

STRUCTURED STORY READING AND RETELL RELATED TO LISTENING  
COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AMONG ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Dissertation

by

ANA M. CRUZ DE QUIROS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2008

Major Subject: Educational Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

Structured Story Reading and Retell Related to Listening Comprehension and Vocabulary  
Acquisition among English Language Learners. (August 2008)

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This study compared the oral language development, vocabulary, and comprehension of English language learners (ELLs) in second grade who were participating in a five-year longitudinal study, Project English Language and Literacy Acquisition (Project ELLA) (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003), after two years implementation. For this comparison study, 72 students were randomly selected from students participating in an enhanced and a typical transitional bilingual education program. The students in the enhanced transitional bilingual classroom received structured story reading, and practiced retelling and story grammar for two consecutive years. Conversely, comparison group of students continued with a typical instructional program. Retell and comprehension question measurements from two stories were obtained from both groups, and in both English and Spanish.

The first and second research questions focused on oral language development in both English and Spanish. Findings were measured by the length of the retell. The first question demonstrated statistically significant results in all measurements: number of T-units, number of words, and number of sentences in English. Statistically significant results

were also found in number of words in Spanish for the second question. However, the number of T-units and the number of sentences in Spanish for the second question demonstrated non-significant results. The third research question focused on the vocabulary growth of the student after he or she was exposed to explicit and direct vocabulary instruction. The treatment group statistically outperformed the control in this respect. The fourth and fifth questions addressed comprehension as measured by story grammar in English and Spanish and leveled questions addressed at the end of the first and last story. Students participating in the treatment group demonstrated greater comprehension of the story. The students participating in the treatment group after having participated in such a program for two years also demonstrated how structured story reading strongly benefits oral language growth, greater vocabulary knowledge and higher comprehension in English literacy acquisition without forcing students to lose their first language.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all the little ones that have never been exposed to storybook reading because of great poverty.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To reach the end of this particular journey would not have been possible without divine intervention. It was the Holy Spirit who gave me the gifts necessary to accomplish such an endeavor. Therefore, I thank God for His intervention. Because God places people and situations in our lives to serve as instruments to assist us in accomplishing His divine plans, He put in my life my dear husband, Eddie N. Quiros, whose love and patience was insurmountable; my mother Ana Melendez, who took on her shoulder the housework to allow me time to work and study; and my son Alexander (Dr. Quiros) who served as mentor and guide during this whole process. I also want to thank those who asked God for the gift of fortitude and the fruit of perseverance for me. Among those people I want to thank Amalia Quiros, Pat Churchman, Dr. Frank Garcia, and Dr. Magda Garcia, just to mention a few.

I also want to thank Dr. Rafael Lara-Alecio and Dr. Beverly Irby who guided me and opened doors unimaginable for a graduate student. They might think they chose me, but it was God who chose them to help me grow spiritually and professionally. They allowed me to participate in Project ELLA for four consecutive years, as well as to share their vision for STELLA. I also want to thank Dr. Durodola for introducing me to the world of vocabulary instruction for ELLs with such enthusiasm; I will never forget that day and I will never forget Dr. Joshi who introduced me to the world of crosslinguistics transfer. Thanks to Project ELLA, sponsored by the Institute of Education Science, under U.S. Department of Education, federal grant, R305P030032 from which the archive data for my dissertation study was retrieved.

I do understand this is not the end, but a change of direction to embark on a different journey. I can only pray that God imparts special blessings upon all these souls He placed in my life to influence me and my future in one way or another.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

School-age children speaking a language other than English in the United States increased rapidly between 1979 and 2007, from 3.8 to 10.6 million (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). Among those children, Hispanic students were the fastest growing population in elementary and secondary school with 69% of them speaking Spanish at home (US Census Bureau, 2005) and considered to be English language learners (ELLs). As has been stated by Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, and White (2004), the need to address the academic requirements of ELLs is considered a logical, practical, and educational challenge. Yet, according to Calderon, August, Slavin, Duran, Madden and Cheung (2005), the educational system was not adequately prepared for this challenge.

The lack of preparedness can be observed in the fact that there was an English reading achievement gap between Caucasians and Hispanics in 2005 based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data (NCES, 2005). To address this disparity, Calderon et al. (2005) recommended increasing English vocabulary for ELLs to improve their reading comprehension in English. Foundational to success in reading is oral language development (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001) and the necessary skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Aldridge, 2005).

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

From the perspective of language development, oral language provides a foundation for the development of other afore-mentioned language skills (Zhang & Alex, 1995). Because oral language proficiency precedes literacy (Lesaux & Geva, 2006), learning problems, such as reading, could be prevented by increasing children's oral language proficiency, as indicated by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998). Based on the connections between oral language and printed word, there should be teaching strategies to improve English language and literacy skills. Therefore, teaching strategies to improve oral language development through systematic and explicit instruction with ESL embedded should be part of every lesson for ELLs.

Among the most recent studies addressing the literacy and language acquisition of Hispanic students is Project ELLA (English Language and Literacy Acquisition), an on-going, five-year, federally-funded project (R305P030032) with approximately 470 native Spanish-speaking English language learners in an urban school district in Southeast, Texas. The purpose of Project ELLA five-year longitudinal randomized trial study has been to implement an evaluation of alternative models of structured English immersion and transitional bilingual education for ELLs from kindergarten to the third grade, whose first language is Spanish. The intervention provided by ELLA has included structured ESL time comprised of oral language development, vocabulary knowledge, ESL strategies, a story-reading component called Story Retelling with Higher Order Thinking for English Literacy and Language Acquisition ([STELLA] Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), critical thinking, content integration, and listening and reading comprehension in English.

## Definition of Terms

For the purpose of my study, several terms are defined in order to better understand the context of the research.

### *Academic Scaffolding*

Academic scaffolding is an ESL strategy used to connect prior knowledge to new information (Herrell & Jordan, 2008).

### *Graphic Organizers*

Advanced organizers are cognitive strategies to facilitate the learner to recall and make connection with new information (Ausubel, 1963).

### *Bridging*

Bridging is an ESL strategy that allows the student to make a connection between language learning and the content areas (Herrell & Jordan, 2008).

### *Cloze*

Cloze is a written text with words removed leaving a blank where the missing word will be inserted (Herrell & Jordan, 2008).

### *Comprehension*

Comprehension is making meaning from a text (NICHHD, 2000). Meaning is constructed during an interaction between the reader and the text (Pressley, 2000).

### *Curriculum-Based Measurement*

Curriculum-based measurement is an approach to monitor student progress having a research base support (Foegen, 2006).

### *English Language Learners*

English language learners (ELL) are those whose home language is not English (NCELA, 2006).

### *Enhanced Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE-E) Model*

Enhanced transitional bilingual education (TBE-E) model is the structured intervention model implemented by Project ELLA in the grades K-3 where students' native language is Spanish. According to Lara-Alecio, Irby and Mathes (2003), TBE-E is "a program that begins with a 70% (Spanish) /30% (English) model in K and moves to 40/60 model in grade 3" (p.42). The instruction for K centered in oral language development moving to content integration in Science. English instruction is enhanced by implementing ESL strategies, ongoing professional development, small group instruction, classroom observation (teacher and student's performance over time) and research-based curriculum.

### *Hispanic*

For the purpose of my study, Hispanics refer to Spanish speaking people.

### *Interactive Read Aloud*

Interactive read aloud is an instructional strategy that utilizes reading books out loud with expression using different voices for each character, including active participation, predicting, discussion, and comprehension monitoring (Barrentine, 1996).

### *L2 Clarified by L1*

L2 clarified by L1 is the use of the first language to clarify the second language (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). For the purpose of my study L2 (English) supported and clarified by L1 (Spanish).

### *Leveled Questions*

Leveled questions refer to a wide range of different levels of questioning. The levels varied from low level such as facts recall to higher level such as inferences and evaluation (Beck & McKeown, 1981).

### *Oral Language Proficiency*

For the purpose of this study, oral language proficiency refers to the ability to communicate meaning fluently and accurately through the use of discourse.

### *Preview/Review*

Preview review is an ESL strategy that facilitates the acquisition of content knowledge with the use of advance organizer, vocabulary instruction, scaffolding and so on (Herrell & Jordan, 2008).

### *Retelling*

Retelling has been defined as post-reading and post-listening recalls used to express what was learned or remembered (Morrow, 1996). It is also considered to take the form of an oral composition or text reconstruction that has been read or heard.

### *Story Grammar*

Story grammar refers to the story structure elements found in all stories. Stories all follow a general pattern, according to the findings of anthropologists and cognitive psychologists who recognize the underlying structure of simple stories. This structure is made up of elements like setting, characters, plot and solution (Dimino, Taylor, & Gersten, 1995). The pattern appears to be consistent across cultures (Dimino et al., 1995).

### *Structured Story Reading*

For the purpose of my study, structured story reading is story reading that is systematically planned and scripted to utilize research-based learning strategies (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003).

### *Think Aloud*

The Think Aloud is an instructional strategy that requires the student to stop periodically and reflect on how a text is being processed and understood providing students with a way to develop high-level thinking.

### *Thought Unit (T-unit)*

A thought unit (T-unit) is a short segment containing a subject and a verb, any main clause with any subordinate clause (Puranik, Lombardino, & Altmann, 2006).

### *Total Physical Response*

Total Physical Response (TPR) is an approach developed by Asher (1982) to second language acquisition through body movements where the learner listens and does not use expressive language until ready.

### *Triadic Assessment*

For the purpose of my study, a Triadic Assessment is the measure of T-units, number of words, and number of sentences produced in story retells to examine oral language development in English language learners.

### *Typical Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE-T) Model*

The typical transitional bilingual education model is the program established by school district for grades K-3 beginning with 80% (Spanish) /20% (English) moving to

50%/50% model in grade 3 (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003). Instruction is offered in both native and target language (English) and follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

### *Word Wall*

Word wall refers to a strategy used to assist second language learner with a list of word for vocabulary learning. The word card with a picture included provides students with a way of recalling meaning and the context where the word was read (Herrelll & Jordan, 2008).

### Statement of the Problem

Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) indicated that research supports that learning to read and write is fundamental to academic progress. However, many children still experience difficulties in learning to read for lack of vocabulary, comprehension skills, and knowledge of the target language structure (Kame'enui, Adams, & Lyon, 1996). Literacy in monolingual English-speaking children has been intensively studied, but little has been done to address the academic needs of Hispanic ELL students (Calderon et al., 2005). Both Garcia (2000) and Carrell (1989) affirmed the lack of literacy research concerned with ELLs.

A pedagogical tool that has been used to monitor listening and reading comprehension is the retell of a passage of a story, either heard or read (Irwin & Mitchell, 1983; Roberts, Good, & Corcoran, 2005 ). A thorough review of the literature has revealed few studies measuring comprehension in populations of ELLs whose first language is Spanish, and little is known about the conditions under which this population acquires English (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). Considering that Hispanics represent the fastest

growing population in elementary and secondary schools in this nation, English oral language development and reading research on this population is vital.

#### Statement of Purpose

Although retelling has been recognized as an assessment tool effective to measure comprehension in students with learning disabilities (Alexander, 1985; Gardill, & Jitendra, 1999; Hensen, 1978; Wright & Newhoff, 2001) and to monitor monolingual reading fluency and comprehension (Irwin & Mitchell, 1983; Roberts, Good & Corcoran, 2005), few studies (Calderon, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Slavin, 1998; Slavin & Madden, 2001) have been conducted on the use of retell to monitor listening and reading comprehension with ELLs who are considered at risk of falling behind native English speakers. The purpose of my study was to investigate (a) the extent to which second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English; (b) the extent to which students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling; (c) the extent to which systematic and direct vocabulary instruction for second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories; (d) the extent to which a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with

practice of story grammar after two years of practice, and (e) the extent to which second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension assessment.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?

2. To what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling?

3. To what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?

4. To what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impact listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice?

5. To what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?

### Significance of the Study

The increase in the Hispanic population in our educational system and the high risk of this population falling behind native speakers of English have led to a heightened awareness of the need for early identification of children at risk for reading failure. There is a need to close the gap between native English speakers and English language learners (Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, & White 2004).

Retelling is one assessment tool used by researchers to measure listening and reading comprehension (Gambrell, Koskinene, & Kapinus, 1991; Gambrell, Pfeiffer, & Wilson, 1985; Golden & Pappas, 1987; Irwin & Mitchell, 1983; Roberts, Good & Corcoran, 2005). Numerous studies in the area of listening and reading comprehension have been conducted among students in mainstream (Price, Roberts & Jackson, 2006; Schoenbrodt, Kerins, & Gesell, 2003) and learning disabled (Dempsey & Skarakis-Doyle, 2001; Gardill & Jitendra, 1999; Hansen, 1978; Hayward, Gillam, & Lien, 2007; Humphries, Cardy, Worling, & Peets, 2004; Merrit & Liles, 1989; Seung & Chapman, 2003; Skarakis-Doyle, Dempsey, & Lee, 2008) but few studies (Gutierrez-Clellen & Hofstetter, 1994; Fiestas & Peña, 2004) have included oral language development in the ELLs population. My study focused on story retelling as an pedagogical tool for monitoring listening comprehension and oral language development in second grade ELLs after two years of practice.

### Delimitations

Archival data selected for my study were restricted to Project ELLA participants in a southeastern school district in Texas. Data were collected from five sources: (a) Naglieri Test of Non-verbal Ability, (b) selected story retellings, (c) story grammar, (d) end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension assessment, and (e) story vocabulary pre-post test. Part of the archival data selected for this study was collected over a period of six weeks. Other data collected covered a span of two academic school years.

### Limitations

One limitation of my study was that it focused on Spanish-English bilingual elementary school students who were not randomly selected for the treatment group, but rather were nested in schools and classrooms randomly assigned to point-in-date in the larger research study, Project ELLA. Another limitation of my study was that the sample was selected from an urban school district located in urban Houston consisting of low socio-economic status; therefore, generalizability will be limited to this sample context.

### Assumption

One assumption in my study is that the teacher in typical transitional bilingual model followed and taught the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (K.9), which included retelling and acting out an order of important events to demonstrate comprehension of selections read aloud (Texas Education Agency [TEA], n.d.).

### Organization of the Study

Chapter I of my study includes an introduction, definition of terms, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, and

delimitations.

Chapter II of my study includes a brief introduction, a discussion of Hispanic English language learners, the theoretical framework, information regarding oral Language proficiency and vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking, measures of oral language development and comprehension, a description of story retelling, story grammar, and lastly, the relationship between story grammar and ELLs.

Chapter III of my study includes the following sections: population and sampling, research design, scoring, instrumentation, intervention, classroom observation, research questions, data collection, data analysis, and a summary.

Chapter IV of my study contains findings.

Chapter V includes a discussion, limitations, recommendations, and implications for practice.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this literature review, structured story reading and retelling are presented as systematic forms of instruction and strategies used to enhance oral language proficiency, critical thinking and comprehension for ELLs. In addition, story retelling is presented as an assessment tool linked to instruction and practice that could provide oral language fluency and comprehension information to teachers. This information could assist teachers in monitoring the progress of ELLs in both languages. In this review, I present the connection between oral language development and vocabulary with listening comprehension as a foundation for reading comprehension. Lastly, measures of comprehension such as retelling and story grammar elements with empirical studies strongly associated to the main topic of this study will be reviewed. The present study targets the ELLs whose native language is Spanish.

#### Hispanic English Language Learners

Due to the fact that the Hispanic population is growing at a consistent and accelerated rate in the United States, the need to address literacy among Hispanics is imperative. According to the US Census Bureau 2000, the Hispanic population increased by 57.9% in 2000, as compared to 13.2% of the total US population. Table 1 illustrates the projected population by race in the US, as reported by the US Census Bureau (2004). According to the report, the growth of the Hispanic population has been 57.9% since 1990. It has also been reported that the Hispanic population increased from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000.

Table 1

*U.S. Projected Population by Race: 2000-2050*

Race	2000 %	2010 %	2020 %	2030 %	2040 %	2050 %
White	81.0	79.3	77.6	75.8	73.9	72.1
African-American	12.7	13.1	13.5	13.9	14.3	14.6
Hispanic (of any race)	12.6	15.5	17.8	20.1	22.3	24.4
Asian	3.8	4.6	5.4	6.2	7.1	8.0
Other races	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.7	5.3

*Note.* From the US Census Bureau website report of 2004,  
<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>

Of concern, along with the increase in the Hispanic population in the US, is the dropout rate gap between Caucasians and African Americans and Caucasians and Hispanics. According to the National Center of Education Statistics (2005), the dropout rate in 2005 (see Table 2) among Hispanics is about 22.4%, versus 9.4% among Caucasians. That is, 22.4% of students aged 16 to 24 and of Hispanic origin are more likely to drop out of school than their Caucasian counterparts. Besides low socioeconomic status, lack of print exposure contributes to the dropout rate. Research by Krashen (1998) and Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) has indicated that youngsters raised in low income environments have fewer literacy and language interactions at home. These children have less shared book reading and adult-child discussions. According to Lyon (2003), over 60% of fourth grade students living in

poverty fail to meet literacy standards in reading. Some of these students were suggested to be failing in school because of poor oral language skills, a necessary ability for academic success.

Table 2

*Dropout Rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by Race/Ethnicity*

	Total	White, non-Hispanic	Black	Hispanic
2000	10.9	6.9	13.1	27.8
2001	10.7	7.3	10.9	27.0
2002	10.5	6.5	11.3	25.7
2003	9.9	6.3	10.9	23.5
2004	10.3	6.8	11.8	23.8
2005	9.4	6.0	10.4	22.4

*Note.* From Institute of Education Sciences report of 2005,  
<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2007/section3/table.asp?tableID=699>

Any student identified as a slow learner, low achiever, or even as gifted and talented must have their needs met. An appropriate intervention and alternative assessment in the early childhood years will contribute to the reading success of ELLs with reading problems; this was the rationale behind the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; Public Law No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, 2002). According to the NCLB, every state receiving

federal funds is accountable for its students' academic achievement. This statute also expects children to read at grade level by the third grade. But in order to have all children succeed academically, it is important to address ELLs' needs in the classroom with a substantial emphasis on promoting second- language oral proficiency, which plays a crucial role in second-language reading process (Geva, 2006).

### Theoretical Framework

My study was based on schema and second language acquisition theories. Schema theory refers to the acquired previous knowledge used to make connections to new information when readers interact. The schema terms were applied to the reading process by Anderson, Reynold, Schallert and Goetz (1977). Anderson et al. (1977) explained that comprehension goes beyond the written text. Schemata or knowledge structures supply the information necessary to make inferences as the reader or listener makes interpretations of the text, permitting students to comprehend the text and thus to make those inferences. Additionally, McVee, Dunsmore and Gavelek (2005) mentioned that during the 1970's and 1980's, schema theory considered schema to be mental structures that were activated and organized as the reader interacted with the text being read. Among those considering schemas to be mental structures incorporating general knowledge were Anderson et al. (1977). Some terms like "prior knowledge" or "background knowledge" have been used interchangeably with schema (McVee et al., 2005), as well as instantaneous connections between one's knowledge and new information necessary to comprehend words, sentences, and discourse.

Schema is knowledge learned or acquired, available for retrieval when the occasion arises, and used to make connections and schemata. Schema is what Bartlett (1932/1961) considered to be “an active organization of past reactions or of past experiences” (p. 201). According to Anderson, Spiro and Anderson (1977), schemas are “mental structures that incorporate general knowledge” (p. 3). Schemata identify what is common among knowledge structures and add to the information in the text. The individual retrieves background information as s/he reads the text. This existing knowledge base assists the individual in comprehending and retrieving information to make inferences. Therefore, the individual level of comprehension will be determined to the degree the individual makes this connection during the reading task with prior or background knowledge. As a result, the more background knowledge or *developed schemata*, the better the comprehension (Pearson, Hensen, & Gordon, 1979). For that reason, schemata have been considered to be predictors of comprehension (Johnston & Pearson, 1982). Thus, one way of adding information to these knowledge structures is by making the reader or listener aware of the connection between prior knowledge and reading text (Anderson, Reynold, Schallert, & Goetz, 1977; Sjogren & Timpson, 1979).

The second theory supporting this study is the theory of second language acquisition. According to linguists including Krashen (1988), native language plays an important role in the acquisition of a second language. A study conducted on second language pronunciation in younger children, as compared to adolescents, after three years exposure to a second language, found that age plays a role in second language acquisition regarding both pronunciation and acquisition (Fathman, 1975). One of the principles of language

acquisition introduced by Krashen (2003) is what he called the input/comprehension hypothesis. Krashen (2003) stated that the only way language is acquired is by understanding messages.

Cummins (1979), an advocate of bilingual education, proposed a model describing the differences between two types of language proficiency. These are Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), both essential in the processes of acquiring the target language and in order to perform at a higher academic level. Cummins (1979) explained his theory of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) using the *iceberg* metaphor, where he described the tip of the iceberg as BICS, or language acquired at a superficial level. BICS is the cognitively undemanding level where knowledge and comprehension are comparable to the language process of pronunciation, vocabulary, and oral grammar. The communication at this level of language proficiency is face to face content embedded (Cummins, 1979). He also added that gestures, intonation, and facial expressions facilitate comprehension of the target language. Conversely CALP, the complex level of language proficiency, the cognitively demanding language required for higher levels of comprehension, relies on knowledge of the language without interpersonal cues (Cummins, 1979). This level is comparable to more advanced grammar, semantic meaning and functional meaning (Cummins, 1979).

Cummins (1983) explained the interrelationship between the native language (L1) and the second language (L2) as a *common underlying proficiency*. According to Cummins (1983), the common underlying proficiency (CUP) principle means that literacy skills are common across languages. According to Richard-Amato and Snow (1992), Cummins's

theory explains that, given both the exposure to languages and motivation, a second language learner can develop proficiency in either language. Furthermore, native language (L1) acquisition supports rather than hinders the transfer of skills from one language to the next (Cummins, 1983; Escamilla, 1987). However, bilingual children are expected to perform effortlessly in both languages (Bialystok, 2001). Hispanic bilingual students are expected to learn a second language without a good foundation in the first language, despite research findings asserting that oral language development in L1 precedes literacy in L2 (August & Shanahan, 2006; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1983; Cummins, 1993).

In my study, these two theories comprise the foundation for using STELLA which is comprised of structured story reading, retelling, and story grammar in English with the intent to increase oral language growth and comprehension in both the native language and the target language.

#### Oral Language Proficiency and Vocabulary

Oracy instruction has been largely ignored in exchange for an emphasis on literacy skills. Oral language is the most important skill a child needs to acquire literacy (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). According to Ovando and Collier (1998), children subconsciously acquire oral language from birth to age five, and progressively acquire phonology, vocabulary, grammar, semantics and pragmatics in their first language (L1). If the child is deprived of an environment that promotes literacy, the child could very well show reading problems that could be prevented (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It has been recommended that oral language development be emphasized in early grades by English as Second Language programs, until students achieve a minimum level of proficiency (Saunders & O'Brien,

2006). Emphasizing oral language development is a priority because it increases listening and speaking vocabulary that later on will transfer, through phonemic direct instruction, into reading and writing vocabulary. Listening is important because it increases language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge and, therefore, better comprehension. The study by Gambrell, Koskinene and Kapinus (1991) restated the positive correlation between oral language and reading proficiency.

Students whose first language is a language other than English come to school with a certain level of vocabulary in their native language, but the degree of native language proficiency varies due to factors such as socioeconomic status (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002), the amount of books in the home, and the level of exposure to a rich vocabulary. Therefore, not all students come to the classroom equipped with the vocabulary, needed to develop oral language and comprehension (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). For this reason, Beck et al. (2002) stated the need for vocabulary instruction in our educational system. However, this situation is also an ongoing challenge not only for the bilingual students, but for monolinguals (Freebody & Anderson, 1983) as well. Thus, taking this into consideration it should be no surprise that underprivileged ELL's often arrive at school with an under-developed first language (Corson, 1992; Proctor, Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005).

Recently, an awareness that outstanding reading fluency does not equate with comprehension, which is considered the goal of reading (Kamil, 2004) is emerging. If the child is capable of quickly decoding the printed word but does not understand the meaning of the word, comprehension is impaired (Stahl, 2004). Comprehension requires word knowledge, comprehension strategies, and thinking skills (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001).

Consequently, students not only need to know how to decode a word, but to also know its meaning; that is, students need to know the breadth and depth of the word. The breadth of the word refers to the multiple meanings of the word, and the depth of the word refers to its morphology, phonology, syntax, and its sociolinguistic aspects. More attention should be given to the depth and breadth of words, allowing students to expand their knowledge of a word for further usage.

Literature highlights the need for robust vocabulary instruction (Beck et al., 2002). Such instruction is more effective if connected with students' prior knowledge, which makes vocabulary meaningful (Stahl, Hare, Sinatra, & Gregory, 1991). The vocabulary definitions must be friendly, comprehensible, with modeling and visual scaffolding. In addition, usage of vocabulary both taught in context and decontextualized provides practice with a word (Beck et al., 2002) allowing students to develop a large and diverse lexicon before becoming literate. In general, studies have shown evidence that literacy as early as kindergarten or first grade highly correlates with later reading ability (August & Hakuta, 1997; Invernizzi, Justice, Landrum, & Booker, 2004; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

According to Nagy (2005), comprehension is improved by good vocabulary instruction. To determine the best method to teach vocabulary, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2000) examined many studies following a set criteria, and determined that vocabulary instruction does improve comprehension as long as the methods are appropriate to the age and reading ability of the student. Vocabulary should be introduced in many different ways, but to be effective, especially with ELLs, the vocabulary should be introduced through direct instruction (Kamil, 2004). Vocabulary can

be developed during story reading in a form of interactive, text-related dialogue (Calderon et al., 2005); that is, it can be developed through incidental instruction when appropriate, and scaffolded with visuals. In addition, providing multiple exposures to the words introduced previously in subsequent storybook readings allows for rapid recognition and a better understanding of the story. Besides direct and indirect vocabulary instruction, Penno, Wilkinson and Moore (2002) described a third way of introducing vocabulary, a combination of direct instruction and learning the meaning as text is read.

Oral language and vocabulary provide the foundation for other language skills (Zhang & Alex, 1995). They are essential for the communication of knowledge, the communication of ideas, and the ability to think critically. More importantly, both oral language and vocabulary skills are essential for comprehension and transfer to L2.

### Comprehension

The goal of reading is comprehension, or as Durkin (1993) called it, *the essence* of reading. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) stated that comprehension is a very complex and active process. Both listening and reading comprehension are complex processes that involve making connections between background knowledge and new learning. Comprehension also involves knowledge of the semantic and syntactic systems that will help a student make predictions and inferences.

According to Zhang and Alex (1995), the literacy learning process begins with talking about experiences. Through speech, children learn to organize their thinking. Knowing a word is not sufficient; a word needs to be connected with prior knowledge. This hypothesis was proposed by Anderson and Freebody (1981) known as the Knowledge

Hypothesis, which establishes a cause and effect relationship between knowledge and comprehension. This knowledge allows for an increase in vocabulary and, therefore, an increase in both listening and reading comprehension. Stanovich (1986) described this increase as the Matthew effects, which means that the more vocabulary readers possess, the better the readers' comprehension and the more the student will read. The more they read, the more words they will learn. Among the recommendations made for the development of comprehension abilities offered by Pressley (2000) were teaching vocabulary meaning, an emphasis on the need for teacher modeling, and extensive reading. In order to provide students with a source of rich vocabulary directly related to comprehension, one effective strategy teachers can use is storybook reading.

In 2005, Proctor, Carlo, August, and Snow conducted a study with 135 ELLs fourth grade students participating in a longitudinal study investigating the acquisition of English and Spanish literacy skills from three urban elementary schools. These schools were located in Boston, Chicago and El Paso, Texas. Participants from Chicago and El Paso were mainly of Mexican origin, while the students enrolled in Boston were from Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico origin. All three school received Success For All (SFA) intervention (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, & Wasik, 1996) with Spanish and English curriculum. Data collected from these students were decoding (fluency and alphabetic knowledge) and comprehension (vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension). Data were analyzed with a t-test to compare both groups. Findings demonstrated no statistically significant differences in alphabetic knowledge between those students receiving instruction in either English or Spanish. However, according to Proctor et al. (2005) with an adequate

L2 decoding ability, the vocabulary knowledge in the target language improves English reading comprehension outcomes for ELLs whose native language is Spanish. Therefore, a combination of decoding skills and listening comprehension enhancement is a predictor of strong reading comprehension outcome.

### *Critical Thinking*

Reading is more than just decoding and understanding at a lower cognitive level. The reader or listener needs the critical thinking skills necessary to use the text-acquired information and to make connections with prior experiences, in order to further their knowledge. Ennis (1989) stated that the way to teach critical thinking is controversial because researchers have not come to an agreement on how to teach it. Three possible ways of teaching critical thinking provided in 1989 by Ennis are: (a) to teach it independently, (b) to integrate critical thinking with instruction, and (c) a combination of both. Each of these three ways incorporates reflective thinking skills. That is, when students reflect, they look back into their experiences and make connections. For Ennis (1989), critical thinking is reflective thinking, allowing the thinker to focus or center on deciding what to believe or do. Such thinking allows the student to make inferences and predictions.

According to Shermis (1999), the first theoretical investigation of reflective thought can be attributed to John Dewey's 1910 book, *How We Think*. During the reflection process, learning occurs. At the same time, language is developed as students orally express their reflections. For this reason, students not only benefit by reflecting (i.e., by engaging in critical thinking), but also by explaining their ideas and defending their point of view. This type of action requires higher order thinking.

Teachers can ask higher level thinking questions as students work on new skills or review what they have learned in class. Once students show an understanding or a mastery of the skills learned, they are then ready to be challenge on a new level. As Shermis (1999) affirmed, reflective theory can be applied at any grade level or age by asking questions that create conflict and confusion.

### *Story Reading Effects on Oral Language Development*

Story reading is an approach used in every classroom, especially in early childhood. The Texas Reading Initiative (2002) stated that:

listening to and talking about books on a regular basis provides children with a demonstration of the benefits and pleasures of reading. Story reading introduces children to new words, new sentences, new places, and new ideas. (p.6)

Story reading has also been shown to be effective in increasing both new vocabulary and concept development (Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1995; Ewers & Brownson, 1999; NICHD, 2000), comprehension, and narrative ability (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004). Additionally, storybooks also teach children about attitudes and acceptable behavior that are valued in the society where the student resides, particularly the ELL student.

According to Isbell et al. (2004), story reading is the most popular and researched instructional activity designed to increase vocabulary knowledge, book print and literacy. As children are exposed to frequent story reading, they are more likely to use complex sentences (Isbell et al., 2004), have better comprehension of the story, are more likely to generate questions and, overall, improve in academic achievement. Isbell et al. conducted a

12-week study involving 38 children, whose ages ranged between 3 and 4 years old. They investigated whether storytelling and story reading influenced language development and story comprehension. In their study, they found that the storytelling group outperformed the story reading group in retelling, while the story reading group did better in creating a wordless picture book story. For this study, gains per measure were reported. The gains reported for the mean length utterance in storytelling and story reading were (1.3) and (0.46) respectively. On a measure of fluency in storytelling, an increase of (9.05) was obtained, and (34) was reached for story reading. Additionally, vocabulary diversity was measured to have a gain of (94.64) for storytelling and (11.47) for story reading. However, they did not find any significant gender difference among those within a single group or between the different groups with regards to story conventions and comprehension.

Students in story reading relied on pictures to restructure the story, as compared to the storytelling group who performed better in stating the ending of the story, as well as recalling the characters, setting and moral of the story. Isbell et al. (2004) acknowledged that the storytelling format showed gains in the formal ending. They attributed that finding to the fact that in storytelling, the ending is the last information heard, and therefore it is easier for students to retain the information as fresh in their short term memory. They concluded that both storytelling and story reading are beneficial to the development of oral language and story comprehension. They also noted that children in the story reading group improved their oral language complexity, as compared to the group exposed to storytelling. For this reason, the selection of books used for story reading should have a well-developed story line with a coherent text.

According to McNamara (2001), coherent texts are easier to recall. Storybooks should be colorful and have attractive illustrations, in addition to being presented in a way that holds the interest of the listeners and reaches their emotions. Teachers for ELLs can use the story reading approach to include stories from the children's culture, which has the added benefit of increasing students' self esteem. When students come from immigrant families, immigrant stories should also be included to make a connection with the student's prior knowledge and experiences. Besides, this cultural exchange enhances children's knowledge about other cultures, while at the same time allowing them to share their own. Folk tales allow for such exchanges of cross-cultural knowledge.

A comparison study of storytelling versus story reading conducted by Trostle and Hick (1998) found that storytelling groups outperformed story reading groups in comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. This six-week study involved 32 British Primary school children (16 boys and 16 girls) whose ages ranged between 7 and 11 years. These students were grouped by age, gender and literacy skills. The treatment lasted 20 minutes, with no discussion during the story's presentation. All students were tested individually in both comprehension and vocabulary. Students were asked for the definition of 13 to 14 words, receiving 2 points for a correct answer, 1 point for a partially correct answer and 0 for an incorrect answer. Trostle and Hick found that the storytelling group outperformed the story reading group in comprehension: storytelling mean= 21.88, SD = 2.16, and story reading mean = 19.81, SD = 2.48 (Cohen's  $d = .89$ ) and vocabulary knowledge storytelling mean = 19.25, SD = 3.31, and story reading mean = 16.31, SD = 2.75 (Cohen's  $d = .96$ ). No

differences were found between gender and literacy skills. They recommended storytelling as a supplement to story reading to enhance comprehension and vocabulary knowledge.

According to Simich-Dudgeon & National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1998) activities that generate collaborative talk in the classroom are necessary when planning for ELLs. The strategies must support oral language development. One strategy is story reading but reading a book to a child without strategic planning to increase the student's vocabulary and comprehension is not sufficient. Students' acquired life experiences and knowledge, also called prior knowledge or background knowledge, should be integrated or taken into consideration during the selection of story books. This will provide teachers with a great resource for making instruction meaningful (Christen & Murphy, 1991). Christen and Murphy (1991) explained that when students lack prior knowledge, such knowledge needs be built up by developing vocabulary knowledge, providing experiences and introducing content in incremental steps. Children from low socioeconomic statuses (SES) with poor vocabulary skills may not have sufficient background knowledge they need to bring to the reading experiences for scaffolding, in order to attain new knowledge. It is through interactions with adults and peers that children develop oral language (Kies, Rodriguez, & Granato, 1993), imitating the language they are exposed to in their daily environment.

As mentioned previously, story reading plays an important role in literacy development; it assists in enhancing language skills by expanding vocabulary (Pollard-Durodola, Mathes, Vaughn, Cardenas-Hagan, & Linan-Thompson, 2006), narrative ability (retelling) and reading comprehension (Isbell et al., 2004; Morrow & Brittain, 2003;

Thorndike, 1977). If used in conjunction with interactive activities and discussion, story reading and listening to stories read aloud will both have a positive effect that is essential to students' comprehension. These activities can set the stage for the story and can allow them to draw upon prior knowledge as questions are asked during story reading, or as post reading activities increase comprehension. Research findings show that vocabulary improves with story reading, especially when interactive or post reading instructional strategies are integrated. Ulanoff and Pucci (1999) conducted a study with bilingual third grade students, comparing two methodologies using a *read aloud* strategy: (a) concurrent translation and (b) preview-review. They randomly selected three third grade classes to serve as control, concurrent translation and preview-review groups. Students were pre-tested on chosen vocabulary items. After the pretest was completed, all three classes listened to a story in English. The control group received no intervention or explanation of the story, Group 2 listened to the same story but used concurrent translation, and the third group used preview-review prior to listening to the story. All students received a post test on the same vocabulary items included in the pretest. Analysis showed the results to be statistically significant with  $r^2 = .68$ ;  $p = <.001$ . Their findings demonstrated that concurrent translation did not facilitate English vocabulary acquisition, but preview-review provided statistically significant results when compared with concurrent translation. Thus, they demonstrated that the selection of strategies is essential to the objective.

Repetition has a positive effect in many ways, one of which is comprehension (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Stories can be repeated to allow for better comprehension because learning does not happen by memorizing, but rather by repetition. According to

Webb (2007), gains in vocabulary knowledge is related to frequency of words encountered in text. As children repeatedly listen to the same story, they increase their vocabulary knowledge and content in ways that will allow them to connect with the next story they hear. Morrow (1988) stated that repeated reading led children of low socioeconomic status (SES) to achieve better interpretations of the story. This repetition was shown to increase students' responses to questions, assist them in making inferences and help them predict the outcome as they make their associations.

Story reading or reading aloud to bilingual children fosters both expressive vocabulary and literacy skills. Unfortunately, few studies on story reading and vocabulary development have been conducted with bilingual children. Petterson (2002) conducted a correlational study to investigate the relationship between expressive vocabulary size and the frequency of story reading exposure and television watching among 64 bilingual children aged 21 to 27 months. Petterson found a positive and significant relationship between shared reading and vocabulary size. For English reading and vocabulary size, a correlation of  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$  was obtained, but for Spanish vocabulary the correlation was  $r = .04$ . On the other hand, a positive and significant correlation,  $r = .35$ ,  $p < .05$ , was found for Spanish reading and Spanish vocabulary, but a negative correlation was shown with English vocabulary. In addition to a vocabulary increase, story reading provides children with the opportunity to deal with texts by addressing a number of skills and by increasing the length and depth of responses.

At the other end of the spectrum, a longitudinal study conducted by Meyer, Stahl, Wardrop, and Linn (1994) found a negative correlation between the level of children's

reading achievement and the time spent reading with an adult. Meyer et al. (1994) found that at the end of first grade the students ranged between -.11 on the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test to -.15 on the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), and -.16 on the Interactive Reading Assessment System (IRAS). Their findings contradicted previous studies conducted on storybook reading. Their explanation to this contradictory finding was that storybook reading by itself does not develop reading skills, but rather that storybook reading is a complement to any reading program.

In 1999, Ouellette conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of using reading aloud as a way to expose fifth graders with low reading abilities to reading, in order to stimulate their interest in reading and their development of a sense of story structure. This 12-week study used an experimental/control design with 72 fifth graders as participants. The participants were identified as having low reading abilities and were taken from a pool of 231 students, from 11 classrooms in two schools. Their reading ability was measured using the Metropolitan Achievement Test, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (MAT6). Written story summaries establishing students' expectations of story structure and MAT6 scores were used for comparability between the two groups, which showed no statistically significant difference. Participants were randomly assigned either to the experimental or the control group. The researcher met with the experimental group for *read aloud* sessions once a week for 12 weeks, and *sharing time* after each reading session. The control group continued with their typical reading instruction.

For story retelling analysis, Ouellette (1999) used Thorndyke's story grammar categories: setting, theme, plot and resolution. The interrater reliability was  $r = .92$ . A

multivariate repeated measurement analysis of variance showed a result that was, according to Ouellete (1999), borderline statistically significant,  $F(2,64) = 2.51, p = .09$ . The gain in scores in reading comprehension was also borderline statistically significant,  $F(1,65) = 3.46, p = .07$ , but written retelling was not significant,  $F(1,65) = 2.40, p > .05$ . Ouellete considered that the insignificant findings could have been a result of the small sample size and the use of MANOVA, which is a very conservative test.

### Measures of Oral Language Development and Comprehension

Although researchers acknowledge that oral language proficiency correlates with reading proficiency, little research on ELLs whose native language is Spanish (Gutierrez-Clellen & Hofstetter, 1994) has been conducted, using comprehension through oral language activities as a way of obtaining text comprehension and demonstrating knowledge of text-acquired information (Gambrell, Koskinen, & Kapinus, 1991).

#### *Story Retelling as a Measure of Language Growth*

Bilingual Hispanic students need to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in both English and Spanish because these skills are necessary to achieve the goal of reading comprehension. Listening and speaking provide the foundation for literacy skills. Biemiller (1999a) has stated "... oral language development sets a limit on reading comprehension" (p. 30). Measuring a meaning-making process such as comprehension is difficult. Students do not comprehend by just reading the text. Comprehension is a very complex a task, and it must be monitored to address the needs of those students whose oral fluency does not reflect an understanding of the text-acquired information. This is why norm reference tests provide little information to teachers who are making instructional decisions

(Roberts, Good & Corcoran, 2005). For ELLs, a curriculum-based assessment is more valuable to a teacher (Dominguez de Ramirez & Shapiro, 2007) than a norm references test, for the reason that it will allow for closer and continuous monitoring of comprehension. One way of assessing students' story comprehension is through the use of retellings, as a curriculum-based measurement. Acknowledging that retelling practice increases the recall of discourse comprehension (Gambrell et al., 1991; Gambrell, Pfeiffer & Wilson, 1985), retelling could be used as a screening instrument to assess oral language development of ELLs.

Retelling has been defined as post-reading and post-listening recalls used to express what was learned or remembered (Morrow, 1996). According to Goodman (2001), retellings provide much information about the comprehension process. Another definition for retelling is a post reading or post listening recall in which readers or listeners tell what they remember either orally, in writing, or by illustrations. This seems to be a viable way of assessing a bilingual child because it offers the teacher a way to observe the student's growth in both language and comprehension. Unfortunately, studies conducted on Hispanic students in the acquisition of literacy in English as a second language have been scarce. One study on bilingual children concerning the production of narratives in both English and Spanish was conducted by Fiestas and Peña (2004). A small sample of 12 children was utilized, with ages ranging from 4 to 6. In this study, retellings were stimulated in two ways: using a wordless picture and a static picture. Both stories were scored for complexity of story grammar. Retellings were analyzed by measuring the total number of words, the number of clause units (or C units) and the mean length of C units. Their findings showed a statistically

significant main effect of  $\eta^2 = .48$  for narrative elements and a statistically significant measurement between language and narrative element interaction,  $\eta^2 = .18$ . Previous studies had shown that children compose narratives in both English and Spanish in a comparable way. But the researchers, Fiestas and Peña, found differences when they compared the story elements of the narratives in both languages. When using the wordless picture book, Fiestas and Peña found that more initiating events were produced in Spanish narratives, as compared to English. However, more consequence events were found in the English narratives for the same task. On the static picture task, the researchers found mixed results. Overall, they found that students used more story elements in their native language, Spanish. Fiestas and Peña concluded that for this reason the language and narrative tasks for bilingual children should be considered when they are tested.

It has been noted that students who have good comprehension use strategies to assist them successfully recall the text. Students use these strategies to assist them in organizing and retrieving information from the text, allowing them to have a better understanding of the story or text. This strategy known as story retelling, provides students with a scaffold or a model of language which they can imitate (Isbell et al., 2004). Retelling provides the student the opportunity to reconstruct the story (Snow, 2002), and this is a challenging process. Listening comprehension is a complex process, as well as an active one. The listener must differentiate phonemes, identify and know the meaning of words, and understand the grammatical structure (Vandergrift, 1999) of the target language. In addition, “the listener has to interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered...” (Vandergrift, p. 168) and base his or her interpretation of the information acquired on the socio-cultural context.

Retelling allows the child to play an important role in the process of oral or writing text reconstruction (Gambrell et al., 1991; Goodman, 2001).

Gambrell, Pfeiffer and Wilson (1985) investigated this text reconstruction known as retelling and its effect on the comprehension and recall of text information. The two treatment conditions selected for this study were retelling and illustrating. Both strategies identified by Gambrell et al., (1985) as fitting Wittrock's generative model of learning, which says that the reader must engage in constructing relationships between text information and prior knowledge (Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, & Goetz, 1977).

Gambrell, Pfeiffer and Wilson (1985) did not favor the schemata theory rather they were more aligned with the Wittrock's generative model of learning, which suggest that when the reader is engaged in the construction of meaning and makes a connection with the text, the reader comprehends what is read. This model developed by Wittrock focuses on: "(a) attention, (b) motivation (c) knowledge and preconceptions, and (d) generation" (p. 532). The process of generation factor has been considered by Wittrock as the most important. The participants for Gambrell et al., (1985) study were 93 fourth graders in public elementary school, all of whom were native speakers of English. They were assigned randomly to one of the two instructional strategies, retelling and illustrating. An analysis of variance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine any significant difference between treatments. The IQ scores were used as covariate for this study. They found statistical significance difference between immediate and delayed recall for the illustrating treatment,  $F(1,90) = 5.48, p < .05$ . They obtained no statistical significant difference between immediate and delayed recall for the retelling treatment,  $F(1,90) 5.48, p > .05$ . However, on

the two day delayed recall, the retelling group showed statistically significant results,  $F(1,90) = 1.06, p < .05$ .

In 2002 Gutierrez-Clellen conducted a study on 33, mostly Mexican descendant, ages ranging from seven to eight-years-old, fluent bilingual children drawn from a larger study, on story recall and story comprehension in English (L2) and Spanish (L1). Five of the students received English-only instruction and the remaining received instruction in both languages, English and Spanish. She used frog story picture books age appropriate to assess story recall and used factual questions to assess story comprehension. Using a pair t-test for each task, a statistically significant difference was found for story recall in English than in Spanish with an effect size of  $d = 0.72$ . Her study showed statistically significant differences between spontaneous narrative production and story recall. Students performed better in English spontaneous narrative and comprehension than in Spanish. However, when comparing English and Spanish performance, a greater variability within participants, was observed in the Spanish tasks demonstrating different levels of narrative proficiency in L1 and L2. Gutierrez-Clellen concluded that students demonstrating low English performance may benefit from increased instruction provided in the target language, English.

In another study, Gambrell, Koskinene and Kapinus (1991) stated that children ought to be exposed to all kinds of good literature and prose, especially since teachers do most of the talking in the classroom. In their study, they emphasized how retelling makes the reader focus on the story as a whole. Additionally, Gambrell et al. considered that this focus on centering on the nature of the story provides a framework to improve comprehension, therefore encouraging elaboration. Gambrell et al. acknowledged that one way to engage

students in participating orally is through the use of retellings, but unfortunately, this instructional strategy has been used frequently as an assessment and not as a strategy to enhance comprehension. With 48 fourth grade participants (of whom 24 were identified as proficient readers and 24 as less proficient readers by the scores on the Cognitive Abilities Test), Gambrell et al. (1991) investigated the effects of practice in retelling on reading comprehension, on both the proficient and the less proficient readers. Their findings showed a statistically significant main effect on proficient readers with  $p < .05$ , with a 15% gain in story structure elements, while the less proficient readers showed an 18% gain. On the two dependent variables, implicit and explicit questions, they found that the Pearson correlation was not significant; therefore, they conducted a t-test and found statistically significant differences in both groups. In this study, retelling was used as a tool to help students reflect on the text, organize their ideas as they thought about the story sequence, and consider the message intended by the author, as well as the illustrator. No effect sizes were reported.

Gambrell et al. (1991) eight narrative stories were selected, four of which were at the second grade level for less-proficient readers, and four were at the fourth grade level for proficient readers. Participants read a story silently, the retelling was recorded, and the researcher administered oral comprehension questions about the story read by the student. He followed the same procedure for both the less proficient and the proficient readers. The only modification in the study was that the less proficient readers used a story appropriate for their reading level. The researchers used the Fry Readability formula to determine the equal reading level. In four sessions, the students' reading improved significantly. This study reiterated the direct relationship between oral language and reading proficiency. Their

research showed that proficient readers and non-proficient readers who practice retellings recalled more propositions, recalled more of the story structure, and increased their number of correct answers to cued recall questions. After four sessions, the quality of retellings of both proficient and less proficient readers improved significantly. This Gambrell et al. (1991) study also supported Wittrock's (1974) model of generative learning as did Gambrell et al. (1985) study. The 1991 study showed that with practice in retelling, both proficient and less proficient readers improved in both their free and cued recall retelling. As a result, Gambrell et al. (1991) stated that there is a strong relationship between oral language and reading comprehension. No effect sizes were reported.

In addition, culture also plays an important role in providing students with prior experience that will play an important role in the comprehension of texts. Invernizzi and Abouzeiad (1995) argued that there are qualitative differences in written story retelling among different cultures. People often share everyday life experiences in their own words, depending upon the purpose and the reteller's perceptions (Dudukovic, Marsh, & Tversky, 2004). They stated that children map their oral and written story summaries through the use of story retells, based on their background knowledge. As students reconstruct the text, they obtain ownership of this construction as they make connections with prior knowledge. In their study, participants were expected to retell stories in writing.

Retelling can also be practiced at home during story reading time. De Temple and Tabors (1996) conducted a study with kindergarteners on a mother's style of book reading and retelling of a story. The purpose was to detect the effects of a child's story retelling and to identify if this effect, if positive, would predict literacy levels in the first grade. The 62

participants selected for this study came from low income families. Mothers were asked to read a story to their children, and children were expected to retell the story back to their mother. All retellings were transcribed and coded for story sense, non-picture information, and length, divided by the amount of words. All story retelling measurements were associated with first grade reading and language skills. The tests used by De Temple et al. (1996) were the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), the Gray Oral Passage and the total number of number of words. All story retells were transcribed and coded for sense of structure, non-picture information and the length of the retelling. For the first measurement, sense of structure, a holistic coding was used. For the non-picture information measurement, the information was divided by the total number of words, the length of the retelling, and the total number of number of words. De Temple et al. found a strong correlation between the retelling and reading measurements. Story sense was statistically significant and correlated with WRAT,  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ , with reading Gray Oral Passage Scores,  $r = .53$ ,  $p < .001$ , and definitional skills,  $r = .30$ ,  $p < .05$ . Non-significant results were obtained for a total number of words with WRAT, but a strong correlation was found with the Gray Oral and Definitional skills,  $r = .41$ ,  $p < .0001$ . These measurements contributed greatly to predicting first grade reading performance. They found that the model combining preschool home literacy environments and kindergarten emergent literacy, as well as a sense of story, was a powerful predictor for first grade literacy skills.

In another study, retell fluency was used to measure reading comprehension because of the wealth of comprehension behaviors demonstrated as students retell a story. Good oral reading fluency, which reflects good decoding, does not equate to comprehension of a text.

This means that that the scores obtained from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Systems (DIBELS, 2004) on oral reading fluency do not necessarily correlate with good comprehension, although in some cases they do. Robert, Good, and Corcoran (2005) recognized the need for ongoing monitoring of students with reading problems, but showing good oral reading fluency scores. In this study, reading comprehension using story retelling was assessed in 86 first grade students from six schools with a population of 96% African American students. Robert et al. used the scores of a curriculum-based measurement called Vital Indicators of Progress (VIP), a section of the Voyager Universal Literacy Program, as an alternate for DIBELS. The VIP measure was developed by Good of the University of Oregon (as cited by Robert et al.). The individual retell fluency passages from VIP correlated to .47 and .43 with the Broad Reading Clusters (letter and word identification and passage comprehension) from the Woodcock Diagnostic Reading Battery, combined at the post test point. The average of the VIP retells fluency passages correlated to .51, a 26% variance explained by the Broad Reading Scores (BRS). The latter achieved a correlation of .61 with the oral reading fluency average. They found a modest gain when adding retelling to a battery of fluency tests, but still offered teachers a tool to identify and monitor students with reading problems whose oral reading fluency did not represent reading comprehension.

A review on oral retelling research conducted by Pappas and Pettegrew (1991) showed that more teachers are shifting from worksheet use to more interactive activities. When teachers ask more questions, students have more opportunities to participate in the reading process. One way of active reading participation is the use of story retell strategy. Retelling requires organization of thoughts (Pappas & Pettegrew, 1991) providing the

teacher valuable information regarding students' oral composition, use of wording and strategies to organize the text in the reconstruction process. Therefore, oral retelling could serve as a valuable tool to enhance, monitor and measure ELLs comprehension progress.

### *Story Grammar*

Research studies have suggested that direct instruction in text structure and the use of organizational devices as story maps both increase comprehension (Dimino, Gersten, Carnine, & Blake, 1990; Gardill & Jitendra, 1999; Strickland & Morrow, 1989). Dimino et al. (1900) stated that “story grammar evolved from the analysis of folktales conducted by anthropologists in the early 1900’s” (p. 20). They explained that when adults and even children retold or heard a story, the retelling of that story followed a pattern. Thorndyke (1977) referred to this pattern as story grammar. This piece of information leads researchers to investigate if direct instruction of story grammar improved comprehension (Dimino et al.).

Story grammar, considered as another way of telling a story, is used as a tool to assess progress in listening comprehension either during or after story reading. This instructional tool helps students learn about the general structure of stories and how to ask themselves important questions about those stories they hear or read. As previously mentioned, story grammar has a set of story elements common to all other stories. Those elements are setting (i.e., time and place where the story happened), characters, problem or plot, resolution and theme. Using story grammar as a guide and assessment tool to identify the story elements has proven to be very beneficial and effective in helping teachers evaluate what their ELLs have retained during story telling time. Gardill and Jitendra (1999), authors

of *Advanced Story-Map Instruction*, described story mapping as a technique to help students understand and recognize the story elements identified by story grammar. They, Gardill and Jitendra, considered story grammar as templates that provide students with a tangible framework that assists them in identifying the elements of narrative stories.

Dimino et al. (1990) compared two teaching methods to promote comprehension, the traditional basal instruction and the explicit reading comprehension instruction. The study was conducted in four weeks with 32 low performance 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. The researchers focused on identifying the story grammar elements considered the most important: (a) problem (conflict), (b) main characters, (c) attempts, (d) resolution, (e) twists, (f) character information, (g) reactions, and (i) themes. Among the variables used for this study were: (a) story grammar questions, (b) basal questions, (c) written retelling, and (d) theme questions. The researchers found that story grammar instruction significantly improved low-performing students' responses. In addition, they found positive effects for written retelling, as well.

Gardill et al. (1999) replicated previous studies done by Dimino et al. (1990) and Gurney, Gersten, Dimino, and Camine (1990). The six participants were students from middle school with learning disabilities, who were assessed for comprehension. Students were instructed and practiced story mapping for a total of 20 to 23 sessions during the study. A multiple baseline study was used to investigate the effectiveness of direct instruction, using story mapping techniques for reading comprehension. According to the researchers, students with learning disabilities probably lacked effective interaction with the text, as a result of their less developed schemata, so Gardill et al. developed a comprehension test to measure both literal and inferential questions that would reflect the comprehension skills of

these students. Teaching scripts were developed for teachers for consistency purposes, and three dependent variables were measured: percentage of story grammar questions, percentage of correct basal comprehension questions, and story retells. The scoring guides for the story grammar used in this study were adopted from Idol and Croll (1987). For the retell measurement, the researcher read the story to the students. The retelling was then audio taped and transcribed for scoring purposes. From this retelling, the number of words, correct word sequences, thought units (T-units) and sentences per retell were all analyzed. Gardill et al. reported a mean 26% gain in the story elements present in the students' retelling. A reduced amount of number of words, T-units (minimal terminal units) (Hunt, 1965) and the number of sentences were all considered. The mean for the number of words for the six students was 231 during the baseline, and 193 number of words on post intervention. The mean of the T-units during the baseline were measured at 29 T-units, while on post intervention a mean of 19.67 was calculated. For the number of sentences, a mean of 17 sentences during the baseline was recorded, and 14.5 were obtained for post intervention. No standard deviation was reported for this study. Overall, the results of this study showed that all six students considered the story grammar helpful, and their reading comprehension improved.

#### *Story Grammar and English Language Learners*

Educators have long known the importance of comprehension for high academic achievement. They have used open ended questions or cloze sentences to monitor for listening and reading comprehension. However, Shanahan & Beck (2006) found few studies, three to be exact, that examined strategies to teach reading comprehension to ELLs. The

intervention length varied in those studies as well as the grade level complicating the identification of best teaching strategies to teach reading comprehension to ELLs.

Learning story grammar strategies in the native language is a skill that can transfer very well to the second language, thus improving the student's comprehension. The story elements introduced for this strategy are: (a) a beginning that includes the time of the story, the place where the story happens, and the main characters; then (b) a beginning, middle, and end (sequence); (c) a plot with a problem to solve; and (d) an action with a conflict. Once children know how to identify these elements in the story, their comprehension and memory of the stories improve, making them better readers.

#### Summary

In the complex process of comprehension, the more the students get involved with a story and the way they organize the acquired information based on their knowledge of story structure, the more information the students recall from the story. But all this is possible if and only if students have the correct vocabulary to express the information they have learned, both orally and in writing. The use of story grammar is a strategy that assists students in organizing this information obtained during story reading. In addition, this engagement in the process of knowledge construction from the context gives bilingual students a better chance to decrease their vocabulary deficit. The literature review indicated that most studies on vocabulary, listening comprehension, and use of retell as assessment tool have been conducted in cases of learning disabilities. However, the use and benefit of story retelling and story grammar in ELLs has not been extensively studied specially in a longitudinal study. Many studies conducted thus far have addressed oral language

development, while studies on English literacy for ELLs have been overlooked (Garcia, 2000).

### CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

My study addressed the benefits of a five-day structured story reading component to oral language development on ELLs using vocabulary probes, story grammar and retelling as assessment tools linked to instruction and practice on ELLs in transitional bilingual programs. Specifically, the purpose of my study was to investigate (a) the extent to which second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English; (b) the extent to which students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling; (c) the extent to which vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories; (d) the extent to which a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice, and (e) the extent to which comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize

structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment.

In this chapter a discussion of the methodology used for my study will be included. This chapter includes the following sections: population and sample, research design, scoring, instrumentation, intervention, classroom observation, research questions, data collection, data analysis, and a summary.

### Research Design, Population, Context, and Sample

Archival data for my study were retrieved from a five-year longitudinal field-based research project, Project ELLA (R305P030032), incorporating approximately 460 native Spanish-speaking ELLs during the academic year 2007-2008 in an urban school district in Southeast Texas. The majority of the student population in this district is from low socio economic status (TEA, 2007) qualifying for free lunch. The native language of 45% of the students attending this district is Spanish. The study participants were identified by State criteria as Limited English proficient; they all had a Home Language Survey at the time of admission indicating Spanish as the primary language spoken at home. The purpose of this five-year longitudinal study has been to implement a rigorous alternative instructional model for primary grade students whose native language is Spanish. This project seeks to identify best practices and under what condition, structured English immersion (SEI) or transitional bilingual education (TBE), is most effective in helping native Spanish speaking children in acquiring English language and literacy skills.

In order to select schools to participate in the project, the original criteria required to have both SEI and TBE in place, however, in order to maintain statistical power it was found

necessary to include schools providing SEI or TBE. Random assignment was conducted at the school level. This resulted in a sample size of 23 schools and 60 classrooms. From this sample 22 schools were assigned to receive the treatment and 12 schools assigned to the control group. The total sample size at the onset of project ELLA in 2004-2005 academic year (i.e. kindergarten) was 800 and due to a high attrition rate (a phenomenon typical in metropolitan area), the total sample size at the end of 2007-2008 academic year (i.e., second grade) was 462.

For the purpose of my study, a power analysis (Thomson & Kieffer, 2000) was conducted based on an alpha of .05 and a moderate effect size of .8, resulting in a sample size of 70 students. Seventy-five second grade students were randomly selected from a pool of 267 student participants in transitional bilingual program, which consisted of 142 students in the transitional bilingual program – enhanced (TBE-E) and 125 students in the transitional bilingual program – typical (TBE-T), instruction participating in Project ELLA, were randomly selected. Forty students were randomly selected from TBE-E and 35 were from the TBE-T pool. Two students withdrew from the project, one from the TBE – enhanced program and one from the typical instruction group. A third student from TBE-E group had some problem other than language to be included in my study and the inclusion of this student would bias the results. This resulted in a total sample of 72 students: 37 in TBE-E and 35 in TBE-T.

For my study, the dependent variables selected to measure the length of retell in English and Spanish were: (a) T-units, (b) number of words, (c) number of sentences, (d) vocabulary, (e) story grammar, and (f) end-of- story assessment.

## Research Questions

1. To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?

2. To what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling?

3. To what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?

4. To what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impact listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice?

5. To what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?

## Instrumentation

The archival data retrieved from 72 Hispanic bilingual second graders were collected and analyzed for this study. The archival data were collected from the following instruments: the Naglieri Test of Non-verbal Ability (NNAT), curriculum-based measures

(vocabulary, end-of-story assessment, and retellings), and teachers' observation protocol scores used by Project ELLA for fidelity of implementation.

#### *Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test*

*Description.* The NNAT, was used and is a reliable nonverbal assessment designed to give nonverbal appraisals of general ability for children with ages ranging between 5 and 17 years. This nonverbal ability test has been used to identify culturally and linguistically diversely gifted and talented children, because it does not require the student to speak or read. It uses geometric designs and different kinds of shapes that require logical organization (Naglieri, 1997).

*Reliability and validity.* According to Naglieri (1997), the internal reliability coefficients for the NNAT, by grade, were found to be within the range of .83 to .93. Validity was supported by a strong correlation between limited English proficient and non-limited English proficient students when used with Hispanic students at different levels of English proficiency (Naglieri, Booth & Winsler, 2004).

#### *Curriculum-Based Measurement*

Curriculum-based measurement (CMB) provides reliable data (Robert, Good & Corcoran, 2005; Foegen, 2006) which allows for performance growth monitoring of students' academic progress. A curriculum-based measurement (end-of-story assessment) was developed for each STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) story to assess vocabulary and comprehension with leveled questions, and each was scheduled in advance by Project ELLA (see Appendix A). This was considered as an end-of-story assessment. In addition, another CBM developed for this study was as assessment

consisting of 20 words used to test story vocabulary from six narrative storybooks, which was scheduled for a period of six weeks (see Appendices B & C).

### *Retellings*

Retellings to measure oral language development were collected from study participants for two stories, *The Great Fuzz Frenzy* (Stevens & Stevens Crummel, 2005) and *Double Bones: The Adventures of Diplodocus* (Dahl, 2005). Students retold the first and last stories of the six stories selected for this study, after being instructed regarding the procedure to follow. All retellings were transcribed verbatim and coded. Retelling has, in the past, been used by speech specialist and researchers to measure oral language development and to monitor progress.

### Intervention

Language skills are better learned when integrated and introduced in a sequence (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2006). One strategy that is learner-centered for reading instruction is story reading, which allows for science integration that optimizes instruction. This strategy provides students with the opportunity to interact orally before, during, and after the story reading. Story retells with higher order thinking for English Literacy and Language Acquisition (STELLA) (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), not only integrate skills, but introduce them in a sequence in order to provide scaffolding for ELLs, and is of primary interest for ELLs and it also utilized L2 clarified by L1 strategies (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). STELLA is the story-reading and retelling component of Project ELLA's 3-Tier intervention was of primary interest for my study.

*The Experimental Group – Enhanced Instruction*

*Transitional Bilingual Education –E* (TBE-E) is the enhanced group, the group that received intervention. The time allotments for the intervention were as follows:

1. Kindergarten students received 75 minutes of structured ESL instruction, of which 15 minutes were allotted to the story reading component STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), 10 minutes were allotted to communication games for small group instruction with a trained Paraprofessional during the Santillana Intensive English lesson, 10 minutes to Daily Oral Language (DOL) and 50 minutes to Santillana Intensive English (Ventriglia & González, 2000).
2. In first grade, this group received 90 minutes of structured ESL instruction with 40 minutes assigned to STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), 30 minutes for Santillana Intensive English (Ventriglia & González, 2000), 10 minutes of communication games for small group instruction with a trained Paraprofessional for the first half of the academic year, and 10 minutes of Daily Oral Language/Science. In the middle of the first grade, Early Intervention in English replaced Communication Games to provide small group instruction.
3. Second grade student received 45 minutes of Early Intervention in English at Level III, 35 minutes of STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), 10 minutes of Daily Oral and Written Language, and small group instruction using Early Intervention in English at Level I. Small group work was delivered during the Level III large group instruction time.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the STELLA component is the treatment of interest in this study. In addition to oral language development, vocabulary knowledge, and critical thinking using Bloom's taxonomy for higher level thinking and problem solving to facilitate ELLs with their English language and literacy acquisition, STELLA serves as a bridge that connects and integrates science through structured story reading. For vocabulary knowledge, STELLA uses direct and indirect vocabulary instruction along with teacher modeling and student practice. Additionally, STELLA provides instruction and modeling of story structure elements through the use of story grammar, leveled questions and other activities such as story circle and ordering sequence of events. During the weekly STELLA lessons, the teacher modeled the proper use of language, the process of identifying story structure, and problem solving. Additionally, the same story was read aloud for five consecutive days, allowing for students to interact with and engage in dialogue. In this study, scripted lessons were provided to all ELLA experimental teachers, while control teachers followed their typical instruction plans. Following information and a description of the story reading component is presented.

#### *STELLA Lesson Introduction*

The story time period (STELLA) for the experimental group was 15 minutes in kindergarten, and 20 minutes in the first semester of first grade. This changed to 40 minutes in the second semester. The story time period for second grade was 35 minutes. The intervention was held every school day and included detailed, scripted lessons and activities. STELLA scripted lessons included the following: (a) book introduction, (b) prior knowledge activation, (c) systematic direct and indirect vocabulary instruction with opportunities to

practice, (d) higher level questions, (e) ESL strategies, (f) science integration, and (f) story grammar and retelling practice.

### *Storybook Selection*

A key ingredient to a good story lesson is the storybook selection. STELLA storybooks were selected to address the diverse cognitive levels in the classroom. Fiction stories were used for kindergarten, while narrative and expository books were selected for first and second grade. For each book, a five-day lesson plan was developed. These stories were of interest to the children and their illustrations were enticing, using many different types of art media to create effects that would assist ELLs in taking meaning from the text. By second grade, the author's biography was made part of the five-day lesson. For some stories, information about the author's motivation in writing the story was also provided to stimulate the student's desire to imitate the author. Besides genre selection, vocabulary encountered in the stories played an important role in the selection of the story for the children.

I asked both, control and the experimental group teachers, to read the same story, but only the experimental teachers followed the scripted lessons for the story of the week. The control group continued with their typical instruction plans. The main reason for asking both the control and the experimental group teachers to read the same story was that since vocabulary is such an integral part of story retelling and comprehension, the students needed to be assessed on the vocabulary selected from the same story. Twenty words were selected for pre and post assessment. These words were introduced by the TBE-E teachers as scripted in the lesson for the story, as described above. Both control teachers and experimental

teachers were provided with a schedule for the title of the storybook of the week, but the experimental ELLA teachers followed not only the same story book reading schedule, but scripted lessons for the stories. These teachers also had biweekly staff development meetings provided by Project ELLA. The first and sixth books were chosen for the retelling assessment. The first storybook was *The Great Fuzz Frenzy* (Stevens & Stevens Crummel, 2005), which is a fable. It is a conversational story with two protagonists. Their reaction to events was written for ages 4 to 8, grades pre-kindergarten to the third grade. The sixth book, *Double Bones: The Adventures of Diplodocus* (Dahl, 2005), was used last. This book is a narrative-informational storybook with a simple story; characters do not converse in this story. This very simple story was written for ages 5 to 8, grades kindergarten to the third grade.

#### *Storybook Introduction*

During this period, the same book was read for four consecutive days, Tuesday through Friday. The storybook was not read on Mondays in an effort to awaken curiosity about the new story. On day one, the author and illustrator of the book were introduced, background knowledge was offered, and predictions about the topic of the story were enticed, all as part of the Day 1 lesson. Facts about the themes were included to provide for background knowledge that might be required in order for students to fully understand the new information that would be introduced during the week.

*STELLA Description and Instructional Strategies*

Story retelling with higher order thinking for English Literacy and Language Acquisition (STELLA) (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), is a structured story-reading and retelling component that has been used as part of the intervention for Project ELLA August of 2004 through May 2008. The STELLA component was designed to develop oral language to increase vocabulary; comprehension and critical thinking, all of which facilitate English language and literacy acquisition for ELLs (see Figure 1). In this study, scripted lessons were provided to all ELLA experimental teachers, while control teachers followed their typical instruction plans.

STELLA not only integrated skills but introduced them in a sequence, providing scaffolding for the second language learner. This structured story reading component used interactive read-aloud strategies in kindergarten and first grade. By second grade, students participated in choral reading, with the assistance of a teacher whenever necessary. An example of the second grade schedule for the story reading five day lesson is as follows:

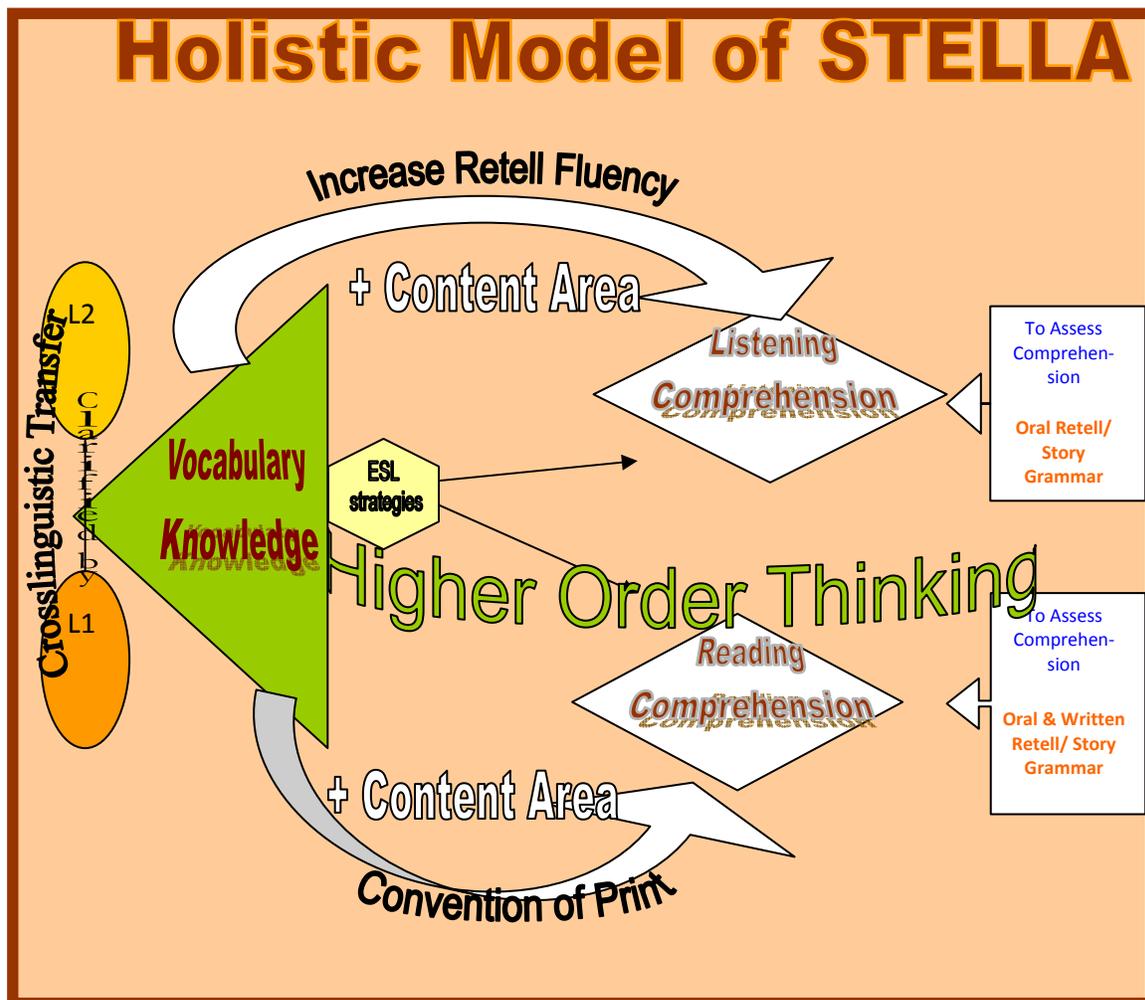


Figure 1. Holistic model of STELLA.

*Day 1.*

- Introduce vocabulary – 3 words at a time.
- Introduce book – Author with a short biography when available, illustrator, art media, information provided by the illustrator. Story book introduced but not read.
- Make connections to previous lessons and activate prior knowledge.
- Topic Web – Organize knowledge or schema and add new information learned during the lessons.
- Review vocabulary introduced.

*Day 2.*

- Review vocabulary.
- Introduce new words and main characters – 3 words.
- Read story a page at a time – Stop at every page to ask accompanying leveled questions, breaking down the text into bits of information to make connections between the text and illustrations.

*Day 3.*

- Review vocabulary.
- Introduce new words – 3 words.
- Story review – Review what was learned on the previous day.
- Story mapping – Story grammar.

- Closure – Review vocabulary from the words according to the wall cards the teacher placed on the STELLA Word Wall to assist students during writing activity time.
- Writing activity.

*Day 4.*

- Review vocabulary.
- Introduce new words – 3 words.
- Interactive group retelling – Words, phrases, paragraphs and whole pages.
- Story Circle – Using higher level questions, story events, sequence of the story and science integration when appropriate.
- Vocabulary mapping chart – Review vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, and write sentences using the word.
- Closure – Review words on the STELLA Word Wall.

*Day 5.*

- Reread story – No interruption.
- Science activity – Practice concepts learned.
- Writing activity.

*Vocabulary*

As indicated by the daily schedule, vocabulary instruction was a key element of STELLA lessons, using systematic direct and indirect vocabulary instruction with critical thinking to increase comprehension. Comprehension was targeted by providing the definition of a selected word, by the teacher modeling the word's usage, and by students

practicing the new vocabulary using the word both in and out of context. STELLA introduced three new words every week, per story, in kindergarten. This increased to nine words in the first grade and twelve words in the second grade. STELLA followed Beck and McKeown (2002) three Tiers vocabulary instruction criteria with some modifications. The three tier words are as follow: (a) Tier 1 consist of basic word such as house, door, pet, mother and so on, (b) Tier II words are high frequency words such as predicted, immersion, obstinate and so on and considered as the most productive of the three tiers, and (c) Tier III words are encountered less frequently and are mostly content related. For second language learners, Tier I words might not be part of their lexicon therefore should be part of the instruction. This explained why Calderon, August, Slavin, Duran, Madden and Cheung (2005) developed a set of word selection criteria modifying Beck and McKeown (2002) guide. Therefore, modifications such as use of cognates, depth of meaning, high utility, and nature of the word as described by Calderón et al. (2005) was implemented by STELLA.

For the reasons aforementioned, it was necessary to introduce Tier I words rather than Tier II words in kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year because they lacked English vocabulary in the target language. The new vocabulary was introduced on day one and revisited every day for the reminder of the week, allowing students to become comfortable with using the new words. These words were introduced using direct instruction, by introducing the word represented by a picture (for example, the word *boulder* with a picture of a boulder), and a friendly definition on the back of the card (such as “a boulder is a large rock”). Immediately after the introduction of the word, students were asked “Have you ever seen a boulder? What is it like?” Then students were expected to use

the new word to complete their ideas. For example, “A boulder is like....” This gave students an opportunity to practice the new word and to integrate the word in and out of context. Some words were encountered in other stories and revisited for reinforcement. In first and second grade, Tier II words and cognates were selected, as well as antonyms and synonyms, by using a vocabulary mapping organizer. Some Tier III words were introduced as science was integrated with the story. Vocabulary cards (see Figures 2 & 3) were made for the new vocabulary, and a word wall card was made for each word with the same picture and word used in the vocabulary card. These word wall cards were used to close the lesson by reviewing the definition of the words and by either the teacher providing a sentence using the new word, or the teacher asking students to provide a sentence using the word. In addition, these word wall cards served as scaffolding for spelling the words once students began to write in the second language. A list of STELLA vocabulary introduced in kindergarten (see Appendix D), first grade (see Appendix E), and second grade (see Appendix F) is included.

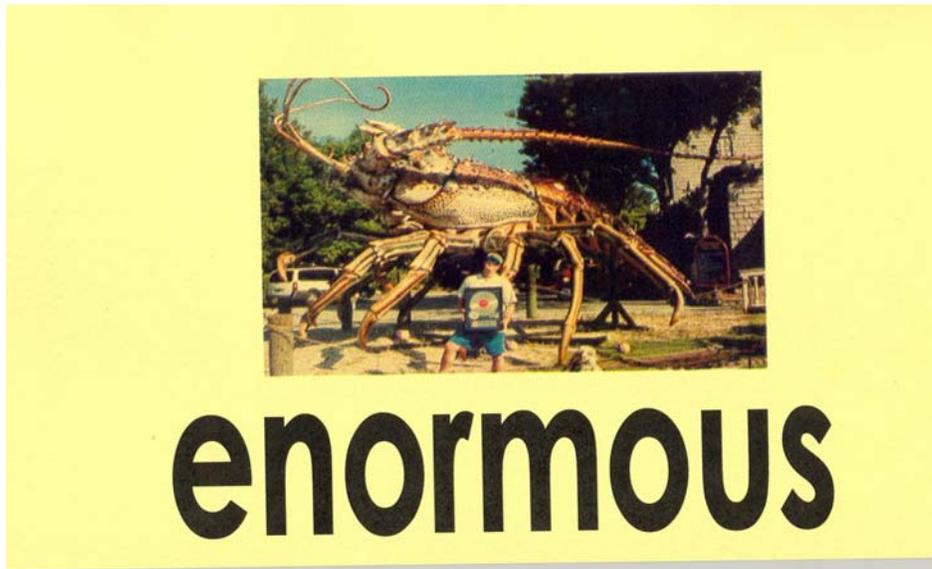


Figure 2. Front side of a STELLA vocabulary card.

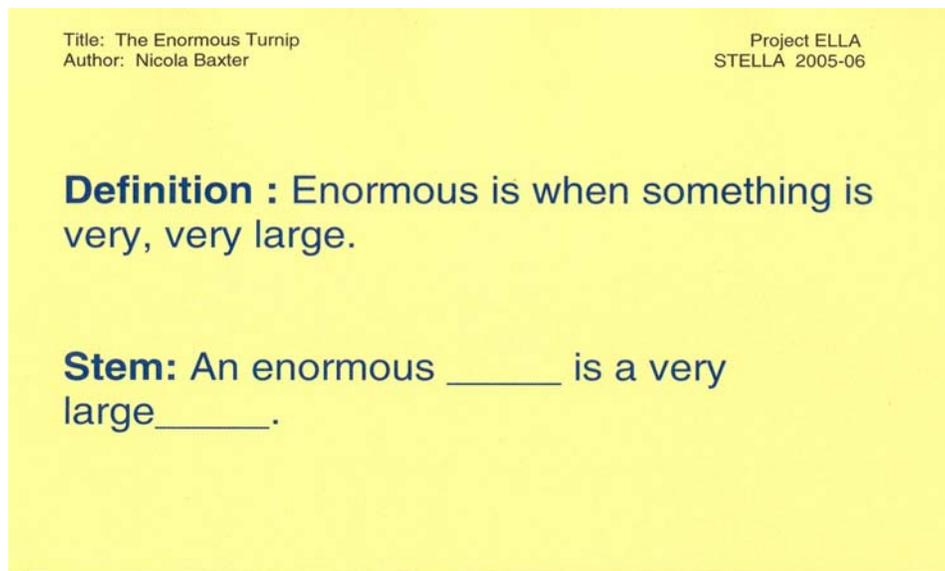


Figure 3. Back side of a STELLA vocabulary card.

### *Higher Order Listening Comprehension Questions*

As new vocabulary was learned, students were provided with strategies to answer higher level questions, and therefore to increase comprehension. Those questions were asked as the story was read for the first time on Day 2. Every page of the story ended with a series of questions. The information or prior knowledge activated on Day 1 facilitated their understanding of the story and second language use, and increased their comprehension in the target language. Questions such as, “Who do you think will help the little rabbit and how? Why do you think the little rabbit believes that the other side is the right place for him? What surprised you the most about the story? and What would you do if you were the little rabbit?” were all a part of Day 2 interactive dialog after each page was read.

### *ESL Strategies*

ESL strategies are instructional strategies that support and accommodate ELLs’ needs allowing these students to better understand the English language by reducing the level of anxiety and increasing knowledge of the target language. STELLA systematically organized and introduced ESL strategies to facilitate vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension (see Table 3 for STELLA ESL strategies). An instructional ESL strategy used to increase story comprehension that was used in addition to vocabulary instruction and higher level listening comprehension questions was the use of different graphic organizers. These organizers are tools that allow students to construct meaning, to make connections with prior knowledge (Herrell & Jordan, 2008). They were also used to guide students in the thinking process. A graphic organizer used for the story, *Catching Sunlight* (Blackaby, 2003) was: “This is what I know about leaves.” After the organizer was introduced, the students

had to provide information such as How leaves look, How leaves smell, How leaves feel, and How some leaves taste. For the story *The Cowboy Mouse* (Lara-Alecio & Irby, 2003), the organizer included words describing the main character of the story, the Cowboy Mouse, along with story grammar practice. The organizers were selected dependent upon the story and the objectives for the lesson, with the objective being that students could organize their knowledge and increase their comprehension. Lastly, story mapping (Beck & McKeown, 1981) was used on Day 4 for every story that was read. Setting was identified as when and where the story took place, the characters were identified by name, the problems and their resolutions were identified, and finally, how the story was resolved was also discussed.

Other ESL strategies used in STELLA to increase comprehension were repetition of story reading and vocabulary, cloze sentences, and retelling. Rereading the same story allowed for the development of oral language skills and active engagement with activities in a risk free environment. Students had multiple exposures to the information in the second language and structured connections to their background knowledge. Beginning in kindergarten, students were expected to provide a missing word from the story on Days 4 and 5 of the lesson. In first grade, five cloze sentences related to the story were used, and students were asked to select the correct word and explain the reason for that selection. Rhyming words were selected at first as scaffolding, in order to allow students to acquire necessary skills. In second grade, a word or two per page were covered from the story, which was presented via an ELMO, a camera connected to a television set that magnifies the pictures and text in the story books. As students became more successful at recalling the missing words, phrases were then covered instead of single words, moving eventually to

whole paragraphs, and progressing into every other page and finally the entire story. Teachers acted as facilitators scaffolding, when necessary, especially with the more challenging words.

STELLA provided instruction and modeling of the various story structure elements (setting, characters, plot, problem, and solution). In kindergarten, for example, in the Story Critique Time, students voted regarding whether they liked or disliked the story by feeding peanuts to an elephant named STELLA, depicted on a large poster. Soon students learned that stories could be subject to criticism. In kindergarten and first grade students were provided with a prompt or sequence of event cards to guide them through the story retelling process. By mid first grade picture cards were removed, and students transitioned from visual scaffolding to recalling and retelling information heard or read in English. As students moved to second grade, the same strategy was upgraded into oral and written story grammar where teachers used guided practice to identify the different elements of the story. Scaffolding and leveled questions were used by the teacher to stimulate critical thinking.

To assist further in comprehension, story grammar was practiced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> day of the lesson. In kindergarten, the author and illustrators of the books were introduced first, then the setting and the characters, and later the students progressed into incorporating one or more elements of the story at a time. By the mid first grade and throughout the second grade, students transitioned from oral responses to writing about the story grammar elements, including setting, characters, problem and solution. Each of these introduced one at a time over time systematically. Because this instruction was in English, written story grammar was not introduced until second grade, with the purpose that by that time students

had acquired enough writing skills and enough English vocabulary to express their thoughts and knowledge in the second language. Teachers provided kind and encouraging feedback to the students and scaffolded for them it necessary, as specified in the scripted lesson.

Because this story reading component created the opportunity for development in the English language, ESL strategies were embedded throughout the five day lessons. Table 3 shows the STELLA ESL strategies used in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. Some of the strategies remained in place for all three consecutive years such as interactive activities, preview/review, and academic scaffolding read aloud, but others were replaced according to the skill emphasized for that academic year.

As mentioned earlier, ESL strategies were used to facilitate second language development and to lower the affective filter that was achieved with the use of predictable routine strategies, established and provided on the five day STELLA lesson plan. The ESL strategies built upon what the students already knew by activating prior knowledge, providing meaning in full context, developing oral communication skills and supporting culture. Other ESL strategies commonly used in STELLA were the word wall, which was used at the end of the lesson on Day 1, and twice thereafter to review and reinforce learned vocabulary, the visual scaffolding used to make language more understandable, advanced organizers, bridging through the use of L2 clarified by L1 provided by the paraprofessional, connections with content area, modeled talk, and interactive read-aloud.

Table 3

*ESL Strategies for Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade*

Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade
Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud
Preview/Review	Preview/Review	Preview/Review
Total Physical Response	Total Physical Response	-----
Academic Scaffolding	Academic Scaffolding	Academic Scaffolding
Think Aloud	Think Aloud	Think Aloud
Leveled Questioning	Leveled Questioning	Leveled Questioning
-----	Word Wall	Word Wall
-----	Graphic Organizers	Graphic Organizers
Cloze	Cloze	Cloze
-----	Bridging	Bridging
L2 clarified by L1	L2 clarified by L1	L2 clarified by L1

*Note.* Strategies used for the first three years.

Teachers participating in my study, both the experimental and control groups, read the same six story books. However, only the experimental teachers followed the scripted lessons for the story of the week while the control group teachers continued with their typical instruction plans. For all six storybooks (see Table 4), the daily structured lessons were scripted for experimental teachers in an effort to control for confounding variables

during the ESL block such as teaching style, activities, vocabulary selection, and leveled questions, in additions to years of experience in story reading lesson delivery.

Table 4

*Storybook Selection for the Six-Week Period as Scheduled*

Week	Storybook	Author	Language	Pub Date
1	Great Fuzz Frenzy	Janet Stevens	English	9/1/2005
2	Song and Dance Man	Karen Ackerman	English	1/15/1992
3	Our Tree Named Steve	Alan Zweibel	English	3/17/2005
4	Jack's Garden	Henry Cole	English	3/19/1997
5	Water Beds: Sleeping in the Ocean	Gail Langer Karwoski	English	8/20/2005
6	Double Bones	Michael Dahl	English	2005

*Note.* Stories used for this study.

*Training for Intervention Teachers and Paraprofessionals*

In the overall Project ELLA, teachers in TBE-E received ongoing biweekly professional development, while paraprofessionals were trained once a month. A needs assessment on teachers' knowledge on ESL strategies was conducted at the beginning of each school year with the experimental teachers. The needs assessments showed that teachers lacked knowledge in certain ESL strategies. Therefore, these teachers were provided further training in ESL strategies.

Teacher training consisted of the main components of the project: (a) Santillana and Early Reading Intervention, Level II, for the total class, (b) STELLA, the story reading component, and (c) Communication Games and Early Reading Intervention, Level I. Along with these components, teachers were introduced to research-based strategies on: (a) oral language development and fluency, (b) vocabulary development, (c) second language acquisition theory and practice with ESL strategies using Herrell and Jordan's (2008) 50 most effective strategies, (d) leveled questions, (e) classroom management, and (f) professional portfolios.

For my six week study the TBE-E teachers received training three times. Paraprofessionals in TBE-E were trained in teaching STELLA every month under Project ELLA for the following grades: kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. For my study, the paraprofessionals were trained once. During Project ELLA trainings, paraprofessionals were instructed in all STELLA elements, ESL strategies, vocabulary instruction and review, higher level questions, story grammar, story circles and retelling. They were instructed on how to respond to higher level questions when students were not capable of answering the questions (when they reached too high into Bloom's taxonomy). Paraprofessionals, as well as teachers, were instructed in modeling the thinking process and responding to the question. If the teachers were absent from their classroom, paraprofessionals delivered the lesson for the day. Otherwise paraprofessionals organized STELLA lesson materials for the teachers, facilitating good pacing and coordination between the teacher and the paraprofessionals during lesson delivery. During intervention, paraprofessionals monitored students' behavior

and writing activities. They were responsible for collecting students' work and the delivery of that work to the Project ELLA, STELLA coordinator.

Teachers and paraprofessionals were trained in interpersonal relationships and communication, second language theory, classroom management, monitoring of behavior, how to provide corrective feedback, and the reflective process, using portfolios that were collected at the end of the year. Paraprofessionals were allowed to use Spanish in the classroom when needed, or when required by the script, for the first three academic years. English clarified by Spanish were used to preview/review the storybook, and to clarify and relate cognates in both languages, but all this information was scripted.

Teachers participating in Project ELLA were observed monthly. Field notes were taken to allow the coordinator to have information vital for training. All teachers were expected to present a lesson for every component of the study, for both practice and corrective feedback by coordinators. Both the retelling process and story grammar practice were included in the scripted lesson. These teachers received training for phonics in English. Teachers were in need of this training, given the fact that although bilingual teachers were certified for bilingual education, they still lacked the phonemic awareness necessary to teach the target language. Because they were not native English speakers, the deficit was addressed. This deficit was recognized by coordinators as the teachers were observed. Teachers acknowledged the need for such training and paraprofessionals acknowledged that STELLA and phonemic awareness training helped them in their vocabulary acquisition and second language pronunciation.

### *The Comparison Group – Typical Instruction*

*Transitional Bilingual Education –Typical (TBE-T)* is the comparison group in Project ELLA's research. It delivered 80% of its instructional time in the native language (Spanish) and 20% in the target language (English), which is known as the 80/20 model. In school district D, students are normally transitioned into a 50/50 model by the third grade. The typical group delivers English as a Second Language instruction (ESL) for 45 minutes, daily. Project ELLA did not intervene with the instruction of this group, except to collect data. TBE-T teachers were observed three times a year by the observation coordinator, whose major responsibility was to collect data using the Transitional Bilingual Observation Protocol (TBOP) (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994) (see Figure 1) and the Teacher Observation Report (TOR), in addition to field notes. This pedagogical model will be explained in the Classroom Observation section.

As mentioned earlier, I asked both the experimental and control groups to read the same story books, but only the experimental teachers followed the scripted lessons for the story of the week. The control group continued with their typical instruction plans and did not have access to STELLA strategies.

### Data Collection

Additional archival data retrieved were a pre and post end-of-story curriculum-based measurement for Stories week 1 and week 6. End-of-story assessment and the twenty words selected for my study were reviewed by experts. Therefore, face validity was established. The twenty words selected for my study were based on the vocabulary introduced during STELLA (the structured story reading component) time.

These pre and post researcher-designed vocabulary assessments for each consisted of 20 words defined using a multiple choice format. Those words were selected from the storybooks that both the control and experimental teachers read during the time of the study. According to the National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) vocabulary growth is best assessed through measures sensitive to instructional gains such as teacher made tests. The words for the post test were the same, but in order to avoid memory effect and testing threat to validity, the words appeared in different orders and the questions were inverted. For example, For the word *boulder*, the pre-test asked, *which word means the same thing as boulder?* For the post-test the questions was *A huge rock is a ...* (see Appendices B & C).

Other data retrieved for this study were the retellings collected from two stories read in two sessions, six weeks apart. Each retelling, one in English and one in Spanish, for each story and each participant, was recorded. The Naglieri non-verbal ability test, a test that correlates strongly with IQ scores, was used to covariate the dependent variables for the univariate analyses of covariance (ANCOVA). The procedure followed for retell collection was as follows: (a) testers were trained in the retelling procedures; (b) a short script was provided to the tester for that purpose; (c) students were assessed individually in the school setting, mostly in the school library or in any other room assigned by the administration or teacher; and (d) all students were prompted and informed of the procedure. All data collected were returned to the main ELLA office and returned data collection delivery was checked for every tester involved.

All retellings of stories (week one and week six) were audiotaped. They were transcribed verbatim by graduate students. Each audiotaped retelling was listened to three

times to make sure the transcriber captured all the words and expressions. The first two times, the transcriber listened to the tape and read the transcription. The third time I reviewed the tapes. The quality of the retellings in English and Spanish were assessed by measuring thought units (T-units), number of words, and number of sentences.

A rubric for the story grammar was developed following a modified version of Thorndyke (1977), with the omission and addition of some elements in order to adapt to ELLs. The major story elements described by Thorndyke as important for making the schemata for the story are setting, theme, plot and resolution. For my study, the elements used to score each retelling in English and Spanish were: (a) setting (where and when), (b) characters (the main and secondary characters), (c) character description, (d) plot (beginning, middle and end, with supporting events), (e) if the reteller remained true to the story (no imaginary events or characters), (f) the problem and (g) the solution, and (h) two additional multiple choice questions in English and Spanish.

First grade NNAT scores were collected during the Fall of 2005. The NNAT test is a 30-minute test. It was administered by a trained paraprofessional. During the Spring of 2007, retells for *The Great Fuzz Frenzy* (Story week 1) and *Double Bones: The Adventures of Diplodocus* (Story week 6), pre and post vocabulary, and story grammar from Story week 1 and week 6 were collected by trained paraprofessionals and myself.

### *Scoring*

Prior to scoring each retelling, the researcher had a conference with a Speech-Language Specialist (SLS). This SLS scored the first sample according to the guidelines used for scoring oral samples. The SLS met with a second SLS to establish inter-rater

reliability and to agree upon scoring procedures following Owens (1991) guidelines. After I was instructed on the guidelines by the SLS, I scored the same retell sample and compared all three for calibration.

The audiotaped samples were coded by graduate students. All incomplete words, irrelevant words that were still correct for the sentence structure (once upon a time), self correction, code-switching and repetitions for effect (run! run! said...) were included. To determine the boundaries of the sentence, the intonation and pauses were considered. The scoring for retelling was as follows: (a) each retell was segmented into minimal sentences known as thought units (T-units) by using slashes to determine T-unit limits in the passage; (b) sentence boundaries were determined by underlining the whole sentence with a color marker; (c) words not included were bracketed, meaning those words were not counted in the total amount of number of words; and (d) at the end of the retelling, T-units were numbered and the words per T-unit were posted next to the T-unit (for example, “Pip Squeak touched the fuzz” equates to 1 T-unit, 5 words). All T-units were added together, as well as the words per T-unit.

Code-switching is a normal process in second language acquisition. The ELL uses words from L1 when speaking in L2 or vice versa, but do not change the overall meaning of the communication in either language. Code-switching during retellings were accepted for T-unit analysis (Gutierrez-Clellen, Restrepo, Bedore, Peña & Anderson, 2000; Owens, 1991) and word count. For example, in the T-unit “Después todos no sabían que ya pos alguien le quitó la fuzz,” the child was not penalized for using the word “fuzz” instead of “pelusa.” Nor were they penalized for using common and acceptable words for their culture, like the word

“pos” when the correct spelling is “pues.” The number of words per T-unit was added together, for a total number of number of words. Any other words not included as part of the thought units were not part of the total number of words. For example, in the T-unit “um and they sleep,” the number of words was three.

For my study, the dependent variable of primary interest when measuring the length of the retelling used to compare Spanish and English oral language development was the total number of words. The T-units and the number of sentences were not analyzed simultaneously to compare both languages because conjoined sentences in the English language could yield more words per T-unit than the T-units in Spanish (Gutierrez-Clellen, Restrepo, Bedore, Peña, & Anderson, 2000). Conjoined sentences in English will appear to have a higher score in words per T-unit than in Spanish. Therefore, comparison between English and Spanish words per T-units will not provide accurate information.

Pre and post vocabulary tests consisted of 20 words. I scored each test using an answer key. End-of-story assessments were administered at the end-of-Story week 1 and Story week 6. These CBM included vocabulary and comprehension questions about the story of the week.

It should be noted that experimental bilingual teachers had been delivering structured story reading to the experimental bilingual students for three consecutive years prior to the time of data collection for this study, but retelling and story grammar instruction began in depth in the first grade. Retelling practice occurred through the use of interactive group retellings and story circle activities, where students were asked questions about the theme, the events and the characters of the story, and were engaged in interactive story grammar

activities where teachers filled out a story grammar poster with answers provided orally by the students. By mid-second grade, students transitioned into written retellings using a story map. Appendix G shows the STELLA elements as implemented by grade level.

### *Inter-Rater Reliability*

Inter-rater reliability was determined by T-unit length and words per T-unit. The percentage of agreements was calculated by a number of agreements in the T-unit boundaries, divided by the sum of the agreements plus the disagreements. Later, I met with two graduate student raters and trained them establishing an inter-rater mean agreement of 92 %. Table 5 shows the inter-reliability of the retell coded measures.

The story grammar consisted of four direct questions about the setting, characters, problem and solution. Three categories were scored by revisiting the retellings for information regarding plot (sequence of events), character description and the use of imaginary settings (extraneous information) and/or characters, or irrelevant information. The story grammar elements were scored by graduate students unaware of the research questions.

Table 5

### *Inter-rater Reliability for Retell Coded Measures*

Measure	Agreement	Disagreement	Percentage
T-units	23	2	92 %
Sentences	23	2	92 %
Words per T-unit	23	2	92 %
Mean length of T-units	23	2	92 %

*Note.* T-unit – Terminal or minimal sentence.

The percentage of agreement was calculated for each comprehension measure, and raters reached 91% mean agreement for story grammar scores on 25 samples. Table 6 demonstrates the inter-reliability of the story grammar measurements.

Table 6

*Inter-rater Reliability of Story Grammar Measurements*

Measure	Agreement	Disagreement	Percentage
Setting	24	1	96 %
Character	23	2	92 %
Character Description	23	2	92 %
Plot	20	5	80 %
Imaginary Setting/Characters	21	4	84 %
Problem	24	1	96 %
Solution	24	1	96 %

#### Fidelity of Treatment

Project ELLA's coordinators were trained in classroom observation in order to check for the validity of study's implementation. In my study, Project ELLA observation coordinator observed both TBE-E and TBE-T teachers one time to ensure correct implementation procedures. The observation coordinators used a Teacher Observation Protocol (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994) to monitor teachers' intervention implementation and readiness in the classroom (see Figure 4). Project ELLA's TBE-E teachers received

biweekly ongoing professional development, and paraprofessionals were trained monthly to make sure intervention was well understood and mastered. For the duration of my study, teachers received two trainings and paraprofessional one.

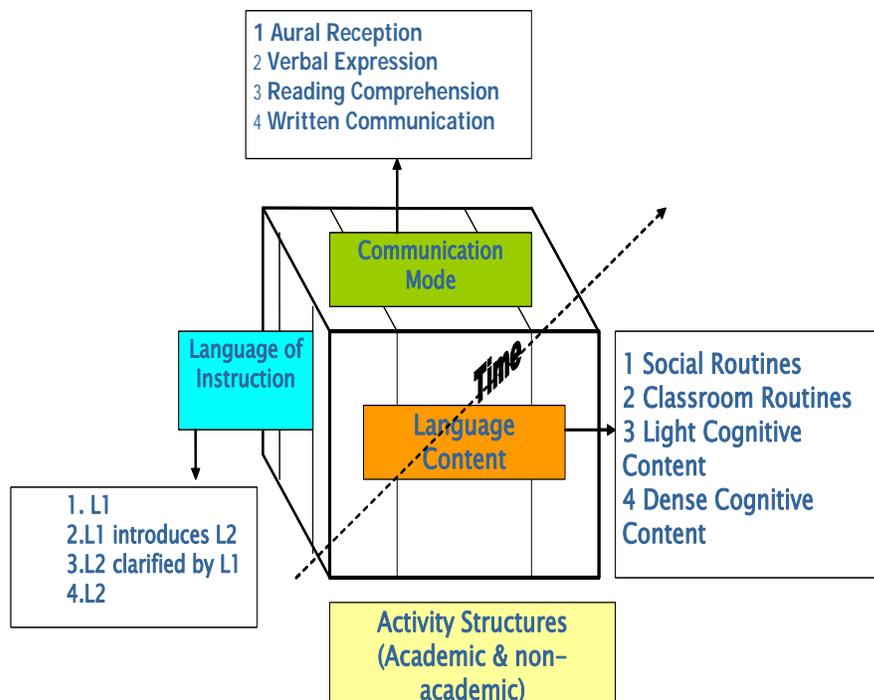


Figure 4. Transitional bilingual observation protocol (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994).

For Project ELLA, the experimental and control group teachers were observed, and measures of instructional practices were obtained through the use of Transitional Bilingual Observation Protocol (TBOP) Instruments (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). This pedagogical model was developed for English bilingual classrooms to assist the administration in teacher training and the monitoring of performance over time. Transitional Bilingual Observation Protocol (TBOP) Instruments have been validated and applied in transitional bilingual classrooms (Meyer, 2000; Breunig, 1998) as well as in dual language and structured

immersion classrooms. Four elements of classroom of instruction were incorporated in this model: (a) Communication Mode, (b) Language of Instruction, (c) Language Content, and (d) Activity Structures (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). For each observation period, sixty 20 second observations were entered, per teacher, by the observer. On site coordinators, including the observation coordinator, established a .90 inter-rater reliability prior to Project ELLA data collection.

As aforementioned, part of the five components included in Project ELLA's design, experimental teachers received ongoing professional development and biweekly practice on the scripted lessons for STELLA. The scripted lesson provided the first year teacher a scaffold and training in teaching English as a second language in the bilingual classroom, and the experienced teachers the awareness that despite all their years of experience, this was something new (that most wished they had known earlier on in their careers).

For the ELLA control teachers, known as TBE-T teachers, no training was provided, nor did they receive instruction on how to deliver story reading. All Project ELLA's control teachers were observed four times a year. In addition to the Observation and Transitional Bilingual Observation Protocol (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994), which consisted of sixty 20 second observations on instructional practices, the observation coordinator obtained field notes from control teachers. For my study, the observation coordinator took notes one time on classroom management, story reading behavior, language used in the classroom during took notes during the ESL block, and ESL teaching strategies used by the control teachers. These field notes reported that the majority of the control teachers did not expect students to answer in complete sentences. Of these five teachers, only one had high expectations and

expected students to answer in complete sentences. Most of the time, the questions asked during story reading were at the lower level of Bloom's taxonomy, that is, at the knowledge and comprehension level. Yes and No answers were accepted, but no further inquiry was expected. Students did not receive feedback when not using proper English grammar, nor did the teacher model how to answer with correct grammar. By the lesson presented during the ESL block, it was evident that lessons were not planned for the ESL time. Inconsistency was observed in the use of language and some teachers used codeswitching very frequently. One control teacher told her students to speak in English only, and later on she switched to Spanish, indicating a lack of knowledge regarding research-based teaching strategies.

During the period of my study, few ESL strategies were evident during story reading in the control classroom. It seemed that control teachers considered concurrent translation to be the main ESL strategy to facilitate second language acquisition. Only one of the five control teachers in the study used L2 clarified by L1 during instruction as an ESL strategy. All five control teachers used visual scaffolding and all five had good classroom management. Most of the lessons in control classrooms showed skills taught in isolation with no connection to prior knowledge.

None of the control teachers provided structured vocabulary instruction prior to story reading. Rather, they provided concurrent translation of the vocabulary or introduced the word with a definition using incidental vocabulary instruction, but did not provide practice on how to use the word in or out of context. Most lessons observed in the control classrooms addressed low cognitive levels.

## Data Analyses

Because in education an outcome variable has multiple causes and independent variables have multiple effects (Thompson, forthcoming), a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was considered as the model for my study for Research Questions 1, 2, 4 and 5. In addition to multiple variables, experimental and control groups were established due to their participation in Project ELLA in order to reduce the systemic bias that results from not assigning students randomly to two groups. There was more than one outcome variable for the length of retell in English and Spanish for Questions 1 and 2. Story grammar was collected in English and Spanish for question 4. Preliminary analyses were performed to determine if assumptions fit the observed data, but the assumptions for Box's M for Questions 1 and 2 were not met and, therefore, ANCOVA provided the best statistical test for the data. The covariate used for all five research questions was the first grade NNAT scores collected in the Fall of 2005.

To answer Research Question 1, *to what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English*, and Research Question 2, *to what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling* in my study, the length of the retelling was analyzed. This was done as follows: by calculating the T-units, counting the number of

words, and number of sentences. Means and standard deviations were reported for the experimental and control groups in both English and Spanish. However, univariate analyses of covariance were conducted to determine whether differences between experimental and control groups' retelling measurements were statistically significant.

The third Research Question, *to what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories*, was answered by computing the pre and post vocabulary assessment gains, and a univariate analysis of covariance was conducted with NNAT as a covariate. To answer the fourth Research Question, *to what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice, for story grammar on Story week 1 and Story week 6 in English and Spanish*, a univariate analysis of covariance was conducted. The fifth Research Question in this study, *to what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment*, was answered using ANCOVA as the statistical test. Curriculum-based measurement for the experimental group were already established due to their participation in Project ELLA, but this created a need for an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to reduce the systemic bias that results from not assigning students randomly to the two groups. An analysis of covariance attempts to adjust group

means on all variables within the sampling error. The control group in my study received the same curriculum-based measurement for Stories week 1 and week 6.

To answer all five research questions, the data collected for my study were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.1, a statistical software program.

### Summary

Chapter III described the methodology for this study. Data collection procedures and analyses appropriate for responding to the five research questions were also been explained. The next chapter will present the data analyses and findings.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, I presented the findings in relation to the five research questions of my study: (a) To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?, (b) To what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling?, (c) To what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?, (d) To what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice?, and (e) To what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?

For the purpose of my study, an analysis of covariance was selected in an effort to reduce error variance and to adjust for initial differences. The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test (NNAT) scores collected from first grade were used to covariate for this study. One reason for the selection of this covariate was that research demonstrated a strong correlation of NNAT scores with the Otis-Lennon IQ test (Naglieri, 1997). Furthermore, IQ scores have been used in other studies as covariates (Lepola, 2004; Stevens, 1996). Another reason for the selection of this covariate is that theoretically (Stevens, 1999) the non-verbal ability test (NNAT) has been considered a good predictor of academic achievement among diverse populations (Naglieri, Booth & Winsler, 2004). The first grade NNAT (covariate) scores were used to covariate for the length of retells and level of comprehension in both languages, English and Spanish. Due to the fact that a non-verbal ability test does not require verbal production, such a test can be utilized to assess second language learners (De Thorne & Schaefer, 2004).

The NNAT scores from the first grade were used as covariate for correcting for any initial differences that existed prior to the study on measures that were not pre-tested. A preliminary analysis was conducted to check the assumptions, including: (a) normality, (b) homogeneity of variance (Levene's test), and (c) homogeneity of regression, respectively, on the following dependent variables: T- units, number of words, and number of sentences for research questions one and two. Vocabulary was tested for questions three, story grammar in English and Spanish for research question four, and curriculum-based measurement in English for research question five. The results of these preliminary analyses were demonstrated in pages 90, 94, 98, 101 and 107. A Bonferroni correction was calculated at  $\alpha$

= .017 (.05/3) for Research Questions 1 and 2, and .025 (.05/2) for Research Questions 4 and 5.

### First Research Question

To answer the first research question: *to what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?*, the following variables for length of retell were measured quantitatively and separately: T-units (minimal sentences), number of words, and numbers of sentences (simple, compound or complex sentences). To reduce error variance and bias, three ANCOVAs were performed for this research question.

Preliminary analyses of data demonstrated a violation of the equal variance assumptions (Levene's test) for the T units, the number of sentences, and the group interaction between covariate and each variable aforementioned. Because ANCOVA is sensitive to outliers (Hamilton, 1977), data were explored to examine variability, central tendency (median) and data distributional shape for the T-units, number of words, and the number of sentences for Stories week 1 and week 6 in English. Three outliers were identified in the TBE-E group responsible for group interaction. Table 7 indicates preliminary measures of the assumptions for normality, Levene's test and homogeneity of regression for T units, number of words, and number of sentences in Stories week 1 and week 6 for Research Question 1 after the three outliers were removed. However, Box's M, p

< .05, assumption was still significant indicating that the homogeneity of covariance matrices has not been met.

The Levene's test assumption was met for each of the dependent variables, T-units, number of words, and number of sentences for the Story week 1 session. As data were run again without the three outliers found in the TBE-E group, no significant group interaction effects were found between the covariate and the factor for T-units, number of words, or number of sentences in Story week 1 in English. Therefore, the assumption for this test was met. A significant interaction would have indicated that the number of T-units, word per retell, and number of sentences in Story week 1 in English differed across the transitional bilingual education-enhanced group and the transitional bilingual education-typical group. Having found no statistical significance in all dependent variables, T units, number of words and number of sentences for Story week 1, all assumptions were met with the exception of Box's M assumption,  $p < .05$ .

Table 7

*Assumptions for Triadic Assessment in English for Stories Week 1 and Week 6*

Story		Skewness	Kurtosis	Levene's Test (p)	Group Interaction(p)	n
Wk 1	TU E	.388	-.341	.595	.169	72
	WPR E	.229	-1.063	.420	.481	72
	Sen E	.210	-.798	.802	.873	72
Wk 6	TU E	.302	.006	.570	.569	72
	WPR E	.474	-.133	.224	.571	72
	Sen E	.509	.376	.913	.213	72

*Note.* Wk = Week. TU = T units. E = English. Sen = Sentences. WPR = number of words

Three ANCOVAS were conducted with NNAT scores as covariate to measure the differences between the groups with the outliers removed, making it necessary to use a Bonferroni correction,  $.05/3$  ( $p = .01$ ), to examine the length of retell in English for Story week 1 under three conditions: T-units, number of words, and number of sentences. The results for the ANCOVA for the Triadic Assessment to measure length of retell in Story week 1 in English, which was used to measure oral language development, after removing the three outliers in the TBE-E group, revealed strong statistically significant differences

between the TBE-enhanced and the TBE-typical groups on the T-units,  $F(1, 66) = 35.737, p < .001, d = 1.41$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .35$ ), number of words,  $F(1, 66) = 46.572, p < .001, d = 1.62$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .41$ ) and the number of sentences,  $F(1, 66) = 31.828, p < .001, d = 1.37$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .33$ ) after controlling for non-verbal ability.

Preliminary analysis of data for Story week 6 demonstrated a violation of the Levene's test assumptions for the T units and number of sentences variables. Once outliers were removed, all assumptions were met for the aforementioned variables for Story week 6. To measure oral language development in English for the second grade ELLs students studied, three ANCOVAs with NNAT as the covariate were conducted in an effort to measure statistically significant differences between groups. Descriptive statistics for length of retell in English for Stories week 1 and week 6 are presented in Table 8. Figure 5 depicts a bar graph of the mean scores for the T-units, the number of words, and the number of sentences for Stories week 1 and week 6 in English, respectively.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Triadic Assessment in English for Stories Week 1 and Week 6*

	Grp	Story week 1				Story week 6				N
		Mean	SD	Mn	Mx	Mean	SD	Mn	Mx	
TU E	TBE-E	22.57	9.81	7	49	19.40	5.92	9	37	35
	TBE-T	9.44	8.81	0	29	9.18	6.23	0	25	33
WPR E	TBE-E	168.77	69.21	44	286	154.65	50.69	58	275	35
	TBE-T	62.88	61.07	0	219	62.91	38.59	0	154	33
Sen E	TBE-E	17.71	7.09	7	33	13.20	4.86	6	27	35
	TBE-T	7.79	7.43	0	2	7.39	4.94	0	21	33
Total										68

*Note.* N= 72. TU = T-units. WPR = number of words. Sen = Sentences. E = English. Mx = Maximum. Mn = Minimum.

The Levene's test assumptions were rejected and no significant group interaction was found for each dependent variable T units, number of words, and number of sentences for Story week 6 in English. To measure oral language development in English for the second grade ELLs, three ANCOVAs for Story week 6 in English with NNAT as the covariate were conducted. These analyses measured statistically significant differences between the groups, and therefore, it was necessary to use a Bonferroni correction ( $p = .05/3 = .01$ ) to examine the length of retell in English for Story week 6 under three conditions: T-units, number of words, and number of sentences. The ANCOVA for Story week 6 in English showed a statistically significant difference between the means of the TBE-

enhanced and the TBE-typical groups, as determined by T-units,  $F = 47.293, p < .001, d = 1.68$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .42$ ), number of words,  $F = 69.346, p < .001, d = 2.03$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .51$ ), and number of sentences ( $F = 23.18, p < .001, d = 1.19$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .26$ )).

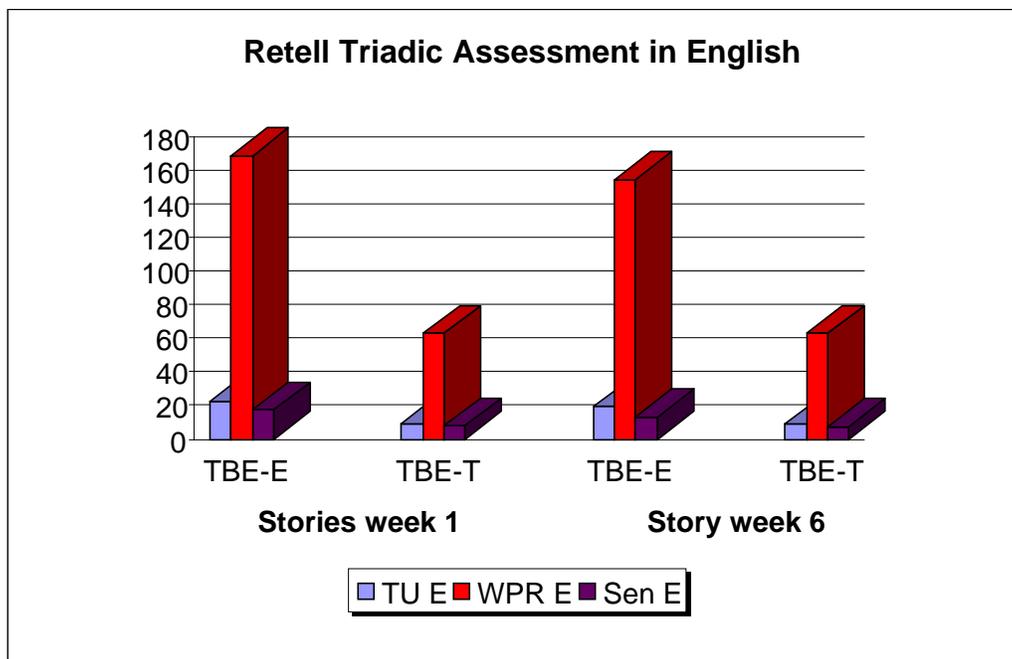


Figure 5. Bar graph for triadic assessment for story week 1 and week 6 in English.

Comparing the Triadic Assessment from both groups in Stories week 1 and week 6 in English, the TBE-E group produced more T-units (minimal sentences) in English in both stories than the TBE-T group. The TBE-E group produced a similar amount of number of words in both stories and outperformed the TBE-T in both measures. For the number of sentences per retell, although statistically significant, the mean difference between the groups and within group was less. The analyses conducted on retelling data to compare oral

language development showed statistically significant differences in T-units, number of words, and number of sentences in English in both stories, between TBE-E and the TBE-T groups. Therefore, ANCOVA results showed it is more likely that differences could be attributed to structured story reading instruction.

### Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, *to what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling*, preliminary analyses to assess assumptions necessary to adjust for initial differences between groups were conducted. To answer this question, the following variables for the length of retell were measured using T-units (minimal sentences), number of words, and number of sentences (simple, compound or complex sentences). Three ANCOVAs were conducted. NNAT, a non verbal ability test which highly correlates with IQ, was used as the covariate to adjust for initial differences. Table 9 demonstrates descriptive statistics for the assumption regarding length of retell, Triadic Assessment, in Spanish for Stories week 1 and week 6 with the outliers removed.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics for the Assumptions for Triadic Assessment in Spanish*

		Skewness	Kurtosis	Levene's Test (p)	Group Interaction (p)	n
Story week 1	TU S	.98	.89	.016	.725	72
	WPR S	1.37	3.64	.937	.897	72
	Sen S	1.22	1.36	.064	.681	72
Story week 6	TU S	1.47	3.47	.067	.802	72
	WPR S	1.04	1.38	.045	.340	72
	Sen S	1.02	.96	.002	.285	72

*Note.* TU = T – units. S = Spanish. Sen = Sentences. WPR = number of words

Descriptive statistics listed in Table 9 demonstrate that retell data for Story week 1 in Spanish were normally distributed. This was followed by a Levene's test to examine equal variance assumptions necessary to perform the univariate analysis. All variables met the Levene's test assumption with the exception of T units for Story week 1 and number of sentences for Story week 6. To analyze data using ANCOVA, it was also necessary to verify the slope of the homogeneity assumption for each of the three dependent variables. The T-unit, number of words, and the number of sentences that measure oral language development in Spanish were analyzed and no interaction was found between the independent variable and the covariate.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics for Triadic Assessment in Spanish for Stories Week 1 and Week 6*

		Story week 1				Story week 6			
	Grp	Mean	SD	Mn	Mx	Mean	SD	Mn	Mx
TU S	TBE-E	19.06	8.97	8	48	19.742	8.416	8	49
	TBE-T	17.06	12.21	1	47	9.029	4.570	2	23
WPR S	TBE-E	160.03	83.631	54	472	165.657	62.417	80	352
	TBE-T	97.68	70.149	3	246	68.529	38.140	20	177
SEN S	TBE-E	13.09	7.060	6	36	13.200	4.861	6	27
	TBE-T	12.03	8.908	1	35	5.529	2.402	2	14

*Note.* N= 72. TU = T-units. WPR = Number of words. SEN = Sentences. S = Spanish.

Table 10 depicts descriptive statistics for Triadic Assessment in Spanish for Stories Week 1 and 6. Three ANCOVAs were conducted with NNAT scores as covariates to measure the differences between the groups. Therefore it was necessary to use a Bonferroni correction ( $p = .05/3 = .01$ ) to examine the ANCOVA on the Triadic Assessment to measure length of retell in Story week 1 under three conditions: T-units, number of words, and number of sentences. The results for the ANCOVA on the Triadic Assessment to measure length of retell in Story week 1 in Spanish, which was used to measure oral language, revealed statistically non-significant differences between the TBE - enhanced and the TBE-typical groups on T-units, and the number of sentences in the outcome variables for Story week 1 in Spanish,  $F(1,66) = .742, p = .392$  and  $F(1,66) = .386, p = .536$ , respectively.

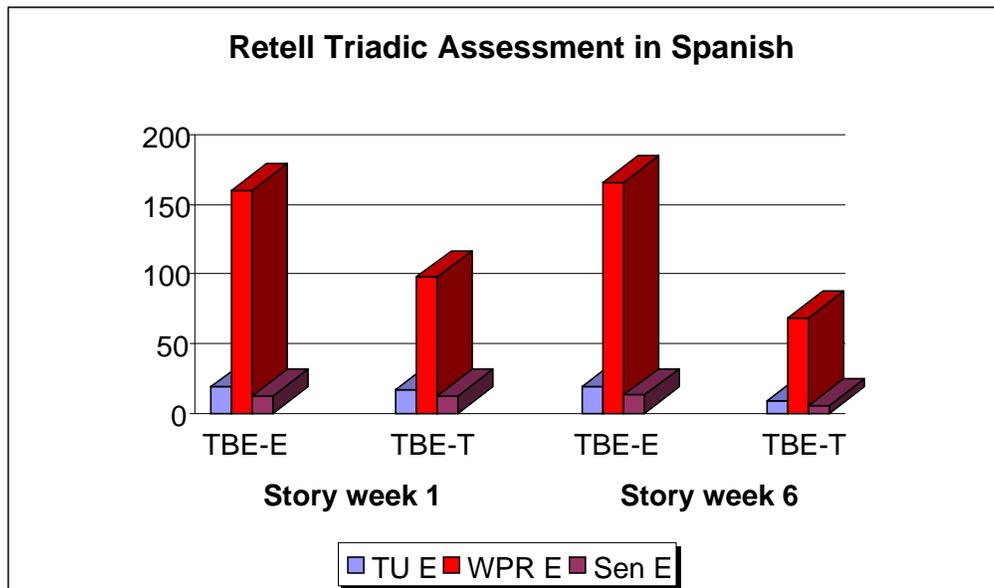
However, unlike the T-units and the number of sentences, the amount of words produced per retell in Story week 1 in Spanish did show statistically significant results ( $F(1,66) = 11.595$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .81$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .15$ ), considered as a large effect size after controlling for the non-verbal ability intelligence test.

To examine for any significant differences for Story week 6 in Spanish, a Levene's test was conducted. The equal variance assumption was met for T-units and number of words, but was violated for a number of the sentences. The other assumption needed to verify that the data met the requirement for analysis of covariance was the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slopes. There was no interaction between the groups and the covariate for T-units, number of words, and number of sentences. Therefore, the assumption of the homogeneity of the regression slopes for the three dependent variables was met. Additionally, the preliminary analysis showed that there was no group interaction; the ANCOVA was conducted in spite of the rejection of the equal variance assumption for the number of sentences for Story week 6. Because ANCOVA is a robust test when similar sample sizes are similar across groups, the violation of Levene's test found in a number of sentences in Story week 6 did not damage the validity of the statistics (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2007).

After controlling for the non-verbal ability intelligence test (NNAT), the test between subjects showed to be statistically significant for all three measures for the length of retell in Spanish for Story week 6, T-units  $F(1,66) = 42.357$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.58$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .39$ ), number of words  $F(1,66) = 59.627$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.89$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .48$ ), and number of sentences  $F(1,66) = 66.537$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 2.00$  ( $partial \eta^2 = .50$ ). The magnitude of the

effect of the independent variable measured by Cohen's  $d$  demonstrated to be noteworthy.

(see Figure 6)



*Figure 6.* Bar graph for triadic assessment for story week 1 and week 6 in Spanish.

Although the enhanced group showed statistically significant differences in both Stories week 1 and week 6 for both the TBE-E and TBE-T comparison groups, they also produced more T-units in Story week 1 than in Story week 6, which could be attributed to the type of story (a fable and conversational story with more characters and events). In the Spanish task, the mean difference between the TBE-E and TBE-T groups was less evident in Story week 1 than in Story week 6; however, the TBE-E outperformed the TBE-T in both languages.

### Third Research Question

To answer the third research question, *to what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories*, vocabulary pretest and posttest data were collected and transformed. Gains were calculated to be analyzed using an analysis of covariance. Table 11 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for the assumptions of vocabulary gains. The gains from pretest and post test variables showed values of skewness statistics less than 2, and values for kurtosis statistics less than 7, indicating that vocabulary gains and variable scores were normally distributed. Levene's test and homogeneity of regression assumptions were not significant.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for the Assumptions for Vocabulary Gains in English*

	Skewness	Kurtosis	Levenes' Test (p)	Group Interaction (p)	n
Pre Vocabulary	-.140	-1.404	.761	.654	72
Post Vocabulary	.100	.077	.236	.022	72
Gains	.100	-.140	.441	.204	72

*Note.* P = p value. Pre = Pretest. Post = Posttest.

Descriptive statistics on data collected for vocabulary gains with the outliers removed demonstrated that the TBE-E had greater gains (6.74 points) when compared to the

TBE-T (0.50 points) (see Table 12). The independent variable used for this analysis was the treatment (group) with two levels, the TBE-E and the TBE-T. An ANCOVA for vocabulary gains was conducted using NNAT as a covariate to determine whether statistically differences in vocabulary existed between the TBE-E and the TBE-T. The analysis of covariance yielded a statistically significant effect,  $F(1,65) = 51.58, p < .001, d = 1.77$  (*partial*  $\eta^2 = .44$ ). The magnitude of the difference observed in the vocabulary test which consisted of 20 multiple choice questions seems to be large. A bar graph (see Figure 7) demonstrates the differences of the raw scores between the pre and post vocabulary tests in English, showing larger gains for the TBE-E than for the TBE-T.

Table 12

*Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary Gains*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocabulary gains	1.0	34	6.735	3.832
	2.0	34	.500	3.212

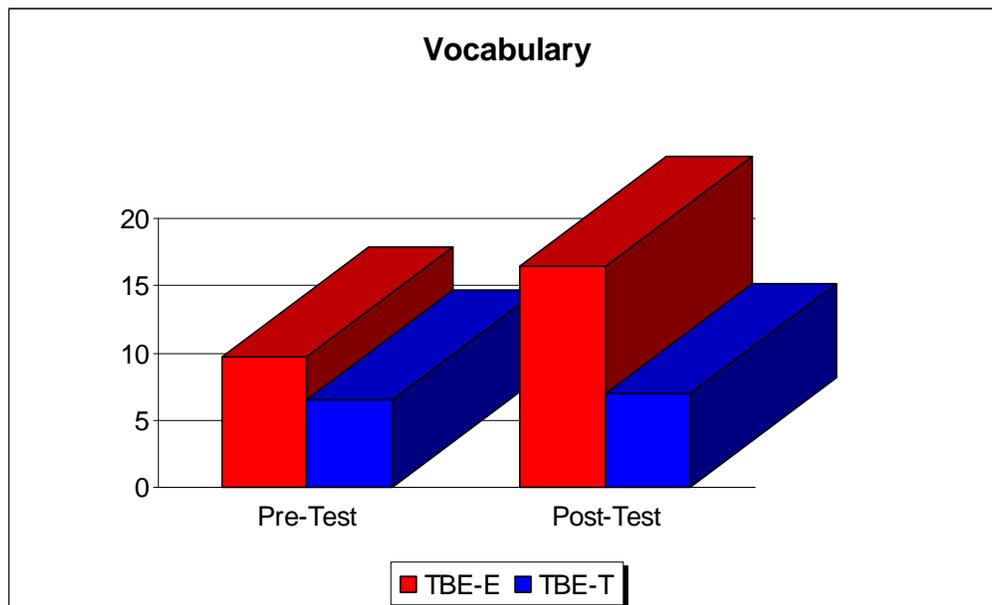


Figure 7. Bar graph for pre and post vocabulary tests.

#### Fourth Research Question

To answer the fourth research question, *to what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice*, story comprehension in Stories week 1 and week 6 in English and Spanish was measured through story grammar performance using a rubric to calculate holistic scores regarding the recall of story elements.

To determine significant differences between the TBE-E and the TBE-T in the use of structured story reading with story grammar, an ANCOVA was conducted with a NNAT from the first grade as a covariate to adjust the outcome variable for the initial differences. Preliminary analyses were performed to examine if the data met assumptions for the ANCOVA on story grammar scores collected in English and Spanish for both Stories week

1 and week 6. Data were examined for normality, Levene's test, and interaction between the groups and the covariate. Preliminary analyses were conducted and the results indicated that the data were normally distributed with skewness less than 2 and a kurtosis less than 7. Levene's test and interaction among the factors showed no statistically significant differences, and therefore it can be concluded that the assumptions were met. Table 13 presents the descriptive statistic for the assumption results for English and Spanish story grammar in both stories.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics for the Assumptions for Story Grammar*

		Skewness	Kurtosis	Levene's Test(p)	Group *(p) Interaction	n
English	S1 StoGr	-.155	-.836	.368	.372	72
	S6 StoGr	-.420	-.337	.097	.454	72
Spanish	S1 StoGr	-.046	-.367	.904	.395	72
	S6 StoGr	-.567	-.541	.004	.913	72

*Note.* S1 = Story week 1. S2 = Story week 6. StoGr = Story Grammar. Group\*= Group Interaction.

The ANCOVA conducted on the story grammar to establish if there was a difference between the TBE-E and the TBE-T groups, after score adjustment and with regards to comprehension and vocabulary knowledge on both Stories week 1 and week 6 in English, demonstrated statistically significant differences. The small standard deviation for both

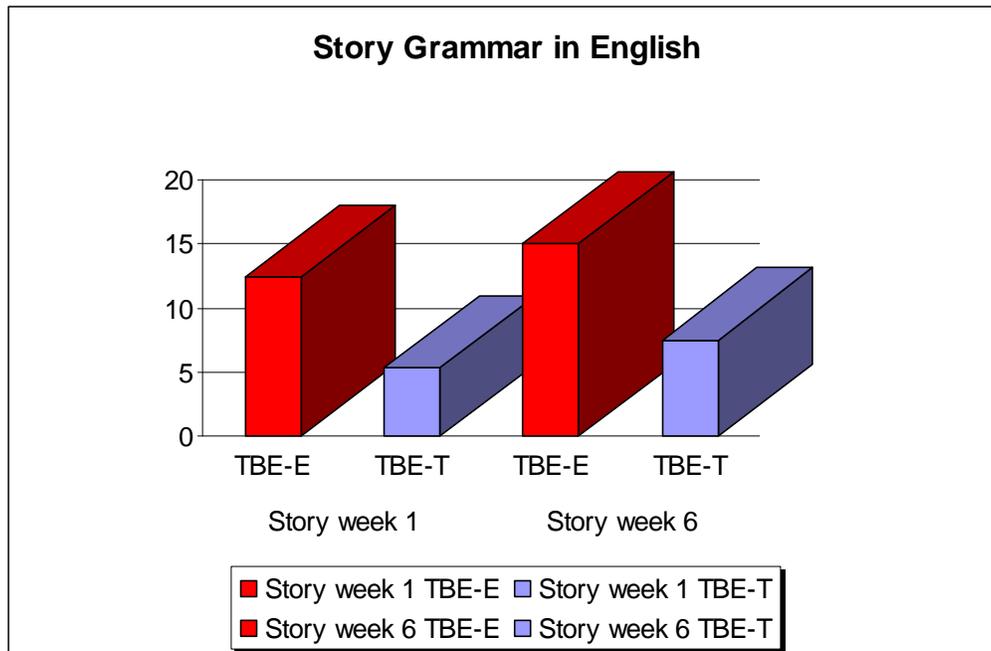
Stories week 1 and week 6 in English indicated that many scores were close to the mean in both groups (see Table 14). Statistical results for the story grammar of Story week 1 showed that the TBE-E and the TBE-T differed after an adjustment with the covariate. The between-subjects effects test demonstrated that the TBE-E group outperformed the TBE-T group in Story week 1,  $F(1,66) = 72.556, p < .001, d = 2.02$  (*partial*  $\eta^2 = .52$ ) (see Figure 8).

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics for Story Grammar in English for Stories Week 1 and Week 6*

	Group	n	Mean	SD
Story week 1	TBE-E	35	12.414	3.225
	TBE-T	34	5.308	3.772
Story week 6	TBE-E	35	15.014	3.2655
	TBE-T	34	7.515	4.031

Story grammar performance in English for Story week 6, an informative story narrated by the author with fewer characters and little plot, showed that the TBE-E group once again outperformed the TBE-T group in story grammar as a measure of listening comprehension. The TBE-T group demonstrated lower scores in comprehension on this measure. Scores were higher in the TBE-E group and a large degree of association existed between the structured story reading and the dependent variable, story grammar,  $F(1, 66) = 92.029, p < .001, d = 2.04$  (*partial*  $\eta^2 = .58$ ) (see Figure 8).



*Figure 8.* Bar graph for story grammar in English for week 1 and week 6.

Preliminary analyses performed to examine assumptions for story grammar in Spanish for Stories week 1 and week 6 demonstrated that the data were normally distributed and that there were no statistically significant differences in Levene's test and homogeneity of regression for Story week 1, but statistical significance was found on an assumption of the Levene's test for Story week 6. However, because the sample size was almost the same as for this study, ANCOVA, which is a robust analysis, was conducted.

Descriptive statistics appear to indicate statistically significant differences between the implementation of the intervention and typical instruction groups (see Table 15). Standard deviation statistics for story grammar in Spanish showed that scores were almost equally clustered to the mean. Story grammar for Story week 1 in Spanish demonstrated to be statistically significant, with the TBE-E outperforming the TBE-T group. The ANCOVA

with a Bonferroni correction ( $.05/2 = .025$ ) showed statistically significant differences for Story week 1,  $F(1,66) = 66.988$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.84$  (partial  $\eta^2 = .50$ ) and for Story week 6,  $F(1,66) = 57.327$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.78$  (partial  $\eta^2 = .47$ ). The results of the ANCOVA on story grammar indicate a considerable difference between the TBE-E and the TBE-T groups (see Figure 9). The TBE-E group showed greater gains in story grammar in English in both stories than TBE-T group.

Table 15

*Descriptive Statistics for Story Grammar in Spanish for Story Week 1 and Story Week 6*

	Group	n	Mean	SD
Story week 1	TBE-E	35	13.285	3.097
	TBE-T	34	7.544	3.154
Story week 6	TBE-E	35	15.714	2.553
	TBE-T	34	9.676	4.052

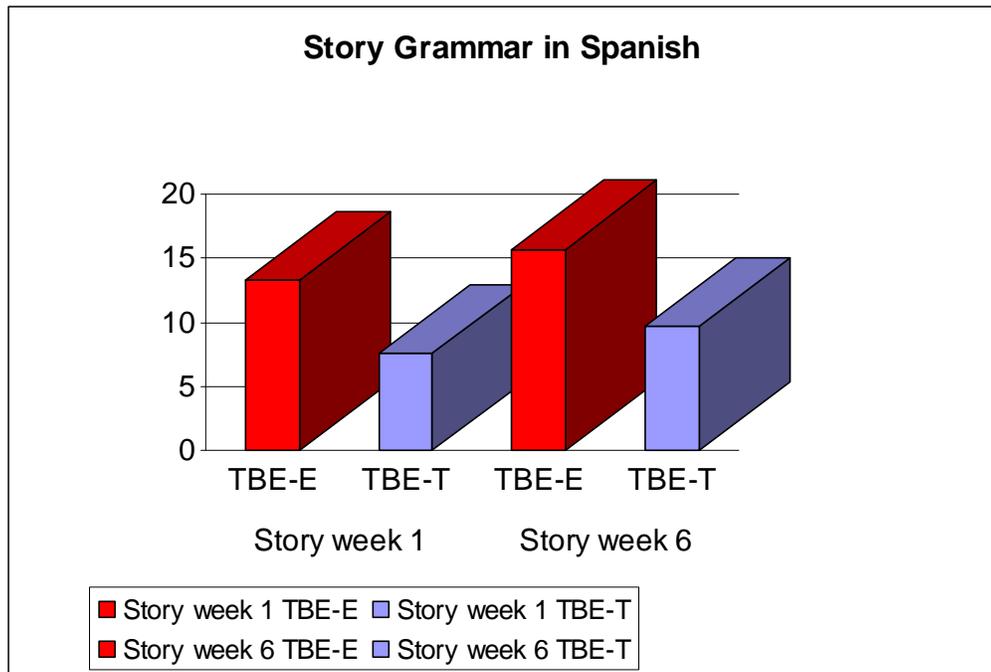


Figure 9. Bar graph for story grammar in Spanish for week 1 and week 6.

#### Fifth Research Question

To answer the fifth research question, *to what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension assessment*, curriculum-based measurements were conducted for the stories *The Great Fuzz Frenzy* and *Double Bones: The Adventure of Diplodocus*, and administered to the students participating in this study for both the intervention and the comparison groups. Unlike the vocabulary tests which contained selected words from the six stories read during the six-week period, the end-of-story CBM measured the students' comprehension of Stories week 1 and week 6, combining story vocabulary with leveled

questions. That is, the measurements were aligned to the stories used in Project ELLA's intervention during the duration of this study.

Curriculum-based measurement (end-of-story) data were analyzed with an ANCOVA controlling as a non-verbal ability test to examine whether or not the assumptions were met, as indicated in Table 16. Data were found to be normally distributed for both tests. However, a Levene's test for homogeneity of variance assumption was met for Story week 1, but was violated for Story week 6. The homogeneity of regression was violated in Story week 1 and assumed for Story week 6. Data were explored and found to be negatively skewed for the TBE-E group. That is, most cases were below the median. But since this research had a similar sample size and ANCOVA is such a robust test with regards to this type of violation (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2007) when sample sizes are equal, two ANCOVA were conducted with NNAT scores used as covariates, along with a Bonferroni correction of  $.05/2$  ( $p=.025$ ) to measure the differences between the groups. This was considered when interpreting these results. An ANCOVA was used to determine whether structured stories with explicit and direct vocabulary instruction and leveled questions were different between the two groups, the TBE-E and the TBE-T. Descriptive statistics demonstrated the differences between the mean of the TBE-E and the TBE-T groups (see Figure 10), with scores closer to the mean for Stories week 1 and week 6 for the TBE-E (see Table 17).

Table 16

*Descriptive Statistics for the Assumptions for End-of- Story CBM in English*

		Skewness	Kurtosis	Levene's Test (p)	Group Interaction (p)	n
Story week 1	CBME	-.459	-.589	.524	.006	72
Story week 6	CBME	-.870	-.552	<.001	.301	72

*Note.* CBME = Curriculum-based measurement in English.

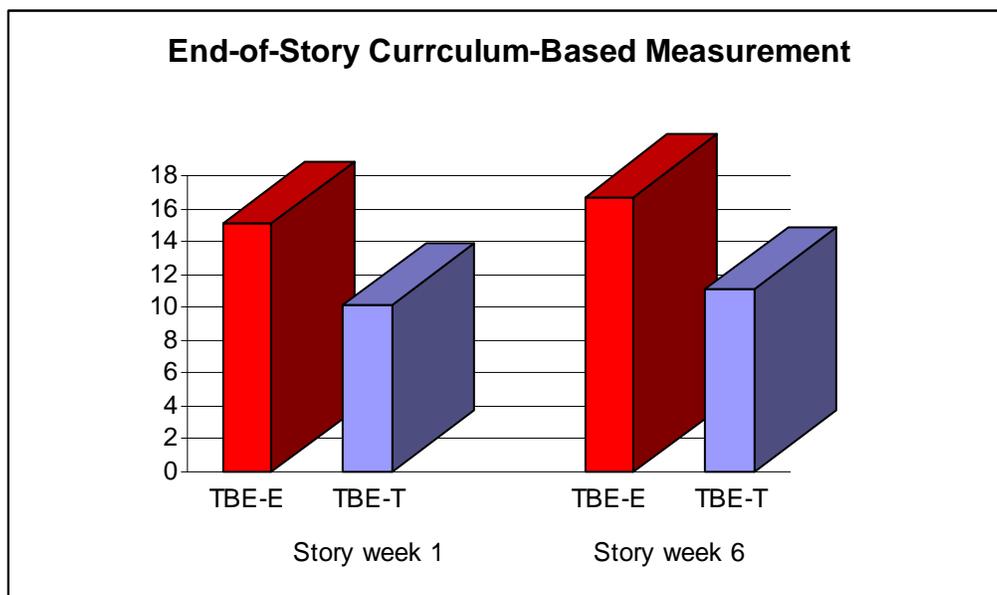
The results for the ANCOVA for the curriculum-based measurements, end-of-story for week 1 and week 6 in English revealed strong, statistically significant differences between the TBE-enhanced and the TBE-typical groups,  $F(1, 66) = 32.660, p < .001, d = 1.32$  (*partial*  $\eta^2 = .33$ ) and  $F(1, 66) = 29.685, p < .001, d = 1.27$  (*partial*  $\eta^2 = .31$ ), respectively.

Table 17

*Descriptive Statistics for the End-of-Story CBM in English*

	Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation
CMBStory1E	TBE-E	35	15.085	3.48
	TBE-T	34	10.177	3.95
CMBStory6E	TBE-E	38	16.742	2.99
	TBE-T	34	11.088	5.34

*Note.* CMB = Curriculum-Based Measurement. E = English. TBE-E = Transitional Bilingual Education-Enhanced. TBE-T = Transitional Bilingual Education –Typical.



*Figure 10.* Bar graph for end-of-story CBM for stories, week 1 and week 6.

## Summary

The current study investigated five research questions: (a) to what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English, (b) to what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling, (c) to what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?, (d) to what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice, and (e) to what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?

A summary of the findings for each of the questions is as follows:

*To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual*

*program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?*

- a. There appear to be strong, statistically significant differences in length of retell between the intervention group and the typical instruction group for week 1 and week 6, as demonstrated by the amount of T-units, number of words, and number of sentences, with a moderate to large effect size for the T-units, the number of sentences, and number of words.
- b. There was a wider range of T-units, number of words, and number of sentences in Story week 1 over Story week 6, for both groups.
- c. It is possible that genre influenced the oral production as a measure by length of retell.

*To what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling?*

- a. Full factorials showed no statistical differences in T-units and number of sentences for Story week 1 in Spanish, but statistically significant differences on number of words. Although T-units and number of sentences appear to show no differences, the results did differ in length of T-units.
- b. Statistically significance differences were found for all dependent variables for Story week 6: (a) T-units, (b) number of words, and (c) number of sentences between the treatment group and the group engaged in typical instruction.

*To what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?*

- a. The ANCOVA of vocabulary gains measures using NNAT as a covariate showed statistically significant differences. The TBE-E group receiving explicit vocabulary instruction outperformed the TBE-T group on vocabulary knowledge. The control group after receiving typical instruction showed a slight improvement on vocabulary knowledge according to the gains obtained, .44 points.

*To what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice?*

- a. Listening comprehension was measured by identifying story elements on retell and relevant questions. Students had to demonstrate knowledge of the story elements. The TBE-E outperformed the TBE-T in both Story week 1 and Story week 6. Statistically differences were found.
- b. The univariate analysis of covariance showed statistically significant differences for both Story week 1 and Story week 6. Findings for comprehension as measured by story grammar in Spanish for Stories week 1 and week 6 indicated statistically significant differences, with the TBE-E outperforming the TBE-T.

*To what extent do comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English*

*differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?*

- a. The ANCOVA examined the differences between the intervention and control groups and found statistically significant differences in both the curriculum-based measurements (assessment administered at the end of each story) for Story week 1 and Story week 6 in English. The TBE-E group showed a better comprehension of the story, as measured by leveled questions and vocabulary knowledge, than the TBE-T group.
- b. More variability was observed on CBM for the TBE-T group for Story week 1 than for the TBE-E group.
- c. Caution on interpreting these results is recommended because group interaction was present in Story week 1 but not in Story week 6.

In the following chapter, I will present a discussion of the findings, limitations of this study, practical applications, conclusion and recommendation.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION

Although story reading and story retelling has been research extensively, few researchers have investigated oral language development and comprehension on a measure of retell and story grammar utilization with bilingual students participating in transitional bilingual education program. Additionally, fewer studies have been conducted with ELLs in a longitudinal study. According to previous research, oral language proficiency, reading comprehension and writing skills (Geva, 2006) are related and necessary for the development of literacy, however, oral language proficiency has been neglected in the classroom (Zhang & Alez, 1995).

Because of the significant growth of the Hispanic population in the United States, and the lack of studies addressing the academic needs of ELLs, I examined oral language development, vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension in ELLs participating in a longitudinal study, Project ELLA, in an effort to contribute to the existing knowledge base in the field of literacy acquisition in Bilingual Education. These students received structured story reading instruction consisting of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction, critical thinking, ESL strategies, content integration, story grammar and retell, all to increase listening comprehension and oral language development. The purpose of the present study with a sample size of 72 Hispanic bilingual students participating in a five-year longitudinal study, was to investigate (a) the extent to which second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story

reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English; (b) the extent to which students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling; (c) the what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?; (d) the extent to which a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice; and (e) the extent to which comprehension and vocabulary outcome of second grade ELLs in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension curriculum-based assessment?

### Discussion

The data collected for my study over a six-week period during Spring of 2007 took place in a school district in Houston. The small sample was drawn randomly from a larger sample ELLs participating in a five year longitudinal study for English language and literacy acquisition. These students, enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and participating in Project ELLA, were randomly selected from two of the four cells in the longitudinal study. The TBE- enhanced group received STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros,

Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), while the contrast group, TBE- typical, continued with typical story reading instruction but read the same story books as the TBE-E group during the course of the six weeks of the study. The later group received neither instruction nor training on how to read the story.

Multiple skill measures to address oral language development and comprehension were used in my study. I was interested in comparing oral language development and comprehension through Triadic Assessment (T-units, number of words, and number of sentences), vocabulary, and comprehension of transitional bilingual education students receiving structured story reading instruction in a longitudinal study to transitional bilingual education students receiving typical story reading. In addition, Project ELLA provided ongoing professional development and scripted lessons for the duration of the intervention. Furthermore, findings from the larger sample (Project ELLA's original sample) from which the sample for my study was randomly drawn was used to co-validate the results from the present study.

Explanations of each research question directing this research is provided below.

#### *Research Question 1*

*To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after two years of oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading in English differ in oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of retelling and ability to retell from the text-acquired information in English?*

In the present study, the results of English oral language development after controlling for non-verbal ability and measured by length of retell indicated that structured story reading with direct and explicit vocabulary instruction (Nagy, 2005), critical thinking, and repeated reading (Morrow, 1988; Van Kleeck, Stahl & Bauer, 2003) led to differences in oral language development between the enhanced instruction and the typical instruction groups. This was demonstrated by a statistically significant effect on the production of oral language on the measure of the length of retell calculated by Triadic Assessment in English produced by the group who received structured story reading instruction when compared to their counterpart, the TBE- typical story reading instruction group. The results of my study concur with previous studies on story retell in English (White & Turner, 2005; Fiestas & Peña, 2004; Gambrell, Koskinene, & Kapinus, 1991). As the data demonstrated, students participating in the treatment group (TBE-E) outperformed the control group (TBE-T) on the measure of length of retell in English.

After controlling for initial differences, these students (TBE-E) surpassed the TBE-T group in all three dependent variables, T units, number of words, and number of sentences, analyzed by ANCOVA. Greater length of retell was shown as students produced more T-units, the shortest allowable form of a sentence (Hunts, 1965), greater production of number of words, and more number of sentences in their story retell. The results of the TBE-E group were not only significant, but differences were twice the amount of the TBE-T control group when the T-units were compared for both stories. The genre of the storybook could have influenced for the T-units' means being slightly higher in Story week 1 than for Story week 6 in both groups' intervention and comparison. Students at an early age tend to prefer fable

over narrative-informational books. They like repetition of their favorite stories and love to see their favorite characters in action.

However, in spite of having three outliers on the upper quartile removed from the TBE-E group, the mean for number of words variable was statistically significant for this group. The amount of number of words of those students receiving the intervention was three times larger than the group receiving typical instruction. It is very important to remember that these two groups received instruction in Spanish and were expected to comply with Texas §89.1201 policy, where ESL instruction is expected to be part of regular instruction. In this study, the TBE-E group received structured story reading for ESL every day for 35 minutes, within a block of 90 minutes. These results could have been attributed to the amount of English used during instruction during the ESL block. This could also indicate that practicing retell after two years of practice with structured story reading including retelling and story grammar use does affect the length, of retell as measured by the amount of words produced per retell for ELLs.

In addition, these results are supported by Lara-Alecio, Tong, Irby and Mathes' (2007) findings. Lara-Alecio and colleagues (2007) reported that listening as a communication mode was observed more frequently in the TBE-T classroom (20.4%) than in the TBE-E (18.7%) classroom, indicating that in the comparison group the teacher did most of the talking, and students were not engaged in a dialogue. Lara-Alecio et al. (2007) also found that TBE-E teachers followed the intervention and spent more time on higher leveled questions as they were scripted in the STELLA lesson. More ask/answer time was observed and this researcher found it to be the most dominant activity structure in the TBE-E

group (43.1%), rather than in TBE-T group (37.3%). This was in addition to the aural-verbal and verbal modality mostly observed during the ESL instructional time. The longitudinal study by Lara-Alecio et al. demonstrated that students' language mirrors the teacher's language. That is, if teachers use Spanish during the ESL block, students responded in Spanish as well, or vice versa. All these factors could have played an important role on students oral language production by the group receiving the treatment.

Furthermore, listening comprehension, which is a complex task difficult to measure in isolation, could also have been a result of the direct and explicit vocabulary instruction during STELLA increasing oral language productivity, as indicated by the number of words and students' understanding of the story. When children's vocabulary knowledge increases, their oral language develops at a faster rate and the text becomes meaningful to the reader. Another possible explanation could have been that the TBE-E group, after two years practice using the words both contextualized and decontextualized with explicit and systematic instruction, increased their expressive vocabulary, while the comparison group found it difficult to produce more number of words in the target language. These findings showed evidence that structured story reading in English for second language learners with ESL strategies, repeated reading, and systematic direct and indirect vocabulary instruction with retelling practice together seem to be more effective than typical story reading instruction. This concurs with Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Mathes, Cirino, Carlson, Pollard Durodola, Cardenas and Francis (2006) who stated that students benefit from systematic and explicit instruction. The magnitude of the difference between the TBE-E and TBE-T groups, as

measured by the effect size, demonstrated more vocabulary production and listening comprehension than the comparison group.

*Research Question 2*

*To what extent do students in a structured transitional bilingual program who utilized structured story reading in English differ in Spanish oral language development from students in a typical transitional bilingual program as measured in Spanish retelling?*

Students in Transitional Bilingual Education receiving structured story reading in English showed statistically significant differences in Spanish oral language development, as demonstrated by number of words and with regards to Story week 1 (the fable), when compared to the comparison group. After controlling for non-verbal ability, a univariate analysis of covariance showed no statistically significant differences in number of T-units or sentences for this story. However, it was observed that the Transitional Bilingual Education-Enhanced group used longer minimal sentences in Spanish than the comparison group. Keeping in mind that these two groups were placed in bilingual programs receiving instruction in their native language, a possible explanation to the TBE-E number of words performance over the TBE-T group in both English and Spanish might be a transfer of vocabulary learned in the second language (Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993). Another possible additional explanation could be the use of L2 clarified by L1, which is the use of the first language to clarify instructional directions, cognate identification, and the recognition of similarities between the two alphabetic languages, English and Spanish. In contrast to Story week 1, the ANCOVA conducted for Story week 6 (the narrative-

informational book) showed statistically significant differences between the TBE-E and the TBE-T groups in all measures, with considerable effect sizes.

An interesting finding that was examined is that the TBE-T group showed comparable results in both stories in English, meaning that the story genre was irrelevant because their English oral language was not as developed as the Transitional Bilingual Education – Typical story reading instruction group. The Transitional Bilingual Education - Enhanced group produced more T-units in Spanish in Story week 6 than in English for Stories week 1 and week 6; however, the amount of T- units was comparable in English and Spanish for Story week 6. These findings could indicate that for the treatment group (TBE-E), there was a transfer of linguistic skills (Dressler & Kamil, 2006). It seems that these two groups performed similarly in their native language, but the group receiving the treatment (TBE-E) outperformed in the second language in the narrative-informational book in all measures and without losing their native language. The amount of T-units, number of words, and number of sentences were comparable in English and Spanish for the TBE-E group in both Stories week 1 and week 6; this concurs with Fiesta and Peña's (2004) findings. The group receiving structured story reading told longer stories than the typical story reading instruction in both stories, in both languages. The overall effect for the second research question was higher for Story week 6 than for Story week 1. One possible explanation could have been that most students had prior knowledge of dinosaurs, although most of the students remained faithful to the context of the story. Additionally, Story week 6 was a simple story with fewer characters and events than the more complex Story week 1. In all, the intervention group produced longer minimal sentences (T-units) than the control group

in both stories, for just a few words more, but this concurs with current research. The mean length of T -units varied with age and grade level (Hunt, 1965). It is worth noting that the amount of words could have also been a result of crosslinguistic transfer, like in Story week 1, which includes the use of cognates and L2 clarified by L1, in addition to the time spent using Spanish language in the classroom. TBE-E teachers used less Spanish because they were engaged in the 90 minute ESL block, while TBE-T teachers used more Spanish and had less time for ESL instruction. The instructions for ESL block of time varies for control groups, according to Lara-Alecio, et al. (2007).

### *Research Question 3*

*To what extent do vocabulary outcomes for second grade ELLs receiving systematic and direct vocabulary instruction in English differ from typical instruction as measured by curriculum-based assessment of vocabulary taught across all six stories?*

Vocabulary was assessed to examine the role of vocabulary directly, and systematic instruction as one element of structured story reading, and how vocabulary influences the length of retells. It is important to mention that the vocabulary test was administered prior to reading the storybook in Spanish to control for language. The vocabulary pre-test (see Appendix B) and post-test (see Appendix C) consisting of twenty words randomly selected from the six stories read during the six week period of the present study showed significant differences on vocabulary gains from the TBE-E group (6.71 points) as compared to the TBE-T group's vocabulary mean gains (0.44 points). This increase in vocabulary gains could explain the statistically significant differences between the TBE-E and the TBE-T in oral language development, as measured by length of retell.

The standard deviations were small for both the pretest and the post test, indicating that scores are clustered around the mean. Fifty percent of the cases scored between eight and thirteen correct answers out of 20 questions on the pretest. When both groups were compared, the TBE-E group performed higher on the pretest than the TBE-T, and had more gains on the post test. The ratings for pretest scores were more homogeneous in the TBE-T group than in the TBE-E group, but at a lower level. However, the TBE-E group showed more variability on the pretest scores than the TBE-T group.

For the post test, the scores were more homogeneous at a higher level than with the TBE-T group, with 50% of the cases approximately rating between 16 and 17 correct answers (see Appendix C). The TBE-E post test demonstrated stronger statistically significant differences when compared to the control group, a result which is supported by Stanovich (1986). This term describes the phenomenon observed in research on proficient and less proficient readers; the more vocabulary a student has the more successful that child will be in acquiring reading skills and comprehension.

The results of the vocabulary test indicated that groups receiving direct and explicit vocabulary instruction received during structured story reading instruction considerably outperformed in the vocabulary post test. The magnitude of the increase for the enhanced group was large when compared to the group receiving typical instruction; the effect of the post test scores was significantly higher in both tests for the enhanced group (Englert, 1995). It is worth noting that the mean for the TBE-T group remained almost the same in the pre and post tests, even after listening to the same stories.

Although the importance of vocabulary is recognized, most research on vocabulary has been performed on monolingual English speaking students, while few studies have been performed on bilingual students (August & Hakuta, 1997; Calderón, 2001; Goldenberg, 1994). The findings of this study seem to demonstrate that bilingual students could benefit greatly if taught strategies for word meaning, due to the causal relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension (Anderson & Freebody, 1981).

Direct and explicit systematic vocabulary instruction in and out of context, following Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) approach, appeared to facilitate and increase communicative retelling and comprehension of the stories presented through structured story reading. STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) selected vocabulary was taught and explicitly reviewed every day, used frequently and revisited in several stories. Therefore, the large effect size could be the result of the way the vocabulary was taught in STELLA (Irby et al., 2004): the structured, friendly definition of words, the use of cognates, L2 clarified by L1 when needed, practice usage of the word in and out of context and visual and modeling scaffolds.

Vocabulary instruction during the structured story reading component seems to be more effective than typical story reading instruction. Besides, studies have shown that students whose first language is one other than English, especially when that language has a similar alphabetic orthography and a similar phonological structure, the student may have some advantages over monolinguals, especially those learning different orthography systems like Chinese and English (Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993).

*Research Question 4*

*To what extent does a five-day structured story reading lesson impacts listening comprehension on second grade bilingual students receiving structured story reading in English differ with practice of story grammar after two years of practice?*

Listening comprehension was examined on the measure of story grammar. After controlling for initial differences, the univariate analysis of covariance demonstrated statistically significant differences between the treatment group and the comparison group for stories in both English and Spanish. This could have been a result of active engagement in identifying the elements of a story, therefore facilitating the retrieval and reconstruction of a text as shown in the length of oral retell. In this study, the enhanced or treatment group outperformed the control group in both languages. Again, transfer of skills learned in one language seems to assist students in their native language. In addition to the story vocabulary learned on a five day lesson, the same story was repeated and leveled questions were asked to increase comprehension. It is not surprising that the group exposed to frequent practice of story grammar were able to recall more elements and reconstruct the text in sequential order. The four main questions asked were to identify the following: (a) setting, (b) characters, (c) problem, and (d) solution of the story. The sequence of events, character description, imaginary events or characters, were obtained after examination of the transcribed retelling.

The results from the ANCOVA in addition to field observations to answer the fourth research question for Stories week 1 and week 6 read in English may be interpreted to mean that typical classrooms use less story grammar as a cognitive tool and less guided practice to increase listening comprehension in English. As a result, these classrooms could have

provided students with a better means to understand the text. Also, it may be interpreted to mean that typical instruction did not address the vocabulary instruction in English as intensively as that of the enhanced group did. The findings to respond to the fourth question of my study concurred with other story grammar research that used story retell and questioning as a way of measuring comprehension (Idol & Croll, 1987), indicating that the awareness of the story elements allows for better comprehension of the story (Dimino, Gersten, Carnine, & Blake, 1990). As demonstrated by these results, systematic instruction with repeated storybook reading with practice of story grammar and vocabulary through comprehensible input seems to be more effective and linked to instruction and practice than typical instruction. The practicing of story grammar affects the organization and production of thoughts on text reconstruction and comprehension because it provides a guide to the student.

In contrast, story grammar for story reading in Spanish showed statistically significant differences, but not as large as those for story grammar in English. Much variability was observed in the TBE-T scores on the Story week 6 story grammar in Spanish, over that of Story week 1. This seems to indicate that the text structure, as demonstrated by the two selections for this study, influenced the productivity of oral retell and the reconstruction of text. However, the comparison group demonstrated less of an ability to organize the story elements to reconstruct the story.

#### *Research Question 5*

*To what extent do second grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program*

*who utilize structured story reading in English differ from students receiving typical instruction as measured by end-of-story vocabulary and comprehension assessment?*

Matching, cloze sentences and leveled questions are the most common methods of assessing comprehension in the classroom. For this reason, an end-of-story CBM that mirrors instruction was also included in this study in order to explore to what extent the TBE-E and TBE-T groups differ in this type of assessment. These test scores were expected to mirror the retelling and vocabulary results. The end-of-story CBM for both Story week 1 and Story week 6 were used to assess vocabulary and comprehension using higher level questions at the end of five days of explicit instruction using the same story book. For this research question, an ANCOVA was conducted on the two end-of-story CBM sets of data demonstrating statistically significant differences in both tests that were administered at the end of the week for week 1 and week 6. Different means but similar standard deviations for Story week 1's end-of-story CBM indicated scores about the mean, and the TBE-E group outscored the TBE-T group. This seems to indicate that structured story reading in English with L2 clarified by L1 benefits students in transitional bilingual education, as demonstrated by all measures used in this study. The TBE-E group demonstrated more awareness of the facts, details and vocabulary than the comparison group. In addition, this difference between groups could have been a result of a lack of systematic instruction in the comparison group, as was observed by the observation coordinator.

Comparing the results obtained for oral language development as measured by length of retell, vocabulary pre and post tests and comprehension as measured by story grammar all showed and co-validated the results obtained with end-of-story CBM.

## Summary

My study concurs with Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, and Mathes (in press). They indicated that students participating in the transitional bilingual education-enhanced group improved statistically significantly over the comparison group in listening comprehension. In addition, this study concurs with Saunders, Foorman and Carlson (2006) where ELL students receiving a separate block of English language instruction to develop a second language benefit over ELL students receiving English language instruction integrated with reading/language arts. To maximize English language development, Lara-Alecio, Irby and Mathes (2006) went further; they showed that not only does a separate English block benefit second language acquisition, but an ESL block with structured English language instruction increases the opportunity of these students to improve vocabulary and listening comprehension.

The ANCOVA conducted in my study indicated significant differences in all of the three dependent variables for length of retell in English, vocabulary, story grammar and curriculum-based measurement in English and word per retell in Spanish, in spite of the low socio-economic status of the participants. However, the analysis demonstrated no statistically significant differences in the T-units and number of sentences variables in Spanish, indicating that students in structured story reading in English maintain their native language development progress along with the group receiving more Spanish during the day's instruction.

## IMPLICATIONS

### *Classroom Implications*

Literacy skills taught in isolation does not offer an authentic representation of the classroom environment, and yet little integration of language and literacy skills can be observed during instructional time. The story reading component, STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) is a systematic structured story reading, an amalgam of different skills and strategies presented in a systematic way to increase the effect that each skill or strategies would produce if presented in isolation. STELLA (Irby et al., 2004) is in no way a solution to oral language development, nor a plan to accelerate reading or comprehension by itself, but it could be a beneficial and useful supplement of language art curriculum, integrating (a) vocabulary instruction, (b) research based instructional strategies, (c) ESL strategies, and (d) content areas such as science. Emphasis should be given to the crosslinguistic similarities between the English and Spanish languages.

Training in the use of learning strategies assists second language learners academically. Teachers' training and ongoing professional development on structured story reading will benefit English language learners as they learn vocabulary, practice story retelling and use story grammar for better comprehension and thought organization. Teachers can also use these two strategies as assessment tools.

These strategies will allow students to become independent and aware of their learning process. Bilingual teachers could benefit by providing student with the strategies incorporated in STELLA (Irby et al., 2004) and the use of retelling as a reliable measure of

oral language progress in both languages. Retellings provide a reliable measure to be used not only to monitor students' oral language and comprehension progress with learning disabilities, but for all students, especially those students whose reading fluency does not represent comprehension. This assessment tool is not limited to language or learning ability; it is a pedagogical tool that connects assessment and instruction.

Retelling assessments provide teachers with a clear picture of students' syntactical problems which transfer to students' writing. In addition, retelling provides information about grammatical or syntactic complexity used by the student in their progress towards language proficiency (Gutierrez-Clellen, Restrepo, Bedore, Peña, & Anderson, 2000). Structured story reading with story retells addresses varied cognitive levels in the classroom. Additionally, this form of story reading addresses bilingual students' need for exposure to diverse literature: "Reading ability, when developed in one language is predictive of reading ability in the other" (Dressler & Kamil, 2006, p. 234). By integrating ESL strategies, vocabulary, explicitly and implicitly taught, with opportunities for students to practice and comprehension strategies and skills that are learned in one language transfer to the other when both languages are alphabetic in nature.

#### Future Research

Further research is needed to measure syntactic complexity in written retells comparing both languages, English and Spanish, using story reading. Also, further research should compare cognitive levels (high, average and low) and gender differences using STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) as a treatment for students in transitional bilingual and immersion methods of instruction. Another consideration should

be to expose ELLs to structured story reading in English and Spanish in order to study the effects of language transfer, as well as oral and written literacy skills. A study utilizing structured story reading in isolation with a larger sample and students of English as well as other languages and diverse cultures would greatly benefit the overall body of research on this topic.

### Conclusion

My study attempted to answer five questions related to oral language development, listening comprehension and vocabulary instruction for students engaged in two years practice. Findings were reported for both languages; English and Spanish, for length of retell and story grammar after two years practice, in order to compare differences in oral language development. Statistically significant differences favoring students in the intervention condition were found in all dependent variables with the exception of measures of T-units and number of sentences in Spanish. These findings suggest that structured story reading appears to stimulate the oral language development of English language learners in the target language, and that students sustain this progress in their first language.

After analyzing the control group data and observations of control teachers, researchers can infer that reading aloud in English to ELLs accompanied only by simple activities is not sufficient for their literacy education. As supported by other studies, Ouellete (1999) stated that there is “little empirical data to support the notion that children who have been exposed to many stories have better expectations for structure than those whose exposure to stories is limited” (p. 74). Students need the guidance and modeling of strategies that will allow them to become independent learners.

Although story reading and retelling are recognized as instructional tools with great benefits for oral language and vocabulary development, as well as an increase in listening and reading comprehension, it would seem as an important research topic to study ELLs' oral proficiency and literacy. Being Hispanics the fastest growing population in the US, it is ironic that few studies have been done that were aimed at the academic needs of this population. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study is the encouragement it might offer for further research on structured story reading and retelling for the English language learners.

It should be noted that ELLs receiving structured story reading in English as a second language benefit from bilingual education (Lara-Alecio, Irby & Mathes, 2007; Cummins, 2007). Furthermore, bilingual education provides a foundation for developing an extensive vocabulary, and increasing comprehension and oral proficiency before receiving academic instruction in the target language. English language learners are learning two sets of lexicons; they need to be taught strategies on how to figure out the meaning of the various words. For example, they would benefit from learning how to use context, cognates, and morphological structures for cues in identifying the meaning of words in the second language. Additionally, these students would be further helped by learning how to use the strength of their L1 skills to look for meaning. Given the potential benefits in academic achievement for English language learners, transfer of vocabulary and comprehension skills research in this area is encouraged.

My study measured different elements of the structured story reading component of project ELLA by testing the different skills addressed in a five day lesson. Oral language,

vocabulary development and comprehension, all intertwined skills presented in the STELLA lessons, were measured individually using univariate analyses of covariance in an effort to demonstrate the effect produced by systematic implicit and explicit instruction through story reading and retelling. Based on previous research on schema theory, second language acquisition theory, oral language development and comprehension, it was hypothesized that all students receiving the STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) intervention should demonstrate a parallel effect in both languages, English and Spanish. This was demonstrated in the analyses performed for length of retell to measure oral language development, story grammar to measure comprehension, and end-of-story curriculum-based measurements widely used by teachers to monitor basic academic needs and to measure comprehension and vocabulary as indications of the reasons for statistically significant differences found between the groups.

The vocabulary pretest raw scores demonstrated a statistically significant mean difference when compared to the control (TBE-T) results, indicating that these students already had a good vocabulary foundation. The less vocabulary the child has, the less the child will read, and therefore the greater the gap between the proficient reader and the less proficient reader. Consequently, this increases the chance that these students will fall behind academically.

Although teachers in Texas are expected to follow the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills which includes retell and story grammar instruction, this study indicates that oral language development for the intervention group was greatly influenced by structured story reading with vocabulary, retell and story grammar practice than students receiving typical

story reading instruction. In spite of the story structure, students in the TBE-E group were able to retell the story more extensively, using more words and longer sentences in English and Spanish. A similar effect was found in listening comprehension measures using story grammar and curriculum-based instruments, suggesting that listening comprehension requires interactive and systematic instruction, and not passive skills learned incidentally. As indicated by the findings of Project ELLA and my study, story reading by itself is not sufficient; repetition, systemic instruction and professional development are all necessary to increase the productivity of English language learners.

In closing, because this sample was drawn randomly from a population participating in a longitudinal study, it was expected to demonstrate a similar behavior or results to the listening comprehension and vocabulary measures using other instruments observing the same measures. The present study concurred with the report on listening comprehension and vocabulary development presented to the US Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition 2007 (see Appendices C, D, E and F).

Despite the limitations of this study, the results of the analyses conducted to compare the magnitude of the differences between typical instruction and those receiving STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) intervention, demonstrate that a foundation has been established for further studies and more importantly, for the use of structured story reading for ELLs in the classroom. Structured story reading can increase students' opportunities to achieve the important goal of reading comprehension. The findings of this study are also consistent with other studies where the instructional strategies such as vocabulary, story grammar, retelling and curriculum-based measurements were

analyzed separately. The students receiving STELLA instruction outperformed typical story reading instruction in both English and Spanish on those measures as well.

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## APPENDIX A

## END-OF –STORY CURRICULUM-BASED MEASUREMENT

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The Great Fuzz Frenzy****Assessment / Week 21**

**Draw lines to connect the words and the definitions.**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. <b>ridiculous</b> | a. <b>having a light or padded appearance</b> |
| 2. <b>gutless</b>    | b. <b>silly and absurd</b>                    |
| 3. <b>fluff</b>      | c. <b>not having courage to do something</b>  |

**Fill in the blank**

- My dad let out a \_\_\_\_\_, after finding out he had to work late.  
(sigh, jab)
- The jar of marbles fell to the floor and \_\_\_\_\_ on the floor.  
(pinch, scattered)
- The blender made a \_\_\_\_\_ of chocolate and vanilla ice cream.  
(nab, swirl)

**Comprehension Questions (Circle the letter of the correct answer.)**

- Which character acts the least gutless in the story?
  - Pip Squeak
  - Big Bark
  - Violet
- After reading the story, the reader knows that the prairie dogs will most likely stay happy if they ----

- a. find more fuzz
- b. get different colors of fuzz
- c. not care about having fuzz

3. After reading the end of the story, the reader can tell that the most important idea in the story is ...

- a. having each other.
- b. the meanest person will have everything.
- c. new things cause a frenzy.

APPENDIX B  
VOCABULARY PRE –TEST

Following you will find the vocabulary pre-test administered prior to Story Week 1 introduction.

Project ELLA  
STELLA Pre Test  
Story—retell Time for English Literacy and Language Acquisition

STELLA retelling Study Vocabulary Test

Listen to the directions. Select the correct answer.

1. Which word means the same thing as **gutless**?
  - bravely
  - cowardly
  - vast
2. What is the meaning of **glance**?
  - quick look
  - Stare at
  - vast
3. What is another word for **lab**?
  - scary
  - drift
  - poke
4. Which word is the opposite of **undisturbed**?
  - bravely
  - disturbed
  - rock
5. What is another word for **foolishness**?
  - silliness
  - boulder
  - mineral
6. What is another word for **rhythmic**?
  - soil
  - musical
  - slick
7. What is the meaning of **adjusted**?
  - To chase
  - arranged properly
  - Some sort of mineral

8. Which word means the same thing as **pretend**?
  - reconstruct
  - cowardly
  - make believe
9. Which word means the same thing as **graceful**?
  - bravely
  - elegant
  - long
10. Which word means the same thing as **hover**?
  - bravely
  - drift
  - vast
11. What is the meaning of **shammy**?
  - Leather cloth
  - Drift away
  - Dusty apron
12. Which word means the same thing as **seedling**?
  - sprout
  - stem
  - sand
13. Which word means the same thing as **chase**?
  - nectar
  - drift
  - pursue
14. Which word means the same thing as **perform**?
  - To carry out
  - heap
  - humus
15. What is the meaning of **incredible**?
  - undisturbed
  - A long nap
  - Something that is unbelievable
16. Which word means the same thing as **boulder**?
  - Large rock
  - drift
  - dusty
17. What is the meaning of **decomposer**?
  - Organism that break down organic material
  - A bird
  - An enormous rock
18. Which word means the same thing as **reconstruct**?
  - massive
  - To rebuild
  - crumble
19. Which word means the same thing as **peacefully**?
  - calmly
  - agitatedly
  - vastly
20. Which word means the same thing as **massive**?
  - Small amount of something
  - Large amount of something
  - Fill to capacity

Score: _____ Date: _____
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APPENDIX C  
VOCABULARY POST – TEST

Following you will find the vocabulary post-test administered after to Story Week 6 introduction.

Project ELLA  
STELLA

Story--retell Time for English Literacy and Language Acquisition

STELLA retelling Study Vocabulary Post Test

Listen to the directions. Select the correct answer.

1. Which word means the same thing as coward?  
 bravely  
 guileless  
 vast

2. To take a quick look is the meaning of...  
 glance  
 Stare at  
 Develop

3. To poke with a pencil is the same thing as ...  
 to be pointed at with a pencil  
 to drift with a pencil  
 to jab with a pencil

4. The opposite of being interrupted by someone is ...  
 to be brave  
 to be undisturbed  
 to be lonely

5. An absurdity is the same thing as ...  
 sad  
 foolishness  
 happy

6. A pattern that repeats is...  
 absurd  
 rhythmic  
 slick

7. To arrange property is the same thing as ...  
 to chase  
 to carry out  
 to adjust

8. To make believe is the same thing as ...  
 to reconstruct  
 to pretend  
 to dance

9. To be elegant is to be ...  
 graceful  
 foolish  
 wise

10. To float in the water without going very far is ...  
 to glide  
 to hover  
 to hop

11. A leather cloth is the same as ...  
 a pillow  
 a cover  
 a shabby

12. A young developing plant that has been grown from a seed is ...  
 sprout  
 stem  
 seedling

13. Another word for pursue is ...  
 wait  
 drift  
 chase

14. To carry out is to ...  
 perform  
 heap  
 cry

15. Something that is astonishing is ...  
 undisturbed  
 incredible  
 expected

16. A huge rock is a ...  
 ship  
 boulder  
 pebble

17. An organism that breaks down organic material is a ...  
 decomposer  
 composer  
 creator

18. To put something back together is ...  
 to reconstruct  
 to slick  
 to crumble

19. To act calmly is to act ...  
 happily  
 agitatedly  
 peacefully

20. Large amount of something is ...  
 massive  
 passive  
 A bit

Score: _____
Date _____

## APPENDIX D

## KINDERGARTEN VOCABULARY LIST

Wk	K						
1	chew	tardy	recess	12	munch	boulder	swoop
2	face	bus	wave	13	spring	winter	fall
3	clap	hop	stomp	14	emu	zookeeper	crowd
4	wake up	get ready	climb	15	cookie jar	squirm	trail
5	snow	mittens	boots	16	house	shelter	puddle
6	caterpillar	cocoon	butterfly	17	rake	dig	spray
7	born	sister	brother	18	iguana	jungle	perch
8	feathers	fur	llama	19	fancy	trousers	bespectacled
9	bear	woods	porridge	20	buds	blossom	branch(es)
10	night	morning	track	21	Duck	Hill	far
11	frog	scarf	long john				

## APPENDIX E

## FIRST GRADE VOCABULARY LIST

1	rule	obey	gentle	stranger	outlaw			
2	tease	lazy	stuff	trail	sticks	beaver	enough	stacks
3	enormous	decide	patch	Delicious	careful	proud	push	pull
4	Meadow	lost	sew	shout	trouble	thin	round	thick
5	Drip	Mix	puddles	stiff	color	splash	stir	
6	inchworm	measure	twig	useful	Idea			
7	celebrate	recipe	occasion	blow	valley	prepare		
8	falling apart	announce	enjoy	wink	propose	melt		
9	everywhere	empty	across	tired	chased	finally		
10	discover	bulge	admire	poke	tight	kick	cozy	drop
11	tender	agreed	invite	satisfy	mistaken	wicked		
12	boulder	sigh	stream	wisest	steep	journey		
13	frightened	paddling	grassy	storm	heavy	shiver		
14	argue	block	stretch	shimmer	groceries	deliver	chase	
15	moon	handful	turn off	slice	Tug	change		
16	shine	gleaming	path	distance	fading	bright	nearest	
17	quickly	swept	snatch	satisfy	Toss	spinning	upward	
18	disappointed	excited	amazing	landed	spinning	flip	planet	
19	damage	hairy	grip	burst	wriggle	crumpled		
20	spread	bouncing	absurd	emerge	gorgeous	beneath		
21	frogspawn	surface	disappear	pond	peering	scooped	tadpole	
22	amphibians	camouflage	protection	poison	hatch	lay	enemy	moist
23	stem	drift	hard	higher	petals	weather	burn	
24	brisk	shake	shrink	stuck	flock	blink		
25	attack	discover	gingerly	snug	ocean	whisper		

## APPENDIX F

## SECOND GRADE VOCABULARY LIST

1	living/non-living	upstream	wonder	decide	halfway	nutrients	perfect	boulder
2	snuck	clamored	plucked	Lotus	Pod	Wrap	Brave	march
	scrambled	special	towering	rattle				
3	photosynthesis	step	evergreen	hike	develop	through	plenty	busy
		outdoors						
	sunlight	cooler	coating	waxy	oldest	shiny	edge	
4	Bottlenose	underwater	blowhole	calf	blubber	excellent	mammal	eyesight
	hearing	amphibian	life cycle	flipper				
5	straightened	stretch	flexible	joint	Attach	Bundle	mend	tear
	Protect	upright	Skeleton					
6	Inclined plane	pooled	leaking	gliding	Ramp	slippery	slanted	slope
	Swiftly	damage	higher	goods	harder			
7	swallow	mushy	trick	without	saliva	feed	treat	stomach
	digest	squeeze	smart	shrink				
8	lumbering	gently lift	babbling	whisper	stared		mysterious feelings	
	brightly	facedown	curiosity	scratch	tickle	soothing		
9	paleontologist	fierce	blast	lighter	fossil	crumpling	uncover	unwrap
	extinct	patiently	stronger	buried				
10	Confuse	Boast	Giggle	Whine	Brag	Sting	Groan	Escape
	Camouflage	Claim	Sway	Moan				
11	Agriculture	flatten	goodness	squeeze	dough	strength	grind	rustling
	machinery	harvest	brown-hands					
12	woodland	stretch	roomy	rush	leap	wander	huddle	dangling
	rain forest	tangled	sliding	smear				
13	faraway	twisting	chatter	endless	crash	spinning	fierce	inland
	dissolved	drift	mighty					
14	drought	monsoon	overflow	bank	flood	bump	burst	pollution
	shower	warning	drizzle					
15	adventure	moonlight	orbit	middle	crater	sleepily	unless	gaze
	hilly	replace	rotation	lump	moon			
16	environment	desert	frightened	stare	iceberg	swell	raging	unusual
	habitat	overjoyed	suddenly	sandy				
17	moonbeam	restore	twirl	hut	blush	darkness	admirer	romp
	constellation	dreamlike	sparkling	Sliver	angrily			
18	explode	nudge	fussy	grin				
	clatter/clattered	licking	whisper	frown	shook	curled	distant	boost
19	territories	unique	Stalk	prowl	dusk	pounce	scruff	scraps

	Unsuspecting	helpless	Tigress	blend				
20	magnificent	dump	crumbly	prance	replied	unwrap	coop	yanked
	hidden	awfully	gasp	whipped				
21	ridiculous	Scattered	pinch	gutless	scary	Fluff	jab	yell
	foolishness	swirl	meanest	alive	sigh			
22	gliding	aims	pretend	dusty	polished	slippery	nod	trimmed
	glance	shammy	wiping	stage				
23	resource	rhythmic	mighty	hover	poke	vast	slick	graceful
	undisturbed	dangerous	beneath	drift				
24	Fahrenheit	current	gas	weather	cycle	cirrus	sleet	stratus
	precipitation	condense	vapor	Celsius	hail	cumulus	fluffy	
25	sprout	blossom	soil	rock	sip	chase	mineral	sand
	seedling	nectar						
26	protected	standing tall	adjusted	smelly	crush	greet	hint	spare
	pronounce	performed	turner	overflow				
27	crumble	incredible	Squiggle	desert	scurrying	droppings	erode	squish
	wriggle	decomposer	Erosion	sticky	slither	topsoil	humus	
28	reconstruct	swampy	Compare	massive	alongside	echoed	spied	roar
	terrifying	plunge	Nuzzled	offspring				

## APPENDIX G

## KINDERGARTEN TO SECOND GRADE ACTIVITIES

	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>First Grade</b>	<b>Second Grade</b>
<b>Story Critique</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Story critique poster (peanuts, thumbs up, down)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Story critique poster Big or Elmo size – teacher modeled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Story mapping – student write</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 9 words –direct instruction</li> <li>▪ Indirect as appropriate</li> <li>▪ Synonyms &amp; Antonyms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 words direct instruction</li> <li>▪ Indirect as needed</li> <li>▪ Review repeated word from previous stories</li> </ul>
<b>Graphic Organizer</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vocabulary Mapping</li> <li>▪ Story Mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Venn Diagrams</li> <li>▪ Topic Web</li> </ul>
<b>Blooms Taxonomy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On day 2</li> <li>▪ Questions provided to address different cognitive levels in the classroom. Teachers stopped and asked questions on every single page. Instructing students that text and illustration provide information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On day 2</li> <li>▪ Questions provided to address different cognitive levels in the classroom. Teachers stopped and asked questions.</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On day 2</li> <li>▪ Questions provided to address different cognitive levels in the classroom.</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>Stories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ H M L levels</li> <li>▪ Pre-K – K – 1<sup>st</sup> grade levels</li> <li>▪ Little Rabbits Journey introduced</li> <li>▪ Colorful and Attractive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ H M L</li> <li>▪ Kinder – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade levels</li> <li>▪ Little Rabbits Journey (read in Kinder) was repeated to introduce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ H M L</li> <li>▪ 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade levels</li> <li>▪ Colorful and Attractive Illustrations</li> </ul>

	<p>Illustrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduced name of author(s) and illustrator</li> </ul>	<p>writing process eliminating this way comprehension process interference –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Colorful and Attractive Illustrations</li> <li>▪ Introduced author and a short biography</li> </ul>	
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leveled questions</li> <li>▪ Interactive Group Retelling – story is repeated and a word left out for student to complete.</li> <li>▪ Connection with previous stories</li> <li>▪ Repetition</li> <li>▪ Sequence Cards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leveled questions</li> <li>▪ Use of Cloze strategy and questions and graphic organizers</li> <li>▪ Retelling – story is repeated and a word left out for student to complete. (Amount of words covered increased with time.)</li> <li>▪ Connection with previous stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leveled questions</li> <li>▪ Use of Cloze strategy, questions and graphic organizers</li> <li>▪ Retelling – story is repeated and a word left out for student to complete. (Amount of words covered increased progressively until students were able to read the complete story on day four.)</li> <li>▪ Connection with previous stories</li> </ul>
<b>Reading &amp; Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oral language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduced by using the words of the title and placing them back in the correct order.</li> <li>▪ Gradually changed by having to complete a cloze sentence selecting the correct word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formal writing introduced in content area, students had to apply their prior knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Story mapping was modeled by teacher, student imitate teachers and later students were expected to perform on their</li> </ul>

		from 2 given words and stating the reason for the selection	own. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Story circle – Questions provided in a sentence strip. Students took turn in reading questions and selecting peers to respond to the questions. This provided students opportunity to practice how to ask questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture/ Prior Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Familiar Themes</li> <li>▪ Prior knowledge activated on day one to make connection with content area.</li> <li>▪ Based on their background knowledge they were expected to predict what the story was going to be about. For this reason, story was not read on day 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Familiar themes</li> <li>▪ Content integration</li> <li>▪ Prior knowledge activated on day one to make connection with content area.</li> <li>▪ Based on their background knowledge they were expected to predict what the story was going to be about. For this reason, story was not read on day 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare and contrast cultures</li> <li>▪ Prior knowledge activated on day one to make connection with content area.</li> <li>▪ Based on their background knowledge they were expected to predict what the story was going to be about. For this reason, story was not read on day 1</li> </ul>
<b>Content Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> <li>▪ Ex. Life Cycle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> <li>▪ Ex. Life Cycle, Living Non Living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> <li>▪ Ex. Body Parts, Planets</li> </ul>
L2 clarified by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes –decreasing</li> </ul>

L1			progressively. Used when necessary
<b>Friday Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on oral language development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oral Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Weekly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Matching words with definition</li> <li>▪ Cloze sentences</li> <li>▪ Multiple choice Comprehension questions.</li> </ul>

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