

4-11-2019

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Communicative Patterns in Bilingual and Monolingual Mother-Child Dyads in the United States and Thailand

Neli Vorobyov
nvoroby1@binghamton.edu

Sirada Rochanavibhata
rochanavibhata@u.northwestern.edu

Viorica Marian
Northwestern University, v-marian@northwestern.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/alpenglowjournal>

Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vorobyov, N., Rochanavibhata, S., & Marian, V. (2019). A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Communicative Patterns in Bilingual and Monolingual Mother-Child Dyads in the United States and Thailand. *Alpenglow: Binghamton University Undergraduate Journal of Research and Creative Activity*, 5(1). Retrieved from <https://orb.binghamton.edu/alpenglowjournal/vol5/iss1/5>

This Academic Paper is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in *Alpenglow: Binghamton University Undergraduate Journal of Research and Creative Activity* by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Abstract

Parental speech has some influences on children's language development. The way parents speak with their children is often reflected in the children's speech patterns. Prior research suggests that monolingual mother-child communication differs as a function of linguistic and cultural background. The present study examined communicative patterns of bilingual and monolingual mother-child dyads in Thailand and the United States to determine whether there are differences in conversational style and content between bilinguals and monolinguals who are native to different countries and cultures. Participants included four bilingual mother-preschooler dyads from Thailand, four bilingual mother-preschooler dyads from the US, and 21 English monolingual dyads from the US. Each dyad completed three tasks in English: prompted reminiscing, book reading, and toy play. Interactions were video-recorded, transcribed using Codes for the Analysis of Human Language (CHAT), and coded for language measures. Data analysis utilized maternal and child mean frequency of each language measure. Results revealed that English monolingual mothers provided more descriptions, posed more questions, used more emotion words, and discussed their thoughts and feelings more than both groups of bilingual mothers. Similarly, English monolingual children shared their thoughts and feelings more than the two groups of bilingual children in each task, whereas the bilingual groups did not differ in their use of other linguistic measures. We conclude that culture and language status can change how monolinguals and bilinguals communicate, even when speaking the same language.

Keywords: bilingual, monolingual, mother-child dyad, cross-cultural, Thai, American, communication patterns

Children's language development is influenced by their early interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978). These interactions typically include parents or caregivers who are more linguistically competent than the children (Vygotsky, 1978). The way in which these adults speak to their children can later be reflected in the children's own speech styles. Research studying mother-child dyad conversations revealed that cross-cultural variation in communication styles and content (e.g., Minami & McCabe, 1991; Minami & McCabe, 1995; Winskel, 2010). Previous research has largely focused on comparing monolingual mother-child dyads from the same, as well as different, cultures. The current study, which is a part of a larger project, aimed to compare bilingual mother-child dyad communication cross-culturally in Thailand and the United States.

Narrative development is an aspect of communication that has been found to differ across languages and cultures. Minami and McCabe (1991) performed a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparison of Japanese and North American children constructing narratives. Results showed differences in narrative characteristics, reflecting what is valued in their respective cultures. For example, the Japanese children provided shorter narratives about past events than their North American counterparts. This succinct narrative style is more prominent in Japanese culture as opposed to North American culture. Examining maternal speech directed at these children, including presence of evaluations, verbal attention, and requests for descriptions, revealed differences that could account for the children's varying narrative development (Minami & McCabe, 1995). Another study compared narrative conversation styles and content in Thailand versus Australia in caretaker-child dyads (Winskel, 2010). The author found significant differences between Thai and Australian caretakers in adult speech directed at children, where Thai caretakers produced more concise and contextually-based narratives in comparison to Australian caretakers who produced longer and more elaborative narratives.

An overarching theme emerges: cultural norms and adult language input that children receive at a young age can influence language development and communication patterns. The current research is part of a larger study, comparing monolingual and bilingual dyads in Thailand and the United States cross-culturally and cross-linguistically. In the context of this specific study, we sought to understand if there are communication style and content differences between bilingual mother-child dyads who speak the same languages but are native to different countries and cultures. We investigated whether Thai and American bilingual mother-child dyads communicate differently in English and how these communication patterns compare to those of English monolingual dyads in the United States.

Based on previous literature as well as results from the monolingual dataset, we expected to find differences in conversation pattern between bilinguals in Thailand, bilinguals in the United States, and monolinguals in the United States. Specifically, we predicted that bilingual dyads living in Thailand would have shorter narratives than those living in the United States and monolingual American dyads would have the most elaborated narratives. Additionally, we hypothesized that monolingual and bilingual dyads residing in the United States would be more self-expressive and use more emotion words whereas dyads living in Thailand would be more reserved with self-expression and utilize fewer words regarding emotional states.

Method

Participants

Monolingual participants included 21 middle-class English monolingual mother-child dyads (11 boys, 10 girls) residing in the United States. To be included in the study, monolingual mothers and children had to be exposed to their L2 less than 20% (if they have an L2 and are exposed to it) and to report L2 proficiency scores of 5 or lower. At the conclusion of the larger study, we anticipate to have the same number of participants for each of our bilingual groups. Currently, bilingual participants included 4 Thai-English bilingual mother-child dyads (2 girls, 2 boys) residing in Thailand and 4 English-Thai bilingual mother-child dyads (2 girls, 2 boys) residing in the United States. Bilingual participants reported a daily exposure of over 20% in their L2. The children were preschoolers, ranging from 3 years 11 months to 5 years in age. Background information on the dyads was acquired through the *Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire* (LEAP-Q; Marian, Blumenfeld, & Kaushanskaya, 2007) to determine ability to speak, read, and understand in their native and second languages, if applicable.

Design

A between-subjects design was implemented, where all dyads completed identical tasks and comparisons were made across the three groups. Independent variables included language status and country of residence. Each independent variable had two levels. In terms of language status, participants were either monolingual or bilingual. For country of residence, participants lived in the United States or in Thailand. Dependent variables were maternal and child mean frequency of each language measure, which included total number of words, praise, positive feedback, negative feedback, action directives, contingency, labeling, descriptions, expansions, extensions, repetitions, requests for repetition, onomatopoeia, close-ended questions, open-ended questions, reframing, recasting, reformulation, affirmation, group pronouns, personal pronouns, mentions of family members, mentions of teachers and classmates, mentions of nannies, mentions of others, main agents, emotional intensity, emotion words/behaviors, attributes of child, behavioral expectations/social norms, and thoughts and feelings.

Materials

For the first task, prompted reminiscing, two sets of 11 word prompts were given to the mother to use as topics of conversation (e.g., Marian & Neisser, 2000). In the second task, book reading, two wordless picture books by Mercer Mayer: *Frog Goes to Dinner* (Mayer, 1974) and *Frog, Where Are You?* (Mayer, 1969) were supplied to the dyad. For the third task, toy play, various farm animal toys were provided to use. Refer to the Appendix for a display of materials used during each task.

Procedure

Thai-English bilingual mother-child dyads participated in two sessions on separate days, one day with all the tasks in English and another in Thai. There was a two-week interval between

the two sessions. English monolingual mother-child dyads participated in one session where all tasks were completed in English. During each session, the dyads were video-recorded participating in three tasks: prompted reminiscing, book reading, and toy play. During the prompted reminiscing task, mothers were given a set of word prompts (either set 1 or set 2), and were asked to elicit past memories from their children related to the prompts (see Appendix for lists of word prompts). For book reading, dyads were supplied with a wordless picture book (either *Frog Goes to Dinner*, Mayer, 1974 or *Frog, Where Are You?* Mayer, 1969) and mothers were instructed to share the wordless picture book as they would read any other book with their child. For toy play, dyads were given the set of farm animal toys and they were likewise instructed to play as they naturally would. No time constraint was placed on any task. These three tasks provided diversity in communicative setting in order to achieve a more comprehensive assessment of language style and content on both the mother and child's parts. See the Appendix for examples of a dyad participating in prompted reminiscing, book reading, and toy play.

Data Coding

The videos were transcribed using Codes for the Analysis of Human Language (CHAT), available through the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES; MacWhinney, 2000). Transcripts were coded for an array of variables measuring both mother and child conversation style and content. Measures that were analyzed in this study included total number of words, use of descriptions (e.g., "red kite"), closed-ended questions (e.g., "is the ball in the kitchen?"), open-ended questions (e.g., "where is the ball?"), positive emotion words (e.g., "happy"), negative emotion words (e.g., "sad"), and thoughts and feelings (e.g., "I like playing tennis").

Data Analysis

To compare the two bilingual groups of mother-child dyads with their English monolingual counterparts, only a subset of the bilingual data was analyzed, specifically data from the English session. To analyze the data, we calculated mean percentages for each measure by dividing the frequency of the measure by the total number of words in the conversation. This accounts for the differing conversations lengths across dyads. Due to small sample sizes, the Wilcoxon-Rank Sum test was used to determine if there were significant differences between the three groups.

Results

Maternal and child mean percentages and standard deviations for each language measure during the prompted reminiscing, book reading, and toy play tasks are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Results from the Wilcoxon-Rank Sum test comparing language use of English monolinguals and English-Thai bilinguals in the US, English monolinguals in the US and Thai-English bilinguals in Thailand, and English-Thai bilinguals in the US and Thai-English bilinguals in Thailand are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Mothers

Across all three tasks, English monolingual mothers in the US used more descriptions (e.g., “the *sleepy* dog”), close-ended questions (e.g., “did the dog try to find the frog?”), open-ended questions (e.g., “what else do you remember?”), negative emotion words (e.g., “they look very *sad*”), and expressed their thoughts and feelings (e.g., “that’s a good idea”) more than English-Thai bilingual mothers in the US and Thai-English bilingual mothers in Thailand. The two groups of bilingual mothers did not differ on any of the language measures across the three tasks.

During the prompted reminiscing and book reading tasks, English monolingual mothers used positive emotion words (e.g., “tell me why you *love* holidays”) significantly more than both groups of bilingual mothers. There were also significant differences in the number of words spoken, where English monolingual mothers produced more words than both groups of bilingual mothers. During the toy play task, English monolingual mothers used positive emotion words significantly more than English-Thai bilingual mothers in the US but marginally more than Thai-English bilingual mothers in Thailand. The three groups did not differ in the number of words spoken.

Children

English monolingual children in the US used more open-ended questions (e.g., “why is the mommy not angry?”) and shared their thoughts and feelings (e.g., “I don’t understand that”) more than both bilingual groups in all three tasks. Like the two groups of bilingual mothers, English-Thai bilingual children in the US and Thai-English bilingual children in Thailand did not differ significantly on any of the language measures across the three tasks.

During prompted reminiscing, English monolingual children used more descriptions (e.g., “a *very big* butterfly”), close-ended questions (e.g., “can I go get some more water?”), and positive emotion words (e.g., “I *love* frogs”) than both bilingual groups and produced more words than bilingual children in the US but not significantly more than bilingual children in Thailand. The three groups of children did not differ significantly in use of negative emotion words.

During book reading, English monolingual children used significantly more negative emotion words (e.g., “I got *hurt* so many times”) than both bilingual groups. The monolingual children produced significantly more words and posed marginally more close-ended questions

than bilingual children in the US but did not differ significantly from bilingual children in Thailand in use of close-ended questions and number of words produced. The three groups did not differ significantly in their use of positive emotion words and descriptions.

During toy play, English monolingual children used more descriptions and close-ended questions than both bilingual groups and produced more words than the bilingual children in the US but not significantly more than the bilingual children in Thailand. The three groups of children did not differ significantly in use of positive and negative emotion words.

Language Measure	English Monolinguals in US	English-Thai Bilinguals in US	Thai-English Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	1866.29 (555.31)	1114.50 (432.65)	1071.50 (355.91)
Maternal: Descriptions	0.92 (0.50)	0.02 (0.001)	0.03 (0.01)
Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	5.81 (1.28)	0.06 (0.01)	0.07 (0.02)
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	3.96 (1.96)	0.06 (0.03)	0.07 (0.02)
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	3.96 (1.96)	0.06 (0.03)	0.07 (0.02)
Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	0.74 (0.34)	0.02 (0.003)	0.02 (0.01)
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	0.22 (0.15)	0.004 (0.002)	0.003 (0.004)
Child: Total Words	846.33 (341.05)	416.00 (165.82)	604.25 (283.66)

Child: Descriptions	1.74 (0.92)	0.03 (0.009)	0.08 (0.05)
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	1.04 (0.58)	0.01 (0.01)	0.006 (0.006)
Child: Open-Ended Questions	0.84 (0.76)	0.008 (0.006)	0.006 (0.005)
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	4.24 (1.93)	0.07 (0.03)	0.08 (0.05)
Child: Positive Emotion Words	0.63 (0.68)	0.009 (0.008)	0.005 (0.005)
Child: Negative Emotion Words	0.36 (0.30)	0.007 (0.007)	0.004 (0.003)

Table 1. Mean Percentages (Standard Deviations) of Mothers' and Children's Language during Prompted Reminiscing

Language Measure	English Monolinguals in US	English-Thai Bilinguals in US	Thai-English Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	802.95 (316.78)	745.00 (19.61)	633.75 (370.09)
Maternal: Descriptions	1.10 (0.75)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	2.88 (1.78)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	4.21 (2.03)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	1.17 (0.89)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)

Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	0.40 (0.36)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	0.76 (0.50)	0.005 (0.002)	0.01 (0.008)
Child: Number of Words	230.90 (176.84)	129.75 (125.67)	81.5 (79.53)
Child: Descriptions	0.75 (1.05)	0.09 (0.14)	0.07 (0.10)
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	1.14 (1.74)	0.002 (0.005)	0.007 (0.01)
Child: Open-Ended Questions	2.36 (2.78)	0.007 (0.009)	0.02 (0.03)
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	3.52 (2.47)	0.08 (0.06)	0.05 (0.04)
Child: Positive Emotion Words	0.31(0.47)	0.002 (0.005)	0.004 (0.008)
Child: Negative Emotion Words	1.26 (1.10)	0.004 (0.008)	0.007 (0.01)

Table 2. Mean Percentages (Standard Deviations) of Mothers' and Children's Language during Book Reading

Language Measure	English Monolinguals in US	English-Thai Bilinguals in US	Thai-English Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	1288.52 (803.11)	960.50 (675.98)	837.00 (342.05)
Maternal: Descriptions	1.15 (0.63)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.01)

Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	5.04 (1.35)	0.03 (0.01)	0.04 (0.02)
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	2.52 (1.05)	0.05 (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	2.79 (1.53)	0.02 (0.003)	0.04 (0.03)
Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	0.24 (0.19)	0.003 (0.004)	0.006 (0.006)
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	0.37 (0.37)	0.01 (0.005)	0.008 (0.001)
Child: Number of Words	1099.24 (791.81)	433.00 (210.04)	580.50 (426.75)
Child: Descriptions	1.12 (0.70)	0.05 (0.06)	0.04 (0.02)
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	0.85 (0.54)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.008)
Child: Open-Ended Questions	0.72 (0.48)	0.006 (0.002)	0.02 (0.02)
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	2.99 (1.77)	0.06 (0.04)	0.07 (0.03)
Child: Positive Emotion Words	0.19 (0.30)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.003)
Child: Negative Emotion Words	0.18 (0.22)	0.008 (0.01)	0.006 (0.008)

Table 3. Mean Percentages (Standard Deviations) of Mothers' and Children's Language during Toy Play

Language Measure	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in the US	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in Thailand	Bilinguals in the US vs. Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	W = 12, $p = .02$	W = 7, $p < .01$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Maternal: Descriptions	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 4, $p = .34$
Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 5, $p = .49$
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 5, $p = .49$
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 14, $p = .11$
Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	W = 12, $p = .03$	W = 10.5, $p = .02$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Child: Number of Words	W = 6, $p < .01$	W = 25, $p = .23$	W = 6, $p = .69$
Child: Descriptions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 4, $p = .34$
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 10, $p = .69$
Child: Open-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 9, $p = .89$
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Child: Positive Emotion Words	W = 3.5, $p < .01$	W = 3.5, $p < .01$	W = 10.5, $p = .56$
Child: Negative Emotion Words	W = 21, $p = .12$	W = 21, $p = .12$	W = 9.5, $p = .77$

Table 4. Comparison of Language Use between the Three Dyad Groups during Prompted Reminiscing

Language Measure	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in the US	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in Thailand	Bilinguals in the US vs. Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	W = 42, $p = 1$	W = 27.5, $p = .30$	W = 12, $p = .34$
Maternal: Descriptions	W = 8, $p < .05$	W = 8, $p < .05$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 11, $p = .49$
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 5, $p = .49$
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 13, $p = .2$
Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	W = 12, $p < .05$	W = 24, $p = .20$	W = 11, $p = 0.49$
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	W = 32.5, $p = .49$	W = 31.5, $p = .44$	W = 8.5, $p = 1$
Child: Number of Words	W = 12, $p < .05$	W = 24, $p = .20$	W = 11, $p = .49$
Child: Descriptions	W = 32.5, $p = .49$	W = 31.5, $p = .44$	W = 8.5, $p = 1$
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 17.5, $p = .07$	W = 21, $p = .12$	W = 6, $p = .62$
Child: Open-Ended Questions	W = 12, $p < .05$	W = 12, $p < .05$	W = 6, $p = .64$
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 10, $p = .69$
Child: Positive Emotion Words	W = 32.5, $p = .44$	W = 32.5, $p = .44$	W = 7.5, $p = 1$
Child: Negative Emotion Words	W = 10, $p < .05$	W = 12, $p < .05$	W = 6, $p = .62$

Table 5. Comparison of Language Use between the Three Dyad Groups during Book Reading

Language Measure	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in the US	Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals in Thailand	Bilinguals in the US vs. Bilinguals in Thailand
Maternal: Number of Words	W = 27, $p = .30$	W = 27, $p = .30$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Maternal: Descriptions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 5, $p = .49$
Maternal: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 6, $p = .69$
Maternal: Open-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 8, $p = 1$
Maternal: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 7, $p = .89$
Maternal: Positive Emotion Words	W = 15, $p < .05$	W = 17.5, $p = .07$	W = 6, $p = .66$
Maternal: Negative Emotion Words	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 12, $p = .34$
Child: Number of Words	W = 25, $p = .23$	W = 11, $p < .05$	W = 7, $p = .89$
Child: Descriptions	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 4, $p < .01$	W = 7, $p = .89$
Child: Closed-Ended Questions	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 7.5, $p = 1$
Child: Open-Ended Questions	W = 8, $p < .05$	W = 8, $p < .05$	W = 4, $p = .34$
Child: Thoughts & Feelings	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 0, $p < .001$	W = 6, $p = .69$

Child: Positive Emotion Words	W = 22.5, p = .14	W = 27, p = .26	W = 7, p = .87
Child: Negative Emotion Words	W = 31.5, p = .44	W = 27, p = .26	W = 9, p = .88

Table 6. Comparison of Language Use between the Three Dyad Groups during Toy Play

Discussion

The current study compared communicative patterns in three groups of mother-child dyads: English monolingual dyads in the US, English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US, and Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand. Based on notable differences in monolingual dyads' communication style and content across languages and cultures, we predicted that there would be differences in communicative patterns between the three groups when speaking in English. As predicted, differences were present in monolingual versus bilingual conversation style and content. However, there were no significant differences present in communication patterns between the English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US and Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand.

Conversational style and content reflect cultural variations across monolinguals and bilinguals. English monolingual dyads in the US used descriptions and questions in conversation to a greater degree than the bilingual mothers, reflecting highly elaborative and lengthy narratives that are favored in American culture (Winskel, 2010). Thai culture values a more concise narrative in comparison and may be suggestive of why Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand used fewer of these communicative strategies (Winskel, 2010). Self-expression, a characteristic of individualistic American society, is also more strongly evident in the monolingual conversations as opposed to the bilingual conversations in Thailand, as can be seen in the greater use of emotion words and more discussions of thoughts and feelings by English monolingual dyads (Winskel, 2010).

Lack of significant differences in communication patterns between English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US and Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand may be due to the extent of acculturation of the English-Thai bilingual mothers in the US. Mothers in this group grew up in Thailand with Thai as their first language and relocated to the US during adulthood. Their early exposure to Thai culture may still have an influence on their communicative patterns even if American culture is currently the dominant culture to which they are exposed and even though they speak English daily more than Thai. Thus, the English-Thai bilingual dyads may be less acculturated in American culture than the English monolingual dyads, who identify solely with the American culture. The extent of acculturation perhaps accounts for the significant difference between the two groups in the US and the lack of difference between the bilingual groups. However, we expect more divergence between these bilingual groups over time between the children who, as opposed to their mothers, are being reared in different cultures.

A limitation of the current study included small sample sizes among the bilingual groups. Small sample sizes can skew results and may not be representative of the larger populations of interest. Due to the time constraint of this project, inclusion of more dyads was not possible but transcribing, coding, and analysis are ongoing in order to ultimately include an equal number of English monolingual dyads in the US, English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US, and Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand. However, having dyads participate in three various tasks and finding consistent results in all three tasks does strengthen the current results for communicative patterns.

In the future it would be beneficial to include English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US with mothers who have English as their first language along with mothers who have Thai as their first language. Therefore, future work can investigate how various levels of acculturation in

bilinguals can impact their communication patterns. Furthermore, this study is a component of a larger study, in which we seek to examine how communication patterns within bilingual dyads differ across their two languages.

To conclude, cultural background and language status can play key roles in communication patterns in mother-child dyad interactions. English monolingual dyads in the US, English-Thai bilingual dyads in the US, and Thai-English bilingual dyads in Thailand engaged in the same three tasks and exhibited differences in conversation style and content when speaking English. Our results suggest that cross-cultural communication differences previously found among monolingual dyads are not currently evident among bilingual dyads, but further research is necessary for determining whether other variables moderate this effect.

References

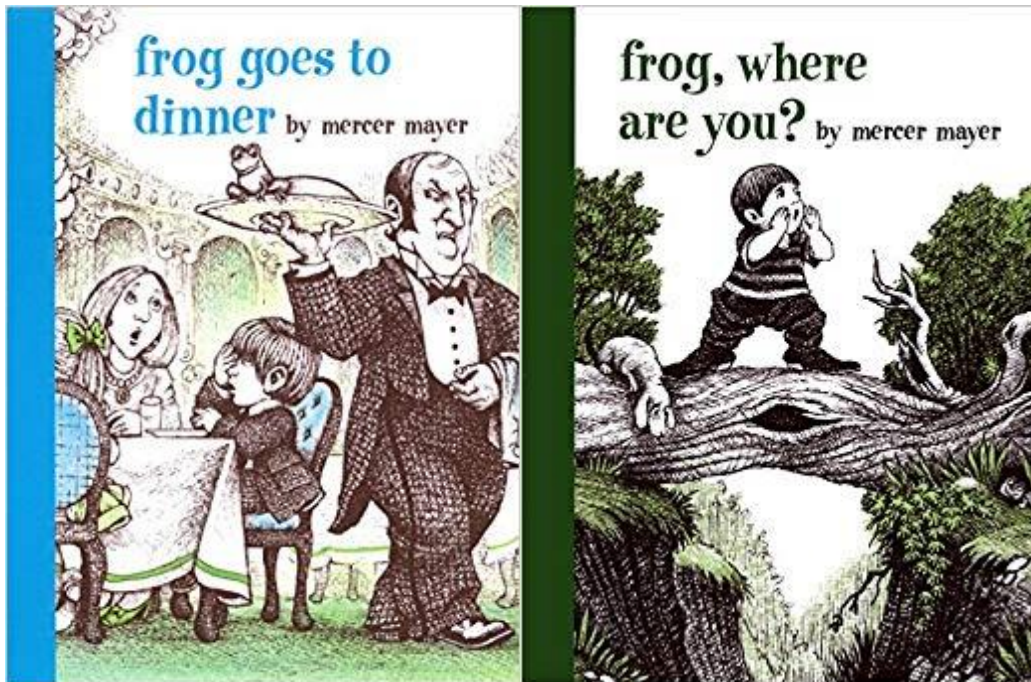
- MacWhinney, B. (2000). *The CHILDES project* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Marian, V., Blumenfeld, H. K., Kaushanskaya, M. (2007). The Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q): Assessing language profiles in bilinguals and multilinguals. *Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research* 50(4), 940-967.
- Marian, V., & Neisser, U. (2000). Language-dependent recall of autobiographical memories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 129(3), 361–368. doi:10.1037//0096-3445.129.3.361
- Mayer, M. *Frog, where are you?* New York, NY: Penguin Books; 1969.
- Mayer, M. *Frog goes to dinner.* New York, NY: Penguin books; 1974.
- Minami, M., & McCabe, A. (1991). Haiku as a discourse regulation device: A stanza analysis of Japanese children's personal narratives. *Language in Society*, 20 (Dec 91), 577-599.
- Minami, M., & McCabe, A. (1995). Rice balls and bear hunts: Japanese and North American family narrative patterns. *Journal of Child Language*, 22, pp 423-445
doi:10.1017/S0305000900009867
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Winkel, H. (2010). A Comparison of Caretaker-Child Conversations about Past Personal Experiences in Thailand and Australia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 41(3), 353-367.

Appendix

Materials for Task 1: Prompted Reminiscing

Set 1	Set 2
Blood	Doctor
Cat	Dog
Airplane	Car
School	Yard
Lunch	Dinner
Boat	Zoo
Laughing	Friend
Blanket	Kitchen
Butterfly	Spider
Holiday	Summer
Birthday	Party

Materials for Task 2: Book Reading



Materials for Task 3: Toy Play



Examples of Dyad Engaging in Prompted Reminiscing, Book Reading, and Toy Play

