

Cultural and linguistic diversity in play and literacy assessments

Maya Goldstein and Silvia Mazabel

10th Annual Assessment Workshop
University of British Columbia
May 3 2012



Introduction

- Who are we?
- Personal interest in the topic
 - Maya's thesis: Parent-child play interactions in immigrant South-Asian families
 - Silvia's thesis: Language Minority (LM) students with poor and good reading comprehension skills: Reading related processes and use of reading strategies

Outline

- Diversity in Canada and BC
 - Relevance of the topic
 - Small group activity
- Culture diversity and play assessment
- Linguistic diversity and literacy assessment
- Final comments
 - Play and literacy connections

Diversity in Canada

Over 280 thousand

- 178 countries (Philippines, India, China)
- 87.2% have a mother tongue other than English or French
- 7.6% were under 9 years of age

Over 250 thousand still present in 2010

- From 170 countries
- Speaking different languages

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010; Statistics Canada 2007, 2009)

Diversity in British Columbia

72% Asia and Pacific region

Surrey 38% are immigrants

35% come from India

18% English/French + L2 or just L2

42% of residents in Vancouver

VSD: 25% students (K-12) are ESL and 60% is LM

Surrey SD: 22% students (K-12) are ESL

(BC Ministry of Education, 2011; 2010; Statistics Canada 2007, 2009 VSB, 2012)

Misrepresentation of C&L diverse students in SPED

- Dunn (1968) = many C&L diverse students identified as cognitive delayed
 - Policy changes (students should be assessed in LI and in a nondiscriminatory manner)
- This disproportionate representation still exists
 - Instructional practices with C&L, referral and assessment practices
 - Eligibility criteria for SPED
 - Deficit view of C&L diverse students
 - Socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., poverty, gender)

Small group activity

- How do you assess culturally and linguistically diverse students?
 - What measures do you use?
 - What adaptations (if any) do you make?

Culture Diversity and Play Assessment

Why play?

- Central activity of children's lives in all cultures
- Value of play in children's development differs across cultures
- In some cultures parents are less likely to be play partners
- Play impacts development

(Cannella & Viruru, 1997; Farver et al., 1995; Gunco et al., 1999; Parmar et al., 2004, 2008; Ramsey, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Roopnarine et al., 1998; Roopnarine & Johnson, 1994; Roopnarine & Krishnakumar, 2006)

Play and development

- Cognitive development
 - Opportunities to construct the environment by interacting with different objects
- Social and emotional development
 - Opportunities to regulate emotions and develop an understanding of social norms
- Language development
 - Children learn the language more effectively "incidentally" during play than formal teaching

(Chance, 1979; Gagnon & Nagle, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1975; Ginsburg, 2007; Piaget, 1962; Pronin-Fromberg & Bergen, 2006; Saracho & Spodek, 1998; Vygotsky, 1967)

Types of play

- Pretend play
 - Children pretend to be someone else
- Solitary play
 - The child could potentially play with other but still chooses to play alone
- Toys and objects
 - Children can turn almost any object into a toy

(Chance, 1979; Cohen, 2006; Coplan et al., 2006; Haight, 2006; Pellegrini, 2008; Smith & Pellegrini, 2008)

Play in other cultures: India

- Large courtyard shared with the neighbours
- Children were often supervised by other family members or neighbours
- Children often played outside
- Always in close proximity to an adult
- Everyday activities took place in the presence of the children
- Children were expected to share with others

(Sharma, 2000)

Play assessment?

- Peer interaction
- Developmental level
- Solitary play
- Early intervention

But what if...

- the child comes from a culture where play is perceived differently?
- the child doesn't own many toys, but rather plays with what he/she finds in the environment?
- parents don't devote "floor time" to play with their children, but rather interact with them in different ways?
- the child is more competent to play by him/herself rather than with peers?

Play assessment and culture

- Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (PIPPS)
- Early Development Instrument (EDI)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

PIPPS – Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale

- To differentiate children who demonstrate positive play relations with peers, and those who are less successful
- To identify play strengths of preschool children living in high risk
- To inform early childhood intervention

(Fantuzzo et al., 1995, 2002)

PIPPS – Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale

- Play interaction
 - Shows positive emotions during play
 - Verbalizes stories during play
- Play disruption
 - Is physically aggressive
 - Rejects the play ideas of others
- Play disconnection
 - Needs help to start playing
 - Refuses to play when invited

Early Development Instrument

- Designed to rate the general development of children across five domains
- Currently used in BC, Ontario, and Manitoba
- Not intended for individual assessment
- The study of the geographic distribution of at-risk children

www.offordcentre.com/readiness/index.html

EDI – toys and play

- ability to take part in imaginative play
- plays and works cooperatively with other children at the level appropriate for his/her age
- is able to play with various children
- is eager to play with a new toy
- is eager to play with a new game
- is eager to play with/read a new book

ASQ

- Does your baby pick up a toy with only one hand? (6 months)
- Without holding onto anything for support, does your child kick a ball by swinging his leg forward (22 months)
- Can your child string small items such as beads, macaroni or pasta “wagon wheels” onto a string of shoe laces? (30 months)

Cross-Cultural Lessons:

Early Childhood Developmental Screening and Approaches to Research and Practice

Community University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families



<http://www.cup.ualberta.ca>

ASQ in research

- To examine the cultural validity of an early childhood screening tool, the [Ages and Stages Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#), for use with immigrant and refugee children
- Partnership with the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative, using a multi-method approach to determine if the ASQ is effective in assessing young children from immigrant or refugee backgrounds, or if there are barriers that require unique tools or approaches

<http://www.cup.ualberta.ca>

Toys and play in assessment tools

- Why is it problematic to interpret the results of developmental screening tools with diverse children?
 - Blocks, dolls, stuffed animals, balls are object used in screening tools that are culturally loaded
 - Questions that use play and toys to measure development skills may be misinterpreted and produce invalid responses
 - Lack of exposure to certain toys will impact the parents' responses

<http://www.cup.ualberta.ca>

Toys and play in assessment tools

- Toys that used in screening tools maybe uncommon objects in some cultures
- Play with toys is not considered an important developmental activity in some cultures
- Interaction with siblings, elders and others in the community were reported as part of child's daily activity

<http://www.cup.ualberta.ca>

Research as an assessment tool?

- Observations on parents and children's play in a diverse drop-in centre
- Observations at the homes
- Interviews with parents
- Receiving information from parents – Calendar logs

Drop-in centre's observations

- Type of activity/area
- Physical interaction and proximity
- Verbal exchange
- What is the parent doing
- What is the child doing

Parents	Children
<p>Structured art activities</p>  <p>ABC toys</p>  <p>Number toys</p>  <p>play/sparkly dough</p> 	<p>"Free" art activities</p>  <p>Kitchen and tools</p>  <p>Cars and trucks</p>  <p>Water table</p> 

Homes' Observations

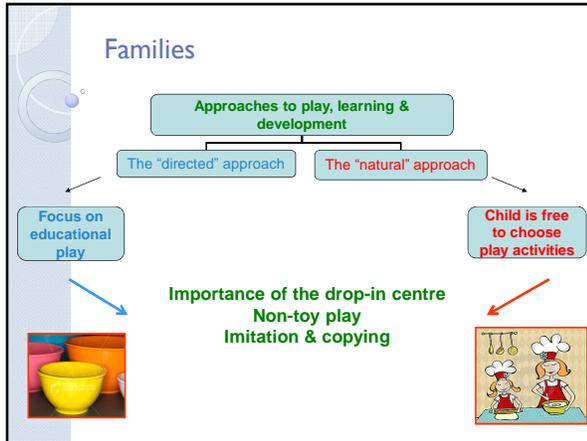
- Organization of the house
- Physical space and changes
- Where the children played
- Location of toys
- TV viewing
- Informal conversations with parents
- Formal interviews with parents

Calendar Logs

- Filled in by the parents
- Who participated in the activity
- Where the activity took place
- What happened during the activity

Parents' voices:

"Following the footsteps of their parents. It's a way of hospitality back in our India. In our culture. Whenever somebody visits us... She just learning, copying from her parents" (Girl's dad)



“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation”

(Plato, 347 BC - 427 BC)

- ### Play and Literacy
- Play in an "international language" that provides a relaxed and comfortable environment for children's learning (Moon 2005; Moon & Reifel, 2008)
 - Expose children to literacy by creating play environments with print (Korat et al, 2002; Morrow & Rand, 1991)
 - Engage children in oral and written language during play by integrating familiar routines from their daily lives (Christie, 2006)
 - Learning a new language in the play area could ease the adaptation of some immigrant children

Linguistic Diversity and Literacy Assessment

- ### Who are the language minority students?
- Come from homes in which the main language is other than the societal and who have attained some level of proficiency in that first language
 - bilingual (proficient in L1 and L2)
 - learning English (ELL/ESL/SLL)
 - proficient in L2
 - LMS fall along a continuum of language development and move dynamically on it (August & Shanahan, 2006)

What is literacy?

“Ability to read, write, and perform simple numeric calculations” (NSEL, 2009, p.11)

↓

Behaviors embedded in natural and social literacy-rich experiences, and linguistic skills that prepare the ground for reading, writing and numeracy acquisition (Roskos & Christie, 2001)

What is early literacy?

- Exploring and playing with books
- Singing nursery rhymes
- Listening to stories
- Recognizing words
- Scribbling
- Linguistic skills

Component based approach

- Phonological processing*
 - Print awareness
 - Reading compr.
 - Written language
- Rapid naming*
- Orthographic processing
 - Context
 - Instruction
- Oral reading in context
- Alphabet knowledge
- Single-word reading

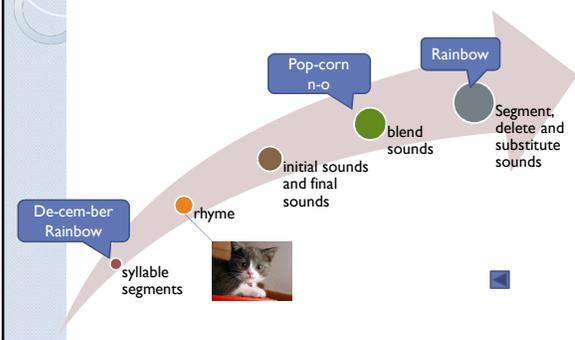
(Rathvon, 2004)

Linguistic skills

- Phonological processing
 - Phonological awareness
 - Phonemic awareness (C-A-T / M-A-T)
 - Alphabetic principle: phonics (read word/ non-words)
 - Phonological memory
- Print awareness
 - Print function
 - Print conventions
 - Which way do you read the words?
 - What does this do? (Point to a comma)

(Pence, 2007; Rathvon, 2004; Siegel, 2003; Yopp & Yopp, 2000)

- Development of PA and tasks
 - **Word level: The — car — is — blue**



Literacy in LM students

- LM might be vulnerable (limited proficiency and home literacy factors) (Rathvon, 2004)
- Children learning 2 languages have PA advantages - transfer (Pence, 2007)
- Majority of LM develop similar foundational word-reading skills to English speakers (age-level) (August & Shanahan, 2006; Lesaux, Lipka & Siegel, 2006)

- Neither LI nor English oral proficiency predict English word recognition and decoding skills
- The cognitive-linguistic factors that predict reading acquisition in monolinguals also predict reading skills for ESL children (Geva & Siegel, 2000; Limbos & Geva, 2001)

Literacy assessment in LM Students

Relevance

- Early intervention
- Develop instructional programs
- Identify at-risk students
- Progress-monitoring

Challenge

- Are LM student's problems the result of:
 - Limited English proficiency
 - Specific RD or language disorder

Standards for Testing

- Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA & NCME, 1999)
 - Administer the test in the most proficient language (multiple skills)
 - Interpreter
- Standards for reading professionals (IRA, 2010)
 - What should reading professionals know and be able to do



www.reading.org/General/CurrentResearch/Standards/ProfessionalStandards2010.aspx

What are the issues?

- Practitioners
 - Language proficiency (L1)
- Assessment instruments
 - Comprehend instructions
 - Understand basic concepts
 - Respond orally/complete a task
- Linguistic demand
 - “Amount of linguistic facility required by a given test” (Rhodes et al, 2005, p.187)

- Tests are based on language developmental expectations for age/grade
- LM students age/grade-level comparisons are not suitable
 - Language acquisition started later
 - Less experience with L2
 - Differences in language exposure (2 vs. 1)
 - Current level vs. actual level is assessed

(Rhodes et al., 2005)

Example 2: Thesis

Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test 4 – Reading Comprehension

Question	Incorrect Responses		
	% of the sample (N=24)	Multiple-case study	
		Poor comprehenders (n=3)	Good Comprehenders (n=6)
5	38	3	0
10	33	3	2
19	42	3	2
32*	65	2	5
34*	48	1	3
39**	64	1	3
41**	45	1	2
51**	36	0	1

Assessment of early literacy

- What is the purpose?
 - Screening or diagnosis
 - Assess the pre-literacy skills in general
 - Assess pre-literacy skills in English or in L1
- Different approaches to assess:
 - Bilingual assessment
 - English
 - First-language

Knowledge and integration of the individual's current age/grade, type and nature of formal education received, current level of proficiency in both languages

- Normed instruments used in research and educational testing in early childhood language and literacy

Screening tools	Batteries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS • TERA – 3 • WRAT – ERA • EDI • RRST 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WJ III ACH • DIAL-III

Rathvon (2004)

Use of standardized measures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize child's functioning (peers) • Strengths and weaknesses • Baseline • Efficient (time and energy) • Objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms do not represent culturally and linguistically diverse students • Biased interpretation of results
--	---

Test of Early Reading Ability–3

(Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 2001)

Early Development Instrument

- Knows how to handle a book
- Is generally interested in books
- Is interested in reading
- Is able to attach sounds to letters
- Is showing awareness of rhyming words
- Is experimenting with writing tools

Reading Readiness Screening Tool (RRST)

- Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta
- Administered by teachers
- One-on-one
 - Kindergarten and GI
 - Older students specially ELL
- Purpose: identify at-risk students for reading problems

www.RightToRead.ca

Some ideas for assessing LM students

- Give directions in LI
- Provide trial items in LI
- Consider the influence of language features and child characteristics
- Describe profile (strengths and weaknesses)

- Use multiple sources of data with multiple purposes
 - Listen to parents
 - Use formal/ informal measures
 - Monitor progress often
- Consider the individual's cultural and linguistic history
- Work with an ELL assessment consultant

- Oral proficiency assessment:
 - Assess vocabulary (receptive and expressive), grammar/syntax, morphological skills, phonological awareness and oral comprehension
 - Include high frequency words

Final comments

- Play and literacy in the early years
 - Simultaneous development in some cultures
 - "Learning through play"
- It is possible to assess play and literacy in the early years in a non-discriminatory manner
- It is relevant to consider C&L diversity in the assessment of play and literacy

- Play is a way to assess childrens' language skills, without the formality of a literacy assessment tool
- Using in-depth observations and interviews is more time consuming - but the overall assessment might be more accurate
- If possible, include people from the community in the child's assessment, they are aware of cultural differences
- Listen to parents about the child cultural, instructional, literacy, and family background

Thank you!

- Maya Goldstein
maya.goldstein@ubc.ca
- Silvia Mazabel
smazabel@interchange.ubc.ca