

Pathways to Oral and Written Language Competence Among  
Young Vietnamese English Language Learners

by

Thao Michelle Duong

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Committee in Charge:

Professor P. David Pearson, Chair

Professor Claire J. Kramsch

Professor Lynn Nichols

Professor Elaine H. Kim

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## Abstract

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Professor P. David Pearson, Chair

This case study, drawing upon the ecological perspectives (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 2004) as a theoretical framework, described the learning experiences of two second generation and first grade Vietnamese English Language Learners navigating between home and school to develop oral and written L1 Vietnamese and L2 English competence for one school year. In the second school year, the focal students' oral and written language samples were collected without classroom observations or interviews. Focal student one had the advantage of learning language in three settings—home, public school, and Vietnamese Sunday School—while focal student two had access to the first two only. A variety of qualitative tools were developed to capture the language affordance, interaction and emergence of ELL learners: (a) observation fieldnotes (b) parent and teacher interviews, and (c) L1 and L2 oral and written reading survey and assessment. Metalinguistic awareness, through language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading emerged as an important mediator of language competence and as an interpretative framework to drive the analytic induction process (Erickson, 1986; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) that I employed. Data interpretation focused on the L1 Vietnamese and L2 English oral and written modes.

The study findings suggest that when teachers, parents and students collaborate to generate and activate the L1 and L2 language affordances (van Lier, 2000) of Vietnamese ELLs through reflexive form of interaction, language learning and competence will emerge. Awareness of language form and function assisted focal students in developing L1 and L2 oral and written competence. Overall, reading assessment results indicate moderate-high growth by the end of the school year for focal student one. She mastered the early reading abilities, such as letter names and sounds, high frequency word and decodable words in L1 Vietnamese and L2 English. Listening and reading comprehension improved more for L2, compared to L1. Focal student two, who had access to only 2 sites (home and public school), showed low-moderate growth in listening and reading comprehension skills in L2 English. Her L2 early reading skills were high, compared to no improvement in L1. There was no growth in L1 listening and reading comprehension through oral retell and writing tasks. Because observations began at the start of first grade, after one year of L2 English exposure in kindergarten, both focal students used more L2 oral language to communicate with family members, peers and teachers. Focal student one

increased her codeswitching as her fluency improved in both L1 Vietnamese and L2 English at age six. Additional participation in Vietnamese Sunday School was beneficial for focal student one as evidenced by her overall improvement in L1 Vietnamese and L2 English oral and written language competence.

Dedicated to:

*Thu Kiem Duong*  
*Linh Tu Cao*

*Chinh Trung Vo*  
*Dalai Tri Vo*  
*Vajra Tam Vo*  
*Anicca Trung Vo*

*Nhon Cao Duong*  
*Nghia Trong Duong*  
*Thanh-Truc Danielle Duong*

In Memory of:

*Antoinnette To Lan Chung*  
*Khanh Kim Pham*  
*Danti Nguyen-Vo*

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## Chapter 1: Language, Literacy and Cultural Landscape

### Resettling in America

The Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, which marked the end of the Vietnam War, resulted in the first wave of immigration to the United States for 125,000 Vietnamese. Most of the individuals were upper or middle class, well educated, Catholic, and English speaking (Egawa & Tashima, 1982). Many Vietnamese had originally fled from North Vietnam when the country was divided and had been associated with the South Vietnamese government. These refugees were temporarily relocated in refugee camps in Southeast Asia, then sent to relocation camps in the United States. Although refugees were initially resettled across U.S. locations, many refugees later moved to be nearer to friends or relatives in warm regions of the country such as California and Texas (Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Further events in Vietnam were the trigger for a second wave of immigration. Tension with China prompted many Sino-Vietnamese, primarily from the south, to flee Vietnam (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Other Vietnamese also left on foot or in leaky boats, facing the dangers of storms and pirates. These "boat people" had less education and lower incomes than the first wave of emigrants, and an estimated half perished in transit (Trueba, Cheng, & Ima, 1993; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The United States passed the Refugee Act of 1980 in response to this second wave and widened the scope of resources available to assist refugees or individuals who fled their native country and could not return because they feared persecution and physical harm.

The continuing persecution of individuals in Vietnam resulted in a third wave of immigration, constituted primarily of soldiers, political prisoners, and Amerasian individuals (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Under the Orderly Departure Program of 1979, former military officers and soldiers in prison or reeducation camps were allowed to fly to the United States with their families, resulting in the immigration of 200,000 individuals by the mid-1990s. The Humanitarian Operation Program of 1989 also permitted more than 70,000 current and former political prisoners to immigrate to the United States. Finally, the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1988 allowed the children of Vietnamese civilians and American soldiers to immigrate with their families to the United States. Many of the Amerasian children were orphans who had lived on the street, received no formal education, and been subjected to prejudice and discrimination in Vietnam (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The Amerasians and their families received instruction in English and other skills in refugee camps before arriving in the United States.

### Generational Differences

According to the 2006 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Vietnamese American population had grown to 1,599,394 since 1980 and remains the second largest Southeast Asian American subgroup.<sup>1</sup> Of those, approximately one million people who are five years and older speak Vietnamese at home—making it the seventh-most spoken language in the United States. As recent refugees, Vietnamese Americans have some of the highest rates of naturalization with 72% of foreign-born Vietnamese are naturalized US citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> 2006 American Community Survey: Selected Population Profile in the United States". United States Census Bureau. <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

Combining this with 36% who are born in the United States makes 82% of them United States citizen in total. Of those born outside the United States, 46.5% entered before 1990, 38.8% between 1990 and 2000, and 14.6% entered after 2000.

The largest number of Vietnamese found outside of Vietnam is found in Orange County, California—totaling 135,548. Vietnamese American businesses are ubiquitous in Little Saigon, located in Westminster and Garden Grove, where they constitute 30.7 and 21.4 percent of the population, respectively. States such as New York, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, Minnesota, Washington, Florida, Virginia and, to some extent, Rhode Island have fast growing Vietnamese populations. The San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle metropolitan area, Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, Northern Virginia, Los Angeles metropolitan area and the Houston metropolitan area have sizable Vietnamese communities. Recently, the Vietnamese immigration pattern has shifted to other states like Oklahoma (Oklahoma City in particular) and Oregon (Portland in particular)

The literature has identified three groups of Vietnamese immigrants (Zhou & Bankston, 1998): the first, the 1.5, and the second generations. In general, members within each of these three groups frequently display different characteristics and levels of acculturation. The identities and characteristics of each group are important to separate because research (Zhou & Bankston, 1998) has indicated that the cultural values and beliefs of members within each group may differ. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the nature of educational services may vary for each group. Depending on the extent of acculturation of each of the three generations, familiarity with and acceptance of educational practices will probably differ.

Although the Vietnamese individuals in all three waves suffered hardships in Vietnam, they differed in their socioeconomic, political, and educational status, bringing individuals from a variety of backgrounds to the United States. This diversity has continued to be characteristic of the Vietnamese American population in the United States. Thus, first generation Vietnamese Americans came to the United States during their late adolescence or adulthood and during one of the periods described above (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). First-generation Vietnamese Americans were educated primarily in Vietnam and have frequently retained much of their Vietnamese culture.

The 1.5 generation is a group who came to the United States between the ages of 5 and 12, having been exposed to Vietnamese culture in Vietnam but receiving much or most of their education in the United States (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The 1.5 generation members have typically straddled both cultures and have been depicted as the most truly bicultural generation.

The third group, identified as the second-generation group, is composed of persons who were born in the United States or came before the age of 5 and retained little or no memory of Vietnam (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). These three groups represent the rich history and diversity that the Vietnam population has experienced collectively.

### **Family Expectations**

In Vietnam, the Vietnamese family was part of a collectivist culture in which the desires of the individual were often subordinate to the needs of the group (Sue & Sue, 1999). Changes often occurred in family structure with the move to the United States. Vietnamese refugees frequently immigrated with their children, but many left extended family members in Vietnam,

including the elderly and possibly the severely handicapped (To, 1993). In other instances, family members were executed or died during flight. Many male immigrants and refugees were initially unable to find jobs in the professions they had practiced in Vietnam and suffered downward mobility after immigration (Grunkemeyer, 1991).

Many Vietnamese American families maintained much of the traditional structure while adapting to changes. However, Vietnamese American families became distrustful of outsiders during the refugee process. Mistreatment by the Communist government increased their distrust (Heifetz, 1990; Lynch, 1997; To, 1993). The military and ideological turmoil of the civil war led to a fear of inquiries, especially from government agencies (To, 1993). It has been found to be useful to go through the mediation of a trusted person of authority to gain cooperation of Vietnamese Americans (To, 1993). For example, there have been a number of implications regarding family structure and community influence when working with Vietnamese American children with disabilities and their families. Vietnamese American family members have varied widely in their adaptation and acculturation to the culture of the United States and in their English fluency. Their concern about public perceptions of their family has also made some Vietnamese Americans hesitant to share information about their child's disabilities with outsiders, including medical or school personnel. (Huer, Saenz, & Doan, 2001)

In general, Vietnamese culture, like that of many other Asian countries, is strongly influenced by Chinese ideologies and religious beliefs, namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Due to a thousand years of Chinese rule and assimilation, it was inevitable that Vietnam would be affected by Chinese civilization. Despite this, Vietnamese culture is not without its own national identity. In effect, Chinese cultural practices tended to coexist with, rather than to replace, traditional Vietnamese culture and language. The advent of French colonialism and the American involvement in the South also added some Western elements to the traditional Vietnamese culture, as reflected in art, architecture, music, attire, schooling system, literature, sexual equality and social mores. Nevertheless, beneath the veneer of Chinese and Western thoughts, the indigenous culture has survived. Whereas foreign influence is unavoidable, nationhood, independence, unification and language preservation have always been uncompromising allegiances of the Vietnamese people.

The family is the center of one individual's life and the backbone of Vietnamese society. A typical family normally includes several generations that live together in the same household, although it is starting to change now. Vietnamese are strongly attached to their families and are deeply concerned with family welfare, prestige, reputation and pride. A misconduct of a Vietnamese is blamed, not only on that member, but also on the whole family, including relatives and ancestors. Filial piety is the most highly respected virtue in Vietnamese society. Thus, parents are always obeyed, respected, loved, and cared for by their children. Ancestor worship is common among Vietnamese of almost all faiths. The Vietnamese group-oriented tendency is explained by the desire to live and work in the same community or 'cultural/ethnic enclave', in contrast to the mobility of American people. Most uprooted Vietnamese left their country with great sadness because they were leaving behind families, friends, and a long-standing culture. With this strong attachment to their motherland, most Vietnamese immigrants wish to return to their homeland one day.

Respect is another key factor in the Vietnamese value system. One is expected to show respect to people senior in age, status or position, whether within or without the family.

Respectful attitudes are expressed through politeness, obedience and a descriptive system of terms of address. Most Vietnamese tend to hide their feelings, avoid conflicts and reject confrontation, in order to avoid hurting or embarrassing anyone. For example, a 'Yes' may not only be a positive answer, but could also be a polite reply used to avoid hurting the feelings of the interlocutor. In addition, the Vietnamese usually smile when they do not want to answer an embarrassing question or when they do not want to offend the interlocutor. They will also smile when scolded by a person senior in age or status to show that they still respect the person scolding and do not hold any grudge. This pattern of behavior may be interpreted as challenging or insulting (even a sign of mockery) in the American cultural context.

Friendships are highly valued, especially between close friends, who are often regarded as blood relatives. Vietnamese people are friendly and hospitable. Whether your visit is announced or unexpected, you will always be warmly received. The Vietnamese do not say 'thank you' very often, because this is considered insincere. When they do, they really mean it. This gratitude will last a lifetime and they won't feel at ease until they can somehow repay the kindness shown to them. Self-respect and saving face are extremely important to the Vietnamese; therefore, public criticism and humiliation are considered extremely rude and should be avoided. Once their feelings are hurt, it will stay in their memories for a long while. By the same token, lost confidence is very hard to restore. In general, punctuality is important to the Vietnamese, although many are notorious for using 'rubber time' (i.e., arriving between 10 to 30 minutes late) when involving parties, which can be very unsettling to some Americans. It is important that physical contact between opposite sexes be avoided. Hugging or kissing in greeting is not usual in Vietnamese culture. Most Vietnamese strongly disapprove of public expressions of affection between males and females, although this, too, is becoming common among young men and women. Touching someone on the head is not advisable, yet acceptable with small children. Gesturing to call someone with the index finger is considered rude to the Vietnamese, but with the palm down is acceptable. Crossing the index and middle fingers is considered obscene.

Vietnamese names are written as Last Name + Middle Name + First Name (e.g., NguyenVan Nam; Tran Thi Tuyet), which is opposite to the way people (including overseas Vietnamese) write their names in America. To address someone, the first name is normally used between equals in an informal context. The appropriate form of address in formal situations is a Title+ First name, as in Mr. Nam – the Vietnamese do not use the last name to address someone. This accounts for the transferred mistake Mr. John, Mrs. Susan, or Teacher Mary. Out of respect, people are addressed according to family or social relationships by kinship terms or professional ones, but not by their first names. A married woman retains her last name, but children are given their father's last name. Often, when Vietnamese students call a teacher 'Teacher' as a Vietnamese vocative of esteem, it is sometimes misinterpreted or considered inappropriate in the American classroom.

### **Making it in School**

Historically, education in Vietnam has been crucial to government advancement. In the Mandarin system, male students were tutored in the Confucian classics and required to pass a rigorous exam to earn a post as a government administrator. During the French occupation, 5 years of free schooling were provided to Vietnamese boys, but further schooling remained costly and unobtainable for many individuals (Heifetz, 1990). Although women began to attend school,

they typically received less education than men. In 1945, 95% of the population remained illiterate (Ho, 1975, cited in Woodside, 1991); however, reforms made in 1979 mandated schooling from ages 6 to 15 (Woodside, 1991).

In the past, public school systems provided little or no specialized assistance to children, in particular with disabilities, although some work programs were established for adults. In an interview with Dr. Hong Duc of the National Institute for Education and Science in Vietnam, Nisewan (1995) found that special education training for interested teachers began in 1991 and was offered for only 3 weeks. Although 37,000 children were served in special education programs, it was estimated that more than 1 million children in a country of 73 million needed services. Those children served by special education were referred to as "visible children," and it was reported that many parents continued to feel shame about a child who had disabilities.

With the immigration of the Vietnamese to the United States, the traditional respect for learning combined with the availability of free secondary education contributed to a strong parental focus on educational achievement (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Education became much more obtainable, and both boys and girls were urged to devote time and effort to obtaining good grades. Furthermore, many Vietnamese parents believed that their children's academic achievements reflected honor on their family and academic failure reflected shame.

When working with student in English mainstream classrooms, some observation have been made about their learning behaviors that is linked to their culture:

- Vietnamese students usually keep quiet in class and wait until called upon to answer the questions asked by the teachers, instead of volunteering. This is often misunderstood as a passive or non-cooperative attitude.
- Vietnamese students tend to copy down, and hence rely on, everything written on the board.
- Free lecturing would handicap many students who have not familiarized themselves with listening and note-taking skills.
- On the whole, their written English is better than their spoken English.
- Vietnamese students may not look in the eyes of the teacher; this is not because of disrespect, but out of fear or reverence. They also like to say, "Teacher"
- Vietnamese students keep quiet in class is to show respect to teachers as well as to create a productive learning environment. Being talkative, interrupting, bragging, or challenging the teacher are not typical of Vietnamese culture. Such behavior is strongly criticized and avoided.
- Vietnamese students like to ask personal questions regarding age, marital status, salary, religion, etc. because knowing the status of individuals is important in furthering a relationship, regardless of public or private.
- Vietnamese students are usually studious and fare well in most American schools despite possible obstacles such as social and language barriers.
- They are very traditional in their learning styles: they are quiet and attentive, good at memorizing and following directions, reluctant to participate (though knowing the answers), shy away from oral skills (being more comfortable with grammar and writing exercises) and from group interaction; they are meticulous in note-taking, they go 'by the book' and rely on printed information, and regard the teacher as the complete source of knowledge.

## Policy and Practice: The Vietnamese ELL in American Schools

At the national level, the top five native languages of English Language Learners (ELLs) (Table 1) are Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Korean and Arabic. According to the 2000 Census report, native speakers of Spanish represent approximately 57% of the total ELL growth. California, which borders Mexico and , houses the largest population of ELLs in the nation, with a total of 1.6 million students in comparison toof the 5 million nationwide, almost a third. The ELL subgroup represents 25% of 6.3 million K-12 total enrollments in California. More specifically, on average, 33% of the total K-5 enrollment is ELLs. This translates to more ELLs being represented at the elementary (K-5) than secondary (6-12 grades) grade levels.

Table 1.1—Growth of ELL groups in USA (U.S. Dept. of Education—OELA)

Top Language Groups	1990	2000	Growth
Spanish	1,636,874	2,584,684	57%
Asian/Pacific Islander	360,251	426,555	18%
Other	391,118	481,879	23%

In California, of those 1.6 million students (Table 1 and Figure 3), approximately 1.3 million are native speakers of Spanish. Following this largest group off ELLs is the Asian/Pacific Islander population, which includes Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese-Cantonese and Tagalog. The ELL demographic in California is representative of both the language and population of theat the national scenelevel. Thus, it is appropriate at this juncture to take a look at how the ELL population performs according to the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and the California English Language Development Test (CEDLT). An analysis of the standardized test scores will provide a perspective on how students perform according to California’s testing standard, which does not necessarily align with the language arts curriculum and standards. This perspective represents one of many accounts of how language and literacy learning is viewed by policy makers and educators in California.

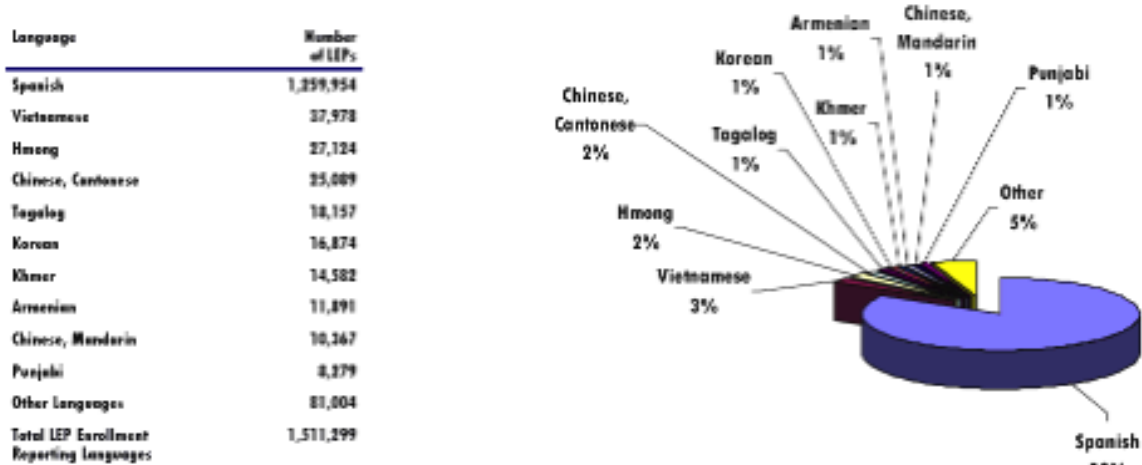


Figure 1.1—Linguistic map of ELLs for California

## Language Assessment of ELL Population

In 2005, of the total number of ELLs taking the California English Language Development Test (CEDLT), approximately 33% of the students scored at or above the early advanced level. This is the level that that students must achieve the state requires students to score at, in the area of speaking, listening, reading and writing, in order to be re-designated as fluent English proficient (FEP). Students are placed into one of five levels—advanced, early advanced, intermediate, early intermediate, and beginning. While reading and writing are assessed regularly as a part of the statewide ELA exams, CEDLT is the only standardized test source where in which educators judge the ELLs’ listening and speaking skills. This part of the test (e.g. grades 3-5) is comprised of listening to a short story and choosing the picture that corresponds with ”answers” the question (select the picture that shows...). Some questions ask students to recall story details and the main idea, w. While other questions require simple inferences. Another portion of the listening and speaking test requires the students to follow directions (e.g. following a recipe) and then choose the picture that corresponds to a set of events.

The climate of standardized testing reveals limitations rather than progress in relation to the reading and writing development of ELLs. A common metric depicting the plight of ELLs is a comparison of the overall ELL and English Only test scores. It can be viewed to show a depiction of the learning gap of between mainstream and ELL students in the area of language arts and reading. Within the California Standard Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, there are two sets of tests, the California Standards Test (CST) and the California Achievement Test 6 (CAT/6). All students who attend the California public schools must take part in one or more of the STAR tests. For elementary school students, in 2005, the difference in p-values (average percentage score differences or learning gap) between English Only (EO) and ELLs averages at about ranged from 12-18% for the CST across grade levels. There is a learning gap for language arts. Table 3 represents a sample among grades 2-4 that scored at or above proficient level for both the EO and ELL students. For the CST, there is a five level scoring placement system. They are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. In order for ELLs to be redesignated as FEP, students have to score at or above the proficient level across the STAR testing program. The gap at each of these grade levels is double digit in terms of the percentage of EOs versus ELLs achieving proficiency.

Table 1.2—2005-06 California Standards Test for grades 2-4 language arts results

	Grade 2 Language Arts	Grade 3 Language Arts	Grade 4 Language Arts
English Only (% above proficient level)	32%	30%	29%
English Language Learners (% above proficient level)	20%	12%	18%

Different from the CST, the California Achievement Test 6 (CAT/6) is administered to only 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders rather than across K-12 levels. In the areas of language arts, the CAT/6 tests specific skills such as reading, language and spelling. In Table 4, the learning gap for EOs and ELLs is represented; it is larger, as indexed by in percentage of students meeting the “mastery” standard, than compared to the differences in CST scores. In the reading portion, the difference in percentage of EO- and ELL difference in students scoring at or above 50 NPR is 32%. For language, the comparable difference is 29%.

What contributes to the learning gap between EOs and ELLs? How are educators and politicians responding to the low performance of ELLs in terms of resource, program service, curriculum and instruction, professional development and the overall policy making on behalf of language minority students in California? Of course, answering the questions is more complex than posing them. However, as the test results indicate, there is a difference between how native speakers (NS) of English perform on these set of skills than non-native speakers (NNS) of English. Setting aside the ‘how, what and for whom’ of the standardized test creation and/or the testing skills and curriculum knowledge expected of a student, there is a fundamental difference in the way ELLs learn the reading, spelling and the language structure of English. The STAR testing program is capable of and is accountable to showing the learning gap, but not in explaining the language and literacy acquisition and use differences between NS and NNS of English.

Table 1.3—2005-06 California Achievement Test for grade language arts results

	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 3 Language	Grade 3 Spelling
English Only (% scoring at or above 50 NPR)	48%	54%	62%
English Language Learners (% scoring at or above 50 NPR)	16%	25%	42%

### **Vietnamese American Education**

Similar to media reports, the academic research also portrays Vietnamese Americans as high achievers. Of the four Southeast Asian groups, the achievements of Vietnamese Americans are perhaps the most celebrated. Rutledge (1992:148) noted, “educationally, Vietnamese refugees are succeeding at an exponential rate.” Echoing this sentiment, Freeman (1995) wrote, “The academic achievements of Vietnamese school children in America are almost legendary” (p. 69). Robbins (2004:68) agreed, asserting, “the Vietnamese are well known as an ethnic group for their academic achievements and success.” Zhou and Bankston (1998) further stated that Vietnamese American children “have been doing so well, in fact, that teachers and educational researchers often see them as bringing new life into deteriorating urban public schools” (p. 130). The message is that Vietnamese American students do exceedingly well in school despite mediocre resources and deteriorating public schools. Much of the research on

Vietnamese Americans highlights their achievements on standardized tests, their attendance at selective colleges and universities, and their success in professional fields (citation here).

According to these researchers, there are several key interconnecting components to the success of Vietnamese American students. First, the educational success of Vietnamese Americans is attributed to cultural mechanisms and understood to be the result of culturally based values that emphasize the importance of education, a strong work ethic, and achievement (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991; Freeman, 1995; Penning 1992; Robbins, 2004; Rutledge, 1992; Whitmore, Trautmann, & Caplan, 1989; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Some researchers have pointed to the importance placed on education to explain educational success: “Education is extremely valued and respected among the Vietnamese and is viewed as an effective way to realize goals” (Robbins, 2004, p. 68).

Other researchers have especially emphasized that the mixture of Buddhist and Confucian traditional values that Vietnamese families brought with them are culturally compatible with the values necessary for success in American society (Freeman, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Caplan et al. (1991) contended that the educational success of Vietnamese American students cannot be explained by ethnicity, religion, gender, or the socioeconomic status and past education of the parents. Instead, the explanation for such extraordinary progress is grounded in the values the refugees brought with them from Vietnam and instill in their children:

Probably nowhere else is the role of these parents more important than in taking the upper hand to transmit the message embodied in the cultural values. They have faith that the cultural foundation on which their lives rest will support them through the vicissitudes of how every value item influences the family in all domains of family life and achievement, they demonstrate that the basic tenets and norms are acquired by the children and relate directly to achievement in school and the management of day-to-day routines of family life. (p. 121)

This argument asserts that Vietnamese cultural values are a vital factor in the educational success of Vietnamese American children. Successful adaptation, according to Caplan et al. (1991), is not the result of Vietnamese refugees’ willingness to adopt American customs but rather is due to an adherence to traditional values and norms. In their study of Vietnamese youth in New Orleans, Zhou and Bankston (1998) arrived at similar conclusions: “For Vietnamese children ethnicity is not necessarily a barrier to becoming American, rather, it is a means of becoming American”(p. 235). According to these researchers, the most successful Vietnamese youth are those who adhere to family and community values and do not become too American. Their findings challenge the straight-line assimilation theories that assume that cultural assimilation is necessary for success in the United States. Related to the cultural adherence argument, researchers have argued that Vietnamese American students’ academic achievements may be linked to the Vietnamese family lifestyle (Caplan et al., 1991; Freeman, 1995; Hung & Haines, 1996; Penning, 1992; Rutledge 1992). According to this view, family activities are routinized to highlight the importance of hard work and education. Caplan et al. (1991) noted that when Vietnamese children get home from school, they have a brief respite during which they may watch television and eat a snack. Soon afterwards,

everyone takes part in carrying out day-to-day chores, such as cooking, shopping, transportation, cleaning, laundry, mowing the lawn, clearing the table for dinner, and doing the dishes, before turning to their schoolwork and helping younger siblings with their homework assignments. (p. 123)

Similarly, Rutledge (1992) noted that education receives a lot of attention in the Vietnamese household. Discussions about children's grades, homework, and education are the focus of family meals.

Much of the research also points to the way Vietnamese Americans view achievement as a collective affair. Educational success is the result of family bonds and obligation (Centrie, 2000; Kibria, 1993; Penning, 1992; Rutledge, 1992; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Within the larger ethnic social context of the family, "[c]hildren [are] constantly reminded of their duty to respect elders, to take care of younger siblings, to work hard, and to make decisions only with the approval of their parents" (Zhou & Bankston, 1998, p. 151). Likewise, Centrie (2000) shared, "Vietnamese children were consistently obedient; I never saw a Vietnamese child talk back to his or her parents, or question parental or adult authority or decisions in the presence of adults" (p. 73). Siblings help one another with homework assignments, and if they do not have enough homework, parents provide children with additional sample problems or reading (Rutledge, 1992). Moreover, there is a pragmatic concern underlying traditional values (Penning, 1992). Because Vietnamese American parents regard the education of their children as an investment in the future, much planning goes into the selection of an educational strategy that would assure the student (and thus the family) success (Kibria, 1993; Penning, 1992).

The relationships that Vietnamese families have with their coethnic communities and the relationships that Vietnamese students have with their families and communities have been identified as forms of social capital that support education (Bankston, 1996; Centrie, 2000; Maloof, Rubin, & Miller, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1996, 1998). Involvement in ethnic community organizations (e.g., religious institutions) helps Vietnamese immigrants maintain the cultural values of the community (e.g., respect for elders) and facilitates young people's social integration into the family and community (Zhou & Bankston, 1998; cf. Zhou & Kim, 2006). Ethnic communities also support afternoon schools for students and cultural celebrations (Centrie, 2000; Zhou & Bankston, 1996, 1998). Zhou and Bankston (1998) explained, "Why many Vietnamese children do relatively well is explained by their easy access to ethnic resources that can help them overcome adjustment difficulties" (p. 45). Similarly, Teranishi's (2004) research finds that Vietnamese students' social networks of siblings and relatives who attended U.S. colleges provide them with resources that help them in their college decision-making process. In the same vein, Conchas (2006) reported that the social capital Vietnamese students garner through interactions with high-achieving peers and teachers promotes good behavior, achievement, and school success. He also noted that teachers expect the Vietnamese students to excel because of their race.

Additionally, explanations of the success of Vietnamese American students argue that students are taking advantage of the educational opportunities in the United States that are not available to them in Vietnam (Caplan et al., 1991; Centrie, 2000; Freeman 1995; Kibria, 1993; Robbins, 2004; Rutledge 1992; Whitmore et al., 1989; Zhou & Bankston 1998). As Caplan et al.

(1991) put it, for Vietnamese Americans, “the U.S. educational system is an equalizer of the inequities of privilege that existed in Indochina” (p. 129). Robbins (2004) noted that “compared with those in Vietnam, the schooling opportunities in the United States are vast” (p. 69). Similarly, Freeman (1995) pointed out that “the opportunities available in America, both economic and educational, are more than they could ever have imagined, and they are taking advantage of them” (p. 77). Conchas’s (2006) study of high-achieving Vietnamese students also found that children were reminded of the sacrifices that parents made to provide children with opportunity. In instances where Vietnamese students complained that they did not want to study, Centrie (2000) found that “[a]n older Vietnamese teen would intervene and remind everyone how hard it was for their parents to come to the United States, how they lost everything in Vietnam, and that it was up to them (the students) to take advantage of school” (p. 73). Significantly, this explanation supports the idea of the American Dream and that the United States is an open society free of significant racial or class barriers to mobility.

Although the research literature emphasizes the educational successes of Vietnamese American students and families, some of the research also indicates the existence of tensions and problems in the education of Vietnamese American students (Davis & McDaid, 1992; Kibria, 1993; Long, 1996; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Not all Vietnamese youth are doing well—there are delinquent valedictorians as well as valedictorian delinquents (Kibria, 1993). For example, Long (1996; see also Ima, 1995) noted that significant numbers of Vietnamese youth are estranged from American culture, alienated from school, and being pushed into gangs. Davis and McDaid (1992) noted that although Vietnamese students believe their parents are interested in their education and success, they also reported that parents do not attend school functions to meet their teachers or participate in school activities. Even Zhou and Bankston (1998), who concluded that Vietnamese American children are doing exceedingly well academically, conceded that there is “an unignorable number”(p. 194) of Vietnamese youth who are not well adjusted to school:

Substantial anecdotal evidence points to delinquency as an issue of growing significance among younger-generation Vietnamese. Although Vietnamese youths have made remarkable academic achievements, they have also showed relatively high rates of juvenile delinquency and youth gang involvement. (pp. 185–186)

According to Zhou and Bankston (1998), the highest rates of delinquency occur within the second generation. These low-achieving, delinquent youth are described as having lost their culture (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). According to these researchers, loss of culture or “over-Americanization” and disconnection from coethnic networks puts youth at risk for delinquency. Similarly, intergenerational conflict and loss of parental authority are said to put youth at risk for delinquent behavior. One explanation for weakened parental authority includes the Americanization of youth with the concomitant loss of cultural values (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). A second explanation includes the shift in power relations between Vietnamese adults and youth because youth are responsible for adult roles such as paying bills and dealing with outside authorities (Ima, 1995; Kibria, 1993; Long, 1996; Nghe, Mahalik, & Lowe, 2003; Tse, 1996). For example, Tse (1996) pointed to Vietnamese students’ role as language brokers in their families, where they assume parental responsibilities such as communicating directly with school

teachers and staff and making decisions about their education (see also Kibria, 1993; Nghe et al., 2003).

The research on Vietnamese American education also suggests that gender is a salient factor for Vietnamese families. Although gender was not a strong emphasis in the research on Vietnamese Americans, a few of the findings are worth mentioning. For example, although Zhou and Bankston (1998) stressed the importance of ethnic communities and cultural values for the academic achievement of Vietnamese students, they also noted that the increased participation of Vietnamese women in education reflects gender role changes in the United States. Shifts in expectations for Vietnamese females due to economic necessity have opened opportunities for women in education. More recently, Pataray-Ching with Kitt-Hinrichs and Nguyen (2006) reported that the father of one of their female research participants did not want his daughter to be too proficient in English because she is female. As they explained, “within the Vietnamese culture that if women are too educated, they might have a hard time finding a husband” (Pataray-Ching et al., 2006, p. 255). In a different way, Robbins (2004) underscored the importance of gender for Vietnamese students’ behavior and participation in her classroom with gender role explanations that are connected to cultural norms. She asserted that the Vietnamese “[b]oys worried more about losing face because by being male they had a higher cultural status” (p. 71), and “Vietnamese behavior roles were the main reason the girls wanted to have a classroom with girls only” (p. 72). Likewise, Conchas (2006) found that Vietnamese boys receive more attention and esteem than girls.

In addition to difficulties created by gender, some research notes the negative impact of poverty on school achievement. Conchas (2006) observed that Vietnamese students must juggle responsibilities in the home with household chores and as translators and cultural brokers for parents and other relatives. Other researchers pointed to the long work hours of parents that leave no time to support children’s homework, attend to how children are spending their free time, or address children’s problems at school (Chuong, 1999; Long, 1996). These researchers linked the subsistence employment that takes parents out of the home to the increase in gang involvement, violence, and truancy among Vietnamese American youth (Chuong, 1999; Long, 1996). Likewise, in a case study of a California high school, Ima (1995) reported that Vietnamese students have numerous difficulties in school that are partly rooted in problems at home. Contrary to much of the research literature, Ima reported that many of the Vietnamese students do not have the support of a strong family/community unit, sharing that school counselors noted that many students do not have functional families.

Furthermore, the manner in which Vietnamese families approach education as a collective has important consequences for Vietnamese students’ educational experiences (Chuong, 1999; Kibria, 1993). Indeed, although Zhou and Bankston (1998) may be correct in asserting that “[c]hildren [are] constantly reminded of their duty to respect elders, to take care of younger siblings, to work hard, and to make decisions only with the approval of their parents” (p. 151); they do not pay enough attention to the negative effects of such responsibility and pressure. For example, Kibria (1993) argued that Vietnamese families’ approach to educational pursuits as a collective affair creates enormous pressure for Vietnamese students to do well in school. For Vietnamese children, their future as well as the future of other family members hinges on their success (Freeman, 1995; Kibria, 1993). Although some children have been able to meet the pressures successfully, others have not. According to Kibria (1993), for those who did not do

well, “the general sense of failure that stemmed from their inability to do well at school was overwhelming; they felt that they had let their families down” (p. 156). Although research on Vietnamese students’ education stresses the influence of family, community, and culture on student achievement, some research points to the role schools play in student achievement. Researchers have attributed the problems that many Vietnamese American students and families are facing to the practices of schools. Long (1996), Chuong (1999), and Ima (1995) argued that schools are not equipped to teach—let alone assess the language skills of—language minority students such as Vietnamese American students. Long (1996) contended that Vietnamese children are improperly placed in classes that often exceed their English proficiency. When Vietnamese children do poorly as a result of the placement, they tend to become embarrassed, lose confidence, and become truant and drop out. Similarly, Ima (1995) discovered that schools lack bilingual staff, resources, and training to assist monolingual teachers to teach about the cultures of immigrant students.

### **Why study this population?**

The last twenty-five years have witnessed significant changes in the demographic profile of the U.S. student population. During that time, the fastest growing segment of the school-age population has been English Language Learners (ELLs), doubling their numbers from approximately 2 million in 1989-90 to more than 5 million in 2004-05. In 2004-05, ELLs represented 10.5% of the total public school student enrollment. While ELL students are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in many government and education reports, for purposes of this dissertation the term ELL will be used to refer to students whose first language is not English, encompassing both students who are just beginning to learn English and those who have already developed considerable proficiency.<sup>2</sup> ELL students share one important educational variable — the need to increase their proficiency in English — but they differ in language, cultural background and socioeconomic status. The term ELL includes a wide range of students: Native American students, long-established language minority communities (e.g., Japanese and Chicano populations) in the U.S., migrant families, and immigrant groups, who represent the most recent arrivals. Table 1.1, below, indicates the top 10 spoken by ELL students by grade level in 2000. Spanish is the language spoken by most ELL students K-12. Today, more than 80% of all ELL students are native Spanish speakers. Asian languages (Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Hmong) are spoken by ELLs at a much lower percentage (3%), but the numbers are on the increase. In particular, Southeast Asians from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are among the largest group of refugees to be resettled in the U.S. in the aftermath of the Vietnam War.<sup>2</sup> Now totaling more than 2 million and growing in size, Southeast Asian Americans can be found in all 50 states across the U.S. As recent refugees, many Southeast Asians have never had a formal education in their homeland, so they never acquired the ability to read and write in their native language. Many Southeast Asian American households are officially designated as linguistically isolated, i.e., most household members are 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English. The latest census figures reveal that compared to

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<sup>2</sup> Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Annual Report to Congress—2005, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/05arc7.htm#8>

just 4% of the total U.S. population, 32% of Cambodian-, 35% of Hmong-, 32% of Lao-, and 45% of Vietnamese American households are linguistically isolated.<sup>3</sup> Consequently this means that many Southeast Asian American students come from homes where they speak a language other than English. Compared to only 19% of the U.S. population aged 5 and over who speak a language other than English, 85% of Cambodian-, 95% of Hmong-, 88% of Lao-, and 84% of Vietnamese Americans aged 5 and over speak a language other than English in their homes.<sup>4</sup>

Overshadowed by the model minority myth that stereotypes all Asian American students as doing well academically, the needs of Southeast Asian American students, particularly English Language Learners (ELLs), are often overlooked. Southeast Asian American students are among the nation's 5.5 million ELL students.<sup>5</sup> In fact, following Spanish (by a large margin), the second and third most spoken language of English language learners are Vietnamese and Hmong.<sup>6</sup>

Like all ELL students, Southeast Asian American ELL students face multiple barriers to attaining educational success. Not only do ELL students face the rigors of learning a new language, they are also trying to learn other educational subject matter in this unfamiliar language. Due to parent's limited English language abilities, these students may lack parental support in the form of assistance with homework and school projects. As a result of the lack of resources available to ELL students outside of the classroom, having access to high quality teachers and services as well as in-school and community resources are integral to supporting the academic growth of ELL students. Properly trained teachers are better equipped to teach and prepare ELL students for success. Yet less than 3% of teachers instructing ELL have a degree in English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education. In addition to the very limited number of quality teachers, there is also a lack of quality educational services for ELL students. Only 8% of ELL students receive extensive instruction designed specifically to meet their learning needs. In other words, 8% of ELL students are receiving 10 or more hours of ESL instruction per week of content instruction and at least 25% or 2.5 hours of the instructional time is in the students' native language.

In chapter 2, I will turn to the theoretical, conceptual and research context to lay the groundwork for the case study. From a research perspective, overall, the young Vietnamese ELL population has been understudied in the United States. That alone is justification for any qualitative or quantitative study. However, with an increase in the number of ELLs (1-Spanish and 2-Vietnamese) nationally, questions as to how this student population develops in both L1 and L2 oral and written languages requires answering. In the classroom context, I want to

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<sup>3</sup> Source: 2000 Census; see also SEARAC's Southeast Asian American Statistical Profile at [www.searac.org](http://www.searac.org); A "linguistically isolated" household is one in which no member over 14 years old and over (1) speaks English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well".

<sup>4</sup> Data Set: 2005 American Community Survey. S0201. Selected Population Profile in the United States. Population Group: Cambodian alone or in combination, Hmong alone or in combination, Lao alone or in combination, and Vietnamese alone or in combination with one or more other races.

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/lepfactsheet.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/lepfactsheet.html); See also MALDEF testimony, [http://www.maldef.org/pdf/Zamora\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.maldef.org/pdf/Zamora_Testimony.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> National Educational Association. [www.nea.org/achievement/talkingells.html](http://www.nea.org/achievement/talkingells.html).

understand the affordances, emergencies and interactions of language learners. Given the changes in educational policies, curriculum development, and instructional strategies affecting ELLs, I want to know where past research has taken the field in better understanding how Vietnamese language learners acquire and use language in American public schools. Specifically, I want to know if an ecological perspective on language learning has provided a model for capturing the interaction of ELLs with its learning environment or niche.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical, Conceptual and Research Context**

A general *ecological perspective* encompasses the totality of the relationships that a learner, as a living organism, entertains with all aspects of his/her environment. As such, it is a relational “way of seeing” that enables researchers and practitioners to account for phenomena that would otherwise go unnoticed or unaccounted for.

(Kramsch, 2002)

First and foremost, using language, and using it *consciously* and *deliberately*, means expressing our humanity and collaborating with others in the construction of our common reality.

(Leo van Lier, 1997)

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I set the theoretical, conceptual, and research context for the current investigation of the role of L1 literacy in the development of both L1 and L2 language and literacy development. In chapter one, I described the conditions that accounted for the plight of Vietnamese ELLs in America’s schools—their successes, failures, and cultural factors accounting for both. Now, I will unpack the theoretical framework that has guided my case study, namely using the *ecological perspective*, espoused by Kramsch (2002), and *metalinguistic awareness* used by Bialystok (1991), Hawkins (1984), James and Garret (1991) and van Lier (1997) to explain the language acquisition and socialization of bilingual learners in the classroom. Since the focus of this case study is on the oral and written language development of young learners, I lean on both theories to provide codes for classroom observations (chapter 3) and data analysis (chapter 4 and 5). An ecological perspective provided a framework for observing and noting the context of learning, while using the concept of metalinguistic awareness identified specific language form and function to capture the L1 and L2 development and proficiency of young Vietnamese language learners in schools over the course of one academic year. I will expand on the components of the ecological perspective such as *emergence*, *affordance* and *interaction* to describe the context where students, teachers and the curriculum associate to develop language and literacy abilities and to acquire sociocultural practices to communicate in a community of learners. In the process I will discuss the dimensions of metalinguistic awareness such as *control* and *analysis* to relate to tasks such as *error correction*, *pronunciation*, *translation*, *language play*, *repeated reading* and *imagination and creative use of language*, observed during the interactions between students and teachers around literacy activities in this case study.

With the policy and theoretical contexts in mind, I turn next to the research on language and literacy learning for ELLs, focusing mainly on research with Vietnamese ELLs, bringing in work on other ELL populations where it illuminates what we know and need to learn about Vietnamese learners. I will provide the literature on the L1 (Vietnamese) and L2 (English) oral and written language development specific to metalinguistic awareness as a set of skills in

acquiring language form and function. The review ends with a statement explaining how and why the current study has the potential to add to our developing knowledge base about this important, growing, and heretofore understudied population of English Language learners (ELLs).

## **Ecological Perspectives on Language Acquisition and Socialization**

### **Ecological Perspective as a Theory for Capturing Learning**

Kramsch (2002) captured the essence of an ecological perspective by weaving both the individual and the learning environment together. As researchers, we should question the traditional idea that language acquisition are linguistic codes and that language socialization is in the form of stages of development or rule based behaviors. Consider the learning of a language involve a reflexive way of seeing the environment that is contingent on the spatial and historical features of the learner, teacher and the curriculum. From a global stance, the increase in ethnic, social and cultural diversity is occurring at a fast rate and the educational system is not catching up to all the potential changes that will influence the way language and literacy is acquired and used. Currently, schools are faced with multiple issues of professional development, curriculum and instruction, and teaching resource gathering as it addresses the multi-ethnic, multi-sociocultural and multi-lingual needs of the changing student population. Specifically, for English language learners, researchers want to know how does an ecological perspective capture the language and literacy learning needs and therefore, inform current research in the areas of second language acquisition and literacy development?

One way to respond to the above question is to look onto the field of ecology to examine the language learning experiences of young bilingual children. Ecology refers to the interaction of all organisms in the environment or specific ecosystems. Here, environment means the physical, biological and social features of the world. As a field of study, ecology is used to provide a ‘worldview that is completely different from the scientific, that its core meaning relates to the study and management of the ecosphere or biosphere’ (van Lier, 2000). For language ecology, it is the context where language is learned and used embedded in the micro and macro aspects of sociolinguistic, educational, economic or political settings rather than de-contextualized. Specific to linguistics, an ecological perspective on language learning relates the forms with function around thought, action and power rather than just codes conveyed through words, sentences or rules of grammar. Kramsch (2002:5) added that the “ecology” metaphor is ‘the poststructuralist realization that learning is a nonlinear, relational human activity, co-constructed between humans and their environment, contingent upon their position in space and history.’ Conceptual models were gathered from across fields such as psychology and linguistics to capture the ecological nature of language learning and development. Among those are Gibson’s (1986) theory of visual perception and Lewin’s (1943) studies, using action research to explore the ‘life space’ (social context). In linguistics, early references connecting ecology to language are Trim (1959), Haugen (1972), Mühlhäusler (1996) and Halliday (1975).

Haugen (1972) first coined the term language ecology as “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment.” In the 1990s the notion of language ecology and eco-linguistics was developed and adapted by Peter Mühlhäusler (1996; 2000; 2001), Mark Fettes (1997; 1999) Nancy Hornberger (2002) and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1994, 2000) as a

response, in particular, to a growing sense that many languages in the world were being lost, and the links this had with a similar reduction in biological diversity. An ecological approach to linguistic diversity includes the deployment of environmental or biomorphic metaphors to argue or demonstrate perceived similarities between linguistic diversity and a loss in natural floral and faunal diversity, as well as the use of biological metaphors such as ‘language death’, ‘living languages’ and ‘mother tongues’ to locate languages in the ‘natural’ world.

Kramersch (2002) stated that an ecological perspective brings into focus ‘all those intractable aspects of language development that have not been the object of systematic inquiry.’ For example, investigating language learning through the use of parody and play (Crystal, 1998; Cook, 2000; Tarone, 2000); and imagination and creativity (Tannen, 1989; Cook, 2000; Carter, 2004) requires further attention. But, what conceptual models best capture the ecological nature of language learning tasks that exist in current elementary classrooms? Kramersch suggested the following ecological models: (1) complex, nonlinear, relational; (2) affordance, emergence and interaction; (3) constraints and equilibrium rather than rules; (4) the representation-action continuum; (5) multiple timescales; (6) hierarchies of organizational levels; and (7) mediation through material, social, and discourse processes. Brief descriptions will be given to all except the concepts of *interaction*, *emergence* and *affordance* as it relates to language learning and development.

**Complex, nonlinear, and relational model.** Chaos/complexity (C/CT), activity and interaction theories take the perspective that new order in the *relational* nature of organisms in the environment can emerge from disorder. The relational results are not necessarily proportional to or attributed to the causes and it occurs at multiple levels of phenomenon, across multiple timescales and with multiple semiotic and linguistic forms. Larson-Freeman (1997) stated that since chaos/complexity science deal with complex, dynamic, nonlinear systems, it is appropriate to use C/CT to synthesize the emergent wholes from the interactions of the individual components. In other words, ‘outcomes arise that cannot be anticipated from an examination of the parts independently...rather, the agents/elements act, react to, and interact with their environment without any reference to global goals—they are undertaking purely local transaction’ Larson-Freeman (2002:38). In relation to the study of second language acquisition, the way to connect cognitive acquisition and social use is to look at language learning as a complex, nonlinear and interactive process. Accounting for the language transformation in the classroom context requires that the researcher see use and acquisition as synchronous to the learning environment. This means that the researcher must view the learner acquiring language form and function as being dependent on the input (Krashen, 1982), output (Swain, 1995) and/or interaction (Long, 1996) of and between the interlocutors, curriculum, instructional strategies, educational policies, and socio-cultural practices of the classroom. For the Vietnamese language learners, understanding the relational aspects between the cultural norms of the home to the cultural norms of the classroom will not only illuminate the complexity of language learning but, to account for all the emergence and affordances the environment provides. From the emergent grammar perspective, ‘language is a real-time activity, whose regularities are always provisional and are continually subject to negotiation, renovation, and abandonment’ (Hopper, 1988:120).

**Language affordance, emergence and interaction.** In the complex, nonlinear systems of chaos/complexity theory, only the interactions of the individual components are meaningful, not the components themselves. If ELLs are not acquiring the L2 oral language development in the process of aiding reading comprehension in schools, then an ecological perspective on interaction and emergence would explain the failure to be not of the individual but of the relationship between the school's curriculum standards and implementation with what language and literacy knowledge students bring to the school. The failure of the 'relation' between the school and ELL students resides in issues such as home/school discontinuities with literacy practices, lack of knowledge with language assessment for second language learners, the way children are taught reading in the classrooms based on schools' expectations for literacy development, or how bilingual teachers decide reading readiness in English with minimal knowledge of the student's native language capabilities.

**Language Affordances.** In his contribution to the field of psychology and work on visual perception Gibson (1986:127) described 'affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill and refers to both the environment and the animal...it implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.' Gibson cited the environment and its affordances: a track in a forest affords walking, a knee-high surface above the ground affords sitting, or a surface of water affords swimming. Humans can modify the surfaces by cutting, cleaning, or paving as to change the affordances. An ecological perspective would take into consideration all of the affordances in the stream of interactions before drawing any conclusion about the nature of that environment.

Van Lier (2000, 2004, 2008) gathered four different definitions of affordance. Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1991:203) defined 'affordances consist in the opportunities for interaction that things in the environment possess relative to sensorimotor capacities of the animal.' From Shotter and Newson's perspective (1982:34) affordance was seen as 'demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablements and constraints.' In Van Lier (2004:91), he added two more definitions, one by Neisser (1987:21), 'affordances are relations of possibility between animals and their environments,' and another by Forrester (1999:88) who provided a definition for affordance, in the context of language, as 'immediately recognizable projections, predictions and perceived consequences of making this (and not that) utterance at any given time.' Language learning is a consequence of the environment and its affordances through learners' interactions with peers, the curriculum and the sociocultural practices of the classroom.

Van Lier (2004:91-2) noted the similarities between the definitions – relations, possibility, opportunity, immediacy, and interaction –, and adds that 'affordance refers to what is available to the person to do something with and more accurately, it is *action in potential* and it emerges as we interact with the physical and social world'. Stoffregen (2003:115), in Sahin et al (2007:455), also sees affordances as emergencies. For Stoffregen, 'affordances are properties of the animal –environment system, that is, that they are emergent properties that do not inhere in either the environment or the animal.' In Stoffregen's definition, affordance is portrayed neither as a property of the environment nor as a property of the individual, but as something which emerges from the interaction between both. In Chemero's words (2003:181), also in Sahin et al (2007:456), 'affordances are relations between the abilities of organisms and features of the

environment.’ Here, the learner, as individuals, bring into the classroom different knowledge experiences and perceptions of how organisms interact in the world. The interactions emerge from social practices. Vietnamese language learners function in similar niches as other ethnic learners but, can have different perceptions, influenced by their own cultural backgrounds. These differences afforded them different experiences and knowledge about how language develops, gets acquired and used locally in the classroom. The emergent nature of affordances suggests that they are best understood in social practices. The idea that the perception and interpretation of the environment affords certain linguistic social practices has been influencing the way we look at the language learning phenomenon. Van Lier (2000:246) defended that ‘from an ecological perspective, the learner is immersed in an environment full of potential meanings. These meanings are available gradually as the learner acts within and with the environment’. Action, perception and interpretation, in a continuous cycle of mutual reinforcement, are preconditions for the emergence of meaning (van Lier 2004:92). But, how can the differences in the niches, coupled with differences in learners’ language experiences, attribute to the understanding of how language is formed and used over time and space?

Using an ecological perspective in explaining the niches will provide some answers. Gibson views each species as occupying a niche that contains a set of affordances. ‘The niche implies a kind of animal, and the animal implies a kind of niche’ (Gibson 1986:129). He explained that:

There are all kinds of nutrients in the world and all sorts of ways of getting food; all sorts of shelters or hiding places, such as holes, crevices, and caves; all sorts of materials for *making* shelters, nests, mounds, huts; all kinds of locomotion that the environment makes possible, such as swimming, crawling, walking, climbing, flying . These offerings have been taken advantage of; the niches have been occupied. But, for all we know, there may be many offerings of the environment that have *not* been taken advantage of, that is, niches not yet occupied.

A niche has to do with the relational position of an individual in its biome or environment. As Polechová and Storch (2008:1) noted, ‘ecological niche characterizes the position of a species within an ecosystem, comprising species habitat requirements as well as its functional role.’ What the individual does influences the niche and the niche influences the individual by offering opportunities for his/her actions or by constraining them. Polechová and Storch (2008) described three approaches to niche: (1) niche as the description of a species’ habitat requirement; (2) niche as an ecological function of the species; and (3) niche as a species position in a community. So, how would a niche, such as the classroom environment, be mediated by language? What kind of affordances would the English language learners have? Is the classroom environment a natural setting to gather the data to respond to these sets of questions? In an attempt to understand these approaches in relation to language learning, I would interpret these approaches as (1) niche as an environment mediated by language; (2) niche as a place to act in by using the language; and (3) niche as a language user position in a discourse community. Van Lier (2004:95) would say that

from an ecological perspective a niche would provide ‘language affordances, whether natural or cultural, direct or indirect are relations of possibility among language users.’

In a classroom where a second language is acquired and used, the affordances are different for learners than they would be in a monolingual classroom. Each learner brings to the classroom his/her own prior linguistic knowledge experiences that are filled with sociocultural practices. Language affordances are not properties of the environment or niche but, a result of language use. Language emerges through social interactions, using local cultural practices situated in the classroom context.

***Language Emergence.*** Ecological perspectives on language learning encompass both the philosophical and scientific tradition known as emergentism. From the scientific tradition, Mill (1930) asserted that a system can have properties that amount to more than the sum of its parts. Mill (1930:243) observed it in the physical environment:

The chemical combination of two substances produces, as is well known, a third substance with properties different from those of either of the two substances separately, or both of them taken together. Not a trace of the properties of hydrogen or oxygen is observable in those of their compound, water.

His observations supported the study of Complex Systems that explained the range from atoms to the weather and accounted for the dynamic non-linear behavior that included many interacting and interconnected parts. A system is dynamic if it is constantly chaotic and in flux; it is non-linear if effects are out of proportion to causes. An example, is when a neglected candle causes a fire that destroys an entire city. In relation to language learning as a phenomenon, how does emergentism capture the chaos?

MacWhinney (1998) rejected the notion that emergentism is either nativism or empiricism. Emergentism views ‘nativist and empiricist formulations as the partial and preliminary components of a more complete account’ of language learning. It provides a conceptual way of understanding theories of cognition in relation to sociocultural theories. According to O’Grady et al. (2009), ‘the core properties of language are best understood in reference to the properties of general cognitive mechanisms and their interaction with each other and with experience.’ Emergentist approach to language acquisition can be divided into two types: input-based emergentism and processor-based emergentism.

*Input-based emergentism.* MacWhinney (1987) introduced the Competition Model to explain how language learners identify and prioritize the various competing linguistic cues (i.e. word order, animacy, case, or agreement) used to comprehend sentences. One way to capture the cues is through language input: how often the cue is present when a particular pattern is being interpreted (cue availability), and how often it points to a particular interpretation (cue reliability). In the case of English, for instance, word order is a highly available and reliable cue for identifying a sentence’s subject—which almost always occurs preverbally.

*Processor-based emergentism.* Hawkins (2004) and O’Grady (2005) looked at language from the Universal Grammar-based approach to explain the linguistic processing factors. Hawkins used language typology to analyze the language learning phenomenon. He looked at

universals and cross-linguistic variation in the syntax of particular language. O'Grady (2005) examined the language acquisition of learners in order to explain the syntactic emergence of learners such as binding, control, agreement, scope etc. The processing of syntactic structure is sensitive to the relative frequency of form-meaning mappings. O'Grady proposed that the gap between experience and speaker's linguistic knowledge is bridged by the processor. The processor is like the experiences in the social world that is mediated by language. That experience will help the learner direct the learners to particular options that are not evident from information available in the input. This is where investigation into the interactions among interlocutors and the use of language to communicate is needed from an ecological perspective.

**Language Interaction.** Gass (1997), Long (1996), and Pica et al. (1996) developed the perspective on interaction to explain the complex phenomenon of language processing. Interaction serves as a tool in the negotiation of meaning on an aspect of language that was not comprehensible prior. Long (1996:451-52) added in the 'interaction hypothesis':

Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.

Van Lier (2000) stated that negotiation of meaning benefit learners, as they acquire a second language in three ways: improved comprehensibility of input, enhanced attention, and the need to produce output. He added that the learner acquired native-like language when s/he interacts with a native speaker or a more competent interlocutor. Linguistic knowledge can be gained from learners who have better grasp of the target language. When learners modify their interaction through negotiation, L2 learning will take place. The modified version might take a 'form of a word or phrase extracted or segmented from the original utterance, a paraphrase or a synonym thereof' (Pica et al., 1996:62).

The process of interaction and language processing creates L2 learning affordances. Pica et al., (1996:63) cited examples of this in Excerpts 1-2 below. In Excerpt 1 the NS modified a prior message, but here modified what the learner had said. The NS signal, you mean the trees have branches?, segmented tree from the learner's initial utterance, then added a plural -s morpheme and substituted branches for stick. In so doing, the NS not only confirmed the learner's original message but also displayed to the learner a morphologically and lexically modified version that showed greater conformity to the standard variety of English, the learner's presumed target.

*1. Learner*

and tree with stick  
yes [response]

*NS Interlocutor*

you mean the trees have branches  
[signal]  
(Pica, 1992; Pica, 1994, p. 5 15)

In Excerpt 2, negotiation with NSs can offer learners a speaking context in which they, too, can manipulate and modify their messages toward greater comprehensibility. Simple clarification requests and signals from the NS such as *what?* or *you did what?* has been found to be particularly effective. Thus, in Excerpt 2 the learner responded to the NS question *you have what?* by segmenting *glass* from his initial utterance, then clarified its pronunciation as *grass* and added to its meaning the related lexical item *plants*.

<p>1. <i>Learner</i>          around the house we have glass          uh grass, plants and grass [response]</p>	<p><i>NS Interlocutor</i>          you have what? [signal]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Pica, 1992)</p>
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The interaction, input and negotiation between the two afforded the opportunities to modify the learner's prior utterances as they retain or extend their meaning and repeat or reshape their form. Also, NSs' responses to learners' signals provided lexical and structural modifications. It enhanced message comprehensibility and served as input on L2 form and meaning.

The above examples were provided to show the interactions between learners and NSs. But, what happens when the interactions takes place between the learner-learner? Can they give feedback to each other where L2 learning takes place? Bruton and Samuda (1980) learners gave corrective feedback during interactions without the NS. Gass and Varonis (1985, 1989), Pica and Doughty (1985a, 1985b), and Porter (1983, 1986) have located many instances of learners' calling attention to each other's errors as they negotiated toward message comprehensibility. Learners not only call attention to each others' errors, but they usually do so without miscorrection, as observed in a variety of contexts of peer feedback (Jacobs, 1989; Rodgers, 1988). The signals in the input give learners the comprehensibility of messages and allow for L2 morphosyntax modification. Learners' signals allow for the extraction and segmentation of single words or phrases from the prior utterances of other learners rather than to modify based on lexical adjustments of paraphrase and word substitution or structural changes of embedding or relocation of prior utterance constituents.

Going back to the L-NS interactions, studies have suggested that learners are able to adjust and expand their original utterances when they respond to negotiation signals from NSs (Pica, 1992). The modification through responses is based on the linguistic signals towards the learners. For example, when signals were open ended, learners responded with modified versions of their prior utterances. It is suggested that learners' modified signals would not be any more effective than that of NSs in gathering the modification from output from other learners.

**Constraints and equilibrium rather than rules.** In optimality theory, grammar and phonology are best captured by constraints rather than rules. Within a complex language learning environment, learners perform best under constraints and settle into a temporary equilibrium. Connectionism theory is the gradual, experience –driven adjustment of connection weights between levels of distributed processing. Processing does not only take place between the “input” and the “output” in the individual's mind, but is distributed across neurons in an

individual's mind and across individuals. Adaptive responses to changing inputs are based on constraints that are particular to a given context. The acquirer is approached as a complex adaptive system in his/her social environment, neither completely random nor completely deterministic.

Recognizing that the relation between schools and ELLs is a complex adaptive system, educators interested in understanding the relationship between oral language proficiency and reading comprehension should realize that schools associates reading with 'information retrieval' that is shared orally with others, talked about in class orally, used for oral display questions on the part of the teacher, embedded in oral participatory and collaborative activities, verbalized and made public to others. The interpretation of text is made public through literacy practices such as read alouds, think alouds with language awareness, or reading instructional conversations among students, with or without teacher guidance. L2 readers have to recognize the relationship between L2 language structure and their L1 linguistic knowledge to make meaning. This adaptation to the changing input or the specific language form processed during reading instruction may or may not produce a proficient L2 reader. Proficiency is defined here as having acquired both the linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of the second language in order to comprehend text while reading, writing, listening and speaking.

**The representation-action continuum.** Knowledge and language awareness are not exclusively propositional and representational, but are considered to be motivated, action driven, the motives frequently being established in the process of the activity itself. During reading, ELLs are tapping into their "linguistic-experiential knowledge" to transact with the text. Teachers often preview books with students by introducing them to the vocabulary and its definitions. This form of scaffolding for reading comprehension requires students to learn language factually or referentially defined by a dictionary as opposed to making meaning with words in relation to either the immediate context of learning or in reference to the ELLs' native language experiences. ELLs are not encouraged to play with unconventional meanings of words, phrases or sentences. The act of meaning making using students' creative uses of language is not part of the traditional monolingual schools. Creative uses allow the child to analyze the constituent elements of language through gestures, ludic play or language performance among peers.

**Multiple timescales.** Kramsch (2002:19) stated 'linguistic phenomena are linked to other nonlinguistic, semiotic system that cannot be separated from an individual's memory of past phenomena and his/her anticipation of future ones; they retain the sedimented traces of experiences that a person's body has given meaning and relevance to. Learner development is not accountable to a particular timescale.' Rather, learning takes place in various timescales, cycling at various rates across spatial and historical time. If I read a given text one day, I build a particular model of its meaning. If I read it again a week later, the model of meaning I build is likely to be different because of the intervening insights and knowledge I have gained through linguistic and non-linguistic experiences. Learners interact, deal, and modify language in multi-lingual and multi-idiolectic situations. The ecological perspective on multiple timescales assisted in situating the context to which oral language proficiency and reading comprehension cycle. The idea that language and literacy learning takes place in different timescales and cycles

at different rates for the ELL repositions my thinking on the issues of assessing second language learners. How would an ecological perspective inform the ways teachers assess ELLs' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities?

**Hierarchies of organizational levels.** As the hybrid activation of linguistic and social systems, semiotic practices are conceptualized as material processes at various low and high scale levels. Learning development shifts from organism-centered to a multiple-timescale system. Language is seen as an idiolect where the whole language experience of the person, including the ability to translate from one language to another, a system far from equilibrium, carries with it traces of past experiences and their emotional resonances that have gone into the constitution of the speaker as subject. For the L2 reader, prior experiences with the native language and reading practices assume that the learner has acquired an organized or structured way of writing and reading. Instructionally, teachers should translate these assumptions into reading lessons that discuss the differences between the L1 and L2 languages.

**Mediation through material, social and discourse processes.** Meaning lies in the relationship between cultural artifacts, persons, and events, not in the objects themselves (Vygotsky, 1978; van Lier, 2000); language, as one of many semiotic systems, emerges from semiotic activity through affordances brought forth by active engagement with material, social and discourse processes. The concept of mediation is one of the most important contributions to the ecological perspectives on language learning. Learners-NSs interactions constantly include the act of negotiation of meaning. As learners move through the school day, they are relating to classroom artifacts, peers and situated literacy events. They learn the discursive movements of the classroom, experiment with language input and output and perform what they know through reading and writing. Language transformation is possible through the material, social and discourse affordances of the classroom.

**Relevance to the current study.** The ecological perspective on language acquisition and language socialization provided a theory for understanding how language transforms and functions in the classroom. The background description of its components will assist my case study and investigation into the oral and written language development of young Vietnamese learners. In particular, I will observe the affordances, emergencies and interactions of the teacher, student and the curriculum as mediated by L1 and L2 languages. Through field notes, interviews and classroom observation and participation, I will account for the chaos/complex, discursive and nonlinguistic semiotic system of communicative practices of the learners-NSs interactions. Next, I will use my understanding of the ecological perspective to conceptualize and operationalize what is known to occur in the classroom: metalinguistic awareness. I will provide an overview and define what metalinguistic awareness is and to elaborate with specific examples of what form it takes inside the classroom.

## Metalinguistic Awareness

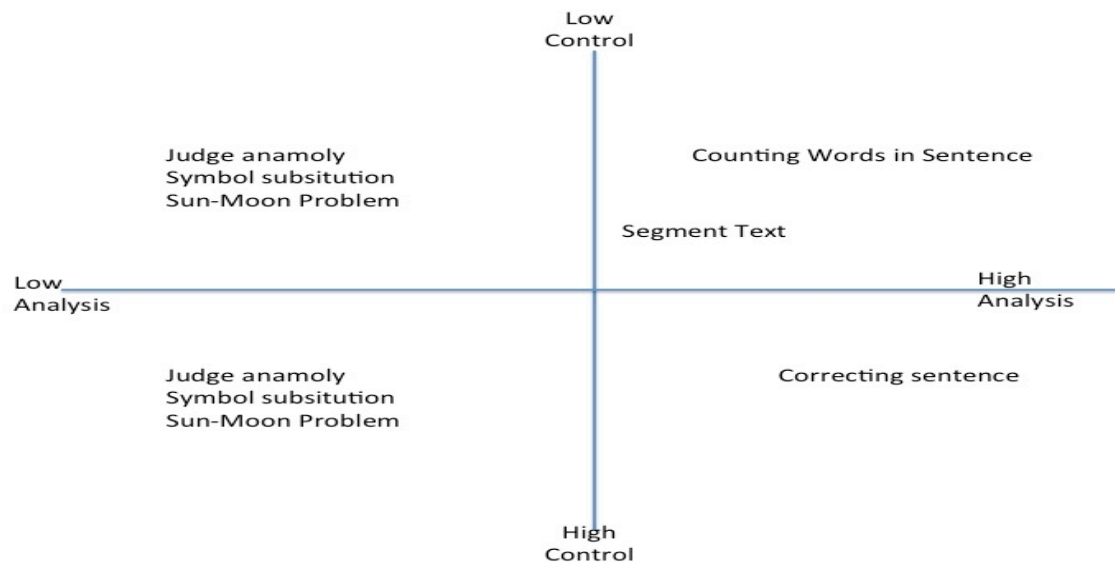
### Overview

From an early age, most children are competent members of a linguistic community; even two-year-olds are able to produce simple two-word utterances and understand more complex sentences. Although this early competence demonstrates an understanding of language, it is an implicit understanding. Explicit understanding of language or metalinguistic awareness, is not found in children until they are older - typically sometime around 6 to 8 years of age. Although metalinguistic awareness was often thought of as a single ability, the age at which children are considered to demonstrate metalinguistic awareness differs greatly from study to study and depends on factors such as the type of knowledge being tested for and the extent to which the knowledge is required to be explicit. Researchers have tended to make general claims from studies that focus on a single aspect of metalinguistic awareness. This, in part, explains why there has been such variation in the explanations of how children become metalinguistically aware. In fact, "metalinguistic awareness" may be too general to be of much empirical use - it may be more appropriate to think of metalinguistic awareness as a general area of knowledge and for research to focus on specific types of metalinguistic understanding.

Perhaps the form of metalinguistic awareness most frequently investigated is phonemic awareness because even very young children will play with word sounds. Some awareness of the phonemic properties of speech must be present at an early age--even two-year-olds will play "language games" in which they say similar sounding words (Weir, 1962). However, young children perform poorly on tasks that require a more systematic analysis of phonology. For example, children are not able to compare the initial phonemes of words until 5 years of age (Kirtley, Bryant, MacLean, & Bradley, 1989) and most children cannot explicitly manipulate phonemes in words (e.g., "Say 'fish' without the /f/'") until a year or so later (Magnusson & Naucler, 1993). Numerous studies have also investigated children's awareness of grammatical rules. As with other forms of metalinguistic awareness, there are dramatic differences in what has been deemed to indicate an awareness of grammatical rules; studies have varied greatly in the extent to which the knowledge that they have tested for **has** been required to be explicit. What has been taken as evidence for grammatical awareness has varied from making spontaneous repairs in speech (Karmiloff-Smith, 1979; Karmiloff-Smith, 1986), to judging which of two sentences "sounds better" (DeVilliers & DeVilliers, 1972; Gleitman, Gleitman, & Shipley, 1972), to conjugating a word on request (Vygotsky, 1986), to verbally stating the grammatical rule in question (Karmiloff-Smith, 1986). Not surprisingly, children's performance varies according to the degree to which the task requires explicit knowledge. Another often tested aspect of metalinguistic awareness is children's understanding of the concept of word. Again, there is variation in the literature as to what is accepted as indicating metalinguistic awareness in this domain. For example, in one of the first empirical investigations of children's understanding of *word*, Downing and Oliver (1974) asked children to identify words from among a series of auditory stimuli and found that, although all of the children overextended the use of *word*, the youngest group (4.5 to 5.5) did so significantly more than did the older children (5.6 to 8.0). In another study, Bialystock (1986a) gave children a variety of Piagetian style tasks (e.g., asking children to judge which of two spoken words is bigger: *train* or *caterpillar*) and found

that there was a significant improvement in children's understanding of word from JK to Grade 1. More recently, in an attempt to capture a more implicit understanding of words, Karniloff-Smith, Grant, Sims, Jones, & Cuckle, 1996) asked children to “repeat the last word” said by an experimenter and found that children as young as 4-years-old have some success on this task.

Bialystok’s work has made an enormous contribution to the identification of qualitative differences between mono- and bilinguals. In her studies Bialystok (e.g. 1985 (with Ryan), 1988, 1991, 1994a, 2001) focuses on analysis and control as the metalinguistic dimensions of bilingual proficiency, as illustrated in Figure 2.1. She reports on evidence from different studies on writing and reading in bilingual children who turned out to be able to solve problems in three language domains better than their monolingual peers because of different levels of mastery of the analysis and control processes based on their bilingual experience.



**Figure 2.1**—Metalinguistic uses of language (Bialystok,1991)

Analysis and control can be considered to be the metalinguistic dimensions of language proficiency, that is they are the processes that define performance across tasks that determine entry into the metalinguistic domain and successfully completing tasks is influenced by the development of analyzed knowledge, that is conscious knowledge, and control over that knowledge. One could say that each processing component is part of the mechanism responsible for language use and for advances in proficiency. This means that language learning and use take place by means of the same cognitive resources that are employed for the full range of intellectual accomplishments. The processing components are responsible for advances in proficiency because they lead to changes in the mental representations constituting knowledge of a domain. According to Bialystok (1991: 32) ‘[d]evelopment occurs in both on-line and off-line contexts, so that the changes in mental representations occur both at the time they are being used (e.g. through correction, instruction, etc.) and when they are not currently in use (e.g. through reflection on the system or by generalization from another system)’. Whereas analysis and control are the processes by which mental representations of information become increasingly structured, through the process of analysis, contextually embedded representations of words and

meanings evolve into more abstract structures. Analyzed knowledge is structured and accessible across contexts; unanalyzed knowledge exists only to the extent that it is part of familiar routines or procedures. In any cognitive activity one is able to attend only to some selected portion of the available information. At any given time situations invariably present more information than can possibly be processed and cognition involves continual selection from that pool of information. The need for higher levels of control in processing can be determined both by the sheer quality of information competing for attention and by the degree of correspondence between the perceptually salient aspects of the context and what the individual actually needs to attend to in order to process that information successfully.

Bialystok concluded that there are universal advantages, but that the processing systems developed to serve two linguistic systems are necessarily different from the processing systems that operate in the service of only one. Thus, bilinguals who have attained high levels of proficiency in both languages are viewed as being advantaged on tasks, which require more analyzed linguistic knowledge. Riccardelli (1993) and Cromdal (1999) supported the construct validity of Bialystok's model. More recently Bialystok (2001) warned that it is not bilingualism per se which guarantees cognitive advantages.

### **Using Metalinguistic Awareness to Analyze Language Form and Function**

The brief overview of metalinguistic awareness lend to an understanding of the potentials of language learners to control and analyze language in both form and through use. In the second language learning classroom, young Vietnamese learners' awareness of language can be displayed in different form. I now turn to a section that will operationalize metalinguistic awareness in the form of language play, repeated reading and creative language use. The case study focused on young Vietnamese learners attending first grade in an elementary school and Vietnamese language school. Instructional strategies used to make language awareness happen in the classroom come in the form of play, rehearsal and oral repeating of words, phrases and text. To capture this, I used the ecological perspective to observe the interactions of learners-NSs and learners-learners using metalinguistic awareness to represent the linguistic knowledge of Vietnamese ELLs in both L1 (Vietnamese) and L2 (English).

**Language play.** Cook (1997) defines language play as a function of fun using language form combined with semantics for the purpose of amusing oneself. Language play can be classified as: (1) play with language form such as playing with sounds of language; and (2) semantic play such as playing with units of meaning. Broner and Tarone (2001:365) stated that these two types of language play can be seen as 'equivalent to exercise with language forms for the purpose of amusement and exercise with units of meaning to create a world of reference that is not real or genuine for the purpose of amusement'. Bakhtin (1981: 60-61) noted that parody is only possible if one is aware that there are many language varieties and can obtain a measure of distance from one's own by ridiculing one verbal form from the perspective on another:

It is after all, precisely in the light of another potential language or style that a given straightforward style is parodied, travestied, ridiculed. The creating consciousness stands, as it were, on the boundary line between languages and styles.

Only polyglossia fully frees consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language. Parodic-travesty forms flourish under these conditions.

For the Vietnamese learner acquiring both Vietnamese and English through interaction with other learners-NSs, Bakhtin would suggest that when the language variety of others are learned, they are associated in the mind of the learner with the personal characteristics of those other speakers.

Sullivan (2000) used the role of play in sociocultural theory as a framework to analyze discourse at a university level English level classroom in Vietnam. The study looked at how teachers adapted the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in a playfulness mediated language learning classroom environment with a set of embedded Confucian values. Sullivan (2000) concluded that the CLT teaching method was in conflict with the Vietnamese Confucian society. Teachers emphasize a learning environment that includes dependency and nurturing rather than independence, hierarchy rather than equality and learning is a mutual obligation of members of a group rather than on individualism. The classroom physical set up is conducive to the values by students sitting closely together with the teacher in front of the students sitting at a desk or is at the front board. Sullivan (2000) noted that the physical constraints of seating were consistent with the good value of group work to benefit all as oppose to the American value of individualism. Oral play with language is rooted in Confucius values.

**Language rehearsal.** Lantolf (1997) had a different interpretation of language play, in that the primary purpose is not fun rather, it is a rehearsal of target language form. Borrowing from the Vygotskian approach, Lantolf states:

For Vygotsky, play is not a means for the child to have fun. Rather, it serves a fundamental role in the child's development, because it creates a zone of proximal development in which the child "always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviors"

(Vygotsky, 1978:102 as cited in Lantolf, 1997:4-5).

For Lantolf, language play is rehearsal for the mastery of new L2 forms and that it exists as a mental rehearsal of unmastered L2 forms. According to Broner & Tarone (2001) 'rehearsal in private speech is common with L2 learning strategies: conscious and unconscious things L2 learners do in order to master the L2'. Examples of language rehearsals are repeating phrases to oneself and having phrases pop into one's head. Its focus is on imperfectly mastered language forms and aims at mastery of language norms. As the L2 learner become native-like speakers, the rehearsal decreases.

Broner & Tarone (2001:369-70) analyzed classroom interactions among children attending full immersion program and cited examples of ludic language play and rehearsal in private speech:

Example 1: Language rehearsal

Teacher: (a) *metros cúbicos*. (cubic meters)

Marvin: (b) *metros cúbicos*. (cubic meters)

Carolina: (c) *cúbicos*. (cubic)

Example 2: Language play

Leonard: (a) *doce...doce! doce! doce!* (twelve...twelve! twelve!)

(with different voices, apparently trying to get the teacher's attention)

(b) *doce* (softly, to himself)

According to Cazden (1976), play with language is a direct contributor to metalinguistic awareness and as reading and writing are first and foremost metalinguistic task—they are both one remove away from the natural state of speech, and in almost all cases are interpreted through the medium of speech—that language play is likely to relate to later literacy development and achievement.

**Repeated Reading.** Repeated reading is an instructional method used to develop automaticity in reading. The method of repeated reading is useful for enhancing reading fluency because it allows students to practice a text over and over until the text becomes more and more familiar and students can decode the text automatically, giving students more cognitive capacity for comprehension. In his classic article on the method of repeated readings, Samuels (1979:377) stated:

As reading speed increased, word recognition errors decreased. As the student continued to use this technique, the initial speed of reading each new selection was faster than initial speed on the previous selection. Also, the number of re-readings required to reach the criterion reading speed decreased as the students continued the technique. The fact that starting rates were faster with each new selection and fewer re-readings were necessary to reach goals indicates transfer of training and a general improvement in reading fluency.

This method of reading instruction does enhance fluency on a text-by-text basis. Research by O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea (1985) has shown that 4 repetitions of a text is usually sufficient for a reader to reach automaticity. Carol Chomsky contributed to the field of repeated reading. Chomsky's contributions to repeated reading theory differ from Samuels' in that Chomsky had students listen to a tape recording of the text they were asked to read repeatedly, whereas in Samuels' approach students simply read a text repeatedly. Chomsky (1978: 377) commented:

The procedure proved to be facilitating for slow and halting readers, increasing fluency rapidly and with apparent ease. Successive stories required fewer listening to reach fluency...The work provided in addition a heightened sense of confidence and motivation. Within several months the children become far more willing and able to undertake reading new material on their own.

There are also questions of near and far transfer with repeated reading. A study by Fleisher, Jenkins, & Pany (1979) investigated the transfer of rapid decoding. The researchers took a text and had one group of children learn each individual word until they recognized the words automatically. They then presented the same children with the whole text to see if the children would be able to read the text fluently. The children could not read the intact text fluently, despite the fact that they had learned each of the words individually until they could recognize them automatically. The conclusion from this research is that, despite their automatic recognition of individual words, repeated reading of individual words to automaticity did not transfer into the fluent reading of whole texts. In conclusion, repeated reading and especially repeated oral reading are effective methods for increasing fluency when done on a whole text basis.

In the previous sections in this chapter, I provided the theoretical and conceptual framework to guide my case study. I now turn to the current research on Vietnamese language learners in the schools. The purpose of this literature review is to understand how Vietnamese learners acquire and use both L1 and L2 languages to socialize and communicate inside and outside of schools. In particular, how has the ecological perspective informed the fields of second language acquisition and reading research in the language development of Vietnamese learners? The students in my case study are a part of the second generation, born in the United States of Vietnamese ethnic background. They acquired both oral and listening skills in Vietnamese from the home and community in Northern California prior to attending school. However, once they start school, what happens to the written language development through reading and writing? Do they further develop it and in what context? While the school designated their primary home language as Vietnamese, these students have had some oral and listening skills in English as well. The exposure to both Vietnamese and English will be further discussed in chapter 3 methods in the focal student section. The review below will focus on the oral and written language development of Vietnamese learners, living in the United States. I start with an overview of the role of language in educating young Vietnamese children in the United States. Then I will move to the Vietnamese learners' acquisition of oral and written Vietnamese and English. The chapter will conclude with a provisional answer to the question of, "What do we already know about Vietnamese ELLs and how does the work I am proposing add to our knowledge base?"

## **Current Research on Vietnamese Language Learners**

### **The Role of Language in the Education of Vietnamese Children**

As reported in chapter 1, Vietnamese Americans live in neighborhoods where they are linguistically isolated. From the U.S. Census Bureau 1990, 84% of Vietnamese aged 5 and over

speak a language other than English at home. Linguistic isolation affects the acquisition of English proficiency. Children living in isolated neighborhoods do not have much contact with people who speak standard or native English. Prior to further understanding how English is learned, an investigation into the oral and written acquisition of Vietnamese is necessary. But, what does this language form of Vietnamese look like as the second-generation Vietnamese children learn from their 1-1.5 generation members of the family and from the community? Where does one find information on the role of language in the education of Vietnamese children in the United States if current empirical research on the L1 (Vietnamese) and L2 (English) language development of young second generation Vietnamese learners is limited?

First, there are existing organizations such as the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARC) that analyze current data drawn from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing, National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA/OELA) and U.S. Department of Education. General demographic data on parent and children's language and literacy abilities could be drawn and interpreted. Also, there are independent research organizations that look at achievement of learners such as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). Zhou & Bankston III (2001), pulled data in Table 2.1 from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing to look at Vietnamese children's (aged 5-17) language abilities compared to other ethnic groups and across 1, 1.5 and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. The pattern in this table shows a shift towards English. For those limited bilinguals dropped substantially from the first to the second generations for all groups. For Asians, regardless of nationality, the 'dominant mode of linguistic adaptation was to become fluent bilinguals rather than English monolinguals whereas the children of black or white immigrants were more likely to become English monolinguals by the second generation' Zhou & Bankston (2001:112). This shift does not mean that children are rapidly not continuing to acquire and develop in their native language. The retention of the parents' mother tongue is due to three factors: (1) continuing high rates of immigration from Asia and family reunification keep the second generation in immediate contact with new arrivals from their parents' native countries; (2) the parents' lack of English proficiency requires children to speak their parents' native tongue at home; and (3) living in an area inhabited by coethnics, as Asian children are more likely than others to do, tends to slow the shift toward English monolingualism.

Table 2.1—Children’s language abilities by generation, 1990

	Limited Bilingual %	Fluent Bilingual %	English Monolingual %
<b>Vietnamese</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> generation	84.7	14.1	1.2
1.5 generation	54.0	43.0	3.0
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	37.0	50.4	12.6
<b>Chinese</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> generation	71.2	26.5	2.3
1.5 generation	49.9	45.5	4.6
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	23.9	46.6	29.5
<b>White</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> generation	29.4	41.2	29.4
1.5 generation	19.8	48.1	32.1
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	5.1	22.2	72.7

Source: U.S. Census of population and housing, 1990 (As cited in Zhou & Bankston, 2001:114)

For the Vietnamese family, maintaining the heritage language is also a part of maintaining the culture. Children learn to listen and speak Vietnamese first so that they could communicate with their elders and to display respect to the hierarchical nature of the family unit. Depending on the each child and parents’ status in the family, from the youngest to the oldest, speaking Vietnamese to aunts, uncles and grandparents is an important way to pay tribute to the cultural traditions. Elders respond by acknowledging the respect and to compliment the intellectual character of the child for maintaining the Vietnamese while acquiring English. But, what does this form of oral and written Vietnamese look like through auditory and oral expressions? How do second-generation Vietnamese learners acquire and use language in L1 and L2?

### **Learning Oral and Written Vietnamese as L1**

Despite Vietnamese ELLs representing the second largest population among the total number of ELLs in the United States, minimal attention has been given to the empirical investigation of these learners, especially within the fields of second language acquisition and first and second language reading research. Research is further limited on the L1 oral and written language acquisition and use for young second generation Vietnamese ELLs, born in the United States. To begin to understand how these language learners develop in English in the schools, researcher must start observing how the L1 is being acquired and used in both the home and school. It is just not the bigger issue of heritage and language maintenance, but the unpacking of oral and written language paths and processes of these learners that needs to be looked at. The fields have minimal knowledge about the affordances, emergences and interactions of these learners as they learn to speak and listen in Vietnamese, with some exposure to English, prior to starting kindergarten in the elementary schools. Specifically, we do not know how these learners develop their metalinguistic awareness in both languages.

In the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), researchers interviewed 363 Vietnamese eighth and ninth graders, living in San Diego, in 1992 and 304 of the same ones in

1995. Zhou (2001) stated that approximately 48 percent of the respondents were female; 15 percent were U.S. born, 46 percent were 1.75ers (the foreign born arriving before age 6), and 39 percent were 1.5ers (the foreign born arriving after age 6). The survey included items inquiring about respondent's ability to speak, understand, read and write English and Vietnamese. Table 2.2 showed adolescents' language adaptation to favor the use of English over Vietnamese overall. These middle school students' ability to speak English increased from 51.2 percent to 53.9 percent while the ability to speak Vietnamese decreased more from 41.4 percent to 33.6 percent. The ability to read and write in Vietnamese decreased as the number of years of English adaptation increased in American society. The language use result is consistent with language proficiency. As fluency in both languages decreased, preference to speak English increased sharply.

Table 2.2—Language adaptation among Vietnamese adolescents

	T1-1992 (%)	T2-1995 (%)
Vietnamese proficiency		
Ability to speak Vietnamese very well	41.4	33.6
Ability to listen Vietnamese very well	42.8	37.5
Ability to read Vietnamese very well	17.1	14.1
Ability to write Vietnamese very well	15.7	11.2
English proficiency		
Ability to speak English very well	51.2	53.9
Ability to listen English very well	50.0	53.9
Ability to read English very well	47.1	49.7
Ability to write English very well	46.8	41.8
Language use		
English monolingual	6.9	7.4
Fluent bilingual	29.2	22.3
Preference to speak English	51.8	74.3
<i>N</i>	363	304

Source: CILS 1992, 1995, & Zhou (2001)

### Learning Oral and Written English as L2

What are the factors critical to oral and written comparison and contrast? Scholars in the disciplines of linguistic, anthropology, education, sociology and communication define the terms *oral* and *written* based on a number of matters that include (1) the relationship between interlocutors in oral and written communication, (2) the role of context in oral and written communication, (3) the type of structure and cohesive devices characteristic of oral and written language, (4) the way in which language mediates meaning under each language form and from the perspective of the aural or visual modalities, and (5) the way in which oral and written language interact to convey meaning. (Horowitz & Samuels, 1988) Oral language is considered to be associated with conversations that is produced, processed and evaluated in the context of face-to-face exchange between interlocutors. It is grounded in interpersonal relationships and

adapted to a specific audience and to socio-cultural settings and communities that are present, functioning in the context of here and now. The language is characterized as episodic and narrative-like. According to Kramsch (1998), speech is loosely structured.

In contrast, cohesion in written language is expressed through lexical choices, nominalization, anaphoric relations, cataphoric relations, signal words or cohesive ties (e.g. connectives such as however, moreover) and is marked through symbolic devices that show intra- and intersentential relations. While oral language is context dependent, written language is said to be an autonomous language without context. It is impersonal, complex with multiple predications, subordination and extended clauses, where elaboration may be needed should the unknown reader misunderstand.

The context of oral and written discourse in school differs from home. Oral reading and talk may occur in dyads at home between parents and children or in schools between peers or older children teaching younger ones. Oral exchanges and social interaction were revitalized due to the work of Vygotsky. Today, in schools, collaborative learning occurs in forms of paired readings, group discussions, authors' chair, read alouds, instructional conversations, retellings and/or think alouds. Cooperative learning that is socially situated around content based curriculum often times entail specified language use. Oral exchanges that occur at home or outside of the classroom may contain different levels of vocabulary and clause construction. In a study with 20 professors and graduate students at two universities, Chafe & Danielewicz (1987) investigated four styles of language use during their daily activities (which included home and school discourses). With a combination of oral and written language styles, the 20 adults produced conversations, lectures, letters and academic papers. Chafe & Danielwicz discovered that every speaker or writer possesses a repertoire of devices, which are combined in varying mixtures depending on the context, the purpose, and the subject matter of language use. Language adapts to its varying environments. Conversationalists use limited vocabulary and are inclined to hedge their lexical choices and to be referentially inexplicit. They make considerable use of colloquial words and phrases. They create brief intonation units, which they chain together, stopping every so often to make a sentence boundary, which is not always well justified in terms of topical coherence. They interact with their audiences, show ego involvement, and talk frequently about specific times and places.

Academic lecturers do not differ from conversationalist in terms of speaking in relatively informal contexts, employing an equally limited vocabulary, using hedges and are also referentially inexplicit. However, their use of literary vocabulary is greater and they make some use of first person and concrete spatio-temporal references. Letter writers who use a more varied vocabulary, are sometimes inexplicit and uses hedges rarely. They use a moderate number of colloquial words and contractions, but at the same time a greater number of literary items. Their intonation units are intermediate in length between conversationalists and academic writers, and their sentences tend to be better formed. Lastly, academic writers' use of vocabulary is maximally varied and they avoid hedges and inexplicit references. Their writing is maximally literary with almost no colloquial items or contractions. Their intonation units are long and their sentences are maximally coherent. They show little involvement with themselves or with concrete reality. This kind of language seems to represent a maximum adaptation to the deliberateness and detachment of the writing environment.

In observing natural spontaneous discourse in English, Halliday (1988) argued that not only does written language contain higher lexical density and is complex so is spoken language. This refutes the dichotomy of oral and written language displayed in Table 5 and partially, Chafe & Danielewicz's conclusion that written language is maximally complex with clauses and vocabulary use. Halliday (1988) used the following pair of texts in which a person had described (in natural discourse) the same experience twice over, once in speech and once in writing:

A. More "written":

*Every previous visit had left me with a Sense of the risk to others in further attempts at action on my part.*

B. More "spoken":

*Whenever I'd visited there before I'd end up feeling that other people might get hurt if I tried to do anything more.*

Version (A) is one sentence, consisting of one clause: a simple sentence in traditional grammar. Version (B) has four clauses (assuming that ended up and tried to do are each single predicators) that is transcribed as one sentence since they are related by hypotaxis—only one has independent status. These four clauses form a clause complex. It appears that the spoken text is more complex than the written one. The spoken text has a lower degree of lexical density, but a higher degree of grammatical intricacy. Halliday used the above text to draw two points. One is that speech is not "simpler" than writing; if anything it is more complex. Two is that it is important to indicate specifically which variable of discourse is being referred to, when one variety is being said to display some distinctive characteristic. Halliday questioned the assumption that written language is syntactically more complex than spoken and suggested:

The more natural, un-self-monitored the discourse, the more intricate the grammatical patterns that can be woven. Spoken and written language, then, tend to display different kinds of complexity; each of them is more complex in its own way. Written language tends to be lexically dense, but grammatically simple; spoken language tends to be grammatically intricate, but lexically sparse.

In addition to grammatical complexity, Halliday also called into question the notion that speech is 'structureless'. Speech is marked by hesitations, false starts, slips and trips of the tongue, and performance errors. Examples of such speech are often cited by studies to show its syntactic simplicity. This form of speech is similar to academic seminars where an individual is conscious of the words uttered and plans out and goes along while listening to check the outcome and then naturally loses his/her way; to hesitate, back up, cross out, and stumble over the words. However, this is not the natural spontaneous discourse that Halliday attributes his study to. Natural discourse tends to be fluent, highly organized and grammatically well formed. If you are interacting spontaneously and without self-consciousness, then the clause complexes tend to flow smoothly without you falling down or changing direction.

Central to Halliday's argument is that oral and written language represents distinct modes of meaning making. Spoken and written languages serve as complementary resources for acquiring and organizing knowledge; hence they have different places in the educational process. The notion of different ways of meaning implies, rather, that there are different ways of knowing and of learning. Halliday (1988) states, "Teachers often know, by a combination of intuition and experience, that some things are more effectively learnt through talk and others through writing. Official policy usually equates educational knowledge with the written mode and commonsense knowledge with the spoken; but teachers' actual practice goes deeper—educational knowledge demands both, the two often relating to different aspects of the same phenomenon."

### **Research Implications**

Based on the available literature, I propose to conduct an intensive case study of a pair of young Vietnamese English language learners on the cusp of learning L2 English in a formal school setting in order to understand the affordances of L1 literacy instruction on both L1 and L2 oral and written language development. The critical difference between the two members of the pair is that one had the added potential advantage of studying her native Vietnamese language as both an oral and written language system, thus permitting a window into the constraints and affordances of L1 maintenance. The goal is to examine the impact of continued L1 development during this crucial period of L2 learning. I hope that the work will impact the field of second language acquisition and applied linguistics by providing a rich data source for this understudied population of Vietnamese ELLs. For the field of reading research, the study can provide a window into the early, more basic reading process of Vietnamese English Language Learners through the focus on metalinguistic awareness at the phonological and decoding levels, as well as the higher order processes of language development and text comprehension. By using the ecological perspective on language learning and socialization, I will identify language affordances, emergences and interactions that lend to a better understanding of the context in which young Vietnamese students develop both Vietnamese and English. By opting for a comparative case study of two ELLs who differ only on that single dimension of L1 maintenance and development, I hope to pinpoint the specific L1 practices that might provide a distinct advantage in oral and written L2 development. This population is understudied, empirically and within education. This case study, investigating the context to which language form and use develop inside the classroom, for young Vietnamese language learners, will begin to inform the field of education. There is much work to do.

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Introduction

Methods sections are inherently complex for a case study that employs largely ethnographic methods to describe the cultural context where language is acquired and used, especially one that has a long duration, as does the current effort. Geertz (1973) defines ethnography as a “thick description—an elaborate venture in” the phenomenon or situated activity. Using the action of “winking,” Geertz examined how to distinguish the winking from a social gesture and to move beyond the action to both the particular social understanding as a gesture from the state of mind of the winker, the audience and how the meaning is derived from the winking action itself. A “thin description” is the winking and the “thick description” is the meaning behind it and its symbolic import in society or between communicators. Ethnographic description is “interpretive, meaning that it is interpretive of the flow of discourse, and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the ‘said’ of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms” (Geertz, 1973:20). Using a semiotic view of culture, analysis or interpretation, is sorting out the structures of signification or codes and determining their social ground or import. From a human behavior perspective, it is within the “symbolic action—action, which, like phonation in speech, pigment in painting, line in writing, or sonance in music, signifies—the question as to whether culture is patterned conduct or a frame of mind, or even the two somehow mixed together, loses sense. The thing to ask is what their import is” (Geertz, 1973:9-10).

#### What is culture?

Culture ‘is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can causally be attributed; it is a context, something within which inter-worked systems of construable signs can be intelligibly—that is, thickly, described. The degree to which an action’s meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed. Understanding a people’s culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity’ (Geertz, 1978: 14). According to Erickson (1987), anthropologists thought of culture as a system of learned or shared among members of a naturally bounded social group, similar to groups of hunters and gatherers in small villages. But, schools are not primitive villages where culture could be analyzed. Rather, it’s a complex small-scale social unit where everyone in the group learns differently. Erickson posed three conceptions of culture that is defined through observations from the classroom by drawing from D’Andrade (1984) and Goodenough (1981). Culture consists of many small chunks of knowledge that is stored within a larger frame among a social group. No single individual has learned all of the information that is possessed by the whole group. The information learned varies widely across individuals and subgroups within the school community. Another conception is that culture is limited to a set of large chunks of knowledge. The structures frame what is considered to be a reality to all members of the group. There are group routine ways of acting and interacting. There is an organization of patterns with coherence in the meaning system and similar understanding of symbols across diverse members of the social group (Geertz, 1973). The third component is that the social structure and culture is intertwined, exposing differential patterns of sharing cultural knowledge within the social unit.

Cultural difference 'is seen as tracing lines of status, power, and political interest within and across institutional boundaries found in the total social unit' (Erickson, 1987:13). From this perspective, the relationship between the content of cultural knowledge and the context to which it manifest is of interest and not the nature of cultural knowledge in of itself. In the classroom, the interest is in the sense-making and how it influences the action. New cultural knowledge, whether in small or larger chunks in the conceptual structures, is being created continually and is constantly being learned and remembered or accepted and rejected. The concept of culture emphasizes the 'systematic nature of variation in cultural knowledge within a population and social conflict as a fundamental process by which that variation is organized' (Erickson, 1987:14). In the first two conceptions, cultural learning is primarily intergenerational where transmission is across generations through socialization. The third concept of culture captures learning and change within one generation, but also considers cultural transmission and its continuity across generations. The third concept is further explored and expanded through the observations in the Vietnamese Sunday school. Specifically, exploring how second generation students respond to curriculum created by 1.5 generation teachers and parents living in the United States. The teacher-student and student-student interactions are in context with a language that is learned away from the motherland, Vietnam. Investigating the instructional and interactional practices across generations 1.5 and 2 inside Vietnamese Sunday and English Mainstream classrooms will provide an understanding into the culture of the Vietnamese community in United States.

**The classroom as context of culture.** In the language teaching and learning context, constructing a speech event between peers or student-teacher starts with linguistic forms, focusing on grammatical and lexical features. Choosing which features of language to make meaning or communicate depends on how the individual evaluates the situation. There are different ways of assessing the language in communication. Kramsch (1993) described context in five dimensions: linguistic, situational, interactional, cultural and intertextual. Individuals in dialogue shape the dimensions while in the process of meaning making. Language is 'at the interaction of the individual and the social, of text and discourse, it both reflects and construes the social reality' (Kramsch, 1993:67). The context of situation where language experimenting takes place includes the classroom physical setting, the participants, curriculum instructions, social learning interactions (manner and tone), norms of interaction and interpretation, language codes and genre (types of oral and written activities).

The core of educational ethnography is grounded inquiry, and that means that methodological tools or lenses are often revised and adapted as the researcher acquires more and deeper insights about the setting, the participants, and the processes that guide participants' development and learning experiences over time. Thus, to report the methods as if "I had it planned that way from the beginning" is, of course, a fiction. So, I will be careful in my interpretation as I note how my plans, approaches, and tools evolved over time, even though elaborating them in a separate section with the term methods implies a more static and planful existence.

I conducted this contrastive case study comparing two young Vietnamese learners because I wanted to understand what, if any, influence participation in an ongoing activity designed explicitly to enhance the development of an oral and written heritage language, in this

case Vietnamese, would have on oral and written language development in both the heritage language and English. Reasoning by analogy to the situation for young first language Spanish speakers, for whom bilingual and bi-literacy experiences have been shown to benefit oral and written performance in both L1 and L2, my intuition told me that participation in something like the Vietnamese Sunday School would exhibit similar benefits. Thus, I set out very early in this effort to make a connection with a Vietnamese Sunday school.

## **The Pilot Study**

### **Finding a research site for L1 language and literacy**

The Vietnamese Sunday school was selected on the basis of: demographic, curriculum and instruction, accessibility and sustainability. There were many Vietnamese language schools and programs to choose from in Northern California, but few that concentrated on both language socialization and implementing the curriculum that focused on explicit Vietnamese literacy and language development. Vietnamese language classes were taught at churches or temples and included either Christian or Buddhist teachings. Also, the Vietnamese language school had to have a diverse group of students, containing both 1.5 and second generation immigrants born to either 1.0 or 1.5 generation parents. Students had to come to class with some oral and written Vietnamese language skills. At minimum, listening and speaking had to be a part of the students' repertoire of literacy abilities. The school had to allow me to be centrally involved for a full academic year and to be flexible about my data collection processes and needs. It had to open its doors to an outsider coming in to observe its norms and practices, to participate in class activities, and to seek for examples of student learning. The school had to be able to define its vision and purpose in working with the students and be subject to interviews. It also had to display social, political, and academic sustainability within the community. The Vietnamese parents send their children to learn Vietnamese not only for the purpose of preserving the heritage language, but also to have them socialize with their peers, using cultural mores and values that are similar to their home. The school had to support democracy for Vietnam currently. Many parents are a part of the 1.5-generation and are themselves children of Vietnamese born immigrants, arriving in the United States as senior adults (ages 65 and up) who were tied to the military during the Vietnam War. The seniors have ingrained in the minds and influenced the political positions of the 1.5-generation (ages 30 to 45) to continue support for the demise of communism in Vietnam. Participation in any community organization, such as a language school, required support for this political stance.

**A pilot study emerges.** Once I selected the L1 learning sight, I was given permission to enter the school community in order to build relationships with the administrators, teachers, parents and students. This was necessary to create trust and to communicate my purpose in developing a dissertation project. As a researcher, I entered the school with questions gathered from the literature review on the L1 and L2 literacy and language development of English Language Learners. Broad questions from that drove this line of inquiry:

1. Across both bilingual and monolingual English situations, how do teachers and EL learners negotiate activities and interactions during literacy instruction as teachers attempt to gauge oral and written English competence in each classroom setting? Specifically:

- What do teachers and learners do to develop oral and written English competence? What instructional strategies do teachers use? What learning strategies do learners use?
- How do teachers assess oral and written English to determine proficiency? How do teachers and students negotiate and determine oral and written English competencies?

2. How are teachers and learners accessing the heritage language (L1- Vietnamese or Spanish) to support the development of reading and writing in the second language (L2- English)? Specifically:

- What do teachers and learners do to develop L1 oral and written competence? What instructional strategies do teachers use? What learning strategies do learners use?
- How do teachers and students negotiate and determine oral and written competencies in L1?
- How is language transfer (interlanguage) facilitated?

During the pilot study, I followed four six years old students, two from Session 46 and two from Session 47, taught by the same teacher, Yen Huynh. These students were a part of second-generation Vietnamese, born in the United States to generation 1.5 parents. They had developed oral Vietnamese through interactions with family members since childbirth. They came to the Vietnamese Sunday school class with adequate listening and speaking abilities in Vietnamese. Their oral Vietnamese included, “formulaic utterances, conversational strategies, and a highly simple code, sufficient for everyday social context” (van Lier, 1999, p. 10). Parents and siblings spoke a combination of Vietnamese and English to these students at home. Their 1.5 generation parents adapted to the American society, having learned the English language by joining the labor force, navigated the educational system, and participated in the wider community. Between 1980 and 1990, for the Vietnamese-American population in the U.S., the English proficiency rate was 38.6 percent, up from 26.6 percent in 1980. The proportion of college graduates among adults aged 25 and over was 16.9 percent, up from 12.6 percent. The labor force participation rate among males aged 16 or over was 71.9 percent, up from 65.7 percent (Zhou, 2001, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

I observed these two sessions (roughly a semester each) of Level-1A Vietnamese language class for the entire academic year of 2007-08 in the Vietnamese Sunday school, located in Northern California, as a pilot study. This was done to familiarize myself with the Vietnamese Sunday School teacher, classroom, students, curriculum and instruction development. Prior to entering the classroom, I had to build rapport with the director of the school. He was considered one of the leading organizers of the Federation of Young Vietnamese volunteers, comprised of first and second generation of Vietnamese-Americans, that met on

Sundays to teach the students. During our meetings, he provided historical accounts, starting from 1984 when a small group (including himself) of people shared the vision for a school that would bring together young Vietnamese immigrants for the preservation of the heritage language, cultural practices and to maintain connection with the motherland. They wanted a place where students and volunteer teachers gathered weekly to discuss about the Vietnam history, cultural values, norms and behavioral patterns and aspirations to move out of the social and economic marginality impacted by the traumas of repression and the pains of exile in the movement from Vietnam to America. Through sharing Vietnamese folk songs, poetry and family memories, children and parents could find time to help build a community with a common language and set of high achievement expectations. The school could serve to disseminate information about social and political activities occurring both in the United States and in Vietnam. It was also an opportunity to inform the wider community about issues emanating from acculturation and language adaptation in the new country.

Started in 1984 and presently, twenty-five years later, with the enrollment of approximately 1000 Vietnamese speaking students (ages 6 to 18) grouped into 30 plus classes with 12 different language ability levels and taught by 80 volunteer teachers, the school represents one of the community's commitment to maintaining the heritage language through instruction and socialization. Although there were no internal year-to-year school-wide data to show how students progressed after receiving Vietnamese literacy and language instruction, the director represented the organizing committee by explaining that achievement was primarily defined by the continual commitment of parents, students, and teachers to weekly congregate and to uphold the deep cultural value of respect for family, community and education; in short, they vote with their feet. He stated that students treat teachers and peers with respect and there were rare behavioral disciplining sessions that involved parents and school administrators. Students generally came to class prepared and homework completed. Parents yielded and gave full trust to the school and its ability to teach their children how to read and write in Vietnamese. Their main role was to support the school by socializing their children in the Vietnamese community activities and in practicing the listening and speaking of Vietnamese. It was an advantage that I was able to speak Vietnamese during my interactions with the school because having a common language lowered the level of skepticism commonly found among first generation members of the community due to years of distrust from the war experiences and resettlement in the host country. Members often begin the interview with the retelling of their refugee experiences and the impact it has made on the acculturation process. I connected because I was also a Vietnamese refugee. However, when it came to the classroom and researching, I was constantly required to explain my purpose and to ensure minimal disruption to the students' socialization and learning opportunities. To the organizing committee, I was an outsider/researcher coming in which meant that I was evaluating the school's overall performance. I checked in with the director often to let him know my objectives prior to each classroom observation. The more informed he was of my intentions, the more he allowed access to the teachers, students and parents. Establishing trust within this ethnic community took time and deliverance. I had to acknowledge and respect the cultural practices at the school. I showed up on time, formally greeted the teachers in the presence of students, spoke Vietnamese, participated in ceremonies and social festivities, and ate traditional food. I was both a participant and researcher.

I also took field notes, conducted interviews, audio recorded, and collected student work samples during a 3-hour once a month observation of Vietnamese language instruction that took place on Sundays. I observed two sessions to look for similarities and differences in the class context, curriculum development and literacy instruction. Through the field notes, I saw similar patterns of how the classroom was set up, which included activity schedule, student-teacher seating arrangements, and materials used. The teacher implemented the same Level-1A curriculum and used similar instructional techniques for both sessions. She created a routine that gave students opportunities to develop written Vietnamese through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Written Vietnamese language was taught throughout the 3-hour class. However, oral language use was kept minimal. The teacher did not give any instructional time to bridge students' oral Vietnamese language with reading or writing. They used spoken language among peers during side conversation. I used these examples from the field notes and audio recordings to begin generating themes for coding classroom observation for the dissertation data collection.

Also, I developed first iteration Vietnamese and English early reading assessment tools so that I could pilot them with those sets of students in anticipation of a later dissertation study. The assessments included letter naming and sounds, high frequency and decodable word lists, and listening and reading comprehension. I administered them to the students and determined the ceiling effects of listening and reading comprehension questions and word lists based on their responses. A scoring rubric was created for the story oral retelling, story retelling through writing, and reading comprehension responses.

**Research questions emerge.** Once I became a participant, documenting the cultural practices and seeing how it was integrated in the literacy instruction made the development of dissertation objectives salient. I narrowed from a set of dissertation research questions to focus on the L1 and L2 oral and written language development of young second generation of Vietnamese-Americans attending first grade in English Language Mainstream (ELM) classrooms and/or Vietnamese Sunday School. I decided to observe and describe the bilingual pathways of second-generation Vietnamese-American students through a case study while following their oral and written language development in both L1 and L2 in the classrooms. This experience led me to the current study. I decided to find two generation 2.0 Vietnamese students whose cultural and linguistic histories were as similar as possible and whose planned experiences for first grade would differ in only one dimension: One student would have access to a Vietnamese Sunday school in which there was a systematic attempt to teach Vietnamese oral and written language while the other student was left to a combination of the home environment and an American public school to develop whatever L1 and L2 competencies he/she would develop. Thus, my research question became something like:

1. Does access to home and formal classroom experiences designed to maintain and enhance the development of L1 Vietnamese, while learning L2 English, assist and reinforce the acquisition of L1 and L2 oral and written modes? If so, what are the types of affordances, emergences, or interactions that might contribute to any advantages accrued by continued L1 Vietnamese and L2 English development?

2. What do the metalinguistic awareness of L1 Vietnamese and L2 English look like through language affordance, emergence or interactions in the classroom? How do forms of metalinguistic awareness such as language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading assist and reinforce the learning of L1 Vietnamese and L2 English?

The design logic for this contrastive case study that emerged was to find two young Vietnamese learners, both entering first grade in the same L2 setting, who differed from one another only in their access to formal educational experiences with oral and written Vietnamese language skills. Then, and only then, would I be in a situation to dig deeply into these two research questions in the “up close and personal” way that an ethnographic lens offers.

## **The Dissertation Study**

### **Classroom Settings**

The case study took place in two distinct settings: The Vietnamese Sunday School attended by one of the two case study students, Kaitlyn, and the public elementary school attended by both Kaitlyn and the other case study student, Ann. Both students attended the same public elementary school, but were placed in different English-only classrooms with two different first grade teachers, Croft and Lorenz, respectively.

**Vietnamese Sunday school.** The Vietnamese Sunday language school serves as a non-profit organization. It is the largest and longest operating school in the United States. Students attend class for both the maintenance of the Vietnamese heritage language and culture. The school provided a space for students to connect and socialize with peers and adults (i.e. teachers or parents), living in the same community in Northern California. Students, ranging from ages 6 through 17, gathered each Sunday to develop oral and written Vietnamese through a curriculum developed by a combination of immigrant and first generation Vietnamese speakers, who lived in the United States since as early as 1975 and through adopted materials from books such as *Tu Dien Viet Nam*, gathered by the association called Khai Tri Tien Duc that was published by Trung Bac Tan Van from Ha Noi, Vietnam in 1931. At the time of this research study, teachers used the curriculum version from 1996. The Vietnamese oral and written language curriculum was integrated and divided into 12 workbooks for Levels 1A-12 for the ages and grades (level 1-12<sup>th</sup>) that was comparable to public school. Students use one workbook for two semesters or one school year. Students stop attending the school after age 17 or grade 12.

Students were selected based on first come first serve basis during enrollment time. They were grouped into classes by age rather than by oral and written language fluency in Vietnamese. There were no language entrance tests or assessments to determine fluency. For example, for Level 1A, the class comprised 5-6 year old students who entered first grade in their public or private elementary schools in the fall. Kaitlyn entered Level 1A with some oral Vietnamese language skills through listening and speaking while some of her classmates have not had any exposure to the Vietnamese language, speaking primarily English in the home and community. This was probably due to the one year of English instruction as kindergarteners (age 5) and starting Vietnamese Sunday school as first graders (age 6). Students continue to listen and speak Vietnamese at home while receiving oral and written English development at school.

Since Kaitlyn was assigned to the workbook, Viet Ngu-Cap 1, for age 6, I used it to compare with a workbook used by beginning level students acquiring oral and written Vietnamese (L1) in Vietnam. I used the book, Tieng Viet-Tap 1, published by Su Pham from Ha Noi, Vietnam. There were more similarities than differences in the curriculum in developing the oral and written language for age 6. The curriculum began with the introduction of letters (b, a) and sounds (bơ-a), moving to forming words (b+a=ba) by sounding letters with the five accent marks (bơ-a-ba-huyền-ba). There were similarities in the patterns used to form or spell words at the beginning (me, xe, la). Pictures were used side-by-side with noun and action words to build vocabulary in both workbooks. There were many images that were culture-based, reflecting from the food eaten and to people displaying the family traditions such as the interaction of children and parents or elders. However, the pictures used in Tieng Viet-Tap 1 were more culture-based and are relevant to the socialization of the Vietnamese people living in Vietnam versus the United States. For example, pictures showing the action words such as traveling to rural places in Vietnam and the mode of transportation. Another example was showing the daily routines of living and interactions such as children bathing using pales of water in the villages and helping elders work in the field. The curriculum and workbooks contained short stories from legends and folktales and poems reflecting family values and history of war. Lesson directions require students to recall, recite, reread and rewrite the poems and stories. Teachers were instructed to use this strategy to assist children in memorizing while learning how make grapheme-phoneme connections, develop phonological awareness and learning spelling conventions to build words while understanding its meaning. Up until Levels 1A-6 (ages 6-12), students were primarily taught language forms, focusing primarily on grammar rather than on content learning such as history and literature. At the higher course Levels 7-12, first generation instructors taught students. Teachers attended primary and secondary schools with some college level experiences. They continue to teach grammar while integrating history and literature that include cultural traditions from the perspectives of pre-Vietnam war authors. Students write poems and reflect on the history of Vietnam. They recite poetry and sing songs aloud.

All teachers were volunteers at the Vietnamese Sunday school. They were selected on the basis of their fluency in oral and written Vietnamese, although there was no formal assessment to determine it. They went through an informal interview process by the organization and became volunteers once selected. They have no certified credential to teach like teachers in the public schools. Teachers at the beginning level were prior students of the school having graduated from Levels 1-12 classes. They were part of the second generation, born in the US and attended the K-12 public schools and/or college. They range in their level of fluency with strength in listening and speaking and weakness in reading and writing. They also range in the level of grammar competency with strength in low level reading skills such as phonological awareness, decoding and word skills, but displayed weakness in syntactic and semantic construction of the Vietnamese language. Teachers informally assess students during the 3-hour class through question and answer or oral dictation. There was an end-of-the-semester assessment that all students took that included content that was covered in workbook or curriculum. Teachers use the results to recommend students to the next level, the following year.

**Public elementary school.** Both Kaitlyn and Ann attended, during the course of the study, Jarvis Elementary School in Northern California which is an English language mainstream

school in which “immersion” was the common approach to addressing the primary language needs of English language learners at all grade level. First grade classrooms were populated by a large percentage of second-generation Asian L1 speakers, including a sizeable Vietnamese population. The school site was in a school district that offered only English mainstream classrooms for Vietnamese ELLs. There were no Vietnamese bilingual waiver classrooms, therefore, no instructional aides were available to assist the students, using Vietnamese. At the K-2 grades, the elementary school contained 43% of English Language learners out of a total student population of 609. The majority of ELLs were Asians, including Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. All students entering California schools are required to fill out a Home Language Survey that informs the school of their language proficiency. If a student speaks a language other than English, he or she enters the English mainstream classrooms with ELL status requiring teachers to provide English Language Development curriculum daily. ELL students are required to take the CEDLT test once per year. The reading, writing and oral language results are given to the next teacher to determine appropriate ELD instructions. During the academic year in which I conducted the study, the school’s Academic Performance Index rate was 954, which met the minimum target of 800 for all elementary schools in California. Although the school met the minimum index, it was still expected to progress each year with a number of ELL students not meeting proficient or advanced levels on the California STAR and CEDLT testing programs.

Teachers used combinations of their own materials with the K-6 Open Court reading and writing program, published by SRA/McGraw-Hill. The program is designed to teach decoding, comprehension, inquiry and investigation, and writing. Part one of the program, Preparing to Read, focuses on phonemic awareness, sounds and letters, phonics, fluency, and word knowledge. In part 2, Reading and Responding, it emphasizes reading for understanding with literature, comprehension, inquiry, and practical reading applications. In part 3, Language Arts, it focuses on communication skills such as spelling and vocabulary; writing process strategies; English language conventions such as grammar, speaking, and penmanship; and basic computer skills. It is a language arts curriculum and instruction program adopted by the school district that teachers and students used to develop oral and written English. Students receive a workbook to practice reading and writing skills and a reading anthology that included different story genres.

Teachers met weekly as first grade team level to ensure language arts curriculum and instruction consistency in implementation. They planned lessons around the Open Court program and are required by administrators to implement the California Language Arts standards for first grade. Assessments were given at several points in the academic year: (1) end of unit; (2) quarterly; and (3) yearly. As students finished each unit, teachers administered assessments from Open Court. This varied according to teachers and time allotted per first grade class. Some teachers did not assess at the end of every unit. There was less consistency there. However, for quarterly and yearly, there were assessments given at the beginning and end of the quarter and year. Teachers used a combination from school site, in-district, and the Open Court reading and writing assessments. Since K-1 students are not required to take the California STAR testing program, districts and teachers use their own assessments to gauge students’ oral and written English language development. Teachers used the quarterly results to report during parent conferences while yearly results were used to determine whether or not students met grade level standards.

## Participants

### Focal Students

I attempted to select students who began first grade with comparable skills in oral and written L1 and L2, as measured by teacher informal assessment, in-district tests, the CELDT, and my initial observations and research developed Vietnamese and English reading assessments. My reasoning was that such comparability would enable me to attribute differences in the students' L1 and L2 development to any differences I might observe in their L1 and L2 experiences throughout the year—recognizing that some confounding factors that I might not be able to observe, such as home language and literacy experiences, might well account for observed differences in performance. I expected to end up with a set of plausible hypotheses about instructional experiences that might possibly account for observed performance differences, with the hope that those hypotheses might be further investigated in subsequent, and presumably more experimental, studies. My work is predicated on the assumption that I, and the field, am likely to learn more, at this stage of the inquiry, from a close examination of the path of development and correlated pedagogical experiences of a few carefully chosen students than from any larger scale examination of test scores. I am more concerned about describing the performance and experiences of these focal students well and richly than in drawing any generalizations about the impact of pedagogy on development. In short, internal, not external, validity will drive the inquiry.

**Kaitlyn.** Kaitlyn was 6 years old when she started first grade at a school in Northern California. She is ethnically Vietnamese, born in the United States and is part of the second generation. She came from a family of four, with one older sister and two parents who were born in Vietnam and was part of the 1.5 generation. Both parents attended grade school in Vietnam and came to the US in their teens and received college degrees. They were both trained engineers and were fluent in English and Vietnamese. During the study, the mother stayed home to take care of the children while the father was employed. She volunteered inside Kaitlyn's classroom during the school day and took her to afterschool activities such as piano and ballet. Kaitlyn and her family socialized within the Vietnamese community by eating, shopping and attending festivals. Her parents conversed primarily in Vietnamese with the children with some English. Kaitlyn socialized with friends using both Vietnamese and English outside of school.

She was taken to the library often for pleasure reading, predominately in English and some Vietnamese. She read books in English, but seldomly read in Vietnamese. She was reading and writing at grade level in English. Kaitlyn's parents filled out, in the public elementary school home language survey, that she spoke Vietnamese as a primary language at home. As a result, she was designated as an ELL when she entered kindergarten, even though she had acquired oral and began reading in English. Prior to first grade, Kaitlyn did not have formal instruction, in a self-contained classroom, where she would be developing oral and written Vietnamese. She only developed oral Vietnamese by listening and speaking to her sibling, parents and extended family and friends. To the elders, she was expected to address them in Vietnamese. This was not only a cultural tradition that she had to follow but, that her extended family members spoke minimal English and used only Vietnamese in their interactions with her. When Kaitlyn did use oral English, she used it with her older sister (who attended third grade at

the same school) and parents. At the beginning of first grade, Kaitlyn was not able to read and write in Vietnamese. Her parents' goal was for her to acquire those skills in Vietnamese Sunday school.

**Ann.** Ann was 6 years old when she started first grade. She is part of the Vietnamese second generation, born in the U.S. to 1.5 generation parents. She has been living in Northern California since birth. She is the oldest of two children. Her younger brother was attending preschool. Her parents came to the U.S. in their late teens and attended elementary and secondary school in Vietnam. Her father worked in sales and mother was in the computer industry. Ann's parents were both fluent in Vietnamese and English but, more comfortable using Vietnamese as it represented their ethnic identity. The parents spoke primarily Vietnamese to the children. At the time of the study, Ann's mother was laid off from her industry and was working part time in the restaurant business. She primarily took care of the children, responsible for their academics and extra-curricular activities. Ann had swimming and piano. Her socialization in the Vietnamese community entailed eating, shopping, and attending art and music festivals. At home, she baked Vietnamese cake and pastries with her mom. Her family gathered for dinner and ate traditional Vietnamese food daily.

Ann lived across the street from her extended family. She listened and spoke Vietnamese fluently with her cousins and the elders in the family. Ann watched television and listened to music videos in Vietnamese with her mother and brother. They sang songs and recited poems learned from the television shows in Vietnamese. Ann's strength was in oral Vietnamese through listening and speaking. Prior to starting kindergarten, Ann did not receive any formal instruction in Vietnamese. She was not able to read and write in Vietnamese. Her parents did not enroll her in any formal Vietnamese school at the time of the study. She seldomly read Vietnamese books, choosing to read in English instead. She developed oral English through conversations and interactions with her neighborhood family members and friends. She was reading and writing in English before starting first grade. In kindergarten, she was classified as ELL and administered the CEDLT assessment. The results placed her at basic level of English reading and listening. She will continue to take the test each year until she scores above proficient level. If she passes, she will be redesignated from Limited English Proficient (LEP) to Fluent English Proficient (FEP).

### **Focal Teachers**

Selecting teachers, started with simultaneous understanding of the demographic map of school districts, its individual elementary schools and the Vietnamese language schools in Northern California. To keep with the comparable L1 and L2 language and literacy skills of focal students, teachers had to also be comparable with their teaching skills, using similar curriculum in the English only classrooms while addressing the ELD needs of ELLs. Focal teachers in English Language Mainstream classrooms had to be comparable in their ability to design literacy activities that will afford ELL students the kind of interactions that transitioned and developed from L1 to L2 oral and written language skills. Teachers had to use the same language arts curriculum with minimal variations in instructional strategies. They had to have experience in instructing ELLs at the elementary school level.

The criteria for selection were different for a Vietnamese language teacher due to no existence of bilingual-waiver Vietnamese classrooms in California. There was no certification needed to teach Vietnamese because most of its language schools were based at congregations (with different denomination such as Catholic or Buddhist), non-profit community organizations and private locations that required minimal or no formal training to teach Vietnamese. These instructors were not certified like the public elementary school teachers where formal training included understanding of theory and practice on the instruction of first and second language learners. However, teachers had to be fluent and had experience working with young children acquiring a heritage language such as Vietnamese. They had to be familiar with the curriculum and displayed abilities in creating literacy activities that afford students the opportunity to interact with peers and teachers using Vietnamese.

**Lorenz.** Lorenz has been teaching at the public elementary school, mostly first and second grade, for approximately 18 years. All of the schools she has taught have had some population of ELLs. She was trained to teach ELLs with a Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development (BCLAD) certificate. She used a combination of instructional strategies to meet the needs of ELLs. Those strategies included grouping to scaffold, breaking down curriculum, allowing time for oral language development, repeating aloud to focus on syntax etc. Lorenz was selected based on her professional ability to work with ELLs and her team level to develop and transition the students from LEP to FEP status, according to the California ELD curriculum. She worked with the first grade team level to establish consistency and accountability in implementing the Open Court language arts program. She was knowledgeable about the constraints and affordances of the required first grade curriculum for ELLs. She supplemented for both assessment and instruction when necessary, pulling from her years of teaching experiences. She had awareness of ELL students' cultural experiences as she integrated her students' language and literacy practices from home, despite the fact that she was not allowed to speak or teach in any language other than English in a self-contained English Language Mainstream classroom. She allowed some language connections to help students make meaning of text with themselves or with peers. She was connected with the parents as they come into the classroom everyday to volunteer and work with students on specific tasks such as spelling or paired reading. She was in constant communication with the students' family to inform them of the students' progress and to understand the students' home environment. She stayed updated on the students' family life.

**Croft.** Croft has been working with young children for 20 years, starting as an instructional aide and then an elementary school teacher. She has taught in the Northern California public schools for all those years and worked extensively with ELLs. She is BCLAD certified and served on the district's Ethnic Race Committee to provide and improve the ELD needs of ELLs. She met with the committee to give input on the instructional practice with ELLs as the district required all teachers to use Open Court and in-district reading and writing assessments. Croft shared district state assessment results with her grade team level to improve curriculum and instruction. She was active with her first grade team level to ensure consistent and accountability in implementing the Open Court program. She also supplemented with her own materials when needed. She was selected to be on this study primarily based on her

consistent awareness of the language and literacy needs of her ELLs. In the classroom, she welcomed the language and literacy experiences of her ELL students. She used her students' L1 and L2 language experiences to integrate with daily literacy activities. She grouped her students heterogeneously so that they could scaffold each other's learning. She allowed students to think in pairs, small groups and in a whole class. She encouraged oral language use as a form of reading development. She had the students sing songs, recite poems and read books aloud. Students were given the opportunity to share their language affordances during classroom interactions with the teacher and peers. With school-home connections, Croft made efforts to inform parents of her classroom curriculum and instructional objectives. She stayed in contact with each family and was informed about the students' home life. The connection with the students' parents kept her aware of the students' efforts to transition from their L1 language and literacy abilities to the acquisition of L2.

**Huynh.** Huynh was a 25 years old graduate student, obtaining a Masters of Arts in Public Health when she decided to join my study. She was not a certified teacher, by California standards. She graduated from the Vietnamese Sunday school program at age 17, after spending 11 years completing Levels 1A-12. She volunteered at the school every Sunday because she liked working with children and to teach about their cultural and language heritage of Vietnam. She was born in the U.S. and was part of the second generation. Her parents were 1.5 generation and arrived in the U.S. in their early twenties, having worked and attended trade school for the past thirty years. Huynh was fluent with strength in oral Vietnamese. She continued to develop the written Vietnamese as it was simultaneously her first and second language growing up. She socialized within the Vietnamese community, having to eat, shop, and attended different community events throughout the year. She was active with the Vietnamese Sunday school in planning curriculum, events and interacted with other language teachers to revise and improve the instruction of students acquiring the culture and language form of Vietnamese. Huynh was selected based on her experience with teaching Level 1 class. She has taught the same course since she graduated at age 17. She started as an instructional aide in the class and then transitioned after the organization saw her ability in teaching the six years old age group. She used the curriculum, developed by the Vietnamese Sunday school organization. She also supplemented in response to her regular classroom assessments. She constantly worked to meet the needs of the learners by grouping, allowing opportunities to orally recite words and sentences in Vietnamese. She stayed connected with all of the parents to share her students' progress. She required homework to be completed each week and for students to practice using oral Vietnamese and to read books at home with their family members.

### **Data Collection: Instruments and Methods**

I used a range of ethnographic methods—including participatory observation, interviews, extensive field notes and audiotapes—to conduct case studies in these 5 settings over a span of two years. For purposes of the dissertation, however, only the first year of data was analyzed, using a combination of classroom observations, interviews and research study developed L1 and L2 language and reading assessments. Whereas, the second year only included Benchmark 4 language and reading assessment results and parent interview with no classroom observations

and teacher interviews. I went back the second year (Benchmark 4) to only get assessment results of Kaitlyn and Ann's reading and oral language skills because I wanted to know their progress in L1 and L2 over a span of two years, grades 1-2 for ELM classrooms and Levels 1a-2 for Vietnamese Sunday school. The second year data provided additional support for the plausible hypothesis that given beginning comparable L1 and L2 language and literacy skills that both Kaitlyn and Ann had, formal instruction in Vietnamese Sunday school afforded Kaitlyn additional language skills to acquire English. Kaitlyn's affordances advanced her overall L1 and L2 language and literacy development.

I used both the observation and field note taking guidelines from Bogdan & Biklen (2003) and LeCompte & Priessle, (1993) for my data collection. I entered the classroom three times per academic year (at the beginning, middle and end) during language arts activities and instruction for each setting. I followed each focal student as they worked with teachers and peers to develop oral and written language in Vietnamese and English. Audiotapes were transcribed to check for accuracies with field notes. Transcriptions were analyzed to look for emerging themes across the acquisition of oral and written skills in Vietnamese and English languages among focal students. Descriptions of emerging instructional themes across three classrooms were used to understand the similarities and differences that existed in the instructional practices of teachers and the learning experiences of students.

### **Interviews**

I interviewed teachers and parents to learn about the influences on the literacy practices of Kaitlyn and Ann, both inside and outside of the classroom. Questions probed a range of pedagogical decisions on the development and implementation of oral, reading and writing activities during language arts activities. Teachers responded to two sets of questions, at the beginning and end of the school year, which included inquiries about focal student language and literacy affordances and emergences, teaching experiences and the instructional connections to the students' cultural background. Parents were encouraged to share about their educational background and purpose for supporting their children in maintaining the heritage language and/or the acquisition of English. I wanted to find out how their learning goals for Kaitlyn and Ann influenced the literacy practices at home as their children interacted with family members to develop listening, speaking and reading skills. The parent interview questions, administered at the end of the school year, primarily contained information on their perspectives on their children's language and literacy skills at home and their views on language learning at school. Parents' responses provided a window into the sociocultural affordances of the Vietnamese language through interactions within the family and in their community in the US.

### **Artifacts and Digital Photos.**

I collected samples of focal students' work throughout the year. It represented a range of students' abilities in oral and written language development during language arts instructions. Digital photos were used to describe the classroom environment. It provided information on the social and academic environment of focal students such as the resources used during language arts activities to access both the heritage language and English. Photos were used to describe how students were situated while participating in literacy activities.

## **Student Assessments**

Focal students were given comparable measures of early reading skills such as the recognition of letters and sounds, high frequency words, and decodable words in L1 (Vietnamese) and L2 (English) at the beginning and end of the academic year. All of the assessments developed for this study appear in Appendices A-N. The results of those tests were used to compare both their listening and reading comprehension skills in L1 and L2. The assessment measures were comparable in terms of appropriate first grade (ages 5-6) level with listening and reading comprehension, frequency of words and decodable words across Vietnamese and English.

Reading assessments for ELLs, acquiring English as a second language, should include a sampling of reading behaviors that guide decisions about reading ability. Assessments have to be responsive to individual differences, here, L1 and L2 distance. Valid assessments require multiple sources of information (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Hiebert, Valencia, & Afflerbach, 1994) and to be authentic as to represent specified real-world socialization and communicative competence, in this case study, from different language cultures (Bachman, 1990). Useful knowledge gained from authentic performance assessment results, for the purpose of understanding students' oral and written language development as it informed instruction, lies from the construct development of the tests and the efforts to connect with the students' cultural and language backgrounds. To make the connections, I first turned to the students' language experiences at home and then to the teachers' interactions as they implemented the curriculum inside the classroom. The pilot study was useful in helping me identify some of the cultural affordances of learning Vietnamese while the students were acquiring English as a second language. It was important to integrate those aspects in developing the reading assessment battery for this study.

Since reading assessment outcomes were used to make instructional decisions, many studies looking at the validity of assessment construct have focused on students' simple reading ability rather than ensuring that the testing procedures correspond to the curriculum as well. More importantly, that the correspondence should move further from curriculum to the integration of L1 and L2 language and literacy practices of ELLs. To create test construct that considered the cultural practices of ELLs required deep knowledge about the L1 and L2 language form and use from the home and classroom. The underlying purpose of creating the reading assessments, in this study, in Vietnamese and English was to provide additional evidence to support the plausible hypothesis that Kaitlyn, given additional formal instruction in Vietnamese, would not only continue to develop in L1, but to also acquire English at the proficient grade level.

Koda (2004), in describing Gough & Tunmer's "simple view of reading" suggested that decoding efficiency was largely responsible for early reading achievement among beginning L1 readers. The critical question was whether a similar developmental relationship existed among L2 readers. Empirical findings suggested that L2 decoding efficiency was in part determined by L1 and L2 orthographic distance and the L1 language experiences. L1 decoding competence was "likely to be a strong factor in discriminating high and low efficiency L2 decoders with similar L1 backgrounds" (Koda, 2004:25). Since both English and Vietnamese orthographies are based on the Latin alphabet, the orthographic distance was not as great as it would in comparing

English to Chinese logographies, for example. Thus when it came to developing the letter/sound and decodable words it was not difficult to make the tasks comparable. The visual connection of letter to sound in decoding and recognizing words required similar skills for both languages. However, oral Vietnamese, like Chinese, is largely monosyllabic, with many diacritics (five accent/tone marks marking pitch) that required additional attention in creating the Vietnamese test. For example, *mò-a-ma-huyèn-mà* represent an example of 5 different pronunciation for the word /mà/. In developing the listening and reading assessments I included the cultural experiences of the students by selecting text that were not only decodable, but also had literary elements (i.e. setting, characters, plot, main idea) that students connected with through their socialization and use of heritage language from their home and community.

All students' responses to the assessments were analyzed on two levels: (1) correct/incorrect based on the task target; and (2) error analysis where comments were provided based on L1 & L2 language development of Kaitlyn and Ann. For example if students were asked to decode the target word /d-ay/ and produced /b-ay/, it would be marked as incorrect in the simpler scheme but the error analysis would indicated that the /d/ and /b/ letter reversal was a common K-1 grade level error for both Vietnamese and English speaking student. Additional comments errors were noted to provide an understanding of linguistic constraints and affordances as students moved back and forth between their knowledge of oral and written Vietnamese and English.

**English listening and reading assessments.** Research study focal teachers from the ELM classrooms assisted me in selecting the age appropriate L2 (English) reading and listening comprehension materials. We chose materials that were of both high interest and at grade level, making images, characters and words from books fun for students to read and listen to while having a range of difficulty. The decodable and high frequency word lists were age appropriate and at grade level with frequent number of occurrence in both oral and written language use and in text.

**Letter-sound knowledge.** In the Letter-sound knowledge assessment (Appendix A), students were asked to name and make the sounds of 26 alphabet letters. Written English is based on 26 letters and 44 phonograms.

**High frequency words.** In this assessment (see Appendix C), students were asked to read aloud 30 sight words at each benchmark. These words were selected based on the level of frequency, as it appeared in first 300 high frequent words from first grade oral and written text. Students were expected to automatically recognize these words to gauge their effort to read text fluently. As is the case with high frequency English words, many of the words represent patterns that are not transparently decodable (i.e. do, of, the, said). Students presumably learn these words through repeated exposure to them through reading and word drills.

**Decodable words.** In this assessment (see Appendix E), students were asked to decode 30 transparently decodable English words, 10 drawn from each of 3 frequency bands: 1-100, 101-500, 501-800; for example the words *that*, *rat*, and *vat* illustrate these levels for the –at word family. In beginning reading, it is important for the child to read phonetically decodable text because it allows the child to apply correct phonologic processing skills. The list of words were

generated by selecting words that illustrate the most common rimes in English, according to Fry's list of English phonograms (1998).

***Reading comprehension and informal reading inventory.*** Students were asked to read aloud (Appendix G) the same story written by Hugh Price, "In the Days of the Dinosaurs: The Dinosaur Chase" at benchmarks 1 and 3. The book was selected based on the age 6 appropriate reading levels, where text was decodable and illustration provided scaffold for vocabulary building. Students read the story aloud while the researcher took an informal reading inventory to gauge their reading fluency level. After reading, students responded to a set of five reading comprehension questions that focused on skills such as recalling details, inferring, and understanding the literary elements (setting, characters, problem/solution, and main idea). A rubric, using the 1-4 point scale, was used to gauge the depth of the students' responses. The results were used to determine the stage of L2 reading comprehension development, compared to L1.

***Listening comprehension.*** In this assessment (see Appendix I), students were read a story aloud written by Jenny Giles, "Two Little Goldfish". After students listened to the story, they were asked to retell everything they remembered while the researcher wrote it down. The purpose was to have students show their receptive skills by listening to a story and then provides a sample of their oral language production through retelling aloud. Students responded to five comprehension questions targeting skills similar to the reading comprehension assessment. A rubric, using the 1-4 point scale, was used to gauge the depth of the students' responses. The results were used to determine the stage of L2 listening comprehension development, compared to L1.

***Oral language interview.*** Students were administered two sections of the oral language assessment during Benchmark 4 only: (1) the warm-up student background; and (2) oral description of pictures. After the beginning analysis of classroom observations and the benchmarks 1-3, more samples of the students' oral language was needed to further track the L1 and L2 oral language development. Open-ended questions (i.e. Tell me about a time when your family went to the park for a picnic.) were given to allow students to produce natural oral language for error analysis.

***Vietnamese listening and reading assessments.*** Different cultural and linguistic considerations were used in the development of the Vietnamese assessments based on its orthographic character. The Vietnamese decodable word list contained only one syllable because the language consisted of only single syllable words. However, dialectical considerations had to be made because second generation US born children are taught primarily in the Southern Vietnam dialect while children born in Vietnam are taught in the Northern. Decodable words were selected based on transparency (letter-to-sound) to but also, the context in which it is used (United States or Vietnam). Consultations with Vietnamese learners and teachers were used determine the grade (or age) level appropriate words.

***Letter-sound knowledge.*** In this assessment (see Appendix B), students were asked to name 29 letters (b→ bê ) and then make the sounds (b→/bơ/) in Vietnamese. This visual connection of letters to the sound production was the beginning analysis into the students'

decoding and word recognition abilities. Reading fluency, in L1 and L2 is dependent on the child's ability to not only correctly recognize the letters and sounds of the alphabet, but to also map them for the phonemes and word recognition.

**High frequency word list.** Words (see Appendix D) were selected from a sampling of age 6 reading level books from Vietnam and the current Vietnamese Sunday school curriculum. There was no formal word frequency calculator used to determine the number of occurrence in text. I selected the words that appeared frequently in twenty narrative storybooks that I reviewed closely. Also, I included words that I observed from the pilot study that students used frequently in both oral and written Vietnamese. To verify the validity of my high frequency list, I consulted the Vietnamese educators at the Vietnamese Sunday School and also consulted the curriculum used in that school.

**Decodable word list.** Since the Vietnamese language has monosyllabic words with one-to-one letter-sound correspondence (one grapheme makes one phoneme), it was easier to select the words with fewer categories, compared to English phonemes. I selected most words (see Appendix F) based on the frequent use of initial consonant and the simple word combination using CV (cà) and CVC (nam). Accent marks were chosen by the level of difficulty as students at age 6 decode words with CV and CVC combined with the six accent marks. The word, biết, was easier to decode, with the low falling diacritic mark ( ́ ) while containing the letter (ê) compared to the word, việt, with the glottalized falling diacritic mark ( ̣ ) below the letter (ê). I also considered the frequency level of the words, as it appeared in oral and written Vietnamese text from Vietnam and in daily use in the U.S.

**Reading comprehension and informal reading inventory.** Students were asked to read a story (Appendix H) aloud, “Những Người Bạn Dễ Thương” written by Trinh Bày Tú Quỳnh. An informal reading inventory was completed to determine the reading fluency. Then they were instructed to retell through writing. The book was selected with similar criteria as the English reading comprehension. However, the book was from Vietnam with illustrations that reflected the sights and socialization of families living there. Since the students were part of the second generation and have not been socialized in the same environment, I was reluctant at first to select such a book because I did not want the unfamiliar context in the book to affect and confound their reading abilities. But, after my initial classroom observation and interview with the parents from the pilot study, I was informed about the common home practice where students were exposed to the ways and sites of living in Vietnam. Parents had their children stay connected with their family members, such as grandparents, who either were still living in Vietnam or living in U.S. but go back to visit often. Students were expected to communicate with their elders in Vietnamese. They had to socialize by using the cultural practices during mealtimes, cultural festivities, and family rituals. They were exposed to the tools and objects used during the socialization such using chopsticks to pick up vermicelli and beef while dipping into the fish sauce. The book that I selected had to portray similar home experiences using site and tools to connect with students while they were reading the text for comprehension. Students responded to five reading comprehension after reading it aloud. A rubric, using the 1-4 point scale, was

used to gauge the depth of the students' responses. The results were used to determine the stage of L1 reading comprehension development, compared to L2 early reading development.

***Listening comprehension.*** I had similar criteria as the Vietnamese reading comprehension assessment in selecting the text, "Chuyện Ông Gióng" written by Trinh Bày Quang Lân. Students were instructed to listen to the story read aloud to them in Vietnamese. Then they were instructed to retell the story aloud while the researcher wrote down their responses. A rubric, scale of 1-4, was used to gauge their responses to determine the L1 listening comprehension development, compared to L2.

***Oral language interview.*** In Benchmark 4 only, students were asked to respond to two sections of pictures, similar to the English oral language assessment. Questions were open-ended to allow students to produce naturally occurring Vietnamese. There were no correct and incorrect responses. The purpose was to get a large sample of the students' oral production of Vietnamese. The pictures were selected based on the familiarity of students' socialization and cultural practices from home and in their community. The images depicted specific use of tools used during mealtime, cultural festivities and playtime from Vietnam. The responses were used to determine students' level of syntactic abilities in L1, compared to L2 development.

### **Data Analysis**

I used an interpretive framework, along with the ecological perspective on language learning, to guide my data analysis. The framework provided insights into the pedagogical influences of L1 and L2 oral and written development among young ELLs. I used a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) rather than determine in advance which themes will emerge. Collections of field notes, audiotapes, artifacts and interviews were analyzed using the analytic induction process (Becker, 1998, Erickson, 1986, Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). To increase the interpretive validity of the study, I simultaneously transcribed audiotapes of students' language and literacy practices during language arts activities in each classroom and interviews of teachers and parents to triangulate my interpretation to ensure consistency and accuracy.

In Chapter 4, I began responding to the first set of the research study questions by describing the types of language affordance, emergences and interactions that might explain any advantages that Kaitlyn accrued by continued oral and written L1 Vietnamese development in a formal instructional language classroom. I provided a narrative, based on initial parent and teacher interviews, that supported the plausible hypothesis that if Kaitlyn and Ann began first grade, age 6, with similar oral and written L1 Vietnamese and L2 English development and Kaitlyn receiving formal instruction in L1 while Ann does not throughout the academic year then Kaitlyn would continue to advance in both languages while Ann would fall behind with some aspects of oral and written L1. This chapter entailed only a description of the beginning of the first year of data collection. I used parents' comments on the L1 and L2 language and literacy experiences at home that included interactions of students with family members and within the Vietnamese community. Language tools such as 1.5 and second generation language conversations during family routines (i.e. mealtime, past time, or visits to grandma's house), artifacts (i.e. stories or pictures brought back from Vietnam visits), and play times that used L1

and L2 at home and in the Vietnamese community (i.e. cultural events or visit to the grocery store). Assessment data results were also described to show how the language affordances from home influenced the L1 and L2 oral and written language development of Kaitlyn and Ann. Also, teacher interview responses were used to support the stance that both students began first grade, at age 6, with similar L1 and L2 language and literacy skills.

In Chapter 5, I moved from describing the language affordances that both Kaitlyn and Ann brought to the classrooms, at the beginning of first grade, to the analysis of classroom interactions throughout one school year. I started with the classroom context in both ELM and Vietnamese Sunday classrooms where detailed information on the physical structure and grouping of the students were portrayed. Then, with each classroom and teacher, I provided examples of language interactions such as metalinguistic awareness. Teacher's interactions with the students around reading and writing instructions were used to support the second set of research questions, which were: (1) What do the metalinguistic awareness of L1 and L2 look like through language affordance, emergence and interactions in the classrooms?; and (2) How do forms of metalinguistic awareness such as language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading assist in learning L1 and L2? I observed language interactions that showed Ann or Kaitlyn's use of language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading to acquire phonological awareness, word recognition and to read text at appropriate grade level in three classrooms. Teacher's interview responses supported beginning evidence that Kaitlyn was advancing in both L1 and L2 oral and written languages. In particular, instruction in Vietnamese Sunday school has helped Kaitlyn not only maintain her L1 heritage language and culture, but also advanced her understanding of how Vietnamese functions in her daily life through her interactions within the classroom and at home and community. I concluded with a beginning set of responses to the research questions relating to the instruction, using metalinguistic awareness as a strategy, for ELL students in acquiring L1 and L2 oral and written language and literacy skills.

In Chapter 6, I finished the research study with a return to the end of the year interviews and assessments to determine the early reading development of Kaitlyn and Ann in both languages. Over a span of one school year, the plausible hypothesis was supported by showing that Kaitlyn not only maintained her heritage language, but advanced in English as well whereas Ann continued to develop her L1 oral language and lagged behind in L1 written language development. I described the interviews from the teachers as they shared about their instructional impact on both students' L1 and L2 oral and written language development in an academic year. In addition, I provided an analysis of the reading assessments in both languages with samples of students' oral and written retelling to compare benchmark one with three. Parents' interviews were used to describe the students' language and literacy experiences at the end of the school year. Their responses provided an ecological perspective on how, in one year, the home and school connection supported the L1 and L2 oral and written language development of Kaitlyn and Ann. Then I finish my data analysis with the end of year two oral language interview results, reading assessments and parent interviews. The data samples were added after one year of data collection and initial analysis resulting in the need to provide additional naturally occurring oral language from Ann and Kaitlyn for simple linguistic analysis to determine specific L1 and L2 oral and written language development. Both Ann and Kaitlyn continued to improve in both languages after the finish of second grade, age 7, but Kaitlyn outperformed Ann in both oral and written Vietnamese after the second year experience at

Vietnamese Sunday school. I did not have any classroom observations in year two therefore, did not provide any instructional analysis. I concluded the chapter with sections on the research study conclusions, limitations, implications for practice and future research.

## **Chapter 4: Language and Literacy Affordances From Students**

### **Introduction: At the Beginning of the First Year of Observation**

As a researcher in the field, I generated a “situation-based inquiry process, learning, over time, to ask questions of the field setting in such a way that the setting, by its answers, teaches the next situationally appropriate questions to ask,” (Erickson, 1984: 51). When I began with the pilot study, my research questions were appropriate, but my initial interpretation of the data was not situated in ecological or sociocultural theories about second language learning. My regard for the role of tools in mediating mind, including language, emerged as I reflected on the affordances, interaction, and emergence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 from the observations. The cultural aspects of language learning became important to investigate as Vietnamese ELLs interacted with the teachers, peers and the curriculum. One of the fundamental premises of sociocultural theories of the mind, at least as conceived by L. S. Vygotsky, is that the human mind is mediated (Lantolf, 2000:1). Humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely on tools and signs to regulate relationships with others, with us, and with the physical world around them. These tools are created by human cultures over time, and among them is language.

My task was to understand how learners used language, organized through culturally constructed artifacts, to relate to the world around them, including the classrooms. Thus, the unit of analysis is the learner, situated in the classroom and at home—the learner caught in the act of using language to make meaning. The schools’ policies, the teachers’ instructional goals, and the parents’ beliefs and values are parts of the context(s) that shape this meaning making enterprise. What links the parts are the culture where language gets immersed in the learning experiences of ELLs. It is culture that provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways (Bruner, 1996:3). Culture is the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. Observing the shared patterns, through close examination, will provide perspectives on how community of learners define and create their social realities through the use of language. An ethnographic approach is appropriate to “give meaning to oral phenomena by placing them into appropriate historical and social contexts and by enunciating their appropriate laws that regulate social life in time and space” (Kramsch, 1994:3). This cultural perspective is one way to describe the oral and written language pathways of Kaitlyn and Ann.

The research for this investigation represents more of an evolving and responsive journey than a pre-planned “tour” of the landscape of Vietnamese and English language learning. An informal connection with a Vietnamese “Sunday School” helped me connect with mainly 1.5 generation Vietnamese immigrant parents who sent their 2.0 generation children to, among other things, learn how to read and write Vietnamese while preserving the heritage language and culture. After the pilot study, I met Kaitlyn and her family in the Vietnamese Sunday school and followed her progress over a two-year period. Also, I developed the idea that in order to truly understand Kaitlyn’s progress in learning both English and Vietnamese (oral and written) language skills, I needed a reference point, a benchmark case against whom I could compare Kaitlyn’s development. That was how Ann, the second student in the study, came into the picture. Ann was the comparable student because she had similar entering L1 skills, similar L2 experiences in the home and at school, but no opportunity to engage in L1 written language

activities, at least in the systematic and formal sense in which it would be taught in a school setting.

In Chapter 4, I use the ecological perspective, as a theoretical framework, to give understanding to what extent does culture, therefore language, influenced the way in which learners negotiate the situated activities that provide language affordance. By following the oral and written language learning pathways of both Kaitlyn and Ann, from the home to the Vietnamese Sunday and/or to the English Mainstream classrooms at a public elementary classroom, I will capture the unfolding events where the relational learning aspects of Vietnamese and English languages intertwine with culture. I will respond to the following set of research questions:

- Does access to home and formal classroom experiences designed to maintain and enhance the development of L1 Vietnamese, while learning L2 English, assist and reinforce the acquisition of L1 and L2 oral and written modes?
- If so, what are the types of affordances, emergences, or interactions that might contribute to any advantages accrued by continued L1 Vietnamese and L2 English development?

As a plausible hypothesis, I went into the inquiry with the expectation that Kaitlyn would progress further in both English and Vietnamese as a result of her learning experiences at Vietnamese Sunday school, compared to Ann who did not receive formal Vietnamese instruction in her community. To support this inquiry, I would try to minimize potentially confounding factors by ensuring that the development of L1 and L2 of both students, Kaitlyn and Ann as it turned out, was as similar as possible at the beginning of the first study year. The language and literacy affordances brought to the classrooms would need to be more similar than different in order for me to zero in on the affordances of the L1 experience of Kaitlyn.

I began my comparison of their entering language experience and competence by providing perspectives on the home socialization of both students, capturing the oral and written Vietnamese affordances and interactions through parent interview responses. I used the initial parent comments, prior to selecting their children for my study, as support in providing evidence that both Kaitlyn and Ann started first grade, age 6, with similar home language and literacy environments. In short, I detailed the cultural practices from the home, from parent interview rather than observations, to get at how both students use their language affordances to communicate and socialize within their family and the extended community.

Then, I examined the results from the oral and written language assessments I had developed in the pilot year; they were administered at the beginning of the first grade for both students to provide another comparative reading of their L1 and L2 development, this time from the perspective of performance on the outcome rather than the opportunity side of the developmental lens. Those results helped me determine the L1 and L2 language and literacy affordances that Kaitlyn and Ann had experienced in their prior (i.e., Kindergarten or up until age 6) school experiences. Next, I used the teachers' beginning of the year informal and formal assessments along with comments about where they believed Kaitlyn and Ann's language and literacy skills were as they began to experience the curriculum in grade one. Also, I examined

and described the informal assessments used by the teacher of the Vietnamese Sunday school for Kaitlyn only. The initial parent and teacher interview responses and the assessments gave lend an understanding into the oral and written language affordance, emergence and interactions from home and school. It gave me a beginning thick description of the types of literacy experiences both Kaitlyn and Ann had in learning how to listen, speak, read and write English and, in Kaitlyn's case, Vietnamese also. I conclude with comments on similarities and differences between Kaitlyn and Ann as they entered the Fall of the first year of my study. The adequate evidence described will begin to support the hypothesis and to respond to the first set of my research questions.

### **Entering First Grade English and Level 1A Vietnamese Classrooms**

Kaitlyn and Ann entered the first year of my study and first grade, at the age of six. They both attended separate kindergarten classes at the same public elementary school. Both received the Open Court SRA/McGraw-Hill language arts program with some English Language Development instruction, as required by California law due to their ELL status. When they entered first grade, several assessments were used to determine their language and literacy skills level. Since there was no STAR testing program at the kindergarten grade level, teachers had to rely on previous year teacher informal assessments, comments, and in-district tests to gauge grade-level appropriate instructions. The CEDLT results were released by the state in October, which was too late for the first grade teachers to use at the beginning of first grade in August. However, the teachers used the kindergarten CELDT results as a start. Teachers, from the public elementary school, provided me their assessments of the students in English only. The Vietnamese Sunday school teacher provided Kaitlyn's informal assessments in Vietnamese only. In addition, I used a battery of reading assessments, developed from the pilot study, to also determine whether or not they entered the study with similar L1 and L2 language and literacy competence. Specifically, I wanted to ensure that both students had similar listening and speaking skills in oral and written Vietnamese, but not reading and writing since they were not acquiring those skills at home. In English, since they received oral and written language skills from kindergarten the year prior, both students would, I predicted, perform similarly on the early reading assessments.

Initially, for the first four weeks of the school year, I worked with first grade teachers to identify 2 students (one attending Vietnamese Sunday school and public school in ELM class and the other one attending the same public school but in a different ELM class) and observed and took fieldnotes on their oral and written language competence during literacy activities. I also met with parents to understand students' home context and to get their support for the research project. I settled on Kaitlyn and Ann based on their comparable skills with their home environment and fluency in Vietnamese.

### **Socialization at Home**

According to their parents, Kaitlyn and Ann displayed strength in listening and speaking skills, using primarily oral and some written Vietnamese. Between listening and speaking, both students were more comfortable with listening to rather than speaking in spoken Vietnamese within the family. Parents encouraged or forced their children to use Vietnamese as much as

possible. They felt it was important to develop the language so that they could understand and communicate with their siblings, parents and elders. They wanted their children to acquire daily use of spoken Vietnamese, feeling that it was important first to learn oral before learning written language in L1 (Vietnamese). This explained why Kaitlyn and Ann (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) displayed weakness in reading and writing written Vietnamese. Both parents (1.5 generation) disclosed that they used minimal oral reading and writing practices involving the use of written Vietnamese at home. This was in part due to the minimal exposure of the 1.5-generation parents to written Vietnamese language skills in their daily interactions at home while growing up. Their first generation parents were new arrivals and worked throughout the day, leaving the 1.5 generation children to fend for themselves with school work and socialization both inside and outside of the family, using a mixture of Vietnamese and English. Spoken Vietnamese was used to communicate during daily routines with elders. Written Vietnamese was not used primarily through reading and writing activities at home. But, for Kaitlyn and Ann's 1.5 generation parents, having lived in the United States for many years and acquiring different levels of fluency in Vietnamese and English, chose to maintain the heritage language by first having their children speak and listen to oral Vietnamese. For Kaitlyn, her parents took a step further by enrolling her in Vietnamese Sunday school so that she could practice both oral and written Vietnamese through listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. Ann's parents exposed her to some written Vietnamese from home only.

In both Kaitlyn and Ann's homes, language interactions often included elder family members from first generation who were fluent in the Southern Vietnamese dialect. Kaitlyn and Ann's 1.0 (i.e. grandparents) and 1.5 (i.e. parents, aunts and uncles) generation family members were from the Southern region of Vietnam. Their parents, grandparents or aunts and uncles often traveled back and forth to visit extended family, bringing food, pictures and videos, and retelling of family conversations from the motherland to share with the children and their parents. Interactions with family members entailed the use of spoken Vietnamese during daily routines such as mealtimes, play time, and homework activities for both Kaitlyn and Ann. There was some use of oral English. In both homes, the family members were connected with the Vietnamese community, socializing and participating in community events. The families shopped at the grocery stores and ate Vietnamese food in the same Northern California Vietnamese community. They had similar values and beliefs in providing the best education, in both L1 and L2. As referenced in Chapter 1, both sets of parents value education and believe that it is an integral part of their children's daily activities both from home and in school. It is part of the Vietnamese culture to teach and remind their children to value learning and hard work through daily practice with language and literacy activities.

Kaitlyn, at age 6, was able to use short simple sentences orally when communicating with her parents and sister in Vietnamese. She was able to understand functional words in reference to food (i.e. *cơm*-rice), objects (i.e. *sách*-book), and in addressing elders (i.e. *cô*-Ms.) when speaking to them. The parents stated that her level of oral Vietnamese was similar to English, with using simple syntax and vocabulary words. Prior to starting Vietnamese Sunday school, Kaitlyn minimally read or wrote in Vietnamese. She predominately listened and spoke oral Vietnamese. However, she began reading and writing, using both oral and written English due to her exposure to the public elementary classroom. The parents read picture books in English, but rarely in Vietnamese prior to starting first grade. They visited the library and

selected English books that were interesting to them such as fairytales. They encouraged or forced her to read other genres in English. Her parents taught Kaitlyn to read and write in English, but seldom in Vietnamese. They said that this was to support the public elementary school in helping her develop in L2 for kindergarten and first grade. The emphasis was more in English reading and writing, using both oral and written, because of what they have to do for homework versus spending the time to learn oral and written Vietnamese. Her parents believed that English was the dominant language that had to have the most attention because of school expectations. They wanted Kaitlyn to perform to standard, if not, advance beyond first grade level of performance. For Vietnamese, the primary purpose was for Kaitlyn to learn the spoken Vietnamese so that she could communicate with family members and to maintain her heritage and culture. Learning written Vietnamese was not a priority even though she had language exposure with extended family members and the community through her socialization. This was in part due to the parents' lack of listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in the written mode as oppose to the oral. The secondary purpose was for Kaitlyn to learn two languages so that she could cognitively process different sounds of languages so that it could prepare her for high school and college elective foreign language courses. Learning multiple languages would, her parents felt, provide Kaitlyn a future advantage to compete in the global market.

For Ann, at age 6, oral Vietnamese was predominantly used to communicate with her parents and brother. Her parents mostly used spoken Vietnamese during their interactions. But, there were opportunities for exposure to written language registers in Vietnamese. For example, they often sat together and watched documentary videos from Vietnam. The narrations from the videos used written Vietnamese. According to her mother, Ann understood the narration from those videos through discussing with her family members. Sometimes her mother took her to the library to borrow books in Vietnamese. They looked at expository books that focused on the history of Vietnam and described the food and sites from Vietnam. Although she was not reading in Vietnamese, she had exposure to books prior to starting first grade. When Ann visited family members in Northern California, she conversed with them in Vietnamese only. Sometimes, her grandmother would read to her in Vietnamese. They read *Ca Dao* to her and sang songs together while her mother was working. Ann has been to Vietnam to visit extended family members. She was able to communicate with them and to socialize, using local practices that were familiar to those used in Vietnam. She ate the same food and enjoyed conversing with her extended family, using oral Vietnamese. When she returned to the U.S., she continued to stay in touch with the Vietnam branch of her family. Her parents believed it was important for Ann to maintain her heritage through learning Vietnamese from home. Her parents were fluent in Vietnamese, oral and written, hence they were capable of teaching Ann. However, because of limited time with doing English homework, daily use of Vietnamese, especially written Vietnamese, was minimal. They wanted to make sure Ann was meeting first grade standards at the public elementary school while maintaining the heritage Vietnamese language.

Kaitlyn and Ann entered their first grade classrooms with similar home and community language affordances. In Chapter 2, Gibson (1986) and van Lier (2004) define affordance as the environment in which humans modify the interaction between interlocutors, using tools such as language or sensorimotor capacities. It is the context where opportunities and limitations, local practice and perceptions surface as humans relate and communicate. What is available to the persons in action serve as the potential to create different acts of meaning and forming local

practice with language. Kaitlyn and Ann related to their home and community environments by using both oral and written Vietnamese (L1) and English (L2) through the following types of bilingual-multidialectal dyad (Zentella, 1997) interactions:

- Primary interaction—generation 1.5 parents (caregivers) were mixed in their level of fluency in both Southern Vietnamese dialect and English. They spoke both languages among themselves and to the children. Generation 2.0 children responded predominantly in English and favored English among themselves.
- Secondary interaction—generation 1.0 extended family members were fluent in Southern Vietnamese dialect and had minimal exposure to English. They spoke primarily Vietnamese among themselves and to the children. Generation 2.0 children responded predominantly in Vietnamese, but favored English among themselves. Children were taught and expected to address elders in the primary language (L1) to pay respect and to maintain the cultural traditions.
- Tertiary interaction—mixed generations of 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 spoke both bilingual-multidialectal Vietnamese and English in the Vietnamese community. Generation 2.0 children responded predominantly by codeswitching, but favored English among themselves.

As referenced in Chapter 2, Romaine (1995) classified the main types of early childhood bilingualism based on the studies that considered factors such as the native language of the parents, the language of the community at large and the parents' strategies in speaking to the child. From Kaitlyn and Ann's language interactions and experiences at home and in the community, it appears that they transitioned to Type 6: 'Mixed languages' where the primary language of contact is a mixture of Vietnamese and English as she entered the public school system. The studies for Type 6 indicated that parents were bilingual in the household and that sectors of the community may also be bilingual. Parents used codeswitching and mixed languages as strategies to communicate with their children. The results were inconclusive because parceling out the contributing factors to early language development was difficult. The variation in the language input from the caregivers (i.e. parents, siblings, or grandparents) was confounded by the different levels of fluency and how much time used for one (L1) language versus the other (L2) in interacting with the child.

According to the beginning of the year parent interview response, in the primary interaction, Kaitlyn and Ann responded with a mixture of oral and written Vietnamese and English with their parents (1.5 generation) and siblings (2.0 generation). They resorted to English in communicating with their siblings, but mainly spoke Vietnamese to their parents and elders as it was important to keep the core traditions of respect and honor for the family. Maintaining the filial piety by speaking in Vietnamese is a highly respected virtue within the Vietnamese community. In the secondary interaction where both Kaitlyn and Ann interacted with the first generation extended family members, using primarily oral and written Vietnamese through the use of regalia. Objects such as food, music, games, pictures, or videos were used to describe the taste, sights and sounds of Vietnam. Ann has visited Vietnam several times while

Kaitlyn has not. But, both stayed connected with their extended family members as their parents made it a priority to continue socializing them, speaking Vietnamese to maintain the heritage language and to uphold cultural practices surrounding the identity of the Vietnamese people, away from the motherland. The parents, in the tertiary interaction, socialized Kaitlyn and Ann in the Vietnamese community by taking them to the local restaurants, grocery stores, holiday and cultural festivities, or community centers where a mixture of oral and written Vietnamese and English was used to communicate and participate in the events. They had exposure to all three generations, speaking a combination of English and Vietnamese to each other while cultivating the Confucian traditions of group membership, nurturing environment, and values of respect for the dependence of each other to maintain a community.

However, speaking English, by generation 2.0 was influenced by their exposure to the larger community and it dominated the socialization process of their daily lives, both inside and outside of the home. At home, it appeared that L2 English became the preferred language of use to communicate in general as Kaitlyn and Ann grew older and started attending school public elementary school. Also, L2 English was the dominant language for the children and parents as they increased the amount of exposure to the community at large by attending public elementary school. Through their daily socialization, Kaitlyn and Ann (generation 2.0) were affording their parents, extended family members and the community the opportunities to use L2 English. According to the parent interview responses, the students increased their codeswitching as the schooling experiences increased. For Kaitlyn, she would codeswitched when struggling to find the right L1 Vietnamese words to communicate during her interactions with parents and extended members. Ann, on the other hand, was not purposeful with random codeswitching.

Van Lier (200) used the ecological perspective to define the term *affordances* in language learning as the relations between the learner and the environment. From the parents' description of the language learning tools through interactions, both Kaitlyn and Ann was afforded the opportunities to acquire oral and some written Vietnamese, prior to entering first grade. There were multiple sources used to expose them to the cultural practices, using Vietnamese as their primary language. Without the immediate family interacting with Kaitlyn and Ann, they would not have the opportunity to develop the pragmatic aspects of Vietnamese. By voicing the need to maintain the culture through using the language of their ethnicity, both children knew that it was important to converse and interact with the language tools to communicate and belong in their community. Children understood the cultural value in speaking Vietnamese to elders and that it was a way to belong in the environment. The learners mediated the relationship between the language and its environment. The language tools, learners, and the intention to relate those two were the niche (Gibson, 1986). The way the parents positioned their children around the language tools, provided the ecological niche that characterized the home context.

Although both Kaitlyn and Ann's home socialization was similar, there were some differences in the emphasis revealed in the development of their oral and written Vietnamese through interactions at home. Ann's parents emphasized more use of written Vietnamese registers through listening and speaking activities that involved the first generation extended family members. They allowed her to listen to and sang songs that children in Vietnam used to learn Vietnamese as a native tongue. She used all of her sensorimotors to learn Vietnamese (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, 1991) and to use artifacts such as pictures, music compact discs and videos, books and food. The parents did read text. On the other hand, Kaitlyn's parents

engaged her in everyday Vietnamese language during daily routines. But, to help Kaitlyn develop the written Vietnamese register, they chose to enroll her in Vietnamese Sunday school. They were more focused on achievement, by school standards, rather than to maintain the Vietnamese cultural practices by developing both oral and written Vietnamese. They were less fluent in Vietnamese than Ann’s parents and knew that they did not feel capable, by themselves, of socializing her in written Vietnamese. This was evident in the differences between the two girls in the opportunity to listen, speak, read and write in written Vietnamese—Ann had a decided advantage in her home environment. They believed that it was important for her to develop oral Vietnamese so that she could interact and communicate with her extended family members and that it was the way to maintain the culture. If one only looked at the home experiences then, one would give the nod to Ann in terms of experiences with written Vietnamese registers.

### Performance as Indexed by Formal Assessments

#### Vietnamese (L1) Assessments

I used developed research-based listening and reading assessments during the pilot as one of several sources for understanding where Ann and Kaitlyn were in their oral and written language development before some instruction began in Vietnamese Sunday school and in the ELM classrooms. At the beginning of first grade, both Kaitlyn and Ann displayed similar L1 oral and written listening and reading comprehension skills, but differed in the correct and error responses for the L1 written production of letter/sound, high frequency and decoding word lists. Reading fluency in L1 and L2 is dependent on children’s ability to produce grapheme-phoneme connections. The Vietnamese orthography contains 23 letters (i.e. a, b, c, d) without diacritic marks and 29 sounds (i.e. /a/, /bờ/, /cờ/, /dờ/), including six letters with diacritic marks (i.e. ă→/á/, â→/ớ/, đ→/ê/, ê→/ê/, ô→/ô/, u→/ư/). In Table 4.1, there were assessments for 23 letters and 29 sounds each representing one point for the total possible correct numbers of 23 and 29.

Table 4.1—B1 Baseline performance on L1 Vietnamese reading assessments

Assessments	Possible Number Correct	Number Correct		% Correct	
		<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>	<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>
Letter Names	23	0	2	0	9
Letter Sounds	29	25	0	86	0
High Frequency Words	30	22	8	73	27
Decodable Words	30	20	2	67	7
Listening Comprehension	24	8	14	33	58
Oral Retell	(4)	(1)	(1)		
LC Questions	(20)	(7)	(13)		
Reading Comprehension	24	0	0	0	0
Writing Retell	(4)	(0)	(0)		
RC Questions	(20)	(0)	(0)		

Based on the parent interview responses, in which I learned that there was minimal exposure to written Vietnamese literacy practices at home, I had low expectations for both students. Ann met those low expectations, providing 2 letter names and no sounds. Unsurprisingly, Ann's lack of knowledge of letter sounds explained her inability to read decodable word or high frequency words, which, in a shallow orthography like Vietnamese, are largely decodable. Without the opportunity to map the grapheme-phoneme through listening, speaking, reading and writing at home, Ann did not have the opportunity to encounter Vietnamese words that she might then recognize at sight. Neither girl could read or understand any part of the reading comprehension selections; Ann did not even attempt to read it. For the listening comprehension task, which was in many ways an alias for a language comprehension task, Ann performed somewhat but, not significantly better than Kaitlyn. So on this set of written language tasks, neither girl excelled across the board, but Kaitlyn showed more prowess on the decoding tasks (letter sounds, decodable words and high frequency words) while Ann was somewhat more proficient on the oral language listening comprehension task.

On the high frequency word assessment, Ann read eight words out of 30 correctly. The words contained two kinds of diacritic marks. Ann made accurate unmarked (i.e. *bằng*) mid-level toned words such as /ra/ out, /ba/ three, /con/ child, or /qua/ through. She also recalled frequent words with low-falling accent marks (i.e. *huyền*) such as /mà/ that, /và/ and, /là/ is, or /vào/ in. The errors made were with words that she had familiarity with in daily spoken and written language such as instead of reading /bò/-cow she produced /bố/-father (Northern Vietnamese dialect as opposed to /ba/-father in Southern Vietnamese dialect). She did not pronounce it with the low-falling mark, but used the high-rising diacritic mark (i.e. *sắc*) instead because she used what was familiar to her, /bố/-father. The same occurred with /má/-mother (Southern Vietnamese dialect), she used /mê/-mother (Northern Vietnamese dialect) instead. I was more interested in analyzing the errors (here, defined as not producing the targeted word) to understand the cultural and metalinguistic awareness (as students made effort to produce) of each word rather than to count it as right versus wrong. This was one way of analyzing the language production from an ecological perspective. It's not naturally occurring discourse, but what the student produced had background knowledge and language experiences that needed further discussion. Ann displayed similar word recognition behavior compared to a native speaker of English by obtaining a word's meaning and then extracting its sound. Although this was a word isolation assessment without context, she used her visual input, analyzed the graphic symbols but made an error with mapping with the correct accent tone. Fluent reading requires rapid and effortless access to word meaning. Word-recognition studies confirmed that skilled readers are, through automaticity, capable of analyzing and manipulating word-internal elements, such as letters and letter clusters (Ehri, 1998). To develop word recognition competence, children must be aware (i.e. metalinguistic awareness) of the written symbols form spoken words. This acquired orthographic knowledge become mnemonic device that "bonds the written forms of the specific words to their pronunciation in memory" (Ehri, 1998: 15). Ann decoded 2 out of 30 words, which supported the literature (Koda, 2004; Bernhardt, 1996) on L1 and L2 word recognition skills. Without the ability to acquire this knowledge with automaticity, she would struggle with reading fluency and comprehension in both L1 and L2. It appeared, without home observation, but from parent interview, Ann is playing with the sounds of oral and written L1 Vietnamese through songs and playing with family members. It was possible that she was

beginning to acquire the sound-symbol skill through some book exposure with extended family members.

On the other hand, Kaitlyn was able to sound out letters, but not name them. She was also able to recognize the high frequency words and read the first grade level decodable words. With the beginning ability to recognize words instantly and access their meanings and sounds without letter-by-letter processing showed Kaitlyn's accumulated knowledge of the Vietnamese writing system, sound-symbol relationships in particular, at age 6. The errors made in both assessments were similar to Ann's where monosyllabic words with CV combination were easier to recognize and decode rather than CVV, with or without the diacritic marks. However, when accent marks were included, Kaitlyn made similar errors as well, especially with *hỏi*, (dipping), *ngã* (glottalized rising), *sắc* (high rising), and *nặng* (glottalized falling).

But, how did she acquire this knowledge if, from the parent interview, she did not participate in literacy practices at home that used written Vietnamese? It is most likely an artifact of my search for participants. The public elementary school and the Vietnamese Sunday school started within two weeks of each other, but I did not select the students for this study until after four weeks of observations and initial parent and teacher interviews. Further queries, from the interviews with Kaitlyn's parents and her Vietnamese Sunday school teacher revealed that Kaitlyn had begun learning the sounds (first) and letters (second) and was beginning to decode CVC words with pictures to make meaning even in the first several weeks of the Vietnamese Sunday school—before I was able to complete the observations and the testing. Huynh had begun instructing the students how to make the letter sounds through language play, a common practice within the Vietnamese schools to get students to learn the sounds combined with accent marks.

Although Kaitlyn was on her way with word recognition and making meaning, she was not confident enough in her decoding abilities to read the story during the reading comprehension assessment, let alone answer any questions. Given her oral language emphases in the home (doing school-like tasks), one might have expected better results on the listening comprehension assessment, but did not go further than a short phrase in retelling what she heard. However, she was responsive to the synthesizing rather than inference questions, after some prompting. In Figure 4.1, Kaitlyn was prompted to answer listening comprehension questions after listening to a story read aloud, “Chuyện Ông Gióng” written by Trinh Bày Quang Lân. The story was culturally-based with the characters, setting and plot and had a legend theme. This was a common theme used in children's stories in Vietnam, but also read by 1.5 and second generation young Vietnamese in living in U.S. An author wrote the book from Vietnam, and the setting in it depicted images from the rural Vietnam, with families living in raised shacks above river bends. Children were playing in open grassland while parents were working in the rice fields. The main characters were a child and his mom who was raised to have morals, family loyalty and valued the freedom of his country. The child grew up and was chosen by the king because of his loyalty, integrity, and mighty powers of flying, to fight off the enemy to protect his country. He succeeded and was deemed a hero throughout history. More importantly, he upheld the respect for his mother and honored his family name. When Kaitlyn heard the story, she did not have a direct connection to its theme because the parents did not expose or read these common books to her aloud. Her family did not expose her to these kinds of stories by listening or reading, through the media, other family members, or community, so that she could

understand the story theme and moral lesson. Instead, she chose to recall simple details that she related to such as the relationship between mother and child.

In Figure 4.1, lines 7-10, Kaitlyn responded to detail recall questions with simple short phrase relating to what the baby wanted from his mother. The baby wanted to be fed rice. When probed further in Lines 13-15, with a synthesizing question, she began to connect with the problem in the story, which was that the king was losing his country to the enemy and that the main character was called on to use his mighty powers to fight off the army, but he was still young and needed more practice with his flying powers. Although she attempted the connection, it was not accurate in the sequencing and logic of the story plot and solution. She simply recalled the details of the main character, which was the ability to fly and to hold up the moral value of honesty that his mother taught him, but she did not connect to the story plot or solution. Her use of the Southern Vietnamese dialect syntax included simple short phrases (see Lines 4 and 10) that were at the beginning level, but not age six appropriate, compared to learners from South Vietnam or second generation students acquiring formal L1 Vietnamese language instruction in the U.S. The phrases were complete with subject and verb agreements without mispronunciation of words and its accents. Kaitlyn understood the prompting questions and commented at each turn; she never asked me to repeat or clarify the questions. Even though her vocabulary was limited, given her stage of acquiring L1 instruction at Vietnamese Sunday school, she was able to communicate, using some Southern Vietnamese dialect.

Kaitlyn was not confident in using written Vietnamese orally. This was due to her minimal exposure to reading Vietnamese text at home, prior to starting Sunday school with Huynh. This was also coupled by her inability to read the text fluently. She lacked both the decoding and accent tone skills to make meaning with the legend story. Her vocabulary level was low therefore, searching and organizing her thoughts to make complete sentences and communicating it with reading comprehension question responses was difficult. Also, retelling was a struggle because she was disconnected with this kind of story genre, despite it being popular among students her age in the community and living in Vietnam. However, when asked in Vietnamese, Kaitlyn responded predominately in Vietnamese without code mixing or moving back and forth between L1 and L2. This was possibly be due to the assessment prompt asking her to use Vietnamese to the best of her ability or with her speaking to me as an elder using only Vietnamese in addressing her. She addressed me with the appropriate reference in Lines 2 and 6, *Con* (I), which is used when speaking to an adult or and older person. Kaitlyn knew the appropriate cultural practices to use and at the appropriate time.

“Chuyện Ông Gióng” Written by Trình Bày Quang Lân

- |   |          |   |
|---|----------|---|
| 1 | Thao:    | <u>Đã học được gì từ câu chuyện?</u><br><i>What did you learn from the story?</i> |
| 2 | Kaitlyn: | <u>Con không biết.</u><br><i>I don't know.</i>                                    |
| 3 | Thao:    | <u>Ai nằm trong câu chuyện này?</u><br><i>Who was in the story?</i>               |
| 4 | Kaitlyn: | <u>Chú bé và mẹ.</u><br><i>The baby and mom.</i>                                  |
| 5 | Thao:    | <u>Ai nữa?</u>  |

	<i>Who else?</i>
6 Kaitlyn:	<u>Con không biết.</u> <i>I don't know.</i>
7 Thao:	<u>Em bé và mẹ đã làm những gì?</u> <i>What did the baby and mom do?</i>
8 Kaitlyn:	<u>Bé muốn mẹ làm. Con không biết.</u> <i>The baby wanted mom to. I don't know.</i>
9 Thao:	<u>Mẹ đã làm gì trong câu chuyện?</u> <i>What did mom do in the story?</i>
10 Kaitlyn:	<u>Chú bé muốn cơm.</u> <i>The baby wanted rice.</i>
11 Thao:	<u>Muốn cơm rồi làm sao?</u> <i>Wanted rice, then what?</i>
12 Kaitlyn:	<u>Cái bé muốn...</u> <i>The baby wanted...</i>
13 Thao:	<u>Vấn đề trong câu chuyện là gì? Điều gì đã được khó khăn trong câu chuyện?</u> <i>What was the problem in the story? What was difficult in the story?</i>
14 Kaitlyn:	<u>Bé không có nói láo. Nó không có bay.</u> <i>The baby did not lie. He did not fly.</i>
15 Thao:	<u>Không có bay rồi gì nữa?</u> <i>Did not fly, then what else?</i>
16 Kaitlyn:	No.

**Figure 4.1**—B1 Kaitlyn's oral response to L1 listening comprehension questions

In Figure 4.2, Ann's listening comprehension responses are depicted. She was asked synthesizing and inference questions requiring her to recall characters, story sequence and plots. There were similarities and differences in her responses, compared to Kaitlyn. She connected with the story's themes, heroes and legends, as she recalled the sequences of events (Lines 1-4) with confidence. With some prompting, Ann was able to accurately recall details that summarized the lesson of the story (Line 4). I used the listening and reading comprehension rubric (see Appendix K) to place her at Level 3 where her remarks on the main ideas were consistent with the text and her background knowledge. Ann's ability to connect with the text purpose makes sense in light of the exposure she had with family members orally telling her stories of war. She watched documentaries on the history of Vietnam and was told about the value of maintaining the family name by being loyal to your own country. She had a sense of patriotism. This was noted in Lines 4 and 10, but primarily throughout the theme of the story in Lines 1-10. This was the message throughout the story where the author weaved in the character and the setting. However, the short response in Lines 9-10 only began to be connected with the story sequence and the overall understanding of the problem and solution. I placed Ann at Level 2 on the rubric for the story plot question because she attempted to identify the event, but it was not in logical sequence with the story plot and solution. She recalled details in complete short phrases with words that were in the story content. Her pronunciation of the words in the phrase, *Nó té xuống* (He fell down), was accurate despite the difficulty with differentiating between the

/s/ and /x/ sounds and combining the initial consonant with the /x-u<sup>ố</sup>ng/ and the accent mark. She did not show the ability to visually recognize and pronounce those letter-sound combinations from the decoding word list, which was appropriate because her strength at the time of the observations, was in oral production, using L1 spoken rather than reading L1 written words.

“Chuyện Ông Gi <sup>ố</sup> ng” Written by Trinh B <sup>à</sup> y Quang L <sup>â</sup> n	
1	Thao: <u>Đã học được gì từ câu chuyện?</u> <i>What did you learn from the story?</i>
2	Ann: <u>Cái chuyện này, cái thàng này đánh nhau nhưng mà thàng này nó giỏi hơn.</u> <i>In this story, he fought together, but this guy was better.</i>
3	Thao: <u>Đánh giặc để chi con?</u> <i>Fight for what?</i>
4	Ann: <u>Để cho save nước của nó.</u> <i>To save his country.</i>
5	Thao: <u>Ai nằm trong câu chuyện này?</u> <i>Who was in the story?</i>
6	Ann: <u>Thàng này, với lợi ba người này, với lợi cái mẹ kia, với lợi con nó, với lợi hai đứa kia.</u> <i>This boy, and with three people, and with this mother, and with their son, and with two other boys.</i>
7	Thao: <u>Nhưng mà cái anh đánh giặc tên là gì? Phải là Gi<sup>ố</sup>ng không?</u> <i>But, what was the man who fought in the war's name? Was it Gi<sup>ố</sup>ng?</i>
8	Ann: <u>Đạ.</u> <i>Yes.</i>
9	Thao: <u>Vấn đề trong câu chuyện là gì? Điều gì đã được khó khăn trong câu chuyện?</u> <i>What was the problem in the story? What was difficult in the story?</i>
10	Ann: <u>Nó đánh nhau với lợi nó đánh rặc (giặc).</u> <i>They fought together and they fought with the enemy. (misspelled enemy)</i>
11	Thao: <u>Nó làm gì để nó thắng?</u> <i>What did he do to win?</i>
12	Ann: <u>Nó bỏ gì với lợi ( ). Nó té xuống.</u> <i>He gave something with ( ). He fell down.</i>

**Figure 4.2**—B1 Ann’s oral response to L1 listening comprehension questions

In Figure 4.2, Ann’s listening comprehension responses are depicted. She was asked synthesizing and inference questions requiring her to recall characters, story sequence and plots. There were similarities and differences in her responses, compared to Kaitlyn. She connected with the story’s themes, heroes and legends, as she recalled the sequences of events (Lines 1-4) with confidence. With some prompting, Ann was able to accurately recall details that summarized the lesson of the story (Line 4). I used the listening and reading comprehension rubric (see Appendix K) to place her at Level 3 where her remarks on the main ideas were consistent with the text and her background knowledge. Ann’s ability to connect with the text purpose makes sense in light of the exposure she had with family members orally telling her

stories of war. She watched documentaries on the history of Vietnam and was told about the value of maintaining the family name by being loyal to your own country. She had a sense of patriotism. This was noted in Lines 4 and 10, but primarily throughout the theme of the story in Lines 1-10. This was the message throughout the story where the author weaved in the character and the setting. However, the short response in Lines 9-10 only began to be connected with the story sequence and the overall understanding of the problem and solution. I placed Ann at Level 2 on the rubric for the story plot question because she attempted to identify the event, but it was not in logical sequence with the story plot and solution. She recalled details in complete short phrases with words that were in the story content. Her pronunciation of the words in the phrase, *Nó té xuống* (He fell down), was accurate despite the difficulty with differentiating between the /s/ and /x/ sounds and combining the initial consonant with the /x-uống/ and the accent mark. She did not show the ability to visually recognize and pronounce those letter-sound combinations from the decoding word list, which was appropriate because her strength at the time of the observations, was in oral production, using L1 spoken rather than reading L1 written words.

### **English (L2) Assessments**

Kaitlyn and Ann were comparable in oral and written English after they received one year of kindergarten instruction. In Table 4.2, results for English are reported; students were administered the same reading tasks as in Vietnamese but in English. They both were at grade level in oral and written English according to the assessment data results and the teacher interviews from the English Language Mainstream classrooms at the public elementary school. With similar scoring criteria as the L1 Vietnamese assessments, both students scored 100% on the letter names and sounds and the high frequency word list. Students have the additional tasks of learning those grapheme-phoneme combinations in spelling after they acquire the 26 letters and sounds during kindergarten and first grade. In Vietnamese, the additional task was to add the 6 diacritic accent marks onto the pronunciation of a more transparent letter-sound orthography. How do Ann and Kaitlyn take to the task as they move between L1 and L2 with formal and informal instruction in both languages? They both decoded the words accurately with the scores of 100% for Kaitlyn and 90% for Ann. They received 1 point for decoding each targeted word accurately. There was no pattern of errors, on Ann's part, that was necessary to account for and discuss. Based on the word score results, both students were on their way to decoding and word recognition tasks. Compared to the stage they were in for Vietnamese, Ann was just beginning to map letter-sounds and to do it with automaticity whereas Kaitlyn, with some formal instruction already, was reading words. Kaitlyn was progressing at a comparable rate for both L1 & L2 word reading whereas Ann was moving along only in the L2. Do the affordances and interactions in oral and written Vietnamese at Sunday school have any influence on Kaitlyn's L1 and L2 competence? How will not having access to formal instruction in L1 affect Ann's L1 and L2 competence? In Chapter 5, classroom observations will be used to understand the movement between L1 and L2 for both students. The affordances and interactions will be discussed to show how teachers and students use language to mediate meaning while developing L1 and L2 oral and written competence.

Table 4.2—B1 Baseline performance on L2 English reading assessments

Assessments	Possible Number Correct	Number Correct		% Correct	
		<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>	<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>
Letter Names	26	26	26	100	100
Letter Sounds	26	26	26	100	100
High Frequency Words	30	30	30	100	100
Decoding Words	30	30	27	100	90
Listening Comprehension	24	19	18	79	75
Oral Retell	(4)	(3)	(2)		
LC Questions	(20)	(16)	(16)		
Reading Comprehension	24	22	15	92	62
Writing Retell	(4)	(3)	(1)		
RC Questions	(20)	(19)	(14)		

Kaitlyn and Ann performed comparably on both the listening and reading comprehension assessments. They were strong in listening and reading written L2 in both the question response and the oral and written retelling sections. However, there was a difference in the oral retelling with Kaitlyn, in Figure 4.3, with scores of Level 3 (see Appendix L) and Level 2. She provided a comprehensive and logical set of story sequence. Her recall of details supported the main idea. She had control of the sentences and grammar with few errors. She did not use transition words while summarizing the story. She accurately named the characters and spoke clearly with nonverbal gestures such as stops, hesitations, and eye movement. She was confident in her oral retell with a clear introduction of characters and then a lead into the problem of the story. She showed some cognitive listening comprehension abilities. She inferred that the fish was scared after being caught by a net and placed into a new fish tank. She concluded the story with the characters reuniting and becoming friends again. This was correct with the story sequence.

<p>1 Kaitlyn: There was two goldfish name Speedy and it was a black name Speedy and they were playing hide and seek and then a plastic...and then a net came into the water. One of the goldfish tried to swim away from it and then the net caught him and they put him in a plastic bag and then he was scared. And then he went into a new tank, a new tank with fresh water. And he didn't see anyone and then his friend, Speedy squat inside, he keeps on opening his mouth and ( ) and the other goldfish tried to help him. And then Speedy splash his tale and they played hide and seek in the new tank.</p> <p>2 Thao: Anything else?</p> <p>3 Kaitlyn: No</p>
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**Figure 4.3**—B1 Kaitlyn’s oral retelling of L2 listening comprehension story

Kaitlyn appeared to connect with the story as she recalled what happened and responded to the listening questions. She had familiarity with reading L2 text that involved main animal characters and lessons of friendship. This was noted during the retelling and the researcher observing the excitement in her voice and the level of engagement as she had. This was different

when she listened to the story in Vietnamese and her connection with stories of legends and heroes where she made no attempt to do both the oral and written retell. She had less familiarity with the L1 culture specific text selection of, “Chuyện Ông Gióng” written by Trình Bày Quang Lân with the setting taking place in rural Vietnam and the grade level words and characters read by children of her age. This finding was consistent with the parent interview responses where Kaitlyn had exposure to L2 reading from her visits to the library and limited reading experiences with Vietnamese children books.

Ann scored a Level 2 on the oral retelling, Figure 4.4, indicating that she made attempts to provide some logical sequence of the story, but it was unclear in her expressions. Initially, she made an attempt to recall character details that were correct, but did not connect with the story events such as plot and solution. After a general prompting question, she could not connect the two main characters to the solution, which was Zip helping Speedy swim so that they could play together again in the tank. She provided an important event that connected with the story plot, which was Speedy getting caught by a net and was dropped in the new tank. She spoke clearly, using some complete thoughts and did some summarizing and inferring, but overall it was slightly less cohesive compared to Kaitlyn. Ann, according to the parent interview, was connected to both the Vietnamese and English stories with the themes of friendship and family value. She was more confident with oral retell because she was more expressive in oral English. However, with the story theme, she showed more level of engagement with the Vietnamese story through her exposure to the language and culture in her interactions with family members. Overall, Ann was moving towards grade level with listening comprehension.

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 1 | Ann:  | The black goldfish is Zip and the orange goldfish is Speedy and a giant net got Speedy and that’s all I remember.  |
| 2 | Thao: | Anything else? Do you remember what happened?  |
| 3 | Ann:  | Speedy had nowhere else to hide and he got dropped in the new tank and he said and he is the only fish in the new tank and he splash down...zip...he can’t move and at last he moved his tail and his friend, they swim together |

**Figure 4.4**—B1 Ann’s oral retelling of L2 listening comprehension story

In Figure 4.5, Kaitlyn scored a Level 3 (see Appendix L) on the written retell from the story, “In the Days of the Dinosaurs: The Dinosaur Chase” written by Hugh Price. After reading the story to herself, Kaitlyn wrote down her recall of the story. She started with introducing the story characters. Then she attempted to connect the characters with the problem in the story, but it was not accurate. Her detail was correct, but it did not completely match the sequence of events. She had some control of writing conventions such as punctuation, grammar, and appropriate paragraphing with introduction and concluding sentences. Kaitlyn had good spelling skills with only one error for the word, dinosaur. Overall, she was moving towards grade level with her performance on the reading aloud and writing retell. She was already reading in English by first grade and responding to reading comprehension questions.

Their was big dinosaur and little dinosaur. The dinosaurs where playing chase. Then little dinosaur hid in his hole. Then big dosaur got hungry and wanted to eat little dinosaur. When little dinosaur went out big dinosaur chase to the mud and then he got stuck.

**Figure 4.5**—B1 Kaitlyn’s writing retell of L2 reading comprehension story

In Figure 4.6, Ann scored a Level 1 for her writing retell after reading the text to herself. She attempted to identify details of the story, but it was fragmented and did not connect with the plot or solution. There were no introduction and concluding sentences, showing her need to develop summarizing, inferring, and synthesizing skills. There were spelling errors (i.e. dinosau/dinosaur and staik/stuck) and a run-on sentence. Compared to Kaitlyn, she was continuing to develop reading comprehension by building fluency, decoding, and word recognition skills for both L1 and L2. However, English was less dominant for Ann, compared to Kaitlyn. Ann was less confident with both L1 and L2 in the written retell assessment in comparison to the oral retelling. She was still developing early reading skills for both L1 and L2 whereas Kaitlyn needed more exposure to oral and written L1 Vietnamese.

The big dinosaur chase the little dinosaur run on the mud and the big dinosau run and got staik.

**Figure 4.6**—B1 Ann’s writing retell of L2 reading comprehension story

The assessment results provided one perspective on Kaitlyn and Ann’s L1 and L2 oral and written language competence at the beginning of the first year of the research study. There were consistencies between the parent interview responses on the home language affordances and the students’ early reading abilities. Both students had similar oral and written L1 language experiences with their parents, siblings and extended family member, integrated with Confucian values of dependence, group membership, filial piety, and using education to maintain the Vietnamese heritage language while growing up America. The affordances from home such as language tools and creating opportunities to use the tools by both the primary caregiver and the children support the continued development of L1 and L2 competence. The primary, secondary and tertiary interactions provide an environment for generations 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 to experiment and make meaning with Vietnamese and English. In Chapter 5, I will give more examples of language interactions and how language emerges from them in forms of metalinguistic awareness in the classroom settings. The next section includes teacher interview responses that discuss the formal and informal assessment of L1 and L2 oral and written language skills and the classroom affordances at the beginning of first grade, age 6, for Kaitlyn and Ann.

## **Teachers’ Perspectives on Language Learning**

### **In the English Language Mainstream Classrooms**

According to the ELM classroom teachers, both Ann and Kaitlyn entered first grade, age 6, with grade level oral and written L2 English development. Lorenz and Croft used the Open Court language arts program to instruct. They were not permitted to instruct in any other

language (i.e. Vietnamese) to support their ELLs other than English because there were no Bilingual Waivers granted. Teachers had to use the state adopted text, i.e., Open Court, to develop Kaitlyn and Ann's English skills. But, what would happen to the L1 Vietnamese language affordances that the students were bringing in? How would teachers know the language knowledge and experiences of these students if they were not allowed to assess in the primary language? Lorenz and Croft met with the entire first grade team level (5 and a half classrooms) to ensure that all classrooms were on similar lesson themes, from the curriculum, where all first grade students were taught specific literacy skills such as decoding, word recognition or spelling to build reading fluency and to move towards reading comprehension. Teachers relied on a varied assessment system to gauge the language and literacy development of students such as their daily observations, teacher generated tests, Open Court end of unit tests, and in-district benchmarks. At the principal's insistence, all teams used these assessment results to share instructional strategies and to identify which students needed additional assistance. Kaitlyn and Ann were designated as English Language Learners requiring that they receive additional English Language Development daily. But, they were at the proficient CEDLT level on the reading, writing and oral language sections of the assessment so Lorenz and Croft integrated the ELD curriculum with their daily language arts curriculum as oppose to teaching it in addition to for these ELL level students. In order for them to transition out of the ELL status, they had to score at proficient to advance level on the CEDLT and STAR testing program in California in second grade. Both students were on their way, as first graders, to being redesignated as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). However, since the California STAR testing system does not begin until second grade, Kaitlyn and Ann will have to wait one additional year to begin the process of re-designating to FEP.

**Lorenz on Kaitlyn.** Language affordance in the public elementary classroom was created by student-teacher-peer interactions around curriculum and standard expectations. Kaitlyn was designated as an English Language Learner since kindergarten and Vietnamese was the primary language. In the teacher interview, I set to understand how Lorenz worked with ELLs to develop their English while accessing their cultural and metalinguistic knowledge from home and community. I started with having Lorenz describe how she accessed Kaitlyn's primary language in the classroom. In Figure 4.7, Lorenz stated the importance of encouraging Kaitlyn to use her Vietnamese to comprehend curriculum in the classroom. In line 4, Lorenz would ask students to access their language and be aware of it when to use it. She urged students to continue learning in both languages and to be bilingual. Developing classroom culture requires acknowledging the students cultural and linguistic background. It was important to Lorenz to foster the connection between home and school through language. The awareness and acceptance of Kaitlyn's linguistic background provided a classroom culture that invited multiple access to L1 and L2, despite Lorenz's inability to speak and listen in Vietnamese. Without that resource, Lorenz was not able to develop Kaitlyn's transition from L1 to L2. However, by encouraging her to be metalinguistic aware of the L1 as she is learning L2, Lorenz assisted Kaitlyn in accessing all her language tools to make meaning with English reading and writing. She had high interest in helping her ELL students maintain their heritage language while continuing to learn a new. Lorenz understood the boundaries by noting that English is the dominant language and to meet school and state standards, Kaitlyn must learn it along with her

English-only classmates. Therefore, language affordances often included metalinguistic awareness of both L1 and L2. Kaitlyn could access Vietnamese when appropriate, but she would have to do it alone or with another peer without teacher supervision. At the beginning of first grade, her interactions with the primary language was controlled by Lorenz during whole class instruction.

- 1 Thao: How are you and the SS accessing the primary language or the students' cultural background to support their English language development?
- 2 Lorenz: Their primary language, that means the home language?
- 3 Thao: Yes
- 4 Lorenz: It goes back to culture in the classroom that she feels comfortable to say that I know that word in Vietnamese and so I would respond by saying "well, what does it mean in Vietnamese." That kind of thing and does anyone else speak Vietnamese. I would try to bring it into the classroom, depending on time. But, you want to acknowledge the child by putting themselves out there and this is what I know from my culture. I always encourage parents to be bilingual at home. They shouldn't be just speaking only English at home. It's whatever your native language is at home, it should be encouraged. I've had parents come in and discussed their culture and share their culture. We have multicultural day here at school in May so that is something we do at school as well. It's hard because, in class, I'm supposed to be focusing in the English. So I can't necessarily say ok lets have everybody talk in your own native tongue in the classroom. Kids are pretty shy about it because when you want to interview L, she didn't want to talk to you about in Vietnamese. Because it's a cultural thing that when you are at school, you're suppose to be speaking English. So I try to let them know that it's ok to speak another language at school but, I also have to be careful as a teacher because a lot of my kids speak Chinese. They could have a whole conversation about stuff in Chinese that I don't know about and that's not good for me is it as a teacher. So I have to be careful with that in terms of that being a negative thing in the classroom. And I had that somewhat with my second graders at school saying bad words in their home language. You can't be saying bad language. They could be saying it in front of me and saying it and I wouldn't know. I have had SS in the past that had been in level one. It's been French, Russian and other languages that we don't have other kids in the class. So that's why we have to connect with them across. And that's where the pictures come in, manipulative...having them like if you are counting bears and saying four in their language first and then using the word learning four.

**Figure 4.7**—B1LI Lorenz's interview responses to L1 language affordance

At the beginning of first grade, Lorenz stated that Kaitlyn's English language development was good. She had solid understanding of vocabulary and good reading comprehension when it came to word choice and vocabulary. She was considered a high ELL. She was at grade level with her oral language development. She spoke in complete sentences, after prompting from the teacher. According to Lorenz, Kaitlyn's personality contributed to her level of engagement and how often she shared aloud. She was a shy student that needed to be

encouraged to participate in order to show her language ability. She contributed minimally when called upon, but overall she communicated with classmates clearly and appropriately with her word and sentence choices. She was reading chapter books and writing multiple sentence paragraphs. Lorenz stated that with those abilities, she was on her way to achieving the California First Grade State Standards.

In Figure 4.8, Lorenz responded to a set of questions relating to Kaitlyn as an ELL compared to the students in the class. I cited this interaction not because I wanted to find out about her instructional method, but to get a sense of where Lorenz was at in understanding the linguistic knowledge and experiences of the ELL students in her classroom through her assessment and curriculum implementation. I wanted to know if she had awareness of the Vietnamese language experiences Kaitlyn brought to learning English. Her responses to the questions showed, at the beginning of first grade, that she made efforts to understand Kaitlyn's individual learning needs by wanting to fill the gap with supplemental materials (Line 2) and differentiated instructions. She used her own materials to support Kaitlyn's grammar development. She was purposeful in tailoring her lessons to fit the needs of her ELL students. When asked about the overall instructional goals for her ELLs (Line 5) she continued to state that filling in the gap was the most important contribution she could make in developing the students' English. However, to fill that gap, she did not address the prior linguistic knowledge of her ELL students such as Kaitlyn's experiences with L1 (Vietnamese) oral and written from home. The home-school disconnect was not individual to the teacher, but with the entire school as it focused on English Language Development to transition ELLs to FEP and to perform well on the STAR testing program, starting at second grade. Schools were required to teach the California ELD curriculum if they had a high percentage of ELLs.

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|---|--|
| 1 | Thao: Now, I'm getting into Kaitlyn as an ELL. What are you doing to develop her in her status as an ELL, I guess ELD. Do you see her as being separate from the rest of the students who are non-ELLs or do you find that there needs to be something to supplement her learning because of her status as an ELL?   |
| 2 | Lorenz: Well, there's other SS that are similar to Kaitlyn in a sense that they are high achievers. But, they are still technically ELLs, so what my task is to figure out where the gaps are for her, as well as my other SS, and then plug in those gaps as best as I can. That's why I use those supplemental materials that I just kind of look and see how she is responding to different activities that we're doing whether it would be with Open Court or the Evan Moore things....and seeing oh, she's having difficulty understanding what a verb is....ok...so that's something we need to go over more with her and probably if she is having the issue, the other high kids that are also EL learner will need... |
| 3 | Thao: Can you think of a specific ELD skill, whether oral or written, in the realm of reading and writing as well too, that you had to do something extra to supplement her development?   |
| 4 | Lorenz: Probably the different plurals. So instead of it being dog and dogs, having it   |

- be mouse and mice. You know, child and children. So that the irregular plurals were something I went over with them. I saw that was an issue for some of them and K was one of them as well, trying to figure out, ok, you know, what is the plural of this word. It's not just adding an -s to that word. So I supplemented with some worksheets that I had and then they did some group work and partner work on figuring those words out so that they could add those to their vocabulary.
- 5 Thao: And what are your goals for your ELL SS in this classroom. It could be for today or could be for the rest of the year. What are your goals generally?
- 6 Lorenz: Just that they are able to converse adequately and intelligently in English. That they could use the correct words, the correct tense as well as the correct pronoun association. So it wouldn't be, he is writing on the computer right now, it would be you're a she. So getting the correct persona with it. And then also, just as for me, like I said before, as a teacher having to constantly evaluate all of my ELLs. Where are the gaps? What are they missing? And trying to focus in on either working with them one-on-one with me. I also have parent helpers that come in. Do I have the parents doing something special with them or do I need to send things home for their parents, their own parents to do at home with them. So my goal is to help them develop their language however, I can do that. And everybody is different and that's the thing. I mean I've got probably 12 ELLs technically in my class. So, and they are all at different level.

**Figure 4.8**—BILI Lorenz's interview responses to Kaitlyn's language learning

Lorenz did make an effort to connect with the parents to have them come in and assist her with the students. The assistance did not include the use of the students' primary language, in part because there were no bilingual waivers and that Kaitlyn's parents were more interested in having her meet the classroom English standards while at school. Also, Lorenz was not fluent in Vietnamese and was not exposed to the culture other than from her students. At the beginning of the school year, she made efforts to have students connect their home experiences to the classroom by have Kaitlyn do projects such as, "All About Me" where she had to present to the whole class what activities she does at home, who was in her family and what were her favorite things to do. The activity served more as a beginning of the year introduction as opposed to getting a thick description about Kaitlyn was, as a person, a student, and a Vietnamese language speaker at home. Efforts to understand Kaitlyn's cultural and linguistic experiences were from those classroom activities. Lorenz stated that without knowledge of how to speak Vietnamese, she would have a difficult time connecting her Vietnamese language skills to learning English. Her approaches stemmed from connecting with the parents to have them volunteer, doing activities such as "All About Me", and having Kaitlyn write about her family and what she did at home in her journal. At the beginning of the year, I did not know how Lorenz would take Kaitlyn's responses to those activities to assist her in developing L2.

**Croft on Ann.** Lorenz and Croft had similar goals and expectations for their ELL students as they accessed the primary language and provide language affordances for their students, despite the fact that there were no parent bilingual waivers, which would allow teachers to formally teach Vietnamese while developing in English. In Figure 4.9, Croft discussed the school activities used to foster an environment of multicultural and multilingual acceptance. She created opportunities for ELL students to share their cultural backgrounds so that they could connect their home experiences with the classroom local practices, which included curriculum standards and instructions and ways of socializing with different input from peers and teachers. Croft developed literacy activities that allowed Ann to identify with her language heritage and culture. This made Ann comfortable in sharing her differences while finding common grounds with her peers that come from different language backgrounds. For Croft, it was necessary to have a classroom environment where students' interactions in literacy activities involved the integration of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Reaching out to parents and getting them to participate is an additional context where I could learn about how Ann used language to communicate, show competence and to socialize among peers, teachers and parents. Based on the interview responses on primary language access, Croft was providing language affordance where Ann could use both L1 and L2. However, I was not sure how Croft organized her literacy instruction to allow Ann to access Vietnamese and English to develop L2 competence. What types of physical objects and artifacts did she access to create the language affordances for Ann?

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|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Thao:  | How are you and the SS accessing the primary language or the students' cultural background to support their English language development?  |
| 2 | Croft: | We have several multicultural activities that we do. There are so many cultures that celebrate, not just Christmas, not just Hanukah, but we have Ramadan and Diwali. The students, we recognize the dates first of all, for these holidays and we talk briefly about these holidays just like we do Christmas and Hanukah. And you could almost see them glow when they talk about their background and other SS ask them questions so that makes them feel that somebody is interested in them and it's just an enriching experience in the class, really, to learn about each other and to appreciate the sameness and the differences that we have in our celebrations. (pause) We would like to have more parent involvement for multicultural times but, we're having a hard time getting it off the ground. So we're reaching out to parents right now to give us some help. Uh what have we done. We put things on our window. One year we had flags from different countries and put them on our window. I was at one school where we made dolls and did a parade of dolls. And that is good but, I don't know, it seems like we could do more. |

**Figure 4.9**—B1C1 Croft's interview responses to L1 language affordance

According to Croft and Lorenz, the CEDLT reporting system was not effective in providing the next grade teacher information on ELLs' oral language and reading competence. In Figure 4.10, Croft stated that she did not receive the CEDLT score at the beginning of the school year because the state does release them until October or November. She needed the scores to gauge Ann's ELD level. She resorted to her own assessments through classroom observations (Line 4). She observed that Ann was responding to reading comprehension

questions early in the year and was reading chapter books at home. Ann was writing phonetically and recognized her letter sounds. She was beginning to write in complete sentences and to stay on topic. She was a careful listener and when called upon to respond to questions, she was reluctant. The shyness in the classroom was a cultural response not because she was unable to do so due to lack of oral language skills. Vietnamese children in the home speak when spoken to. When they do speak, it would be in monotone voice. This is a form of cultural respect for the elders in the family, including parents, siblings and extended family members. But, how does Croft respond to this cultural aspect of learning in the classroom? Did she embrace it or dismissed it? Further observations in the classroom throughout the academic year would appropriately respond to this question.

Similar to Lorenz, she diversified her instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. Starting with providing the opportunity to speak, Croft was attentive to the number of responses Ann made when called upon. For example, she allowed time for ELLs to answer reading comprehension questions so that they felt comfortable doing it with the whole class. Croft allowed Ann to explain herself so that her classmates could understand. She also interacted with the students in smaller groups to individualize the curriculum to ensure students moved from where they were. Croft gave another example of Ann not writing on topic, after taking an in-district writing assessment for the beginning of the school year. She looked onto other writing strengths that Ann had, which was illustrating pictures that had details to express her thinking. She commented that this was a typical first grade skill and that Ann was not far from her oral and written L2 language development.

Although Croft made efforts to develop Ann's ELD, she did not tap into her L1 Vietnamese language experiences. She connected with parents to have them come into the classroom to volunteer, but did not inquire about Ann's language and literacy experiences at home with Vietnamese. Croft had general information on the family such as how many siblings, parent employment, and where they lived. She was not aware of Ann's interactions at home and her Vietnamese language development taught by her parents. Her position about teaching in the primary language was similar to Lorenz with the added fact that she could not do anything beyond what her first grade level team objectives were in instructing ELLs.

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|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Thao:  | How is her ELD in terms of her listening, speaking, reading and writing?   |
| 2 | Croft: | She's a good listener. She can be trusted, sitting in the back of the row and can be expected to listen. She wants to do well. She writes phonetically, even though she doesn't spell everything correctly. She's able to write most of the sounds. I can't remember her fluency scores. She's coming along comfortably and she's confident. She's reading chapter books at home.  |
| 3 | Thao:  | So then, without having her CEDLT scores, what do you use to determine her English proficiency level?  |
| 4 | Croft: | I observe in the classroom. I observe how she answers the questions. If she struggles to answer grammatical questions when we do comprehension skill papers. How often she responds. Although I'd tend to not put ELLs on the spot. I give them the right to pass and make them comfortable with being here and not dreading to be called on. We have a list of things that we're suppose to incorporate in our lesson plan. In January, I will start making sure I have |

- at least 30 minutes everyday as a group or in a small group of certain skills we're working on.
- 5 Thao: Does she use words and sentences with the appropriate person, time and place? Can you give some examples?
- 6 Croft: I think all first graders want to share stories. So, if I am starting a lesson and before I get started, especially first thing in the morning, it might not be appropriate but that's something first graders do. For example, she can explain a situation so that everyone could understand her. She's a beginning writer, so it's understandable that after her first writing assessment, after unit 2, she got off topic in her writing. She didn't answer the question directly. She had some sentences that were legible and easy to understand but, they were off topic and that's another typical beginning writer, first grade. Her handwriting is neat and her pictures show detail.

**Figure 4.10**—BICI Croft's interview responses to Ann's language learning

### **In the Vietnamese Sunday School**

Kaitlyn had received four weeks of instruction in Vietnamese Sunday school prior to her participation in this research study. Along with Huynh, I observed her interactions with peers while she used a mix of L1 and L2. By age 6, English was Kaitlyn's dominant language choice when communicating with her peers even though it was not due to her lack of skills in speaking Vietnamese. Her classmates used English, so she chose English to speak. But, when she communicated with Huynh, she used Vietnamese. This was common among the beginning level courses at this school. Huynh had a different assessment system compared to Croft and Lorenz. It was not as systematic and in the context of a public elementary school where California standards had to be met. However, Huynh was following an assessment system that was developed by the organization and in response to the curriculum. She had to follow her course level team of teachers in assessing at the same time. Assessments were given at the beginning and end of the course with mini end of chapter dictation assessments such as, *Chính Tà*. In addition, teachers used their classroom observations and took note of question responses. Since, the classroom was highly interactive with students sharing aloud, teachers used the opportunity to gauge students' oral and written Vietnamese development.

**Huynh on Kaitlyn.** In Figure 4.11, Huynh noted that Kaitlyn was a social student who interacted readily with peers, using primarily English to socialize. Reading text aloud to the whole class was common and students were expected to pronounce words clearly and accurately. Developing Kaitlyn's oral and written Vietnamese was a priority for Huynh and the school. When Kaitlyn spoke English, teachers do not generally respond unless they use English to translate meaning of words if students did not understand in Vietnamese. Huynh (Line 4) stated that Kaitlyn was at Level 1a (beginning level according to the Vietnamese Sunday school standards) with her Vietnamese letter-sound skills and word pronunciation. She was developing in her writing, not having to write complete sentences yet at the beginning level of the course. There were some spelling errors in her writing, which were similar to those she made in the tests that required her to read decodable and high frequency words, where Kaitlyn left out accent marks. For example, instead of writing /phở/ she would put /pho/ instead. This was considered a

spelling error. In some cases, not including an accent mark resulted in a change in meaning. During “Chinh Ta” dictation activities, Huynh would use the opportunity to gauge where Kaitlyn (and her peers) was performing with both her oral and written Vietnamese by circulating around the classroom and observing what Kaitlyn and her peers wrote. The activity entailed the teacher saying a word or short phrases aloud and the students would write down what was said. Overall, Huynh’s beginning of the year assessments of Kaitlyn’s language abilities were that she was producing at the appropriate level of oral and written Vietnamese. She was communicating clearly with her peers and the teachers.

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| 1 | Thao:  | How is her social ability inside of the classroom?  |
| 2 | Huynh: | She is very social. She’s very outspoken. She’s the loudest when we read. She knows everything pretty well with the right words. She speaks English w/ peers and L1 with me.  |
| 3 | Thao:  | Tell me, how is her Vietnamese language development? What do you use to determine her Vietnamese proficiency level?   |
| 4 | Huynh: | Her L1 is good. She knows all the words when she writes and when she reads. She knows her letters and sounds. She performs well in read aloud with sentences & phrases. Chinh ta is used to test what they know and is comprehensive to see if they have been following along and understanding. We use quizzes every five to six weeks. Chinh ta, reading and practice writing |
| 5 | Thao:  | What is her reading level?  |
| 6 | Huynh: | She is advance for Level 1a. She probably practices at home. She goes beyond the day’s lesson. She can explain what we read and participate through Q & A.  |
| 7 | Thao:  | What is her writing level?  |
| 8 | Huynh: | Her writing is good with little flaw. During the test, she can write what I dictate. She goes beyond to write in complete sentences. Matching words with pictures, she gets all of them.  |

**Figure 4.11**—B1HI Huynh’s interview responses to Kaitlyn’s language learning

Sullivan (2000) found that teachers were at the center of curriculum instruction in a university classroom in Vietnam. This is in accordance with the cultural value of centralizing learning for the good of all students. Teachers were often seen as the source of wisdom and knowledge and students are there to learn from them. Mediating knowledge through language was not done in a constructivist way where both students and teachers were partnering to make meaning. Huynh was at the center of learning and the physical set up of the classroom allowed students to focus their eyes on her for instruction. In Sunday school, Kaitlyn was social and participated in class question and answer activity directed by Huynh. She did not appear to be shy like she was in Lorenz’s class. This was possibly due to the flexible movement between L1 and L2, afforded by Huynh’s instruction. In Line 2, Kaitlyn addressed her peers in L2 while speaking to Huynh in L1. She does it intentionally with knowledge that Huynh would comprehend her Vietnamese use while with her peers, she might not be confident that they would and English is the dominant language in their socialization outside of the home.

In Figure 4.12, Huynh continued to surface the affordances she created in Vietnamese Sunday school by reflecting on Kaitlyn’s L1 and L2 competence. Linguistic input from the teacher in relation to how it is used by Kaitlyn with the physical setting in the classroom were the affordances. Although the inquiry was about her communicative competence, Huynh also provided her perspective on how the curriculum should be implemented. There were classroom socialization practices that indicated that Kaitlyn was using her linguistic knowledge to make meaning. In Lines 2,4 and 6 Kaitlyn shows how she was developing L1 while using some L2 to communicate with her peers. She appeared to be confident, comfortable and consistent with her L1 use with Huynh and expressed herself clearly when expected. Memorizing through recalling, reciting, rereading and rewriting were strategies that were often used in the Vietnamese teaching culture as referenced in Chapter 1.

1	Thao:	Does she use words and sentences with the appropriate person, time and place? Give example.
2	Huynh:	She does use the words and sentences at the appropriate time with the right person. She can speak in clear phrases. With her peers she speaks in L2.
3	Thao:	Does she apply the appropriate meaning of spoken and written words and sentences when speaking, reading and writing? Does she apply the appropriate grammar rules when speaking and writing?
4	Huynh:	When we try to match pictures with words, she knows how to explain the pictures in L1. We are not focused on grammar at this level. We are more focused on learning the letters and sounds of the alphabet.
5	Thao:	Does she make sense during interaction with peers and teachers? How does she use spoken and/or written language to communicate her ideas?
6	Huynh:	Most of the time or activities, she makes sense and use appropriate words to communicate her ideas. An example was a recent TV interview during Tet. She was engaged and used L1 clearly. She memorized what she would say and communicated clearly to the interviewer.
7	Thao:	Does she ask for help when she struggles with listening, speaking, reading and writing? What strategies does she use to repair errors?
8	Huynh:	If she is socializing and does not hear what I say, she’ll raise her hand to ask for clarifications. There are certain times she gets the accents mixed. The pronunciation might be different depending on what they learn from home (dialectal differences by region).

**Figure 4.12**—B1HI Huynh’s interview responses to Kaitlyn’s L1 competence

### Summary

Van Lier (2000) described affordance as a particular property of an environment. An ecological perspective on the reciprocal relationship between an organism and a particular feature would require me to investigate the interaction between the classroom environment and Ann. An affordance affords further action rather than to cause or trigger it. In Kaitlyn and Ann’s L1 and L2 development in the classroom, what they did, what they wanted and what they used language for depended on the literacy activities and the tools appropriated to make

meaning. An ecological theory of perception concludes that an affordance is a property of neither the actor nor of an object, it is a relationship between the two. In learning Vietnamese and English, the input and the linguistic processing in relation to how it is used is one way to identify the affordances in the classroom. The perceived object or the language input must be viewed in relation to the activity itself. In Croft and Lorenz's classroom, human activities such as literacy interactions involve the physical objects and artifact (tools) integrating social, historical and cultural practices of the students. For Ann and Kaitlyn, it was specific to language affordances that arose out of literacy skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing, using oral and written L1 and L2.

At the beginning of the first grade, at age 6, both Ann and Kaitlyn were more comparable in oral and written L1 (Vietnamese) than different. They had similar home experiences where interactions with family members involved the use of spoken and written Vietnamese. The parents, from both homes, provided the Vietnamese language affordance through activities such as trips to the library, conversations using artifacts, and singing songs from the motherland. Ann had more experience with the written register, compared to Kaitlyn, and scored higher on the listening comprehension assessment. On the other hand, Kaitlyn scored higher on the decoding and high frequency word lists and had letter sound skills. This was due, in part, to her exposure to the Vietnamese Sunday school instruction that occurred in the first few weeks of school at the beginning of the study. Kaitlyn's parents predominately exposed her to the oral language, giving her an advantage with understanding both the cultural and social aspects of using Vietnamese. For example, she had to speak Vietnamese to her elders, using a combination of spoken and written register. For Ann, it was the same cultural expectation for her to speak to her parents and elders. Ann's parents gave her the opportunities to converse during family routines such as mealtimes, play time and learning time such as doing homework or reading.

For the oral and written L2 (English) language competence, Ann and Kaitlyn were comparable, based on the study research assessments, teacher classroom informal assessments and observations and teacher interviews. In the ELM classrooms, the CEDLT scores, at the end of Kindergarten placed students at proficient level and were ready to be redesignated by the time they reach second or third grade. For Huynh, in the Vietnamese Sunday school, Kaitlyn had more strength in her oral language ability, compared to the written register. The classroom affordances allowed Kaitlyn to move between Vietnamese and English oral and written through translation or socialization practice among her peers. In the public elementary classroom, Lorenz encouraged L1 use, but was unable to organize instruction or create activities that would intentionally allow her to develop her competence. This was similar for Ann as Croft did not know how to transform her L1 linguistic knowledge while acquiring L2 as an ELL at the beginning of the school year. In Chapter 5, I will analyze the classroom interactions and look for the language affordances that would allow both students to be metalinguistically aware of the movement between L1 and L2.

## Chapter 5: Language and Literacy Interactions in the Classroom

### Introduction: During the School Year

In Chapter 4, by providing a detailed comparison of their home, community and school experiences and performance at the outset of the study, I took the first step in evaluating the plausible hypothesis that Kaitlyn's formal experiences in learning oral and written Vietnamese in the Sunday school setting might contribute to any differential growth observed in Ann and Kaitlyn's oral and written L1 and L2 abilities. I was present in all three of their classrooms for one school year to observe their participation in the L1 and L2 language practices during three benchmark periods (the beginning, middle and end of school). Both students started first grade, age 6, with comparable oral and written Vietnamese based on parent and teacher interviews and the assessments administered at the beginning of the school year. Students brought to the classrooms language affordance and through interactions with peers, teachers and the curriculum, the forms and functions of L1 and L2 would unfold, mold and take shape both in the classrooms and at home. In Chapter 5, I provide an account of Kaitlyn and Ann's language and literacy experiences inside of the classrooms during the same year, where I continue to address the language *affordance*, *interaction* and *emergence*. In addition, I respond to the second part of the research question sets by referring to the field notes and classroom observations about the oral and written L1 and L2 for both students. I describe the language and literacy activities, as situated in the classrooms in which these two learners lived during the school year, first, for both Kaitlyn and Ann in English only classrooms in a public elementary school and second, for Kaitlyn in the Vietnamese Sunday school. I analyze the classroom interactions involving these English Language Learners while addressing the second part of the research question sets:

- What does L1 Vietnamese and L2 English metalinguistic awareness look like when viewed through the lenses of language affordance, emergence or interactions in the classroom?
- How do language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading promote metalinguistic awareness whereby assists and reinforce the learning of L1 Vietnamese and L2 English?

There were components to language learning and socialization in each classroom for these English Language Learners. In the chaos/complexity, activity and interaction theories, (Kramsch, 2002) those components involve the relational aspects that Kaitlyn and Ann would have with the classroom and home context where there were opportunities for them to develop English and Vietnamese. Larsen-Freeman (2002) stated that outcomes may result from interactions that may not have been known or anticipated. The agents or elements act and react to and interact with their environment without necessarily having a global goal. To observe language learning, especially with two languages, researchers have to account for all that is occurring in the observational setting. This meant that I used a range of tools—observation field notes, parent and teacher interviews and artifacts—to triangulate Kaitlyn and Ann's language learning pathways. To do this, I adapted a set of classroom observation codes from the pilot

study and adjusted them further as the current study unfolded. Also, to stay focused on answering the research questions, I identified specific patterns of oral and written language events. Descriptions were given of instructional settings/activities in which students and teachers interacted and negotiated while students gained language competence through various activity structures such as read aloud, dictation, grammar lessons, or weekly language review. Teachers' approaches to language instruction were influenced by the way they viewed language and how it was a tool to develop classroom culture. It was within their instructional strategies that the teachers' values and beliefs come to life. I documented those strategies and the beliefs underlying them and will illustrate by offering rich discourse examples.

Throughout the analyses for Chapter 5, I used an ecological perspective to capture the language affordances, emergences and interactions of Kaitlyn and Ann as they socialized in the classrooms. I begin with a description of the physical landscape of the classroom in both Vietnamese Sunday school and English language mainstream public elementary school to provide context for understanding the descriptions of specific examples of language learning tools and artifacts. Then I describe the similarities and differences in both the physical and curricular aspects of the learning contexts. These two contextual accounts allowed me to better examine how students were situated as well as where and with whom they used Vietnamese and English to communicate. The curriculum and the conversations were the context for my investigation of students' acquisition of oral and written Vietnamese and English. Specific metalinguistic awareness events would provide evidence for the kinds of instruction that connect Kaitlyn and Ann's cultural ways of learning. I end the chapter with a summary of the language affordances and emergences arising from students' interactions with the teachers and peers.

## **The Classroom Context: Physical and Cultural**

### **In the Vietnamese Sunday School**

The Vietnamese Sunday classrooms were at a local public high school where the organizing committee rented space during the weekend. All Levels 1a-12 (ages 6-17) classrooms were held there. They had a range of resources, but, compared to the public elementary classrooms where children, ages 5-10 years old, these resources were situated differently. Although there was a difference in the classroom space, teachers and children in the Vietnamese Sunday school did not interact with the classroom resources. The teachers brought their own materials and language tools to teach and the students were required to bring their own reading and writing tools such as books and workbooks every Sunday. Teachers, who were part of the 1.5-2 Vietnamese generations, brought with them culturally based values that emphasized the importance of education, a strong work ethic and high achievement. They continued to incorporate the mixture of Confucian and Buddhist traditional values that Vietnamese parents have used for centuries to raise their children to value and respect education. Referring to Chapter 1, the basic tenets and norms of the Vietnamese family structure are acquired and maintained by children and is directly related to upholding the family life routines and academic achievement in school. The values of learning and working hard that were acquired in Vietnamese Sunday school matched with Kaitlyn's family values. Her parents saw the Vietnamese Sunday school as a continuation of their efforts to develop Kaitlyn's cultural values, including learning oral and written Vietnamese to communicate within her community of family,

peers and teachers. Sunday school was a place where students achieve collectively, working together as a whole class to follow classroom routines, rules and standards. For Huynh, this meant that she was in constant communication with parents to report on Kaitlyn's progress and to get help with any academic and behavior needs. Huynh worked together with the parents to ensure that students were following instructions, completing classroom tasks, and respecting each other. There were continuity between the Vietnamese Sunday school achievement goals and that of the parents from home.

**Inside Huynh's classroom.** The Vietnamese Sunday school was located in a local high school rented on Sundays. There were restrictions on how the teacher could move the desks and tables to accommodate instruction; however, as it turned out, the existing arrangement, with desks lined up in rows, was conducive to learning for the teacher-centered approach of the Sunday school. The physical layout in Figure 5.1 was similar to the Vietnamese language classrooms in the metropolitan parts of Vietnam, rather than rural. The set-up of the classroom and how students were situated in relation to the teacher exemplified Confucian values of dependence, nurture and obligations of group membership (Sullivan, 2000). The teacher's desk and podium, sitting in front of the white board, was the center of student attention. Students sat at small individual desks (save for the small table group that included Kaitlyn), each separated by space on all four sides. This seating example served to embody the underlying value that the good of the group outweighs the good of the individual, rather than the American value of individualism. Of course, expediency sometimes prevailed over principle or cultural practice. Hence, the teacher placed Kaitlyn and two others at the only group round table because there were not enough desks. Also, the teacher felt that Kaitlyn and the other two girls sitting with her at the table could work independently, while cooperating when needed, without getting easily distracted and disrupting her teaching. Most of the English side conversations I captured for Kaitlyn occurred with those two table peers. Consistent with the view that these three were all compliant, responsible students, these sidebars usually occurred when the teacher was not instructing. There were approximately 30 students in the class and not all showed up every Sunday, but when they did, the space was limited and some students had to double up or sit at a round table, similar to Kaitlyn.



**Figure 5.1**—Huynh's classroom configuration

Language teaching tools were dispersed throughout the classroom. Although, the “how to posters”, the science content specific posters, or reference books, all in English, were placed on the walls by the permanent high school teacher, Huynh had the opportunity to bring her own tools to use, such as books, videos, cultural artifacts from the Vietnamese community. The white board was used often to write words and phrases and draw pictures for students to recall, reread, and rewrite from. It was one of the most common and effective tools used to instruct as students had to focus on it for as long as three hours per Sunday school session. It was positioned at the center of the classroom, next to the podium, where Huynh would often stand to teach. When she circulated around the classroom and observed students’ work, she would return to the white board area to begin the next round of whole class interaction. Students followed her movement regularly as they look to her for the next instruction or activity. This was a teacher-centered, curriculum-centered classroom environment, similar to the classrooms in Vietnam.

### **In the Public Elementary School**

There were similarities between the two English Language Mainstream (ELM) classrooms. Kaitlyn (in Lorenz’ classroom) and Ann (in Croft’s classroom) sat at tables with 3-4 other students; at any given table, there was a planned mix of genders, ethnicities, and achievement levels. The teacher’s desk, in one corner of the room, was seldom used during instruction (see figures 5.2-5.3). By contrast, the carpet meeting area was visible and frequently used for large and small group meetings. This was where students met as a whole group for mini-lesson instruction or to converse about the calendar and daily schedule. Side conversations took place here as well as within the group desks. Teachers often asked students to engage in think-pair-share activities at their tables and in the carpet area. Students would complete the task at hand with peers while Lorenz and Croft listened in. Both classroom physical layouts were common in California classrooms where each student was assigned to one desk with a shelf that had their textbooks, workbooks, folders, pencils and paper. It is a personal space yet common in its features compared to other peers. Although there were more similarities than differences in the physical layouts of the two classrooms and the resources to aid instruction (which were also common to all first grade classrooms), the way in which Lorenz and Croft used those resources varied.

**Inside Lorenz’s classroom.** Lorenz circulated around her classroom (see Figure 5.2) often to observe students’ work and to instruct. She used the front white board to lay out the daily schedule and school announcements. She used the back white board to do mini-lessons with the overhead projector. Students looked onto that board to receive information and to learn from the teacher’s modeling of how to read, spell and write words. Surrounding the classroom were bookshelves with different genres of books at first grade level, but the collection did not include multi-ethnic or Vietnamese-English books. There were areas where students sat to read silently and to work cooperatively such as the meeting carpet area. There were daily visits to the carpet area where Kaitlyn interacted with her peers in pairs, small groups, or the whole class with Lorenz at the center for mini-lessons and read aloud. Other parts of the classroom included learning centers such as computer, audio-book, or calendar time. Lorenz would send students to these areas at different time throughout the day to do work individually or with a peer. A routine learning activity such as ‘calendar time’ was done as a whole group where students learned all

about the calendar and how to count the days of the year. Adjacent to the front white board area, there were word walls and alphabet strips, resources that students referred to when they were struggling with spelling, pronouncing words, or recognizing words automatically. I observed students' eyes wandering around and looking for the words or letters to write or form spelling words. For the language learner, the word wall or charts were visual inputs to aid in reading and writing with the both the oral and written register.



**Figure 5.2**—Lorenz’s classroom configuration

**Inside Croft’s classroom.** In Figure 5.3, Croft’s classroom was rich with resources. She covered the walls with words, texts (i.e. poems, rhymes or songs), and number charts as tools for students to refer to if they needed clarification or assistance. There were areas that students could go to in order to follow daily routines, appropriate for first grade standards, such as the calendar area and the computer area, which was equipped with the independent reading program, *Accelerated Reader*. Students’ drafts and final work were posted throughout the classroom, giving them the opportunity to showcase their work alongside the work of their peers. I observed that this was one way Ann could express herself, through her work display. It was a way to display her competence without shedding her shy demeanor. Croft acknowledged that she used this strategy to connect with Ann’s cultural experiences. She had a configuration similar to Lorenz’, where student desks were organized in groups of four in order to foster cooperative learning. The white board was used as a tool for language and literacy modeling, and Croft placed the carpet area next to the board to gather the whole class so she could conduct mini-lessons. Students also gathered on the carpet area to read or respond to text orally. It was a place of comfort as students informally expressed themselves at times and then formally learned new skills as Croft implemented the Open Court curriculum during language arts time. The classroom was surrounded by bookshelves containing cross content genres with science, math and history related stories and expository books. The books were added language tools for students to enjoy or to gain reading skills independently. There were no books written in

Vietnamese and only a handful of multiethnic books. Interactions with the classroom resources and language tools allowed students to further develop their oral and written skills in English.

The configurations in both Lorenz and Crofts' classrooms elicited different language and literacy practices. There were certain areas students went to work independently and other areas where they continued to practice with others. The movements around both classrooms were free floating, allowing students to circulate as well as the teachers to interact with them.



**Figure 5.3**—Croft's classroom configuration

**Grouping in general.** Grouping in all three classrooms provided opportunities for Kaitlyn and Ann to use their oral and written language, albeit in instructional settings rather than the everyday contexts of language use. In the English Language Mainstream (ELM) classrooms, whole group language arts instruction involved more use of written language than spoken because of the nature of the scripted program, *Open Court*. Lorenz and Croft provided lessons on a range of skills, such as phonological awareness, word recognition, vocabulary, sentence structure and reading comprehension during the morning time block, using workbooks and worksheets provided by both the language arts program and each teacher's personal resource materials. English was the only language used during interactions among peers and with the teachers. I observed no attempts by the teachers to provide opportunities for the students to access Vietnamese to communicate or to mediate their meaning-making in response to English spoken and written texts. In fact, both teachers strategically placed the small number of Vietnamese students (3 or 4 per classroom) at separate tables in a manner consistent with (a) their goals of maximally heterogeneous groupings and (b) post-Proposition 227 practices. Thus, Kaitlyn and Ann operated in learning environments in which their first and second language systems had to be kept separate, with no opportunities to use Vietnamese themselves or to attempt any sort of codeswitching behaviors.

In Vietnamese Sunday school, the grouping allowed Kaitlyn to interact with the whole class in a setting in which the teacher was at the center of the interaction and controlled any and all discourse turns. Activities often involved the whole class responding and reciting from a highly controlled curriculum and prescribed written text. The most vivid difference between the ELM classrooms and Vietnamese language classroom was that the two language systems were not kept separate; instead the two languages were intentionally intermingled to promote understanding, learning, and language use in Vietnamese. Students came into Level 1A at the age of six or as a first grader with some, often considerable, knowledge of English as a result of attending kindergarten at the public elementary school. Kaitlyn also had exposure to both oral and written English at school and oral (with some minimal written) Vietnamese written at home. In order to communicate clearly with students, many of whom were more comfortable communicating in English than Vietnamese, the teacher, Huynh, and her assistant, Nguyen, would allow, even encourage, the use of English to translate Vietnamese words or phrases. Figure 5.4 provides an example of a common interaction between the teacher and the whole class; in this instance; they are translating Vietnamese nouns to English.

1	Huynh:	<u>Ok. Máy em nói cho biết, ba là ai?</u> <i>Ok. Can you tell me who "ba" (dad) is?</i>
2	Whole class:	Dad
3	Huynh:	<u>Rồi số ba là số mấy?</u> <i>What is the number "ba" (three)?</i>
4	Whole class:	Three
5	Huynh:	<u>Rồi nếu máy em ca hát là cái gì?</u> <i>Then if you are "ca" (singing), what is it?</i>
6	Whole class:	Singing.
7	Huynh:	<u>Còn, bà của mình là ai?</u> <i>Who is our "bà" (grandma) then?</i>
8	Whole class:	Grandma.
9	Huynh:	<u>Còn chái cà là cái gì?</u> <i>What is a "chái cà" (tomato)?</i>
10	Whole class:	Tomato.
11	Huynh:	<u>Còn con cá la con gì?</u> <i>What is cá (fish)? (con- attached to object ie. fish is con ca)</i>
12	Whole class:	Fish.
13	Huynh:	<u>Okay, bây giờ máy em lái notebook ra cho cô.</u> <i>Ok, Now, everyone take your notebook out for me.</i>

**Figure 5.4**—Codeswitching in Vietnamese Sunday school

During the year of observation, both Lorenz and Croft used the Open Court language arts program. Components of the programs and its activities required (or, at the very least, strongly encouraged) the teachers to instruct the whole class as a single group. Lorenz and Croft regularly attended grade level meetings in which they and their grade level peers agreed on common goals (the same curriculum objectives) and a pacing guide that would guarantee a common implementation schedule. Grouping was partly driven by the curriculum expectations

and partly by the teachers' desire to allow students to develop oral and written language predominately orally first and then through reading and writing. From the teacher interviews, I learned that Lorenz believed that whole group instruction allowed for more readily available monitoring and scaffolding and also promoted a greater sense of group membership. In their interviews, both teachers revealed a preference for the 4 students per table arrangement; they both felt that it allowed students to help each other (especially the ELLs) navigate the daily curriculum tasks and to socialize, using both oral and written English. More specifically, the seating arrangements (4 or 5 to a table) enabled more face-to-face communication, including non-verbal gestures such as eye contact, hand pointing and body movement. My observations corroborated these anticipated practices. In both classrooms, students often turned to each other to hold side conversations or completed independent learning tasks while talking quietly to one another. Lorenz believed that friendships could be built through students helping each other complete tasks and in sharing similar classroom activities. She allotted time for students to work in small groups or in pairs after mini lessons or whole group instruction. However, whole group instruction occurred throughout the school year and was the primary form of instruction set-up for Lorenz. Kaitlyn did not participate in this form regularly. When I asked Lorenz about Kaitlyn's oral language development, Lorenz took Kaitlyn's non-participatory behavior to be related to her shyness and did not consider the possibility of a large power-distance (Hofstede, 1986) between teacher and student in a large group setting. When I queried her further, she expressed concern that her shyness led to a reluctance to volunteer and talk spontaneously to her peers. She did acknowledge that Kaitlyn almost always answered her direct questions correctly, but thought that she was "lower" in language development because of her "shyness". In societies such as Vietnam, students expect teachers to initiate communication, waiting to speak up in class only when invited by the teacher. The fact that Kaitlyn was able to answer questions directed towards her provides support for the cultural rather than the shyness interpretation.

Lorenz: She is on grade level in terms of her oral. Not because of her language but, because of her personality. She is very shy. So in that sense, she is lower. She doesn't participate and offer answers but, she does know it. If I ask her directly, she will answer and be able to answer correctly. But, she doesn't volunteer to answer often. So in that sense, she's lower than what I consider with my other students. (B1.LLI.08)

Like Kaitlyn, Ann did not volunteer to speak often in a large group setting unless called upon in Croft's class. Croft stated, "She's (Ann) a good listener. She can be trusted, sitting in the back of the row and can be expected to listen." Since Croft used the same language arts program, whole group instruction was the norm and played out quite similarly across the classrooms. Students read aloud, participated in question and answer, and recited rhymes. Ann listened during instruction and observed her peers interacting with the teacher while learning the discourse practices of knowing when to speak and what to say during the appropriate time. She was rarely disruptive to her peers or to the teacher and clearly communicated when spoken to in either large or small group. When working in a small group of five students, she confidently

stated her opinion about the tasks at hand when spoken to and then spent the majority of the time listening to her peers. Like Kaitlyn, Ann did not volunteer to respond to teacher queries or invitations in the whole group; she did respond when called on by the teacher, but in an even more reluctant manner than Kaitlyn. The difference in small group and whole class interaction for both students is reflective of the Vietnamese culture and tradition. In a whole class discourse turn taking, where the teacher is dominating to interaction, Vietnamese students yield to the teacher as a form of respect and to allow the teacher to guide and model what to learn. Ann and Kaitlyn did not question the teacher because it is part of the Vietnamese culture for the young to listen and observe first before commenting. It is one form of respecting those adult encounters.

## **Language Interactions in the Classroom**

### **Classroom Opportunities to Interact**

**The contexts of observation.** Kaitlyn and Ann’s classroom grouping patterns provide an understanding of when and with whom they interacted during language arts activities. All teachers were required to implement the district-adopted scripted curriculum, which was highly teacher-centered in order to guarantee a common set of whole class interactions across all classrooms across the entire district. The expectations of that program colored any and all of the interactions that I observed throughout the year as they established boundaries for the nature and focus of any language activities that Kaitlyn and Ann (and their peers) would experience.

Recall that in the ELM classrooms, I conducted a total of 36 classroom observations, in three separate waves, at the beginning (12), middle (12), and end (12) of the school year. Each classroom observations lasted between 1-3 hours. I completed (some) full transcriptions, (many) selective transcriptions, and a complete set of content logs to get at the social and behavioral patterns of teachers and students using oral and written language in three classrooms. The observations in Lorenz and Crofts’ classrooms revealed similar activities and routines—no doubt at least partially a function of the scripted curriculum—such as morning greetings, daily schedule, calendar time, daily language review, spelling lessons, grammar and dictation. From the transcriptions, I found that calendar time, grammar lessons and read aloud promoted discourse turns that allowed students to learn and practice oral and written English over seventy-five percent of the 36 classroom observations. This meant that 27 out of 36 classroom observations contained some form of constructive discussion around the days of the year, sentence development, and oral and listening of written text. In the next sections, descriptions of the activities are provided in relation to teacher-student interactions are described. In the Vietnamese Sunday school, I conducted 12 classroom observations and one ceremonial observation. At the end of the Vietnamese Sunday school session, there was a graduation ceremony awarding students who moved onto the next lesson level. The parents and family members celebrated afterwards with a carnival at the school site.

**Language interactions in Huynh’s classroom.** In all twelve of the classroom observations at the Sunday School, I found that students and teachers participated in *Chinh Tả* (dictation), which is a common practice at the beginning level of Vietnamese language instruction in both Vietnam and the United States. Within *Chinh Tả*, students practiced

phonology and began learning one-syllable words and their meaning. Students spend at least one-third of class time saying aloud the letters, sounds and tones of each word. The teacher used pictures to attach meaning to each word and asked students to write it multiple times in their writing journal. Written Vietnamese (i.e. spelling words, high frequency words, or short phrases) was used often during this time, and oral language was limited mostly to repeating one-syllable words. Huynh gave students the opportunity to practice spoken Vietnamese by modeling how to spell.

Dictation was also an activity used often for students to practice Vietnamese phonology. Since the classroom was, in a manner consistent with scholastic traditions in Vietnam, teacher-centered and the text was pulled from a prescribed curriculum, student-teacher interaction was neither spontaneous nor constructive. In Figure 5.5, an example of a routine classroom interaction, *Chính Tả*, showed Kaitlyn responding to an oral dictation. First, the teacher sets up the dictation by writing on the white board what she expected the students to write in their notebook. Students note the title and number the page on their papers. Then, the teacher either pronounced each word or, alternatively, the names of the letters of the alphabet. Students listened and then wrote down what was said. The exchange often included the use of oral and written English to translate meaning of Vietnamese words or phrases. The teacher used this approach because she (correctly) assumed that most of her students did not know how to define words in Vietnamese and that accessing English was an easier route for the majority of the learners, including Kaitlyn, since English was their dominant language. For example, the teacher said, “Mấy em song cha. So ba. What do you do when you sing? (All children finish already. Number three. What do you do when you sing?)” and the whole class responded, “Ca (sing).” The teacher asked students in English what they thought “sing” was and they responded back, “ca”. Thus, students used both language systems to make meaning of words. As the year progressed, however, they used short phrases in both English and Vietnamese. Huynh encouraged codeswitching between the two languages during activities such as dictation and read aloud (see Figure 5.7 and 5.16).

(Teacher writes on the white board.)		
Chính Tả #2		
1. ã	2. bà	3. ca
4. cá	5. ba	6. ca
7. bã	8. bạ	9. cà
10. bả		

**Figure 5.5**—*Chính Tả* (word dictation) in Huynh’s classroom

Another form of language interaction was *Ráp Vần* (spelling), used throughout the Sunday school year. In Figures 5.6, Huynh interacted with individual and the whole class, including Kaitlyn to acquire the CV word spellings with accent marks. A mixture of Vietnamese and English (Line 1) was used to give simple directions to students to prepare for the exercise. *Ráp Vần* is a form of spelling activity that required students to map letters to sounds with accent marks. Some students were at the beginning level of recognizing the alphabet letter (Line 2) with its mark like /ã/. Kaitlyn was already on her way to spelling words such as /bà/ and /ca/

with the pronunciation of *bơ-a-ba-huyen-bà* with a diacritic mark or *cơ-a-ca* without a diacritic mark. Students would repeat this aloud as a whole class. This was a local language practice that was used throughout the beginning level course at Vietnamese Sunday school. This form of spelling was not taught at home for Ann, as she did not receive formal instruction on how to pronounce words similar to Line 7 with the written Vietnamese register.

1 Huynh:	<u>Máy em lấy sách dưới đó để ở dưới cho cô.</u> Only your notebook and name tag on the table. The rest on the floor. <i>Everyone take your book and put it under for me. Only your notebook and name tag on the table. The rest on the floor.</i> ã (addressing and assisting individual SS) <u>ã có cái gì?</u> <i>ã is like what?</i>
2 Child 1:	Happy face.
3 Huynh:	<u>Ok. Số một “ã” xong chưa?</u> <i>Ok. Number one ã finish already?</i>
4 Whole class:	<u>Đã.</u> <i>Yes.</i>
5 Huynh:	<u>Rồi mấy em xong chưa? Số hai, who’s your grandma, grandma là ai?</u> <i>Is everyone done? Number two...who’s your grandma, grandma is what?</i>
6 Whole class:	<u>Bà.</u> <i>Grandma.</i>
7 Huynh:	<u>Số hai là bà...bà...bà...Bơ-a-ba-huyền-bà.</u> <i>Number two is bà...bà...bà...Bơ-a-ba-huyền-bà.</i>
(Whole class writes as teacher walks around to help individual student.)	
8 Huynh:	<u>Huyền...huyền...Bơ-a-ba-huyền-bà ....huyền bà.... (To indiv. SS)</u> <i>Huyền ( ` )... Huyền ( ` )... Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà .... huyền bà....</i>
(Teacher walks around to help students.)	
9 Huynh:	<u>Máy em xong chưa? Số ba. What do you do when you sing?</u> <i>Is everyone done? Number three. What do you do when you sing?</i>
10 Whole class:	<u>Ca.</u> <i>Sing.</i>
11 Huynh:	<u>Cơ-a-ca... Cơ-a-ca...so ba.</u> <i>Cơ-a-ca... Cơ-a-ca...number three</i>

**Figure 5.6**—*Ráp Vần* (spelling) in Huynh’s classroom

For Kaitlyn, the interaction in Figure 5.6 was a common routine and she spoke aloud with her classmates because it was classroom practice to recite the letters and sounds. She appeared to shed her shyness and got involved with her peers to produce a task because she knew that she was being evaluated and observed by Huynh. Kaitlyn was good at following directions in both

Vietnamese Sunday school and in first grade at the public elementary school. As stated in Chapter 1, within Vietnamese culture, it is important that students listen to the teacher as they would parents at home. To practice this belief, Kaitlyn had to follow the teacher, without questioning her and perform what was asked, and in this case, to carry out a classroom routine. Similar to Figure 5.6, the *Ráp Vần* (spelling) activity often included students and teachers drawing pictures or translating into English in order to access the meanings for particular Vietnamese words. Codeswitching was a strategy for the learners to cope with not knowing how to say or spell a word in their primary Vietnamese language. However, English appeared to not only dominate during peer side conversations, but also during whole class interactions focused on meaning making with words and phrases in Vietnamese Sunday school. The interaction in Vietnamese Sunday school was teacher-whole class, which stood in stark contrast to the mixture of teacher-student, student-teacher or student-student interaction in the English Language Mainstream classrooms. This practice was not only a pedagogical practice for teachers in the Vietnamese Sunday school, but part of the culture of using language between children and adults imported from schooling traditions in Vietnam. When the whole class responded *đạ*, it was meant more than a *yes*, that it was the students' expression of respect for the teacher. I observed that language learning was not just focused on form, it was also a form of communicating culturally. Kaitlyn was expected to use language purposefully, which was to respect the Vietnamese tradition of valuing education by choosing words that honor teachers and school administrators. Even without the benefit of Sunday school, Ann was also acculturated in this tradition, but in her case from experiences and practices encountered at home. Both Kaitlyn and Ann understood that a key purpose of using Vietnamese was to communicate cultural values such as respect for education and those who take part in it. This was displayed in the discourse interaction between Huynh and Kaitlyn as she acknowledged the tasks she had to complete and her continued achievement through classroom assessments and teacher observations in Vietnamese Sunday school. For Ann, it was through her interaction at home with her parents and sibling around family daily routines. Ann continued to use oral Vietnamese at home with her family members so that she could maintain the cultural values.

In Figure 5.7, the interaction was between Huynh and students around a sentence dictation lesson in the Vietnamese Sunday school. This was a routine language development activity that involved Huynh saying aloud a series of short phrases such as "*Tú về tô mì*" and students listened, rehearsed the sentence aloud (to whole class and/or to self) and wrote the words with accurate spelling and diacritic marks. In Lines 12-14, Huynh read aloud the sentence, "*Bé phi có quà*". Then Kaitlyn rehearsed aloud to herself the sentence by spelling out certain parts of the words with the tone marks, "*co-o-co...co qua*". She said, "*co qua*" instead of using the tone marks, *sắc* (high rising) in "*có*" and *huyền* (low falling) in "*quà*". Huynh repeated the sentence aloud to the whole class and had the students write it before dictating the next short phrase. Kaitlyn listened to the repeated sentence and made corrections as she rehearsed all of the sentences accurately in Line 25. Language rehearsal made Kaitlyn aware of the letters and sounds of words with tone marks. Huynh afforded her the opportunity to practice her pronunciation and spelling of one syllable words in Vietnamese. Students in Sunday school used oral skills to rehearse written language. There was a routine to this culturally-based form of language practice. Students were expected to listen to the teacher, stay focused on the lesson task and to follow through on the assignment. The exercise was interactive, with the teacher at the

center of the activity while the students were building receptive and productive sentence structure skills. The turn taking between the teacher and students promoted language development and allowed students to maintain the collective value of learning. Sullivan (2000) analyzed classroom discourse, in Vietnam, through ‘play’ as a mediated activity and found that in order to understand the individual students’ historical background, it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists with the teaching practices and curriculum. The communicative language teaching (CLT) practices, brought to the Vietnamese language classroom and designed by the Council of Europe, represents an Anglocentric view that is often seen as universal. In order for the CLT practices to work well, teachers must embed the language experiences of the students by integrating the teacher-led and the playful oral narrative styles.

Huynh provided an L1 and L2 codeswitching environment for the students, whereas in the public elementary classrooms, teachers were not allowed, by law, to instruct in any language other than English. When Huynh codeswitched from Vietnamese to English, the students responded in similar ways. In Lines 17-22, Huynh mixed L1 and L2 during task instruction such as, “Số tám. Number eight, “Vẽ sò vô vớ.” Sometimes her codeswitching were at mid-sentence while the students used full sentences in English to communicate. Students responded in complete sentence in English such as in Lines 10-11 between Huynh and Kaitlyn. The mixing of L1 and L2 was during simple task instructions (i.e. and Kaitlyn was able to comprehend what was said and responded within context and used words accurately. However, with the targeted sentence dictation, she did not do any translation in English. She had the students listen to the sentences and then write them down. Huynh did not translate the sentences such as “Xe ba bị hư”. Routine activities such as this allowed opportunities for students to codeswitch for meaning making and sentence structure development. It gave students the flexibility to move between Vietnamese and English and to control when it was appropriate for them to learn the language and to perform the tasks.

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Huynh: <u>Ok. Số ba. Số ba, “Tú vẽ tô mì.”</u><br><i>Ok. Number three. Number three, “Tú vẽ tô mì.”</i> |
| 2  | Child 1: <u>Me hay là gì?</u><br><i>Mother and what?</i>  |
| 3  | Huynh: <u>Sông chưa? Ai chưa xong? Ok. Số bốn.</u><br><i>Done? Who is not done? Ok. Number four.</i>    |
| 4  | Child 2: Come on, I’m not even done.  |
| 5  | Huynh: <u>Ok. Số bốn, “Cu ho sù sù.”</u><br><i>Ok. Number four, “Cu ho sù sù.”</i>                      |
| 6  | Child 3: Xu Su? (Repeats part of sentence to self.)   |
| 7  | Child 2: I know how to do it.   |
| 8  | Child 3: Is that too small or something.  |
| 9  | Kaitlyn: Yes it is.   |
| 10 | Huynh: <u>“Cu ho sù sù.” Everybody sông chưa?</u><br><i>“Cu ho sù sù.” Everybody finish?</i>            |
| 11 | Kaitlyn: No, because he has my paper.   |
| 12 | Huynh: <u>Ok. Số năm, “Bé phi có quà.”</u>  |

- Ok. Number five, “Bé phi có quà.”*
- 13 Kaitlyn: Bé phi cơ-o-co...co qua. (Repeats dictation sentence to herself.)
- 14 Huynh: “Bé phi có quà.” Mây em viết sông chưa? *Ok. Số sáu. “Mẹ bế bé Ty.”*  
*“Bé phi có quà.”* *Everyone finish writing?* *Ok. Number six, “Mẹ bế bé Ty.”*  
 (On the side with another classmate.)
- 15 Child 4: Do you want me to do that?
- 16 Kaitlyn: Like that.  
 (Focus back on Huynh.)
- 17 Huynh: “Mẹ bế bé Ty.” Sông chưa? *Ok. Số bảy. Ai chưa sông?* *Everybody done. Ok. Số bảy, “Ba đi qua phà.”*  
*“Mẹ bế bé Ty.”* *Finish?* *Ok. Number seven. Who is not finished? Everybody done.*  
*Ok. Number seven, “Bà đi qua phà.”*
- 18 Child 5: What?
- 19 Huynh: “Bà đi qua phà.” Sông chưa? *Ok. Số tám. Number eight, “Vẽ sò vô vờ.”*  
*“Bà đi qua phà.”* *Finish?* *Ok. Number eight. Number eight, “Vẽ sò vô vờ”*
- 20 Child 5: What is it?
- 21 Huynh: “Vẽ sò vô vờ.” Sông chưa? *Ok. Last one. Số chính. Số chính là. Ok. Số chính*  
*Number nine. “Xe ba bị hư.”*  
*“Vẽ sò vô vờ.”* *Finish?* *Ok. Last one. Number nine. Number nine is? Ok. Number*  
*nine. Number nine. “Xe ba bị hư.”*
- 22 Child 6: Finish.
- 23 Huynh: No, I’m not done yet. *Ok. Ai nôi chuyện ời lại cho cô.*
- 24 Whole Class: Bố đi vô sò. Mẹ Hà kẻ lể. Tú vẽ tô mì. Cự ho sù sụ. Bé phi có quà. Mẹ bế  
bé Ty. Bà đi qua phà. Vẽ sò vô vờ. Xe ba bị hư. (Repeats dictation sentences  
 aloud)
- 25 Kaitlyn: “Bố đi vô sò.” “Mẹ Hà kẻ lể.” “Tú vẽ tô mì.” “Mẹ bế bé Ty.” “Bà đi qua phà.” “Bé  
phi có quà.” “Vẽ sò vô vờ.” “Xe ba bị hư.” (Repeats sentences aloud to herself.)

**Figure 5.7**—Sentence dictation in Huynh’s classroom

**Language interactions in Croft’s classroom.** Figures 5.9 provide extended language interactions inside Ann’s public school classroom. Croft started the day with calendar time. She began the session by calling on all students to meet her around the carpet area, where she discussed the number of days and weeks that students had spent in school so far in the year. The objectives were to get students to name the day and date and to count the total number of days they had attended school. Students orally practiced the names of the days of the week and talked to peers about weather conditions. When the script was noted as “whole class”, Ann participated along with her peer. It was during calendar time that Croft used highly routine discourse turns that allowed students to practice structures of everyday discourse. For example, in response to cues such as “yesterday was, today is, tomorrow will be”, the students would take the next turn by responding, “yesterday was Sunday, today is Monday, and tomorrow will be Tuesday.” Ann responded confidently during routine activities such as this. They used English only and did not access either oral or written Vietnamese to assist them in responding to the teacher’s questions. For the English learner, activities that involve routine discourse samples and repetition, especially around everyday rather than academic matters (e.g., days of the week rather than

reading comprehension), may decrease the prospect and level of anxiety and fear of making mistakes while practicing important English structures. The syntax used during calendar time was simple and predictable, and both girls responded confidently in the group setting.

1 Croft:	Let's start with the calendar. Annie, what's the day of the week? Rohan, it's Annie's turn. Annie, what day is it. Not the date but the day. I kind of made it hard because I have some turned. Lets turn it back. Remember you take that's not showing and you go up the top to find the day. You could come up and take a look. I should have abbreviation that's larger so you could see it.
2 Child1:	Monday
3 Croft:	Very good. She got it. Monday. Now, lets have Joshua do the date.
4 Child2:	November 17, 2008
5 Croft:	Ann, could you give us the color of the leaf.
6 Ann3:	Yellow.
7 Croft:	Raise your hand if you agree. Siddharth, you must turn this way. We need your help. Sometime you might be the one who only have the question for us. Crystal, what's the weather like today.
8 Child4:	It's sunny.
9 Croft:	And I'm counting the tally marks and we have five here and two more. How many sunny days?
10 Whole class:	Seven.
11 Croft:	We've had seven sunny days. We've had more sunny days than any other kind of weather. Shuby, how many days have we been in school? Let's count.
12 Child5:	Um, fifty three
13 Croft:	Fifty-three. Fifty-three. Lets count them. Lets count
14 Whole class:	10, 20....50, 51...53
15 Croft:	Do we count up to 100?
16 Whole class:	No
17 Croft:	We just count up to the day. Fifty three. Over here, we count to 100 hundred but today we count to only 53. Let's change these. We need to change the day.

**Figure 5.8**—Calendar time in Croft's classroom

**Language interactions in Lorenz's class.** There were similarities between calendar time and grammar lessons in that the activity structure was highly routine, with its discourse turn expectations and the simple oral and written syntax usage (see Figures 5.10 and 5.12) in the questioning and response phase. However, there were differences in the goal of these activities. In Figure 5.10, Lorenz taught parts of speech to the class by using sentence examples from the Open Court curriculum. This was one of the main standards taught at the first grade level in this school district. Students were not constructing the sentences with the teacher. The teacher expected the students to name the parts of the sentence after saying it aloud. Students listened to the strings of sounds that made up words and then attached the meaning on their own. For example, Lorenz started with "Jake helps Kayla" and asked from Kaitlyn what the verb was in the sentence. In order to respond correctly, Kaitlyn had to use prior experience (and perhaps knowledge gained during earlier instructional sessions to which I was not privy) to understand

that Jake was the subject, helps was the verb and Kayla was the object. Lorenz did not scaffold any of the students' responses in this example (but, as I have implied, may have in earlier sessions). Students knew how to respond when they encountered clues that suggested which rules of the discourse prevailed in this particular situation. They used structured sentences to respond to the teacher, thus any spontaneous or creative use of oral language use was kept to a minimum. Ann and Kaitlyn, along with all of the other students in the class, were expected to understand and use that discourse routine during grammar lessons. In order to respond to the teachers' questions, they had to use the written English convention of using complete sentences to respond (Jake is the noun) rather than the more common English oral structure (Jake). There was no use of Vietnamese (what would that have looked like if the teachers had been able to access Vietnamese structures) to get at the use of written English structures during this oral English activity. The teacher did not provide opportunities for both students to access their understanding of Vietnamese syntax structure or lexical forms to interpret the English sentences.

1 Lorenz:	Dad is a proper noun. That's why is has a capital to it. Number nine, Jake helps Kayla. What's the verb, Kaitlyn.
2 Kaitlyn:	Helps is the verb.
3 Lorenz:	Helps is the verb. What is our noun?
4 Child1:	Kayla
5 Lorenz:	Sentence please. Kayla is a noun.
6 Child1:	Kayla is a noun.
7 Lorenz:	Kayla is a noun. It's a proper noun.
8 Child2:	Jake is a noun.
9 Lorenz:	Jake is a noun. Do we have any adjectives in this sentence?
10 Whole class:	No.
11 Lorenz:	No we're suppose to have one by now. Number ten, the children put the leaves in the bag. What is our verb?
12 Child3:	The verb is put.
13 Lorenz:	The verb is put. What is the noun?
14 Child4:	The noun is the leaves.
15 Lorenz:	The noun is the leaves. What is another noun?
16 Child5:	children
17 Lorenz:	Sentence please.
18 Child6:	Children is a noun. And there's a another noun, Kaitlyn.
19 Kaitlyn:	Bag is a noun.
20 Lorenz:	The third noun. Sometimes there's a lot of nouns. Do we have adjectives?
21 Whole class:	No.

**Figure 5.9**—Grammar lesson in Lorenz's classroom

**Similar language interactions in Croft and Lorenz's classrooms.** The read-aloud activities (Figures 5.11-5.12) were often used in Lorenz and Croft's classrooms. I did not choose these activities to discuss because of their curricular significance, but because the reading aloud structure represented the only space where I witnessed students using a mixture of oral and written language structures to communicate their understanding of both the subject matter and

ways of speaking and making meaning that prevailed in the classroom. It was a place where teacher-student interaction involved authentic use of language in playful and constructive ways. In Figure 5.11, Croft shared a poem with the students. Poetry was often used during both first grade classrooms and usually involved lots of listening, singing the rhymes, and noting the rhythm of the letter sounds as they practiced blending and segmenting words to fine tune their phonological awareness skills. The Open Court poem in this example was designed to help students learn the /sh/ sound by saying aloud the common beginning sound of each word, “Sheila and Sharon went to the seashore.” The teacher read the beginning parts of the line and then invited the whole class to finish each sentences with the different pitch levels of the /sh/ sound. Students knew the rhythm of poetry and knew how to say the letter sounds of the word. By interacting with the whole class, Croft allowed opportunities for students to display their knowledge of discourse rules (i.e. turn taking, using sounds and rhythm) in reciting poetry, using English phonetic principles. Students played with the /sh/ sound as they formed words that began with it.

1 Croft:	Books is plural like what we learned earlier. Let’s read our poem. I’ll wait for quiet. Sheila and Sharon went to the seashore. They saw lots of shells. Sheila rushed from shell to shell. Sharon held a shell to Sheila’s ears. Do you hear anything, asked Sharon. Yes, it sounds like the ocean crashing on the shore, shouted Sheila.
2 Whole class:	/sh/
3 Croft:	Let’s try a different shape of shell, said Sharon. She found a big shell. It made a loud..
4 Whole class:	/sh/
5 Croft:	Sheila found a small shell. It made a soft...
6 Whole class:	/sh/
7 Croft:	They found a thin shell. It made a high...
8 Whole class:	/sh/
9 Croft:	They found a fat shell. It made a...
10 Whole class:	/sh/
11 Croft:	Sheila and Sharon listened to lots of shells, but no matter what size and shape, it made a...
12 Whole class:	/sh/

**Figure 5.10**—Read aloud in Croft’s classroom

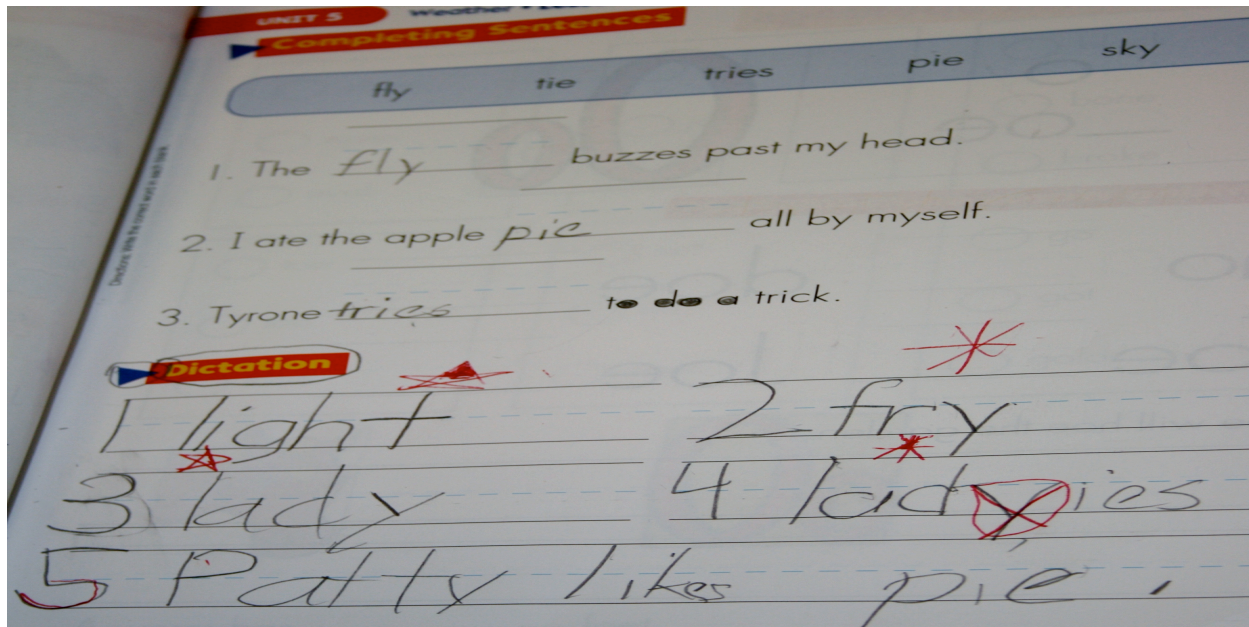
In Figure 5.12, Lorenz read a rhyming story but constructed meaning with the students through a question and answer session. The purpose was to scaffold students’ reading comprehension by discussing the main ideas of the nursery rhyme. Lorenz read the short story and then asked students what they thought about spiders after Child 2 responded. The students interacted with Lorenz, in a stream of discourse turns, about the positive and negative aspects of spiders. The discussion led to students taking responsibilities for living things and the importance of knowing how to handle spiders when they were unsure about whether or not it was poisonous. The teacher-student interaction was communicative where members of the group

discussion were using their knowledge of language to orally express what they thought about the poem. All members of the group constructed meaning together, using oral and written English. As with all interactions observed in this setting, Vietnamese was not accessed in the quest for understanding. There were acknowledgments from both teacher and students that the discussion was important to understanding why Miss Muffet went away after the spider came her way.

1 Lorenz:	Now we're going to read a short story and on page 36. It's on nursery rhyme. You need to be on Little Miss Muffet. Boys and girls. This is a book that has a lot of rhyme. These are rhymes that people started hundreds of years and they actually used them before school started and used them to teach children things before people started to write them down. They started off with oral histories with talking before they started to write them down. So there are all of these rhymes, some you might know like, Little Bo Peep. There is another is Patty-Cake.
2 Lorenz:	You could see her sitting here "eating her curds and whey. She's taking her shoes off and she's relaxing. And then when she saw that spider, she went running away.
3 Child 1:	Without her shoes.
4 Lorenz:	That's right, without her shoes. These were shoes they use to have. These were shoes that boys and girls used to wear. They didn't have tie shoes. They didn't have velcro. So they actually had buttons on their shoes. That's how their shoes closed. So if you wanted to put shoes on, you have to button them. Now, does this look like a real story or a pretend story?
5 Child2:	pretend
6 Lorenz:	It's pretend because...
7 Child2:	It's pretend because spider ( )
8 Lorenz:	Can spiders crawl in your shoes?
9 Whole class:	Yes.
10 Lorenz:	Yes, they can. Spiders crawl around in different places. They can crawl behind you and next to you but, they're not going to look like this one. Thumbs up if you liked this story? Why are some people of spiders.
11 Child3:	Some spiders bite you.
12 Child4:	Some spiders ( )
13 Lorenz:	Why else do people not like spiders?
14 Lorenz:	Some people don't like the feeling of spiders crawling on you. Anyone else?
15 Child6:	Some spiders ( )
16 Lorenz:	Anything else that some people don't like, like Mr. Lorenz. Sometimes spiders build spider webs. You walk and run into it.
17 Whole class:	Yes.
18 Lorenz:	Some people don't like spiders because of their webs. So there are lots of reasons why a lot of people don't like spiders. But, why are spiders important. Why should we take care of spiders. Why are they important to us?
19 Child7:	They are important because some little bugs crawl in the plants bugs.

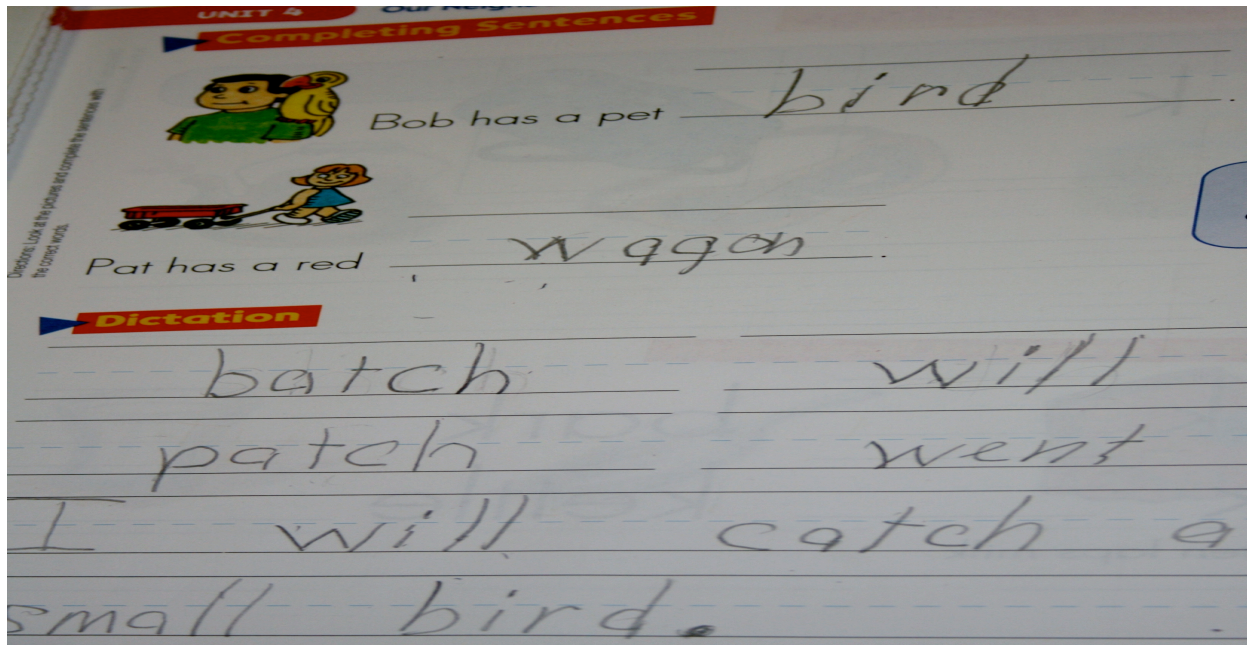
**Figure 5.11**—Read aloud in Lorenz's classroom

Croft and Lorenz were on the first grade level team and met weekly to ensure that the curriculum was implemented simultaneously with first grade standard and benchmarks. They worked with students, creating word recognition and spelling activities that included word and sentence dictation, similar to Huynh’s class in the Vietnamese Sunday school. In Figures 5.13-5.14, Ann and Kaitlyn produced words with spelling patterns. The task was for them to complete the sentences with appropriate words and in the correct context. Students listened to the words said aloud and spelled it with teacher assistance. Then, they used the words to create a sentence. Both students had comparable written production of words and sentences.



**Figure 5.12**—Ann’s sentence dictation writing

The English only classrooms afforded the students language interactions that involved a scripted curriculum. Teachers had less flexibility to use words in the students’ primary language (L1) such as Vietnamese, and rapid and frequent codeswitching between the two languages was neither present nor possible. Implementing the curriculum included the use of workbooks provided by the school. Kaitlyn and Ann used these workbooks throughout the language arts activities and were supplemented when needed. Croft and Lorenz often included their own materials if Open Court did not include spelling patterns or sentence structure that met the first grade standards.



**Figure 5.13**—Kaitlyn’s sentence dictation writing

**Summary of classroom interactions.** The language arts activities described gave students opportunities to use oral and written language in Vietnamese and English to communicate and make meaning of text. Due to the nature of scripted curriculum in the ELM classroom settings, Kaitlyn and Ann communicated mostly using the register of written English embedded in the Open Court program. They were not given access to Vietnamese, as both the language of use and a set of skills built through listening, speaking, reading and writing from the home to learn English. Written English register dominated these activities, with minimal interjections of oral English. Students used oral English when given the opportunity to converse with peers in small groups or with the teacher in a constructive way. However, in the Vietnamese Sunday school, Kaitlyn, along with other students, accessed both languages during different activities. The teacher used the dominant language, English, to get at understanding of one syllable Vietnamese words and short phrases. The strategies teachers used during the activities to get students to use language is an important discussion to have since teachers bring assumptions about language learning and develop strategies based on that to teach language learners. For example, it could be that Huynh’s encouragement of code-switching, particularly the use of English to understand and complete classroom tasks in Vietnamese, provides an ironic example in which L2 is regularly invoked to aid the development of L1, at least in its written form. We know from a long tradition of second language learning, that learning a second language promotes a deeper metalinguistic understanding of one’s first language (Bernhardt, 1998; Koda, 2004). Thus, it might be that when Kaitlyn and her classmates in Huynh’s classroom used English to assist them in understanding and completing Vietnamese written language tasks, they were also deepening their metalinguistic understanding of English. This might have been the mechanism that permitted Kaitlyn to outpace Ann in her growth of both English and Vietnamese throughout the school year during which I conducted the study.

## Language Emergence in the Classroom

### From Instruction to Emergence

**Instruction in Vietnamese Sunday school.** The beginning level classes had teachers (1.5 or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) who were students themselves, having gone through at least ten years of Vietnamese instruction in this very program. At the more advanced level classes, teachers were from either the first or the 1.5 generation and had not been students in the program. They were expected to teach language form and meaning while integrating Vietnamese history and literature, including folklore. Teachers in the first generation bring years of learning strategies and exposure to teaching methods from Vietnam. They grew up in the Vietnamese society where the combination of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism has established the core values and behavioral norms of Vietnamese society and culture. In education, this gave rise to a strong emphasis on teacher-centered curriculum and an unquestioning set of obedient students in the classroom. At the primary grade level, students were taught words in a decontextualized fashion. Nguyen (1988) attributes this to the traditional educational objective of *Tien hoc le* (learn morality first). Traditionally, curriculum contained vocabulary that reflected the moral content of education and it manifested in the rote learning of such text as Confucian proverbs with no point of reference for young students. Marr (1981) noted that, during the 1930s, the Association for the Dissemination of Quoc Ngu Study broke away from the traditional method of making the students recite the spelling of each word. Instead, students were encouraged to sound out words by syllables with the aid of poetry. Because Vietnamese is a shallow (direct graphemic to phonemic representation) orthography, mastering the relationship between sound and script led to conventional spellings quite quickly. However, lesson content remained decontextualized. Marr pointed out that the bulk of material, “continued to uphold the virtues of diligence, neatness and social harmony” (Marr, 1981:182).

Figure 5.12 shows Huynh interacting with the whole class using recall, recite and rewrite strategies during a spelling activity. I chose this language sample to show common strategies used by Vietnamese language teachers to focus students on language form, in this case both oral and written letter by letter spelling. Students were often asked, in all of the classroom observations, to recall what was said or written on the board, to recite what was said aloud as a whole group and then rewrite what they said aloud multiple times. This form of rote learning and memorizing linguistic forms is common practice within the culture of education in Vietnam. This strategy was used throughout the Vietnamese Sunday school, including Kaitlyn’s class of first graders. Students were constantly listening, speaking, reading and writing to correct forms of Vietnamese. The logic implicit in this approach is that by recalling, reciting, and rewriting, students would remember the words whether they met them in or out of context.

In all my observations, I witnessed no examples of constructivist word learning pedagogy in the Vietnamese Sunday School setting. By constructivist pedagogy, I am referring to the type commonly found in U.S. classrooms—lessons in which teachers engage students in different ways of learning written language (in this case written Vietnamese) such as learning words by having several students share the meanings they inferred for a given work as they encountered it while reading and discussing the degree to which various inferences are consistent with the use in the text. Students construct meaning with text through interaction with peers and teachers.

The activity in Figure 5.13 is not a constructivist form of learning. Huynh is using different ways, in one lesson, to get students to pronounce Vietnamese words in a systematic way, which aligned with schooling in Vietnam. The first task was to pronounce the words with the letters and accent tones accurately and to write it down repeatedly. Huynh separated word meaning with pronunciation by not putting the words in context such as short sentences, paragraphs, and illustrations. Students did not use the words through interactions peers and the teacher. There was no construction of meaning while doing recall, reread, recite and rewrite. The teacher was at the center of the routine activity.

1	Huynh:	<u>R</u> ồi, <u>m</u> ấy em <u>đ</u> ánh <u>v</u> ần cho cô. <u>B</u> ơ-a-ba. <i>Everyone, spell for me, Bơ-a-ba.</i>
2	Whole class:	Bơ-a-ba.
3	Huynh:	<u>C</u> ơ-a-ca.
4	Whole class:	Cơ-a-ca.
5	Huynh:	Bơ-a-ba- <u>h</u> uyền-bà
6	Whole class:	Bơ-a-ba- huyền-bà
7	Huynh:	Lớn lên. <i>Louder.</i>
8	Whole class:	<u>B</u> Ơ-A-BA- <u>h</u> uyền -BA
9	Huynh:	<u>C</u> ơ-a-ca- <u>h</u> uyền -cà.
10	Whole class:	Cơ-a-ca- huyền -cà.
11	Huynh:	<u>C</u> ơ-a-ca- <u>s</u> ắc -cá
12	Whole class:	Cơ-a-ca-sắc -cá
13	Huynh:	<u>B</u> à...bà... <u>m</u> ấy em <u>bi</u> ết <u>đ</u> ánh <u>v</u> ần <u>ch</u> ữ bà không? Ai <u>bi</u> ết? Chrystal, <u>đ</u> ánh <u>v</u> ần cho cô <u>đ</u> i? Bà...bà... <i>Bà...bà... Everyone spell bà for me? Anyone know? Chrystal, spell for me? Bà...bà...</i>
14	Child1:	Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà
15	Huynh:	<u>Gi</u> ỏi. Bơ-a-ba- huyền-bà. Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà. Bơ-a-ba- huyền-bà, <u>ph</u> ải cái này <u>kh</u> ông? <i>Good. Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà. Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà. Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà, is this one correct?</i>
16	Whole class:	<u>Đ</u> ạ. <i>Yes.</i>
17	Huynh:	<u>M</u> ấy em <u>vi</u> ết cho cô <u>n</u> ăm lần <u>đ</u> i. <i>All children write for me five times.</i>
18	Whole class:	Ahhhhh.
19	Huynh:	<u>F</u> ive times. <u>Ch</u> ữ bà. Bơ-a-ba- <u>h</u> uyền -bà <i>Five times. Word bà. Bơ-a-ba- huyền -bà</i> <u>Vi</u> ết <u>s</u> ông chưa? Bà <u>n</u> ăm lần. <i>Write already yet? Bà five times.</i>
20	Whole class:	<u>Đ</u> ạ <i>Yes.</i>

**Figure 5.14**—Recall, reread, recite and rewrite in Huynh’s classroom

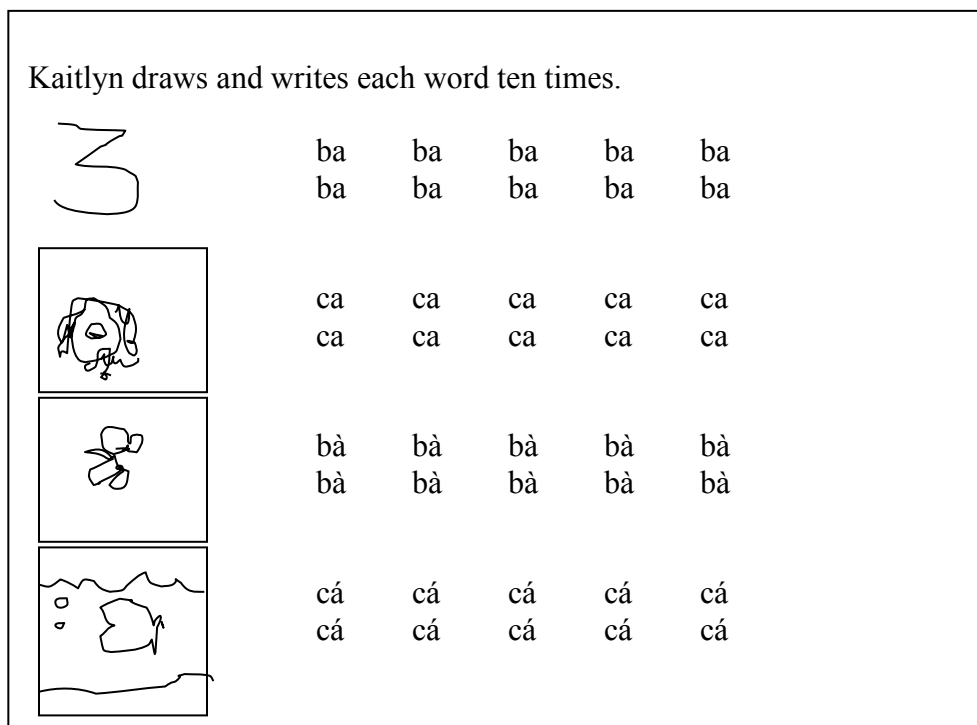
**Language play in Huynh's class.** Cook (1997) and Sullivan (2000) suggests that the function of language play is to amuse oneself, but in language learning, it can serve as a way to combine the sounds of letters or accent marks with word meaning. In Huynh's class, students play and make meaning with Vietnamese through illustration. In Figure 5.14, Kaitlyn drew a picture of a happy face, representing the five diacritic marks in the Vietnamese orthography. Students used this image to remember and make the rise and falling tones as it combines with letters during classroom routines such as *Ráp Vần* (spelling) activities. Since the English and Vietnamese are different by these diacritic marks, it was an additional knowledge of phonemes that Kaitlyn was acquiring. She was gaining visual input skills involving new symbols in the written register. The picture is a mental representation of the sounds that she referred back to often throughout the school year to help her spell and read better. After Kaitlyn finished her drawing, Huynh would have her connect the sounds aloud to the whole class. The repetition of sounds helps build metalinguistic awareness for bilingual learners.

Kaitlyn draws 5 diacritic accent marks in a face form.



**Figure 5.15**—Language play using diacritic marks in Huynh's classroom

Another form of language play was represented in Figure 5.15, which depicts Kaitlyn's picture and rewriting of a word ten times. Then she repeated those words ten times aloud to herself and with the whole class; at times she would sing the words out loud so that she could hear herself make the sounds. When she does say the words to herself, it serves as a form of metalinguistic awareness. Kaitlyn was playing with the words so that she could build the mental representation to retrieve next time she encounters similar spelling or pronunciation patterns. Huynh circulated around the classroom and listened in to assess each students' pronunciation. If the student did not pronounce correctly, she went back to the front white board to illustrate the picture and to write out the words five times for students to say a loud with her in unison. She taught this language learning strategy to assist students in pronouncing words with its varied spelling combinations and six accent marks. Kaitlyn's drawing was accurate and it provided the meaning for each word. She wrote words correctly and was aware of the tonal difference as she wrote different words with various accent marks. Although she was playing with the CV words, she demonstrated the ability to adjust to different ways of learning language. Lorenz and Croft do not use rewrite and reread as a form of language play. Rather, they have the students sing songs that rhyme to practice their pronunciation skills. However, since Kaitlyn was receiving additional instruction on how to use language in a variety of ways, by building metalinguistic awareness, she can communicate better with her Vietnamese Sunday school peers.



**Figure 5.16**—Language play using pictures and rewrite in Huynh’s classroom

**Language rehearsal in Huynh’s class.** Lantolf (1997) noted that the primary purpose of language rehearsal is to master the target language form. Language play can serve as rehearsal of the language form that is imprinted in the mental representation of the mind. In Figure 5.15, Kaitlyn was using pictures and rewriting strategies to play with the diacritic marks and its sounds. This assisted her in representing written Vietnamese letter-sound with accent tones. In this routine task, Kaitlyn rehearsed in private speech, saying aloud to herself the words and having. This form of words popping up in one’s head is a form of metalinguistic awareness. According to Lantolf (1997), as the second language learners become more native-like speakers, the rehearsal decreases over time, suggesting that rehearsal of language naturally occur at a young age. In Figure 5.16, Huynh was providing a routine lesson when I observed Kaitlyn saying /phở gà/ (chicken noodle soup) along with her classmates and then codeswitched to “chicken noodle soup” (Lines 15-18). Kaitlyn was trying to make meaning with the words, /phở gà/, by translating it in English after repeating the word to herself. She was possibly transferring her metalinguistic awareness skills in Vietnamese to learning English by rehearsing how to say, “chicken noodle soup”, three times. This was repeated in Line 21 where she was rehearsing in Vietnamese with a friend and translating what ‘phở gà’ was as she noticed a tone error in her friends pronunciation, ‘phở ga’. She stated that it meant chicken noodle by playing with the words. Vietnamese She continued rehearsing to herself, while other classmates overheard her and repeated the same words. She was making meaning with the words in both Vietnamese and English as she translated. Kaitlyn appeared to be moving from L1 and L2 to compensate for

what she does not know after raising consciousness to the L1, so she codeswitched instead to English. She codeswitched between the languages in Vietnamese Sunday school, but did not in the public elementary classroom. Huynh’s language instruction created an environment where Kaitlyn could move back and forth between L1 and L2. In the ELM classroom, and for the legal reasons explained earlier, Lorenz did not access Vietnamese to develop Kaitlyn’s English, thus not allowing Kaitlyn to develop in L1 while learning L2. This has been the result of the end to bilingual education in California schools through Proposition 227 in 1998.

1	Whole class:	Phơ-ơ-phơ-hồi-phở
2	Huynh:	<u>Giỏi. Mấy em đánh vần gà.</u> <i>Good. Everyone spell “gà”.</i>
3	Whole class:	Gơ-a-ga- huyền-gà
4	Huynh:	<u>đúng không?</u> <i>Is it correct?</i>
5	Whole class:	<u>Dạ</u> <i>Yes</i>
6	Huynh:	<u>đánh vần lại.</u> <i>Spell again.</i>
7	Whole class:	Gơ-a-ga- huyền-gà
8	Huynh:	<u>Phơ-ơ-phơ-hồi-phở. Mấy em đánh vần lại cho cô.</u> <i>Phơ-ơ-phơ-hồi-phở. Everyone, spell again for me.</i>
9	Whole class:	Phơ-ơ-phơ-hồi-phở
10	Huynh:	Gơ-a-ga- huyền-gà
11	Whole class:	Gơ-a-ga- huyền-gà
12	Huynh:	Phở gà.
13	Whole class:	Phở gà.
14	Huynh:	<u>Phở gà là gì mấy em?</u> <i>What is “phở gà” everyone?</i>
15	Whole class:	Chicken noodle soup.
16	Kaitlyn:	Chicken noodle soup. Chicken noodle soup. Chicken noodle soup. (sings)
17	Whole class:	Chicken noodle soup.
18	Kaitlyn:	I ate it. I ate it. I ate it. Whooo (sings)
19	Child 1:	I ate it. I ate it. I ate it. Whooo (sings)
20	Child 2:	Davina, remember this.
21	Kaitlyn:	<u>It’s not “phở gà”. Phở gà là chicken noodle, chicken noodle.</u> (sings) <i>It’s not “phở gà”. “Phở gà” is chicken noodle, chicken noodle.</i> (sings)

**Figure 5.17**—Language rehearsal in Huynh’s classroom

**Instruction in Lorenz’s classroom.** In Figure 5.17, Lorenz used metalinguistic knowledge strategies to get students to recall their experiences in aiding their understanding of words. She used question and answer method to get students to pay attention to the word, “steep”. As referenced in Chapter 2, analysis and control, for bilingual learners, are considered the metalinguistic dimensions of language proficiency (Bialystok, 1991). The process which determine the entry into the conscious knowledge is dependent on the kinds of tasks involved. In

language instruction such as Figure 5.16, Lorenz modeled to students how to control the processing of English parts of speech (i.e. noun, verb) through sentence correction. She started with an incorrect sentence (Line 1) and asked students to think aloud what the verb was. Child 1 (Line 2) responded with a complete sentence, an expected form students have to use while speaking, and moved on to identifying the noun. When Lorenz (Line 5) asked for the adjective in the sentence, Kaitlyn said aloud “step”. She did not respond in a complete sentence so Lorenz raised her language analysis ability by having her say it again in complete sentence. Kaitlyn’s sentence development, in English, occurred on-line (awareness) through her mental representation of correct use of grammar and then off-line through her reflection on the errors she was making. As she acquired the rules of grammar, her analysis of English would become more structured. This is an example of analyzed linguistic knowledge where Kaitlyn could access content or context, possibly with other languages such as Vietnamese.

1 Lorenz:	The adjective is new. Again, we’ve got I and my. They are pronouns. Number three, “we climb a steep hill.” What’s our verb?
2 Child1:	The verb is climb
3 Lorenz:	The verb is climb. What’s the noun?
4 Child2:	The noun is hill.
5 Lorenz:	The noun is hill, a place. What’s the adjective?
6 Kaitlyn:	Step.
7 Lorenz:	Sentence please.
8 Kaitlyn:	The adjective is step.
9 Lorenz:	STEEP. The adjective is steep. Does anyone know what steep means?
10 Child4:	It kind of means high.
11 Lorenz:	Right, steep means it’s very high. Is this a steep hill?
12 Whole class:	No
13 Lorenz:	Is this a steep hill?
14 Whole class:	Yes.
15 Lorenz:	Yes, steep means it goes up in a very sharp angle. If you think about the streets in San Francisco, the streets goes up very high. Put your paper protectors up. Do the last two by yourself. Number four, “dad made a tasty lunch”. Take your green crayons and circle your verb. Now take your red crayons and circle your nouns. And now take your blue crayon and circle your adjective. Number five, “we sat by a big old tree”. Now take your green crayon and circle the one noun. Then take your blue crayon and circle the two adjectives. We sat by a big old tree. When you are finished, I’d like for you to put all of your crayons away. Turn your protector paper down but not away. We have the last page. You want to choose the verb at the top of the page. The first one says...

**Figure 5.17**—Metalinguistic awareness in Lorenz’s classroom

**Instruction in Croft’s classroom.** Croft instructed students on sentence structure in Figure 5.18. I chose to analyze this long interaction because I observed that Ann was using language rehearsal as a form of metalinguistic awareness to understand the conversation involving the whole class. Also, students were struggling with their spelling of particular words.

Croft mediated the conversation by calling on each student to get their version on how to spell different words until a conflict arose. In Line 5, at the beginning of Croft's lesson, Ann was saying to herself the word, Patty, from the sentence, *Patty likes pies*. She was writing down the sentence and was trying to spell Patty and got stuck and tried to rehearse to herself, but could not resolve it. Instead of raising her hand to ask for help, she sat and listened to the conversation as it unfolded with other classmates complicating the spelling of Patty as they shared their own versions with Croft. It appeared that students varied in the ending sound of /p-a-t-t-y/ such as pattie, paddie, or paddy. Towards the end of the interaction, after listening to the spelling errors and Croft's reasoning, Ann corrected a student's spelling for the word, likes, by saying and adding "-s" to herself after the student said, "like", which was misspelled. Ann showed listening comprehension skills and metalinguistic awareness, through rehearsal, as she developed her own understanding of English language structure such as word endings. Her mental representation of the word, Patty, has been imprinted and added to her linguistic knowledge. She had high control of the language structure in order to analyze the forms herself. But, I wondered whether or not, the language rehearsal is both culture and second language learner specific. In other words, do bilingual learners use metalinguistic awareness as a strategy to address sentence errors? Bialystok (1991) suggested that during the analysis and control process, bilingual learners tap into their linguistic knowledge and cultural experiences to make meaning of sentence structure in the targeted language in order to become more native-like in speaking and reading.

1 Croft:	Number three. Lady. Count the syllables. It might help you. Number four, ladies. Ladies. And the sentence for those of you who are finished, Patty likes pies.
2 Whole class:	Patty likes pies.
3 Child1:	How do you spell Patty?
4 Croft:	I will repeat. All you have to do is raise your hand. Patty likes pies. Patty is a girl. Count the syllables in the words if it helps. Patty likes pies.
5 Ann:	Patty, Patty, Patty (says aloud to herself)
6 Child2:	I finished. Just three words.
7 Croft:	That's right, it's a very short sentence today. We might be able to think of a describing word for pies to make it interesting.
8 Child3:	What is the sentence.
9 Croft:	Patty likes pies. Shuby, how do you spell light. I'll give you time to take your red pen out. I forgot that step.
10 Child4:	L-i-g-h-t
11 Croft:	That's right. Number two, who would like to spell fry. One syllable, it has the /i/ sound at the end.
12 Child5:	F-r-y
13 Croft:	F-r-y Correct. Number three, who would like to try lady.
14 Child6:	L-a-d-e...I mean -y
15 Croft:	L-a-d-e is a good guess. L-a-d-y is correct. If you spelled L-a-d-e, circle it, write l-a-d-y above it. Joshua, would you like to do number four.
16 Child7:	L-a-d-i-e
17 Croft:	Anybody else have a question for number three. Ashlyn, do you have a question

	or you were volunteering for ladies.
18Child8:	I wanted to volunteer.
19 Croft:	You were volunteering. You almost had it. I only see one letter missing there. L-a-d- change the -y to -I and add the -es to make ladies, more than one. How many of you got it or almost got it but you forgot the -d or something.
20Child9:	I forgot the -i
21 Croft:	Any questions so far? Anything needed to be repeated? Who would like to try the sentence? Patty? Who would like to try Patty?
22Child10:	P-a-d-i-e
23 Croft:	P-a-d-i-e, well that is a good guess. Here's a way to spell Patty, according to the book today. P-a-d-i-e is a good guess.
24Whole class:	Yeah.
25Child11:	It's Patty.
26 Croft:	It looks like Patty, doesn't it. Now, I had a girlfriend once that spelled her name like this P-a-t-t-i-e. Some people spell their names and they don't follow the rules. So if you spelled it P-a-t-t-i-e, by the way I said that one today too.
27Child12:	A girlfriend.
28 Croft:	Raise your hand if you want to talk. If everybody talks up, we get big noise. Ian
29Child13:	I thought you said Pattie-s.
30 Croft:	Patties, no I said, Patty. That's a hard one to hear. Next time, I think I'll walk around, so you could hear me a little better.
31Child14:	I thought you said Paddy, P-a-d-d-y.
32 Croft:	I think in Ireland, there might be somebody with that spelling. Like I said, names don't follow the rule. Let's just circle what they have. More often than not, you will find Patty, P-a-t-t-y or P-a-t-t-i-e for a girl. Not a big deal. Likes.
	(L walks over A table group.)
33Child10:	I thought she said Paddie
34Child14:	I thought you said Pad-dy
35 Croft:	Oh my goodness.
36Child10:	L-i-k-e
37Ann:	-S
	(Bell rings. SS quiet down.)
38 Croft:	Boys and girls, don't worry about getting everything correct. This is just practice. Let's get pass Patty and we're gonna go to like. Now, Ashlyn said l-i-k-e. She was almost right and then Ann said, -s. And that's correct. Patty likes. Likes, has the -s /s/ at the end. Patty likes pies. Who would like to try pies? Who hasn't had a turn today?

**Figure 5.18**—Language rehearsal in Croft's classroom

### Summary

In Chapter 5, I provided examples of the language affordance, instruction and emergence from classroom observations and field notes in response to the research question sets. Although there were many more observations I could have used to describe the first grade, age 6, oral and

written L1 and L2 learning experiences of Kaitlyn and Ann, I selected the ones cited in this chapter because they represented the vast majority of the interactions observed over the school year in three classrooms. The observations illustrated the consistent and systematic patterns of language acquisition and development found in these classrooms. By consistent, I mean the kinds of interactions that continually arose from teachers' lessons and students' responses to the instruction. I discussed the types of interactions that occurred regularly due to curriculum implementation expectations and socialization patterns that were conducive to the classroom language use and culture. Croft and Lorenz provided opportunities for Ann and Kaitlyn to use English to rehearse and to develop general metalinguistic awareness. In the examples I cited, both students kept the Vietnamese and English language systems separate in the English only classrooms, but relied on similar reading and listening strategies that were found in both the ELM classroom and Sunday school context. For example, in word reading, Kaitlyn used the routine and systematic spelling skills from Vietnamese Sunday school to help her decode and write English sentences in the ELM classroom. There is a correlation between the use of metalinguistic awareness, a strategy, to learn L1 and L2, which was found in both classroom settings for Kaitlyn. Ann, on the other hand continued to develop in English without the aid of Vietnamese. Since I did not conduct home observations, it was difficult for me to use home language experiences to connect with Ann's public elementary school experiences. The classroom observations in Croft's class were the only language interaction data sets I had to account for Ann's oral and written L1 and L2 development over one school year. Croft did not know how to access Ann's prior linguistic knowledge with Vietnamese to connect with her English development. It was stated in the interview response that she knew that the school, by law, was not obligated to instruct in Vietnamese, but that she felt it was her responsibility to move from where the students were. This meant that Ann's cultural background required understanding in order to help her transition to learning English in the classroom. She did not know how make the connection, especially without knowing the Vietnamese language and not having first had experience with the Vietnamese culture.

In the ELM classroom, the two languages were kept separate, in part, in response to the school policy, post California Proposition 227, ending bilingual education. Lorenz and Croft did not know how make the connection with Kaitlyn and Ann, especially without knowing the Vietnamese language and not having first had experience with the Vietnamese culture. However, the teachers used instructional strategies such as language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading to assist Kaitlyn and Ann in building reading skills. Those strategies were found in the Vietnamese Sunday school. The difference was that strategies such as language play and rehearsal was culture specific in language learning for Vietnamese students. Huynh did not have a teaching credential, nor was she trained to teach either in Vietnamese or English. In the English Language Mainstream classrooms, those language learning strategies were curriculum and instruction based. Based on the beginning of the year teacher interviews, teachers shared that they were Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certified to teach ELLs. In the process they were professionally trained, through programs such as Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), to meet the English language development of Kaitlyn and Ann. Lorenz and Croft used language play and rehearsal, as a form of metalinguistic awareness, as a teaching strategy whereas Huynh

Ironically, it was in the Vietnamese Sunday school that Kaitlyn could access both Vietnamese and English to learn oral and written Vietnamese. This was noted in Figures 5.4, 5.7, 5.12, and 5.15 where Huynh provided opportunities for students to codeswitch if they either wanted to communicate with peers through side conversation or they needed help with translations in reading for meaning. It was part of the class culture to use both languages to learn Vietnamese, a language identified by the public elementary schools as being primary (L1). Kaitlyn appeared comparable in both languages, based on the assessments given at the beginning and end of the year. She was purposeful when she codeswitched with the teachers versus her peers. With the teacher, she spoke Vietnamese to respect the culture and tradition. With peers, she spoke English because that was the language of socialization on the side and playground during recess. By observing Kaitlyn in a school where formal Vietnamese language instruction took place, I understood, with some data analysis, that Kaitlyn's primary language, at age 6 might be both a mixture of Vietnamese and English. I wondered if this was the case with other Vietnamese second generation born in the United States. Some findings from this data analysis begin to support one of the largest studies surveying Vietnamese adolescents' language adaptation (CILS 1992, 1995 & Zhou, 2001). The study concluded that, over time, with the increase learning and use of English, Vietnamese adolescent's L1 language ability decreased from 41.4% to 33.6% in three years.

## Chapter 6: L1 Vietnamese and L2 English Emergence After One School Year

### Introduction: At the End of the First Year of Observation

My fundamental hypothesis was that if Kaitlyn had additional formal L1 Vietnamese instructional experiences while learning L2 English, she would develop, in comparison to Ann, greater oral and written expertise in both languages. In Chapter 4, I described their initial level of expertise and experience in the two languages through three lenses: their parents' views, their teachers' views, and their performance on the battery of tests I gave at the outset of first grade. In Chapter 5, I continued seeking answers to my research questions by observing the interactions in the classroom. In the English and Vietnamese only classrooms, I observed Ann and Kaitlyn interact with their peers and teachers to learn and use language to communicate and socialize. In particular, I observed literacy activities that involved Kaitlyn using and developing her metalinguistic awareness to develop her oral and written Vietnamese and English competence. This occurred primarily, almost exclusively, in Sunday school, where Ann was able to switch readily and fluently between English and Vietnamese (possibly because Huynh was fluent in L1 and L2, while Lorenz was fluent only in English). Ann continued to develop her metalinguistic awareness in English without the use of Vietnamese in the public elementary classroom despite Croft's promotion and encouragement of the L1 primary language usage when possible. An important finding from the observations was that during interactions in both Lorenz and Croft's classrooms, Kaitlyn and Ann kept had to compartmentalize their Vietnamese and English language communication and socialization. Due to the explicit state policy discouraging bilingual instruction, bolstered by the lack of Vietnamese expertise of the teachers, there were simply no interlingual instructional affordances in the public school classrooms. At the end of Chapter 5, I speculated that the interlingual activity encouraged and supported by Huynh in the Sunday School might have served as a metalinguistic mediator to support Kaitlyn's development in both English and Vietnamese.

In this final Chapter 6, I take a close look at Ann and Kaitlyn's end of year performance—after spending first grade in the public schools (and, in Kaitlyn's case, the Sunday School) through the same lenses used to take a snapshot at the beginning of first grade—interviews with parents and teachers and performance on a battery of L1 and L2 tests. After interpreting the comparative growth of these two students, I offer an ad hoc coda, an afterthought prompted by the realization, after examining end of grade one data, that the listening comprehension assessment did not provide me with rich enough samples of oral language production, in either L1 or L2 (but especially L1) to draw valid inferences about oral development.<sup>7</sup>

The next section of the chapter will include brief reading assessment results at the end of year two of the study, using the same battery of reading assessments from the first year. I added

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that I collected these data to understand where both students were in their oral language production, knowing that I would never be able to determine what prompted that level of development. In grade 2, I conducted no classroom observations, no parent interviews, and no teacher interviews. Even so, I determined that these limitations were trumped by what I might learn about what I came to understand was a vacuum in my data set.

an oral language survey to capture specific linguistic skills in L1 Vietnamese and L2 English at the end of second grade or age 7.

Finally, I conclude the dissertation study with some learning highlights from my data analysis. I note the types of affordances and interactions that teachers, parents and students used to assist in learning both oral and written Vietnamese and English at home and in the English-only classrooms. I discuss the limitations that I faced as I moved from the pilot study to developing the dissertation research, to the data analysis and to the conclusions. Future research studies, taking the ecological perspectives on the oral and written language competence and development of Vietnamese English Language Learners, should address a combination of what I learned from my study and the development of further research questions and procedures to understand the affordance, interaction and emergence of language among young EL learners. Studies should also identify specific L1 and L2 metalinguistic awareness such as language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading in young learners. These examples of awareness could be used as instructional strategies to help second language learners of English read and write in American public schools. I will discuss how I would clarify my research questions and methods were I return to conduct a more nuanced study of the language and literacy experiences of second generation Vietnamese English Language Learners.

### **Competence in L1 and L2 Language Learning at the End of Grade One**

#### **Parent Perspectives on L1 and L2 Language Learning at Home**

The same set of questions used at the beginning of the year to probe parents' perspectives on Kaitlyn and Ann's language learning experiences were also used towards the end of the research observation year. The purpose was to understand whether or not the home and community experiences for both Ann and Kaitlyn changed over the course of one school year. I wanted to find out if there were changes in the oral and written language experiences in L1 Vietnamese and L2 English. If there were changes, how did this affect the overall language competence and development for both students at home and eventually in the classrooms? At the end of first grade, both Kaitlyn and Ann's oral language experiences were similar at home as both parents continued to communicate with their children primarily in Vietnamese due to the cultural traditions and the goal of maintaining the heritage language. However, a mixture of oral L1 and L2 were used among parents, family members of various ages and in the Vietnamese community. The overall interview responses indicated that parents continued the daily oral routines, interacting with the same home physical space and cultural objects from food, books, videos, and pictures to communicate and socialize. Parents continued to emphasize learning both oral Vietnamese and English in order to maintain the Vietnamese tradition at home and to succeed in the public elementary school. The 1.5 generation parents addressed their 2.0 children through primary interactions as described in Chapter 4 while their children responded predominately in English. The secondary interaction also continued with extended family members where Kaitlyn and Ann spoke primarily in the Southern Vietnamese dialect. However, there was a difference in acquiring the written Vietnamese that increased Kaitlyn's competence and development in written Vietnamese as a result of continued weekly attendance and participation with Vietnamese Sunday school while Ann interacted with her parents and extended family members without formal instruction. Kaitlyn's parents increased their

involvement in providing the language affordances for her as they met the goal of supporting the Vietnamese Sunday school's curriculum and instruction. Kaitlyn began to read and write in Vietnamese more as the year progressed.

**Kaitlyn.** According to her parents, Kaitlyn increased her oral response in Vietnamese at home as she became more confident and competent from taking classes at Vietnamese Sunday school. She spoke in complete and clear sentences as she interacted with the physical space and the cultural objects. However, as the year progressed, she increased the mixture of both oral and written L1 and L2 and became more aware of the differences and similarities between English and Vietnamese during her codeswitching. She was more intentional as she understood the cultural and local practices at home and when to use strictly Vietnamese with her elders. This was reinforced in Vietnamese Sunday school as Huynh continued the cultural traditions and expectations. In addressing her parents, she used a mixture of L1 and L2 when she needed help in either language to translate. The consistent exposure and use of L1 and L2 made her a better writer and reader in both languages at home. But, as the English language dominated her interaction and communication with peers and teachers at school, she was more comfortable and confident in using L2 English at home. The parents did not restrict Kaitlyn from using L2 as they felt it was just important for her to succeed in English so that she could meet all school standards. They often responded to Kaitlyn in English without codeswitching to Vietnamese. They encouraged her to use oral and written English when speaking and reading with trips to the library, participation in extra curricular activities and community events.

In Vietnamese, the parents provided opportunities to communicate in order to pay respect cultural traditions and to maintain her ethnic identity. It was important to them that Kaitlyn knew the appropriate space and time to use the primary language in addressing people. It gave them pride in knowing that she was developing fluency in both languages. The parents stated that during family events, Kaitlyn would use her Vietnamese language to pay respect to her grandparents, aunts and uncles. Kaitlyn socialized her cousins and elders, in using L1 to not only communicate, but to also belong to the family unit. The primary and secondary interactions during family routines such as frequent gatherings around food, birthday celebrations, honoring the ancestors and annual cultural celebrations such as Tet Festival (Vietnamese New Years) created an environment of inclusion and growing as a whole group that were interdependent. The parents afforded her the environment to build her competence in Vietnamese while in return, Kaitlyn exercised her speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities to communicate clearly and intentionally. She became more metalinguistically aware of the words and sentences used to make meaning of her family members. Kaitlyn played, rehearsed and repeated the sounds of the Vietnamese language in her interactions with her parents and sibling. The parents were committed to continuing the Vietnamese Sunday School, fearing that without further instruction in the Vietnamese Sunday school, Kaitlyn's preferential use of L2 English would dominate all aspects of her communication. They reasoned that she would eventually lose her identity with the heritage language and the local practices that were attached to the use of Vietnamese, including infusing the Confucius values in her daily routines. The parents attributed Kaitlyn's increased use of oral and written Vietnamese to her experiences with Vietnamese Sunday school. They believed that she was more proficient in Vietnamese and as a result, it has left her more

engaged and motivated to use Vietnamese in her daily routines. They were committed to continuing the Sunday School at least through the next year.

**Ann.** According to her parents, Ann continued to express herself using oral Vietnamese throughout the first grade at home. She had both primary and secondary interactions where family members socialized her into using the cultural tools to communicate. She spoke to her parents and sibling in complete sentences with clear thoughts. They continued to participate in family and community activities where she had to use Vietnamese with elders. Ann knew when to address them in Vietnamese. Her parents stated that she could listen and speak Vietnamese but was unable to read or write in her heritage language. They did not provide opportunities to develop competence in written Vietnamese through formal instruction with reading and writing. There was some evidence of informal encounter with written L1 registers—playing and rehearsing Vietnamese through songs and with daily routines. But, without further exposure through reading and writing instruction during literacy activities, Ann was not able to fully grasp her communication with the secondary interactions with the 1.0 and 2.0 generations.

Although it was important to maintain her heritage language, the parents thought her progress in English at school should remain the main priority because it, not Vietnamese, determined her achievement and success in school. At times, Ann responded with a mixture of L1 and L2, codeswitching when unable to find the right words or do not have enough vocabulary to express her thoughts. As the year progressed, Ann expressed more in oral and written L2 English because she had more practice from the public elementary classroom. She became more confident and comfortable with using L2 to express herself at home and in the Vietnamese community. The parents did not restrict her from communicating in L2 with her family members. They expressed worry that she would fall behind if she did not focus on developing her L2 English competence. Socially, they worried that Ann, who was decidedly shy to begin with, would not be able to make friends in the English-only classroom if she didn't speak English well. By the end of first grade, it was apparent that the family was not moving beyond communicating with oral Vietnamese, despite the importance of maintaining the heritage language through cultural practices at home.

### **Performance as Indexed by Formal Assessments**

I used the same battery of assessments during the beginning and end of the school year to determine Kaitlyn and Ann's oral and written L1 and L2 language competence and development. In Chapter 4, I concluded that the two students exhibited more similarities than difference in the level of proficiency in all language assessment tasks. In particular Kaitlyn and Ann were able to read high frequency words while struggling with decoding in L1. There were no attempts to read or retell through writing in the reading comprehensions section, but was able to listen and retell a story with some coherence in L1. However, the results for L2 were mostly the same; both Ann and Kaitlyn were able to decode and comprehend through listening and reading. By the end of the school year, both students differences emerged in their decoding and listening and reading comprehension in both oral and written L1 and L2. The most important similarity was that English was the dominant language and they continued to perform at a higher level in L2 than L1, despite the public school's designation that L1 was the primary language, allowing each to be designated as an English Language Learner.

**Vietnamese (L1) Assessments.** At the end of first grade, Kaitlyn outperformed Ann in all of the reading assessments with the exception of the reading comprehension section (see Table 6.1). Kaitlyn improved dramatically in percentage for sight word reading and decoding abilities in comparison to the beginning of the school year (see Table 4.1) while continuing to acquire the letter naming and sound skills. She read and decoded two sets of different words for benchmark 1 and 3. The list from benchmark 1 was the same from the beginning of the first research year while benchmark 3 list was different, with words reflecting an increase in level of difficulty as students aged and progressed to the end of the school year. For the high frequency word list, Kaitlyn progressed to reading the words rather than sounding it out letter by letter. For example, instead of sounding the word /ba/ (father in Southern Vietnamese dialect) as / bô-a-ba/, Kaitlyn read /ba/. She also used self-correction strategies during sounding words that had diacritic marks. The high frequency target word was /còn/ (also) where she read aloud, /con/ (I) and then self-corrected with the appropriate accent mark. Most errors had to do with omitting or mispronouncing the accent marks. Another set of errors occurred with L2 language transfer where the target word was /nào/ (any) and Kaitlyn read /now/ with a rise in tone as oppose to a fall in tone represented by the diacritic mark (ˆ) above the letter (a) or the target word was /đây/ (this) and she read /day/ without paying attention to the vowel (â). She was able to decode words that had CVC combinations and consonant blends that are specific to Vietnamese orthography such as –nh (những/the) or –ng (người/people).

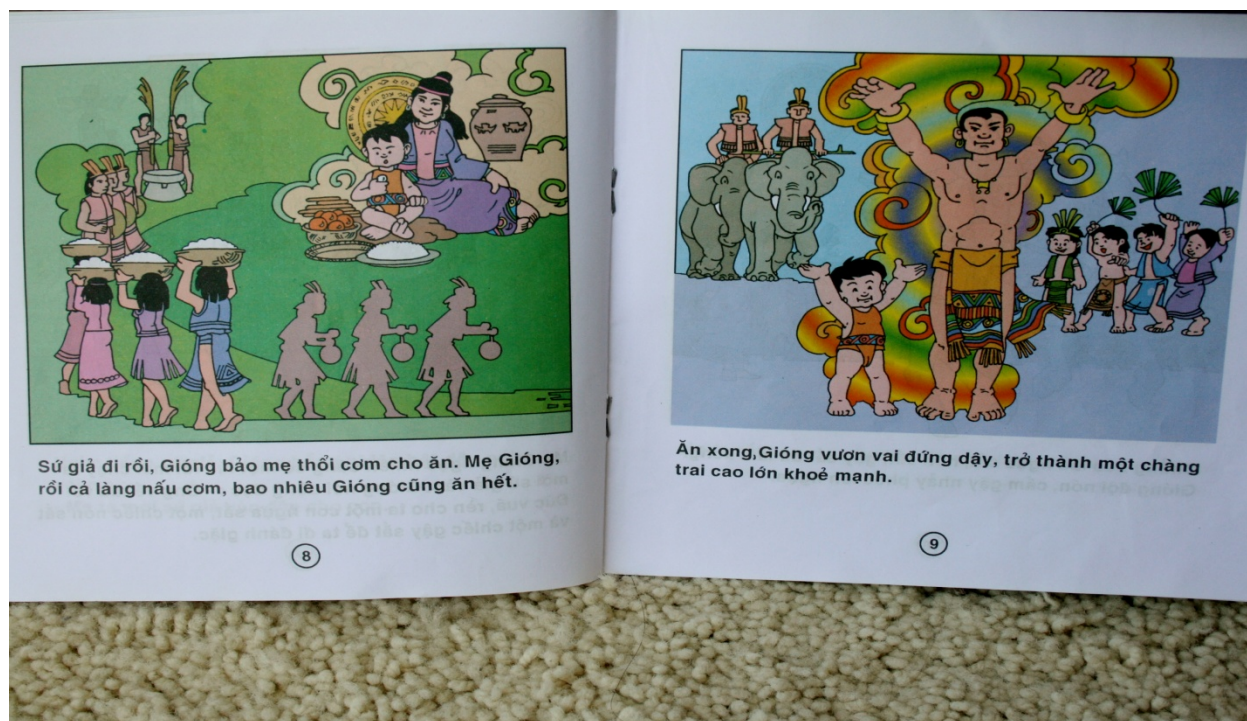
Table 6.1—End of first grade performance on Vietnamese reading assessments

Assessments	Possible Number Correct	Number Correct		% Correct	
		<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>	<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>
Letter Names	23	23	2	100	9
Letter Sounds	29	23	2	79	7
High Frequency Words					
Benchmark 1 Words	30	26	9	87	30
Benchmark 3 Words	30	21	7	70	23
Decodable Words					
Benchmark 1 Words	30	27	1	90	3
Benchmark 3 Words	30	20	4	67	13
Listening Comprehension	24	10	12	42	50
Oral Retell	(4)	(2)	(3)		
LC Questions	(20)	(8)	(9)		
Reading Comprehension	24	0	0	0	0
Writing Retell	(4)	(0)	(0)		
RC Questions	(20)	(0)	(0)		

Ann improved, but not at the same level as Kaitlyn, in her ability to decode oral and written Vietnamese. Her improvement can only be attributed to the continued use of oral language in her interactions at home. She was not able to produce letter sounds and minimally named letters, but was able to recognize some high frequency words. She accurately read common words without accent marks such as *ba* (father), *em* (baby), *con* (I) or *ra* (out). When

she got to a word that she could not decode, due to the lack of letter sound ability, she would replace it with common words that had similar initial consonant sounds with no accent marks such as instead of target word, /rôi/ (and), Ann would read /rau/ (vegetables) or another target word, /cũng/ (also) and she would read /con/ (I). Ann’s minimal exposure to written Vietnamese at home explained the low level of improvement in recognizing site words and decoding words when reading.

Figure 6.1 provides a text example of a listening comprehension narrative story in Vietnamese that Kaitlyn and Ann listened to and responded with reading comprehension questions. The passage from the book, “Chuyện Ông Gióng” written by Trình Bày Quang Lân, had age 6 or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level words, sentences and paragraphs. Students made cultural connections after listening to the folk legend story theme. Children in Vietnam often read stories that depict a hero from history and learn about the moral and values he or she modeled through their efforts to save the country. The illustrations provide a visual representation of the storyline, which was appropriate for children who were at the decoding stage and need the additional help with text comprehension. The story contained appropriate vocabulary words that challenged Kaitlyn and Ann’s thinking while containing a plot with a moral lesson at the end.



**Figure 6.1**—Vietnamese listening comprehension passage

Both students were able to get through the listening portion and to basically retell in L1 Vietnamese what happened to the main character, *Gióng*. However, they were not able to fully read and comprehend the text, partially due to their decoding level and oral language skills. Figure 6.2-6.3 provide examples of Kaitlyn and Ann’s oral retelling. I wrote down exactly what was stated. Kaitlyn retold the story, using a combination of complete and fragmented sentences. She identified the main character and setting. She codeswitched when she could not find the

right word in Vietnamese to articulate her thinking. She did not know how to state “freeze and live” in L1, so used L2 to help her translate. In Chapter 5, this emerged as a strategy Kaitlyn used in Vietnamese Sunday school during the school year to help her learn written L1. Her subject-verb-object word ordering was appropriately used to describe what happened to *Gióng* throughout the story. She did not make the connection that *Gióng* was born with special powers that was going to be used to fight off the enemy as he grew up. The enemy tried to capture his country so the king commissioned his mother to sacrifice her son for a greater calling to save the region. She graciously gave up *Gióng* to the king and the country after raising and nourishing him with love and food. His power was used to fight off the enemy and he became a hero not by his might, but by his loyalty to his country and people as a whole. Kaitlyn did not capture this moral lesson clearly, compared to Ann. She focused more on the written Vietnamese language structure in her retelling as opposed to showing her text comprehension. Given her status as a beginning second language learner who is processing two languages and negotiating form and meaning across both languages, this performance is understandable. Kaitlyn, as we have seen in chapter 5, uses her metalinguistic awareness from L2 to help her learn L1.

Mẹ có bé tên là Giông. Giông không biết nói được. Giông biết cười. Giông xẻ ngựa cái freeze lửa. Live in Phù Đổng.

*The mother has a baby name Giông. Giông does not know how to speak. Giông knows how to smile. Giông will horse the freeze fire. Live in Phù Đổng.*

**Figure 6.2**—B3 Kaitlyn’s oral retell of Vietnamese listening comprehension story

Cultural artifacts such as stories that relate Confucius teachings to the character and plot development are used in Vietnam today and in the Vietnamese community in the United States. Such stories are commonly told orally rather than to have children read. Ann’s parents afforded her the opportunity by having secondary interactions with the 1.0 generation elders. She developed her listening and speaking oral language ability through folk stories told by her grandmother. In Figure 6.3, although Ann was unable to recall specific names of the character and setting, she focused on the story development. She did not use the Vietnamese word order accurately, had fragmented sentences and mispronounced words with incorrect accents. But, she understood the main idea and lesson of the story in her retelling. She connected with the story.

Thàng mà nó nhỏ thì mẹ nó nui nó. Rồi cái thàng kia nó là ai mà đi đánh giặc cho cái nướng. Rồi cái thàng đi em bé đi thì cái thàng đó ăn nhiều. Rồi cho grow up và đi đánh giặc với lợi cho mẩu sắt, cái kại sắt. Rồi cho ngựa sắt. Thì cái nay nó cho bỏ lửa và đánh giặc.

*The little young boy was raised by his mother. Then the other boy, I don’t know who, went to fight for his country. Then the little baby boy ate a lot. Then he grow up and went to fight in the battle with the iron, the iron sword. Then with the iron horse. Then this he threw fire and battle.*

**Figure 6.3**—B3 Ann’s oral retell of L1 Vietnamese listening comprehension story

Ann codeswitched once for the words “grow up” and appropriately placed it in the correct SVO word order while Kaitlyn did not. Kaitlyn stated, “Live in Phù Đổng” instead of

“Giống lived in Phù Đổng” or said, “Giong xẻ ngựa cái freeze lửa” (Giong will horse the freeze fire.) instead of “Giống xẻ use the ngựa to freeze lửa” (Giống will use the horse to freeze the fire.). She was developing the grammar skills in Vietnamese Sunday school while Ann used her oral language skills to retell the story with more accurate language structure. Kaitlyn’s Vietnamese was emerging. Ann slightly scored higher on the listening comprehension questions compared to Kaitlyn. Neither attempted to read the text, despite further probing. Neither was sufficiently comfortable with L1 Vietnamese reading fluency to read the text aloud. This compromised their reading comprehension of the passage.

**English (L2) Assessments.** As was true at the beginning of the year (see Table 4.2), Kaitlyn and Ann were comparable with reading and decoding the L2 English high frequency word lists (see Table 6.2). They began Grade 1 with strong decoding skills and maintained it throughout the school year. However, Kaitlyn codeswitched to L1 Vietnamese during the letter sound task for the letters r, n, m, l, c and b. There were no patterns of codeswitching from the list of letters in order to draw any conclusion. However, the strategy to codeswitch and straddling between L1 and L2 was common in Vietnamese Sunday school. Huynh provided Kaitlyn the physical space to interact with her as the teacher and with Kaitlyn’s peers, using a mixture of L1 and L2 for the purpose of translating and developing metalinguistic awareness. Lorenz and Croft, precisely because they enacted their curriculum in synch with district expectations (i.e., English only) and, no doubt, because they had little Vietnamese expertise, did not provide an environment in which Kaitlyn and Ann could flexibly move between both languages to make meaning.

Table 6.2—End of the year performance on English reading assessments

Assessments	Possible Number Correct	Number Correct		% Correct	
		<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>	<i>Kaitlyn</i>	<i>Ann</i>
Letter Names	26	26	26	100	100
Letter Sounds	26	16	26	62	100
High Frequency Words					
Benchmark 1 Words	30	30	30	100	100
Benchmark 3 Words	30	30	30	100	100
Decodable Words					
Benchmark 1 Words	30	30	29	100	97
Benchmark 3 Words	30	30	30	100	100
Listening Comprehension	24	22	17	92	71
Oral Retell	(4)	(4)	(3)		
LC Questions	(20)	(18)	(14)		
Reading Comprehension	24	23	19	96	79
Writing Retell	(4)	(4)	(3)		
RC Questions	(20)	(19)	(16)		

Kaitlyn surpassed Ann by nearly 20 percent in both listening and reading comprehension tasks at the end of grade one. This end of year index of L2 English competence is consistent

with the progress in L2 that I observed throughout the school year from the classroom observations and teacher interview responses. L2 English was becoming the dominant language as she became a skilled reader and writer in the classroom. Kaitlyn continued using what she learned in all three contexts—home, Vietnamese Sunday School and public school to support her advancement in the oral and written L2 modes. Figure 6.4 depicts Kaitlyn listening to the same story administered at the beginning of the school year; she was asked to retell what she heard and understood. She used accurate syntax and vocabulary to retell clearly. The sentences were expanded with details that were appropriate to the story sequence. She described the literacy elements such as character, setting and sequencing. She used appropriate beginning, middle and end of story elements to describe her understanding of the plot and overall story development. Kaitlyn displayed an increased level of confidence and engagement with retelling, which was characteristic of a skilled reader. Some of these skills may be transferring to her L1 Vietnamese reading development as she showed an increase in her intentions to retell after listening to a story in Figure 6.2, compared to the “no attempt” response at the beginning of first grade. This is an example of reading skill transfer as oppose to language transfer. Retelling is a form of language rehearsal that assists second language learners in becoming more metalinguistically aware.

In the beginning of the story, Speedy and Zip were playing tag. And then a fishing net came when Speedy was swimming in his tank and Speedy did not get out of the way and the net picked him up. Um. They put the Speedy in the bag and people brought him home. When they brought him home, he was worried he was taken inside where there were no fishes and the weeds. And then they saw...he saw a fish splashing inside the tank and then he saw that it was his friend, Zip. And then after that and then when he saw his friend Zip, he saw that he wasn't moving and when he started moving, they started swimming together in the new tank. The end.

**Figure 6.4**—B3 Kaitlyn's oral retell of L2 English reading comprehension story

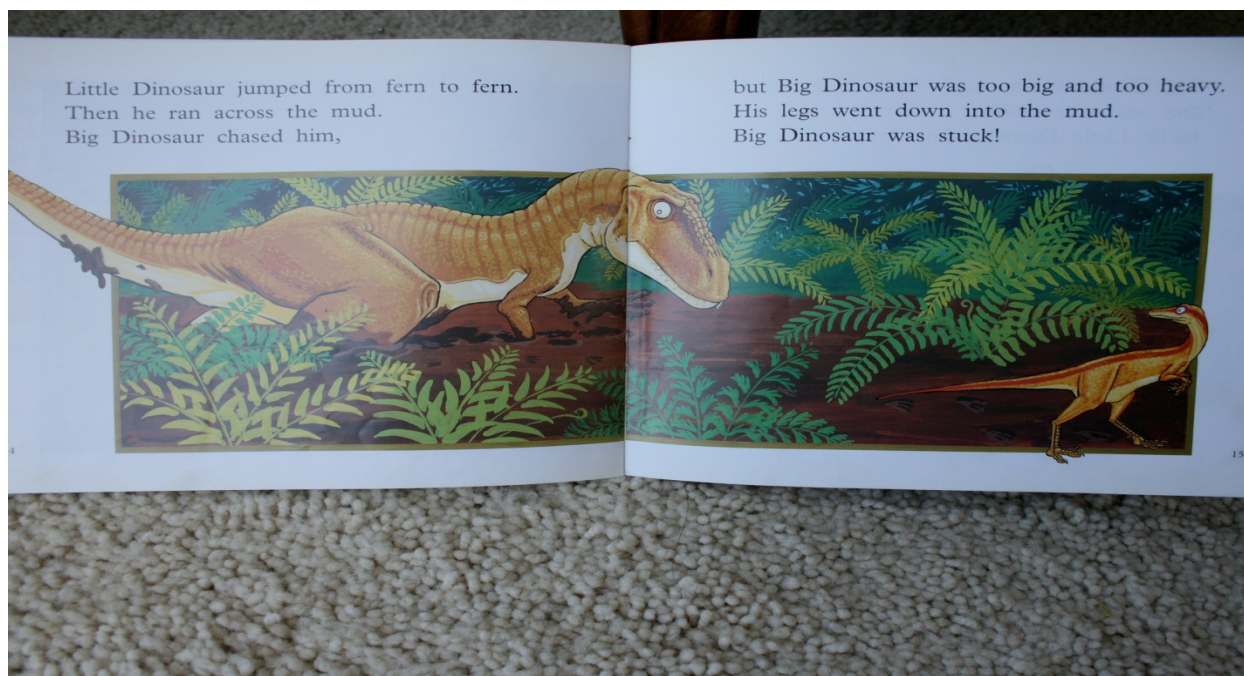
In Figure 6.5, Ann demonstrates that she was not comprehensive in her retelling of the story sequence. She omitted details that led to the main problem of the story which was that a family caught Zip and took him away from his friend, Speedy, and put it in their fish tank. Zip was lonely and sad, so laid lifeless at the bottom of the fish tank. Speedy got caught by the net next and was brought into the tank where he saw his friend not moving. He swam to the bottom of the tank to rescue Zip, but it turned out that he was fine, he just needed to see his friend again. Ann understood the main idea of the story, but was not able to articulate the lessons of friendship. However, she was able to listen to the story with minimal difficulty by the end of first grade. Her responses to the listening comprehension were brief without specific accounts from the story. She received 71% on those tasks compared 75% at the beginning of the school year. The decrease may be due to her not acquiring the reading comprehension skills for first grade and lack of continued oral language development with minimal affordances as observed in Chapter 5. Ann displayed cultural shyness that could possibly impede her from voicing herself during literacy activities where interaction with the teachers and peers were needed to develop L2 oral and written competence. On the other hand, Kaitlyn scored 92%, which was an increase from 79%. This increase was most likely driven by a combination of factors—her L1 oral language development in the Vietnamese Sunday school, her ELM classroom literacy activities and interactions from home. The whole group interaction around recall, reread, recite and

rewrite affordances that allowed Kaitlyn to enact metalinguistic awareness in both L1 and L2 in the Sunday School may well have been the most “active ingredient” in promoting this growth.

Speedy was the first to get caught by the net. Then Zip. When Speedy got in the bag, he had nowhere to hide. When he got into the water, there was the rock. Zip was laying down the tank really long. Speedy move Zip around and around and then finally Zip and Speedy played together again.

**Figure 6.5**—B3 Ann’s oral retell of L2 English reading comprehension story

The students read aloud an L2 English reading comprehension story called, “In the Days of the Dinosaurs: The Dinosaur Chase” written by Hugh Price (Figure 6.7) that was the same as the beginning of the school year. Similar to the L1 Vietnamese listening comprehension text, illustrations were added context to allow first graders to comprehend the story better. If they struggled with decoding words, pictures could support their recall of words and its meaning. In Figures 6.8-6.9, Ann and Kaitlyn provided the writing retell after reading aloud the story. They used good writing conventions to show their understanding of the story. There were complete sentences with minimal spelling errors. Ann improved individually over the course of one year while scoring below Kaitlyn in both the writing retell and response to the reading comprehension questions. Ann was able to recall details in her writing that lend to her overall understanding of how the story developed. She identified the characters and simple story sequence. However, the main idea was not summarized accurately because she did not include why the little dinosaur decided to come out of the hole and be chased by the big dinosaur again. By wanting to chase after the lizard, little dinosaur forgot that he was endangering himself. If the big dinosaur wasn’t caught in the mud, little dinosaur would have been eaten alive. Ann did not show what she learned from the story through her writing while Kaitlyn provided additional detail that was important to the story conclusion.



**Figure 6.6**—English reading comprehension passage

In their writing samples, the students exhibited control of the overall writing mechanics that supported the meaning of the story. However, Kaitlyn continued to outperform Ann in L2 English with reading summarizing and inferring. Her writing was logically sequenced and the paragraph was cohesive, with a beginning, middle and ending transition words. She provided details and the connections it had with the characters and plot. Because her writing was clear,

Little dinosaur was in a hole. Big dinosaur was waiting for little dinosaur to come out the hole. And then a lizard came to release in the sun. And then little dinosaur got chase by big dinosaur.

**Figure 6.7**—B3 Ann’s writing retell of L2 English reading comprehension story

Kaitlyn was able to articulate the major ideas and events in the story. She improved from the beginning of the year (Figure 4.5) where spelling errors and incomplete sentences impeded her ability to comprehend the overall storyline. Classroom observation in Chapter 5 indicated that Kaitlyn had affordances and interactions that allowed her to express her thinking through appropriate writing conventions. Activities such as grammar lessons gave Kaitlyn practice with using proper sentence structure. In both Croft and Lorenz’s classrooms, it was common to have grammar lessons such as dictation where both students had opportunities to learn writing conventions. But, the affordances surfaces only when Kaitlyn and Ann use those tools to express or communicate their thinking. In the writing retell assessment, they had the opportunity to use those conventions to make meaning. For Kaitlyn, it was also reinforced in the Vietnamese Sunday with the *Chính Tả* (word dictation) activities. She had the additional space weekly to interact with peers and Huynh, using metalinguistic strategies such as language rehearsal and play during the word dictation time. They interacted as a whole group to develop L1 written

Vietnamese spelling conventions. The affordances allowed both her L1 and L2 oral and written abilities to emerge.

Consistent with the end of the year sample, Ann's progress in writing was slow throughout the first grade observation and with the writing assessment results. In Figure 4.6, Ann wrote one run-on sentence to describe the story she read and although, she improved, she was still focused on developing her writing conventions rather than to write for meaning and communicating. She improved on her spelling but, not enough to show clear understanding of the story. Even so, she was more comfortable expressing herself through writing than speaking in Croft's class, most likely. Her parents supported this finding by stating that Ann likes to express herself with her cousins and sibling, but with adults and an authoritative figure, she would regress and rather keep to herself. Croft did provide oral language activities as a whole class to encourage all student participation, but Ann often would not participate.

Big Dinosaur was chasing Little Dinosaur. Little Dinosaur went into a hole so Big Dinosaur couldn't eat him. When Little Dinosaur saw a lizard he went out of the hole to eat the lizard but Big Dinosaur chased him. Big Dinosaur chased Little Dinosaur into the trees. Little Dinosaur ran across mud but Big Dinosaur didn't get to eat Little Dinosaur. The End.

**Figure 6.8**—B3 Kaitlyn's writing retell of L2 English reading comprehension story

### **Teachers' Views on Classroom L1 and L2 Language Learning at the End of the Year**

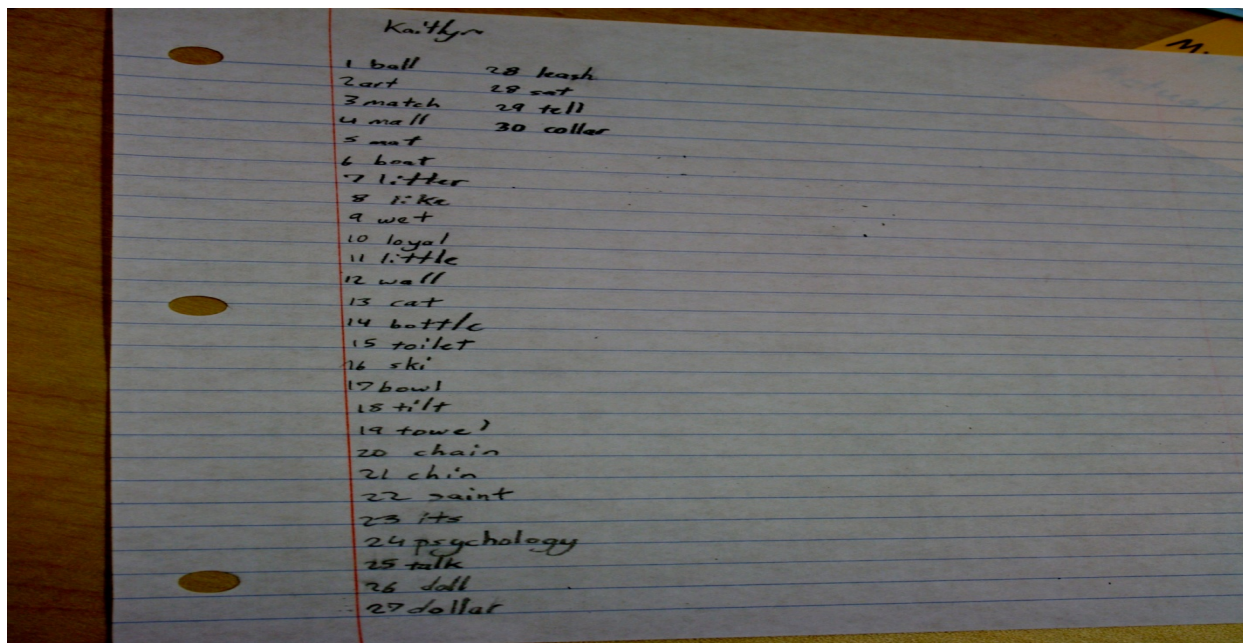
At the end of the school year, I used the same set of interview questions as the beginning of the year, but added a section on teacher integration of students' cultural experiences with instruction. It included four questions that asked teachers to describe the role of the students' culture in implementing curriculum and providing affordances that allow them to use language to communicate and make meaning. In this section, I use the teachers' responses to further query the hypothesis that with additional instruction in L1 Vietnamese and the affordances and interactions provided, Kaitlyn would outperform Ann in both L1 and L2 oral and written languages. From the responses, I wanted to understand the affordances provided in the classroom to assist Ann and Kaitlyn to develop, employ, and improve their competence in L2 towards the end of the school year. I was hoping to be able to tease out whether any differences discussed with regard to their relative competence might be traceable to Kaitlyn's additional exposure to L1 and L2 language interaction and her metalinguistic awareness in Vietnamese Sunday school. Having established the nature of home language experience for both students (recall that Kaitlyn had to do more practice at home due to Vietnamese Sunday school projects in which she had to use L1 more with family and members of the community). I expected the teacher responses to support the classroom observations from Chapter 5 in better understanding how classroom activities provide students the physical space and language tools to make meaning with text and mediate classroom culture.

**Lorenz on Kaitlyn.** According to Lorenz, Kaitlyn became more social inside and outside of the classroom as the year progressed. She noticed at the beginning of the year that Kaitlyn was very shy and spoke to her mom to try and understand why she would not speak up or participate in classroom discussions. She found out that her shyness was due both her maturity level and that it was part of the Vietnamese culture to not voice their thinking in school.

Lorenz encouraged Kaitlyn in pair-share and small group environments where she, as the teacher, was on the outside and only Kaitlyn and her peers could participate. This worked and Kaitlyn flourished with her oral language competence, primarily with her peers. Lorenz used informal observation, end of year classroom assessment and district benchmarks to determine that Kaitlyn would transition out of ELL status in second or third grade because she was becoming proficient in English. Her reading and writing abilities surpassed all her classmates. She was reading above grade level at 160 words per minute and expanded her receptive vocabulary by reading a variety of texts. In Figure 6.10, we see Kaitlyn working with a peer to spell as many multi-syllabic words as possible. She wrote the most words, including items such as “psychology”. It was a challenging word to decode and spell. She provide other spelling patterns She used her spelling skills and vocabulary knowledge to express herself clearly through writing.

Lorenz: She is interested in understanding what she is reading and try to achieve the classroom goals for reading. She tries hard to do all of the reading skills. She is able to comprehend what she is reading and has become more advanced. She wants to read chapter books instead of picture books because she wants to imagine her words and draw her own pictures rather than to rely on other’s illustration.

Kaitlyn became a more confident reader and writer, using L2 oral and written English. Lorenz attributed her advancement to the ongoing classroom activities that allowed for additional language practice, discussion and cultural connection with the heritage language. In first grade, Kaitlyn was engaged in more oral than written language during classroom interactions. Lorenz believed that students developed oral first and then transition to written language use as they become better readers and writers. For Lorenz, it was small groups or partner work that mattered most. Students learned different ways to interact to help them transition from L1 to L2, by using their metalinguistic awareness in L2 English through activities such as language play and rehearsal. Grammar lessons involved the interaction between Kaitlyn’s metalinguistic awareness, the language arts curriculum, and the peers and teacher’s responses. It was a triangular language affordance that allowed Kaitlyn to experiment, create and question its functional use. As students progressed to writing activities, knowledge of language structure helped them better express their thoughts and critiques of various text, including classroom discourse.



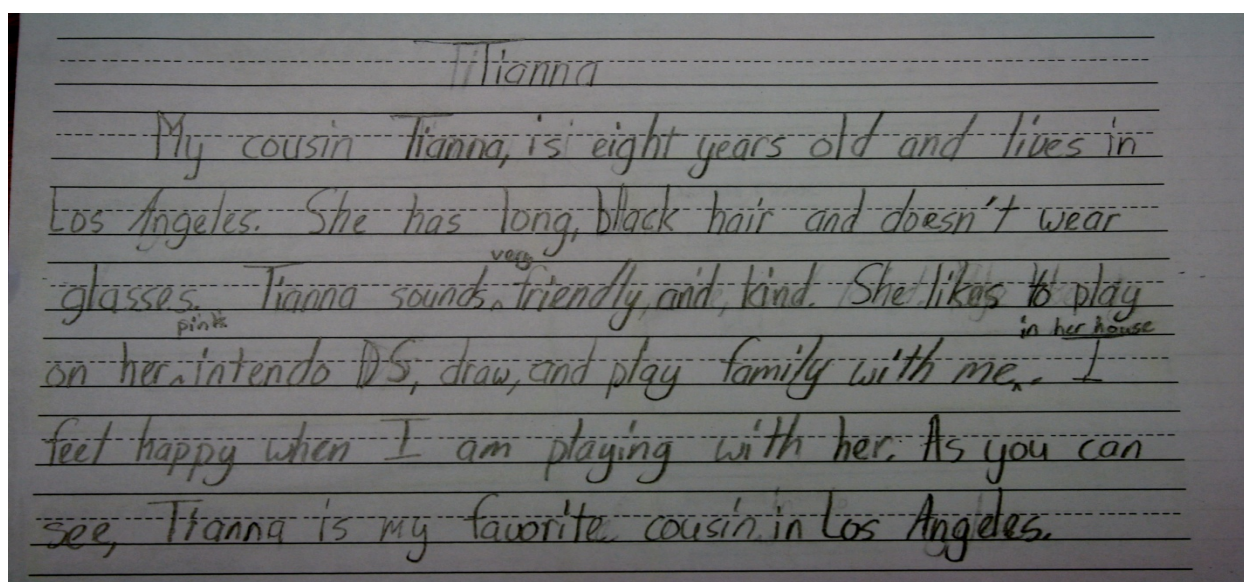
**Figure 6.9**—Kaitlyn’s L2 multi-syllabic word spelling

In Figure 6.11, Lorenz provided a writing sample from the end of the school year that demonstrated Kaitlyn’s transition to L2 written competence. When asked to describe her writing abilities, Lorenz enthusiastically responded:

Lorenz: At the beginning of the year, she had simple sentences that were incomplete thoughts with spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors. By the end of the school year, she has improved tremendously with her writing. She paints a real picture of what she’s trying to tell about. She is using transitional words. She is sequencing in the correct order. She is detail oriented and is specific with her word choice.

The writing sample in 6.11 shows Kaitlyn’s attention to details with further descriptive words whereby, expanding her thinking. For example, she interjected the paragraph with detail words like “very”, “in her house”, and “pink”. After her description of Tiana, I had a clear picture of who her cousin was. Kaitlyn provided her cousin’s age, where she lived, what she looked like and who she was as a person. She went on to say what Tiana liked to do and how it made her feel while doing it. I was convinced that Tiana was a good person and that she deserved to be chosen as the best cousin ever. The movement from expressing herself orally to writing has been supported by the affordances of physical space and objects in the classroom. Lorenz stated that for ELLs, students and peers worked with her to use “realia” such as cultural objects, brought from home, where they were able to touch, feel and smell prior to writing. This allowed them to discuss what they observed and to provide detailed accounts of their experiences through writing. This form of language play activity offered ELLs a space to discuss and experiment with language. According to Lorenz, students got to work among themselves as a group with minimal teacher input. The interactions were rich with language awareness in form and function as

illustrated in Chapter 5 classroom observations. Kaitlyn socialized her peers into her cultural world, which was filled with norms and expectation from the Vietnamese heritage. In return, by being in a small group without the teacher at the center of knowledge creation, gave Kaitlyn a chance to overcome her shyness. Although being a member of a group and showing respect to authority figures such as Lorenz, was at the core of the Vietnamese cultural traditions, Kaitlyn was socialized by the Western traditions of independent thinking and ways of being while working cooperatively with peers to overcome her shyness. This compromise allowed Kaitlyn to communicate knowledge and create meaning with her peers. Lorenz provided a classroom environment that allowed language to be played, rehearsed and repeated orally and through writing. These forms of interaction were, most likely, an important, perhaps the most important, part of Kaitlyn’s metalinguistic awareness development in L1 and L2—at least to the degree that it was supported in the L2 classroom.



**Figure 6.10**—Kaitlyn’s L2 narrative writing

The interview questions probed for information on the teacher’s observation and assessment of students’ use of L1 while learning L2. Lorenz stated that she did not know Kaitlyn’s level of fluency in L1 Vietnamese because she did not assess or access the form during literacy activities. However, she was aware of the importance of bridging her prior linguistic knowledge to what she is learning in class. She encouraged the parents to share what they do at home to the class so that it would give Kaitlyn the added context to read and write about, using both L1 Vietnamese, when possible, and L2 English. She felt that acknowledgment of different cultural assets needed to be followed up with actual activities that embraced students’ differences while continuing to develop what is similar in both L1 Vietnamese and L2 English. Lorenz described her intentions with classroom activities as follows in working with ELLs:

Lorenz: I give a lot of time for practice, using visuals that integrate their cultural experiences. Culture is very important because we live in such a mix culture. We need to learn how to respect each other socially and academically. We

work hard on the class culture so that students feel safe to share and to respect their classmates. They buddy up once a week so that they can see new games they could play with each other and to learn English. During story time, I incorporate different kinds of life aspects and try to have things that are personable to them.

Although Lorenz continued creating situations that promoted the use of L1 while learning L2 through the school year, she remained conflicted with not knowing how to target specific language forms and function for improvement. This is wholly predictable in a situation in which she was facing multiple languages, variable background knowledge and experiences, multiple literacy levels, and different skill profiles in a single classroom. Lorenz acknowledged this dilemma throughout each interview intervals. She would gesture frustration and apprehension as she discussed her goals and classroom context. She made comments such as:

Lorenz: I don't give them access to their primary language formally because we have so many languages in the classroom and I don't know what the negative responses to English would be. Life is not that compartmentalized.

We ended the interview with Lorenz reflecting on Kaitlyn's overall experiences with learning and using L2 as an ELL. She was confident that Kaitlyn would continue to advance in L2 English with her listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. She indicated that she would make the effort to support her transition out of ELL status either in grades 2 or 3 if she progressed in the same manner as first grade. Kaitlyn excelled in all aspects of school curriculum and standards. Her competence in L2 oral and written language surpassed all of Lorenz's expectations for an ELL student. She attributed Kaitlyn's achievement to the heightened awareness of her abilities to communicate, interact, and take risks with her peers and teacher, using language.

As a reader and writer, Kaitlyn was confident and self-motivated. As an ELL, she was encouraged from home to take charge in connecting what she knew about the Vietnamese culture and traditions through her daily home practices to her classroom practices. Kaitlyn understood how to use what she knew and to communicate clearly orally and in writing. As the year progressed, Kaitlyn grasped the basic components and structure of L2 English and used this knowledge to express her thinking, both in speech and writing. Lorenz believed that her relationship with Kaitlyn grew as a result of her efforts to connect with the family either academically with meeting standards or socially during school cultural events. Without consistent communication with the home, Lorenz stated that she would not know how to make the cultural connection and better understand Kaitlyn's competence with both L1 Vietnamese and L2 English.

**Croft on Ann.** According to Croft, Ann made connections with her friends socially while continuing to display some shyness when sharing aloud during whole group discussion. At the beginning of the school year, Ann was quietly communicating, interacting only when called upon. She would come to Croft to ask questions or to discuss something individually, but was apprehensive due to fear of being punished if she did not get things right as noted from

Croft's interview responses. Ann was hard on her self-esteem if she was unable to correct her own oral language errors. At the end of the school year, she volunteered a lot more with increase in confidence with her oral language ability. She remained at the early-advanced level as an ELL status. Croft stated that Ann was at above reading level in L2 English. She was reading at 80 words per minute and had strong fluency skills. Ann was able to spell words with simple word families. She could easily read sight words.

Croft did not include L1 Vietnamese in her instruction and assessment to understand Ann's progress in L2 English because of the California prohibition against bilingual instruction. However, she allowed Ann to use her L1 when she needed help with making meaning with L2 English text or in communicating with her Vietnamese peers during group activities. Croft frequently paired same-language peers so that they could assist each other during literacy activities. She encouraged Ann to connect her primary language experiences when socializing with her peers and teachers in pairs, small or whole group. This would allow her to further practice L1 Vietnamese while learning L2 English in the public elementary classroom. Croft had awareness of Ann's language errors in L2 and tried to determine if it was due to Ann's fluency level in both L1 and L2. When asked about what Croft used to determine Ann's L2 English proficiency, she responded with an example of her observation of Ann's specific oral use of written language in the classroom:

Croft:           When she's quiet, I make it a point to come to her. I have not heard her say /hop-ed/ or omit the /s/ on the noun as her language does not include it. Ann uses Vietnamese to describe the name of her country. I have no idea what her oral language and reading level is, but it seems like she knows how to use Vietnamese to help her describe things.

Croft had some awareness of the Vietnamese grammar structure. It was enough for her to notice, at the end of the school year, that Ann was making fewer L2 spelling and pronunciation errors. In Chapter 5, Figure 5.10, I observed a read aloud activity where the whole class rehearsed the sound, /sh/, in noun words such as Sheila, shell or shape. Prior to the lesson, Croft briefly asked students to recall how to make plural nouns. This was a way for Ann to tap into her prior linguistic experience to make the accurate grammar notation. In that particular literacy activity, the whole class rehearsed language, which was a form of affordance. It was not only just the specific lesson on consonant blends (/sh/), the use of language rehearsal, or the whole class participating that afforded Ann the opportunity to learn and use L2. It was the relationship between using language (an artifact) to rehearse (an instructional tool) around a group of L2 speakers that were becoming a community of learners. Language, enriched with cultural and historical values, was an important tool for Croft to use with her students so that they can relate to the classroom environment with its standards and expectations. The interactions between students, language and the curriculum provide one window into Croft and Ann's effort to relate to school space and to make meaning. Croft stated that her embrace of Ann's L1 Vietnamese language experiences require her to be aware of the culture and to connect the home to school. As a teacher, it was her role to help her ELL students move between their home culture to the classroom culture. This meant that she has to be aware of the L1 not only in form, but how ELLs use it during literacy activities.

Croft used the classroom physical space to group Ann, along with other EL learners for language practice and reinforcement. Students worked together to monitor each other's L2 English competence with Croft mediating on the side. When asked further about Croft's language arts and the types of activities she used to develop students' oral and written language skills throughout the school year, she responded with a list of regular interactions that afford ELLs the metalinguistic awareness:

Croft: Students read the story, ask questions and give comments to make connections which help them remember. Learning to do that is a good skill. We talk about text to text, self and the world. We talk about figurative language. An important tool is to connect self to text.

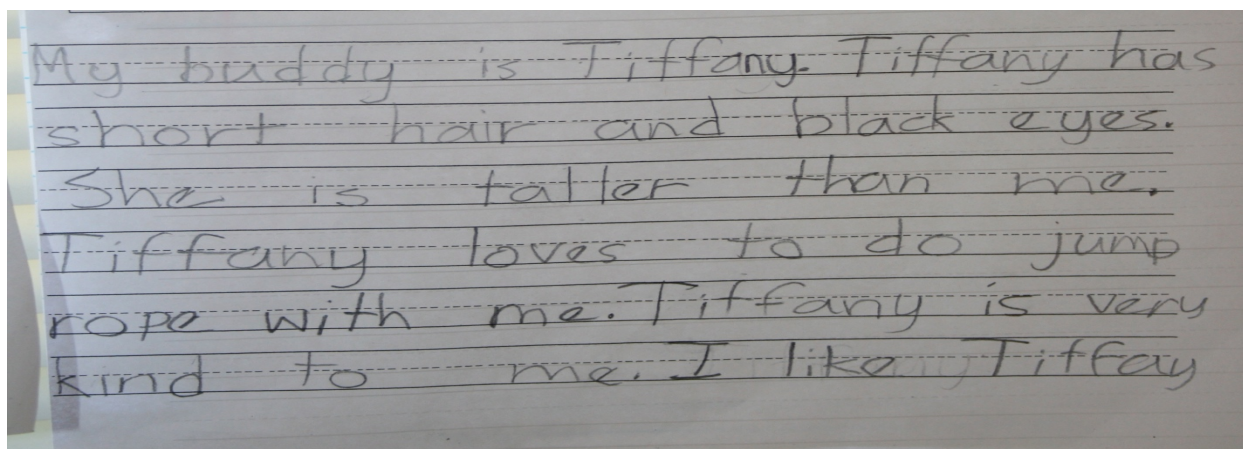
While Croft did not instruct in L1 Vietnamese, she created a classroom environment where Ann could connect her prior linguistic knowledge to talking and reading of text. This was conducted in both whole class and small group arrangement. There was frequent whole class conversations which supported the Vietnamese cultural value of learning for the good of the whole group, as referenced in Chapter 1. The teacher was at the center of the discussion leading students toward a specific curriculum standard whereby developing their oral and written language competence. It assisted Ann's oral language development while allowing her to overcome her cultural shyness. Croft believed that the classroom context should include a space for ELLs to practice, rehearse and play with attention to specific reading and writing skills. The tools and artifacts used to communicate during literacy activities required Croft to allow creativity and experimentation with language like play.

Croft: I use a lot of games for enjoyment such as vocabulary hangman activity and jeopardy angle. This was a way to get out of blending and to use whole blending and use it with sentences. I try to focus on individual development even in whole class instruction. I should do more oral language with puppetry using spoken language.

Croft tried to help ELLs play with language during game time, a practice that was rooted in her goal to further develop students' oral language skills. This moved students from oral language development to the building of reading skills. Playing and rehearsing language during whole class talk and game time made Ann more metalinguistically aware of not only L2 English, but language in general. It gave her time to practice hearing the sounds of language for decoding words and to further build her fluency skills. In reading, Croft noticed Ann's struggles were not due to language, but to lack of reading comprehension skills such as inferring. First grade standards privilege decoding, phonological awareness and word recognition over comprehension and concept development. Awareness of letter sounds and mapping grapheme-phoneme are skills that develop best orally, using both spoken and written language in her classroom. Ann was meeting first grade standards for reading with increased ability to express her metalinguistic awareness and knowledge of how the structure of L2 English functions in her interactions with peers and the teacher. Croft often made mental notes as she circulated around the class to understand where her students were at as they participate in group activities. She noticed Ann

was doing more discussing, but not leading it. She attributed this to the cultural shyness. Croft believed that with more language practice and improvement in L2 English, she would overcome the shyness. Ann needed to be more comfortable and confident with classroom local practices and culture in order to navigate the curriculum and her interactions with peers.

At the end of the school year, Croft believed that Ann was improving with her ability to socialize, using oral language and begun exercising her knowledge of written L2 English through writing. In Figure 6.12, Croft provided Ann's writing sample to show where she was at with the writing conventions and critical thinking. Ann wrote about her friend, Tiffany and described what she looked like and what she liked to do with her. She was trying to persuade the audience that Tiffany was a good friend to her because she was kind. The sentences were grammatically correct and simple. There were no transitional words and her examples were brief with minimal extension. Croft assessed her writing and stated that it was at grade level despite the brevity with her logical reasoning. She was looking at convention more than content for first grade. However, she noticed the sentences were simple towards the end of the year and attributed this to her transition from oral language competence to written in L2 English. She was still developing in the written mode.



**Figure 6.11**—Ann's L2 narrative writing

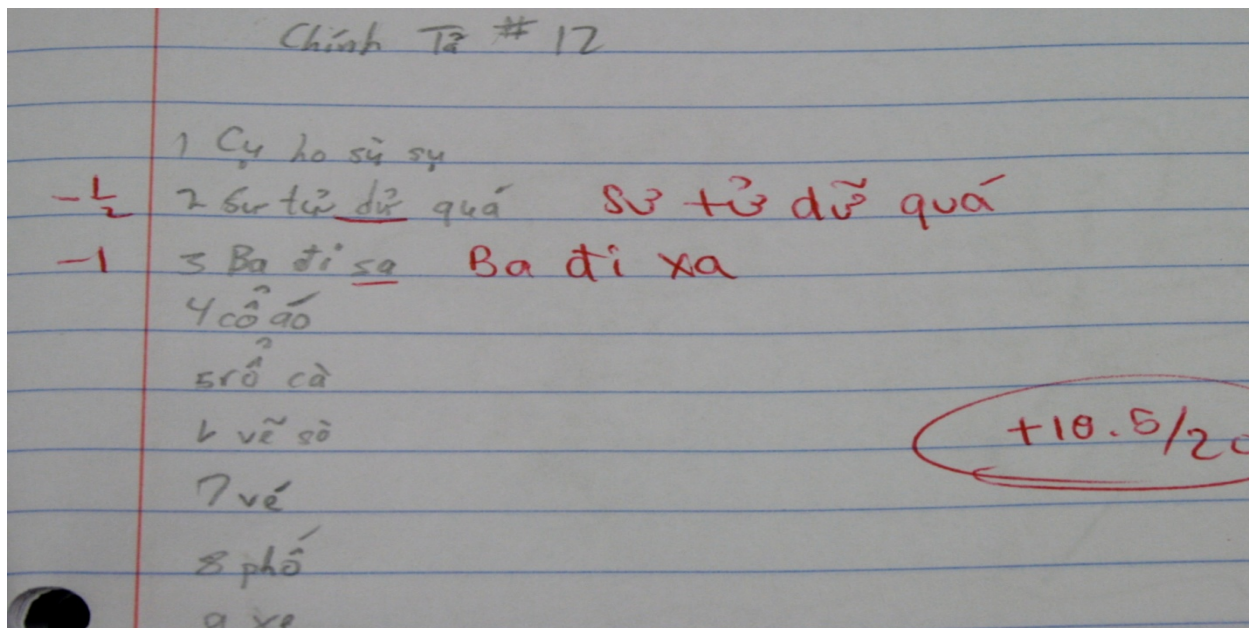
We ended the interview with questions relating to culture and its connection to instruction. Croft's response was consistent with the beginning of the year where she believed strongly that connecting classroom culture with the home culture was pertinent to Ann's learning. One primary way to connect was to involve the family members. Throughout the school year, she invited Ann's parents to participate in the classroom with projects such as "heritage doll" or community day. Parents were welcome to share their home and community experiences with the students and other parents. During open house, Ann's parents shared their holiday celebrations such as Tet or Chinese New Years. Although the parents did not volunteer in the classroom, they encouraged Ann to share what they do at home to maintain the Vietnamese heritage. Croft learned about how Ann socialized at home with her family members and that she spoke L1 Vietnamese with her elders. Croft learned from the parents that Ann had a lot of confidence with her L1 oral language competence.

**Huynh on Kaitlyn.** At the end of the Vietnamese Sunday school term, Huynh stated that Kaitlyn was friendly and social as she interacted with her peers. However, she was purposeful in using L2 English to communicate as the year progressed. It was only during whole class activity that Kaitlyn used L1 Vietnamese, which was consistent with the classroom observations in Chapter 5. She was not shy in expressing her thoughts to the whole class and with peers. This was an improvement possibly due to the influence of the public elementary classroom where participation was required to develop oral language competence. Kaitlyn was able to follow multi-step directions without much repeating. Huynh expressed frustration with ensuring the students listened to the directions in L1 Vietnamese and responding as well in the same language:

Huynh: She does speak L2 English a lot too because that's their main language. It's easier to speak L2 because they use it the majority of the time. Most of the readings are whole class and she reads the clearest and loudest.

Codeswitching occurred often throughout the school year. Although Huynh allowed, perhaps even encouraged codeswitching, it was the school's goal to have students speak and write in L1 Vietnamese. Even so, Huynh knew that these first graders were entering her class after receiving one year of kindergarten exclusively using L2 English. Huynh was not legally restricted to use either L1 or L2, so she made the classroom flexible and adapted her stance in concert with her perceptions about what the students needed in order to learn Vietnamese. She offered students the opportunity to use L2 English to translate L1 Vietnamese. This assisted Kaitlyn when she got to a word she did not know in L1 Vietnamese in expressing her thoughts.

When asked to describe Kaitlyn's L1 Vietnamese language development, Huynh noted that she was meeting all curriculum standards and did not struggle with reading and writing. In Figure 6.13-6.14, Huynh provided writing samples for a routine classroom activity for *Chỉnh Tả*. These year-end samples showing Kaitlyn's improvement in using written L1 Vietnamese through writing. In Level 1A, students were expected to spell accented words with different forms of vowel and consonant blends. Students were to write in complete sentences rather than in paragraphs. In the first sample, for the *Chỉnh Tả* activity, students listened to Huynh dictate a word or sentence aloud to the whole class, students listened to the word with heightened attention to accent and then write down what they heard. The red pen marks indicated Huynh's error notation for Kaitlyn to go back and correct. Kaitlyn's errors were typical of overall school

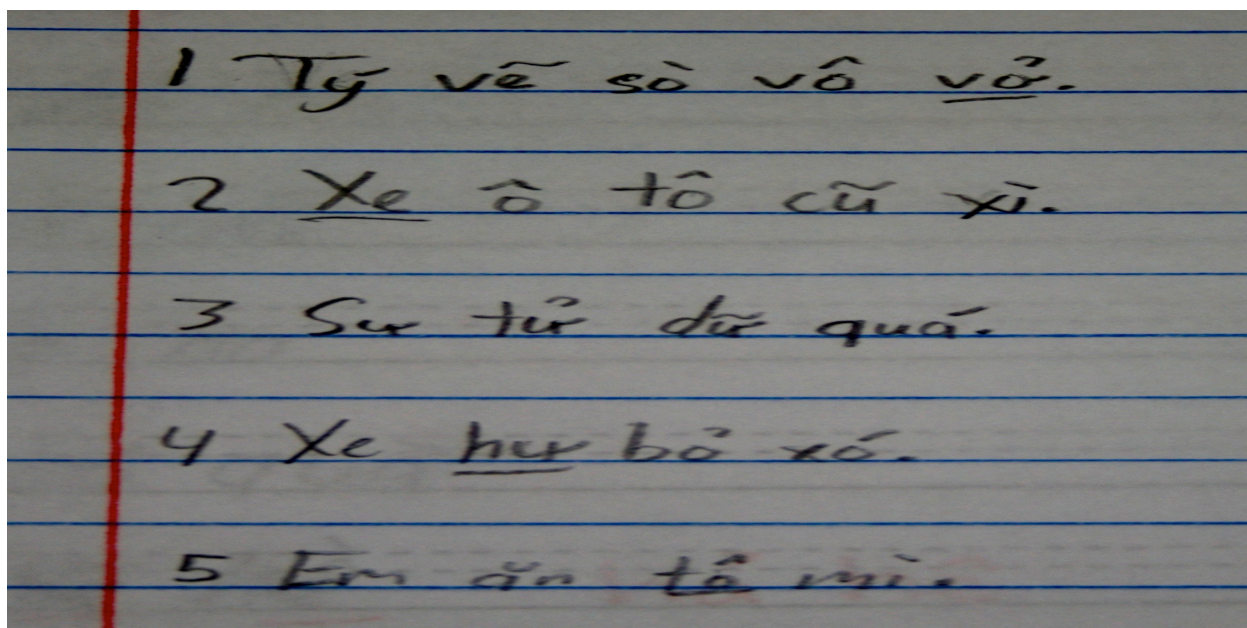


**Figure 6.12**—Kaitlyn’s L1 *chỉnh tả* (dictation) writing

Level 1A, age 6, as students learned the letter sounds and mapping it with phoneme-grapheme connections through writing. She made an error with the diacritic mark ( $\sim$ ) on top of the word, *dữ* (cruel). This diacritic mark starts out low and quickly rises in tone making it hard to pronounce with the letter-sound for /r/. Another common error found in early readers, which was often found in L2 English, was distinguishing the sounds /s/ and /x/ such as target word /xa/ and Kaitlyn writing /sa/.

Huynh: We primarily follow the workbook, but I supplement when I have extra time. There are some error patterns I noticed the students consistently making in their writing of words with the accent marks (  $\acute{\text{~}} \sim \acute{\text{~}} \grave{\text{~}}$  ). They also make errors with distinguishing the letters x/s, ă â/a , d/đ.

In Figure 6.14, Kaitlyn demonstrates that she could write clearly and accurately. She grasped the challenging task of listening to the words and accents and writing it. The sentences had predominantly two letters and one syllable, which was representative of the Vietnamese word structure. Kaitlyn was meeting the curriculum standard in Vietnamese Sunday school with simple sentence writing. She improved on listening to accent marks while making accurate letter sounds, especially with vowels ă, â, ê, ô, u, and distinguishing them with a, e, o, u. By the end of the school year, she was not mixing the letter-sounds for L1 and L2 in her writing. Huynh noted that this was a skill that a lot of her students have not mastered due to the L2 dominance at age 6.



**Figure 6.13**—Kaitlyn’s L1 sentence writing

Huynh primarily taught the class as a whole, consistent with the Vietnamese cultural tradition that teachers need to impart knowledge to students precisely because they bring more wisdom and experience to the classroom. Students listened as a whole class and responded when asked. When asked about the various instructional strategies she used to teach, Huynh stated that the format was consistent across all of the classrooms in Vietnamese Sunday school (see Chapter 1). Students were taught to conduct most lessons as a whole class through recite, repeat and rewrite activities. Memorization was a consistent strategy for all students to learn the oral and written L1 Vietnamese mode.

Huynh: We connect the meaning of the word through pictures drawn on the white board. Students see it then write it. We pronounce words and sentences aloud as a whole class often. They recall what they learn, then recite it a loud and then repeat through rewriting multiple times in their notebook. We do this exercise every class meeting.

Huynh thought that it was important to maintain the cultural tradition in the ways teachers instruct at Vietnamese Sunday school. Kaitlyn understood that paying respect to the elders meant that she spoke when spoken to and to respond when asked. There was continuity between the home culture and Vietnamese Sunday classroom. Huynh discussed the use of L2 English to help Kaitlyn learn written L1 Vietnamese. By allowing her to translate to her preferred English, which is a common strategy used by second language learners who in these conflicted (between home and school) settings, Kaitlyn was comfortable codeswitching. Since Huynh was fluent in both languages, it likely made such codeswitching more natural and more effective. Huynh found from her interactions with the students that it was easier for them to move from written L2 to written L1 rather than vice versa. This was attributed to their one-year exposure to L2 English

in kindergarten in the public elementary schools. English was becoming the dominant language of learning for most of her Sunday School, not only in the classroom conversation, but in their one on one asides and, for most, in their socialization in the larger community. Huynh struck a balance in meeting the classroom standard with its cultural traditions with where the students were at with their L1 and L2 competence. She was not restricted to teach according to Proposition 227 that ended bilingual education in California for K-12 schools. She had flexibility to move between L1 and L2 to help Kaitlyn make meaning of written L2. It was Kaitlyn who socialized her into this transfer of language structure and form for L1 and L2. Despite Huynh's every effort to get students to listen, speak, read and write only in Vietnamese, she was not successful and sometimes expressed frustration at her students' L2 English preferences, although she did, as I have discusses, exploit that disposition to help them develop L1 literacy.

We ended the interview with Huynh's responses to questions on assessment. Unlike Lorenz and Croft, she did not use conventional assessment, but relied instead on her observations of Kaitlyn's learning from her responses during whole class activities. School-wide benchmarks that aligned with the curriculum were given at the beginning and end of each semester-long sessions. In each of the benchmarks, Kaitlyn outperformed all of her classmates in the oral and written modes. Huynh stated that she developed more confidence with her reading and writing after she grasped the basic Vietnamese decoding framework. Although she still struggled with some of the letters and diacritic marks, overall, she was meeting all curriculum standards. Her socialization inside and outside of the classroom was also improving, despite her codeswitching. She knew when to use L1 and L2 to her benefit as she tried to make meaning with her surroundings by making friends and meeting all school standards. Huynh believed that Kaitlyn's parents played an important role in ensuring that she did her homework and practiced her oral and written L1 at home. She was confident that they were doing the minimum while expecting Kaitlyn to accomplish Sunday school curriculum standards. Huynh thought that the educational philosophy in Vietnamese Sunday school matched perfectly with Kaitlyn's parents whereby making cultural practices continual and consistent with Confucius values.

### **The End-of-Year Two: Competence in L1 and L2 Language Learning**

After I completed the first year of observation and assessments, I went back the following year in June to administer one round of the research-based assessments to collect additional evidence about Kaitlyn and Ann's language use. Based on what I perceived to be some shortcomings in the oral language database, I hoped to learn more about their "language in use". I knew, when I made the decision to collect these additional data, that I could not draw strong inferences from it (mainly because I did not observe in the classrooms when they were in second grade), but I went ahead with the data collection anyway, in the hope that the richer data on their language use would outweigh the lack of ongoing contextual evidence needed to adequately interpret any changes in their performance profile. Instead, I wanted to learn whether some trends that I had observed at the end of grade one—specific language improvements in form and function—extended to the end of second grade. Thus, I obtained samples of their writing and oral language use. I took samples of the writing retell by re-administering the first year reading assessment battery. Then I administered an oral language survey (a completely new task) in

which Kaitlyn and Ann responded to a set of pictures in both L1 Vietnamese and L2 English. The purpose of the oral language survey was to capture students' natural use of oral language in a less "school like task" than the set of questions used to respond to the reading and listening battery tests. I wanted to allow Ann and Kaitlyn to freely use their oral language in a more expressive than responsive mode.

### **Writing Retell From Researched Based Assessments**

In Figure 6.15, Ann did a writing retell after she read an L2 narrative story aloud. She identified the main characters and the problem of the story without a solution. She did not identify the story setting. In comparison to the end of the first year response (Figure 6.8), it did not appear that she made much improvement in her critical thinking with the story sequence. She did not include why and how the little dinosaur put himself in harms way. The little dinosaur enticed the big dinosaur by presenting himself because he wanted to chase and eat the lizard. Although her summary was on topic, her recall of the story sequence was out of order leading the reader to believe that all big dinosaur wanted to do was eat little dinosaur. The moral of the story, which was do not put yourself in harms way if you are little and to not provoke anyone in a negative way, was not included in her written description. Ann committed one simple spelling error, "go" instead of "got" and one punctuation error (not placing a comma after the word "Finally"). She continued to write simple sentences without further expansion or included a repertoire of words or vocabulary learned from second grade. This was similar to her first grade writing as well where she did use the words from the story to add context to her summary. She made minimal use of transition words, such as then or next. Without further teacher interview or classroom observations, I could not attribute her lack of improvement to classroom instruction or home interactions in L1 and L2. However, it is important to note the difference in comparison to Kaitlyn's L1 writing at the end of second grade.

Big Dinosaur was hungry. He wanted to eat little dinosaur. Big dinosaur can run fast but the trees go in the way. Finally little dinosaur got into the mud and the big dinosaur got stuck.

**Figure 6.14**—B4 Ann's writing retell of L2 reading comprehension story

Kaitlyn continued to grow in second grade in L2 reading and writing. In Figure 6.16, she accurately retold the story with clear writing conventions and critical thinking skills. She was able to articulate who the characters were, where the story took place, and a simple version of the plot. The sentences were clear and characterized by extensive use of vocabulary words, such as "forest" and "fern", that were on topic and related to the story. She used transition words appropriately such as "then", "slowly" and "luckily". There was growth compared to the end of first grade (Figure 6.9) in her recall of details and story sequence whereby allowing her to comprehend the text accurately. There was a difference in her writing with descriptive and action words. There were no spelling or punctuation errors. Overall, her writing appeared to be at above second grade level.

One day, big dinosaur was chasing little dinosaur. Little dinosaur hid in a hole in the rock. Then, a brown lizard sat in front of the hole. Slowly, little dinosaur jumped at the lizard and big dinosaur jumped to little dinosaur. Luckily, little dinosaur and the lizard go away in time. The

little dinosaur went running into a forest. The little dinosaur ran on ferns than ran on the mud to the other side. When big dinosaur went on the mud he got stuck for a very long time.

**Figure 6.15**—B4 Kaitlyn’s writing retell of L2 reading comprehension story

In addition to gathering Ann and Kaitlyn’s writing retell in L2 English, I tried to also collect samples of their writing retell in L1 Vietnamese. However, Ann was unable to read or write in L1 by the end of second grade and chose not to respond to the listening and reading comprehension tasks. Therefore, I did not get a sample of Ann’s written retell. On the other hand, Kaitlyn outperformed herself, compared to the end of first grade where Kaitlyn and Ann did not make any attempts to write a response last year. In Figure 6.17, Kaitlyn wrote in complete sentences, which was simple at times and extended at other. She had some spelling and punctuation errors. Some words had incorrect diacritic marks, which in the Vietnamese tonal language, can change the meaning of the word or sentence. ”. She appeared to be developing in her spelling with some accent mark errors. For example she wrote / *dường* / meaning “bed” instead of / *đường* / which meant “street”. But, she was able to spell complicated vowel blends, which does not exist in L2 English such as “*kiếm*” or “*muốn*”. She used vocabulary words that were on topic and related to the story sequence. She read for meaning as represented by the logic of her writing. She understood the moral of the story without stating it.

Buổi sáng, bé Mỏ hai trái nả. Trên giường, Mỏ thấy con gà lạc. Mỏ dúc con gà kiếm mẹ. Mỏ gặp con gấu. Mỏ đi bộ and con hổ chạp to Mỏ. Con hổ muốn ăn Mỏ but con gấu sợ con hổ.

*In the morning, Mỏ picked two fruits. On the bed, Mỏ saw a lost chicken. Mỏ helped the chicken find mom. Mỏ saw a bear. Mỏ walked and the fox attacked to Mỏ. The fox wanted to eat Mỏ but the bear scared the fox.*

**Figure 6.16**—B4 Kaitlyn’s writing retell of L1 reading comprehension story

### Oral Language Survey

As I suggested at the outset of Chapter 6, at the end of the second year of the research study, I went back to take oral language samples of Ann and Kaitlyn in order to compensate for the shortcomings of the listening comprehension tasks as a measure of oral language production; they were simply not revealing enough language to allow any inferences about oral language production. It was a common oral language task; students looked at presumably evocative pictures and described what they saw. The purpose was to gauge their L1 and L2 oral language competence at the end of second grade. I used an oral and written retelling rubric (see Appendix L) to guide me, especially regarding structure and conventions. In Figure 6.18, Ann described in detail, using fragmented sentences with verb tense errors. She was still developing L2 English convention and structure skills such as her word choice and pronunciation. Her sentences were simple and short with minimal transitional words. That said, she was demonstrably less shy in sharing aloud compared to the end of first grade. She was more confident and in control of her oral language use. Oral language was her strength compared to reading and writing. She connected some of the object images with Halloween and was able to use words in the right

context such as “pumpkin” “bread” or “fork and knife”. Her description was logically sequenced.

I think it's a dinner buffet or no it's not, the order of those food and I guess prepare it for a birthday party, and I think it's Halloween because it have a pumpkin and usually people don't have pumpkin next to there food. There's three glass of water and three plate. Two plate has one bread on it and that one doesn't (points to the picture). Each of them has a fork and a knife. Both of these people has this thing in the middle and this guy only has that thing next to him. And I think they have more people than this table because I kind of see another one right there (points to the picture). And I saw someone asleep right there so maybe that person already got their food and maybe that one is waiting for another person. That's why no one is sitting right there.

**Figure 6.17**—B4 Ann's L2 oral picture description of an American dinner

Kaitlyn, in Figure 6.19, had simple sentences with no L2 grammar and structural errors. She used some transitional words and consistently correct verb tense. Her descriptive words were on topic and in context with the picture theme. She had good command of L2 English and was confident in describing the pictures without any further probing on my part. Compared to first grade oral language use, it appeared that the internal logic and sequencing of her utterances was more transparent as she clearly expressed her descriptions of the typical American family dinner. There was a flow in her use of phrases, such as “seems like” or “it looks like”, as if she examining her own stance toward the images. She related to the pictures to the American holiday by connecting turkey and bread with Thanksgiving Holiday.

It looks like people are having dinner with turkey. And the turkey, I think it's Halloween because it has turkey and there's bread. It seems like it's Thanksgiving dinner and they have some bread and turkey with water and some brown stuff that looks like (points to the picture)...it looks like something. It sort of looks like mud in someway. And this looks like green beans.

**Figure 6.18**—B4 Kaitlyn's L2 oral picture description of an American dinner

**Vietnamese.** In Figures 6.20 and 6.21, Kaitlyn and Ann exhibited similar control of L1 Vietnamese as they attempted to describe the typical Vietnamese mealtime. They interjected pauses and hesitations during their description. For neither student, however, this was a flawless performance. They did not demonstrate good control of the Vietnamese sentence and grammar structure. Both had pronunciation and accent mark errors on simple basic words. Ann appeared to have more confidence in her Vietnamese oral language than Kaitlyn, consistent with what we learned about their home strengths in first grade. She had more logical reasoning in her description whereas Kaitlyn was keen on identifying the objects accurately.

Cái hình này, mấy người này, nó đi ra ăn tại di nó là bủi tối. Voi là nó giống như có nhiều mùi hơi tại vì nó phải bấn mấy cái thùng, thùng ma có cho mat. That's why nó phải ăn để cho nó get some energy. Nó là rest. Nó. Mấy cái này, mấy người, mấy vì của someone hai là bắc, hai là aunt của mấy người này (points to the picture). Một người nó giống như nó bỏ tai ở trong tóc để cho nó lên tai vì nó fall down. Mấy cái đồ ăn nó không có giống như cook. Maybe, nó giống như nó phải bắt lửa. Nó phải làm lửa vì hai cái stick. Then nó giống try một cái pot.  
*This picture, these people...they go out to eat because it is dark. And there are a lot of sweating because they bring the boxes...boxes that have wear. That's why they eat for they get some energy. They rest. They. These, these people, aunts belong someone or they are older aunts or they are their aunts (points to the picture). One person looks like they put hands in their hair and up because it fell down. These foods, it does not look cook. Maybe, it looks like have to start fire. They have to start a fire with the two stick. Then they try one pot.*

**Figure 6.19**—B4 Ann's L1 oral picture description of a Vietnamese dinner

Consistent with her practices in the Sunday School from first grade, Kaitlyn codeswitched to L2 English more often, compared to Ann, while trying to find the right L1 Vietnamese words to describe what she saw. For example, she stated, “*It seems like nó happy*” and then corrects herself and codeswitched back to Vietnamese with, “*nó vui*” (they happy). This indicated again with, “*con không biết nó call*” (I don't know what it is call.) and switched to, “*con biết nó là áo dài*” (I know it is Vietnamese dress). She experienced this in Vietnamese Sunday school during the first year of classroom observations. It was a strategy for her to make meaning by recalling and repeating, using both L1 and L2 oral language. Unsurprisingly Ann did not use this sort of strategy when she codeswitched. She was not interested in finding the words to translate and to use both L1 and L2 to assist her.

Nó là năm bà ăn... ăn cái... ăn... ăn... nó là...it seems like nó ngồi trông cái mat and they ăn cái lettuce and cái shrimp and cái meat. It seems like nó happy... nó vui... nó mang like đồ Việt, không phải đồ mỹ, like người Việt mang...usually không phải người mỹ mang... nó like colorful...like the zig zag colorful... mỹ có một color...con không biết nó call... con biết nó là áo dài... con biết cái Vietnamese clothes are more colorful.  
*There are five women eating...eating this...eating...eating...this...it seems like they are sitting on the mat and they eat lettuce and the shrimp and the meat. It seems like they are happy...they happy...they wear like Vietnamese clothes, not like American clothes...like Vietnamese people...usually not like American people wear...it is colorful...like the zig zag colorful...American have one color...I don't know what it is call...I know it is Vietnamese dress...I know these Vietnamese clothes are more colorful.*

**Figure 6.20**—B4 Kaitlyn's L1 oral picture description of a Vietnamese dinner

With the emerging hypothesis—that Kaitlyn's Sunday School experience gave her the unique opportunity to become metalinguistic about her acquisition of L1 Vietnamese and L2 English, these data revealed some advantage to Kaitlyn in L1 oral language development. As in earlier stages, Ann's L1 competence was the equal of Kaitlyn's. It was perhaps even a little more developed because Ann had more L1 secondary interactions with family members, using language tools such as realia, and she did codeswitch to L2 when she was not addressing elders.

The L2 sample demonstrates a slight but real advantage for Kaitlyn in terms of sophistication and a marked advantage in the application of conventions of language use. This measure provided some conclusive evidence about the affordances of continued L1 written language exposure on oral language development in L1 or L2, the exception being modest evidence for an advantage in L2 conventionality.

### **Summary**

By the end of the first year of data observation and assessments, Kaitlyn and Ann had more similarities in L2 English oral and written language competence compared to L1 Vietnamese. Both demonstrated improvement in early reading skills such as letter names and sounds, high frequency and decodable words. However, Kaitlyn outperformed Ann on the listening and reading comprehension tasks. Lorenz stated that Kaitlyn surpassed most of her classmates (English only and ELLs) in reading and writing. Her level of engagement and motivation to use L2 oral language was influenced by her increased improvement in reading and writing abilities. She was more social as she overcame her cultural shyness in whole and small group interactions. Lorenz provided the affordances in the classroom for Kaitlyn to tap into her primary language during activities, but she did not use the opportunity as evidenced by no codeswitching and use of L1 Vietnamese. Hunyh noted that Kaitlyn turned to L1 Vietnamese oral and written language through speaking and writing when interacting with teachers and in completing class reading and writing assignments. She codeswitched during translation time when she was unable to find the write word to express in L1 written language. Vietnamese Sunday school teachers allowed students to use L2 to assist with learning L1 when necessary, but it was the school's preference to have Kaitlyn learn and practice strictly in Vietnamese.

Ann continued to develop her L1 oral language skills at home with both primary and secondary interactions (see Chapter 4). She codeswitched at home during interactions with her parents or sibling, but not at the public school. Croft stated that she encouraged Ann to lean on her L1 language abilities when needed, but similar to Kaitlyn, she did not tap into it. The observation data did not show either Kaitlyn or Ann codeswitching during both interactions with teachers and peers. On the early L1 reading assessments, Ann did not show improvement on the high frequency and decodable word lists whereby explaining her inability to read and retell through writing with the L1 reading comprehension tasks. On her oral retelling of the L1 listening comprehension assessment, Ann showed some improvement in her L1 convention use. She was able to recall details of the narrative story, but unable to put it in logical sequence. Her accents and pronunciation improved in oral language use, but not in the written mode. This was also displayed in her writing where she provided fragmented sentences in L1. Kaitlyn improved in her writing with complete thoughts with some fragmented sentences. She showed the most improvement in her spelling and diacritic mark use. Overall, both the end of the first and second grade data collection showed Kaitlyn having more L1 and L2 oral and written language competence. She had more control of the language form and use, compared to Ann.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

In the last twenty-five years, there have been significant changes in the demographic profile of the United States' K-12 student population. Among those are the fastest growing numbers of English Language Learners moving beyond the traditional states such as California, Texas, Florida or New York and into the States such as Colorado, South Dakota or Nebraska. Currently, there are more than 80% of all ELL students identified as native speakers of Spanish. In California, the second largest population of ELLs is Vietnamese speakers residing mostly in counties such as Contra Costa, Alameda, Orange, Riverside or Los Angeles. The first issue is the ongoing increase in the linguistic and cultural diversity of students in the classrooms and the public schools are not equipped to address the ever-growing complexity of providing adequate curriculum and instruction while meeting the socialization needs of the ELL population. The second issue is, with the second largest ELL population being Vietnamese in California, researchers in the field of applied linguistics, second language acquisition and reading, have minimal knowledge to inform educational practitioners of strategies to address the language competence and communication of this particular group of students. There are fewer research studies investigating the L1 and L2 oral and written language competence of young Vietnamese English Language Learners. In addressing the issues, I set out to investigate the language learning and socialization of young Vietnamese English Language Learners.

This case study provided a thick description of the learning and socialization of two Vietnamese English Language Learners, Kaitlyn and Ann. I observed their language learning experiences over a course of two years. In the first year, I went into their homes and conducted parent interviews to understand the cultural practices of two Vietnamese families. Then, I stepped into three classrooms, two public elementary classrooms and one Vietnamese Sunday school classroom, to observe and take fieldnotes on the pathways the students took to learn about the languages they listened to, spoke, read and wrote about in order to make meaning of the world they lived in. In the second year, I returned to briefly gather samples of the students' oral and written language abilities from their performance on a researched developed reading assessments and their responses to an oral language survey. I did not conduct classroom observations and teacher interviews for the second year.

I drew upon the ecological perspectives (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, ) as a theoretical framework to guide my observations, analysis and interpretation of the data. Taking an ecological perspective was appropriate in answering my hypothesis that Kaitlyn would continue to develop and advance in her L1 and L2 oral and written competence as a result of additional experiences with formal instruction in Vietnamese Sunday school while learning L2 English in the English Language Mainstream classroom. Without the additional experience similar to Kaitlyn, Ann would progress slowly in L1 and L2 and eventually allow L2 English to dominate her language of choice in socializing and communicating in the classroom and at home.

### **The Ecological Perspective: Affordance, Interaction and Emergence**

Ecology refers to the interaction of all organisms in the environment. For language learning, it is the context where the learners relate to the physical space, cultural artifacts and object tools to make meaning. Van Lier (2000) argued that language is embedded in the micro and macro aspects of social, educational, economical and political settings. To understand

language means to observe its state of affordance, interaction and emergence. The classroom is one space where researchers could capture the complex and nonlinear systems of language use. In this case study, the affordances between the teachers, parents, and students and the use of L1 and L2 oral and written language were apparent throughout the classroom observations and interview responses. I found the classroom and home affordances to be critical in the learning of Vietnamese and English. Teachers provided Kaitlyn and Ann the space to play, rehearse and repeat language, which served as forms of metalinguistic awareness that led to further Vietnamese and English language competence throughout one school year. Croft and Lorenz provided a classroom environment that encouraged, acknowledged, and promoted the use of students' primary language to make meaning, using their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, even though they were hampered in actively promoting L1 perspectives by California Proposition 227. Although teachers could not use specific Vietnamese language forms in their instruction, they gave Ann and Kaitlyn the opportunity to think aloud, play and rehearse Vietnamese when needed during literacy activities and interactions with peers. Croft and Lorenz expressed frustration for not having the training and ability to further Ann and Kaitlyn's L1 Vietnamese competence simply because they do not speak the language and without a parent waiver, were not given professional development to assist, using the primary language.

Huynh, the volunteer Sunday School teachers, was able to further influence Kaitlyn's L1 and L2 competence by encouraging codeswitching, which allowed Kaitlyn to use L2 strengths to enhance L1 written language development. Because she was fluent in Vietnamese and English, Huynh could monitor, and on occasion sharpen the use of those L2 strengths, particularly for learning words. She allowed Kaitlyn to reinforce L2 English learning by having her translate in English when learning written L1 Vietnamese involved some struggle.

When I began the study, I had expected Huynh to use L1 Vietnamese only to instruct, communicate and socialize the students around curriculum and Vietnamese Sunday school standards. As the classroom observations and fieldnotes were analyzed, throughout the school year, it revealed the affordances Huynh and the students used to codeswitch and move between L1 and L2 during interactions. Such affordances included recalling, reciting, rereading and rewriting the L1 language forms. Whole group setting with those instructional tools afforded Kaitlyn additional practice in L1 and L2. Huynh allowed students to use L2 to translate written L1 words and phrases as the school year progressed and L2 English became more dominant and language of choice during teacher-student and peer interactions. Since she was fluent in English, she led students through the translation while noting whether or not it was accurate and in context with their logic and critical thinking. This was done primarily using oral language. Students did not write in L2 English. However, Kaitlyn continue to develop her competence in oral and written L1 as she was accountable to meeting the expectations in the Sunday School curriculum. It was the school's cultural practice to ensure that all teachers finish the curriculum by the end of the year. Teachers met periodically to check in on where they were at with their instruction. Huynh report to Kaitlyn's parents periodically to ensure that she was practicing her Vietnamese at home and that she was completing her homework accurately.

Throughout first grade, age 6, Ann and Kaitlyn experienced reflexive forms of interaction where they related their heritage Vietnamese language to learning English (even without assistance from their monolingual teachers) as evidence by the affordance and emergence during literacy activities in the classrooms and at home with parent interviews. Both students had

access to classroom environments that were conducive to practicing language through interaction with the teachers and peers—especially in pairs and small groups. Croft and Lorenz created literacy activities that encouraged both students to use L1 and L2 oral and written language modes to communicate, despite not having the Vietnamese language skills to instruct. They grouped students so that interactions were supportive of their Vietnamese cultural traditions. Ann and Kaitlyn overcame their cultural shyness in small group interactions as oppose to whole class. According to the educational values and traditions within the Vietnamese community, learning was for the benefit of the whole group and interdependent. However, Croft and Lorenz balanced the classroom culture with home culture by encouraging students' to interact with their L1 when necessary to learn L2 by engaging in language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading whereby further developed their metalinguistic awareness. The observation fieldnotes did not show that Ann and Kaitlyn used specific L1 Vietnamese during literacy activities in the classroom. I found that this was due to their differences in L1 fluency. Kaitlyn was formally learning oral and written Vietnamese in Sunday school while Ann was continuing her routine activities at home with primary and secondary interactions.

### **L1 Oral and Written Vietnamese Competence**

After one school year, Kaitlyn and Ann improved in their L1 Vietnamese oral language competence while only Kaitlyn showed increases in her ability to use L1 written mode. Over grade 1, Kaitlyn surpassed Ann in the early reading skills such as letter sounds and naming, recognizing site words and decoding words but not in comprehension. By end of the school year, Kaitlyn decoded one-syllable words with varying vowel and consonant blends with mixtures of diacritic marks. She showed more confidence with listening, speaking and reading written L1 Vietnamese. Kaitlyn and Ann were not comfortable with writing in Vietnamese. Although Ann continued to use oral language at home, she did not have any formal instruction in reading and writing oral and written L1 Vietnamese, therefore explaining her lack of confidence in responding to listening and reading comprehension questions. Ann's parents focused on having her listening and speaking, using oral language as oppose to written language as the year progressed. They did not have Ann read and write, using the written mode at home. They emphasized more the oral language as Ann used it in both primary and secondary interactions.

Kaitlyn's experiences in Vietnamese Sunday school allowed her additional practice with written and oral L1. The whole class instruction activities afforded the opportunities to listen and speak, using mostly oral language. Huynh afforded students the opportunity to learn written L1 through routine activities such as *Chính Tả* (Word Dictation) and *Ráp Văn* (Spelling). She spoke to her teachers primarily in Vietnamese because it was a cultural tradition that the school expected Kaitlyn to maintain. It was a form of respect in interacting with elders and teachers. At home, she was expected to do the same. There was continuity between Vietnamese Sunday school and at home with educational philosophy and cultural values—especially the idea of respect for one's elders. Kaitlyn understood that her success in school required for her to carry on the Vietnamese cultural values in the classroom and at home. This meant that she continued to practice her oral and written L1 through recalling, reciting, rereading and rewriting, which were instructional strategies that connected with the Confucius values. She interacted with the teacher in L1 oral and written language. Her teacher did not stand in the way of her natural

tendency to codeswitch or even rely primarily L2 oral English, while talking with her peers and trying to figure out the meanings of L1 text and words.

### **L2 Oral and Written English Competence**

Kaitlyn and Ann were developing at grade level in L2 English early reading. The assessment results for the end of the school year indicated that they were on their way with L2 English fluency. However, Kaitlyn outperformed Ann on the listening and reading comprehension tasks at the end of grade one. Her oral and written responses showed that she was more competent than Ann on her grammar, mechanics, sentence structure and spelling convention. Kaitlyn's writing consistently improved, especially in her logical and critical thinking abilities. In the assessments, she identified accurate story sequences and provided details that were in context with the story characters and setting. Lorenz stated that Kaitlyn surpassed her peers in reading and writing. She attributed her L2 oral and written development to her engagement with reading and the additional practice at home. Kaitlyn continued to develop her knowledge of language structure while learning how to use it with peers and the teachers to communicate. Lorenz believed that her reading and writing skills knowledge improved as she read and wrote more. Kaitlyn consistently showed interest in reading and writing in L2 as the year progressed. By the end of the school year, Lorenz was ready to transition Kaitlyn out of ELL status.

Croft found that Ann not only improved on her early reading skills, but her oral language as well. Her cultural shyness often impeded her learning during whole group instruction, but Croft worked with her to overcome some of it in small group setting. Ann's writing samples did not show improvement throughout the school year with basic sentence structure, simple word use and some spelling and punctuation errors. Her growth in reading and listening comprehension skills were minimal as her responses during classroom interactions through read a louds were basic and at time out of context. Ann was stronger in her oral language use during literacy activities. She showed competence in her interactions with the teacher and peers and understood the classroom local practices in her L2 language use. She had confidence and was comfortable in interacting with spoken versus written L2 English. Croft believed that Ann was progressing as an English Language Learner and that she would transition out in a couple of years.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Like most efforts to study complex settings, there are a host of limitations in this work—sampling of students and language samples among them. But three major limitations stand out—the age of the students I observed, the scope of the parent interview, and the assessments I developed.

I set out to use the ecological perspective as a theoretical framework to inform my understanding of how English Language Learners learn and use language at home and in school. From the pilot study observations, I raised questions regarding the influence of learning L1 Vietnamese at home on the acquisition of L2 English at school. I wanted to know if second generation Vietnamese ELLs had the advantage in learning English as a result of knowing Vietnamese. Therefore, I narrowed my dissertation research questions to address those initial observations, using qualitative methods to collect the data. I hypothesized that ELL students

would have the advantage of learning L2 English as a result of additional formal instruction in L1 Vietnamese. To prove this, I started with the subject selection of young ELLs and discovered early on that to understand the influence of L1 on L2 oral and written language, researchers would have to select students transitioning from home to kindergarten, as opposed to the kindergarten to first grade transition I captured in this case study. Analyzing the influence of L1 on L2 development could be more appropriately characterized if researchers were able to capture ELL students' first exposure to formal instruction of L2 English in a public school setting. However, I was limited due to the Vietnamese Sunday schools' age requirements for Level 1A classes. In a perfect world, I would have conducted this study with 5 year olds just starting formal kindergarten.

As my observations moved along and data analysis begun, I discovered that by first grade, Ann and Kaitlyn's oral L2 English was sufficiently well developed enough that we could see the reciprocal influence of L1 and L2 oral language. This changed my research questions to include the impact of using both L1 and L2 oral and written language, as opposed to L1 Vietnamese only, on the metalinguistic awareness of both students. I did not include further probing questions in the parent interview survey to get a clearer understanding of English learning and use in the home. This would have reshaped my study to look closely at Kaitlyn and Ann's codeswitching. Instead, I only got to see Kaitlyn's codeswitching (and only because Hyunh allowed—or promoted—it). Also, further home observations and student interviews would have given me a thicker description of cultural practices as related to Vietnamese language and use. Observing interactions at home might have provided additional opportunity to see metalinguistic awareness in action outside a classroom setting.

Due to limited access to researched based Vietnamese language assessment that addressed the language development of young second generation Vietnamese English Language Learners, I developed my own to assess Kaitlyn and Ann's language knowledge. However, there were limitations that should be noted in the early reading tasks such as letter sounds, naming, site words and decoding words. High frequency and decoding words should be generated systematically with age and grade level appropriate. To do this, a large number of different text genres should be gathered and a set of systematic procedures used to determine the frequent number of words as it appears in text. With reading and listening comprehension text selection, the students responses from this study suggests that it not only include culture specific illustrations, but also the purpose of the story should contain lessons learned that are from the Confucius cultural values and traditions. The text should be written from the Southern Vietnamese dialect as students learn this form at home or in the community in the United States.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The context for observation in my case study has not changed the features of the ecological perspective theories, but using the theoretical framework to observe classroom interactions has added to a clearer understanding of two young second generation Vietnamese English Language Learners in three classroom settings. This was a case study and therefore, not generalizable to the whole ELL student population. This study suggests that language affordance could be generated or activated when all features in the environment of learning are engaged. Kaitlyn and Ann related to and were given the opportunity to use the physical space, cultural

artifacts and language tools in their interactions with the teachers and peers. Teachers used strategies such as language play, language rehearsal and repeated reading to aid in Ann and Kaitlyn's L1 and L2 oral and written language development and competence. As a result, Kaitlyn and Ann, but especially Kaitlyn, improved in their L1 and L2 metalinguistic awareness. For Kaitlyn, she has surpassed the first grade curriculum and standards while continuing to develop her L1 Vietnamese oral and written language compared to Ann. The study also suggests that Kaitlyn's advancement in oral and written language competence was due, at least in part, to her continued interaction and practice of both L1 Vietnamese and L2 English.

Future empirical research studies should include a wider sampling of ELLs that includes both classroom and home observations with student, parent and teacher interviews. Capturing L1 and L2 language development and competence is better substantiated if the researchers follow the students from home to school with observation fieldnotes. Interview surveys should be altered to include the cultural practices from home and classrooms. Specific cultural practices could be identified in order to make the comparison between home and school. Describing language influence without specific links to cultural practices would not assist parents and teachers in creating affordances that allow students to develop and interact with L1 and L2.

Future approaches to teaching ELLs should take into consideration the cultural strategies they use in communicating and interacting with teachers versus peers that are brought from their home and community. In this study, Kaitlyn continued to purposely codeswitch as she progressed in her fluency with L1 and L2. This codeswitching was observed during Vietnamese Sunday school, where her teacher sanctioned the practice. This affordance increased her motivation and engagement to use both L1 and L2 oral and written language to communicate and interact with her peers and teachers. Without the additional observations, I would not have been informed about her increased competence specifically, in L1 and L2 written language. She did not codeswitch in the public elementary classroom.

Huynh had different approaches that were specific to the Vietnamese cultural values with education. Instructional strategies carried cultural tradition that included having students interact with L1 Vietnamese by recalling, reciting, rereading and rewriting text. Both oral and written modes were used in the activities and Kaitlyn had language reinforcements through those interactions. Huynh's fluency in both Vietnamese and English assisted Kaitlyn in all aspects of classroom socialization, interactions and communication. Kaitlyn had the added benefits of, compared to Ann, learning L1 Vietnamese oral and written while having L2 English reinforced primarily through translation. When creating and activating the affordances and interactions in language learning, Kaitlyn and Ann had the fortunate opportunity, as a young second generation Vietnamese learner to come from homes that chose to maintain the heritage language. Their parents were purposeful in ensuring that they continue to learn Vietnamese. We need more work on understanding the role of these Sunday Schools, from diverse perspectives—cultural practices, linguistic development, and motivation.

### **Final Comment**

I set out to understand how Vietnamese and English, in both oral and written registers, develop within young English Language Learners. I was particularly interested in the affordance, interaction and emergence of language that was provided in the home, in conventional public schools that are not allowed to promote bilingual dispositions, and in school

settings in which the perseveration of Vietnamese is the explicit goal of instruction. I learned that all three of those setting—home, public school, and Vietnamese Sunday School—have something to offer young learners in their quest for L1 Vietnamese and L2 English oral and written competence.

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## APPENDIX A

### ENGLISH LETTER NAMES & SOUNDS

<i>Names</i>	<i>Sounds</i>
z	
y	
x	
w	
v	
u	
t	
s	
r	
q	
p	
o	
n	
m	
l	
k	
j	
i	
h	
g	
f	
e	
d	
c	
b	
a	

## APPENDIX B

### VIETNAMESE LETTER NAMES & SOUNDS

Việt Thư Tên & Âm Thanh

Tên ( <i>Names</i> )	Âm ( <i>Sounds</i> )
a	a
ă	á
â	ớ
b	bê
c	xê
d	đê
đ	đê
e	e
ê	ê
g	giê
h	hát
i	i ngắn
k	ca
l	e lơ
m	e mờ
n	e nờ
o	o
ô	ô
ơ	ơ
p	pê
q	Qui
r	e rờ
s	ét-sì
t	Tê
u	U
ư	Ư
v	Vê
x	ích-xì
y	y dài

## APPENDIX C

### ENGLISH HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST

<i>Benchmark 1</i>	<i>Benchmark 2</i>
do	jump
up	some
my	from
have	here
will	come
we	went
what	little
can	said
but	your
his	work
at	there
not	play
they	when
for	people
that	spring
on	many
she	night
of	please
is	always
was	their
in	look
it	they
he	into
you	live
and	been
said	find
I	help
a	would
to	through
the	carefully

## APPENDIX D

### VIETNAMESE HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST

Việt High Frequency Từ Danh Sách

*Benchmark #1*

*Benchmark #2*

ba	nước
em	Khi
học	Lên
đi	Ông
sẽ	Nhà
con	mớ
làm	ở
trong	Còn
the	Tô
vào	rồi
bò	Năm
được	Các
làm	bị
má	Đã
ngồi	Cho
anh	Đang
bạn	Này
mà	Cũng
ra	Vào
có	từ
qua	Sau
minh	Nào
ta	Nhưng
theo	về
không	đâu
và	chỉ
là	Như
dễ	Đây
bài	của
đề	Không

## APPENDIX E

### ENGLISH DECODABLE WORD LIST

*Benchmark 1 Benchmark 2*

lap	rake
rot	bunk
top	tail
lick	shy
sat	dip
dug	man
chain	sink
win	shin
king	bore
mat	hill
back	pick
day	bat
hail	wine
bag	ham
need	best
rest	tan
van	not
ham	shop
lick	ring
pill	tin
bug	pain
fin	nail
pink	nap
rest	sack
wing	may
map	tag
dine	mug
yam	ram
quick	deed
ship	ban

## APPENDIX E

### VIETNAMESE DECODABLE WORD LIST

#### Tình Từ Danh Sách

<i>Benchmark #1</i>	<i>Benchmark #2</i>
vé	những
cà	phả
bi	Thì
củ	Trên
sò	thấy
chữ	Theo
may	Trong
ngăn	với
phở	trước
luôn	rất
nhảy	Hơn
sông	Qua
minh	nhieu
com	người
nem	việ c
ghế	biết
quà	đà
cờ	Nam
mía	Hang
dóc	số
quí	Đây
vườn	trường
chim	việt
quý	thế
tủ	Thong
xe	đế
tý	Thành
kêu	Trong
với	Sinh
dê	rất

## APPENDIX G

### ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION

“In the Days of the Dinosaurs: The Dinosaur Chase” by *Hugh Price*

1. *Retell through writing. Write everything you remember about the story you read.*

2. *Reading Comprehension Questions*

- a. What did you learn from the story? (Main Idea)
  
- b. Who are the characters in the story? What did s/he (it) do? (Motive of Characters)
  
- c. What was the problem in the story? What was the solution? (Plot)
  
- d. What was one important thing you remember from the story? (Significant Detail)
  
- e. Have you been chased before? What did you do to get away? (Inference using prior knowledge)

## APPENDIX H

### VIETNAMESE READING COMPREHENSION

Việt Đọc Hiểu

#### “Những Người Bạn Dễ Thương” *Trình Bày Tú Quỳnh*

1. Thông qua văn bản. Viết tất cả mọi thứ bạn ghi nhớ về những câu chuyện mà bạn đọc. (Retell through writing. Write everything you remember about the story you read.)

2. Đọc Hiểu Các câu hỏi. (Reading Comprehension Questions)

a. Những gì bạn đã học hỏi từ những câu chuyện? Chính ý tưởng. (What did you learn from the story? Main Idea.)

b. Ai là các ký tự trong câu chuyện? Điều gì đã làm các em (nó) làm gì? Các ký tự. (Who are the characters in the story? What did s/he (it) do? Motive of Characters.)

c. Điều gì đã được các vấn đề trong câu chuyện? Đây là giải pháp? Lô. (What was the problem in the story? What was the solution? Plot.)

d. Điều gì là một trong những điều quan trọng mà bạn nhớ từ các câu chuyện? Một số Xem chi tiết. (What was one important thing you remember from the story? Significant Detail.)

e. Các bạn đã bao giờ giúp đỡ một người bạn? Điều gì đã xảy ra? Trước khi sử dụng kiến thức. (Have you ever helped a friend? Describe what happened. Inference using prior knowledge.)

## APPENDIX I

### ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION

“Two Little Goldfish” by *Jenny Giles*

1. *Retell. Tell me everything you remember about the story you heard.*

2. *Listening Comprehension Questions*

- a. What did you learn from the story? (Main Idea)
- b. Who are the characters in the story? What did s/he (it) do? (Motive of Characters)
- c. What was the problem in the story? What was the solution? (Plot)
- d. What was one important thing you remember from the story? (Significant Detail)
- e. Have you had a friend who needed help? What did you do? (Inference using prior knowledge)

## APPENDIX J

### VIETNAMESE LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Việt Ghi

#### “Chuyện Ông Gióng” *Trình Bày Quang Lân*

1. Nói cho tôi tất cả mọi thứ bạn ghi nhớ về các bạn nghe câu chuyện. (*Retell. Tell me everything you remember about the story you heard.*)

2. Nghe Hiểu Các câu hỏi (*Listening Comprehension Questions*)

a. Những gì bạn đã học hỏi từ những câu chuyện? Chính ý tưởng. (*What did you learn from the story? Main Idea.*)

b. Ai là các ký tự trong câu chuyện? Điều gì đã làm các em (nó) làm gì? Các ký tự. (*Who are the characters in the story? What did s/he (it) do? Motive of Characters.*)

c. Điều gì đã được các vấn đề trong câu chuyện? Đây là giải pháp? Lô. (*What was the problem in the story? What was the solution? Plot.*)

d. Điều gì là một trong những điều quan trọng mà bạn nhớ từ các câu chuyện? Một số Xem chi tiết. (*What was one important thing you remember from the story? Significant Detail.*)

e. Bạn đã bao giờ gặp một anh hùng? Những gì trẻ đã làm gì? Trước khi sử dụng kiến thức. (*Have you ever met a hero? What did s/he do? Inference using prior knowledge.*)

## APPENDIX K

### LISTENING-READING COMPREHENSION RUBRIC

Questions	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
What did you learn from the story? (Main Idea)	Does not attempt a prediction or conclusion	Attempts a prediction or conclusion; inaccurate or unsubstantiated with the text	Draws conclusions and make predictions that are consistent with text or background knowledge	Draws conclusions and makes predictions using examples from the text
Who are the characters in the story? What did s/he (it) do? (Motive of Characters)	Random guessing	Inaccurate attempts to identify some concepts in text (i.e., characters, plot, main idea, or setting)	Identifies some concepts in text as more important to text meaning (i.e., characters, plot, main idea, or setting)	Identifies words, characters, and/or events as more important to overall meaning; makes some attempt to explain reasoning
What was the problem in the story? What was the solution? (Plot)	Random guessing	Inaccurate attempts to identify some concepts in text (i.e., characters, plot, main idea, or setting)	Identifies some concepts in text as more important to text meaning (i.e., characters, plot, main idea, or setting)	Identifies words, characters, and/or events as more important to overall meaning; makes some attempt to explain reasoning
What was one important thing you remember from the story? (Significant Detail)	Does not retell	Randomly retells some elements of the text; events may not be in sequence	Retells most key elements in sequence	Retells elements of the text in logical sequence; may include some extension to overall theme, message, background knowledge
Have you been chased before? What did you do to get away? (Inference using prior knowledge)	Does not make connections with the text	Talks about what text reminds them of, but cannot explain or relate clearly to the text	Relates background knowledge/ experience to text	Uses background knowledge to enhance comprehension and Interpretation. Makes text-to-text-self

## APPENDIX L

### ORAL AND WRITTEN RETELL RUBRIC

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Meaning</b>	-Attempt to minimally identify important/major ideas/events -Inaccurate identification of events.	-Some important/major ideas/events identified with unclear expressions.	-Some important/major ideas/events identified and clearly expressed.	-Comprehensive important/major ideas/events identified and clearly expressed. -Details support main point.
<b>Structure</b>	-Attempt to use sentences to form logically sequenced paragraphs -Inaccurate use of introduction and conclusion -Text does not support title	-Some logically sequenced sentences/ paragraphs with not cohesive whole -Simple introduction and conclusion with minimal transition words	-Some logically sequenced sentences/ paragraphs with cohesion -Some clear introduction and conclusion with transitions	-Logically sequenced. -Uses transitions words/sentences -Sentences/ paragraphs form a cohesive whole -Use of good introduction/lead -Use of good ending/conclusion.
<b>Conventions</b>	-Attempt to inaccurately be in control of: Conv.spelling Usage Punctuation Vocabulary Sentence structure Grammar	-Some in/accurate: Conv.spelling Usage Punctuation Vocabulary Sentence structure Grammar -Some phonetic spelling errors -Some inappropriate paragraphing	-Some control of: Conv.spelling Usage Punctuation Vocabulary Sentence structure Grammar -Some overall mechanics support meaning. -Appropriate phonetic spelling -Appropriate paragraphing	-Control of: Conv.spelling Usage Punctuation Vocabulary Sentence structure Grammar -Overall mechanics support meaning. -Appropriate phonetic spelling -Appropriate paragraphing

## APPENDIX M

### ORAL LANGUAGE SURVEY PROTOCOL

**English Assessment: 1. Warm-Up:** Say the following to child. Audio record response.

A. Say to child, *“Tell me about your family.” “How many are in your family?” Mother? Father? Brothers and sisters?*

B. Say to child, *“Tell me about yesterday.” “Describe what you did from when you got up until you went to bed.”*

C. Say to child, *“Tell me about a time when your family went to the park for a picnic?” “Describe what you did.”*

**2. Oral Description** Say the following to the child. Audio record response.

A. Show child Set A pictures. Say, *“Tell me about this picture.” “Describe what you see.”*

**Vietnamese Assessment: 1. Bắt đầu với. (Warm-Up)** Nói những điều sau đây cho trẻ. Âm thanh ghi lại phản ứng. (Say the following to the child. Audio record response.)

A. Nói với con, "Hãy nói cho tôi biết về bạn bè của bạn?" "Hãy nói cho tôi biết về người bạn thân nhất của bạn?" "Hãy nói cho tôi biết về những người bạn khác tốt không?" (Say to child, *“Tell me about your friends?” “Tell me about your best friend?” “Tell me about your other good friends?”*)

B. Nói với con, "Hãy nói cho tôi về nghỉ hè của bạn." "Mô tả những gì bạn đang làm." (Say to child, *“Tell me about your summer break.” “Describe what you are doing.”*)

C. Nói với con: "Tôi muốn bạn cho tôi biết về một thời gian khi gia đình của bạn đã đi đến một bữa tiệc sinh nhật?" "Mô tả những gì bạn đã làm." (Say to child, *“I want you to tell me about a time when your family went to a birthday party?” “Describe what you did.”*)

**2. Nói mô tả. (Oral Description)** Nói những điều sau đây cho trẻ. Âm thanh ghi lại phản ứng. (Say the following to the child. Audio record response.)

A. Tỏ ra cho con Set B hình ảnh. Nói, "Hãy nói cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này." "Mô tả những gì bạn nhìn thấy." (Show child Set B pictures. Say, *“Tell me about this picture.” “Describe what you see.”*)

B. Tỏ ra cho con Set C hình ảnh. Nói, "Hãy nói cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này." "Mô tả những gì bạn nhìn thấy." (Show child Set C pictures. Say, *“Tell me about this picture.” “Describe what you see.”*)

APPENDIX N

SET A: ENGLISH ORAL LANGUAGE SURVEY

1. Tell me about this picture.



2. Tell me about this picture.



3. Tell me about this picture.



## APPENDIX O

### SET B: VIETNAMESE ORAL LANGUAGE SURVEY Đánh Giá Ngôn Ngữ Việt Miệng

1. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture.)



2. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture)



3. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture.)



## APPENDIX P

### SET C: VIETNAMESE ORAL LANGUAGE SURVEY Đánh Giá Ngôn Ngữ Việt Miệng

1. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture)



2. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture)



3. Cho tôi biết về bức ảnh này. (Tell me about this picture)



## APPENDIX Q

### TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

Teacher name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **About focal student**

1. Tell me about the student's social ability inside and outside of the classroom. With peers and teacher.
2. Tell me about the student's English Language Development (listening, speaking, reading & writing). What is ELL status? What do you use to determine English proficiency level?
3. Tell me about the student's reading level. (phonological awareness, decoding, vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension)
4. Tell me about the student's writing level? (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, clarity.)
5. Communicative competence. (Using oral and written language)
  - a. Tell me about the student's use of words and sentences with the appropriate person, time and place. Give example. (sociolinguistic competence)
  - b. Tell me about the student's use of appropriate meaning with spoken and written words and sentences when speaking, reading and writing. How about the use of appropriate grammar rules when speaking and writing? (grammatical competence)
  - c. Tell me about the student's sense making during interaction with peers and teachers. How about the use of spoken and/or written language to communicate ideas? (discourse competence)
  - d. What does the student do when struggling with listening, speaking, reading and writing? What strategies are used to repair errors? (strategic competence)

#### **About teacher Instruction**

6. How long have you been teaching? What grade level? How long have you been teaching ELLs?
7. Tell me about your language arts program. Describe the activities you use to develop student's oral and written language skills.

8. Tell me about your language arts assessment program. Describe the tools you use to assess oral and written English proficiency.
9. Tell me about the strategies you find useful in developing the student's oral and written language skills. Describe using each modality: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
10. Tell me about student grouping. Describe why you group them in different ways.
11. Tell me about how you and the students are accessing the primary language (L1-Vietnamese) to support the oral and written development in the second language (L2-English)?
12. Tell me about how you work with students who struggle with her reading and/or writing. Describe what attributes to the learning difficulties. Is it a language or reading skills issue?

## APPENDIX R

### TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: END OF THE YEAR

Teacher name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **About focal student**

1. Tell me about the student's social ability inside and outside of the classroom. With peers and teacher.
2. Tell me about the student's English Language Development (listening, speaking, reading & writing). What is ELL status? What do you use to determine English proficiency level?
3. Tell me about the student's reading level. (phonological awareness, decoding, vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension)
4. Tell me about the student's writing level? (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, clarity.)
5. Communicative competence. (Using oral and written language)
  - a. Tell me about the student's use of words and sentences with the appropriate person, time and place. Give example. (sociolinguistic competence)
  - b. Tell me about the student's use of appropriate meaning with spoken and written words and sentences when speaking, reading and writing. How about the use of appropriate grammar rules when speaking and writing? (grammatical competence)
  - c. Tell me about the student's sense making during interaction with peers and teachers. How about the use of spoken and/or written language to communicate ideas? (discourse competence)
  - d. What does the student do when struggling with listening, speaking, reading and writing? What strategies are used to repair errors? (strategic competence)

#### **About teacher Instruction**

6. How long have you been teaching? What grade level? How long have you been teaching ELLs?
7. Tell me about your language arts program. Describe the activities you use to develop student's oral and written language skills.

8. Tell me about your language arts assessment program. Describe the tools you use to assess oral and written English proficiency.
9. Tell me about the strategies you find useful in developing the student's oral and written language skills. Describe using each modality: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
10. Tell me about student grouping. Describe why you group them in different ways.
11. Tell me about how you and the students are accessing the primary language (L1-Vietnamese) to support the oral and written development in the second language (L2-English)?
12. Tell me about how you work with students who struggle with her reading and/or writing. Describe what attributes to the learning difficulties. Is it a language or reading skills issue?

**About teacher connecting student cultural experiences and instruction**

13. Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_'s family.
14. Describe your experiences with \_\_\_\_\_'s family during the school year.
15. Tell me about the role of the student's culture in your instruction. How do you integrate the child's cultural experiences (from the home) in developing her oral and written competencies in L1 & L2? What activities do you use? Give examples.
16. Tell me about the role of the student's culture in assessing oral and written abilities in L1 & L2. Describe how you integrate the student's cultural experiences in assessing oral and written competencies in L1 & L2. Describe both formal and informal assessments that you use.

## APPENDIX S

### PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Parent name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Speaking and understanding

1. What language does your child speak at home?    \_\_\_ Spanish    \_\_\_ Home language  
\_\_\_\_\_ English
2. What percentage of time do you speak your home language to your child?  
0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
3. Is your child able to understand almost everything that is said in his or her home language?
4. Who does your child speak your home language with? When? Where?
5. Describe your child's interactions with friends or relatives in the home language?

#### Reading and writing

6. Describe your child's ability to read in the home language? Explain.
7. Describe your child's reading experiences at home? Which language is used? Who does your child read with? What kinds of books?
8. Describe your child's ability to write in the home language. What kinds of things does she like to write at home (e.g. letters, notes, recipes)?

#### Family home experiences

9. Describe what your family do for fun?
10. Describe your family mealtime experiences. What kinds of food do you eat? What are your conversations like during mealtime?

11. Describe your interaction and experiences with your community in the home language or in English.

12. Describe your child's interactions with friends or relatives in the home language or in English?

### **Parent school experience**

13. If you came to the United States from another country, did your child attend school in that country? Yes No

14. If you answered "Yes" to the question above, how many total years did your child attend school in that country? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Describe your school experience (in your country)?

### **Parent's view on language learning**

16. Describe your child's L1 & L2 language development in the classroom and at home? How does the teacher connect your child's cultural experiences to everyday learning at school?

17. Describe the important for your family to maintain your child's Vietnamese (listening, speaking, reading & writing).

18. Why did your family chose to send your child to Van Lang? What was the purpose in sending your child to attend class Level-1A every Sunday from 9 to Noon? (Applicable to bilingual student)

19. Describe your family's experiences at Van Lang and/or the elementary school.

20. Describe your family's exposure to the Vietnamese culture, both inside and outside of the home?

21. Describe the cultural connection that Van Lang and/or the elementary school makes in instructing your child?