A study of the English language proficiency, Spanish language proficiency, and reading strategies of selected Hispanic beginning readers of English.

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A STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY,
SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, AND READING STRATEGIES OF
SELECTED HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS OF
ENGLISH

A Dissertation Presented
by
DOROTHY MARIA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
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A STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, AND READING STRATEGIES OF SELECTED HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS OF ENGLISH

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FOR PETER D. MARIA

This study is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Peter D. Maria, who was a fluent speaker of English, Spanish, and Portuguese. He always told my father, "Damn it, Frank! Teach those kids Spanish!"
I would like to give special thanks to my parents, Clara Maria and Frank Maria, and to all of my family for their unfailing support and encouragement.

I am grateful to the Washington State Migrant Education Program, specifically Rosendo Rivera and David Randall, for their support of this project.

Finally, I would like to thank the children, teachers, and administrators of two school districts in Washington State. Their willingness to "take a chance" will, hopefully, be of benefit to children.

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, AND READING STRATEGIES OF SELECTED HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS OF ENGLISH

(September, 1983)

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Thirty Hispanic second graders enrolled in regular (as opposed to bilingual) classrooms were administered the Spanish and English versions of the LAS and the Reading Miscue Inventory. The study was guided by questions related to the subjects' oral language proficiency and its relationship to their reading proficiency.

It was found that the great majority of the subjects were fluent speakers of prestige dialects of English. Further, the majority of the children were found to be non-Spanish-speaking.

Fourteen of the fifteen more proficient readers were speakers of prestige dialects of English. The only LAS subscale which emerged as a predictor of the subjects' RMI reading levels was Subscale V, reflecting the subjects' syntax, vocabulary, and oral fluency.

Finally, in almost 50% of the instances, teacher judgment differed from the RMI judgment in terms of the Hispanic beginning readers' reading proficiency. Each of the findings suggested a topic which would be well-considered through future research efforts.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

1

**CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

14

**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

52

**CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

61

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

93

**REFERENCES**

98
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1:  A Comparison of Teacher Judgment and RMI-Based Judgment of the Reading Proficiency Levels of Thirty (30) Hispanic Beginning Readers of English  62

TABLE 2:  English Language Proficiency Levels of More and Less Proficient Hispanic Beginning Readers of English  68

TABLE 3:  Crosstabulation of RMI Level by English Level  73

TABLE 4:  One-Way Analysis of Variance:  English LAS by Group (More of Less Proficient Readers)  74

TABLE 5:  Spanish Language Proficiency Levels of More and Less Proficient Hispanic Beginning Readers of English  77

TABLE 6:  Crosstabulation of RMI Level by Spanish Level  80

TABLE 7:  A Comparison of the Reading Strategies of Selected Limited and Fluent English-Proficient Hispanic Beginning Readers of English in Terms of the Quality of Their Miscues and Retellings  88

TABLE 8:  A Comparison of Scores on LAS Subscale IV Reflecting Comprehension of Syntactic Structures  89

TABLE 9:  Percentage of Miscues Corrected  90
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the rapidly growing numbers of Hispanics living in the U.S., society has taken an increased interest in learning more about members of this group. In 1978, it was estimated that over 12.05 million people of Hispanic background were residing in the United States. The preliminary 1980 census reports have been interpreted to indicate that over 16 million Hispanics currently reside in the U.S. (Arciniega, 1981). Of the 16 million, over 60% are of Mexican origin.

It has been found that for the most part, Hispanics reside in metropolitan areas found in the industrial and sunbelt states. Over 85.4% live in metropolitan areas, while $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total Hispanic population is found in three states: California, Texas, and New York (Garcia, 1981).

Of particular significance to our educational system is the finding that over 42% of all Hispanics living in the U.S. are under the age of 25. Further, of the 3.5 million limited-English proficient children attending U.S. schools, 73% are Hispanic. In light of these figures, it is evident that for many years to come, U.S. schools will continue to be faced with the question of how to best serve children with limited English proficiency.
Through the development of specially funded programs, the federal government has responded positively to this challenge, developing programs which provide academic assistance to economically disadvantaged children of all language backgrounds. Together with other children, limited English proficient students have been the benefactors of such programs as Title VII, Chapter I, and Chapter I Migrant.

Perhaps the single most significant development for limited English proficient children has been the emergence of bilingual education programs. A large number of local and state educational systems have embraced some form of bilingual education as a means of addressing the educational needs of limited-English proficient students.

Other educational systems, apparently despairing of the financial and social responsibilities, have attempted to address the issue of limited English proficient children by eliminating them from the schools. In 1975, Texas amended its education code to allow local school districts to charge tuition to the children of undocumented workers. This new amendment made education impossible for a large number of limited English proficient children. The state law was overturned by a 1982 Supreme Court decision. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that a state must provide free education to children regardless of their illegal status in the U.S. (Alabama Law Review, 1981, America, 1982).
While the schools have been mandated to educate all children regardless of their language background or residency status, it is the growing concern of the tax-paying public that whatever the answer has been in the past, whatever the monies spent, the result has been less than positive. For among Hispanics, the school dropout rate continues to hover between 70-85%. In spite of desegregation orders, 2/3 of all Hispanic children still attend highly segregated schools.

According to Arciniega (1981), federally funded programs notwithstanding, the educational experience of Hispanic children in the U.S. continues to be marred by: curriculum which offers an inadequate treatment of Hispanic contributions to the U.S., a "cultural deficit" perspective on testing, guidance, and counseling programs and processes for Hispanics, under-representation of Hispanics on school district staffs, a lack of school decision-making power within the Hispanic community, and a negative attitude toward the Spanish language as a mode of instruction.

An analysis of current educational programs and their less than successful impact upon Hispanic student achievement would be well-served by a consideration of the roots of such programs. The unfavorable statistics are less startling when we consider the role which our legal systems have taken in the changing educational experiences of minorities, specifically Hispanics, in the U.S.. A review of educational milestones for Hispanic students will underscore the fact that virtually all major changes have been prompted by legal decisions made at the federal level.
The seeds of educational equity for Hispanics were sown by the civil rights movement of the 60's. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred discrimination in any institution receiving federal funds (Margulies, 1981). In 1968, a year of inner-city riots and school walk-outs, Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act, giving non-English speaking children the option to study in their native language for the purpose of easing into U.S. life. Through the Act, federal funds were made available for bilingual education. The initiative, however, had to come from local schools (Thorstrom, 1981). School districts across the country applied for and received federal funds through Title VII, introducing the phenomenon of bilingual education to children, teacher trainees, and teacher trainers almost simultaneously.

In 1970, the Office of Civil Rights issued a memorandum interpreting Title VI to encompass language-minority children. Shortly thereafter, the parents of a limited-English proficient child of Chinese origin attending school in San Francisco sued the school system for its denial of the child's language-related educational needs. The result was the now historic Lau vs. Nichols Supreme Court decision of 1974. The Supreme Court ruled that failure to give special help to limited and non-English speaking children denied them their right to an equal education. The Court further ruled that such help could take a variety of forms, including but not necessarily limited to ESL instruction.
In 1975, a task force appointed by now Secretary of the Department of Education Terrel Bell, came up with the "Lau remedies," interpreting the Supreme Court decision. In providing guidelines for the content of the new programs, the remedies stated that English As a Second Language instruction was not enough. The remedies asserted that children should be taught in their native language when appropriate and that children should be taught their mother culture. The remedies, aimed at school districts with concentrations of children from one language group, said that the new bilingual programs were not to result in ethnically segregated schools.

In 1976, the Office of Civil Rights issued a memorandum reminding regional offices that the Lau remedies were only guidelines. However, for districts proposing strictly ESL-based programs, the burden of proof was upon them to establish the effectiveness of their programs.

Under the Carter administration, then Secretary of Education Shirley Hufstedler set forth federal regulations which would require that students be taught required subjects in both languages while learning English. In 1981, Terrel Bell, almost immediately following his appointment by Reagan to the post of Secretary of the Department of Education, withdrew Hufstedler's regulations. The Department is presently in the process of proposing a new set of regulations which will surely grant local and state government agencies greater freedom. While the Lau remedies are currently in effect, the Office of Civil Rights has applied different standards to the evaluation of district plans.
The main concern is whether or not a plan for serving limited and non-English speaking children is likely to work.

Given the present administration's support of the agricultural industry and the 1982 Supreme Court decision granting free education to all children, it is likely that, for many years to come, local, state, and federal educational decision-makers will continue to be challenged to meet the educational needs of limited-English proficient children.

School districts are presently responding to this challenge in a number of ways. According to the Office of Civil Rights, school districts offering strictly ESL programs are definitely in the minority. On the other hand, the number of districts across the nation offering maintenance bilingual-bicultural programs is small and dwindling. It appears that the majority of school districts with large concentrations of limited English proficient children have opted for transitional bilingual education programs.

Many school districts have set as a number one priority, the rapid exiting of children from these transitional programs. In some states, such as Texas, children are tested every year to determine their readiness for the regular program. Other districts exit children from bilingual programs as soon as they demonstrate a specific grade level of achievement in native language reading. Language testing is a critical component of virtually all current education programs designed for limited English proficient children.
Ironically, the trend toward rapid transition from mother tongue to English language instruction presently coexists with emerging research data which indicates that a child's success in English is positively related to the strength of his educational foundation in his native language.

In the past, educational researchers' treatment of issues related to Hispanic children did little more than mirror the prejudices of their times. Without mention of assessment instruments, researchers spoke of "bilingual children," "Spanish-speaking children," and pupils from "foreign homes." Further, studies were designed on the basis of unsupported premises. Some of those premises included: "All Hispanic children are native speakers of Spanish." "All Hispanic children come from Spanish-speaking homes." "Bilingualism implies a lack of proficiency in English." "All Hispanic children enter U.S. schools with a common set of language-related competencies."

Today, as researchers and teachers question and test the findings of earlier research studies, our perceptions of Hispanic children in U.S. schools are changing. The uniqueness of each Hispanic child is becoming more evident as research questions and tools become increasingly refined. Such a shift in perceptions can only be positive because it is only through viewing children as individuals that their needs as individual learners can be addressed.

While the answers to the dilemma of educating linguistic minorities in the U.S. have recently been sought and fought for in the courts, it is critical that the educational community provide leadership by strengthening the theoretical base upon which these decisions are made.
It is entirely possible that through new federal regulations, the courts will again have a major impact upon the fate of Hispanic children in U.S. schools. By seeking and providing answers to questions which clarify critical issues, educational research can serve to promote decisions which help our schools to better serve children of all language backgrounds.

Problem

An in-depth documentation of the language and reading strengths of selected Hispanic beginning readers of English is a critical step
toward the much needed refinement of research questions which have hitherto assumed the existence of a prototypical Hispanic beginning reader. While offering such a documentation, the present study focused specifically on a consideration of the kinds of linguistic knowledge which may be components of a language base supportive of the development of English reading proficiency for Hispanic children.

Purpose

The present study intended to explore the relationships among the English language proficiency, Spanish language proficiency, and reading proficiency of selected Hispanic beginning readers of English.

Design of the Study

The study did not aim to test hypotheses pertaining to Hispanic beginning readers of English. Rather, in response to the limited research base related to this group, the author's intent was to document and explore existing phenomena for the purpose of clarifying questions for future research.

To this end, thirty (30) Hispanic beginning readers of English were administered tests of their English and Spanish language proficiency, as well as a test of their English reading proficiency. The test results were later analyzed for the purpose of identifying trends in relationships among variables pertaining to the subjects' Spanish and English language proficiency and their English reading proficiency.
Significance of the Study

While a linguistic perspective does not provide the sole framework within which Hispanic beginning readers can be considered, it is a focus which can provide a starting point for research which is aimed at clarifying issues related to the development of English reading proficiency for Hispanic beginning readers. That language facility provides critical support for beginning readers is a generally accepted premise among researchers in the area of reading. Nevertheless, early research studies which focused upon Hispanic readers of English generally failed to consider the language variations which exist within Hispanic communities. In that not all Hispanic children manifest the same variety or degree of English language proficiency, a documented consideration of the subjects' English and Spanish language proficiency is a necessary point of departure.

The present study should be useful in pointing to trends in terms of the relationships among the language-related competencies under consideration. Because research related to Hispanic beginning readers of English is extremely limited, the study should assist future research efforts by documenting the existence of specific relationships and questioning the previous assumption of others.

Finally, the study will serve to underscore the complexity of issues related to Hispanic beginning readers, thus underscoring the need for a consideration of clearly defined linguistic variables.
Definitions of Terms

Beginning readers: Second grade students in the process of developing the strategies used by proficient readers through experience with the reading process.

Bilingual: Able to use two (2) languages to varying degrees of proficiency.

Code-switching: The alternate use of two (2) languages or linguistic codes.

Hispanic: One whose ethnic heritage can be traced to Latin American cultures, i.e. Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.

Language-related competencies: Those abilities which are related to the individual's expressive and receptive control of oral and written language.

Language variations: Dialects of a spoken language.

Less proficient beginning readers: Those who are not able to utilize the three (3) language systems with sufficient effectiveness for deriving meaning from a text.

Low-prestige dialect: A language variation which is given lesser status within a given society.

Miscue: A reader's observed response which does not correspond to the expected response (Goodman, 1973:160).

More proficient beginning readers: Those who are able to utilize the three (3) language systems with effectiveness sufficient for deriving meaning from a text while gaining the experience necessary for becoming fluent readers.

Phonological system: The language system which provides the rules for combining speech sounds.

Prestige dialect: A language variation which is given the great degree of status within a given society. While much of the literature reviewed uses the term "Standard English," it is the author's point of view that no language variation is more valid than another which effectively communicates to individuals within the same language community.
Semantic system: The language system which provides the rules for assigning relationships between linguistic symbols and the objects, events, or ideas to which they refer.

Syntactic system: The language system which provides the rules for combining words into sentences.
Delimitations of the Study

Ethnic background of subjects. Because of the researcher's geographical location, subjects were selected from among children who are of Mexican descent. Nevertheless, the findings will probably be of relevance to members of other Hispanic populations who share critical commonalities with the subjects of this study.

Socioeconomic status of subjects. The great majority of subjects shared a similar socioeconomic background. They were members of families from a low income bracket.

Geographical area. Subjects were selected from two (2), small rural communities in the State of Washington. While another geographical area might produce different findings, it is the author's position that the factors under consideration will have similar relationships regardless of the geographical area.

Desired outcome. In that only thirty (30) subjects were examined in-depth, the study can only hope to describe and analyze existing phenomena for the purpose of clarifying questions which can be experimentally considered in future research.

Limitations of the linguistic perspective. A linguistic perspective will consider only one (1) area which may shed light upon Hispanic beginning readers of English.

Limitations of the testing instruments. While the Reading Miscue Inventory and the Language Assessment Scales are, in the researcher's judgment, suitable instruments for studying the reading and language proficiency of Hispanic children, the kinds of information which were collected was limited by the scopes of the instruments.
CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Those who seek to improve the educational experience of Hispanics within the U.S. would especially benefit from an investigation into the importance of specific kinds of language competencies for the reader's development of English reading proficiency. Further, because such a broad range of language competencies exists within Hispanic communities in the U.S., an inquiry into these language variations is critical to an understanding of the kinds of educational practices which will support the development of English reading proficiency for individual Hispanics who fall at specific points along the language continuum.

The purpose of the following review of literature is to establish a theoretical base for the study of the relationship between the language competencies of varying Hispanic readers of English and their development of English reading proficiency. The following areas will be reviewed in this section:

1) The Study of Hispanic Readers of English: A Historical Overview
2) A Framework for the Consideration of the Language Variations Among Hispanic Readers of English
3) Contrasting Views of the Reading Process and Learning to Read: Implications for the Roles of Specific Language Systems
Hispanic Readers of English:
A Historical Overview of Related Research

The purpose of this section is:
* To report research findings which shed light upon Hispanic readers of English and their development of English reading proficiency.
* To identify issues which have emerged from studies related to Hispanic readers of English.
* To document and reevaluate generalizations which have been made by researchers involved in the study of Hispanic readers of English.

The following historical overview will include a discussion of research studies which relate to Hispanic readers of English. While not all included studies pertain specifically to Hispanic readers of English, all studies are related to the relationship between language variations and the development of English reading proficiency.

A general shift has occurred in the questions which have been of interest to those studying linguistically diverse readers of English. Studies conducted in the thirties (30's) and forties (40's) sought to reveal the nature of the "linguistically different" child's "reading problem." Later studies (especially those in the sixties (60's)) were largely concerned with the effects of specific educational programs upon the reading achievement of linguistically different children. Many studies conducted throughout the seventies (70's) to the present have considered the "second language" or "ESL" reader for the purpose of generating insights into the relative importance of specific language systems (semantic, syntactic, phonological, lexical) for the English reading process. Other studies have considered the relationship between
the use of a stable, low prestige dialect of English and the development of English reading proficiency. While few of these studies have considered Hispanic readers of English, their relevance to the present study's target population will be discussed later in this section.

Early reading studies related to Hispanic children in the U.S. sought to compare the reading ability of Hispanic children with that of non-Hispanic children living in the U.S. (Tireman, 1930) (Kelly, 1935) (Steuber, 1940). These studies were based on a comparative analysis of reading achievement test scores. The studies found that Hispanic children scored considerably lower than the norm in all cases. The conclusion of these studies was that "Spanish-speaking" children were at an educational disadvantage. The implication, then, was that speaking Spanish was, in some way, hampering the development of English reading proficiency for Hispanic children.

The studies were seriously flawed by unsupported premises, i.e. that all Hispanic children studied were Spanish-speaking; that "Spanish-speaking" and "English-speaking" could be considered mutually exclusive categories, and that socioeconomic factors were unimportant variables. Thus, little was learned about the language of Hispanic children and its relationship to their English reading achievement.

During the same period, attempts were made to identify the nature of the Hispanic children's reading problem. For example, their ability to pronounce and comprehend English word lists was studied (Tireman, 1945). The researcher found that his fourth (4th) grade Hispanic subjects were unable to comprehend forty-six percent (46%) of the words presented
from a list of words presumed to be known by average children in the U.S. by grade four (4). The conclusion was that the "native Spanish-speaking subjects" did not possess the reading vocabulary of the average fourth (4th) grader in the U.S. The implication was that children who speak Spanish have poorer reading vocabularies than monolingual English speakers when reading English.

As in earlier studies, this study was seriously flawed by invalid assumptions. First, the researcher offered no support for the premise that the subjects were, in fact, "native Spanish-speaking." Second, because the study required that the subjects give an oral explanation of each word, their inability to express word meanings orally was taken as evidence that the words were not comprehended.

The Hispanic child's comprehension of words presented visually vs. orally was studied by Tireman and Woods (1939). The researchers found a significant difference in comprehension in favor of words presented visually. The conclusion was that "Spanish-speaking children" comprehend written language better than oral language. The conclusion implied that speaking Spanish negatively correlates with the ability to comprehend oral English. No measure of language proficiency was cited. Again, because of unsupported premises, this study generated little information about the language of Hispanic children and its relationship to their strengths and weaknesses as readers of English.

In the late fifties (50's), a shift in focus occurred among researchers who were interested in Hispanic readers of English.
Research questions were aimed at identifying instructional approaches which would maximize reading achievement for Hispanic children in the U.S. The majority of these studies considered the effects of oral English training (ESL instruction) on the reading achievement of Hispanic readers of English (McNeil, 1958) (McCanne, 1966) (Horn, 1966) (Knief, 1975). The studies compared ESL instruction to other approaches. The effects of ESL instruction were compared to the effects of: no additional instruction (McNeil, 1958), basal vs. Language Experience instruction (McCanne, 1966), and oral Spanish development vs. tradition reading readiness instruction (Horn, 1966). One study looked at the combined effects of oral English and oral Spanish language development upon English reading achievement test scores of Hispanic junior high school students (Knief, 1975).

For the most part, the studies pointed to the positive effects of ESL instruction upon the reading test scores of Hispanic children. Nevertheless, the importance of the findings was lessened by several factors. First, the subjects were consistently assumed to be Spanish-speaking. No test measures for making this determination were cited. Second, no measure for assessing the subjects' English language proficiency was cited in any instance. Third, socioeconomic data was not provided. Finally, no consideration was given to the effects of oral English training upon reading scores for monolingual English-speaking children. (Given that reading is a language process, it is probable that all children, regardless of their language background, would benefit from instruction which would expand their ability to use
and comprehend language.) The relative importance of oral English training (ESL instruction) for Hispanic children and other children in the U.S. was not clarified by studies conducted during this period.

Several studies conducted during the seventies (70's) considered the "second language reader's" language development, e.g. his syntactic system, and its relationship to the subjects' reading strategies. These studies gave evidence that some Hispanic readers of English will not have sufficient command of the English language to efficiently utilize those reading strategies which are used by proficient readers of English (MacNamara, as cited by Hatch, 1974) (Hatch, 1974) (Goodman, as cited by Rigg, 1977) (Clark, 1979).

To test the impact of syntactical knowledge upon reading speed for first and second language readers, MacNamara (as cited by Hatch, 1974) used pairs of passages. One pair was written in the subjects' native language, English. It consisted of one passage which closely resembled English syntax (without making sense), and a second passage which presented words in random order. The second pair was identical to the first except that it was written in the subjects' second language, Irish. The subjects were able to read the syntactically acceptable sentence in their native language more rapidly than the random word passage in the same language. In contrast, their reading speed for the syntactically correct passage and the random word passage in their second was identical. MacNamara's findings suggest that some second language readers are not able to use syntactical knowledge to increase their speed when reading a second language while they are able to utilize their knowledge of syntax to increase their reading rate when reading their native tongue.
The varying effect of textual syntactic constraints upon "native and second language readers" was suggested by the findings of Hatch et al (1974). The task involved the rapid deletion of every letter "e" on a page of text. Upon comparing the success of the two groups, the researchers found that the ESL students were much more successful at the task than were the native English-speakers. The native speakers marked letters when they appeared in content words but missed letters in function words. If the skilled native speaking reader is accustomed to assigning priority to features in words and sentences, as is suggested by a cognitive view of the reading process (Gibson, 1970), it makes sense that the native speaking subjects would see the letter "e" more often in content words as compared to function words. If the second language reader is less adept at the utilization of unit-forming principles, it follows that he would see the letter "e" in every word equally well.

The relevance of the above mentioned studies to Hispanic children learning to read English is limited. An important consideration is that the subjects in MacNamara's and Hatch's studies were adults who were probably already proficient readers in their native language. The findings, then, may be most relevant to the bilingual Hispanic child who has already learned to read Spanish, i.e. the child who has participated in a bilingual educational program. Further, the important differences between subjects do not appear to lie in their bilingual vs. monolingual states. Rather, the differences appear to lie in the extent
to which they are able to evidence a native-like command of the
second language. The bilingual child who has been able to achieve
native-like fluency in English may not be subject to the same limi-
tations as the child whose dialect of English reflects limited-English
proficiency.

The miscue/ESL project which was conducted under the direction of
Goodman (as cited by Rigg, 1977) yielded noteworthy data with regard
to ESL readers. The subjects included ten (10) representatives of
four (4) groups of "ESL" speakers (Arabic, Navajo, Samoan, Spanish)
for each grade level including second (2nd), fourth (4th), and sixth
(6th) (one hundred twenty (120) subjects in all). All subjects were
identified as average readers. From the original group, four (4)
subjects from each language group were selected for analysis, giving
a total of forty-eight (48) in-depth RMI analyses. The utilization of
the three (3) cueing systems (graphophonic, syntactic, semantic) by
ESL readers was one question considered by the researchers. It was
found that all subjects utilized the three (3) cueing systems, although
with varying degrees of efficiency. The readers made miscues on only
twenty percent (20%) of the text. When they deviated from the text,
they often produced miscues that made sense. Spanish-speakers produced
an average of forty-one (41%) semantically acceptable miscues as comp-
ared to the Arabic group, thirty-six percent (36%), the Navajo group
forty-one percent (41%), and the Samoan group, thirty-six percent (36%).
At least fifty-five percent (55%) of all miscues were syntactically
acceptable. An important finding was that the types of ESL miscues were
similar across and within all groups—eighty percent (80%) involving the substitution of a null form for an inflectional ending. This suggests that the reading proficiency of second language readers is not determined by their first language. The researchers concluded that the subjects' reading proficiency seemed to be related to their English language proficiency as well as to the semantic and syntactic complexity of the text.

It is interesting to note that in Goodman's Miscue/ESL project, grammatical and lexical miscues caused by English being the readers' second language were coded as dialect miscues, and as such, were considered to be semantically and syntactically acceptable. It appears that the researchers have made a questionable assumption with respect to the significance of ESL miscues. To include them in the "acceptable/dialect" category assumes that the ESL readers possess the same degree of linguistic knowledge as dialect speakers of a language in which the reader is fluent. Further, an initial consideration of the distinction between limited-English speakers and fluent English speakers would have resulted in the researchers' inclusion of the Texas-Spanish group in the dialect study rather than the ESL study. Rather than selecting subjects on the basis of the order in which two (2) languages are acquired (as was done for the Miscue/ESL study), a more relevant criterion seems to be the extent to which the subjects' English language production demonstrates fluency.

None of the afore-mentioned studies appear to have assessed the English language proficiency of the subjects. The result is that the
studies did not provide information with regard to the English language variations which support or fail to support the English reading process.

While most researchers have viewed Hispanic readers as members of one, linguistically-limited group, others have found evidence to support the notion that some Hispanic children speak a stable, low prestige dialect of English which is not limited in nature (Arnold, 1971) (Lucas and Singer, 1973) (Goodman, as cited by Rigg, 1977) (Laine, 1978). While Goodman had originally categorized Hispanic subjects as ESL readers, the data from his Miscue/ESL study indicated that the language of this group was similar to that of speakers of stable, low prestige dialects who were studied in the same research project.

As further support for the linguistic diversity existing among Hispanic children, Laine (1978) found no significant difference in the language competency of Black, Chicano, and White seven (7) and ten (10) year-old boys. Arnold (1971), in a comparative study of the reading skills of Mexican-American and Afro-American junior high school students, found no significant difference in the language production of the two (2) groups.

Finally, Lucas and Singer (1973) found that while the language of their sixty (60) first grade Chicano subjects varied from that of the larger community, it resulted in no communication interference for the average English-speaking listener. The researchers found that the language of their subjects reflect few syntactic divergences from the language of others. As the speakers got older, syntactic divergences became virtually nonexistent. Finally, Lucas and Singer found a
relationship between syntactic ability and reading achievement.

The afore-mentioned research studies were cited to emphasize the importance of recognizing and considering the linguistic diversity which characterizes Hispanic readers of English. Only insofar as clear linguistic descriptors are offered will research efforts related to Hispanic readers of English provide information which will positively impact upon their achievement in the area of English reading.

If a segment of the Hispanic population speaks a stable, low-prestige dialect of English, as has been indicated by research, a review of studies related to low-prestige dialect use and reading will assist in the refinement of a context for further study.

The remaining discussion, then, will pertain to studies which consider the reading process for speakers of stable, low prestige dialects of English. The great majority of studies cited were conducted with Black children who are speakers of varieties of Black English. It is important, however, to note that the present study does not assume that the language of the two (2) groups is identical. The concern is the identification of issues which may have relevance to the present study of Hispanic beginning readers of English.

Studies related to Black English and reading have dealt with a number of issues including: the relationship between the use of specific syntactic variations and reading comprehension (Labov, 19670 (Jaggar and Cullinan, 1975); the relationship between a variable phonological system and decoding skills (Hart, Curthrie, Winfield, 1980); the relationship between control of a high prestige dialect of English
and reading proficiency (Sims, 1972) (Piestrup, 1976) (McGinnis, 1976). Also studied have been the problems involved in the study of the relationship between dialect use and reading achievement.

A relationship between the receptive and productive control of prestige dialects of English and reading achievement has been documented by several researchers. Labov (1967) found, in a study of nine (9) Black children, ages ten (10) to sixteen (16), that his subjects failed to recognize the "-ed" ending as a tense marker when presented with a written text. This could be related to their variable use of the "-ed" form in oral speech. Jaggar and Cullinan (1975) found that the comprehension of texts reflecting a high prestige variety of English was related to the young Black subjects' receptive and productive control of a prestige dialect of English.

According to Jaggar (1971), while structural interference (a divergence in the syntactic structure of the reader and the text) may result in comprehension problems for the reader, the problems may occur largely for beginning readers who are only competent in their native, low-prestige dialect. Jaggar hypothesized that children would demonstrate a higher level of comprehension of reading materials written in a language structure similar to their speech dialect than materials written in a different dialect of the same language. A second hypothesis was that the ability to read in a different dialect is a function of the ability to read in one's native dialect. Jaggar prepared two (2), fifty (50) item close texts—one in a high prestige dialect of English and another written in a variety of Black dialect. The
passages were administered to eighty (80) Black children from a low socioeconomic background and eighty (80) subjects from a middle class background. The subjects were third (3rd) and fourth (4th) grade children. Jaggar found that both groups comprehended the text written in a high prestige dialect better than the text written in a variety of Black dialect. She also found a relationship between the ability to read one's native dialect and the ability to read a second dialect. The researcher concluded that the evidence with regard to the White subjects indicated that comprehension problems can occur when a mismatch exists between syntactic structures of the child and the text. That the Black children were able to read the text written in a high prestige dialect was taken as evidence that children who learn to read in a high prestige dialect may not experience problems related to structural interference. She then proposed that comprehension problems may be greatest for young children who are only competent in a low prestige dialect.

A positive correlation between control of a high prestige dialect and reading achievement was found in a study of Black seventh (7th) graders. McGinnis (1976) found that while control of a low prestige dialect does not hinder the development of reading proficiency, control of a high prestige dialect may facilitate the process.

Sims, on the other hand, found no important relationship between the dialect use of Black children and their reading proficiency (Sims, 1972). Sims conducted an in-depth analysis of the oral miscues of ten (10) Black second (2nd) graders placed in second (2nd) grade basal
textbooks. The children read one passage written in a Black dialect and a second passage written in a prestige dialect of English. The differences which emerged between the more and less proficient readers were not related to their use of Black dialect. A control for the subjects' competence with regard to both dialects would have offered greater clarification with respect to the relationship between their oral language and their reading proficiency.

Piestrup's study of teacher's accommodation to Black dialect (1973) underscored an important issue: the teacher's minimum awareness of a student's dialect may produce an excessive emphasis upon dialect differences during reading instruction to the detriment of the learning process for the beginning reader. That a child translates a printed text into his own dialect does not necessarily reflect a lack of comprehension.

Nevertheless, Piestrup concluded that none of the teaching styles which emerged from her study seemed to be more effective for children who used a considerable amount of Black English. Further, a significant, negative correlation between low-prestige dialect use and reading scores was found for all groups. Reading scores for children taught by the "Black Artful" approach were considerably higher than scores for children taught with a "White Liberal" or "interrupting" approach. Piestrup also found that children taught with a "Black Artful" approach had significantly lower dialect scores than children taught with a "Vocabulary" or "Interrupting" approach.

In that the characteristics of each teaching approach were not
mutually exclusive, it is difficult to point to any one teaching strategy which affected the reading and dialect scores of the subjects. Nevertheless, the teaching style of the "Black Artful" teachers appears to reflect modes of behavior which are important for teachers of reading, regardless of the students' dialect. The "Black Artful" teachers used language play in instruction.

In addition, they encouraged student participation by listening to the children's responses. In terms of the accommodation of their teaching strategies for speakers of Black English, the "Black Artful" teachers attended to vocabulary confusions and expansion. In addition, they taught the children to listen for the sound distinctions which are characteristic of high prestige dialects of English.

Concluding Remarks

It is clear that the relationship between the language of speakers of low prestige dialects and their development of English reading proficiency has not been satisfactorily established. What appears to emerge from the literature is the following:

1) Few research studies have shed light upon Hispanic readers of English in terms which would clarify their development of English reading proficiency. Many of the studies which have considered this diverse population have been seriously flawed by: inadequately defined populations, a lack of control of socioeconomic factors, a lack of information about the reading strengths and weaknesses of linguistically identifiable members of this group.

2) The ability to utilize one's language base for efficient reading
is not necessarily affected by the reader's use of a low prestige dialect of English.

3) The child who does not possess a stable syntactic system may be handicapped in his utilization of syntactic knowledge when reading English, to the extent that his dialect does not facilitate the comprehension of the underlying structures of a text.

4) There appears to exist a positive correlation between a young reader's competence in prestige dialects of English and reading achievement. That a correlation exists does not mean that there is a causative relationship. The relationship may exist as a function of factors which have not been considered by the studies reviewed. A child who speaks a high prestige dialect of English may be perceived by teachers as being intelligent, thus teacher expectations may be a factor which contributes to their success as developing readers. In addition, a home environment which contributes to high prestige dialect usage among minority children may, similarly, assimilate a respect for social institutions, e.g. schools, which, in turn may contribute to the child's motivation for achieving school success. The nature of the relationship between the utilization of high prestige dialects of English and the development of reading proficiency for Hispanic bilingual beginning readers is an area which requires further research.

A Framework for the Consideration of the Language Variations Among Hispanic Readers of English

The purpose of this section is to identify and discuss language variations which exist among Hispanic readers of English. The language of Hispanic children in the U.S. must be considered as being unique to
each child. That is, in light of the complex linguistic and sociolinguistic factors which enter into the language acquisition process for Hispanic children, no accurate assumptions can be made with regard to their English or Spanish language proficiency.

Sociolinguistic research studies have pointed to the changes which occur in the patterns of language usage for Hispanics who are U.S. dwellers (Timm, 1975) (Austerlitz, 1976) (McClure, 1977). Nevertheless, the Hispanic child who is monolingual English-speaking has remained largely unidentified by studies in the areas of linguistics and education.

While it might be argued that this absence reflects the nonexistence of such a language type within Hispanic communities, it is the author's experience that the phenomenon of English monolingualism exists and will increasingly manifest itself within Hispanic communities largely as a function of the economic and societal pressures which act upon minorities in the U.S.

The remaining discussion will consider the enormously diverse and broad language type which is the bilingual speaker of English. In that bilingualism is most accurately viewed as occurring along a continuum (Aguirre, 1978), there exist some general categories which can provide a sense of some points along the continuum of bilingualism.

The fluent-English speaker is characterized by language production which is no different from the speech of monolingual English-speaking children. While some bilingual Hispanic children speak high prestige dialects of English (De Avila and Duncan, 1981) (Lucas and Singer, 1973),
others speak low prestige dialects of English, characterized by stable rule-governance. Some bilingual children appear to speak a variety of Black English (Fishman, 1969), while others speak a dialect of English which is specific to their language heritage, i.e. Chicano English (Metcalf, 1969). The following is an example of the language production of a fluent-English speaking, seven (7) year-old Hispanic child:

There once was a real clever fox and he was real hungry. He saw the black big crow eating a big piece of cheese. He said, "I wonder how I could get that big piece of cheese." He went up to crow and said, "Good morning, Miss Crow," and she didn't answer. And then he said, "You're very beautiful." (De Avila and Duncan, 1981:25)

The following is an example of the language production of a fluent-English speaking, seven (7) year-old Hispanic child who is a speaker of a low prestige dialect of English:

I got two brothers. One of them is one month old. The other is six years old. He always be crazy with me.

The limited-English speaker is often characterized by a variable phonological system (an accent). While this child may have sufficient vocabulary to communicate, the sophistication of vocabulary will usually be somewhat limited. Further, syntactic divergences, uncommon to native-speakers will often repeat themselves. In addition, the limited-English speaker will experience some difficulty in combining words in a flowing manner. The following is an example of the language production of a limited-English speaking, seven (7) year-old Hispanic child:

The girl playing in the snow and the father wrote in the wish book. The girl went to fishing and father wrote in the wish book. The girl went to swimming with her friend and her father wrote it in the wish book. And the girl wished that it always was fall and the father wrote in the seasons book. (De Avila and Duncan, 1981:23)
Contrasting Views of the Reading Process and Learning to Read: Implications for the Roles of Specific Language Systems

The purpose of this section is to identify the language systems which have been widely agreed upon as being critical to the development of English reading proficiency for beginning readers. Varying perspectives are discussed in terms of the following: Scope or definition of reading, a description of the reading process, learning to read, and factors which contribute to the success or failure of the beginning reader.

The perspectives which are considered include the following: information processing, cognitive psychology, and psycholinguistics. The theories were selected because each considers the roles of language and cognition in reading—areas which, most importantly, can provide a potential framework from which issues related to reading and Hispanic readers can be gleaned.

Reading from an Information Processing Perspective. Information processing models of reading view reading as a process in which new information is selected and used in conjunction with previously encoded information (Underwood, 1978). During reading, information is processed through stages at several levels of structure that are somehow integrated with each other. Three (3) sets of components are generally delineated in information processing models of reading: processing mechanisms, knowledge bases, and temporary storage buffers (Kleiman, 1977).
A computer analogy is used to describe the transformation of input (i.e. the written text) into output (the reader's response).

Information processing models differ from one another in several ways. They may offer different explanations of how components of reading are organized and integrated. Bottom-up models propose a hierarchically organized reading process which starts with the lowest level of analysis (i.e. word or sub-word recognition). Top-down models describe a process of verification of previously stated hypotheses. Interactive models of reading processes argue that many levels of analysis interact during reading (Lesgold and Perfetti, 1978).

Another difference among information processing models of reading relates to their scope. While some models attempt to account for the entire reading process, others concentrate on one aspect, i.e. visual perception or comprehension.

A third point of divergence among information processing models of reading is their approach to the study of information processing. One approach is the study of cognitive structures which are in motion during information processing. A second approach is the study of the strategies which are utilized by the individual. This approach is grounded in a view of the reader as an active, adaptable, and creative agent. Information processing, according to this approach, is a variable process in that it is the individual who selects the strategies to be employed. According to a strategies approach to the study of information processing, the selection of information is a process which is fundamental to the system. Selection is based upon the indivi-
dual's goals as determined by his previous experiences and present needs (Underwood, 1978).

LaBerge and Samuels' automatic information processing model (1974) exemplifies a bottom-up, hierarchically organized model of the reading process. Briefly, lower level processing skills must become automatic so that attention can be given to semantic levels of processing. Comprehension is the product of the reader's organization of words and word group codes into the semantic system. The perception of words occurs in three (3) stages, according to LaBerge and Samuels' model of word recognition. In stage 1, a hierarchically organized series of codes is activated in the long-term visual memory system. In stage 2, codes in the phonological memory system are activated. Codes in the phonological memory system feed into the semantic memory system in stage 3. According to LaBerge (1972:245), it is possible to go directly from the visual word code to the semantic meaning code without phonological code involvement. For skilled readers, speed in word recognition is facilitated by word recognition processing strategies (Samuels, Begy, Chen, 1975-76: 83-84) including: ability to generate a target word given context and minimal cues for the target; more and faster partial perception in the absence of total word recognition; and a willingness to correct an incorrect hypothesis as to the identity of the word. For the fluent reader, word recognition is often a "constructive act" (Samuels, Begy, Chen, 1975-76:75) whereby the reader uses prior information to formulate a hypothesis which is tested and subsequently accepted or rejected. The strategies which account
for greater speed in word recognition are trainable and can produce better readers.

The role of speech recoding in reading has generated conflicting experimental findings for different information processing models of the reading process. Starting with a three-stage model for the entire reading process, Kleiman attempted to determine the point at which speech recoding occurs (Kleiman, 1975). Kleiman's model of the reading process begins with visual encoding (perception of letter strings). The second stage is lexical access, during which semantic and syntactic information about words is retrieved. The third stage is the working memory where information is stored and processed. The end product is comprehension. According to Kleiman, words are recoded to speech during the working memory stage.

Coltheart (1978), on the other hand, has proposed that lexical access is facilitated (on different occasions and for different readers) by visual encoding and phonological encoding. While phonological encoding is, on the average, slower than visual encoding for skilled readers, on certain occasions (i.e. when encountering a new word), skilled readers may choose to utilize a graphophoneme correspondence system which will enable them to convert a string of letters into a string of phonemes which will assist them in word recognition. Coltheart suggests that the processes which underlie lexical access are not "immutable and automatic." The reader's decision to utilize different strategies will depend, to some degree, upon his analysis of the situational requirements.

According to Lesgold and Perfetti (1978), reading is a cognitive
process involving a combination of assimilative and constructive processes. If these combined processes are not efficiently synchronized, memories which are needed may deactivate before word coding processing is completed.

While phonological encoding is utilized differentially by all readers, according to Lesgold and Perfetti, the skilled reader differs from the less skilled reader in the speed in which phonological codes are accessed. Due to slow phonological processing, the less skilled reader may be "less able to comprehend discourse in which coherence depends upon antecedent relationships" (1978:334). Speed in semantic coding is another factor which differentiates skilled from less skilled readers.

The differences between skilled and less skilled readers may be quantitative rather than qualitative, according to Lesgold and Perfetti. That is, the rate of discourse encoding and memory may account for the most important difference between the two (2) types of readers. The functional short-term memory capacity may be greater for skilled readers. In that they have more time to rehearse short-term memory contents, the practice effect (for verbal encoding and decoding) may result in quicker and more accurate verbal processing. The functional short-term memory capacity of less skilled readers may be negatively affected by two factors: an inability to keep up with demands placed on short-term memory coding mechanisms; and less specific and less complete short-term memory codes resulting in less retrievability and less accuracy. Lesgold and Perfetti have not found differences between
skilled and non-skilled readers in the following areas: sensitivity to sentence structure, sensitivity to thematic organization, and short-term memory size.

**Reading from a Cognitive Perspective.** Cognitive psychologist Eleanor Gibson has found information processing models of reading to be inadequate. Most information processing models are weak, according to Gibson, (1977:156), in that they are based upon "invented stages in processing." Further, in making "unsupported assumptions...that input is obtained in bits and pieces" (1977:156), these models ignore the experiential knowledge which is available to and utilized by the reader. Finally, Gibson argues against the assertion that perception equals memory in that meaningful information must be identified by the learner before it can be remembered (Gibson, 1977).

The theory of reading which Gibson proposes considers the following: how perceptual learning occurs, the stages in which children learn to read, and reading processes for the mature reader. According to Gibson, reading is a cognitive process which is not easily described in simple terms. In that Gibson views reading as adaptive and flexible, according to the reader's purpose, she argues against a single model of the reading process. There are as many reading processes as there are readers, according to Gibson.

While reading starts out as a perceptual task, it ends up as a conceptual tool for thinking and learning. The mature reader, according to Gibson, engages in an economical search "for relational information for invariant properties." Through a constant search for and detection
of structures, the reader is able to process the largest units which are appropriate to the task.

Gibson discusses the roles of perceptual, syntactic, and semantic constraints which act upon the mature reader. The mature reader does not perceive words in a sequential, letter by letter fashion, rather, he takes in and processes larger graphic units. Visual analysis is aided by such factors as: word frequency, degree of approximation to English, redundancy (in letter strings and other sizes of message units), and unit-forming principles (Gibson, 1970).

The mature reader learns to assign priority to features which suit the reading task at hand. Finally, the mature reader utilizes orthographic rules (a kind of syntax analogous to grammar) even though invariant mapping is not available (to the reader of English).

According to Gibson, the syntactic structure of English must be used to process units "that communicate something." Syntactic constraints assist the reader in the formation of units for reading and in processing through reduction. The regularities of language structure are utilized by the skilled reader in that the reader's knowledge of rules tells him where and how far to look. In addition, this knowledge assists him in chunking materials in higher order units. The mature reader, then, is able to utilize semantic constraints to develop expectancies as to what future units may be.

The beginning reader needs certain fundamental skills which are prerequisites to learning to read. Competence in speaking, according to Gibson, will allow the beginning reader to extract information from
the three (3) language systems (phonological, semantic, and syntactic). A basic "conceptual system" will enable the beginning reader to recognize relationships between units. Knowledge of morphology will assist the beginning reader in the utilization of unit-forming principles. Certain perceptual skills are prerequisites to learning to read: the ability to learn the distinctive features and shapes of letters and the development of active strategies for comparison and scanning.

The beginning reader moves through three (3) stages, according to Gibson. At stage 1, the prerequisite skills are developed. At this stage, instruction may include training in sound/symbol correspondence within a rule-oriented framework. The development of pronouncing skills may be essential at this stage. During stage 2, the beginning reader must learn to "analyze the internal structure." Stage 3 is the point at which the beginning reader learns the "rules of unit formation:" the correspondence between phonological and graphological systems, rules of orthography, grammatical constraints, and the utilization of semantic contexts. As the beginning reader becomes more skilled, he will progress in his ability to use these structural principles for reading in larger, more efficient chunks.

The developing reader must learn to utilize the three language systems so that he can identify an economic strategy which will "reduce a number of bits to one superordinate unit."

The success or failure of the beginning reader will be affected by the following: the ability to assign economic priorities according to the specific reading task; the ability to utilize knowledge of
structural rules for the processing of information in units which will reduce the information load; and the ability to employ attention for economical information pick-up. Finally, the ability to recognize the utility of a strategy (or body of information) for the specific reading task, is a critical factor which will affect the beginning reader's development.

**Reading from a Psycholinguistic Perspective.** Kenneth Goodman's views related to reading have evolved largely out of extensive studies of the oral miscues of different kinds of readers. Through his studies, Goodman has developed theories proposing: a model of the reading process, differences between proficient and non-proficient readers, and how children learn to read.

Goodman's definition of reading is based upon the importance of the roles of thought and language for the reading task. Reading, according to Goodman, is a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, 1967:126) in which thought and language interact in "an active process of constructing meaning from language represented by graphic symbols (letters) systematically arranged" (Smith, Goodman, and Meredith, 1976:265). The reader, like the listener, is actively involved in a reaction to and interpretation of the devices within language which convey meaning. Reading, then, is not reading unless it conveys meaning.

Goodman has clearly delineated his model of the reading process for the mature reader (1967:132-133);

1. The reader scans along a line of print from left to right and down the page, line by line.
2. He fixes at a point to permit eye focus. Some print will be central and in focus, some will be peripheral; perhaps
his perceptual field is a flattened circle.

3. Now begins the selection process. He picks up graphic cues, guided by constraints set up through prior choices, his language knowledge, his cognitive style, and strategies he has learned.

4. He forms a perceptual image using these cues and his anticipated cues. This image then is partly what he sees and partly what he expects to see.

5. Now he searches his memory for related syntactic, semantic, and phonological cues. This may lead to selection of more graphic cues and to reforming the perceptual image.

6. At this point, he makes a guess or tentative choice consistent with graphic cues. Semantic analysis leads to partial decoding as far as possible. This meaning is stored in short-term memory as he proceeds.

7. If no guess is possible, he checks the recalled perceptual input and tries again. If a guess is still not possible, he takes another look at the text to gather more graphic cues.

8. If he can make a decodable choice, he tests it for semantic and grammatical acceptability in the context developed by prior choices and decoding.

9. If the tentative choice is not acceptable semantically or syntactically, then he regresses, scanning from right to left along the line and up the page to locate a point of semantic or syntactic inconsistence. When such a point is found, he starts over at that point. If no inconsistency can be identified, he reads on, seeking some cues which will make it possible to recognize the anomalous situation.

10. If the choice is acceptable, decoding is extended, meaning is assimilated with prior meaning, and prior meaning is accommodated, if necessary. Expectations are formed about input and meaning that lies ahead.

11. Then the cycle continues.

While all readers, proficient and non-proficient, utilize three
cueing systems (graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic), the proficient reader differs from the non-proficient reader in terms of a different utilization of them. Further, the proficient reader is more effective in terms of deriving meaning from the text. He is more efficient in that he exerts the least amount of effort and energy required by the reading tasks. Finally, the proficient reader is more highly selective, using only that information which is necessary to extract meaning from the text (Goodman, 1975).

The beginning reader utilizes his knowledge of the three (3) cueing systems; the extent to which the beginning reader is able to utilize the three cueing systems effectively and efficiently is related to several prerequisite strengths. A strong language and experience base are critical prerequisites to learning to read. Other prerequisites include: motivation—a need for written language; the ability to relate to the concepts reflected in the text; pride in the mother tongue or the dialect of the young reader; and confidence in his ability to use language.

According to Goodman, the beginning reader will not progress toward becoming a proficient reader through the learning of a series of isolated skills. Rather, the beginning reader must: learn to discover generalizations about language and how it works; and learn to utilize appropriate strategies for a particular task. Some strategies which he must learn include: information processing strategies, scanning strategies, sampling and predicting strategies, and strategies for interacting with different kinds of texts.
While some children need instruction geared toward the above, others will develop these strengths independent of instruction. The role of the teacher, then, is that of the facilitator of learning. According to Goodman, the teacher can facilitate the child's growth as a reader by analyzing the child's strengths and weaknesses through miscue analysis and the subsequent provision of instruction geared toward the specific strategies which have been identified by the miscue analysis as being weak. The teacher of beginning reading must constantly involve the young readers in language play which demonstrates respect for their language. The teacher must expose children to meaningful print in ways which encourage their inner motivation to learn. Finally, the teacher of beginning reading must encourage learners to utilize their knowledge of language to make sense of what they are reading.

According to Goodman, several factors will affect a child's development as a reader. Over-reliance upon the graphophonic cueing system (including sound/symbol correspondence, shape/word configurations, affixes, recurrent spelling patterns, whole known words) will have the effect of creating "word callers." Under-reliance upon their knowledge of language will weaken them in developing sampling, predicting, and confirming strategies. Utilization of the following syntax-related information will provide the reader with critical support: patterns of word or function order, inflection, contextual meanings, and redundancy. Finally, the extent to which a beginning reader's experiential background differs from that reflected in the text is a factor which will influence
his development as a reader.

Frank Smith's (1971, 1975, 1978) approach to the study of reading, like that of Kenneth Goodman, has developed from within a psycholinguistic framework. A careful consideration of the brain's role in cognitive processing is integral to Smith's analyses of the tasks of reading and learning to read. In addition, aspects of language, e.g. language acquisition and the relationship between language and reading, play a critical role in Smith's theories on the reading process and learning to read. The interaction between thought and language provides a focus for the questions which Smith has attempted to answer.

Reading is the reduction of uncertainty, according to Frank Smith. That is, all reading tasks, from letter identification to passage comprehension, involve the reader in a process of conscious or subconscious questioning and a subsequent search for the answers. The reader, both skilled and beginning, is involved in a process of seeking the answers to questions which result from the uncertainty which he brings to the reading task. The level of questioning is determined largely by the reader's prior knowledge—information which he has available to him "in his head."

The reader's cognitive structure plays a critical role in all aspects of reading, in that the answers to questions are based upon the reader's past experiences, future expectations, and the information which he receives at the moment. The reader's perception of letters, words, and concepts is determined by what he chooses to categorize and the way that the categories fit into his cognitive structure. The way
that a reader responds to a particular item will determine the way which the item is allocated to previously established categories. In short, according to Smith, it is the reader's cognitive structure which determines his perception, categorization, and interrelating of old categories with new ones.

Letters and words are identified by both the skilled and beginning reader through a process of feature analysis, according to Smith. The reader utilizes his cognitive structure to ascertain the distinctive features of a visual array, and thus to identify the items in the array. A distinctive feature is a "significant difference among visual (or acoustic) patterns" (1978:240). Feature analysis is facilitated by the human perceptual system. Through feature analysis, the reader assigns items to categories in spite of the items' orientation, detail, or size. A second aspect of feature analysis is that determinations can be made on the basis of probability; all specifications of a feature list need not be specified for identification to take place. The utilization of redundance is a third aspect of feature analysis. That is, the reader may utilize information from other sources, e.g. knowledge of spelling patterns, for letter or word identification. Finally, the reader is able to utilize a predicting/confirming strategy to establish categories and to relate them to one another.

In that reading is only "incidentally visual," the brain plays a much larger role in letter and word identification than does the eye. While the eye relays information to the brain (in the form of neural
impulses), it is the brain that moves the eye through a visual array. Further, the brain determines whether the eye will make forward movements or regressions. The brain selects and processes what it can handle. It tells the eye when it has gotten enough information from a fixation; it also tells the eye where to move next. In that the brain is limited in terms of the amount of visual information it can process, the skilled reader learns to rely less and less on visual information and more upon the non-visual information which he brings to the reading process.

Just as letter and word identification are based upon the allocation of a visual configuration to a category, the identification of meaning (comprehension) is based upon the allocation of a visual configuration to one of a number of semantic categories. While proponents of bottom-up models of the reading process usually view word identification as preceding word comprehension, Smith proposes that word comprehension often precedes word identification. If a word's identity is dependent upon its meaning, a reader can only identify the word by first ascertaining its meaning. A word's meaning, in addition, can only be determined by viewing the word in relation to the other words in the sentence. For the fluent reader, prior linguistic knowledge provides support which is critical for word identification and passage comprehension; this knowledge makes it possible for the reader to utilize predicting/confirming strategies which speed upon the reading process. As predictions are confirmed or discounted, the proficient reader modifies future predictions. Comprehension occurs when predic-
tions are confirmed.

While the fluent reader is able to use non-visual information to facilitate the reading process, the beginning reader requires more visual input while developing the experience and prior knowledge which are critical for fluent reading. The beginning reader (of his native language) is aided by a functional knowledge of his language as well as a wide range of complex learning skills (as evidenced by the manner in which he acquires his spoken language). Nevertheless, the beginning reader must acquire additional knowledge to become a proficient reader. According to Smith, the beginning reader must learn the following: the significant differences between letters, words, and meanings; categories for letter and word identification; visual/semantic associations; and the relationship between the rules of syntax and the written aspects of language. In addition, the beginning reader must learn to read fast.

The teacher's role in reading instruction is to provide the individual child with the information which he needs to reduce his uncertainty. By giving the child the necessary feedback, the teacher assists the child in formulating the rules which he needs to succeed at a particular reading task. The teacher must encourage the beginning reader to be a risk taker. Only by accepting the possibility of error will the beginning reader acquire the speed which is necessary for comprehension. Only with an understanding of the reading process will the classroom teacher be able to address the task of teaching beginning reading in a way which is pedagogically sound.
Several factors will impede the reader's development, according to Smith. Over-reliance upon visual information will seriously impede the beginning reader's development. If the reader brings little or no prior knowledge to the reading task, or if he is not encouraged to utilize his prior knowledge, he will develop tunnel vision whereby he will not be able to process enough information to construct meaning from a visual array. A second factor which will impede the beginning reader's growth is a reluctance to take chances with perception. By refusing to make predictions, the beginning reader "reduces the likelihood of being right." Finally, the combined limitations of short-term memory, long-term memory, and tunnel vision may be overwhelming for the beginning reader unless he is encouraged to try to make sense of new information.

Concluding Remarks

As a child learns to read, he is basically learning to derive meaning from print. The meaning which any reader, beginning or adult, derives from print is dependent upon the meanings and experience base which he brings to the reading process. For this reason, the seven year-old who is considered an "excellent reader" will not be able to read the same kinds of materials as the fourteen year-old who is also considered an "excellent reader."

Learning to read, then, is an on-going process which begins, for most, at age five (5) or six (6) and continues into adulthood as the developing reader grows in experience and knowledge. The success
of a reader is gauged largely in terms of his ability to interact with the reading materials which are a necessary part of his environment. The success of beginning readers in learning to read is directly related to their teachers' perceptions of what they need to know. Nevertheless, the present discussion will focus upon the language strengths which will assist the beginning reader in learning to derive meaning from print, regardless of the focus which is present in individual classrooms.

The theories which were reviewed in this section propose different kinds of prerequisite skills, stages, and learning objectives for beginning readers. Nevertheless, all theories seem to agree upon the importance of a strong oral language base as critical support for the developing reader. The beginning reader's phonological system (the set of sounds available to him) allows him to "sound words out"—to encode graphic input phonologically. Most theorists agree that phonological encoding is a strategy which is utilized by all beginning readers to some extent. The beginning reader appears to be supported in phonological encoding to the extent that his phonological system assists him in deriving meaning from pronounced words.

The beginning reader's semantic system is another language system within the reader which assists him in learning to read. While some theorists, i.e. Goodman, Smith and Gibson, argue the importance of the semantic system in terms of the cognitive strategies which it facilitates (sampling, predicting, confirming, the discovery of significant differences between meanings, the developing of visual/semantic associations), others, largely those from an information processing perspective, view
the semantic system as a mechanism which is in operation during information processing.

The syntactic system of the reader is a third language system which provides the beginning reader with critical support in the development of reading proficiency. The syntactical knowledge of the reader may afford him a near automatic response to syntactic constraints. It may assist the reader in the processing of larger units of information. Syntactical knowledge may assist the reader in the development of sampling, predicting, and confirming strategies on the basis of "what sounds like language."

Summary

While most researchers and practitioners would agree that learning to read requires a supportive oral language base, the specific features of such a base remain, at this time, in question.

Many important issues emerge from the present gap in knowledge. Some of those questions pertain to Hispanic beginning readers of English.

Although Hispanic children who learn to read in the U.S. reflect a diverse population and a wide range of language variations, those who teach members of this loosely constructed group would undoubtedly benefit from research pointing to the specific language competencies which support the development of English reading proficiency.

The present study was conducted for the purpose of documenting the language competencies of selected Hispanic beginning readers with
the goal of pointing to language related competencies which support the development of English proficiency.
CHAPTER THREE:
METHODOLOGY

Tests of language and reading proficiency were administered to thirty (30) Hispanic beginning readers of English. The results were later analyzed for the purpose of documenting and comparing the language and reading strengths of proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English.

Testing Instruments

Reading proficiency measures: The Reading Miscue Inventory was administered to a population of Hispanic second graders. A total of thirty (30) children were selected from two (2) pools of children designated by their teachers as being either highly proficient or non-proficient beginning readers.

The Reading Miscue Inventory was developed from a psycholinguistic perspective on the reading process. That is, according to its developers:

The reader is not passive. Reading is a meaningful interaction between the language of the reader and the language of the author. Reading is not an exact process. All readers do deviate from the text, and these deviations can be evaluated based on the degree to which the meaning of the text is disrupted. Deviations in oral reading are called miscues to suggest that they are not random errors, but in fact, are cued by the thought and language of the reader in his encounter with the written material. The procedure used in the RMI gives teachers the opportunity to examine
and evaluate the interaction between the language of the reader and the language of the author.

(Y. Goodman and C. Burke, 1971:5)

The procedure for administering the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) is as follows:

ORAL READING AND TAPING: The teacher has a student record his reading of an unfamiliar selection on audio tape. The teacher provides no assistance, but may sit alongside the reader with a specially prepared copy of the text, called the Worksheet, used in marking the reader's miscues. After the student finishes reading the entire selection, he is asked to retell the story in his own words. The teacher asks no leading questions, but probes until the student has offered as many details of the plot, character, and description as he can recall.

MARKING MISCUES: Later, the teacher replays the tape, confirming and reevaluating on the Worksheet the miscues made during the oral reading. The teacher then replays the telling of the story to calculate a Retelling Score.

(Y. Goodman and C. Burke, 1971:6-7)

Language assessment measures: The Spanish and English versions of the Language Assessment Scales were administered to all subjects. This scale provides scores of five (5) to four (4) to indicate fluency in either English or Spanish, a score of three (3) to indicate limited proficiency in the target language, and a score of two (2) to one (1) to indicate non-proficiency in either Spanish or English.

(De Avila, E. and Duncan, S., 1981).

The development of the LAS was based on a view of language as consisting of four (4) linguistic aspects: phonology
(phonemes, stress, rhythm and intonation), the lexicon (the "words" of the language), syntax (the rules for comprehending and producing meaningful utterances) and pragmatics (the appropriate use of language to obtain specific goals.) Within each of these primary subsystems, the LAS focuses on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsystem</th>
<th>LAS Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>Phoneme Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoneme Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicon</td>
<td>Concrete nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Oral (sentence) Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Production (story retelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatics</td>
<td>Observations (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(De Avila and Duncan, 1981:8)

The Language Assessment Scales (LAS) is administered, in either language, in a period of approximately forty-five (45) minutes.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between English reading proficiency and other language-related competencies, as suggested by the Reading Miscue Inventory and the Language Assessment Scales, for Hispanic, proficient and non-proficient beginning readers of English. The other language-related competencies examined included receptive and expressive control of oral English and Spanish.

The study was guided by the following questions:

1) Did teacher judgment correspond to the Reading Miscue Inventory in the identification of proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

2) What were the English language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as proficient beginning readers of English?
3) Using the Language Assessment Scales, what were the English language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers of English who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as non-proficient beginning readers of English?

4) Was there a significant difference in the English language proficiency levels of proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English as determined by selected instruments?

5) Using the Language Assessment Scales as the basis for analysis, what were the Spanish language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as proficient beginning readers of English?

6) Using the Language Assessment Scales as the basis for analysis, what were the Spanish language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as non-proficient beginning readers of English?

7) Was there a significant difference in the Spanish language proficiency levels between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English as determined by selected instruments?

8) For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on English LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge (subscales I and III) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

9) For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale IV (reflecting comprehension of syntactic structures) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

10) For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale V (reflecting
production of syntactic structures) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

11) For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale II (reflecting the lexical store) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

12) For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on English LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge (subscapes I and III) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

13) For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale IV (reflecting comprehension of syntactic structures) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

14) For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS subscale V (reflecting production of syntactic structures) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

15) For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale II (reflecting the lexical store) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

16) Using the Reading Miscue Inventory and the Language Assessment Scales as the bases for analysis, how did the reading proficiency of limited and fluent English-proficient Hispanic beginning readers differ in terms of the quality of their miscues and retellings?

17) Which LAS sub-system was the best predictor of the Hispanic beginning readers' reading proficiency rating?
Population

For this study, fifteen more proficient and fifteen less proficient Hispanic second graders were identified from regular (as opposed to bilinguall) classrooms. All children demonstrated some degree of proficiency in oral English and were designated as fluent or limited English-speaking. To control for the possible effects of Spanish reading instruction on English reading proficiency, all of the participants had received initial reading instruction in English. Socioeconomic factors were controlled for by selecting only those students receiving free or reduced price lunches.

Procedures

Data collection began with a questionnaire sent to all second grade teachers within a given school district. The questionnaire asked them to identify good and poor readers from among their Hispanic students receiving free or reduced lunches.

Teachers responded with the names of twenty-six (26) potential "poor" readers and eleven (11) potential "good" readers. Because an insufficient number of good readers was identified by teacher judgment, a second school district was surveyed in the same fashion. The second grade teachers from the second school district submitted the names of eleven (11) potential "good" readers and thirty-two (32) potentially "poor" readers.

The combined pools from the two school districts offered twenty-two potentially "good" readers and fifty-eight potentially "poor" readers.
From teachers' responses, thirty (30) names were randomly selected, fifteen from a pool of "good" readers, fifteen from a pool of "poor" readers. As testing proceeded, it became obvious that teachers had consistently overestimated their students' reading proficiency levels.

The researcher, in an effort to arrive at fifteen (15) good readers, tested all available students (18) who had been identified as good readers, leaving only twelve identified as poor readers.

Individual testing proceeded as follows:

1) The researcher pulled each child out of his/her classroom on an individual basis. Testing was conducted in an isolated area, generally free from distractions.

2) The researcher spent about three to five minutes establishing rapport with the child.

3) The researcher explained the testing procedure to the child in general terms.

4) The child then read a story from a book of readings accompanying the Reading Miscue Inventory. The interviewer noted miscues on a separate copy of the story. In addition, the entire testing experience was tape-recorded for later analysis.

5) Each child was administered the LAS in a similar manner, but on a different day.

Because there existed a consistent discrepancy between the teacher's judgment of a child's reading proficiency and the results of the RMI, the subjects were re-categorized for the purposes of the study. Two less absolute groups emerged: the more proficient reader and the
less proficient reader.

Reading proficiency levels were arrived at using Goodman and Burke's guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Comprehension Pattern</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Retelling Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Loss</td>
<td>Some Loss</td>
<td>Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-proficient</td>
<td>0-14%</td>
<td>0-100%</td>
<td>0-25 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat proficient</td>
<td>15-45%</td>
<td>0-85%</td>
<td>20-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately proficient</td>
<td>40-79%</td>
<td>0-60%</td>
<td>0-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly proficient</td>
<td>60-100%</td>
<td>0-40%</td>
<td>0-20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where inconsistencies between the Comprehension Pattern score and the Retelling Score arose, the researcher made a judgment on the students proficiency level. In these instances, more weight was given to the Retelling Score.

The results of the Reading Miscue Inventory and the Language Assessment Scales were analyzed in terms of the previously listed questions.

On the basis of the findings, the researcher will attempt to provide some clarification as to the specific language competencies which support the Hispanic beginning reader's development of English reading proficiency.

Procedures to be Used for Data Analysis

In order to determine if there was a significant difference in the English language proficiency levels of more and less proficient beginning readers (Questions 2-4), a t-test was performed comparing the Language Assessment Scales means for the two populations. In addition, a one-way analysis of variance was performed to compare the mean ranks of the two groups. Finally, a cross-tabulation of the RMI levels with the English levels was performed.
These same procedures were used for determining the relationship between proficiency in Spanish, as measured by the LAS, and the children's English reading proficiency (Questions 5, 6, 7).

In order to determine if there was a significant difference in the performance on English LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge between more and less proficient beginning readers of English who are limited English-speaking, a t-test was performed comparing the LAS subscale means for the two populations (Question 8).

These same procedures were employed for determining the difference between comprehension of English syntactic structures (Question 9), production of English syntactic structures (Question 10), and lexical knowledge (Question 11) for more and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English who are limited English-speaking.

To determine if there was a significant difference in the same LAS subscales between more and less proficient beginning readers who are fluent English-speaking, a t-test was performed comparing the LAS subscale means for the two populations (Questions 12-15).

To compare the quality of miscues and retellings for limited and fluent English-speaking Hispanic beginning readers (Question 16), a qualitative analysis was performed. The proportion of miscues reflecting graphic similarity, correction, grammatical acceptability, semantic acceptability, and meaning change was compared for the two populations (Limited and Fluent English-Speaking readers).

To determine the LAS sub-system which was a predictor of RMI levels (Question 17), a discriminant analysis was performed on groups defined by RMI levels.
CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

Most educators are guided by a set of beliefs which have evolved from discussions, readings, and experience. When direct experience is limited, we tend to rely more heavily on what we hear or read.

When information which we seek doesn't exist, we are left to base our actions on untested assumptions. Such has long been the case for educators of Hispanic children in the U.S. It is the author's hope that the findings of the present study will contribute to the strengthening of the theoretical base used by educators to test and refine the belief systems which presently guide their teaching.

1. Did teacher judgment correspond to the Reading Miscue Inventory in the identification of proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

Because the accuracy of teacher judgment in the identification of good and poor readers has been well-documented, the present study relied upon teacher judgment for the initial identification of subjects. Students were later tested with the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) so that teacher judgment could be verified as accurate.

The study, then, afforded the opportunity to explore the extent to which teacher judgment corresponded to a more formal measure in assessing the reading proficiency of the Hispanic beginning readers involved in the study. A correspondence between teacher judgment and the RMI was noted wherever the following conditions existed:
A COMPARISON OF TEACHER JUDGMENT AND RMI-BASED JUDGMENT OF THE READING PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF THIRTY (30) HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS OF ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER JUDGMENT</th>
<th>RMI-BASED JUDGMENT</th>
<th>CORRESPONDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Excellent</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Very Good</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Excellent</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Excellent</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Excellent</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Poor</td>
<td>Highly Proficient</td>
<td>- (underestimation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Poor</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>- (underestimation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Very Good</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Very Good</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Excellent</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>+ (overestimation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Excellent</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>+ (overestimation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Very Good</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Poor</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Very Good</td>
<td>Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Excellent</td>
<td>Moderately/Somewhat</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat/Moderately</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Excellent</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Excellent</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Very Good</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Very Good</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Poor</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Excellent</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Excellent</td>
<td>Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Poor</td>
<td>Non-Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Poor</td>
<td>Non-Proficient</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. A teacher rated the student as an excellent reader and the RMI-based assessment reported a highly proficient reader;
2. A teacher rated the student as a very good reader and the RMI-based assessment reported a highly proficient or moderately proficient reader; and
3. A teacher rated the student a poor reader and the RMI-based assessment indicated a somewhat proficient or ineffective reader.

The above criteria for correspondence gave teacher judgment the benefit of the doubt. For example, a correspondence was noted when teachers rated students to be very good readers and the RMI found them to be moderately proficient. Further, teacher judgment was noted as accurate whenever a teacher rated the student a poor reader and the RMI-based assessment indicated a somewhat proficient reader. The criteria used, then, may have resulted in conservative findings. That is, teacher judgment may, in fact, have been even less accurate than what was found.

According to teacher judgment, the thirty (30) Hispanic beginning readers who were selected for the study fell into two distinct groups. Eighteen (18) students were reported to be very good readers, and twelve (12) students were reported to be poor readers. According to the Reading Miscue Inventory, however, teachers recommended the following kinds of readers:

Six (6) proficient readers
Nine (9) moderately proficient readers
Thirteen (13) somewhat proficient readers
Two (2) ineffective readers

Although the original aim of the study was to compare proficient and non-proficient (ineffective) Hispanic beginning readers in terms of their language and reading strengths, students did not fall into these two distinct categories. For this reason, subjects were reclassified for the purposes of this study, as either more proficient or less proficient readers. Fifteen students fell into each broader classification, allowing for a comparative analysis of their reading and language strengths.

Out of thirty (30) judgments made by eleven teachers regarding their students' classification as readers, only seventeen (17) judgments, 56%, corresponded to a classification obtained through the Reading Miscue Inventory. Where teacher judgment varied from the RMI-based judgment, teachers appeared to underestimate their students' reading proficiency levels in four (4) instances. In the majority of instances, nine (9) out of thirteen (13), teachers appeared to overestimate their students' reading proficiency levels. A discussion of possible reasons for the 44% lack of correspondence will follow.

The underestimation of a student's reading proficiency level by his/her teacher could be attributed to several possible factors, i.e. unrealistically high expectations, the overriding influence of a prejudgment based on the teacher's expectations of students from a particular background, a "word perfect" orientation to reading which does not allow for linguistic difference and is in opposition to the view of the reading process which underlies the RMI, or insufficient data for assessing the child's reading proficiency.
Based on the researcher's observations of the students and teachers involved, it appears that in those instances where teachers underestimated their students' reading proficiency, the reasons were varied. In at least two instances, the children appeared to be very quiet or shy; teachers, then, may not have had sufficient exposure to their reading strengths. In the absence of data, teachers may have relied upon their expectations.

From informal discussions with several of the teachers, it appears that word identification rather than comprehension was stressed in their approach to reading instruction. One child who was somewhat halting in oral reading faired quite a bit better in comprehension, however, the teacher may have weighed the oral reading more heavily. Of interest was the instance where the teacher judged the student to be a poor reader, while the RMI-based judgment assessed the student to be a highly proficient reader. This particular teacher underestimated two of the four children whose reading proficiency was underestimated. The teacher's apparent lack of interest in the study may have been a significant factor.

By far the majority of variances between teacher judgment and the RMI-based judgment were related to an over-estimation of the young readers' proficiency levels. Again, through conversations with the teachers, the reasons for their over-estimations seemed to emerge. In several instances, teachers appeared to have developed low standards, due, in their own words, to "the teaching environment." One teacher said, "Compared to all of the other kids in my class, he is a good reader. But then, look at where I'm teaching."
The desire to help the children by labeling them as good readers appeared to motivate some of the teachers to over-estimate students' reading proficiency. Those who seemed most "sympathetic" to the children (spending extra time with them, speaking animatedly of them) were also those who overestimated their reading proficiency.

The teacher's definitions of reading proficiency (that which differentiates a good from a poor reader) seemed to be another important reason why teachers overestimated their students' reading proficiency. As one teacher said, "Why didn't you tell me that you meant comprehension? You just asked me to identify the good readers."

Because 44% of the teacher judgments resulted in clear discrepancies with the RMI, it is relevant to consider the possible effects of an inaccurate assessment of a child's reading abilities. Such a consideration would be appropriately considered in a follow-up study.
2. What were the English language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as more proficient beginning readers of English?

Of the fifteen (15) students who were identified as being more proficient readers, fourteen (14) scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 5 of the English Language Assessment Scales (LAS). One scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 4. In other words, all of the more proficient Hispanic beginning readers were assessed to be fluent speakers of English. In addition, the overwhelming majority (93%) were assessed to be highly articulate, native-like speakers of a prestige dialect of English. The mean English LAS score for members of this group was 90.4867.

Noteworthy was the finding that none of the more proficient readers was assessed to be limited English-proficient. The finding lends support to the premise that the development of English reading proficiency requires a strong oral English language base. This finding has important implications for the English proficient child who is learning to read in English. This child will in all likelihood not proceed with the same rate of progress as the fluent English speaker who is learning to English.

Another noteworthy finding is that almost all of the more proficient readers scored at the English LAS Level 5, indicating a highly developed language base. This finding is of interest because it documents the fact that many Hispanic children in the U.S. are not only fluent users of English—they are also users of a prestige dialect of English. The finding, then, maintains in question the relationship between the ability to speak prestige dialects of English and
# Table 2

## English Language Proficiency Levels of More and Less Proficient Hispanic Beginning Readers of English

### More Proficient Readers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88.8 (raw score)</td>
<td>5 (level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Range:** 81.9-99.2 (4-5)
- **Mean:** 90.5 (5)
- **Standard Deviation:** 5.615
- **t-Test:** t=3.55
- **p-Value:** p=0.001

### Less Proficient Readers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>86.5</td>
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<td>87.6</td>
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<td>86.8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>82.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>74.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.0</td>
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<td>86.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Range:** 71.3-96.4 (3-5)
- **Mean:** 81.7 (4)
- **Standard Deviation:** 7.740
learning to read English. Why were almost all of the more proficient readers able to demonstrate native-like fluency in a prestige dialect of English? Why did the ability appear to go hand in hand with the ability to demonstrate proficiency in English reading? Most importantly, why did children who were fluent English speakers fall into the less proficient group of readers? These questions warrant further consideration in future research efforts.
3. Using the Language Assessment Scales, what were the English language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers of English who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as less proficient beginning readers of English?

Of the fifteen (15) students who were identified as being less proficient readers, five (5) scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 3 of the LAS, indicating limited English proficiency. Four of the less proficient readers scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 4 of the English LAS, while seven scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 5 of the English LAS. While 1/3 of those less proficient readers were of limited English proficiency, the remaining readers, 67%, were assessed to be fluent speakers of English, according to the LAS. The mean English LAS score for members of this group was 81.7333.

With regard to the group studied, it is of interest to note that almost half, seven, of the less proficient readers scored at the Oral Language Proficiency Level 5 of the English LAS, while an overwhelming majority of the more proficient readers, fourteen, also scored at the same Level 5. Of those Hispanic children who were included in the study, then, over 66% demonstrated the ability to use a prestige dialect of English. A total of 80% of all children included in the study were fluent users of a stable dialect of English. These findings indicate that the level of English language development may not be an important factor for a large number of Hispanic children who are learning to read in a monolingual English-speaking classroom. Nevertheless, noting the five LEP children who were found to be learning to read in English, two questions emerge:
Are those limited English-proficient children who are enrolled in regular English language reading programs receiving any kind of additional support as beginning readers of English? Further, how do LEP children who learn to read in English fair in later years as readers? These questions would be well-considered in future studies.
4. Was there a significant difference in the English language proficiency levels of more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English as determined by the Language Assessment Scales?

The mean English LAS score for the more proficient readers was 90.4867, while the mean English LAS score for the less proficient readers was 81.7333. The t-tests showed that the scores for Group 1 were significantly higher than the scores for Group 2, \( t=3.55, \alpha=.001 \).

A one-way analysis of variance was performed to test the mean ranks by groups. The mean rank assigned to more proficient readers in terms of their English LAS levels was 20.00, while the mean rank assigned to less proficient readers was 11.00, indicating a significant difference, \( p .05 \), in the mean ranks of the English language proficiency levels of more and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English.

While 1/3 of the less proficient readers scored in the limited range of English proficiency, none of the more proficient readers scored within the limited range. Further, none of those who scored in the limited range of English proficiency were assessed to be more proficient readers of English. Finally, 2/3 or those who were less proficient readers of English were fluent English speakers, while all (100%) of those who were more proficient readers of English were fluent English speakers.

While the mean English LAS scores of the more proficient and less proficient readers put them both in the fluent range, a significant difference in their scores emerged. The average level for the more proficient group was Level 5; the average LAS level for the less proficient group was Level 4. The difference in their scores was significant at the .001 level.
### TABLE 3
CROSS TABULATION OF RMI LEVEL BY ENGLISH LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMI LEVEL</th>
<th>ENGLISH (LAS) LEVEL</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Row Pct</th>
<th>Column Pct</th>
<th>Total Pct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 = Non-Proficient</td>
<td>Level 3 = Limited English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 = Somewhat Proficient</td>
<td>Level 4 = Fluent English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 = Moderately Proficient</td>
<td>Level 5 = Fluent English (Expanded)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 = Highly Proficient</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN TOTAL</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4
KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
ENGLISH LAS BY GROUP
{MORE OR LESS PROFICIENT READERS}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>MORE</th>
<th>LESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN RANKS</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p = .005 \]
The findings indicate that a positive relationship may exist between the use of prestige dialects of English and English reading proficiency. Fluency may not be enough for some Hispanic beginning readers of English. Rather, a prerequisite strength may be control of a prestige dialect of English.

On the other hand, the relationship may exist as a function of another factor, i.e. high teacher expectations of children who are speakers of prestige dialects. Or, a home environment which contributes to high prestige dialect usage among minority children may, similarly, assimilate a respect for society's institutions which may in turn contribute to the child's motivation for achieving school success. Regardless of the nature of the relationship, it is clear that this is an area which requires further study.

In that over half of the less proficient readers were fluent speakers of English and almost half were speakers of a prestige dialect of English, it is clear that in many instances factors other than linguistic knowledge as tested by the LAS contributed to the reading weaknesses of the less proficient readers. This fact underscores the need for on-going language and reading assessment accompanied by programmatic and instructionally appropriate responses to the test results. Clearly, a Hispanic child who is a fluent speaker of English will not benefit from a structured English as a Second Language program. Similarly, the child who is limited English-proficient will probably not make rapid progress in English reading without oral language development.
Using the Language Assessment Scales as the basis for analysis, what were the Spanish language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as more proficient beginning readers of English?

Of the fifteen (15) students identified as being more proficient readers, eight performed at the Oral Proficiency Level 1 of the Spanish LAS, one scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 2 of the Spanish LAS. Thus, a total of nine more proficient readers, 67%, were assessed to be non-Spanish-speaking. Of this same group, five (1/3) were assessed to be limited Spanish-speaking. Finally, only one more proficient reader was also a fluent speaker of Spanish. The mean Spanish LAS score for members of this group was 54.2000.

These findings indicate that the terms "Hispanic" and "Spanish-speaking" are not synonymous. As was discussed in Chapter Two, it was a generally accepted premise of earlier studies that all Hispanic children were also Spanish-speaking. It is important to underscore the findings which refute this earlier notion because whenever impossible expectations are imposed upon a child, i.e. that he speak a language which he cannot speak, the effects will be detrimental for the child.

The question emerges as to why children with monolingual Spanish-speaking parents (as were many of the subjects of the present study) do not speak or understand Spanish. The question will be addressed more fully at a later point; however, it is relevant to note that the children involved in the present study were all enrolled in regular as opposed to bilingual classrooms. It is most likely that children in bilingual classes would maintain some knowledge of Spanish.
TABLE 5
SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF MORE AND LESS PROFICIENT HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS OF ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MORE PROFICIENT READERS:</th>
<th>LESS PROFICIENT READERS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAS SCORES {SPANISH}</td>
<td>LAS SCORES {SPANISH}</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. 72.3 (raw score)</td>
<td>16. 39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 68.9</td>
<td>17. 50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 58.7</td>
<td>18. 50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 18.4</td>
<td>19. 84.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. 83.6</td>
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<td>6. 41.3</td>
<td>21. 39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 29.1</td>
<td>22. 74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 52.9</td>
<td>23. 40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 72.0</td>
<td>24. 28.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>10. 38.8</td>
<td>25. 73.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. 69.7</td>
<td>26. 70.3</td>
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<td>12. 44.5</td>
<td>27. 16.0</td>
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<td>13. 53.8</td>
<td>28. 54.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. 69.4</td>
<td>29. 66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. 85.7</td>
<td>30. 79.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

range = 18.4-85.7 (1-5)
X = 90.5 (5)
S.D. = 5.615

range = 16.0-84.0 (1-4)
X = 59.7
S.D. = 21.2

\( t = -.69 \)
6. Using the Language Assessment Scales as the basis for analysis, what were the Spanish language proficiency levels of Hispanic beginning readers who were identified by the Reading Miscue Inventory as less proficient beginning readers of English?

Of the fifteen students identified as being less proficient readers of English, seven scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 1 of the Spanish LAS, indicating non-Spanish proficiency. Among less proficient readers, five scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 3 of the Spanish LAS, indicating limited Spanish proficiency. Two of the less proficient readers scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 4 of the Spanish LAS, while one scored at the Oral Proficiency Level 5 of the Spanish LAS, indicating that 1/5 or 20% of those assessed to be less proficient readers of English were fluent speakers of Spanish.

Because over 1/2 of the less proficient readers were non-Spanish speaking (scoring at the Spanish LAS Level 1), it would seem that "bilingualism" has little to do with the problems of many of those Hispanic children who are experiencing difficulties in learning to read English.

A comparison of English and Spanish LAS scores of the less proficient readers shows that three children who fell within this group were assessed to be limited in their abilities to speak both Spanish and English. The notion of "a-lingual" children has long been a controversial one, especially among linguists. There are those who would hasten to propose that the outcome of a bilingual environment for many children is the "onset" of a-lingualism. Others, however, are convinced that at some point children who are in the process of learning a second language often regress, temporarily, in the first.
7. Was there a significant difference in the Spanish language proficiency levels of more and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

The mean Spanish LAS score for the more proficient readers was 54.2000, while the mean Spanish LAS score for the less proficient readers was 59.2000. The t-tests showed no significant difference in the scores for the two groups.

Seven of the less proficient readers, 47%, were assessed to be non-Spanish speaking, while nine of the more proficient readers, 60%, were assessed to be non-Spanish-speaking. Five of the less proficient readers were assessed to be limited Spanish-speaking, while five of the more proficient readers were also assessed to be limited English-speaking. Finally, three of the less proficient readers were assessed to be fluent-Spanish speaking, while one of the more proficient readers was assessed to be fluent Spanish speaking. In all, 53.3% of the thirty children tested were assessed to be non-Spanish speaking, 33.3% were assessed to be limited Spanish-speaking, while 13.3% were assessed to be fluent Spanish-speaking.

In that the majority of children tested for this study were found to be non-Spanish-speaking, it would seem that the loss of this linguistic ability is a double loss because it serves no practical purpose, occurring in significant numbers among both more proficient and less proficient readers.

The phenomenon of the Hispanic monolingual English-speaking child is an interesting one for several reasons. First, as was previously noted, the existence of such a child has not been well-documented in previous studies.
# TABLE 6
CROSSTABULATION OF RMI LEVEL BY SPANISH LEVEL

RMI Level 1 = Non-Proficient
RMI Level 2 = Somewhat Proficient
RMI Level 4 = Moderately Proficient
RMI Level 5 = Highly Proficient

Spanish (LAS) Level 1=Non-Spanish
Spanish (LAS) Level 2=Non-Spanish
Spanish (LAS) Level 3=Limited Spanish
Spanish (LAS) Level 4=Fluent Spanish
Spanish (LAS) Level 5=Fluent Spanish

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMI LEVEL</th>
<th>SPANISH (LAS) LEVEL</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Count</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>
Second, the study's documentation of the monolingual English-speaking Hispanic child gives evidence that the previously accepted notions regarding Hispanic children in the U.S. are inaccurate. Finally, some of these come from Spanish-speaking home environments where the parents speak only Spanish.

Many pressures converge upon Hispanic children forcing them to conform to a standard which has not been set in the home. In some instances, monolingual Spanish-speaking parents support the school and society's efforts to "mainstream" their children by discouraging the growth and development of a potentially natural resource. It would seem that there must be psychological ramifications for the Hispanic child who speaks no Spanish and whose parents speak no English. It is the author's sense that further research related to this issue would provide a better understanding of its development. Such an understanding is critical to a view of Hispanics' role in U.S. society and its implications for Hispanic children in U.S. schools.
8. For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge (subscales I and III) between more and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

See question 11 for a response to questions 8, 9, 10, and 11.

9. For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS subscale IV (reflecting comprehension of syntactic structures) between proficient and non-proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

10. For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale V (reflecting production of syntactic structures) between more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

11. For those children who scored in the limited range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale II (reflecting the lexical store) between more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

No student who scored in the limited range of English proficiency was assessed to be a more proficient reader of English. For this reason, no basis for comparison was present for the above questions. What linguistic factors account for the non-representation of the limited English proficient students among the more proficient readers?
More importantly, why? A consideration of the role of each language system and its relationship to the young reader's success will follow. Theorists are not in agreement with regard to the role of the beginning reader's phonological system in his success as a developing reader. A cognitive view maintains that pronouncing skills are essential prerequisites for the beginning reader. An interactive information processing view of the reading process holds that a child with a variable phonological system may lose speed when phonologically encoding new words. However, a top/down information processing view asserts that a beginning reader with a strong accent will not be hindered in his efforts to learn to read.

Different schools of thought agree that the beginning reader's semantic system is a critical prerequisite to his reading success. A cognitive view asserts that without the availability of semantic contexts, the beginning reader will not be able to "chunk" letters, words, or groups of words. Without an immediate semantic representation of phonologically encoded words, the young reader's speed in semantic coding will be affected, holds the interactive information processing view. Top/down information processing theorists hold that if a child cannot immediately assign a meaning to a visual configuration, his speed in encoding will be affected, resulting in lessened comprehension. Finally, bottom/up information processing theorists agree that lower levels of processing must become automatic in order for comprehension to build. This automaticity will not be possible if a reader does not possess a semantic system which allows him to assign immediate meanings to the majority of words he will encounter.
The importance of the beginning reader's syntactic system is stressed by proponents of different views of the reading process. A cognitive view holds that an unstable syntactic system may not allow the young reader to process information in larger, more efficient chunks. An interactive information processing model maintains that all readers use syntactic knowledge in some way. Top/down information processing theorists elaborate that without a stable syntactic system, a child may not be able to build the speed necessary for chunking. Further, the child may not be able to develop critical predicting and confirming strategies. Finally, a bottom/up information processing view maintains that speed in word recognition will be affected by an unstable syntactic system.

Given the overwhelming agreement of educational theorists as to the importance of at least two of the three language systems, it is no surprise that this study documented no instances of a limited English proficient child who was also a more proficient reader of English.
12. For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge (subcales I and III) between more and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

The mean phoneme score for the more proficient readers was .2323, while the mean phoneme score for the less proficient readers was .2277. The t-tests showed no significant difference in the scores for the two groups in terms of the LAS subscales reflecting phonemic knowledge.

13. For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS subscale IV (reflecting comprehension of syntactic structures) between more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

The mean score on the LAS subscale IV (reflecting comprehension of English syntactic structures) for more proficient readers was .111, while the mean score for less proficient readers was .1021. The t-tests showed no significant difference in the scores for the two groups in terms of the LAS subscale IV.

14. For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS subscale V (reflecting production of syntactic structures) between more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?
The mean score on the LAS subscale V (reflecting production of syntactic structures) for more proficient readers was .4400, while the mean score for less proficient readers was .4100. The t-tests showed no significant difference in the scores for the two groups in terms of the LAS subscale V.

15. For those children who scored in the fluent range of English proficiency, was there a significant difference in the performance on the English version of the LAS, subscale II (reflecting the lexical store) between more proficient and less proficient Hispanic beginning readers of English?

The mean score on the LAS subscale II (reflecting lexical knowledge) for more proficient readers was .1214, while the mean score on the same subscale for less proficient readers was exactly the same, .1214, showing no difference in the scores for the two groups in terms of the LAS subscale II.

While no significant difference emerged between the more and less proficient readers, the more proficient readers consistently scored higher on each subscale with the exception of subscale IV reflecting lexical knowledge, where both groups scored exactly the same. Considering the fact that a significant difference in the total scores of more and less proficient readers emerged from a statistical analysis, it would seem that the difference was, to some degree, related to the combined effect of some or all of the subscales, minus subscale IV (reflecting lexical knowledge). In other words, the LAS subscale reflecting the ability to give the names of specific common items appears to be the most unrelated to reading proficiency.
16. Using the Reading Miscue Inventory and the Language Assessment Scales as the bases for analysis, how did the reading proficiency of limited and fluent English-proficient Hispanic beginning readers differ in terms of the quality of their miscues and retellings?

The purpose of this question was to consider the effect which a limited English-proficiency has upon the utilization of comprehending strategies. To this end, the researcher compared the RMI scores of the five limited English-proficient readers and five fluent English-proficient readers (LAS "5's"). Both groups were composed of less proficient Hispanic beginning readers.

It was found that as a group, the limited English-proficient (LEP) readers were poorer readers than the fluent English-proficient readers. The table on the following page shows that four out of five of the LEP ranked lower as readers than four out of five of the fluent English-proficient readers.

Predictably, the LEP readers made less efficient use of the majority of the reading strategies considered. The major findings were:

1. The LEP readers didn't correct miscues as often.
2. The LEP readers didn't retell the story as completely as did the FEP readers.
3. There was not a difference in the grammatical acceptability of the miscues of LEP and FEP readers.

The difference in scores was least evident in the "graphic similarity" category. This is no surprise in that the use of graphic cues is not necessarily a strategy used by better readers.
A COMPARISON OF THE READING STRATEGIES OF SELECTED LIMITED AND FLUENT ENGLISH-PROFICIENT HISPANIC BEGINNING READERS IN TERMS OF THE QUALITY OF THEIR MISCUES AND RETELLINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% OF MISCUES REFLECTING...</th>
<th>LEP READERS*</th>
<th>FEP READERS**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#22</td>
<td>#25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Acceptability</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Acceptability</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Similarity</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting Strategy</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retelling Score</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7

* All LEP readers were assessed to be less proficient readers of English. The number at the top of each column refers to the reader's rank among the other 29 readers included in the study.

** The FEP readers included in the above comparison were selected on the following basis: they were all less proficient readers of English, and they all scored within the fluent range (5's) on the Language Assessment Scales. The number at the top of each column refers to the reader's rank among the other 29 readers included in the study.
One surprising finding emerged from a comparison of the % of grammatically acceptable miscues made by limited and fluent English-proficient readers. The limited English group produced a slightly greater number of grammatically acceptable miscues than did the fluent English group. That is, three of the five LEP readers scored higher in the "grammatically acceptable" category than did four of the five FEP readers. This finding was especially interesting when considered in conjunction with the readers LAS scores on the section reflecting comprehension of syntactic structures (Sec. 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEP READERS</th>
<th>FEP READERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#22 .100</td>
<td>#18 .125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#23 .100</td>
<td>#20 .100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#26 .100</td>
<td>#21 .113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#27 .113</td>
<td>#23 .113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#30 .088</td>
<td>#29 .113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fluent English-proficient readers demonstrated greater comprehension of English syntactic structures than did limited English-proficient readers. Why, then, did LEP readers produce more grammatically acceptable miscues when reading an English text? Perhaps in some instances, LEP readers make more efficient use of the linguistic knowledge which they do possess than does the FEP reader who is not a proficient reader of English. In other words, LEP readers may compensate for the linguistic knowledge which they lack by making maximum use of the knowledge which they possess.
In most instances, however, readers without a strong English language base are seriously hampered in using correcting as an effective strategy for comprehending a text. Because so much of what they read does not make sense, they may lose the expectation that reading will result in the acquisition of new, understandable information. In many instances, their language does not help them to know when they have produced a significant miscue, thus they do not make appropriate corrections.

Of the two groups which were composed of less proficient readers, the fluent English-proficient readers made more efficient use of correcting strategies than did the limited English-proficient readers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Miscues Corrected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEP READERS (In ranked order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#22, 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#25, 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#26, 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#27, 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#30, 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 9

It is interesting to note the scores of LEP readers #22 and #25. These two readers corrected more of their miscues than did the other LEP readers in spite of the fact that their overall English proficiency scores (as determined by the Language Assessment Scales) were lower than the scores of the other LEP readers. Again, these findings would indicate that some Hispanic beginning readers of English who are limited English-proficient maximize the knowledge of English which they do have, using it to try to make sense of a text.
The retelling strategies of the LEP readers of English included in the study appear to have been affected by their linguistic limitations:

**LEP READERS' RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: "What was the story about?"

#22 "They take a picture of Bill...and then...and they were playing baseball..."
#25 "Billy the Tiger and Ben...They played baseball against the Red Birds."
#26 "Everybody wanted to see Ben."
#27 "Bill Evers..."
#30 "Uh...the Tiger...He was running away and the boys went to chase him."

The story, "Bill Evers and the Tigers", deals with a group of boys and whether or not they will have enough courage to call a famous ball player and whether or not he will come to their baseball game.

The LEP readers retellings were sketchy and skeletal at best; in many instances, the readers appear to have misunderstood the text. In contrast, the fluent English-proficient readers, while still poor readers, were able to retell more. In addition, their retellings were more accurate:

**FEP READERS' RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: "What was the story about?"

#18 "They wanted to talk to Bill Evers and they, they, uh, called him up so, so he could play baseball, and when they came, he, he showed them how to play, how to hold the bat and the ball...and he wrote his name on the bat."
#20 "About Bill Evers and Ben Jones..."
#21 "It's about Bill Irvings...he could hit hard...he could hit...he knew how to play baseball..."
#23 "It was about everybody gathers around Bill Evans and they said 'Hi.'"
#29 "Baseball...that he was a baseball player and that he liked to play baseball."
17. Which LAS subscale was the best predictor of the Hispanic beginning readers' reading proficiency rating (RMI level)?

A discriminant analysis was performed on groups defined by RMI level, including the subscales of the English LAS as variables. The purpose of the operation was to assess the ability to predict RMI level by the score on a specific subscale of the LAS. It was found that the only subscale which was a significant predictor, \( p = 0.0260 \) of the RMI level was subscale V reflecting the production of syntactic structures.

It is important to note that this subscale is not scored on the sole basis of the complexity of the speaker's syntactic structures. The rating also considers the speaker's fluency and vocabulary. In other words, the factor(s) which allowed this subscale to be a significant predictor of the subjects' RMI levels is not clear. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that whereas neither comprehension of specific vocabulary items or syntactic structures served as a predictor, the ability to produce language which was complex in terms of syntactic structures, vocabulary, and fluency did, in fact, demonstrate a predictive function. What are the implications?

A global assessment of a beginning reader's natural language may be useful to the classroom teacher who is concerned with setting appropriate goals for Hispanic beginning readers of English. Certainly, the results of such an assessment would have to be interpreted with caution, give the many limitations of the testing situation. Nevertheless, such an assessment would be within the realm of possibility for the classroom teacher as an on-going evaluative indication of the child's prerequisite language needs.
CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

By documenting and discussing existing phenomena, the researcher has reexamined commonly held assumptions about Hispanic beginning readers of English in U.S. schools. To test the assumption that all Hispanic children are Spanish-speaking, thirty Hispanic children were administered tests of their Spanish language proficiency. It was found that only 13.3% of the thirty were fluent Spanish-speakers. Further, the Spanish spoken by the less and more proficient readers was not significantly different in terms of scores which emerged on the Spanish LAS for each group.

The notion of a "bilingual problem" was further tested through a consideration of the English language proficiency of the thirty subjects. The great majority of the Hispanic children who participated in the study were fluent English-speakers, regardless of their reading proficiency levels. In fact, all of the more proficient readers of English were fluent speakers of English. The overwhelming majority of children in this same group, 92%, were assessed to be highly articulate, native-like speakers of prestige dialects of English.

The major aim of the study was to clarify issues which warrant further research. To this end, thirty Hispanic second graders were administered Spanish and English language proficiency tests as well as an individually-administered reading proficiency test. An analysis of the test results was guided by seventeen questions, the majority of which were concerned with the relationship between the subjects' English language proficiency and their reading abilities.
The study found that all of the more proficient readers were fluent English-proficient. Only five of the less proficient readers were actually limited English-proficient. Seven of the remaining ten less proficient readers were assessed to be fluent speakers of a prestige dialect of English. These findings indicate that a substantial number of Hispanic children learning to read in regular (as opposed to bilingual) classrooms will encounter few language-related problems when learning to read English.

Of the five children assessed to be limited English-proficient, none fell within the "more proficient reader" group. The five limited English-proficient readers were further considered in a comparison of their reading strategies with the strategies of five fluent English-proficient children who were also less proficient readers. It was found that the limited English-proficient readers made less effective use of the majority of reading strategies considered. The limited English-proficient readers did not correct their miscues as often as did the fluent English-proficient readers. Further, the LEP readers did not retell the story as completely as did the FEP readers. Interestingly, however, the fluent English-proficient readers produced fewer grammatically acceptable miscues than did the LEP readers.

The study attempted unsuccessfully to isolate linguistic factors which account for differing levels of reading proficiency. It was found that there was no significant difference between the more and less proficient readers in terms of their scores on the individual subscales of the Language Assessment Scales reflecting phonemic, lexical, and syntactic knowledge.
Subscale V (reported to assess the speakers' production of syntactic structures) was found to be a significant predictor of the subjects' RMI (Reading Miscue Inventory) test results. The scores for this subscale, however, were actually derived from a combined consideration of the subjects' syntax, vocabulary and oral fluency.

The present study concentrated for the most part upon a consideration of linguistic and educational aspects of the thirty children involved. One finding, however, was related to their classroom teachers and their perceptions of the subjects as readers. It was found that out of the thirty reading proficiency classifications made by eleven teachers, only 56% corresponded to classifications obtained through the RMI. It was further found that in a majority of instances, teachers overestimated their students' reading proficiency.

Why were the eleven teachers unable to correctly assess their Hispanic students reading abilities in almost half of the documented instances? Given the possible implications of this issue, this question would be well-considered in future research efforts. The most important finding which emerged from the present study was that many equally critical questions still remain to be addressed through future research.

Why did a native-like fluency in a prestige dialect of English go hand in hand with the ability to demonstrate proficiency in English reading? Further, what combination of linguistic factors contribute to the lesser English reading proficiency of limited English-proficient Hispanic beginning readers?
Five of the less proficient readers were limited-English proficient. From this finding, two questions emerged. Are other children similarly enrolled in regular English language classrooms receiving any kind of additional support as beginning readers of English? Further, how do limited English-proficient children who learn to read in English fair in later years as readers?

Many of the subjects who participated in the study were children of monolingual Spanish-speaking parents. These same children, in several instances, were assessed to be non-Spanish-speaking. What factors contribute to this phenomenon? What are the psychological and educational implications for the children?

In summary, the following questions resulted from the present study:

1. Why were the eleven teachers unable to correctly assess their Hispanic students reading abilities in almost half of the documented instances? What are the implications for the inaccurately assessed children?
2. What combination of linguistic factors contribute to the lesser English reading proficiency of limited English-proficient Hispanic beginning readers?
3. Are LEP children who are presently enrolled in regular English learning classrooms receiving additional support as beginning readers of English?
4. How do LEP children who learn to read in English fair in later years as readers?
5. What are the factors which contribute to English monolingualism among Hispanic children, Spanish monolingual parents? What are the psychological and educational implications for the children?

Given the findings and questions which emerged from the present study, it is clear that future research could potentially play a critical role in the future school experiences of Hispanic children in the U.S. These future research efforts will have the greatest impact if they consider the uniqueness of each Hispanic child, while at the same time considering the home, school, and society which interact to create the child's learning environment.

Through their teacher training programs, institutions of higher learning can have a direct and profound impact on the educational lives of Hispanic children. The study points to several specific areas of training. First, teachers must be trained in reading assessment. Second, they need to learn to use language assessment data in planning a reading program for individual Hispanic children. Third, where limited English-proficient children are learning to read in English, teachers need to develop strategies for building their students' language base. Fourth, teachers need to learn ways to validate the language which their students bring from home.

Finally, the study demonstrates that institutions of higher learning must work with teachers to create an atmosphere where reading development abounds for all children regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.
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