KEY TERMS:

FAMILY LITERACY

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL)

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)

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CHILDREN’S LITERATURE (CL)

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

AUDIO BOOKS
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMS: EFFECTS ON PARENTS’ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Currently there are high numbers of adult English language learners (ELLs) with preschool-aged children living in the United States (e.g. U.S. Census). Many of these parents are motivated to learn English in order to obtain or improve employment, to be better able to communicate with children’s teachers, and to help with homework (Askov, Kassab & Weirauch, 2005; Chao & Mantero, 2014; Rivera & Lavan, 2012). ELL parents often want to be involved in their children’s education but feel their language skills are inadequate (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chao & Mantero, 2014; Cooke, Mackiewicz, Wood & Helf, 2009; Montgomery, 2008; Rivera & Lavan, 2012). Given that ELL mothers are frequently unemployed, are motivated to learn English, and have preschool children who are learning basic literacy skills, the research presented in this seminar paper suggest that parents participate in their children’s ELL literacy instruction in order to improve their English language literacy and to become informed of and involved in their children’s education.

Most research concerning parental involvement in children’s early literacy learning focuses on the effects and benefits to children (Chao & Mantero, 2014; Kim & Byington, 2016; O’Brien, Paratore, Leighton, Cassano, & Krol-Sinclair, 2014). The content of this seminar paper presents the results of the review of literature concerning the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents’ English language development. This paper presents research on specific programs and methods that not only incorporate parents in their children’s English language learning, but also encourage and improve the English language literacy development of the parents.
Qualitative and quantitative data from several sources are presented along with a discussion of specific ways in which involvement in early literacy programs affect parents’ English language learning program participation, self-perception, and literacy achievement.

The hypothesis presented in this review of the literature is: ELL parents who participate in early literacy activities with their children will increase program attendance (as measured in program hours); will self-report more confidence, positive attitudes and enjoyment in regard to learning English; and improve literacy skills (as measured by standardized tests), in comparison to adult ELL students who do not participate in shared literacy activities with their children.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem to be addressed is, what are the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents’ English language literacy development? Consideration is given to the effect parental involvement in children’s ELL activities has on parents’ English language learner program participation, self-perception, and literacy achievement.

**Definitions of Terms**

In order to support the readers’ understanding of this review of literature, the following terms are identified and defined:

**Family Literacy:** Family literacy programs frequently combine adult literacy, school-age education, and parenting education. The term family literacy is used in several ways: (a) to describe the study of literacy in the family, (b) to describe a set of interventions related to literacy development of young children, and (c) to refer to a set of programs designed to enhance the literacy skills of more than one family member (Britto & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Chao & Mantero, 2014; Gadsen, 2002; Handel, 1999; Kim & Byington, 2016; O’Brien et al., 2014; Wasik et al., 2000, as cited in Caspe, 2003). The research base for family literacy includes
several disciplines: adult literacy, English as a second language, emergent literacy, child
development, and systems analysis (Caspe, 2003; Padak and Rasinski, 2003).

**Limited English Proficiency/Proficient (LEP):** The term is used to refer to students who are
learning English and do not show a high level of English language achievement including
listening, reading, speaking and writing (Belsky, 2006).

**English Language Learner (ELL):** The term is used to refer to students whose first language
is not English and who are in the process of learning English in an English-speaking region.
For those students of English outside English-speaking countries, use “English as a Second
Language (ESL)”, “Second Language Learning”, and “English as a foreign language (EFL)”
(Belsky, 2006).

**Second Language Acquisition (SLA):** SLA is the study of how second languages are learned
and the factors that influence the process (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

**Literacy Education:** “Teaching of reading, writing and social skills to prepare persons to
function at the fifth grade level” (ERIC, n.d.).

**Children’s Literature:** “Children’s literature is defined as material written and produced for
the information or entertainment of children and young adults. It includes all non-fiction,
literary and artistic genres and physical formats” (Library of Congress, 2008, p. 1).

**Educational Strategies:** “Overall plans for implementing instructional goals, methods, or
techniques” (ERIC, n.d.).

**Audio Books:** “Audio versions of printed material (such as books, articles, or other
publications) produced in analog or digital formats. Used in P-12 and higher and adult
education settings with learners who have visual impairments or other physical or learning
disabilities, and to support reading and literacy instruction in general education settings. Also used for recreational reading” (ERIC, n.d).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to provide a review of the literature related to the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents’ English language development. In addition, the review of literature can inform and improve practice in the area of adult English language learner instruction.

Significance of the Study

This review of literature provides data on the effects of parental involvement in early ELL literacy programs on adult English language development. The study of the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents’ English language development and attitudes is important to the practice of adult ELL instruction. This work will make an impact on parental involvement in early literacy programs and should be of importance to others seeking information related to best practices in adult ELL literacy instruction.

Delimitation of the Study

The references used for this review of the literature were collected over a period of seventy-five days in 2014. Resources of the University of Wisconsin System search tool and the services of Karrmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville were utilized. Several search engines provided by EBSCOHOST were used. The key search terms were “family literacy”, “limited English proficiency”, “English language learner”, “second language
acquisition”, “literacy education”, “children’s literature”, “educational strategies”, and “audio books.”

This review of literature focuses especially on the Hispanic/Latino population due to the reviewer’s specific instructional focus. Another delimitation of the research presented here is the focus on women and children; little information is available concerning fathers’ involvement in family literacy (Askov et al., 2005; Gadsden, 2002; Prins, Toso, & Schafft, 2008; Rivera & Lavan, 2012).

**Methodology**

A review of literature was conducted related to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence concerning parental involvement in early literacy activities for ELL children and its impact on parents’ English language development, as well as program participation and self-perception. Data sources in the review of quantitative and qualitative research include: (a) parents’ reflective journals, (b) researchers’ logs and field notes, (c) surveys, (d) interviews, and (e) standardized test results. The findings were summarized and synthesized, and recommendations have been made.

Participants in the research and studies reviewed represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being Hispanic/Latino or Chinese. This review of literature focuses especially on the Hispanic/Latino population due to the reviewer’s specific instructional focus. Furthermore, Spanish is the first language spoken by most (76.6%) ELL students K-12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2018) and the “adult ELL population mirrors that of the K-12 population” (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008, p. 4). Therefore, most of the available research on ELLs’ participation in family literacy programs is focused on Hispanic/Latino adults—specifically mothers.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this seminar paper is to review current literature on the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents' English language literacy development. The review of literature includes multiple disciplines: early childhood, adult education, English language learners, family literacy, literacy education, and children’s literature.

Special attention is given to children’s literature as an educational strategy for adult English language learner instruction. A discussion of children’s literature characteristics and its potential attributes and limitations for adult LEP students is considered.

A program description is provided for three family literacy educational strategies that are reported in the literature: (a) parent and child learning together (PACT) time, during which children and parents engage in shared literacy activities, (b) bilingual family literacy bags, and (c) audio books or recorded readings.

Following a description of programs, three main effects of combined child-parent literacy programs on parents’ English literacy development are presented. Consideration is given to adult ELL program participation, as measured in hours; adults' self-perception of reading efficacy and enjoyment; and adult ELL parents’ literacy development, as measured by standardized tests.

The paper concludes with recommendations for further research on the involvement of parents in their children’s ELL literacy instruction.
Adult Learners’ Needs

Adult learners have vast and varied life experiences and knowledge bases they build upon when learning new skills. While past experiences affect what and how an adult learner learns, present experiences and current realities are often the motivation for new learning (Sharp, 1991). Adult learners have specific purposes for learning information or a new skill. Adult education program planners and instructors need to ensure that program goals and activities align with students’ needs and motivations (Montgomery, 2008).

Parents’ lives are busy with competing demands. Limited English proficient (LEP) parents’ schedules may be further complicated by jobs that do not provide regular work schedules or personal time off (Rivera & Lavan, 2012). An entry in a LEP parent participant’s journal (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009, p. 626) reflects busy parents’ reality:

I like to share time with my children and reading together has given us an opportunity to talk and tell stories. This is something we rarely do because there is always something to do. I am busy...there are chores to do, errands to run and little time to do them.

Another LEP parent’s journal entry (BavaHarji, Letchumanan, & Bhar, 2014, p. 97) reflects the competing demands of raising children, working and pursuing education:

I [mother] very busy...afternoon I put the children at the grandmother house than I go work...only night I read to [Vernon]... not long maybe 10 minutes or less like that...

Educational programs need to provide parents with ways to reach their educational goals while at the same time meeting the needs of the family and contributing to employment and financial growth.
LEP Parents’ Motivation to Learn English

For many adults with limited English proficiency (LEP), important motivations to learn English are the desire to read to their children, to be able to teach their children to read, and to be informed of and involved with their children’s formal schooling (Askov et al., 2005; Chao & Mantero, 2014; Rivera & Lavan, 2012; Sharp, 1991; Wright, 2003).

The language barrier for LEP parents often limits their involvement in their children’s schooling, leaving parents unaware of school practices and expectations (Quiroz & Dixon, 2012). In an interview with researchers (Chao & Montero, 2014, p.102), a church-based ESL adult program participant reported:

I used to feel shut out of school, because my English is not good. I even could not imagine I could talk with kids in the school classrooms.

Furthermore, parents’ previous unsuccessful, negative school experiences can contribute to feelings of anxiety and low-self esteem, which further alienate LEP parents from involvement in their children’s formal education (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Gadsden, 2002). Despite these barriers to participation in their children’s formal education, ELL parents are often involved with their children’s education at home. “Current studies on early literacy practices of Latino families suggest that there is parental guidance, participation and concern with children’s reading and writing development” (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005, p. 113). Despite limited English proficiency, few economic resources, and low levels of education, studies indicate that when LEP parents are provided opportunities to collaborate and learn strategies and ideas from teachers, as well as provided with a selection of appropriate books, they are consistently willing and effectively able to support their children’s literacy learning (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Kim & Byington, 2016; O’Brien et al., 2014; Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999).
Establishing the Need for Bidirectional Literacy Research

The importance of parental involvement in their children’s early literacy development has been widely documented in the literature. Research shows that parental involvement in their children’s education results in higher test scores, better attendance and stronger cognitive skills for the children (BavaHarji et al., 2014; Harper, Platt & Pelletier, 2011; Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005). Research findings provide evidence that FLPs (family literacy programs) narrow vocabulary and reading achievement gaps for ELL children, and the “combined evidence suggests that FLPs have some effect on the learning lives of families and on their children’s language and literacy achievement” (O’Brien et al., 2014, p. 387). However, there is little quantitative data in the collective research on the effect of parental involvement in their children’s education on the literacy development of LEP parents. “Few family literacy research discussions explore its implication for adult learning and literacy. As a result, approaches that build solid foundations for adult-related practices are missing” (Gadsden, 2002, p. 4).

There is a recognized need for increased research on the bidirectionality of literacy, that is, how the literacy of both child and adult learner is developed during shared literacy activities (Chao & Mantero, 2014; Gadsden, 2002; Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Packard, 2001). “Research and practice tend to focus primarily on the needs of children, with little or no attention given to the reciprocal nature of children’s and adult literacy” (Gadsden, 2002, p. 7). Parents who are nonnative speakers of English could learn English with their children through shared early literacy experiences.
**Children's Literature**

Children's literature can be used as an effective educational strategy for developing the English language skills of LEP adults (Chen, 2012; Donceva & Daskalovska, 2014; Ho, 2000; Huang, 2015; Leal, 2015; Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005; Packard, 2001; Smallwood, 1992).

Children's literature can be one of the most effective teaching materials available for students of all ages. Using it to develop literacy is a well-documented approach for elementary students, both native and nonnative speakers. It is newer, but increasingly popular, with adult ESL learners, especially in ESL family literacy programs (Smallwood, 1992, p. 5).

Children's literature can be an effective tool in developing literacy skills in adult ELLs because it provides comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) through its simplicity in language and form. Children's literature often has repetition, rhyme, and predictable storylines. Children's stories are usually told directly with little digression and with obvious relationships between characters and actions. Children's literature has conflict, action, adventure, suspense and humor to help develop the story line. Well-written children's literature can give insight into culture, customs and language when the characters and settings are accurately and richly described (Chen, 2012; Donceva & Daskalovska, 2014; Ho, 2000). Children's literature is supported by colorful illustrations and provides comprehensible input. Picture books can be especially helpful for adult ELL students attempting to understand the meanings of idioms and other aspects of an unfamiliar culture.

Readers unfamiliar with English can improve their reading and language through stories with a strong plot and well developed characters while learning more about the American culture and customs. Familiarity with good children's literature selections can give the
ESOL (English as a Second or other Language) learner the opportunity for sharing these stories with family and friends. (Flickinger, 1984, p. 8).

Shared readings offer parents and children “insight on themselves and their worlds by allowing them to connect with the text and each other in real and meaningful ways” (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005, pg. 114). Social relationships serve as a basis for the acquisition of new language skills and concepts as participants interact to discuss ideas, share knowledge and solve problems (BavaHarji et al., 2014). Learning is shaped and enhanced by a “mutual exchange of views and experiences by all parties involved: that is children, parents and teachers engage in the process of constructing their thoughts, ideas and beliefs” (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005, p. 112). The literacy of both child and adult learner is developed during shared literacy activities (Chao & Mantero, 2014; Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009).

Critics of using children’s books in adult literacy programs are concerned about offending the adult learner with childish materials. This is a valid concern; however, when materials are carefully and purposefully selected “adult learners can benefit in many ways from reading children’s literature” (Smallwood, 1992, p. 1). Culturally sensitive texts can promote parent-led conversations in which parents elaborate on the text for their children, placing the adult in the leader/teacher role (Packard, 2001). The key to successful use of children’s literature with adult learners is presenting the material in ways that “emphasize learners’ roles as competent parents, rather than as deficient readers” (Sharp, 1991, p. 216). The adult educator can select and present culturally and linguistically appropriate children’s books (Leal, 2015) as a resource for parents to interact with their child at home, to be involved in their children’s education, and to enhance their children’s literacy development.
Several studies refute the skeptics’ concern that children’s literature offends adult learners and does not hold their interest (Chen, 2012; Donceva & Daskalovska, 2014; Huang, 2015; Leal, 2015). The most effective way to engage intergenerational students (ages 18-50) in the Partnership for Family Reading program was through the use of children’s literature (Handel, 1999). The use of children’s literature with university-level ESL and English as a foreign language students has been shown to positively impact students’ motivation, interest, and self-perceptions as readers and language learners (Chen, 2012; Ho, 2000; Leal, 2015). College EFL students enrolled in American children’s literature-based courses reported that reading the texts aloud “was extremely useful and productive” (Khodabakhshi and Lagos, 1993, p. 53, cited in Chen, 2012) and had a significant positive influence on the students’ self-perceptions as English learners as well as their attitudes toward reading (Wu, 2001, cited in Chen, 2012).

Carefully selected children’s literature could provide the means through which adult ELLs access a language and culture along with their children. Children’s literature can help lay a foundation for second language growth, build vocabulary and increase cultural understandings so that LEP parents can feel more confident communicating with their children’s teachers and being more involved in their children’s schooling.

Descriptions of Bidirectional Literacy Programs

PACT.

Parent and Child Together time (PACT), a component of the Even Start section of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), provides an opportunity for parents and children to participate in interactive literacy activities under teacher supervision (Askov et al., 2005). The goal of PACT programs is to increase literacy and language development of parents so they can be their children’s primary teachers and full partners in their children’s education (Askov et al., 2005;
Irby, 1992). Many family literacy programs similar in design and purpose to PACT have been developed under different names and acronyms (Askov et al., 2005; BavaHarji et al., 2014; Caspe, 2003; Montgomery, 2008; O’Brien et al., 2014).

Montgomery (2008) described a typical research-based family literacy project that was designed so parents could attend literacy classes and learn how to read with their children. Parents received training in how to help their children engage in reading by asking questions that prompted the readers to make connections between the text and their personal experiences and values. The project had as its first research question: “How does parental use of literature with their children influence the parents’ perception of self efficacy regarding literacy tasks?” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 22). Anecdotal evidence from parents’ journals indicated they felt empowered by sharing their understanding of the text in relation to their own experiences as they learned to read with their children. “Sharing this cultural heritage as they read the books with their children provided parents with support and confidence. As parents became more confident in their literacy skills, they also volunteered for more involvement in… school activities ” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 23). After reviewing the videotaped sessions, researchers concluded that parents’ skill and comfort-level increased both in reading with their children and in asking questions. Additionally, some parents learned to read in both English and in Spanish during the five-year literacy program study. Furthermore, there was evidence of “positive change in (parents’) self-perception and efficacy in being able to participate directly in their children’s literacy learning” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 25).

Two family literacy programs, among many others throughout the United States (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008), include Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando [Learning, Improving, Educating]) and AVANCE, as described by Hyslop (2000).
These programs were developed to train parents in different literacy strategies to use with their children at home. The goals of these programs were to increase: (a) Hispanic parents’ ability to provide literacy opportunities for their children; (b) parents’ ability to be positive literacy role models; (c) parents’ literacy skills in order to encourage, initiate, support and extend their children’s literacy learning, and (d) home-school relationship for Hispanic families.

**Bilingual family literacy bags.**

Bilingual books allow parents and children to experience literature in their shared first language, while facilitating literacy skills in their second language as well (Quiroz & Dixon, 2012). Several studies provide support of the use of bilingual texts as an educational strategy for ELLs (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Montgomery, 2008; Quiroz & Dixon, 2012). In these studies, parent-child communication during book readings and homework activities was clearly contingent upon the shared language of parent and child (Larrotta & Ramirez; Montgomery; Quiroz & Dixon).

“Another important finding for language planning is the indication that quality of language interactions in Spanish facilitates English language and literacy skills...Maternal literacy skills, although important, seem to be second to the maternal support afforded by bilingual education and mother child shared language” (Quiroz & Dizon, 2012, pp. 166-167).

The Family Literacy Bag (FLB) initiative was a specific parent involvement strategy implemented by school districts in Florida, California and Utah (Montgomery, 2008). The goal of FLB was to build a literacy bridge between families and the classroom that would connect with the families’ cultural and linguistic heritage. The participating teachers were trained in the
purpose and use of the FLBs prior to program implementation, including “conducting action research to evaluate the FLB and to guide practice” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 18).

Specifically, FLBs provided bilingual texts and reading support resources and activities for families to use at home. Each literacy bag had dual language books. Instructions were provided in English and Spanish for activities to be done in connection with reading the book. “Each Family Literacy Bag (FLB) contained a guidebook for parents to read and discuss with their children and three quality children’s books at varied reading-developmental levels and genres. The books and activities focused around a theme” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 17).

The FLB program was effective because it provided bilingual texts, specific strategies, instructions and activities for parents to use with their children at home.

“Most Spanish-speaking families appreciated having the books and materials in their native language. Some parents could not read in English and appreciated the Spanish translation. Others used the dual language books to learn more English. With both Spanish and English books available, Spanish-speaking families learn that their native culture and language are valued. Children continue to learn in their native language as they become increasingly proficient with English” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 18).

**Audio books/recorded readings.**

Audio books are another option for providing comprehensible input for ELLs of all ages. Children’s audio books are especially appropriate for shared child-parent literacy experiences, and provide a model for pronunciation and oral reading fluency, including “correct intonation, pitch, stress, diction and enunciation” (Ho, 2000, p. 263).

Cooke et al. (2009) examined the effects of using audio prompting to assist LEP, native Spanish-speaking mothers in teaching their preschool children English vocabulary at home.
Mothers were trained through modeling with supervised practice and feedback to use a Talking Photo Album (TPA). A Talking Photo Album is a bilingual labeled picture book with an audio recording accompanying each page, which provides accurate English object names and feedback to the reader.

Parent-child tutoring sessions using the TPAs averaged five minutes each, for five tutoring sessions per week. After seventeen weeks of tutoring with the TPAs, pre- and post-test scores of object naming fluency provided evidence of substantial growth in performance for all participants. Posttest scores for some of the mothers exceeded the scores of their children. Cooke et al. (2009) conclude that the TPA intervention: (a) successfully involved parents in their child's education, (b) was sufficient to allow the mothers to acquire new vocabulary, and (c) was an enjoyable language learning strategy for the mothers. "Anecdotally, it was clear in this study that these parents wanted to be involved and, when given a clear strategy and support, worked consistently with their children" (Cooke et al., 2009, p. 226). Study participants reported the TPAs were easily transportable, adaptable and cost efficient.

Results of a recorded reading intervention for ELL parents and their children expand the literature to include use of a comprehensive recorded reading program delivered by a parent with limited reading proficiency and/or perceived skill deficit (Kupzyk, McCurdy, Hofstadter & Berger, 2011). ELL parents who participated in the recorded reading intervention reported: (a) increased comfort providing assistance with reading at home, (b) the acceptability of the program, and (c) enjoyment while practicing reading at home.

**Successful programs**

Successful programs offer parents specific ways to: (a) help their children at home, (b) be active participants in their child's education, and (c) increase their own literacy development.
The success of programs can be attributed to being “clearly aligned with the needs of parents and students, broad-base community support, ongoing and on-site relationships with university educators, and extensive support services to parents” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 26).

Successful programs also instruct parents in the use of specific reading strategies throughout the reading process (Robinson, 2012; Smallwood, 1998), such as pre-reading (activating background knowledge, making predictions), during reading (visual imagery, self-monitoring for comprehension, making text-to-self/text/world connections) and post-reading activities (confirming or rejecting predictions, summarizing, and sequencing). Providing ELL parents with clear literacy strategies and support attributed to the success of the TPA intervention on participants’ object naming fluency (Cook et al., 2009).

Programs need to provide sufficient class time for parents to practice reading aloud quality texts with a partner in order to increase their confidence before reading to their child at home (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009). By reading and discussing the text with a classmate who is also learning English and specific reading strategies, the LEP adult becomes more familiar and confident with the text, and will be more encouraged to share the story and model reading strategies with their children at home (Sharp, 1991).

Successful programs report greater participation rates, as measured in number of hours and days of program involvement. Studies indicate “greater efforts are needed to increase the duration and intensity of participation” in adult ELL programs (Askov et al., 2005, p. 144). Increased participation may be achieved through technology and homework packets, especially through instructional content and skills that meaningfully apply to women’s family situations. The LEAF (Learning English Among Friends) research-based family literacy program was effective because it addressed the needs of the adult participants; “In a disadvantaged
community, education needs to be seen as involving parents beyond attending meetings to include ESL, GED (General Education Development) or other types of educational experiences” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 12). In order to increase the involvement of LEP parents in their children’s formal education, schools need to offer family literacy programs that “focus as much on meeting the needs of the mothers as on their children’s needs” (Rivera & Lavan, 2012, p. 257).

**Effects of ELL Parental Involvement in Children’s Literacy on Parents’ Program Participation**

There is evidence that parents who participate in family literacy programs with their children have higher attendance rates than participants in adult-only literacy programs, and the effect of being a Hispanic ESL participant significantly increased the number of hours of PACT participation (Askov et al., 2005; Prins et al., 2008). “The variable that most strongly related to the duration and intensity of participation—and hence to achievement outcomes—are the following: whether the woman is in an ESL program...” (Askov et al., 2005, p. 142).

Participation rates are important since participation is related to achievement outcomes. In an analysis of parental participation in the Toyota Families for Learning Program and the substantial and significant gains in reading skills, as demonstrated by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores, Philliber et al. (1996) stated, “at least one of the reasons adults in the family literacy program may demonstrate greater gains than participants in adult-focused programs do is that they stay longer” (p. 562). One of the reasons adults participate in family literacy programs longer and with more intensity than in adult-only literacy programs is the convenience of having their
children with them eliminates the need to secure childcare while they attend classes (Prins et al., 2008).

**Effects of Parental Involvement in Children’s Literacy on Parents’ Attitudes Toward Learning English**

The use of children’s literature was an initial step in developing ELLs’ confidence in their ability to read, speak and understand English (Ho, 2000). ELL parents who participated in the recorded reading intervention (Cooke et al., 2009) reported increased comfort providing their children assistance with reading at home, as well as enjoyment while practicing reading in English at home.

Increased parental engagement with their children’s education and confidence in their own English education was especially evident for parents who participated in PACT programs (Rivera and Lavan, 2012). Mothers reported a better understanding of what was expected of their children in school on a regular basis and further “described how going to their children’s classroom also helped them learn English and other literacy skills (Rivera & Lavan, 2012, p. 254). As previously mentioned, the ELL parents who participated in a PACT program (Montgomery, 2008) felt empowered by sharing their cultural understanding of texts as they learned to read with their children. Furthermore, there was evidence of “positive change in (parents’) self-perception and efficacy in being able to participate directly in their children’s literacy learning” (Montgomery, 2008, p. 25).

Most of the participating parents in the Latina/o parent literacy project (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009, p. 626) experienced a “shift in attitude toward reading,” as evidenced by entries in their reflective journals: “Reading used to scare me, but now I know that it can be fun and I now know how to do it with my children.”
Effects of ELL Parental Involvement on Parents’ Literacy Development

Few family literacy studies provide quantitative data of adult ELLs’ literacy development based on pre- and post-test scores (Paratore, 1992; Philliber et al., 1996). Most of the results for literacy development as a result of parental involvement in children’s literacy activities are based on qualitative data and anecdotal evidence.

Quantitatively, seventy-three percent of participants in the “Families About Success” program (Irby, 1992) showed improvement in reading, as indicated by Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA) pre- and post-test scores. An analysis of the CASAS and TABE scores of parents who participated in the Toyota Families for Learning Program indicated substantial and significant gains in reading skills (Philliber et al., 1996, p. 562). An analysis of researchers’ field notes (Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009) showed that parent participants expanded their academic and conversational vocabulary specific to the literacy project. Furthermore, an analysis of parents’ journal entries provided evidence of improved fluency and quality of writing skills.

There is qualitative data that suggests that ELLs changed from being reluctant to avid readers as a result of participation in family literacy programs (Chao & Montero, 2014; Kim & Byington, 2016; Larrotta & Ramirez, 2009; Montgomery, 2008). ELL parents who participated with their kindergarten children in an at-home family literacy routine (Imperato, 2009) reported the oral reading of rhythmical children’s texts and subsequent focused instructional activities helped with their understanding of the structure of English.

Summary

This review of literature provides quantitative and qualitative data about the effects of parental involvement in children’s ELL literacy education on the adults’ second language
development, with a special emphasis on learner program participation, self-perception, and literacy achievement.

This review of literature presents qualitative data and anecdotal evidence that the use of children’s literature with LEP adults and their children promotes appreciation and enjoyment of literature, enhances adults’ motivation to learn English as a second language, and increases adults’ self-perception as capable readers and language learners.

The primary goal of all of the educational strategies presented in this review of literature is to incorporate English language learning through meaningful parent and child literacy experiences. Based on the findings of this study, “adult ESL literacy programs should play an integral role in appropriating ESL learning and ESL use into everyday family literacy practices” (Chao & Montero, 2014, p.109). Successful adult ELL programs will teach parents how to read and write in English, as well as support them in learning how to create situations in the home that encourage reading and writing with their children (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Limited English proficiency (LEP) parents can increase their English language skills through involvement and participation in their young children’s early literacy ELL activities.

It was hypothesized that adult ELL parents who participate in literacy education with their children would exhibit larger gains in reading than LEP adults who participate in adult-only ELL programs. As this review of literature suggests, there is a lack of action research and quantitative data on literacy development of adult ELLs who participate in their children’s early literacy development. Pre-and post-test scores of standardized tests could be examined to determine whether language and literacy growth differ between these groups.
Chapter III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to provide a review of the literature related to the effects of parental involvement in early literacy programs on parents’ English language development. The content of this paper presents research on specific programs and methods that not only incorporate parents in their children’s English language learning, but also encourage and improve the English language literacy development of the parents. Qualitative and quantitative data from several sources were presented along with a discussion of specific ways in which involvement in early literacy programs affect parents’ English language learning program participation, self-perception, and literacy achievement.

More action research and practice in the area of the reciprocal nature of children and adults’ literacy are needed. Research including quantitative data based on pre-and post-test outcomes of parental English language literacy development is sparse. “Not even in national evaluation studies are there specific outcome data on changes in participants’ lives” (Gadsden, 2002, p. 8). Even when family literacy programs (FLPs) are designed to offer “services to the parent with the expectation that the benefit will be ‘through the parent’ to their children” (O’Brien et al., 2014, p. 384), the quantitative data collected and presented in the research is based on children’s English learning outcomes, with little to no quantitative documentation of parental English language development. More quantitative studies should be conducted to investigate the extent to which parental English language develops as a function of participation in their children’s early literacy instruction. Specific assessment and evaluation measures of
adult ELLs’ literacy development should be included in family literacy research in order to
determine specific outcomes and to guide future research and instructional practice in adult ELL
education.
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