speech/language teacher in the morning class. This class proved, upon observation, to have more of a definition between proficient language users and those less proficient. For this reason, the morning class was targeted as the source of the study sample.

Using the transcripts of the five initial observation sessions in the morning class, a short-list of candidates was made. Of the twenty-four in the group there were seven children eliminated: two whose families were well known to the researcher, two who were mid-year additions to the class, two who had received previous intervention and support services for a speech problem and one whose language proficiency was developed far beyond the norms for her age. Four subsequent mornings spent observing the class narrowed the fourteen remaining down to the six. Criteria for selection included: amount of spontaneous speech, length of utterance, clarity and variety of function.

#### Effects of Configurations (groupings) on Speech

Differences in oral language usage were noted in one-to-one, small group and large group situations. The following observations delineate some of the ways language was used in large group situations:

. Spontaneous speech was discouraged in large group activities with student responses regulated by teacher questioning. Much



of the verbal interaction was choral in large group situations.

. The teacher attempted to involve less spontaneous children by requesting responses specifically from them.

. The atmosphere during large group activities was much more stilted and verbal interaction was directed by the teacher. Discussion was usually carried out through questions and answers with the teacher indicating in several different ways whether responses were expected to be from the whole group or specific individuals.

The following observations were made of language usage in small group and one-to-one situations:

. Group interaction was actively encouraged in the many small group situations offered each day.

. Topic shifts were noted for the six profiled children. Only spontaneous speech was counted and only where the topic originated with the child. Terrance and Jordan generated the most topics. The variety of topics raised by members of the purposive sample are documented in Figure 11.

. The atmosphere in small group situations was one of freedom with little need for reprimands to the group for excessive noise. However, there was always a steady hum of conversation during small group activities.

. There was considerable informal and spontaneous conversation with volunteers in the room. The children appeared comfortable asking any visitor for help or initiating a conversation.

## FIGURE 11

## TOPIC VARIETY

Jordan: Fern's hat  
 new classmate  
 television - characters  
                   - programs  
 fairy tales (2)  
 materials  
 jewellery  
 researcher's writing

Terrance: school activity (3)  
 mother  
 others' behaviour  
 cookie jar  
 recorder  
 sky  
 fairy tales  
 television (4)  
 nonsense (sounds, etc.)  
 nursery rhymes  
 Wonder Woman  
 Superman  
 wings  
 word play  
 diseases  
 blanket  
 home conversation  
 teacher

Fern: feelings (3)  
 sister  
 academic activity (2)  
 dancing

Graham: Prime Minister  
 behaviour of others (3)  
 playing war  
 body parts

Tara: Disney World - pool  
                   - food  
 behaviour of others (3)  
 school activity  
 fantasy

Simone: clothes  
 brother  
 mother  
 doll  
 stuffed animal

### Pre-school Experiences and Language Development

Teacher's collection of information. Senior kindergarten teachers usually gain any information regarding their students' pre-school development from the registration form and any facts passed on by previous teachers from parent interviews and junior kindergarten home visits. Within the board in question, language development has been assessed in the past few years through an Early Identification Developmental Checklist done by the classroom teacher and a screening involving an expressive vocabulary test done by the speech/language teacher. Where circumstances permit, a language sample is also obtained using sequenced pictures. The data collection sheet for the speech/language screen is included in the appendices.

For this study, parent and student interviews were added. The survey sheets used in interviewing the parents and the student interview questions are shown in the appendices.

Speech/language screen. The speech/language teacher assigned to the school shared with me her data for both kindergarten classes. This particular year only the vocabulary test was administered. Table 1 shows results of assessment of the six respondents all of whom were administered the vocabulary test on 1986.12.01. The test is a word-finding or labelling test developed by a London, England speech therapist and revised with local norms in 1979.

TABLE 1

Renfrew Word-Finding Test - Canadian Revision  
(Thunder Bay Norms)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Standard Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Terrance	4.8	11/19	average	5
Simone	4.11	13/19	average	2
Tara	4.11	16/19	above average	1
Fern	5.11	7/19	low average	6
Graham	5.5	11/19	average	4
Jordan	5.5	12/19	average	3

Observation by the researcher and the classroom teacher indicated that Simone appeared to be the most verbally proficient of the six followed by Tara, Graham, Jordan, Terrance and Fern. This was based on the criteria previously listed. Simone spoke more often and in longer sentences and used language in a variety of ways. Her one evident weakness was clarity. Both enunciation and articulation were not age-appropriate but not to the extent that speech was unintelligible. Based on word-finding vocabulary alone, the order would be Tara, Simone, Jordan, Graham, Terrance and Fern. Graham's and Jordan's positions were the only significant difference in ranking. However, none would be identified as being in need of differentiated curriculum by this test alone. Graham, the one child who did not attend junior kindergarten, appeared to have the best spontaneous speech in terms of

function and grammatical structure but had articulation difficulties.

### Television

One interesting observation made during Phase I was the amount of language use that centred around television and the use the teacher made of the childrens' interest in television. For instance, much of the spontaneous conversation was about favourite television shows or characters and the teacher included these (e.g. Snoopy, Rainbow Bright) in wall displays and on worksheets.

This preoccupation with television motivated me to investigate further. Each of the children in the morning class was interviewed individually about their television viewing habits. Included were some questions designed to determine their ability to use language for different functions. It was decided to use only the surveys of the sample group to add to the bank of information to be included in their profiles. Questions asked during the survey are contained in the appendices.

### Sociometry

Bowd's (1973) method suggested explaining to students the purpose of the exercise and asking them to name up to five classmates they preferred to work with and, again, up to five they preferred not to work with. For the purpose of my study, I told the children that their teacher was interested in knowing who they would and would not like to play with if they

had a choice. After the holidays she was going to group children differently on occasion and wanted to know what groups they would like.

The test was done with the whole class with information solicited orally from one at a time. Results were charted and graphed (Table 2 and Figure 12) to find social groupings on the basis of mutual choices and rejections. The pupil interviews with the six children to be profiled in Phase II included a second testing. These results are recorded in Table 3.

During analysis of the sociometric data a pronounced imbalance in the ratio of boys to girls was noted. With all the observations I had done I had not realized how great was the discrepancy between numbers of boys and girls in the class until I saw it on the graph (Figure 12).

This was interesting also in view of the fact that the teacher had designated this class as containing more of the children who were less language proficient and more likely in need of the services of the speech and language teacher. As it is generally thought that boys lag behind girls (Breen & Breen, 1985) in language development in early years it might be assumed that a class so designated would have more boys than girls.

In fact, the ratio of 18 girls to 7 boys (almost three to one) was much different from the afternoon class which was considered more verbally proficient with a ratio of 13 girls

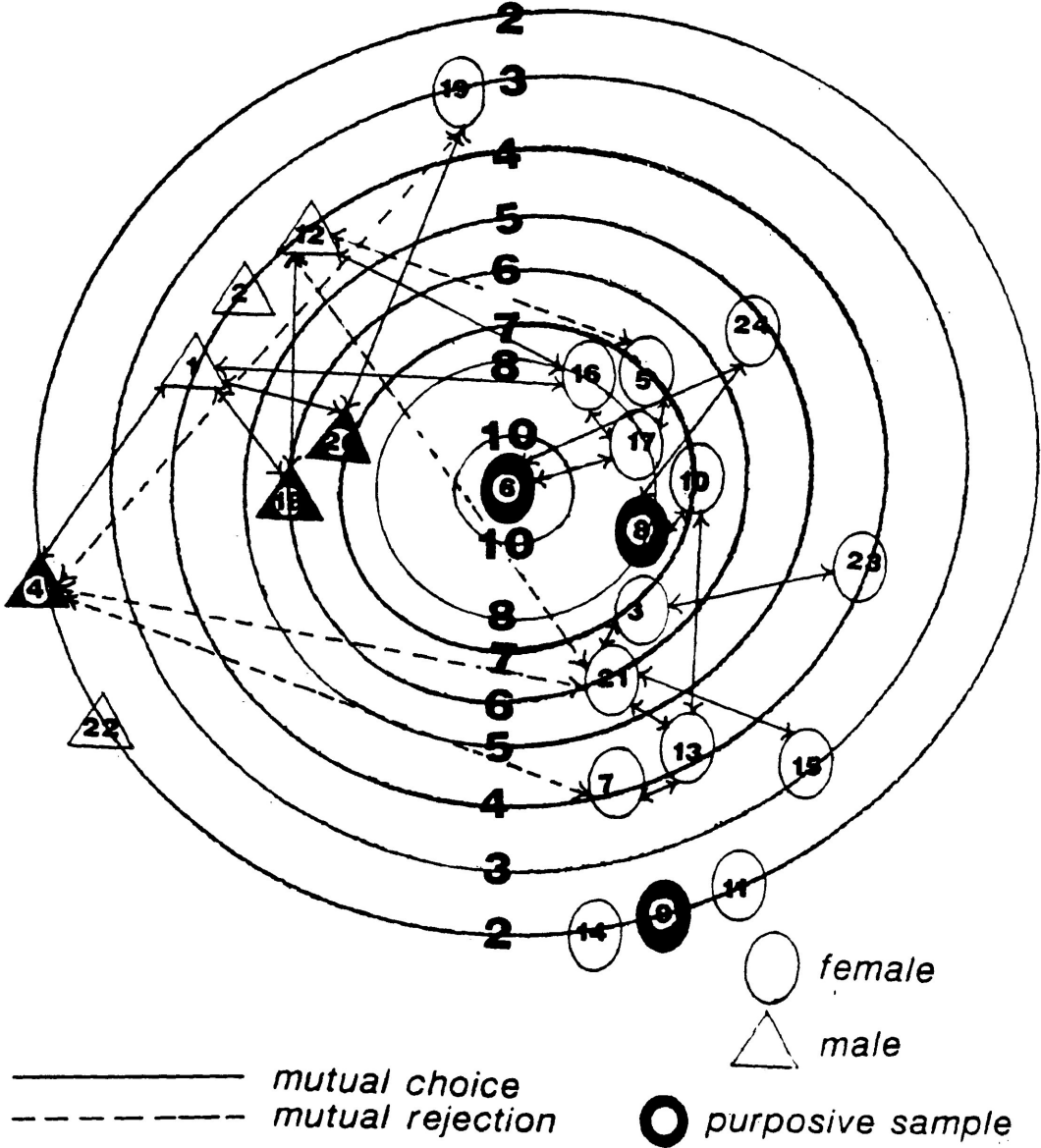
TABLE 2

SOCIOMETRIC TEST CHART

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
1		5		3								2						1		4					
2	3	1	4									2	2	4	5					1		3			
3	4			2		3					5								3	5	1	4		2	1
4 Terrance	2	5	6	6	3	6	5	6	6	6	6	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
5						2			2	3	1	3				4	1								
6 Simone				1	3											1	2			2	5	3	4	6	
7				1	4	5				1							3			2					
8 Tara			5		4	3	2			1					4			1	3					2	
9 Fern	5					3	5	4		1						4			1	2	2			3	
10			5					3						1				4						2	
11		4		2	1	2	4	3		3					5		1								
12	1			2	3		3	4				4	5						1		2	5			
13				1		2	5		3	1	2											4		3	
14		2	5										1					3	3		1	4	2		
15																									
16				1												1		4							
17					1	2	3	4									5								
18 Graham	3				4			3	4		1	5							5	2	1	2		6	
19		2		1				6	3	4	5	4	3					5		1				2	
20 Jordan	2																3	1		5					
21			2	1								2		3	1	5			4		4			3	
22			3	5	1							1							2		4				
23		2	6	1												5					1	4		2	
24					4	2	1											5	3						
Chosen SS	3	3	5	1	6	10	3	7	2	7	2	4	2	2	2	6	7	4	2	5	6	1	4	5	
OS	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1					2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2		1		
Reject SS	2			5			2		1	1	3	4	2		2		2		3	1		2		3	
OS	3	3		5	2		1		1	1	1	1	1		1			2	1	7	3	1		1	
Total Choices	4	4	7	2	7	11	4	8	2	7	2	4	4	2	3	8	8	6	3	7	6	2	4	5	

FIGURE 12

SOCIOMETRIC TEST GRAPH



data from Table



**TABLE 3**  
**CHANGES IN PLAYMATE PREFERENCE**

	Initial Interview		Second Interview		
	Choices	Rejections	Choices	Rejections	
Terrance	Jordan (20) 1 12 Graham (18) 2 Fern (9)	5 19 21 24 7 everyone else Terrance (4) Jordan (20) 22	Terrance Jordan (20) Fern (9)	5 everyone else Terrance (4) Jordan (20)	
Simone	16 17 5 23 24		Simone 16 17 5 21 10		
Tara	10 24 5 Simone (6) 5 3		Tara Simone (6) 17 14 24 12	19 22 Terrance (4) 1 Jordan (20) Jordan (20)	
Fern	10 21 Simone (6) Tara (8) 1	19 Jordan (20) 24 10 7	Fern Graham (18) 2 3 Jordan (20)		
Graham	12 Jordan (20) 1 5 19	21 23 Fern (9) 10 13 24	Graham 12 22 7 13 Fern (9) 17 Graham (18) 5	Terrance (4) 10 19 17 14 15	
Jordan	17 1 10 Simone (6) 19	22	Jordan 17 Graham (18) 5	Terrance (4)	

N.B. Initial choices were made the last week in February and the second three months later in the last week of May and first of June.

and 12 boys. However, the classes had also been made up with consideration given to parental preference for morning or afternoon attendance not just on need for speech/language assistance.

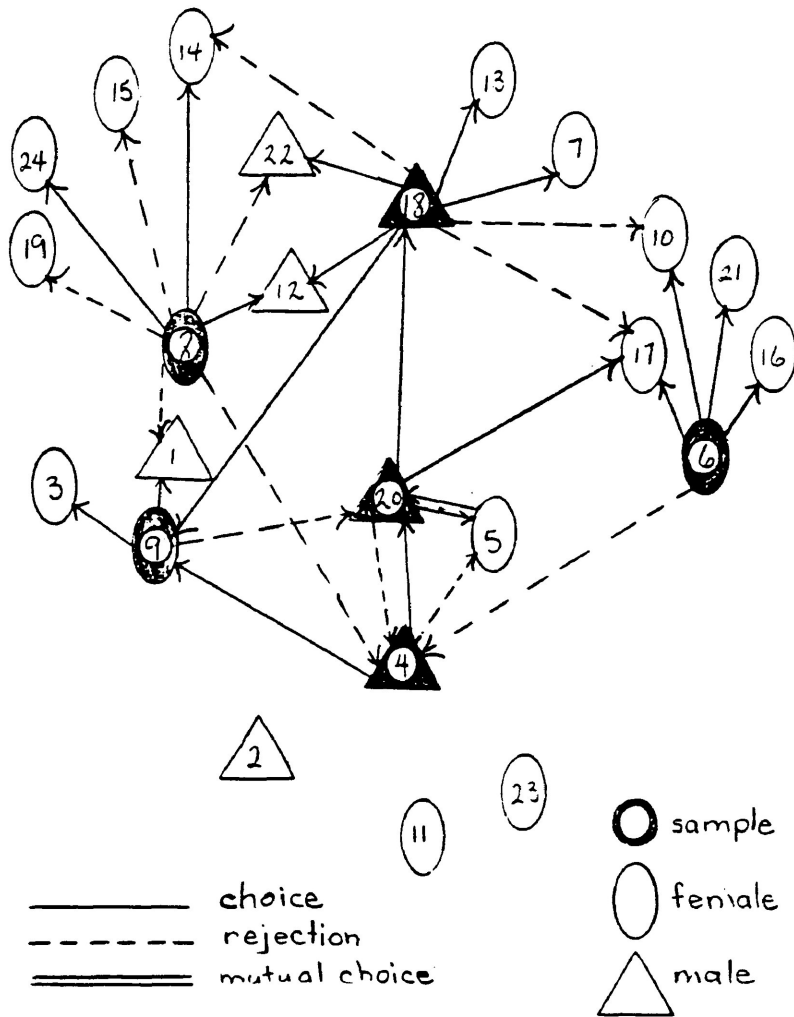
Still, much of the teacher's curriculum differentiation was made on the basis of the afternoon class appearing more able. For example, a printing centre was set up for the morning class on March second, while it was already an established part of the afternoon curriculum when I arrived in January.

During the analysis of data from several sources to compile the six student profiles, results of the second sociometric survey done during the pupil interview were compared (Table 3 and Figure 13) to the students' first responses. The changes observed suggest trying this on an ongoing basis with a group of children periodically throughout the school year to see how social group structures change naturally.

Since the teacher did not noticeably make any specific groupings on the basis of my findings given her after March Break, the changes in preference among the six in the purposive sample may be assumed to have occurred naturally.

Two of the girls (one designated a less proficient language user in the sample, Fern, and one eliminated from the study because of an obvious speech impediment) were involved in either mutual choices or mutual rejections. Observation

SOCIOMETRIC GRAPH OF PURPOSIVE SAMPLE CHANGES IN CHOICE



data taken from second interview in Table 3

indicated that both these girls did play both with individuals and groups but neither obviously struck up a mutual choice or rejection relationship with anyone else (as of February). Thus, the only students with neither positive nor negative effects on the group socially used language differently from the norm. Van Riper (1963) suggests that this factor is the main criteria for intervention in speech development.

One of the boys from the purposive sample and one of the same girls (Fern) were chosen as playmates the least (twice each). Only three others (girls) received only two choices. Three in the large group were chosen by three other people. Simone received the most choices: eleven, four more than anyone else, ten from girls and one from a boy. She did not receive any rejections. She, herself, rejected three children (all socially immature boys: Terrance, Jordan, and one other).

Analysis of changes in the sociometry of the purposive sample over a three-month period, the length of one school term, added insight both to the personalities of the respondents and their social/emotional environment. Some pertinent observations about those changes are provided below.

Only Jordan and Fern remained in Terrance's favour and the same girl (5) was his least favourite. In fact, he rejected her and "everybody 'cept the ones that I do play with".

Simone's choices were the ones that changed the least. One boy (22) was no longer out of favour and one girl (10) a

new choice. Two of the girls (23 and 24) had now lost favour.

Tara still included two of the girls in her preferred list (numbers 24 and 6) and one (19) now headed her list of rejections. The one girl she had listed as both a preference and then a rejection was no longer a consideration at all.

Fern had all new preferences. Two children (19 and Jordan) had changed from her "bad books" to good, one (Jordan) with reservations. Two (2 and 3) were now in her favour while four (21, Simone, Tara and 1) were now out. Three of the girls (24, 16 and 7) are no longer out of favour with Fern.

Graham had retained one choice (12) as his favourite. One boy, Jordan, had lost favour and Fern and one other girl (13) had changed from unfavoured to favoured. Two others (7 and 22) had gained favour. One girl (10) remained out of favour. Three girls (21, 23, and 24) were no longer in his "bad books" but four others (17, 19, 14 and 115) now were.

Jordan was even more definite in his choice of Graham and one of the girls (5) as favourites and had added Simone to the preferred list. One of the girls (17) had lost favour, Terrance was now in disfavour and one of the formerly disfavoured (22) was not mentioned.

#### Profiles of Students in Purposive Sample (Phase II)

The following profiles are based on observations of the six targeted students as well as information gleaned from parent interviews and school records.

Graham

Graham was five years five months old in January. He has a moderate articulation problem which did not appear to affect either his willingness or his ability to communicate with others. For this reason he was included in the target group as one of the three proficient language users. The content of Graham's conversation was much more mature than most of the other students. He spoke of wanting to become "Prine Mini-thter", for example and was the only one to know that "plat-ter" meant "big plate". Many of his comments indicated a more mature sense of humour as well. Two examples of this come to mind.

Once, the teacher had given the rules for Hide and Seek and asked the children to choose the number to count to and the number of people who would hide. She said, "May I have a turn?" (to say how many) and Graham said, "I don't think there'd be a hiding place big enough". Another time, at the Body Centre, he responded to a classmate's comment, "I can't hear nothing." (from the stethoscope) with, "It's just a cheap one". Both of these examples were delivered with a giggle and a knowing look which Graham often used to indicate he caught the humour.

His family life probably had contributed to this quiet confidence. He, his mother and father and two sisters did a lot of camping, picnicing and travelling together. Mother said he had been subjected to very strict discipline which was

gradually becoming more democratic.

Though he was the only child in the sample who did not attend junior kindergarten, he had had the most exposure to books and the least exposure to television. Mother noted that they did not have cable television. What television he did watch was frequently watched with his parents or two sisters and discussed within the family. He was the only child in the sample to display a preference for his left hand. This did not seem to adversely affect his ability to do assigned tasks.

#### Simone

Simone was five years two months old in January. She was very sociable and personable. Homelife appeared very stable and happy. She had a four year old brother. Her father was self-employed and her mother was a homemaker.

Simone had had many opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Her mother indicated that she had travelled extensively with her family, having visited Duluth and Toronto several times. The family spent weekends downhill skiing in winter and boating and camping in the summer. There was a good deal of involvement also with extended family members: grandparents and uncles in town and cousins from out of town. Simone had had some experience with age peer groups prior to school, in Sunday school classes, vacation bible school, and swimming and dancing lessons.

Some evidence of immaturity was evident in Simone's behaviour and speech. She still preferred play-oriented

activities such as the home centre or the sand table to academics though handwork was excellent. General knowledge and many traditional "readiness" skills appeared well developed but her speech was characterized by frequent grammatical errors and poor enunciation especially of medial and final consonants. Simone frequently used the terms "wanna" for "want to", "doan wannoo" for "don't want to" and "dunno" for "I don't know". She also did a lot of head shaking and answering of "yah" rather than elaborating as many of the other children were prone to do. Her one noticeable articulation difficulty was substitution of /d/ for initial voiced /th/ (as in "they").

Simone watched a great deal of television. There did seem to be some regulation of time but not of content. Her favourite shows were her "mom's soaps" as well as the "Elephant Show" (Sharon, Lois and Bram's Elephant Show) and movies.

Simone's mother considered her early in development of most skills especially communicating her ideas fluently (before three). Simone did not learn to dress herself until senior kindergarden. Discipline in the home was termed "somewhat strict" with rules for bedtime and meals but flexible in that the children were allowed to choose which clothes they would wear each day.

### Tara

Tara was four years eleven months of age in January. She was verbal and gregarious. She initiated conversation often



and offered information without prompting. [Observer's Comment (OC): This, I think, might lead one to have somewhat unrealistic sociolinguistic and academic expectations of her.]

Tara was adopted at birth into a middle class home. Father worked in education; Mother was a homemaker. Tara's family valued education and was affluent enough to have provided Tara and her seven year old brother with a variety of experiences not available to many children. During the term in which the study was undertaken, Tara vacationed for two weeks in Florida with her mother, father, brother and a grandmother. Tara kept a daily journal during this time assisted by one or another of the adults. There were many indications of other ways in which the family had provided exposure to print and built high linguistic expectations for Tara. One example was the frequency with which they visited the public library even before Tara was school age; another was the amount of literature in the home and the nightly practice of a bedtime story.

Extensive travelling, family activities, having a brother seven plus a cousin close in age with whom she spent quite a bit of time, swimming and soccer lessons and attendance at Sunday school had given Tara a variety of situations in which she had been exposed to language modelling of age peers and older children and adults.

Initially, the teacher seemed to have concerns about maturity. This was apparently based on Tara's preference for

play and her immature language. Mother, however, felt Tara was advanced at talking, completing puzzles and drawing. She felt she talked so well because the parents did not encourage baby talk.

Observation and data analysis would appear to confirm the teacher's initial evaluation. Tara had problems with vocabulary, short term memory and sentence structure (particularly questions - e.g. "I could check the chicks?" as well as some articulation problems which were not age-appropriate e.g. final and medial voiceless /th/ were replaced by /s/ and /f/ as in "everysing" and "wif", /d/ was substituted for initial voiced /th/ as in "dis" and final consonants were often omitted (e.g. "jus" and doan").

Tara's scoring above average on the word-finding test may again give credibility to the over-achiever, enriched environment theory. In her case, both parents and grandparents consciously supported language and other learning.

In her final report the classroom teacher changed her mind, noting that Tara had made "outstanding progress" and was "well prepared" for grade one.

Mother's and daughter's perceptions differed in some instances. Though Mother said Tara was free to choose her own food, Tara said she never got to choose her own food. Tara's mother indicated television viewing was restricted: Tara did not feel it was.

Although Tara watched a fair amount of television each

day, her parents only occasionally watched or discussed it with her. She said they didn't have rules for watching television, "'Cause we jus doan need them. But I know one rule. When my dad's watching the hockey game we always talk and he says, 'Shh'".

Tara's enriched homelife appeared to compensate for problems in particular skill areas such as limited vocabulary and faulty sentence structure. One wonders if this will balance average skills and allow her to continue to exceed expectations for her age.

### Terrance

Terrance was a gregarious, hyperactive and talkative child of four years, eight months. He was very easily distracted, his language was often inappropriate, and his grammar was immature, particularly his questioning ability. For example, he might say, "I can go to the sand table?".

Homelife appeared somewhat unsettled. Terrance's mother was a single parent. His four half-brothers (two eight year olds, the others nine and two) all had different surnames from his, two of one and two of another, indicating the involvement/influence of more than one male model.

According to his final report Terrance was settling down a bit and showing an interest in reading. He was motivated by rewards but not ready to take initiative for his own learning. The teacher felt he was "not ready to meet the challenges of grade one without hard work".

Terrance's speech was characterized by poor articulation and enunciation. His conversation was often irrelevant and he often resorted to nonsense and word play. His "silliness" was often aggravating to both the teacher and his fellow students. He watched scary movies on television late at night and Mother admitted this influenced his speech and behaviour.

The following excerpt from the selected transcripts used for data analysis contains many examples of Terrance's unique language style. It also includes samples of interactions with others in the purposive sample. The pseudonyms of children from the sample are included and other classmates have been designated "Girl" or "Boy" but the transcript is otherwise the way it was originally recorded. "Teacher" is the classroom teacher and "Me" is the researcher.

#### Transcripts of Fieldwork

Wednesday, February 25, 1987

##### PEANUT BUTTER DAY

Started morning off with fluency.

On the easel was printed "here's a surprise for you." Atop the easel was a gift-wrapped box. The teacher had the children pass it around the circle. Each shook it and then made a guess as to its contents. No one guessed right so they were to come to school with another guess tomorrow.

Gym:

Jordan was asked to tell what they did in the gym last day. They had tried to bump out the beach balls Teacher put in the basketball nets.

Teacher: And was Jordan good at it?

Chorus: Ye-e-e-s.

Teacher: Who else was good at it?

Chorus: [Boy].

We proceeded to the gym where the class was allowed to indulge in "free play". [Girl] chose to sit on the bench with me and could not be persuaded to join the others, so I took the opportunity to begin the sociometric interviews. (Her responses are listed below with the others carried out later in the classroom.)

Again, the experience in the gym generated a great deal of language which was very hard to document as the groups changed so frequently. Comments such as, "I almost did it." were frequent. Jordan and [Boy] played together. [Observer's Comments (OC): These two and Terrance tend to gravitate to each other perhaps because the others will not let them play. Generally, it seems the children with verbal facility choose what is played with and whom and direct the play situation. Those with less facility appear content to be led or play quietly by themselves.] Much of the noise was whooping and laughing. The size and composition of the groups changed frequently many times without much verbalization. The children appeared quite comfortable with other unsolicited companions joining in.

#### Milkshakes:

Graham, [Boy], [Girl] and Fern stayed behind to make peanut butter milkshakes with Mrs. W. (parent volunteer). On our return from the gym, successive groups of children were called to the back of the room to watch the milkshake preparation and I chose to watch Terrance's and Jordan's group.

Terrance: We getta put dem in da gass (when) we get milshakes to drink.

Parent volunteer (P.V.): Look what I forgot.

Girl: What did you (inflection on "you" rather than "what") forget?

Jordan: The mawuck.

P.V.: The most important thing in a milkshake, milk.

Jordan: I like milkshakes.

The blender noise prompted Terrance to copy the noise. The other children followed his lead but less vigorously and then they all waited quietly for the glasses to be filled.

Terrance: I like milk.

Jordan: I like milkshakes better.

Terrance: Rummmmm. Rummmmm. That no milkshake.

Girl: Yaah. For you Terrance.

Terrance: An do we geh to tase?

Girl: Yep.

Terrance: Mmm.

Girl: And I get to taste 'cause ih after you too.

As the adults present (teacher, parent volunteer and researcher) commented on how delicious the shake was and how thick, the children began making comments.

Terrance: How big is mine (to no one in particular)? ..  
 Ah mine. At good.  
 Teacher: How is it?  
 Me: Very thick.  
 Teacher: Can it go up in the straws?  
 Terrance: Cold!  
 Teacher: I wonder why it's cold?  
 Terrance: It's not (Joan's next comment begins here superimposed on Terrance's) sposed to be cold? (as Joan continued)  
 Teacher: Can you tell me why it's cold?  
 Terrance: (immediately following former comment - another example of his repetitious speech) Not sposed to be cold.  
 Teacher: Milkshakes aren't supposed to be cold. [This may have been modelling of "supposed".]  
 Me: It's really delicious.  
 Terrance: It tastes like ice cream to me me. [another immature affectation]  
 Me: Mm hmm. It's really good.

[OC: I couldn't help thinking back to language experience lessons in oral language development groups where the children took an active part in the food preparation. However, the banana popsicles made on another day were done by each individual.]

As the others had their turn at the milkshake centre, I continued with my sociometric survey of the class by asking them for five classmates they would like to play with and up to five they would rather not play with. I explained that after the holiday, the teacher would sometimes like to group them with people they particularly like to be with.

Terrance's sociometric interview is documented as an example in Appendix G4.

### Jordan

This little fellow was a very gregarious and likeable pupil of five years five months. He was a very verbal and overly polite little boy from a lower middle-class family with one younger brother age two and a half.

During the interview with his mother, she indicated that

he was "Daddy's boy" and his father and an uncle were involved in the martial arts. The father seemed to have a fair amount of interaction with his son and was present at the evening meal and others when he was not working, shared responsibility for dentist/doctor appointments, took him swimming and camping and was the authority figure at bedtime. The family was described by the mother as closeknit with frequent contact with grandparents, cousins and aunts (especially mother's sister) and uncles.

Other interaction with people outside the home had occurred at Sunday School, with neighbourhood children and the babysitters. Jordan mentioned that he attended Daycare but his mother did not mention this. Travelling had involved camping and trips to Grand Marais (a small community approximately ninety miles away in Minnesota).

Analysis of the data involving Jordan indicated that his verbosity and good manners appeared to be rote-learned behaviour. His spontaneous conversation included many fairly sophisticated constructions which he had learned fit certain situations and repeated often (e.g. "actouee" for "actually") prefaced many responses to questions and comments such as "You sound wike my mother, I hope you know." were interjected frequently. Much of his conversation was disjointed and irrelevant containing many "mazes" (Dias, 1976) or tangents such as his discussion of ninjas in the excerpt of the transcript quoted below. Many concepts were not yet developed

and relationships not understood. For example, when questioned about whether he had ever had soccer lessons, he responded, "Me? [He often repeats the question in some way.] Yah. I've been at soccer lessons for a hundred years. Until I passed ... To this school". Grammatical structure was also not at the level of the majority of his classmates.

Jordan's speech was also characterized by frequent misarticulations (e.g. /l, th, ch/, final consonants and word endings such as "ing") and mispronunciations (e.g. "groshie" for "grocery"). The content of his conversation indicated an unhealthy preoccupation with television and ninjas. During the student interview he asked, "Do I get a star?" When one was drawn at the top of the page, he said, "That's almost like a ninja star".

Jordan found it difficult to carry on a conversation, switching topic and lapsing into irrelevant speech frequently without appropriate signals. He often brought in topics with which he seemed to be preoccupied and spoke at some length. Some examples are Rockwars, Cait Mack (K Mart), television characters and his unsatisfactory relationship with Terrance, one of the other boys profiled. The following is part of a conversation about ninjas:

Jordan: I've been seein' a ninja star.

Researcher: Hmm?

Jordan: I'm seein' a real ninja star.

Researcher: Really?

Jordan: Yes. Someone nailed a real ninja star on their board and some ninjas are around. Or, actooewe, they're in Could Bay or ...

Researcher: In Cloud Bay?



Jordan: Yah. Probly are always around probly in Cloud Bay.

Researcher: Have you been to Cloud Bay?

Jordan: Yah. I saw a lotta ninjas before. I saw my one of my ninja friends actyouwee. I go at Cloud Bay to ... Well, actyouwee, I teach ninjas. I'm a lot older than em. You know how old are dey? Dey're only dis many (shows five fingers). I'm dis many (shows five fingers of right hand and thumb of left).

Researcher: Oh. I see.

Jordan: So I still go in dis grade. If I was in dis (hesitates) in dis many I'd be at a different school by now.

Researcher: Well, maybe. Not a different school but probably a different class, eh?

Jordan: Yep. But I won't be here when I pass.

Researcher: No? Where will you be?

Jordan: I'll be in grade one.

Researcher: Mmm hmm. But at this school. Right?

Jordan answered with a nod.

Another excerpt from Jordan's student interview, conducted in an empty teachers' planning room, also reflects his difficulty with communication as well as his distractibility:

Researcher: Do you ever go shopping?

Jordan: Yah. Wif no one.

Researcher: For groceries?

Jordan: Yah. I go ... I go wif no one. I groshie shop ... shop jus down the street. I can go there in a jet and get righ back here. I woo ... aI woan ... I doan wanna do it today. (He picks up a fire hat from the other side of the room as he wanders and talks.) Heh! My hat.

Introduction to written language occurred prior to school. Stories were read most frequently by his mother or Angie, an elderly mental patient boarding in the home. Picture books, classics such as Peter Pan, fairy tales, nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss were said to be the material presented. Activities such as scribbling, colouring, printing his name and drawing were attempted and encouraged by the parents. When questioned about favourite toys, trucks, games,

drawing/painting/colouring/writing materials, riding toys and sports equipment were mentioned. Mother felt he is unusually adept at sports. He rode a two-wheeler without training wheels at three and a half years.

Father was described as a strict disciplinarian with Mother being more lenient. Father was said to be the one most frequently responsible for discipline as the "boys listen better". As an example of likely action taken, Jordan might be sent to his room or be given a "smack on his bottom". He was described as a good eater and was encouraged to try new foods. No reference was made to his gastro-intestinal problem. He had a regular bedtime, more flexible in the summer, and most of the time chose which clothes he would wear.

Mother felt Jordan was read to "a lot" (seven on a one to seven scale) prior to school entry and watches an "average" amount of television (four), "a lot" on a rainy day [OC: The impression was given that this was the most prevalent indoor activity.] Angie and the father were said to spend a lot of time watching television with Jordan (six). Television was discussed with Jordan "a lot" (seven) and he had nightmares about "The A Team" and ninjas. Mother felt Jordan had had "average" exposure to nursery rhymes and that there were "a lot" of children's books in the home. Jordan was not taken to the Public Library before senior kindergarten.

Mother said the types of toys encouraged were games, the

swimming pool and bikes. When asked what Jordan liked to do she replied, "Play and run wild. He's not afraid of anything". She felt he did several things exceptionally well for his age: bicycling, dressing himself, gymnastics and swimming. The parents encouraged cycling and the opportunity to run off energy. He swam in his aunt's pool and at Lac de Mille Lac.

When questioned about skill development, Mother felt dressing (He had a book to practice with zippers, buttons and shoelaces) and toileting skills, speaking in sentences ("ET phone home" at 18 months) and expressing his ideas were all developed before three years of age. However, he did not begin speaking sounds clearly until age four. Taking responsibility for housekeeping tasks (something he considers "woman's work"), supervised and unsupervised group cooperation and the following of instructions were just beginning to develop in senior kindergarten.

During this kindergarten year he had experienced some upheaval as his parents were having marriage difficulties and were separate for a time. Additional emotional difficulties were generated by the presence in the home of three outpatients from the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital. Some health problems were evident as well e.g. eczema, gastro-intestinal problems and hearing difficulties as well as frequent bumps and bruises and a broken arm.

Jordan proved to be one of the more popular children, at least with the boys, during the sociometry done with the

group. He was chosen as a preferred playmate by five boys and two girls and received rejections from one boy and seven girls.

Two other interesting observations made were that he was the only one interviewed who did not say play was his favourite thing at school. He liked to "print numbers and figure out what (sic) the numbers go."

Jordan's mother seemed to know his television habits and was concerned about them. She said that the family discussed television a lot. She was concerned about the nightmares he had that were related to television. He liked ninjas, the A Team, Superman, Bruce Lee, American Ninjas and Rockwars. He didn't like "Mummerall" who he said was "kinda weird".

This little boy's sociolinguistic development, I think, needs close attention. He was not presently a real behavioral problem but the potential was there and language difficulties were already proving a detriment to his learning. Observation seemed to confirm the teacher's concerns. His pragmatic language skills did seem to be rote learned with many memorized phrases for certain situations. He had not developed independent work habits, was very easily distracted, and his handwork was weak partly due to his inability to follow instructions. Despite his statement to the contrary, he preferred to play and found the challenge of academics too much for him. However, he responded positively to structure and clear and simple expectations.

Fern

Fern was a quiet, likeable little girl who belonged to a minority ethnic group. She was five years eleven months in January.

Mother said English was not Fern's second language although another language was spoken in the home. Fern came from a one-parent family and had two older half-sisters (14 and 16) and a half-brother (19). Mother said Fern had no relationship with her father.

A language assessment had been recommended by the junior kindergarten teacher but had not been done perhaps because Fern was making steady progress.

Fern had not experienced many of the things that the more proficient language users had. For example, she had only visited one community outside of Thunder Bay, a town of approximately 2,000 about 400 kilometres away.

Discipline was termed "not strict". Television was not discussed in the home and she had not been taken to the Public Library although Mother said there were a lot of books in the home.

Fern's language was characterized by immature grammar and vocabulary. She spoke in very short, telegraphic sentences and seldom initiated conversation especially with her age peers. She found it difficult to explain herself and did not answer well the function questions posed during the student interview.

## Interpretation

### Parental Influence: What Went Before

With both groups of children, those perceived as language proficient and those viewed as less able, there appeared to be some commonality to the parenting that either enabled or disabled the development of speech and language.

Involvement in organized activities outside the home, availability of books, frequent interaction with extended family and provision of a variety of toys seemed to be consistent with the more proficient language users. The less proficient children's homes were characterized by inconsistent adult models and excessive television viewing frequently of programs not designed for children. The most significant difference in this sample seemed to be that the better language users had stable, two-parent family situations where language learning was supported by a variety of experiences, whereas the poorer speakers came from one parent homes in two cases and parental conflict in the other. These children had less support for language learning. All three of these homes appeared unstable and were characterized by frequent emotional flare-ups.

### Teacher's Choice of Curricula

Most often, kindergarten curricula is designated either "academic" or "child-centred" (Egertson, 1987). That carried out in the classroom under study would rather, perhaps, be termed "traditional". There were many characteristics of the

"academic" such as specific skills considered prerequisite to first grade (e.g. math and reading) being taught directly. Another was the segmented daily schedule.

However, much of what went on in this classroom was designed to maintain and develop dispositions to go on learning which is characteristic of the child-centred philosophy (Katz, 1977, 1984). For example, daily activities most often were based on a theme with many "subjects" integrated with others. Also, the teacher kept control of the group without raising her voice.

Some aspects of the teacher's curriculum also met several of the criteria most often attributed to the "whole language approach" to teaching which is, again, considered to be child-centred. Some did not. For instance, the exposure to classical literature such as fairy tales and nursery rhymes with an emphasis on meaning was contradicted by the drilling of isolated sight words dictated by a basal reader.

Skill development. The teacher in this case was preparing children for the requisite traditional expectations for grade one with exposure to: sight words, numbers, counting, colours, letters, and sound-symbol association (see Appendix H). There was daily drill as part of the opening exercises routine but no formal teaching or testing of most of these skills. Sight vocabulary for Whiskers, a basal pre-primer, was however, taught and tested (see Appendix H1).

The teacher chose to exclude from the daily schedule two

activities that generate considerable language learning and opportunities for the children to engage in spontaneous speech: field trips and snacks. She felt the children were really too young to benefit from field trips and that that type of activity should wait until grade four or so when the benefit derived merits the amount of organization involved. She included snacks in the day's schedule only if they were relevant to the theme but not on a daily basis. For instance, on Peanut Butter Day each child had the opportunity to drink a peanut butter milkshake made for them by a parent volunteer. [OC: I felt the activity would have been even more meaningful if the children had helped make the shake]. On another occasion, "B Day", the children made frozen banana "popsicles" to eat at a later date. Such activities generated more spontaneous language than any other type of activity.

Accommodation of individual differences. This classroom teacher adapts the curriculum and her techniques to address the different levels of development and ability in the group. There are many ways this could be expanded, however. To ensure children are learning to follow directions the teacher called on lower-functioning pupils to demonstrate or repeat any instructions given. Frequent one to one interventions by the teacher, especially with children experiencing difficulty helped certain individuals function in the large group. A degree of security was provided by the teacher's tone of voice, her no-nonsense approach, the underlying structure and



routine she provided and her clearly understood expectations. These expectations were realistic (e.g. exposure only for sight words, numbers, colours, counting by rote, and letters). Except in the case of the sight words, these were not formally tested. This testing may have generated in some of the children the feeling that they were expected to know them although no anxiety was observed and there was no negative reinforcement on the part of the teacher. The teacher did praise success, however, which may have negatively affected the less successful.

The teacher said she avoids obtaining information from home and refrains from reading the OSR. She believes that the less known about the child the better and relies on her own observations of classroom behaviour to formulate her own opinion of the child. However, this particular year, she put all those known to be in need of the speech/language teacher's assistance in the morning class.

This teacher's philosophy regarding pre-conceived perceptions of students is one popularly held in the teaching community. However, it is in direct contradiction to the rationale underlying the administrative movement toward early identification and intervention and the belief that the more we know about the child and the sooner we adapt his/her curriculum to address individual needs the better. Speech and language are essential tools of communication and learning, thus it is important during the formative years to provide a

student the best possible environment for optimum sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic development (Gresham, 1984).

The most obvious adaptation to meet individual needs is the difference in curriculum presented to the morning and afternoon classes because of the teacher's conclusion, formulated early in the first term, that the group in the afternoon had higher ability, in general. This was partially due to the placement of all known speech/language difficulties in the morning class. When the morning class were "ready" for printing, the teacher changed the physical environment to accommodate a printing centre and make it easier to "mark" worksheets. She commented that the afternoon class had been printing for some time. In both morning and afternoon classes, instruction was mainly delivered through lecturing to the whole group. The most common language teaching technique was teacher-elicited choral response.

Some teaching techniques favoured by the teacher were conducive to the addressing of individual needs in the area of language development. For example, she used a fair amount of modelling and intervention/correction in language (articulation and grammar). She also frequently reinforced certain concepts she had presented e.g. daily name, number, letter/sound, counting drill and returning to stories, songs and nursery rhymes for repeated discussion as well as rereading or repeating. Even the aforementioned grouping of those with

speech/language needs may be considered a management technique to more easily accommodate those particular needs. Accommodation of individual children was mainly done through one-to-one teacher or parent volunteer intervention.

These were mainly incidental occurrences during regularly scheduled activities. There was no evidence of any activities designed to address specific speech problems or general language development. For example, there were individual instances of the teacher or aide slowing rate of speech or simplifying instructions when a student displayed difficulty. However, no attempt was made to regroup to accommodate those who required more time or simpler instructions. Most activities specifically emphasizing oral language were done in the large group situation.

Unfortunately, during these activities the teacher would often turn to the easel or the blackboard with her back to the group and continue talking. Often times she also would end a statement by allowing her voice to become very low, making her comments unintelligible to all except those closest to her. Both these behaviours left many in the group without the necessary information to proceed with the discussion or activity.

Building self-confidence. The structure, routines and rules in the classroom provided the security for the children to take risks and try things they might not have otherwise. For instance, the daily directed art activity produced a

tangible product to take home, gave small-group experience in following directions and the security of a parent volunteer to assist on a one-to-one basis. The excessive recognition given those children who could read, however, may have had a negative affect on those who did not receive praise.

Community involvement and attitude. The parent volunteer program in the senior kindergarten in this school appeared to do much toward building the cooperative community atmosphere evident through all the grades (Seefeldt, 1985b). The teacher provided several opportunities for parents to interact: as volunteers (chosen); attendance at the three parent meetings during the year; and participation in the theme days. The parents involved had a positive experience at the beginning of their child's academic career which generates an awareness and understanding of the school situation and a respect for the teachers and their role. Parents appeared to continue to participate in and support school activities and there seemed to be more of a value given to education than there is in many school communities.

Though this teacher actively encouraged parent involvement in many ways, communication of concerns and student progress could have been improved. A monthly calendar was used to inform the home of upcoming events and any items required or special considerations. Craftwork, artwork and worksheets were sent home at the end of the week when cubby-holes were cleaned out.

Preparation for further learning. In discussing results of an International Reading Association (IRA) -sponsored survey of preservice and inservice preparation of kindergarten teachers for reading instruction in Canada and the United States of America Bailey, Durkin, Nurss and Stammer (1982) state: "Kindergarten teachers need to be prepared to provide appropriate, concrete instruction that actively involves the children, that is meaningful, and that is based upon the children's experiences and oral language". (p. 307)

This teacher provided many opportunities to interact and experience different things. Such activities as February's theme days and the tea/coffee party mentioned at the parent meeting in September enrich the lives of children who come from less stimulating environments and present vocabulary and concepts in a meaningful and thought-provoking way. Productive thinking techniques such as fluency (brainstorming) and flexibility (categorization) were often employed during these sessions in both the large group and small group situations.

In the classroom the children were exposed to the controlled sight vocabulary of one of the basal reading series used in the school's primary division. This, the exposure to letter and number recognition, and the printing centre were the three obvious attempts to prepare the children for the actual academic tasks of grade one. Although there was no overt expression on the teacher's part that it was expected that these skills be mastered, at least some of the children

may have gotten that impression. There appeared to be no observed anxiety due to lack of success.

The lack of cooperative planning with junior kindergarten, primary, and library/resource teachers eliminates the opportunity for a continuum of curricula and a smooth transition from one grade and teacher to another. The only observed evidence of this was a trade-off with the junior kindergarten teacher whereby both senior and junior classes would watch a film or video tape under the supervision of one of the teachers while the other had planning time. There was no attempt at fostering the beginnings of computer literacy. This, again, could have been done using outside resources.

There was an obvious attempt on the teacher's part to avoid the sex-stereotyping that can result in an imbalance in skill development and values between the sexes. Such a situation may lead to, for example, girls avoiding studies in preparation for careers requiring higher mathematics or boys developing socially unacceptable attitudes toward females (Benbow & Stanley, 1983; Breen & Breen, 1985). This teacher, then, was helping foster a healthy social attitude in both boys and girls which would assist them in reaching their potential as responsible students and citizens.

Chapter Four has delineated the findings and the interpretations of those findings. The final chapter will present the conclusions, implications and recommendations drawn from the findings.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and Reflections

The following observations are the result of a case study of the language learning environment of the senior kindergarten child. Analyses of information gained through this process were done with reflection on experience gained through twenty-eight years of teaching and parenting: as a primary division and grade six classroom teacher; remedial reading teacher; specific learning disabilities teacher; resource teacher; special education resource teacher; teacher/consultant for the academically advantaged; speech and language teacher and a parent of two language-proficient children.

Conclusions and Implications

Various indicators related to effective parenting/teaching techniques affecting language learning emerged during the analysis of the findings in this study. The interpretation of these led to the following conclusions and implications.

Parental influence on the language learning environment apparently hinges on several identifiable factors: stability of family life, consistency of adult models, exposure to books, frequency of interaction with others outside the nuclear family, the value the parents place on formal education and the amount and quality of television viewing.

The "traditional" approach to teaching employed in this

classroom, while curtailing some activities, made interaction easier for some of the children. In her choice of curriculum, the teacher reflected the philosophy that kindergarten is not only a time for socialization but also for getting ready for academic activities. There was an emphasis on time-honoured reading and numeracy readiness skills such as letter and number recognition, sight words and printing. The aspects of language not addressed to the same degree were talking, listening and written composition.

The comfort level of the children in this classroom was very evident. The teacher provided a stable, safe and secure environment by conducting a program with an underlying structure and outlining early on a system of simple, clear and realistic expectations. The children gained both competence and confidence. Even the least able was willing to try. Routines and rules, the structure of the program, and the personality of the teacher as a just and caring person allowed risk-taking.

This teacher capitalized on pupil interests as motivators. The most evident topic was television characters although television, itself, was not used often as a visual aid or to provide vicarious experiences for the children. One motivator not used as frequently as it might have been was food and its preparation. My experience with less-proficient language users is that this is, perhaps, the most effective motivating technique because of the pleasure involved and



because all of the children are experienced with it to some degree. The teacher's decision not to expose the children to experiences outside the classroom also eliminated some of the very things the lower proficiency language users lacked. Another interest not utilized by the teacher was the computer. An introduction to computer literacy would have provided an opportunity to enhance the children's oral language skills and to exhibit the link between talking and writing, speech and print. The use of productive thinking techniques such as fluency (the generation of ideas) and flexibility (the categorization of ideas) greatly assisted in vocabulary and concept acquisition, however.

Most activities were open-ended and allowed for accommodation of all levels of ability. Many aspects of this teacher's program assisted in preparing the children for further learning and the goal of independent learner. Attention was paid to ensuring that all of the children learned how to follow directions and to listen well. However, the teacher's philosophy of forming her own opinion of the children's needs and abilities rather than using information available from other sources to assist her and the lack of regrouping to accommodate specific needs or interests eliminated many opportunities to assist individual students. Although there was attention given to preparation for the academic expectations of grade one, there was no evidence of cooperative planning with the primary division or of an

attempt at continuity from one grade to the next.

The parent volunteer program in the classroom was a definite asset. It was very well planned and effectively used. The use of additional adults in the classroom fostered a sense of community and provided an opportunity for closer adult monitoring, models of and support for oracy and the learning of sociolinguistics (Bush & Giles, 1975; Cavanagh, 1979).

### Recommendations

#### Curricula

. The inclusion of dramatic play on a regular basis would greatly facilitate oral language development (Pelligrini, 1986; Westby, 1980). Such activities seemed to generate the most spontaneous speech but some participation by the teacher is needed to ensure efficient language users do not monopolize the situation (Schickedanz, 1978). For example some of the children used "Pyjama Day" for this purpose with some assistance from teacher. The bulk of the conversation, however, was dominated by the most efficient language user in the group.

. Inclusion of small, age-appropriate field trips on a regular basis would help provide some of the experiential background lacking in some of the less-proficient language users. Some examples might be a walk to a nearby supermarket to purchase a Halloween pumpkin, a visit to a pizza restaurant to make and eat pizzas and a winter walk to the nearby riverbank for a sliding party and winter safety lesson.

More open-ended activities offering varying degrees of difficulty would help accommodate the broad range of ability and developmental levels.

. Small group functional language activities could be designed to facilitate language usage for a variety of purposes. If supervised by an adult, the situation could be manipulated to ensure that less proficient language users gained the experience and practice with the various functions of language. [OC: The classroom teacher during the process of the study recognized the need for more math/language activities and asked that I assist her in designing such a centre during the Spring term. I attended a "Math Their Way" workshop for her and using the type of activities suggested by Staab (1983), I prepared a set of cards to be used in a math centre.]

. Children could begin keeping journals using both drawings and print. Experimenting with writing could be encouraged by allowing them to attempt to write their own stories rather than dictate them. Typing on the computer could also be incorporated. The shared reading of predictable books would also encourage expression of original ideas and consolidate the rhythm and pattern of the language.

. Activities such as those mentioned above would provide the opportunity for the children to experiment with writing and reading as well as speaking and listening.

. The teacher should avoid speaking with back turned to the group or in low tones. It was quite evident that this

frequently left some children without the information they needed to participate as expected.

### Evaluation

. Systematic observation would more quickly and more accurately identify high-risk/high potential children and changing needs/development of all students.

. Ongoing documentation of evaluation by observation would assist in the planning of activities to accommodate changing needs and in reporting progress to parents.

### Liaison

. There could be more reporting to parents via a booklet or folder containing the teacher's comments as well as items done by the child rather than worksheets being sent home in plastic bags.

. Coordination with the daycare situations in which some students spend the other half of the day would prove helpful in understanding such students and accommodating their individual needs. Through the parent it might be possible to arrange visitations of personnel between the two programs. This would be especially helpful if the needs of the child are perceived differently by the caregivers in either situation. Observation in another program would probably also be accepted by administration of both daycare and school as appropriate professional development.

. Cooperative planning with the junior kindergarten, primary and library/resource teachers would provide the opportunity to

share concerns, information and resources. For example, field trips could be planned with other classes whereby older students could be paired with kindergarten students.

#### Accommodation of Language Delays/Disorders/Disabilities

Administrators should encourage more staff development for teachers especially in the primary division to increase awareness and to provide benchmarks and guidelines to evaluate and support the language development of less proficient language users (Kyle & McCutcheon, 1984; O'Donnell, 1977). Some suggestions arising from this particular study are listed below.

- . Prolong, simplify and slow temporal rate of speech to aid auditory processing. (Some children process at a slower rate.)

- . From time to time ask less proficient children to repeat instructions. (This was done frequently in the classroom under study.)

- . Promote perception with clear articulation and avoidance of talking with back turned or head down, lower tones, voice trailing off and idiomatic speech. (Be aware of idiomatic expressions used and explain them.)

- . Provide adequate response time without automatically relying on a verbally proficient to provide the answer in group situations. (Less proficient students in this class were often specifically asked to respond.)

- . Provide concrete, meaningful, reinforcement for correct

responses and/or observed improvements in specific language skills.

. Do not be afraid to point out to a child when he/she is incorrect. Do this in a non-threatening way by modelling or supplementary questioning/teaching and always give an opportunity to make corrections.

. Provide more time for discussion, conversation, choral speaking, and listening activities.

Develop in children the responsibility for signal detection i.e. if an instruction is not understood, the child should ask for more information or a slower rate of presentation.

. Encourage and actively teach/model questioning. For example, play "Jeopardy" where students answer with a question beginning with "what" (move to "how, when, where, why, who"), model responses until comfortable and then return to the activity on a regular basis.

. Give children the number of cues needed to be successful; as success builds, gradually withdraw cues.

. Move from small, incremental steps to more difficult.

Where possible provide written/visual backup to auditory instructions e.g. centre signs with representative picture plus name of activity. (In this class activity centre signs were used but just in print form.)

Avoid making children guess at instructions when misunderstanding is suspected e.g. do not respond to "What do

you mean?" with, "What do you think I mean?"

. Maintain a high success rate; begin with review of material that the last proficient child has been successful with previously (Hixon et al., 1980; Wiig & Semel, 1980).

#### Future Foci for Research

Schools of education and boards of education could greatly assist the development of more effective teaching/learning environments (Fullan & Park, 1981; Wardaugh, 1976). Encouragement and facilitation of more cooperative research between boards and universities and with other agencies and institutions and implementation of action research to better analyze existing teaching/learning environments would aid both student and practising teachers (Hannay & Stevens, 1985; Heath, 1983; Pinnell & Matlin, 1989). There should be more communication of research findings to practising teachers and provision of in-service to lead to implementation of new and innovative techniques and programs.

The following are some suggested areas of emphasis.

1. There should be further investigation into the effectiveness of a holistic approach to support the language learning of children with speech/language differences, difficulties and disorders.
2. A comparison of daycare and kindergarten situations should be made regarding curricula and governmental regulations with a view to adoption of the more effective components of both situations to better serve the needs of pre-school

children. Present discrepancies which might be addressed are: training; care-giver to child ratio; health and safety regulations; government funding; and facilities.

3. A comparison of early childhood education and primary teacher education (teacher preservice and inservice training) programs should be made with a view to combining or enhancing the two situations (LaPierre, 1980).

4. More longitudinal studies of parenting strategies which support language development such as those done by Wells (1986) and Schickedanz & Sullivan (1984) should be done to assist those providing parental support.

5. An investigation of methods by which listening and speaking can be integrated to the degree writing and reading are by those using the whole language approach would assist those children who begin school without the expected oral language proficiency.

6. Studies should be made of specific teaching strategies (e.g. oral language development groups (McCuaig & Essa, 1979) and Reading Recovery (Clay, 1987)).

### Reflections

During the timeframe of this study several changes have occurred in the field of early childhood education. Recent developments in both the Ontario Ministries of Education and of Community and Social Services have addressed some of the concerns reflected in the literature and investigated during this study. One example is the matter of professional



preparation for early childhood education in elementary schools and daycare situations. New teacher training guidelines (Fullan & Connelly, 1987) as well as new directions for daycare facilities (Ontario, EPEP, 1985) point to a future correlation between present early childhood training and teacher training.

The elements included in daycare situations which would enhance the environment of junior and senior kindergarten are the open-endedness of the dramatic and structured play, the emphasis on social skills, the realistic expectations for young children, the more realistic care-giver to child ratio and the greater flexibility of the program. Present teacher education, however, recognizes the children's need for routine/structure/security, hands on learning, ownership of learning, and for having expectations such as rules for behaviour clearly explained. There is a recognition of and preparation for future academic expectations. There are opportunities for participation in small and large group activities such as discussions and the introduction to worksheets. My observations in daycare centres indicate that these are not areas of emphasis in the daycare situation.

The use of parent volunteers in the classroom observed in this study more closely reflects the nursery school/daycare situation than many kindergarten situations. Children become used to other adults in the room and to interacting with more than one adult. This type of environment encourages the

children to be less dependent on the teacher and provides more opportunity for the teacher to address varying levels of ability and maturity reflected, for example, in the following of oral directions and the time required for task completion.

During the course work involved in my educational leave, I was reacquainted with teacher education and observed how pre-service training has changed since my undergraduate days. I was concerned with the lack of classroom management and discipline courses in present teacher training and with the scarcity of opportunities for gaining practical experience in junior and senior kindergarten classrooms during field service (practice teaching). There also seems to be a need for language development/language delay in-service at the junior/senior kindergarten level.

In retrospect, I now realize that replicating an existing study would have been much simpler and less time-consuming. However, designing a unique study is a very worthwhile if often frustrating experience. I would recommend that students involve themselves in research long before they reach the point of undertaking a thesis as part of an undergraduate or graduate program (Simpson & Eaves, 1985).

Narrowing the focus of the study to allow for a viable workload is important. My committee early-on narrowed my perspective and helped bring the workload down to where I would be working within realistic parameters. My choice of topic, however, still lent itself to a broad spectrum of

possibilities. Many elements of the study could have, themselves, provided a suitable focus for a thesis. Among these were the sociometric test and the television survey. I would recommend particularly part-time students undertaking research narrow their focus to such specific topics to avoid generating more work than they can handle comfortably in the time allowed them.

Nevertheless, I would suggest that research be thoroughly documented. Perhaps the easiest way to do this is to keep a daily journal. During the classroom observation portion of this study, a daily process journal was maintained. However, once classroom visits were over, journal entries became more sporadic and somewhat haphazard. Though the journal is time-consuming, I would recommend disciplining oneself to daily entries throughout the entire thesis process. It serves not only as a record of what has happened but also as a regular opportunity to reflect on recent happenings/perceptions in light of previous experiences.

The process of developing this thesis has clarified and solidified my own philosophy about learning. I find I believe some of both the genetic/naturist and the behaviourist schools but neither entirely. My philosophy could better be termed interactionist. From the naturist/genetic theory I accept the contention that an individual inherits facility, brain development and innate intelligence/potential. I also believe as in the behaviourist/learned school, the interactions with

others and models provided do much to formulate the resultant personality. Any individual is the product of his/her experience, inheritance and environment.

Thus, the language learning environment is of prime importance especially in the early years. The people, the variety and quality of experiences to which one is exposed in the formative years, the opportunities to practice language skills and the support and guidance provided in the acquisition of those skills are the determiners of the individual's sociolinguistic development. The development of age-appropriate oral language skills is an essential factor in the development of an individual's attitude toward school, self and others.

I have found the years I have devoted to this study a growth experience and my life is richer for it. My knowledge of and respect of research, computers, the writing process, teachers and, of course, language learning has increased tremendously. I am thankful it is completed, but will hopefully fill the void with meaningful activity.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
COVERING LETTER TO PARENTS FROM PRINCIPAL

1987 05 04

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed you will find information concerning the oral language study being carried out this year in \_\_\_\_\_ classroom. I encourage your cooperating in this undertaking which will assist teachers in appropriately designing the school environment to support and encourage language development in your children.

Please return the forms as requested as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Principal

Encls.

APPENDIX B1  
PHASE I  
COVERING MEMO

M.G. McCuaig

ACCESS TO SCHOOL RECORDS

THE LANGUAGE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student on leave from my position as an Educational Assistant with responsibility for Speech and Language with The Lakehead Board of Education. As part of my master of education program I am conducting a study which investigates the language development of young children. I would like to request your assistance in the study.

Attached you will find a form which requests permission to examine your child's school records and to use the information gained from that and classroom observation in my study.

The study will not identify any individual child. The information will be used to establish trends that will be of assistance to primary teachers in programming and in counselling parents.

Participation is voluntary. Your input is important, however. Gaining as much background information as possible about each child will assist in drawing a picture of the large group.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this research project. Please return completed permission forms to the school office.

If you have any questions or concerns please leave your name and telephone number with the school secretary and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Marilyn G. McCuaig,  
Graduate Student,  
Faculty of Education,  
Lakehead University.

APPENDIX B2  
PHASE I  
PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

PERMISSION FORM PHASE I EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL RECORDS

THE LANGUAGE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM: PHASE I

Re: \_\_\_\_\_  
(student)

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of parent or guardian)

hereby consent to the disclosure or transmittal to or the examination by  
Marilyn G. McCuaig of the information in the Ontario School Record card  
compiled in The Lakehead Board of Education in respect of

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

APPENDIX B3  
PHASE II  
COVERING MEMO

PHASE II: PERMISSION FOR USING INFORMATION GAINED THROUGH  
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWING

141 Glendale Crescent,  
Thunder Bay, Ontario.  
P7C 1N2.

1987.05.08

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Re: THE LANGUAGE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR  
KINDERGARTEN CHILD PHASE II

The accompanying letter outlines a study on which I am working and requests your permission to access school records. For the second part of my study I have chosen representative children to observe more closely. By recording their use of language during different classroom activities I hope to be able to better understand what opportunities are offered for oral language development in the senior kindergarten program.

I would appreciate your permission to include your child in this representative group. Information gained would, as with the survey of school records, be confidential. In addition, I would like to interview both the children and their parents to ask questions regarding the children's language development.

Enclosed you will find a permission form for Phase II. I shall phone you in the next few days to respond to any questions you might have. It is hoped you will find the experience interesting and rewarding in that the process will give you an opportunity to gain more insight into your child's education.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Marilyn G. McCuaig.

APPENDIX B4  
 PHASE II  
 PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

THE LANGUAGE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD  
 PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM: PHASE II

Re: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (student)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent to the inclusion of my  
 (name of parent or guardian)  
 child, \_\_\_\_\_, in Phase II of a research study conducted by  
 (name of student)  
 Marilyn G. McCuaig.

I understand that any information gained through observation, interviews or  
 examination of documents will remain confidential and will be used only for  
 the purposes of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (signature)

Dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.



# APPENDIX C1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST



THE LAKEHEAD BOARD OF EDUCATION

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECK LIST for PROGRAMME PLANNING AT THE KINDERGARTEN LEVEL

Prepared by  
A Committee of The Lakehead Board of Education

Check \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Basic information:

1. First name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_

3. When is your birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your telephone number? \_\_\_\_\_

GROSS MOTOR	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Can walk on 13 steps legs together to the				
2. Can hop on one foot for 3 metres				
3. Can hop on the other foot back				
4. Can step to the floor - dismounts				
5. Can catch a thrown bean bag at 3 metres				
6. Can throw a bean bag into a basket at 2 metres				

FINE MOTOR	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Can draw or copy a circle	O			
2. Can draw or copy a cross	+			
3. Can draw or copy a square	□			
4. Can draw or copy a diagonal	X			
5. Shows a person with 4 parts: head, body, arms, legs				
6. Can cut out a simple picture (e.g. a leaf, a star, a circle)				
7. Can button the own coat or shirt				
8. Can thread a 18 cm. hole with 40cm. string				
9. Can hold hands with fingers interlaced (parameters)				
10. Can tie each finger to thumb in sequence (parameters)				

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
A. Articulation				
1. Can say words after the teacher: dog, jack, cat, pig, pig, pig, etc.				
2. Can say words without a supporting syllable: banana, hospital, animal				

B. Association Vocabulary	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Can phrase logical verbal responses to the following:				
a) If you are sick to whom would you go?				
b) If you wanted to see a boat, where would you go?				
c) Where do we eat or drink?				
d) What does a mother (father) do?				
e) Which way does a record go?				
f) Why do we have stores?				

C. Following Directions	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Listen - repeat can				
a) Sit on the floor				
b) Stand up and clap his hands				
c) Get the box from under the table and get the scissors and paper as well				

D. Listening Skills	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Can repeat the following:				
a) 1 2 3 1 0				
b) under - sorry - body				
c) Tom found three blue eggs in the driveway				


























E. Personal Identification	Y	S	M	COMMENTS
1. Can name 18 pictures				
2. Can select things on a set				
3. Can select things he sees				

Y - Yes    S - Sometimes    N - No

# APPENDIX C1

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**  
 E. Preverbal (18 Months) and later

**COGNITIVE SKILLS**  
 A. Colors

	Y	1	2	3	4	COMMENTS
1. Can select from a group objects, items, etc. (one color, one shape, one size, one weight, one length, one texture, one taste)						
2. Can name the color when requested						

**Counting**

1. Can count out loud (0-20)						
2. Can show 1-3 blocks in one group (quantity & one item)						
3. Can give the number for 1-3 blocks						
4. Can tell how many items he has						
5. Can tell how many objects in a set						

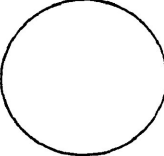
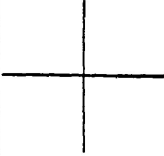
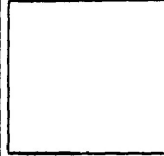
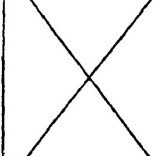
**Size, Shape, Motion, Weight**

1. Can tell which is longer - a pencil or a string?						
2. Can tell which is more than a certain amount of a liquid						
3. Can tell which paper airplane is flying far or is falling?						
4. Can tell if heavier - a block of wood?						

**Directions**

1. Can carry out instructions involving spatial positioning						
2. Can						
3. Can						
4. Can						
5. Can						
6. Can						
7. Can						
8. Can						
9. Can						
10. Can						
11. Can						
12. Can						

**Shapes for FINE MOTION**

APPENDIX C2a

RENFREW WORD-FINDING VOCABULARY TEST

DATA COLLECTION SHEET

RENFREW WORD-FINDING VOCABULARY TEST  
(CANADIAN REVISION)

Date of Administration \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Standard Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rating \_\_\_\_\_

	Name	Response	Name	Response	
1	cup	_____	31	goat	_____
2	table	_____	32	arrow	_____
3	boat	_____	33	lighthouse	_____
4	tree	_____	34	fence	_____
5	key	_____	35	scarecrow	_____
6	knife	_____	36	anchor	_____
7	window	_____	37	saddle	_____
8	finger	_____	38	parachute	_____
9	duck	_____	39	sleeve	_____
10	snake	_____	40	cuff	_____
11	basket	_____	41	waterfall	_____
12	sw	_____	42	apron/pinafore	_____
13	pear	_____	43	drill	_____
14	clown	_____	44	mountain	_____
15	case	_____	45	acres	_____
16	bear	_____	46	vegetables	_____
17	moon	_____	47	igloo	_____
18	chimney	_____	48	diver	_____
19	langaroo	_____	49	buckle	_____
20	kite	_____	50	flame	_____
21	camel	_____	51	vick	_____
22	squirrel	_____	52	steeples/spire	_____
23	leaf	_____	53	(pea) pod	_____
24	owl	_____	54	slings	_____
25	snail	_____	55	hinge	_____
26	watering/can/ sprinkler	_____	56	thermometer	_____
27	slipper	_____	57	crutch	_____
28	(coat) hanger	_____	58	weather/vane/ cock	_____
29	feather	_____	59	caster	_____
30	net	_____		TOTAL	_____

ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE SAMPLE  
(obtained using sequenced pictures)

+	<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Labels three items
	<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Simple sentences, N.P. _____ V.P. _____
	<input type="checkbox"/>	C. Appropriate tense
	<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Pronouns subjective and objective
	<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Use of possessives
	<input type="checkbox"/>	F. Use of articles
	<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Conjunctions
	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. Contractions
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Auxiliary Be
	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Relates pictures

APPENDIX C2b  
 RENFREW WORD-FINDING VOCABULARY TEST  
 THUNDER BAY NORMS

SCALED SCORE EQUIVALENTS FOR RAW SCORES										
AGES	4.0-4.5	4.6-4.11	5.0-5.5	5.6-5.11	6.0-6.5	6.6-6.11	7.0-7.5	7.6-7.11	8.0-8.5	Scaled Scores
19					55-56					19
18		47								18
17	41-42	45-46			54		57			17
16	38-40	42-44	46-48	51-52	52-53	53	55-56			16
15	36-37	40-41	44-45	48-50	49-51	51-52	52-54			15
14	34-35	38-39	42-43	46-47	48	50	51	50-51	52-53	14
13	31-33	35-37	39-41	42-43	46-47	48-49	49-50	49	51	13
12	29-30	31-34	37-38	40-42	44-45	45-47	46-48	47-48	49-50	12
11	27-28	31-32	35-36	38-39	42-43	46	45	43-46	47-48	11
10	25-26	28-30	32-34	35-37	39-41	41-43	42-44	44	46	10
9	22-23	26-27	30-31	32-34	37-38	39-40	40-41	42-43	44-45	9
8	20-21	24-25	28-29	30-31	35-36	37-38	38-39	40-41	42-43	8
7	17-19	21-21	25-25	27-29	31-34	35-36	36-37	39	41	7
6	15-16	19-20	23-24	24-26	31-32	31-34	34-35	37-38	39-40	6
5	13-14	17-18	21-22	22-23	29-30	31-32	32-33	35-36	37-38	5
4	12	14-16	20	19-21	27-28	29-30	30-31	34	36	4
3	12-13		16-18	25-26	27-28	28-29	32-33	34-35	3	
2	11		14-15	23-24	26	26-27	30-31	30-33	2	
1			13	19-22	25		27-29	27-29	1	

SUPERIOR

ABOVE  
AVERAGE

AVERAGE

BELOW  
AVERAGE

POOR



APPENDIX D2

DATA COLLECTION SHEET FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

PARENT SURVEY SHEET: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Please answer every question. The back of the sheet may be used for any additional comments you feel may be helpful.

A. Circle any of the answers that apply (one or more):

1. What involvement has Father with the child?
 

mealtimes	activities outside the home
bedtime	doctor/dentist appointments
none	
2. What involvement has Mother with the child?
 

mealtimes	activities outside the home
bedtime	doctor/dentist appointments
none	
3. What involvement has this child with other family members?
 

grandparents	cousins
aunts	uncles
4. With which of the following activities has your child been involved:
 

nursery school, day care centre, private day care, Sunday school, library story hour, hockey, dancing, babysitter's children, cousins, other
5. What travelling has your child done?
 

out of city	out of province
out of Canada	out of North America
6. If your child was read to before school age, who were most likely to be involved?
 

mother	father	guardian	brother
sister	other		
7. Circle the type of reading materials to which your child was exposed.
 

picture books, comics, classics, fairy tales, poetry, nursery rhymes, newspapers, magazines, \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of these activities did your child try at home before SK?
 

scribbling	letter formation	tracing	drawing
colouring	his/her own name	copying	other

Were such activities encouraged?

yes	no
-----	----
9. What type of show does your child prefer?
 

cartoons	educational (e.g. Sesame Street)
adventures	commercials
other	
10. Circle those toys your child would frequently play with:
 

building sets, dolls, trucks, puzzles, games, drawing/writing/colouring painting materials, riding toys, other

APPENDIX D2

DATA COLLECTION SHEET FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

B. Circle one of the three or four possible answers:

11. How would you describe your family attitude toward discipline?

- very strict
- somewhat strict
- not strict
- democratic

12. Which family member is most responsible for the disciplining of this child?

- mother
- father
- guardian
- other

13. When your child misbehaves what action are you most likely to take?  
send the child to his/her room "ground" him/her (confine to house)  
limit television viewing other

14. Which statement best describes family attitudes toward mealtimes?  
table manners are most important everything on the plate must be eaten  
children can choose their own food children are encouraged to try new foods

15. Which statement best describes your child's bedtime habits?  
goes to bed when tired has a regular bedtime  
flexible schedule other  
(e.g. stays up for special tv shows)

16. Does your child:  
choose which clothes to wear? wear outfits chosen for him/her?

C. On scale of 1 to 7 (from a little to a lot), how would you rate the following:

17. How often was your child read to prior to school entry?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

18. On the average, approximately how much television does your child watch per day?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

19. Do you watch TV with your child?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

20. Do you discuss TV with your child?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

21. Did you expose your child to nursery rhymes?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

22. Did you take your child to the Public Library before SK?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

23. How many children's books are there in your home?  
1 2 3  
4 5 6 7

APPENDIX D2  
DATA COLLECTION SHEET FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS  
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

D. Please comment on the following:

24. What type of toys did you encourage?

25. What does your child like to do?

26. Are there some things your child does exceptionally well for his/her age?

List them (e.g. talking, dressing, sports, puzzles, drawing).

27. How have you encouraged these activities/interests/talents?



APPENDIX E  
STUDENT TELEVISION SURVEY

---

SK TELEVISION SURVEY  
WHAT CHILDREN THINK OF TELEVISION

1. Who is your favourite person in the whole world?
2. If you could change into anyone in the whole world right now, who would you change into?
3. Do you like to watch television?

Why do you like to watch TV?

4. Do good things or bad things usually happen on TV?
5. Do you think you learn things from the television?

Can you tell me something you have learned from TV this week?

## APPENDIX F

### STUDENT INTERVIEW

M.G. McCue Ig

THE LANGUAGE/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

#### PUPIL INTERVIEW

##### INTERESTS AND ABILITIES

1. What do you like to do best at school?

2. What do you like to do best at home?

3. With whom do you like to play in school? (Ask for up to five.)

4. With whom do you not like to play?

5. With whom do you like to be when you're not at school?

6. What kinds of things do you do with:  
your mother?

your father?

your sister?

your brother?

7. Do you have grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins of whom you see a lot?

8. What do you do with them?

M.G. McCue Ig

##### FUNCTION:

1. What would you say if your mother wanted you to wear something you did not like? (relating - personal needs, self-interests, disagree, opinion)

2. What would you say to your friend if they kept playing with something you wanted to play with? (relating and directing - directing actions of self and others, collaborating, requesting direction)

3. What would you say to the parent helper if you couldn't find the paper you needed for your art? (directing - requesting direction)

4. What did you do on flower day? (giving information - labelling, referring to incidents/details, sequencing, asking comparisons, extracting general point)

5. You've had quite a few special days at school this year. What was your favourite? Why? (reason, judge and predict - explaining process, recognizing causal relationships, recognizing problems and solutions, drawing conclusions, anticipating - opinion)

How did you teach child to explain an activity from favourite day?

6. One of the special days in June will be another Peanut Butter Day. What do you think the class might do that day? (imagine and project into classroom situations - projecting into experiences or feelings of others, statements imagined from real life or fantasy)

## STUDENT INTERVIEW (continued)

M.G. McCuaig

## EXPERIENCES:

1. Have you ever been to:
  - nursery school?
  - daycare?
  - Sunday School?
  - dancing class?
  - hockey lessons?
  - soccer lessons?
  - swimming lessons?
  - other (piano, library)?
2. Have you been on any trips:
  - to another city?
  - to another province?
  - to another country?
  - to the United States?
  - to Mexico?
  - over the ocean?
3. Who usually takes you to the dentist?
4. Who usually takes you to the doctor?
5. Do you ever go shopping:
  - for groceries?
  - for clothes?
  - for anything else?
6. Do you have someone at home who reads to you?
7. Do you have special books you like?
8. How many books do you think you have of your own?
9. Do you practice painting, colouring or drawing pictures at home?
10. Do you get to choose your own food sometimes?
11. Does your mom or dad ask you to try new foods sometimes?
12. Do you like to try new foods?
13. Do you have rules for sometimes at your house?
14. When you do something bad at home what happens?
15. Do you get to choose what clothes you put on in the morning?
16. Which of these toys do you play with a lot?
  - dolls, trucks, stuffed animals, puzzles, games, crayons,
  - paints, pencils, riding toys, balls, other (sports equipment)
17. What is your favourite toy?
18. Name some of the toys you have at home.

## Questions Supplementary to TV Survey, Sociometry, Interview, Observations

In this section each of the six children will be asked to elaborate on specific items that have arisen during the above. The questions will differ with each child as they will be generated by their own responses in previous situations.

APPENDIX G1  
FIELD NOTES  
GENERAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

RESEARCH PROJECT: THE LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

Transcripts of Fieldwork  
Wednesday, January 14, 1987.  
Morning Class

This morning I was greeted by Joan: Today is a beautiful day. Five are away.

Marilyn: The right five?

Joan: Yes. Terrance, Jordan ...

I recorded conversation after the students sat at the tables where their worksheets had been placed.

Girl One to Boy One: You're not supposed to colour in. You're supposed to trace. You're gonna get it marked wrong.

Boy One: What's I supposed to do here?

Girl One: You trace. You to around in circles. You sh'd go up there (pointing to the easel). Go up there.

Girl Two is left-handed.

Joan: Graham. Simone.

Boy Two: (perched on the climber near the door): I'm the first one done.

During recess I had a chat with Joyce Essa, speech and language teacher, about the screening.

Girl Three: (at the painting centre): I'm making clouds up here. It's snowing.

Boy Three: (tapping me on the shoulder): Christa wants you.

Simone: Watch (as she tips the doll she is holding over and over).

I asked her what the doll was called and she said Upsey Baby.

Simone: What are you doing that for? (She pointed to my book where I was writing.)

Marilyn: I want to remember what Kindergarten people play with.

APPENDIX G2  
FIELD NOTES  
PROCESS LOG DURING DATA ANALYSIS

M.G. McCuaig

j88.08.15

Monday, August 15, 1988.

1988.08.15.

The past two weeks have been spent working on the six student profiles and the methodology chapter, finishing coding and analysis of the ten transcripts, and comparison of the conclusions to those of the Morgan study, Children's Characteristics On School Entry, of JK, SK and Grade One for OISE (1979) to those of the present study. It is hoped some comparison can be made to an Australian study using a Canadian sample as well.

In perusing the student interviews, parent interviews, TV survey and sociometric test in order to compile profiles of the six children in the purposive sample, several interesting things have arisen. The three children originally designated as more proficient language users were all taken to the public library before they entered school, the other three were not. All children except one named "play" as their favourite activity at school and at home. Jordan, the exception and one designated as a less proficient language user, when asked what he liked to do best at school, said, "Uhh. Print numbers and figure out what the numbers go. Where they put the puzzle, you know." [This is another good example of his mixture of more sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures mixed with the more immature.]

This exercise has again shown the multitudinous other analyses that could be done with the data I have.

## APPENDIX G3

## JOURNAL ENTRY: TIME-LINE

Process Log/Journal  
Sunday, January 17, 1988.

RESEARCH PROJECT/THESIS: THE LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT  
OF THE SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILD

Updated Time-line

## PRELIMINARY WORK

1. thesis topic investigated and proposal prepared for statistical research course under title ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AT SCHOOL ENTRY AS AN INDICATOR OF HIGH RISK/HIGH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS December 1985
2. thesis topic investigated and proposal prepared for naturalistic research course under title PARENT/TEACHING BEHAVIOURS THAT STIMULATE ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN April 1986
3. 1986.09.09 thesis abstract submitted to staff advisor
4. 1986.09.23 revised thesis proposal submitted to staff advisor under title PARENTING/TEACHING BEHAVIOURS THAT STIMULATE ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN
5. 1986.10.14 thesis proposal submitted to committee under present title
6. 1987.04.15 approval of thesis proposal without parent questionnaire

## STUDY

1. meeting with P, VP, SLT, CRT
2. September parent meeting
3. Jan.5: meeting with CRT
4. half-day classroom visitations (a.m. and p.m.): Jan. 7, 9, 12, 14, 16 (choice of proficient, non-proficient language users, decision on which class to observe)
5. Morning class (large group): Jan. 19, 21 (ATI literature looked into), 23 (physical environment, classroom routine, tape-recording orientation, decision on six students to profile).
6. Individual observations begun Jan. 26 (carried out two-a-day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays throughout February and up to March 2.
7. University of Arizona - March 12
8. Ken Goodman - What's More With Whole Language? - TAWL - March 12
9. Myna Haussler - telephone interview - March 16
11. University of Arizona - dissertations
12. Bob Wortman - interview - March 18
13. March 24 - dissertations - LU
14. March 26 - Connie Nelson - questionnaire
15. April 21 - school visitations begun again on three-time-weekly basis

16. several observations of six targetted students in large and small group situations
17. sociometry - each pupil in large group interviewed
18. reflective time: general overview of data --> generated questions for interviews with children and parents preparation of math./lang. activities for Joan's new centre next year
- Math Their Way workshop - May 7
- Pronunciation Posters
19. parent permission forms sent home - May 8
20. two other pupils interviewed (pilot) one high and other low
21. informal interview with SLT: May 13
22. TV survey: individual interviews with whole a.m. group (May 14-19)
23. interviewed two students whose parents had agreed to pilot parent interview May 14
24. started going to school every morning (May 14)
25. finished interviewing six targetted students June 11
26. looked at: two related naturalistic theses: Doake (Book exp. and emergent rdng. behav.) and Haussler (trans. into literacy)
- one recent OISE research brief: Weikart and Schweinhart (bedtime stories)
- projects from Mary Clare's research class
27. parent interview pilot (two)
28. preliminary look at EID and speech screening
29. skimmed methodology sections of Andis and Haussler theses
30. parent interviews
31. review EID and sp/lang screening
32. progress review to superintendent - October 29, 1987 LEFT TO DO
33. finish transcriptions (fieldwork: observations, Journal, interviews)
34. finish coding data
35. complete data analysis
- teacher interventions (teacher directed discussion and individual)
- introduction
- literature review
- methodology
- conclusions and implications
- references - additions and deletions
36. profiles (transcripts - general and 2-a-day, interviews - student and parent), early ID, sociometry, tv survey)
- teacher interview
37. board report
38. interview teacher
39. interview teacher
40. thesis evaluation

## APPENDIX G4

### FIELD NOTES

#### SOCIOMETRIC INTERVIEW

M.G. McCue1g  
t1987.02.25

Terrance's sociometric interview:  
[R=researcher and T=Terrance]

R: I want you to tell me ... who you would like to play with and who you wouldn't like to play with if you got a choice. Okay? Because after the holiday, Mrs. Seaman is going to give you a chance sometimes to play with your favourite people and she wants to know who they are. Okay? So you think of all the children in your room, even the people who are away and tell me who would be your favourite person to play with. Who is it?

T: Kelly [a friend from home]. He's nah even here, no. Jes my friend.

R: Yes. But who? Who in your room? (no response) Who would be your favourite person?

T: Jordan (20). Jordan.

R: Okay. Who would be next?

T (after a long pause): [Boy 12]

R: Mmm hmm. Who would be next?

T: Graham (18).

R: And who next?

T (another lengthy pause): [Boy 2]

R: And who next?

T: No one.

R: Can't think of anybody else you'd like to play with?

T: Yeah. And [Boy 1] and that's all.

R: Okay. So Jordan ...?

T (hastily interrupting): And [boy 22] (inflection on 'and').

R: Jordan would be your favourite and then [Boy 12] and Graham (18) and then [Boy 2]...?

T (interrupting): But I like Jordan and [Boy 1] da bes.

R: Oh! Jordan and [Boy 1]? Okay. Well then, Jordan and then [Boy 1] and then [Boy 12] and then Graham and then [Boy

2]? Okay. Now anybody that you can think of that you wouldn't want to?

T (looking at the notebook): No. Jordan 'an' one. Jordan's da tree. Because I wan Jordan ... No. I wan Jordan ... No. Jordan's suppose to be a higheas. Yah. 'Cause I like Jordan.

R: Yah. Okay. That's fine. Okay.

T: Les puh Jordan on one (in a tone an adult might use in cooperative planning: inflection on "one")

R: Okay. Who would you not like to play with?

T: Oh why do dey got dese tings dere? [Girl 19]. Bugs me insa bus. (indignantly)

R: And who else?

T: Did I talk about Fern(9)?

R: Do you want to play with Fern or do you not want to play with Fern?

T: Okay. I'll play wit Fern den.

R: Who would you not like to play with?  
(One of the other children interrupted here to say they wanted to do something.)

T: You bug me [Girl 5]. I mean it. She is a bug [to R]. How come you're puttin it down nere [pointing to scribbler]?

R: Oh. Just for fun.

T: So. You wouldn't want to play with [Girl 19], you wouldn't want to play with [Girl 21], and you wouldn't want to play with [Girl 5]?

T: No.

R: And who else?

T: Why'nt you put an no on 'em? (as R wrote down names)

R: Who else? ... (no response) Anybody else? ... (no response) Anybody else you don't like playing with? ... you don't have fun with?

T: Everybody in the class that I never talked about on this one [pointing to the "yes" list]. But I said not the teacher, I like the teacher.

(There are good examples here of Terrance's immature articulation and grammar but also of his astuteness and attempts to both express himself and request clarification.)

APPENDIX H1

READING SIGHT VOCABULARY/WORD RECOGNITION

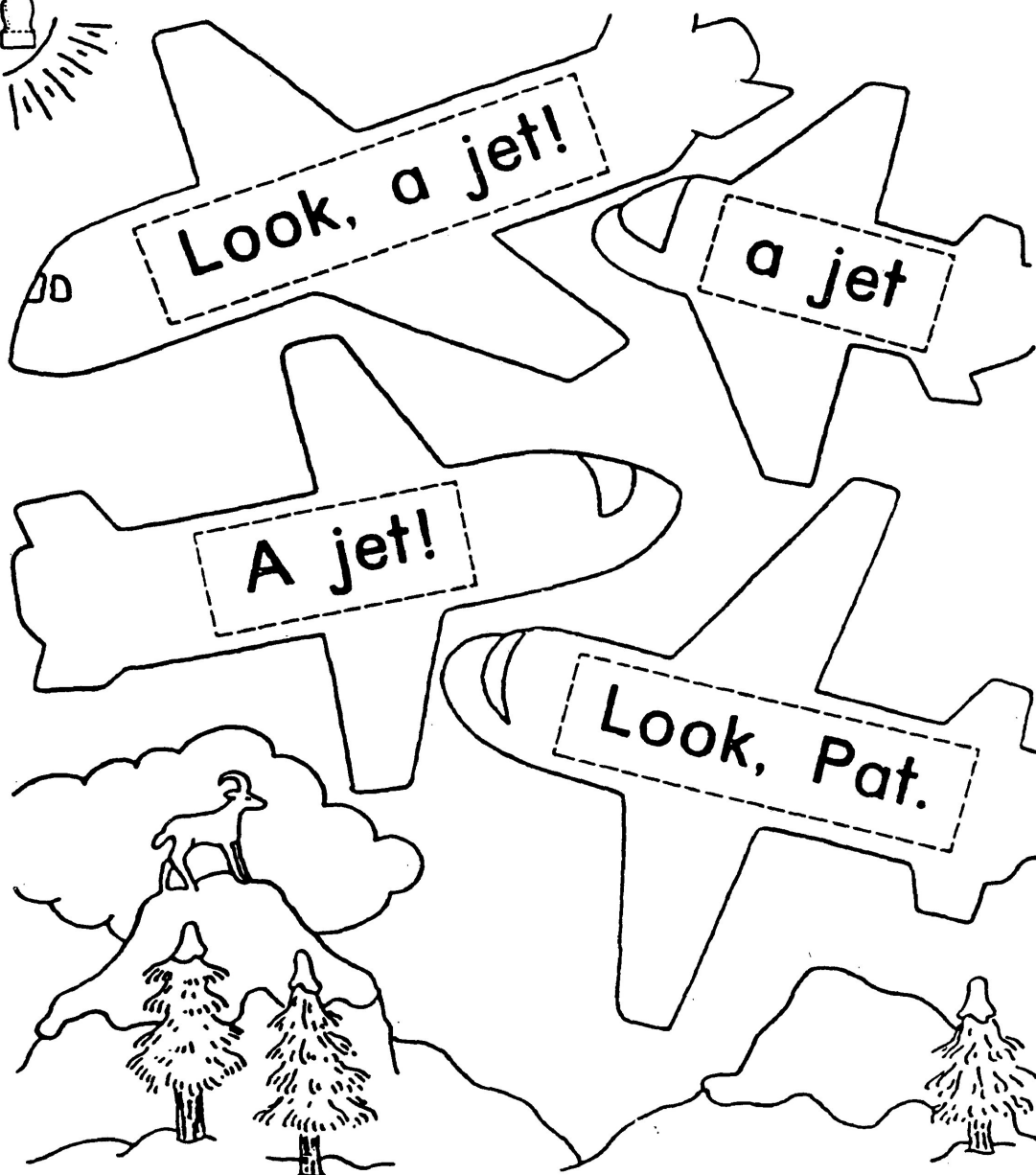
1987.02.06

My name is

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



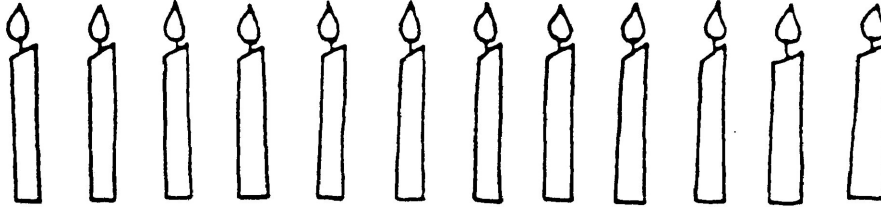
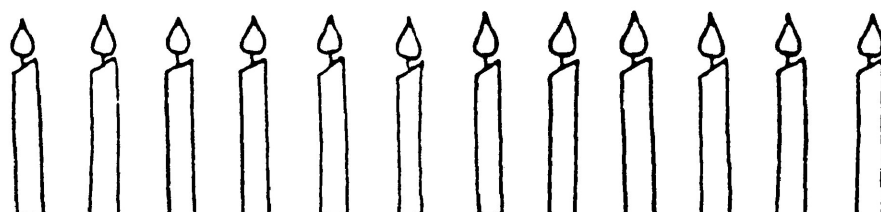
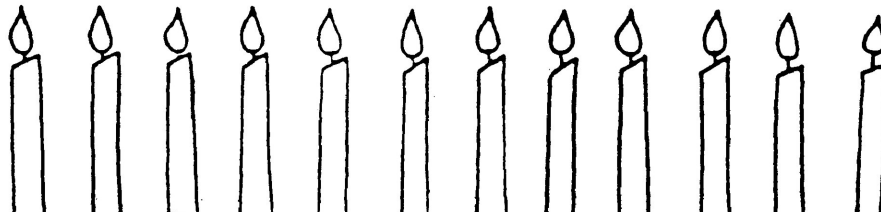
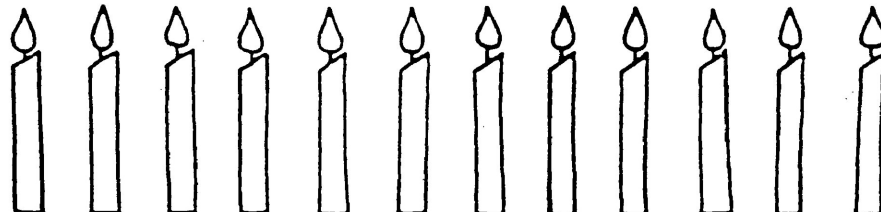
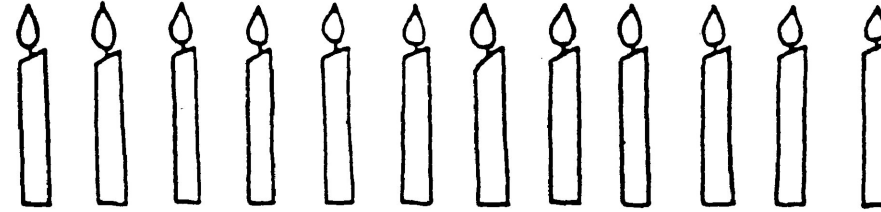
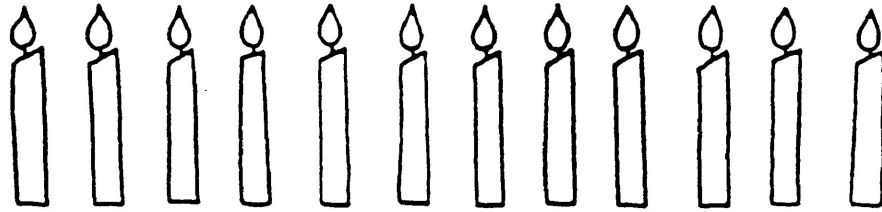
Word Recognition -- Cut out the words on page 17. Paste them to the same words on this page!



APPENDIX H2

NUMERACY/NUMBER RECOGNITION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>7</b>	
<b>11</b>	
<b>9</b>	
<b>12</b>	
<b>8</b>	
<b>10</b>	

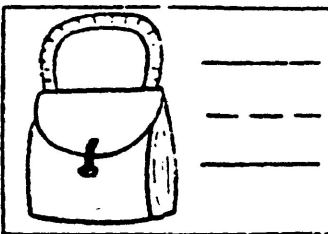
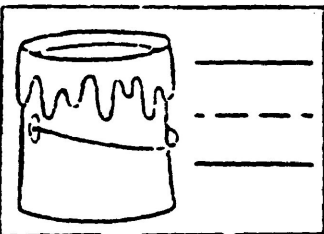
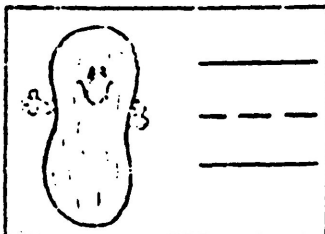
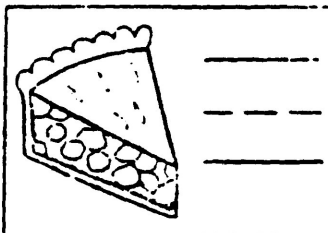
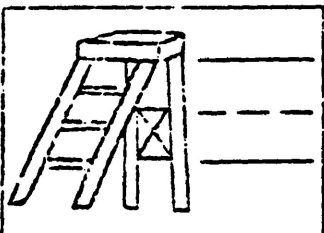
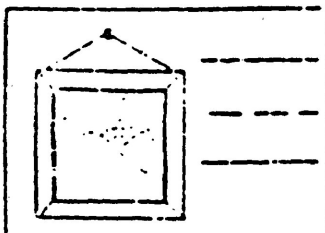
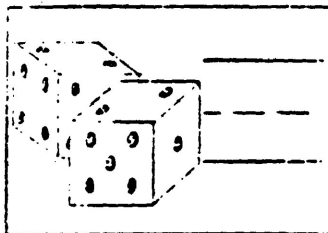
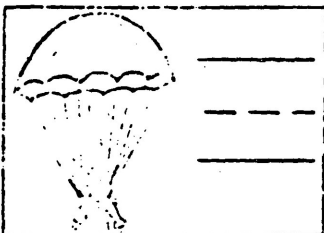
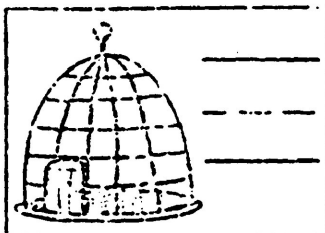
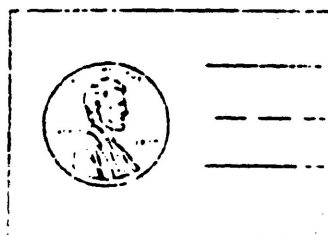
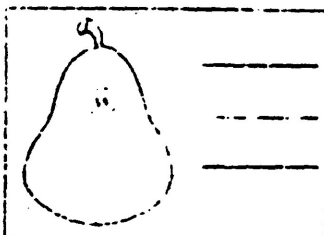
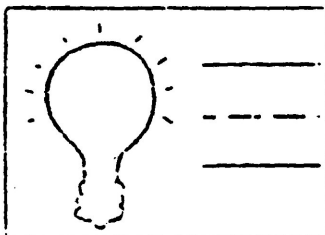
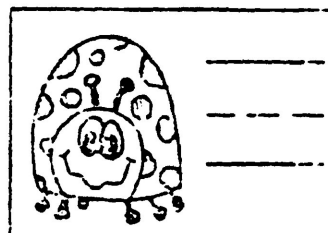
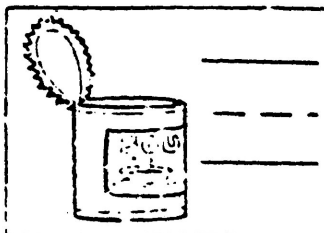
APPENDIX H3  
SOUND SYMBOL ASSOCIATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Initial Consonant \_\_\_\_\_



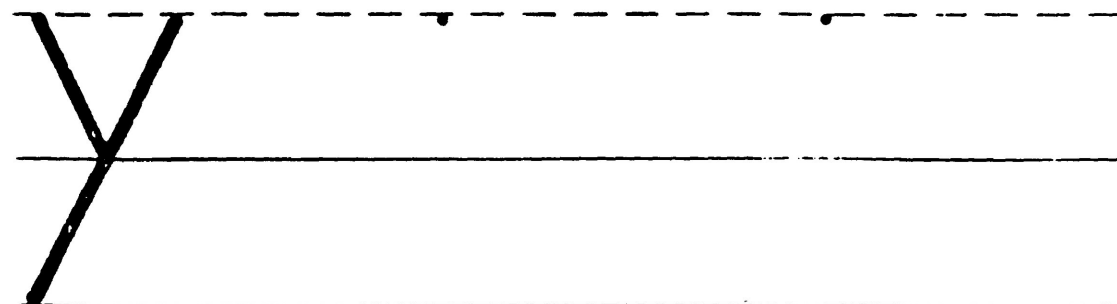
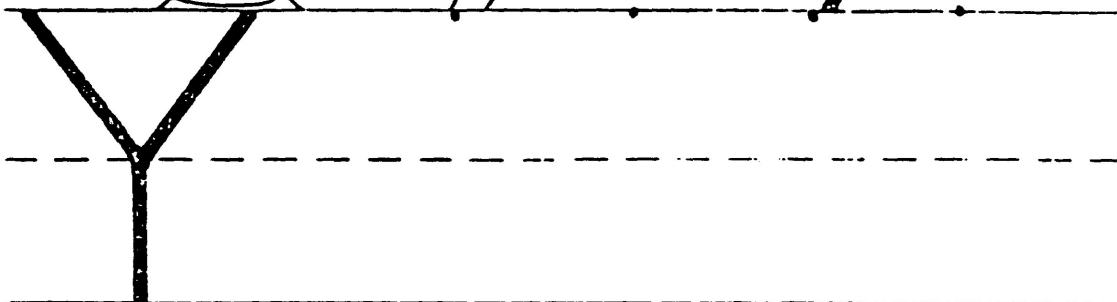
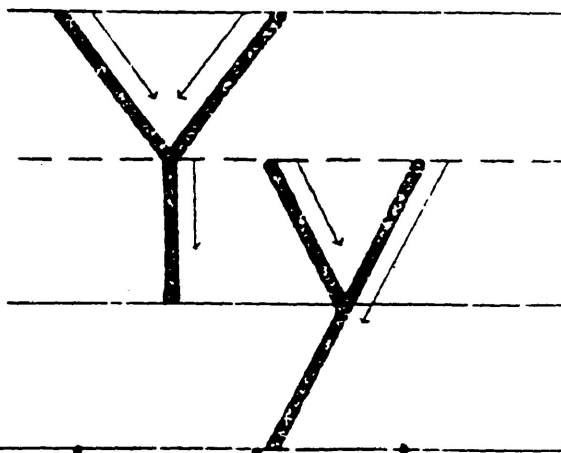
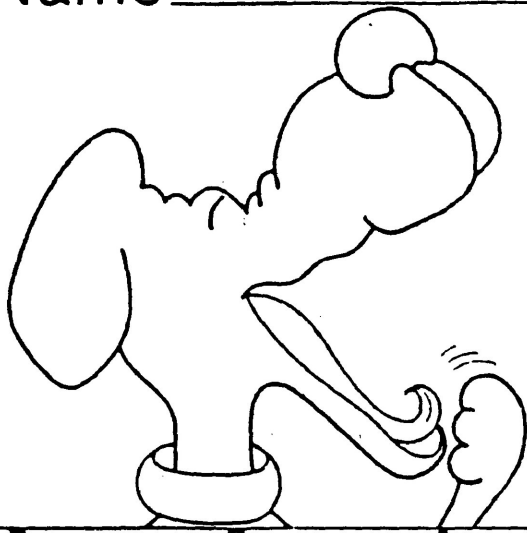
Print the letter " p "

if the picture begins like p



APPENDIX H4  
FINE MOTOR/PRINTING

Name \_\_\_\_\_



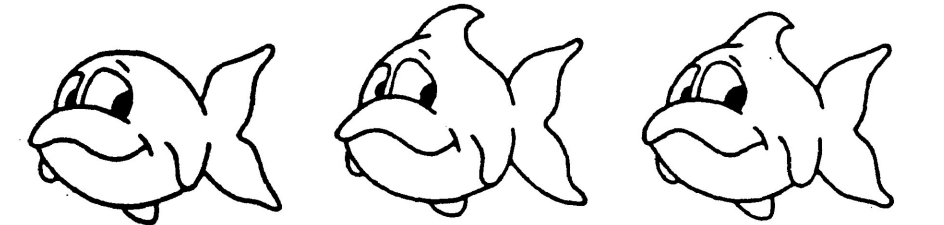
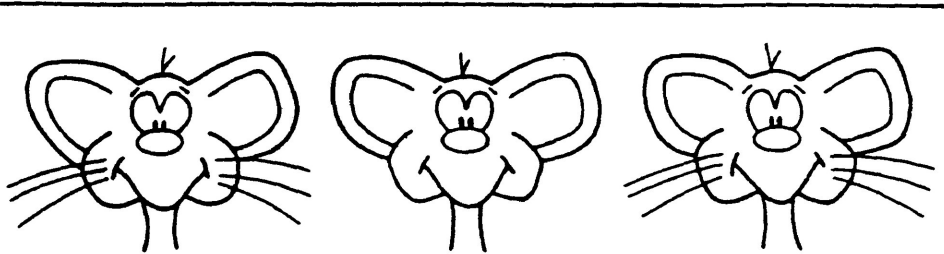
APPENDIX H5

VISUAL DISCRIMINATION/SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Visual Discrimination  
Similarities and Differences**

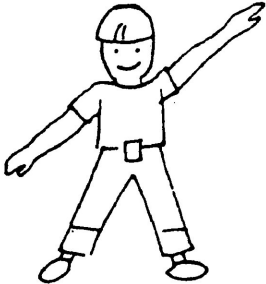
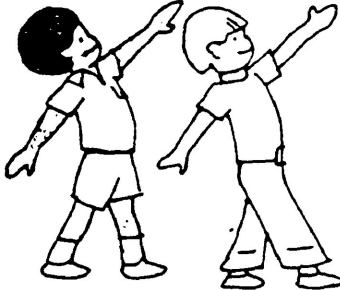
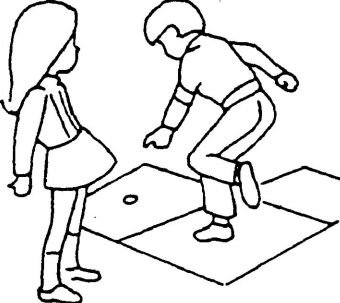
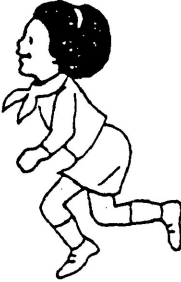

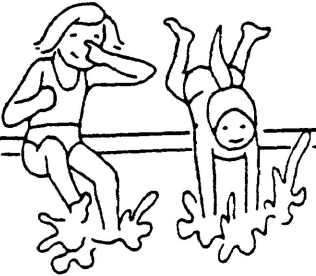
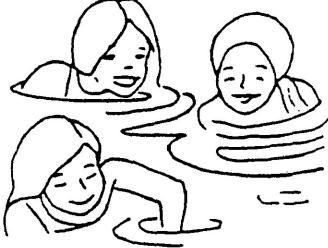
Color the pictures that are alike the same color.



## APPENDIX H6

## SEQUENCING

Draw a ring around the correct number for each set.  
Tell a number story about each row.

 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>
 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>
 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>	 <p>1    2    3</p>