



Language of silence : an ethnographic case study of the expressive language skills of preschool Native American girls
by Arlene Marie Hett

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University
© Copyright by Arlene Marie Hett (1992)

Abstract:

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to describe the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. Additionally, the study investigated whether (a) these characteristics are specific to this population as compared to the Anglo children in the Head Start program, (b) these characteristics are gender specific, and (c) these characteristics handicap the preschool Native American girl when she enters a formal education program.

The study was conducted in the Head Start programs in Great Falls, Montana, and Havre, Montana. An ethnographic case study method was combined with quantitative test scores. Data were gathered through observation and interview as well as through analysis of test scores. The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to 179 children at the two sites. The research was developed and carried out during the fall and winter of 1991-1992. There were 51 Native American children in the study with 21 being female Native Americans.

The findings revealed that there are distinct language patterns of female Native American speakers. The observations indicated that Native American girls speak less than the other groups of children. The interviews revealed that the Native American mothers described their daughters as "shy." The test scores showed a significant difference between the scores of Native American students and Anglo students, between Native American girls and Anglo boys, and, most significantly, between Native American girls and Anglo girls.

LANGUAGE OF SILENCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY
OF THE EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF
PRESCHOOL NATIVE AMERICAN GIRLS

by

Arlene Marie Hett

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April, 1992

© COPYRIGHT

by

Arlene Marie Hett

1992

All Rights Reserved

D378
H4733

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Arlene Marie Hett

This thesis has been read by each member of the author's committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

April 20, 1992
Date

Gerald D. Sullivan
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

April 21, 1992
Date

Diane Mellis
Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

April 24, 1992
Date

Henry J. Parsons
Graduate Dean

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. I further agree that copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for extensive copying or reproduction of this thesis should be referred to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, to whom I have granted "the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute copies of the dissertation in and from microfilm and the right to reproduce and distribute by abstract in any format."

Signature

Arlene Hett

Date

4-7-92

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my husband Byron and my sons Krister and Erik, I am grateful for their personal sacrifice and perseverance during these "dissertation years." Dr. Gerald Sullivan, advisor, chair, and friend, has assisted me with his calm manner and positive approach to this process. I am grateful for his support and guidance. Dr. Ardys Clarke and Dr. Gary Conti were extremely valuable with their knowledge and technical assistance concerning my topic and methodology. Committee members Dr. Duane Melling, Dr. Robert Thibeault, and Dr. John Sawyer found time for me in their busy schedules. I am indebted to the College of Great Falls for providing a work schedule which allowed the freedom to do this "on-site" research. To the administrators, teachers, and children at the Head Start Programs in Great Falls and Havre, I wish to express my appreciation for their hospitality as they welcomed me into their classrooms. To professional and personal friends who encouraged and celebrated with me as each step was completed, I am thankful for their steady support. This dissertation was funded in part by the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the 21 Native American girls and their mothers whose cooperation made this study possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	5
Significance of the Study	5
Definitions	7
Assumptions	9
Limitations	10
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	12
Expressive Language	12
Native American Students	15
Comparison of Expressive and Receptive Language	20
Gender Differences in Language Usage	22
Language Testing in Early Childhood Programs	24
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
General Procedures	27
Population and Setting	28
Method of Collecting Data	29
Operational Procedures	31
Data Collection as Participant Observer	32
Method of Organizing and Analyzing Data	34
Development of an Educator's Monograph	36
4. FINDINGS	37
Participants	37
Classroom Observations	38
Interviews	44
Other Findings	51
Test Results	54
Summary	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS--(Continued)

	Page
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
Summary	62
Conclusions	64
Recommendations	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
APPENDICES	79
Appendix A--Observation Form	80
Appendix B--Interview Form	83
Appendix C--Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test	85
Appendix D--Letters to Head Start Program	100
Appendix E--Educator's Monograph	103
Appendix F--Illustrations	130

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Data from Observation Form	41
2. Data from Interview Form	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing the means of the Language Standard Scores	56
2. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Native American students	56
3. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Anglo and Native American students	58
4. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Native American girls and the Native American boys	58
5. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Native American girls and the Anglo boys	59
6. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Anglo girls and the Anglo boys	59
7. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for the Native American girls and the Anglo girls	61
8. Data from the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test comparing means for two age categories	61

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to describe the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. Additionally, the study investigated whether (a) these characteristics are specific to this population as compared to the Anglo children in the Head Start program, (b) these characteristics are gender specific, and (c) these characteristics handicap the preschool Native American girl when she enters a formal education program.

The study was conducted in the Head Start programs in Great Falls, Montana, and Havre, Montana. An ethnographic case study method was combined with quantitative test scores. Data were gathered through observation and interview as well as through analysis of test scores. The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to 179 children at the two sites. The research was developed and carried out during the fall and winter of 1991-1992. There were 51 Native American children in the study with 21 being female Native Americans.

The findings revealed that there are distinct language patterns of female Native American speakers. The observations indicated that Native American girls speak less than the other groups of children. The interviews revealed that the Native American mothers described their daughters as "shy." The test scores showed a significant difference between the scores of Native American students and Anglo students, between Native American girls and Anglo boys, and, most significantly, between Native American girls and Anglo girls.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the Secretary of Education, Dr. Cavazos, stated at the first meeting of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force that "of all the ethnic groups in the country, Native American students have the highest dropout rate" (Indian Nations at Risk, 1991). The dropout rate in 1989 was 36 percent for Native American students (National Center for Education Statistics, 1989). According to Dr. Cavazos, the work of the task force was part of the national education restructuring strategy. As such, he hoped that members of the task force would review the national education goals jointly with the President and the governors of the states as a guide for their efforts. The first two goals were that by the year 2000 (a) every child will start school ready to learn and (b) the graduation rate will increase to 90 percent nationally (Governor's Conference, 1990).

Educational leaders in our increasingly pluralistic society realized that those two goals would be difficult to achieve. With minorities expected to compose 40 percent of the public school population by the end of 1990 (Nelson-Barber, 1990), the failure of many school districts

to educate poor and minority students was a major concern. To increase the graduation rate in the nation, students from diverse backgrounds and cultures would all need to be studied.

One of the serious problems confronting Native American leaders is that Native Americans as a whole have achieved one of the lowest educational levels among all ethnic groups and are not doing well while attending school. This educational problem has in the past attracted little academic analysis, and, therefore, ethnic and racial stereotypings are often used as theoretical explanations of the problem (Lin, 1985).

School Administrators have been faced with the problem of how to keep Native American students in school. The growing number of potential dropouts in schools near Indian reservations had these administrators and teachers searching to discover culturally relevant teaching techniques (Indian Nations at Risk, 1990).

Several studies focused on language skills of Native American children. Susan Phillips's study on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation (1974) looked at communication in classroom and community with a major portion of her work comparing Native American and Anglo communication behavior in classroom interaction. In Alaska, James Connelly (1985) studied receptive and expressive vocabularies of young Native American children. His major premise was that

Native American children tended to attain relatively low scores on tests which assessed verbal skills and attained at least average scores on tests which assessed nonverbal skills.

Native American children demonstrated unique patterns of interpersonal communication (Phillips, 1983).

In the white culture where the children are punished by their parents, who love their children and are loved by them, the children eventually internalize the moral voices of their parents and are controlled by this internal voice of conscience. In other tribes (Zuni, Navajo) the children are warned, when they are naughty, that people will talk about them. Or they are warned of punishment by supernatural beings. They may be threatened or even whipped by a stranger who is asked to do this. Thus much of the children's experience of punishment comes from outside the home and comes from persons whom they do not love. Morally controlling forces remain in the outside world, as far as these children are concerned, and they grow up without much inner moral control. This may result in their being excessively bashful as children and exceedingly subject to the pressure of public opinion (Havighurst & Neugarten, 1955, pp. 78-79).

Havighurst and Neugarten (1955) went on to say that community members play a greater part in producing both pleasant and unpleasant emotions in Native American children. This indicated that people in the Native American community outside the family had greater power to influence the emotions of the children as compared to the Anglo family where disapproval and discipline are accomplished within the family.

There appeared to be patterns which were also gender specific to females. It has been posited that these female communication patterns have been passed on from one generation to the next through both formal and informal activities (Cazden, 1972).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to describe the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. This population was selected because the Native American dropout rate, 36 percent, was the highest in our nation (National Center for Education Statistics, 1989). Additionally, the study investigated whether (a) these characteristics are specific to this population as compared to the Anglo children in the Head Start program, (b) these characteristics are gender specific, and (c) these characteristics handicap the preschool Native American girl when she enters a formal education program. These language characteristics were studied using both qualitative and quantitative measures. By using the triangulation process, both descriptive and explanatory data were gathered. Triangulation is the combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units (Wiersma, 1986).

The researcher's experiences as an early childhood teacher and reading specialist have provided her with many

opportunities to work with Native American girls. It was the researcher's observation that many teachers were unaware of the unique characteristics of the Native American girl's language skills. An educational need existed for early childhood teachers to have this information. To meet this need, an educator's monograph was developed to assist Head Start teachers and others working in early childhood settings.

Research Questions

Research questions addressed by this study were:

1. What are the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl?
2. Are these characteristics specific to this population as compared to the Anglo children in the Head Start program?
3. Are these characteristics gender specific?
4. Do these characteristics handicap the preschool Native American girl when she enters a formal education program?

Significance of the Study

Although the body of Native American research continues to grow, there continues to be a dearth of research concerning the expressive language skills of preschool Native American girls. These girls must be included in the nation's educational goals if the dropout

rate for all children is to be seriously examined. Because Native American students have the highest dropout rate in the United States (36 percent), a closer look must be taken to understand what causes this statistic (National Center for Education Statistics, 1989). This study provides an important contribution to Native American research as well as to the body of research which focuses on expressive language.

Many school districts compete for state and federal funds for bilingual programs for their students who exhibit language problems. This study may assist those districts with a large Native American population should they decide to start a bilingual program. Considering the flow of research in the area of language and compensatory programs during the past several decades, educators must evaluate and revamp these programs (Indian Nations at Risk, 1991). This study provided more information concerning Native American girls' eligibility for bilingual classes. In a state with twelve Native American tribes, whose members represented about 6 percent of the state population, bilingual programs made sense, and yet few such programs existed (Dodd, 1989).

The ways in which language is passed down from one generation to the next varies from culture to culture. This study may provide educators with additional knowledge concerning how preschool Native American girls are expected

to use language. Through interviews with preschool teachers, these teacher expectations may be revealed. This study may lead to new teaching methods for educators who work with preschool Native American girls. Methods could be explored to develop verbal skills and increase participation among Native American students, such as accepting short or non-verbal responses, presenting multiple choice tasks, and giving visual clues.

In the area of assessment, educators searched for new ways to measure children's school success. Educational practice dictated that a large proportion of assessment of preschool children is based on their communicative skills (Cicourel, 1974). This study combines both qualitative and quantitative information concerning the children in the study. It may serve as a model for educators searching for new ways to assess children's development.

Most importantly, this study may have significance for Native American students who have been failing in school and have been dropping out at a 36 percent rate. This study may provide educators with new insights concerning how Native American children can succeed in schools.

Definitions

The following definitions were used throughout the study and represent terms used by practitioners in the

field of language and terms associated with educational administration as it pertained to bilingual programs.

Basal: On language tests this is the point at which the tester determines that there is no need to go to a lower level on specific test material because the child has a general understanding of the material on that level or lower (Bennett-Kastor, 1988).

Bilingual: The ability to understand and speak more than one language (Philips, 1983).

Ceiling: On language tests this is the point at which the tester determines that there is no need to go to a higher level on specific test material because the child has reached a frustration level (Bennett-Kastor, 1988).

Communication: The exchange of meanings (Philips, 1983).

Early Childhood: Children between the ages of 0-8 (Nadelman, 1982).

Expressive Language: Language used to express ideas or thoughts (Bennett-Kastor, 1988).

Language: Refers to the system of signs and sounds through which we represent and convey our meaning (Philips, 1983).

Receptive Language: The way language is processed from outside to inside (Connelly, 1985).

Speech: The activities of articulating and ordering sounds to produce words (Wells, 1986).

Talk: The use of language to express ideas by means of speech (Philips, 1983).

Triangulation: Qualitative cross-validation conducted among different data sources or different data collection methods. It is a search for convergence of the information on a common finding or concept (Wiersma, 1986, p. 246).

Words: Labels for objects, actions and events (Philips 1983).

Assumptions

The major assumption of the study was based on theoretical constructs regarding the association of expressive language skills and school success. It was assumed that teacher expectation of a child with poor expressive language skills would be lower than for a child with average or above average expressive skills. This has been documented in the Teacher Expectation and Student Achievement (TESA) material.

Another assumption was that the video camera would not serve as an obstacle for the children. The teachers at each of the sites reassured the investigator that the children were accustomed to the camera and that its appearance would not disrupt the children.

Limitations

The study was conducted in the Great Falls Head Start Program, Great Falls, Montana, and in the Head Start Program in Havre, Montana. These two sites were selected because their close proximity to reservations gave them a high population of Native American students. Twenty-eight percent of the students in the study were Native American. The use of only two locations may limit the generalization of the study's quantitative findings.

The interviewing of the Native American mothers by an Anglo investigator may be a limitation of the study. The investigator had worked extensively with the Great Falls community. This reduced the limitations because the investigator had an established rapport with some of the Head Start parents which soon spread to other participants. At the Havre site the investigator was new to the community.

The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test was selected as the testing instrument because it is used in many early childhood programs in the area. This instrument provided a basal estimate of each child's verbal intelligence based on the child's acquired one-word expressive picture vocabulary. The test was designed for children from 2 years to 12 years, and consisted of 110 line drawings. It has certain limitations as mentioned in

the Mental Measurements Yearbook, 1985. For example, the child who supplies the response "locomotive" instead of "train" receives no credit for that response (Burrows, 1985).

Inferences from this study are appropriate as long as the limitations and exploratory nature of the study are considered. With these constraints, the study was expected to yield meaningful information which contributes to the body of knowledge and provides a foundation for future research efforts in the area of expressive language.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of the study was to describe the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. This chapter provides the theoretical basis for the study, synthesizes major issues related to the research, and provides evidence of the need for and limited research in this area to date.

The following major areas of investigation were reviewed: (a) the characteristics of expressive language, (b) the Native American student, (c) comparisons of receptive and expressive language, (d) gender differences in language usage, and (e) language testing in early childhood programs. Computer searches were conducted from sources noted in the areas of Education (ERIC, 1970-1990) and Psychological Review (1981-1987). Descriptors used were "language," "expressive language," "Native American," "minority," "early childhood education," "bilingual education," and "gender."

Expressive Language

Expressive language is the component of language which is used to express an idea or thought (Bennett-Kastor,

1988). It can be thought of as that language which starts on the inside and moves outward. In comparison, receptive language would be language which originates on the outside and moves inward. Receptive language skills deal directly with how people process language when someone else is speaking.

A study of expressive language skills for young children (Bennett-Kastor, 1988) brings forth questions such as the following:

1. Is the child willing to participate in expressive language activities?

2. Can the child express ideas clearly?

3. Does the child use standard English?

4. Does the child have an adequate vocabulary to allow for the expression of ideas?

5. Does the child use the basic sentence patterns of English?

6. Does the child respect the rights of other participants in an oral language situation? (p. 23)

There are several bodies of knowledge concerning language and learning and how they relate to each other. Piaget and his associates believed that children's first-hand experiences form the basis of their learning and understanding (Nadelman, 1982). His work in the area of learning influenced the current division of educators who believe in concrete, hands-on learning as opposed to

educators who believe in a lecture style of teaching. Language, according to Piaget, is important because it may increase the powers of thought in range and rapidity.

Vygotsky (1962) helped explain the way in which children use their experiences in combination with their social exchanges with people involving language. As the child hears and uses words, the child begins to order and classify his experiences. Later, words come to represent generalized notions, abstracted from many experiences. Many concepts cannot be developed from direct experiences only, and language helps children understand these abstract relationships.

In Vygotsky's view, language plays an essential part in conceptual development while Piaget emphasized the concept that the child's thought arises from his own actions, which builds inner frames of reference, which are the basis of meaning. Piaget's work reflected the concept that the meanings the child can communicate through language are dependent on the level of development of nonverbal frames of reference. Luria and Yudrovich (1971) used their case study of twin boys to support their view that children are learning to think as they are learning to use language.

Bernstein (1971) suggested that in many homes children are deprived of language experiences because they have not learned to use language in the ways that are valued by

teachers. Others have challenged this theory, claiming that these children can think and express their ideas using non-standard forms of language. Labor (1971) contended that these children cannot be regarded as having a deficiency in language simply because they use a different form.

"Storying" was a term used by Gordon Wells in his book, The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn (1986), to refer to the perceptual and cognitive processes through which all experiences make sense. Wells claimed that in the beginning this inner storying is not a conscious and deliberate activity but is the way in which the mind itself works. His research stressed the importance of storying as a prerequisite of school success.

Native American Students

The National Education Association's Human Civil Rights Specialist, Ron Houston, presented public testimony to the national Indian Nations at Risk Committee (1990). His testimony was based on a 1987 National Education Association study on American Indian/Alaskan Native Concerns. This committee held regional hearings and visited schools to gain their information. The major issues facing Native American students were inadequate funding, student mobility, and institutional rigidity

according to their findings. Institutional rigidity resulted in schools that could not address the needs of mobile students or potential dropouts and had no capacity for utilizing culturally relevant teaching techniques.

Other speakers at the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force meeting in May, 1990, were Mr. Joseph H. Ely and Dr. Robert Swan. Mr. Ely, a Tribal Chairman, stressed that education is imperative for the survival of their society.

We have to recognize that Indian people will not assimilate. Without this recognition, school teaches one thing and home teaches another regarding who Indian people are and what their goals are. What we have, in reality, are two different societies. They can be compatible, and education must work towards that end. Education must teach pride in culture and ways to cooperate and survive in the dominant culture (Indian Nations at Risk, 1990, 5).

At the same meeting, Dr. Robert Swan from the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana discussed the important role the Head Start program had on their dropout rate. Whereas the national dropout rate was at 36 percent, Dr. Swan claimed that the dropout rate on the Rocky Boy Reservation had been reduced to 20 percent. In Montana 50 percent of Indian adults have been high school dropouts.

Dr. Alan Ginsburg, Executive Director of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, stressed three areas of concern for Native American children in the area of school readiness: (a) the importance of understanding linguistic development and culturally appropriate strategies, (b) the

need for Head Start to be expanded to reflect what is known in these areas, and (c) the importance of language development in preparing a child to develop the cognitive skills necessary to succeed in school.

Estele Fuchs and Robert Havighurst (1983), in their book, To Live on This Earth: American Indian Education, explained the reasons for family background being a handicap in relation to the school achievement of many Native American pupils in American schools.

The first reason is that the great majority of Native American pupils are reared in poverty-stricken families, and poverty is generally a disadvantage for school achievement. Also, with the exception of a growing minority of Native Americans, most Native American families have very little formal education, and, therefore, Native American children are far more dependent upon the school for academic instruction than children whose families are in a position to assist them in this area (p. 128).

The formal education level of Native American families has gradually increased. Enrollment at tribal colleges has increased steadily since 1981. Unfortunately, the scores on the ACT college entrance exam are remaining lower than other minority groups (Indian Nations at Risk, 1991).

Approximately 18 percent of an age cohort were entering college from the Native American population in 1970, while 40 percent of the age group of all American youth were enrolling in college. Only 4 percent of the Native American students graduated from a four year

college, compared with 22 percent of the total American age cohort (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1983).

Members of the Task Force expressed concerns for tests which were used for promotion, college entrance, and placement in special programs in terms of Native American student performance (Indian Nations at Risk, 1990). As a result of these tests, 25 percent of Native American children in public schools were in special education, and in some urban areas it was as high as one-third. Educators labeled children as learning disabled when actually they simply did not understand the subtleties of school language.

In a study of 75 Oglala Sioux children aged four to ten, the same experiments and questions were used that Dr. Piaget had used with Swiss children to produce his theories of cognitive development in human children. The findings show that

the cognitive stages as well as their succession are found in both populations, and at approximately the same time. It means that the inferiorities shown by IQ tests among Native American children are dependent upon the nature of these tests, in particular their cultural content since these inferiorities are not found when one analyzes the development of more fundamental concepts (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1983, p. 121).

Testing is not the only label-producing barrier for these children. Cultural language differences may actually be a larger barrier for them.

Scollon and Scollon's lengthy analyses of interethnic conversations among Athabaskan Native Americans and Anglos in Alaska revealed that something as simple as a shift in rhythm between speakers led to personal judgments of a speaker's capabilities. For example, an Anglo speaker often will ask a question, then pause, waiting for the Native American speaker to reply; then, when it appears the listener has nothing to say, the white speaker will speak again. The Native American, who wishes to reply, but is accustomed to longer pauses between speakers, is not given an adequate opportunity to speak. On the other hand, when Native American speakers do have the floor, they are interrupted frequently because they take what are perceived by Anglos to be "lengthy" pauses between thoughts. As an Athabaskan woman said, "While you're thinking about what you're going to say, they're already talking." Hence, Native American speakers often say very little and Anglo speakers seem to do all the talking (Nelson-Barber & Meier, 1990, 35).

What implications does this hold for the Native American/Anglo classroom? If an Anglo teacher does not make a conscious shift in the language pattern being used, there will be little opportunity for the Native American child to speak. It is important that these students do not feel as outsiders in their own classrooms simply because they may be out of sync with the interactive style used by the teacher.

In The Invisible Culture (1983, p. 4), Susan Philips argues that "the children of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation are enculturated in their preschool years into modes of organizing the transmission of verbal messages that are culturally different from those of Anglo middle-class children." She goes on to state that "this

difference makes it more difficult for them to then comprehend verbal messages conveyed through the American school's Anglo middle-class modes of organizing classroom interaction."

Comparison of Expressive and Receptive Language

Children learn their language through imitation of others in their environment. As the "mother tongue" is learned, certain kinds of discriminations and experiences which are important to that culture are also learned. For example, a child from a rural area might learn to distinguish varied types of plants and know the word symbols for the growth stages of the plant, while an urban child could distinguish brand-name products advertised on billboards and street signs. Naming, defining, generalizing will all necessarily be done within whatever limits exist in the vocabularies of the child's contacts (Luria and Yudrovich, 1971).

It becomes apparent that the culture of a child is greatly reflected in the child's expressive language. Both the verbal and the nonverbal behavior in communication reflects the culture of the person. It appears that preschool aged children have become so enculturated into modes of transmitting verbal messages that their form of communication is cultural specific.

Our educational system assumes that children enter school with a shared developmental sequence of expressive language skills; however, that developmental sequence may be very diverse (Indian Nations at Risk, 1991). Educators, who are working with diverse cultures in their schools, may need to look at curriculum policies and also at teacher training to insure that students from culturally different families are also taught within their dominant form of communication. This is much more complex than simply dealing with children who speak a language which differs from the dominant language. It deals with the "hidden" handicap of speaking the same language but with a completely different delivery system (Indian Nations at Risk, 1990).

James B. Connelly (1985) studied expressive and receptive language skills of young Indian children. His study consisted of all the students in grades one through three from four schools in rural southeastern Alaska. Two schools were primarily white and the other two were primarily Native American with 200 students in the population. The purpose of his research was to compare expressive language test scores to the receptive language test scores of the same students. His results show that "Indian children tend to attain relatively low scores on tests which assess verbal skills and attain at least

average scores on tests which assess nonverbal skills" (Connelly, 1985, 9).

Gender Differences in Language Usage

In Gender Voices, David Graddol and Joan Swann (1989) not only provided a survey of the way women and men differ in their habits but also an exploration of the links between language and the structure of society. They proposed that how women and men speak ultimately affects their position in society, their economic and political achievements, and even their personalities and perceived identities. Certain kinds of speech may be regarded as socially appropriate for a particular sex and may be learned by children just as they learn other kinds of gender appropriate behavior. Language is culturally specific as are other social behaviors.

The classic case of the Carib Indians has been used in many accounts of sex differences in language use. The French writer, Rochefort, in 1665 described the language of the West Indies Indians as having two separate languages, one language being used only by the men and the other only by the women even though they understood the language of the opposite sex. While this is an extreme example of language differences based on gender, every language has been found to contain sex differences (Graddol and Swann, 1989).

The Native American mother is much more closely involved in her daughter's personal happiness than Anglo mothers and their daughters (Havighurst & Neugarten, 1955, p. 72). Hence, the gender differences which have existed will be passed on to the girls of preschool age. The Native American culture may have gender differences in the area of language which are "taught" to preschool girls. The Sioux, for example, have different ways of expression for males and females. Although both sexes speak the same language, their language contains specific words which are male words and other words which are used only by female speakers. The end of words may be different for male and female speakers as well (Clarke, 1991).

In the Blackfeet tribe, aunts often are considered to be mothers, uncles are called fathers, and cousins are brothers and sisters of the immediate family. Even clan members are considered relatives; so Indian cultures consider many more individuals to be relatives than do non-Indians (McLaughlin, 1969).

In Chippewa Customs (1979, p. 58), Frances Densmore describes the child rearing practices of the Chippewa.

The Chippewa gave much attention to the training of their children. In summer the children could play out of doors, but in winter they had to be amused indoors. It was hard to keep the little children quiet in the evenings so they would not disturb the older people. The mother often said, "Keep still or the owl will get you." If they did not keep still she went to the door of the wigwam, held back the blanket, and said, "Come

in, owl; come and get these children who won't keep still."

Chippewa girls were taught to live a quiet life and to be kind to all. "If a Chippewa girl was well brought up and was capable she usually got a good husband. Her reputation often went to other villages and a young man would seek her out because he had heard that she was quiet and industrious" (Densmore, 1979).

Sue Stoner and Boyd Spencer (1983) investigated sex differences in the expressive vocabulary of Head Start children. The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to 100 Head Start children. Their conclusions did not give empirical support to sex differences in the verbal abilities of preschool children nor did their findings support the generalization of females' superiority on verbal tasks.

Language Testing in Early Childhood Programs

Language has been used by parents, grandparents and pediatricians to assess development in children. Child development charts reassure parents that if the child produces specific sounds within a certain age range the child's development is progressing normally. Educators have long used language to assess the development of the students in their classrooms. The child who responded with

different patterns of communication was often labeled as language delayed.

Many of the forms of assessment using language in the schools have been based on informal teacher judgement. However, during the past several decades, researchers have begun to standardize more formal assessments of children's use of language. These tests have been categorized as expressive or receptive measurements. Expressive tests measure the child's ability to express thoughts and ideas, and receptive tests assess the child's ability to understand what others are expressing (Cazden, 1972).

The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test measures expressive vocabulary for children ages 2-12 and takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. The test consists of 110 line drawings. The examinee's task is to give a one-word description of the objects pictured in each test plate. A basal is established by eight consecutive correct responses while a ceiling is obtained when the child fails six consecutive items.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is an example of a test which measures receptive language skills. Each page of the test manual has four drawings in boxes labeled 1-4. The examiner shows the child the page and says one word. The child either points to the correct box or states the number of the box.

In Language Use and School Performance, author Aaron Cicourel (1974) discussed the contrast between the official version of the meaning of test materials and the child's interpretation of these materials. His research showed that what could be called 'errors' in responding to standardized curricula and tests may be the result of misunderstandings on the part of teachers, testers, and children which are created by the interactional activities they are engaged in. Problems of attention, memory, dialect difference and incorrect guesses emerge in educational interaction but are not addressed as central ingredients of learning and evaluation that take place in the classroom.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. This chapter addresses the following topics related to the conduct of the study: (a) general procedures, (b) population description and setting for the study, (c) method of collecting data, and (d) methods of analyzing the data. The components of the data collection process include the observation form, the interview form, videotape, and test results. The components of the analysis method include both qualitative and quantitative measures because the topic required both description and explanation. Triangulation was accomplished through observation, interview, and analysis of test scores of the preschool Native American girls. The final step was the development of an educator's monograph on the topic.

General Procedures

The procedures utilized in this study were to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of literature related to the expressive language skills of preschool Native American girls.

2. Gain permission from the Head Start administrators in Great Falls and Havre to conduct this study in their programs.

3. Meet with the teachers of the classes to explain the nature of the study. The explanation included a discussion of the interview process, observation, videotaping, testing, data to be collected, and the means of analysis.

4. Identify the Native American students in the classes by tribal groups and age levels.

5. Interview the teachers concerning the Native American girls' language usage in school.

6. Interview the mothers of the Native American girls concerning child rearing practices.

7. Conduct observations and videotape in the Head Start classes.

8. Administer the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to all the students in the classes.

9. Develop conclusions and recommendations from analysis of the data.

10. Create a monograph on the topic of Expressive Language Skills of Preschool Native American Girls.

Population and Setting

The selected population for this study were Head Start children in two locations. The Head Start model is to have

20 children in each classroom with a lead teacher and an assistant. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the classroom. In Great Falls there were 38 Native American children in the program with 15 of those being girls. In Havre there were 13 Native American children in the program with 6 of those being girls. The mean age of the children was four years and nine months.

The settings selected for this study were the Head Start class in Great Falls, Montana, and the Head Start class in Havre, Montana. These locations were selected because of their close proximity to reservations which gave each of these classes a high proportion of Native American children. At the Great Falls site 32 percent of the children were Native American, and at the Havre site 21 percent were Native American.

Method of Collecting Data

An ethnographic case study method was selected for this study because it provided a means of gaining the necessary information (Dixon, 1987; Merriam, 1988). Ethnographic case studies concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation (Merriam, 1988). Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people. "The ethnographer observes behavior, but goes

beyond it to inquire about the meaning of that behavior" (Spradley, 1979, 87).

In 1922 Malinowski said, "The goal in ethnography is to grasp the native's point of view" (Spradley, 1979, 85). Today ethnography is no longer relegated to exotic cultures in far off places. It has come home to become a fundamental tool for understanding ourselves and the multicultural societies of the modern world.

The ethnographic case study was combined with the quantitative test scores to provide a better foundation of data for the case study.

We have at least three major research strategies available to us: (1) we can study exclusively what an organism can do...test for all his abilities, competencies by intervening into his life by various artificial means...as has been done in psychometric and experimental work, or (2) we can study exclusively what an organism actually does do without any kind of, or a minimum amount of, intervention on our part...as has been done in the naturalistic observational studies of human behavior that now exist, or (3) we can study him both ways back and forth. If we did the latter, we would be able to generate a foundation of data that would both produce a comprehensive and coherent picture of the phenomena as well as have maximum applicability and impact on areas dealing with social problems (Nadelman, 1982, 42).

Most ethnographic case studies are a combination of description and interpretation, or description and evaluation. The researcher uses the data to analyze, interpret, or theorize about the phenomenon. Finally, many case studies are evaluative in that they are undertaken to

assess the merit of a particular practice or program (Merriam, 1988).

Ethnographic case study or naturalistic inquiry recognizes that the reality manifold is constantly changing in terms of time, people, episodes, settings, and circumstances. One should expect "reality" to be different at different times, recognizing the difference will depend on the situation and not necessarily or merely on a lack of reliability in methodology. The naturalistic inquirer seeks a multiple reality (Guba, 1978).

The use of multimethods can also lead to a synthesis or integration of theories. Finally, triangulation may also serve as a critical test, by virtue of its comprehensiveness, for competing theories (Denzin, 1978).

In this study, one form of triangulation involved multiple data sources. Those sources were the student, the teacher, and the mother or caregiver. Another form of triangulation involved multiple data collection procedures. Those forms of collection were observation, interviewing, and quantitatively assessing test results.

Operational Procedures

The research was developed and carried out during the fall and winter of 1991-1992, during the months of September 1991 through February 1992. Videotaping was used as a mechanical check and extension to document the

observation process, and the classrooms were videotaped each week during the data gathering period.

The main student data gathering technique used was participant observation. This field research technique is considered by some authorities to be the best suited for studying the face-to-face interaction between teacher and student (Spradley, 1979). It also provided critical evidence for this topic while at the same time creating the least disruption of the normal flow of activities in the classrooms. The videotapes were studied to determine number of interactions between the teacher and the Native American girls, types of interactions, quality of interactions, and time lapses between speakers.

Participant observation refers to those forms of research in which the researcher devotes time to attaining some form of membership in the group which is to be studied (Nachmias, 1976). In this study the researcher interacted with the students, mothers, and teachers. Observational research of this type allowed the participants to become familiar with the researcher.

Data Collection as Participant Observer

As a participant observer the investigator observed and recorded descriptive data and direct quotes, utilized interviews, recorded interaction data, and analyzed video recordings of classroom interactions. Observation forms

were utilized to provide a method of collecting the data. An observation form is in Appendix A.

The videotapes were analyzed for quality, frequency, and types of conversation. The researcher used the observation form for evaluating the tapes in the same style that the daily visitations were evaluated. Informal conversations were also noted and recorded on the observation forms.

The investigator observed and tested at the Havre site for 48 hours during December 1991, January 1992 and February 1992. The children at the Great Falls site were observed and tested for 102 hours during the same months. An equal number of hours was utilized to evaluate the videotapes.

The teachers in the classrooms were informally interviewed to gather information about what was happening between the class and the teacher from the teacher's perspective. Mothers of the girls were interviewed to discover ways in which they train and discipline their children and also to discover ways their behavior is similar to and different from their daughter's behavior. This information about child rearing practices provided additional information about the girls' language usage. The interview form was recommended by Leedy (1989) as a method for gathering and organizing the available information. The interview form is found in Appendix B.

To complete the triangulation process, the children were tested on the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (Gardner, 1979). This expressive language test is discussed in the 9th edition of the Mental Measurements Yearbook. The reliability coefficients ranged from .87 to .96. The corresponding standard error of measurement ranged from 3.38 to 5.41. The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) has been used in providing a consistent estimate of a child's expressive vocabulary. A total of 1,249 children were examined in order to obtain raw data for the development of the EOWPVT, and 1,607 children were tested for the gathering of final data. The testing was done by graduate students, and the children tested were enrolled in private schools, parochial schools, and public schools in the San Francisco Bay area. Some children were not in any school program because they were too young (Gardner, 1979). This test was selected because it is used in many early childhood programs in the area. A copy of this instrument's Introduction and Administration are found in Appendix C.

Method of Organizing and Analyzing Data

The method of organizing the data from the observations and the interviews was proposed by Monette (1990). The responses from the observation and interview

forms were assembled and tallied. The tallied results were analyzed to find common categories.

The major portion of the data for this study was gathered through descriptive research methods. Additional data was gathered through the administration of the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test. This data was analyzed through a simple t -test to determine if there were differences in the test scores of Native American girls as compared to Native American boys, Anglo girls, and Anglo boys. The statistic to be tested was the difference between the two means (Wiersma, 1986). The significance level was set at .05. Testing provided another piece of information to help explain the situation.

The quantitative data collected with this instrument was compared with data collected by the researcher as participant observer and interviewer. This triangulation method provided the researcher with a greater data base. Triangulation is basically a comparison of this data base to determine whether or not there is corroboration. This process assesses the sufficiency of the data (Wiersma, 1986). The researcher felt that the accuracy of her judgments was improved by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon.

Development of an Educator's Monograph

The specific end product was a monograph on the topic of "Expressive Language Characteristics of Preschool Native American Girls." The content of that monograph was taken from the observations and interviews of the research project. In addition, relevant information from the review of literature was included.

The five major subdivisions in the monograph dealt with Native American Girls, Language, Language of Silence Research, Language Characteristics of Native American Girls, and Recommendations. Each subdivision included a discussion of the topic and highlights from the research to illustrate that topic.

The researcher used a personal writing style rather than a formal style to create a reader-friendly document. A professional illustrator, Debra Norman, was contracted to enhance the final publication. The monograph is located in Appendix E and the illustrations are in Appendix F.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe the expressive language characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. This chapter describes the findings from the classroom observations and the interviews with Native American mothers. Additionally this chapter provides analyses of the results of the "Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test."

Participants

This study was conducted at two sites, the Head Start program in Great Falls, Montana, and the Head Start program in Havre, Montana. There were 120 children in the Head Start program at Great Falls. Children who were either Native American or Anglo were included in the study. They included 117. Three children were of other races and were not included in this study. The Anglo population total was 79 with 43 females and 36 males. There were 38 Native American children; of these 15 were females and 23 were males. Their tribal affiliation included Chippewa-Cree, Little Shell, and Blackfeet.

The Havre site had 62 Native American and Anglo children. The Anglo population included 49 children, 27 females and 22 males. The Native American population included 13 children, 6 females and 7 males. Their tribal affiliation included Blackfeet, Chippewa-Cree, Gros Ventre, Hidatsa, Assiniboine/Sioux, and Salish/Kootenai.

The total study involved 179 children. Of these, 91 were females and 88 were males. There was a total of 58 Anglo males and 70 Anglo females. Additionally there was a total of 30 Native American males and 21 Native American females. The mean age of the total group was four years and nine months.

Classroom Observations

The main technique used to gather data in the classroom was through participant observation. By devoting time to the classrooms the observer was able to become familiar with the routine of each classroom, gain an understanding of the teacher's style, and become so familiar in the classroom that the children began to accept the observer as another teacher in the classroom. The time this took varied from classroom to classroom. Classrooms where parents were frequent volunteers took the shortest amount of time for students to accept the observer because they were accustomed to having new adults in the classroom.

The observation form (Appendix A) was utilized to collect the data on interaction between the children and the teacher. The observer watched to see which students answered or asked questions, made comments either negative or positive, were involved in listening, and finally actually initiated conversation. An observational log was also written and videotape was recorded as an extension to aid the observer.

A typical observation day involved discussion with the teacher and interaction with the students at learning centers and during the lunch period. The lunch period was designed to enhance vocabulary development and both teachers and assistants worked to help all students communicate during this period. The teachers asked questions such as the following to stimulate conversation, "What did you do last night?" "Did you watch TV?" "What kind of vegetables are we having today?" "Did anyone read a book last night?"

After lunch the children were involved in clean-up, and then they brushed their teeth, worked a puzzle and had an activity period where they were free to select activities from many centers in the room. The activity period was very full of conversations and children interacting with each other as well as interacting with the other adults in the room. During the 150 hours of observation, the investigator observed a wide variety of

activities at centers. The environment was stimulating and well supplied with materials appropriate for preschoolers.

Some students were eager to share some personal information about themselves. Brian, for example, when asked how old he was said, "I am four now but my mom says that I am the man of the house now that Dad is gone. I sweep the porch, cook, and watch Charity and Sam." Charity and Sam were his younger siblings. "How do you know my name?" asked Paul. The observer explained that his name was on his headband so it could be read. He asked the observer if she knew his brother. When the observer said, "No", Paul said, "He's dead." Later the teacher explained that Paul's twin brother had died in the crib when they were infants and Paul always wants to discuss it with new people in the classroom.

The 179 children in the study were eager for conversations with adults and wanted to sit near the observer and have the observer's undivided attention. The observer's role was one without teaching responsibility, so it was easy to give them attention without interfering with the observation process.

In several classrooms the children were curious about the video camera so time was spent on showing the camera, filming the children, and then showing them the tape. If the camera caused problems for either the children or the teachers, it was not used.

The data from the observation form indicated that Native American girls were similar to Anglo girls in that there was a very wide range of performance. Both groups contained students who talked often and initiated conversations, and both groups contained students who were very quiet and never initiated conversation with anyone. As a total group, the Native American girls talked less than the Anglo girls, the Anglo boys, or the Native American boys. Native American girls appear to talk when prompted.

Table 1. Data from Observation Form.

Group	Number in Group	Language Count	Language Count Per Child
Native American Girls	21	103	5
Native American Boys	30	241	8
Anglo Boys	58	409	7
Anglo Girls	70	620	9

One characteristic which was not observed in the Native American girl population was that of "self-talk." The Anglo girls were observed talking to themselves as they performed activities. They did not direct their conversations to anyone directly but rather just played

with the language as they worked. For example, Nicole, an Anglo student, was drawing some cars and airplanes for a new mural in the classroom and as she worked she discussed what she was doing, "Cars can be red, or they can be blue or yellow or white. I like white cars the best. My uncle has a white pick-up. Pick-up, pick-up, pick-up. Pick-ups aren't cars." This made her laugh as if she had made up a joke. She worked intently and quietly for a few minutes and then continued, "I flew in an airplane at Christmas time. Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. What color is an airplane? I think it was blue." She left this center to go to the doll area where she asked her friends what color airplanes were.

The Native American girls were observed to have a longer wait time in responding to conversation. It appeared that they were just listening more thoughtfully. On several occasions, however, the person with whom they were speaking would leave the conversation before the Native American girl responded. For example, Gabrielle (Anglo) asked her friend Nancy (Native American) if she wanted to make snowmen or stars with the cookie cutters. Nancy was thinking it over when Gabrielle handed her the star cutter as if to say, "I'll decide for you."

During the testing, a similar characteristic was observed when the examiner was administering the test. The examiner said, "What is this called?" she waited a

reasonable time for the child to answer and then went on to the next page. Again the examiner said, "What is this called?" After the child had seen several pages the Anglo child usually answered upon the turning of the page without the examiner saying, "What is this called?" However, with the Native American girls the examiner usually had to ask the question each time the page was turned.

The observation log from this study reflects many positive conversations between the students and the teachers. Many of the teachers are skilled at encouraging children to engage in conversations. The lunch period and the activity period are designed to allow for free conversation between students and teachers.

In December, one activity planned for the students was making sugar cookies with a cookie press. The assistant teacher had a constant flow of language concerning the event. "What is this called?" she asked. "What could we call this?" "Could you make up a name for this tool?" "Let me show you what you can do with this." The children were crowding around the table to watch and also to help put the dough into the tube, so the teacher asked them to line up by the table so everyone could have a turn making a cookie.

John's eyes lit up when he saw what he had helped create. "Wow," he exclaimed, "look what I did!" John is one of several Native American boys in this classroom. In

contrast, when a Native American girl, Lydia, had a turn to make a cookie, she smiled and went to the end of the line so she could make another cookie. She appeared to like the activity but did not use language to express her pleasure. When Lydia made her second cookie, the assistant teacher said, "Look what you did!" and again Lydia just smiled and went to the end of the line.

The videotape confirmed the findings of the investigator's observations. The advantage of having the tape is that it could be looked at again and again to make sure the observations were accurate. The video was used in the classrooms only and was not used during the testing procedure nor in the interviewing.

Interviews

To describe the language characteristics of the Native American girls, the mothers of these girls were interviewed. At the Havre site, five mothers were interviewed for the six Native American girls. At the Great Falls site, ten of the fifteen mothers were interviewed, six in person and four by telephone. At the Great Falls site, the mothers of the four girls who ranked highest on the expressive language test were the first to come to Head Start to be interviewed. At the Havre site the one mother who did not come in to be interviewed was the mother of a girl who ranked in the middle of the other

Native American girls at that site. Three Native American girls ranked higher than her daughter and two ranked lower.

The interview form (Appendix B) was followed and the interviews lasted from a half hour to an hour. The mothers exhibited some of the same language characteristics as their daughters. Some of the mothers talked freely, and others simply answered the questions. The interview was started with a brief explanation of the study and a look at the test being used to measure expressive language. Next the questions from the interview form were asked. The final step was to summarize their responses.

The information gained from the interview forms is listed on the following pages. The question or category is underlined and followed by a summary of the information. Additionally, comments have been included to demonstrate the types of responses given.

Date: All the interviews were completed in January and February, 1992, as mothers came to the Head Start program.

Time: The times of the interviews varied from 9:00 to 2:00, which were the hours the children were in school.

Location: The interviews were all completed at the Havre Head Start Building or the Great Falls Head Start Building.

Student's Age: This item varied from 3 years 10 months to 5 years 11 months. At the Havre site the mean

age was 4 years 6 months with students ranging from 3 years 10 months to 5 years 2 months. At the Great Falls site the mean age was 4 years 11 months with students ranging from 4 years 5 months to 5 years 11 months. The mean age for the total group of Native American girls was 4 years 9 months.

Birth Weight: The mothers reported a normal birth weight and could not remember the exact weight of the children.

Siblings: In the families interviewed there were 22 siblings or step-siblings with 15 of those siblings living in the same household as the Head Start student. The seven not living in the same home were older or living with their fathers. Four of the girls are the only child in the family. Four are the oldest child in the family with one or two younger siblings, and the rest are in the middle with both younger and older siblings. The number of cousins was often mentioned.

Comments:

"She doesn't have any brothers or sisters, but she sees her cousins a couple of times each month."

"She has one younger brother. He is a real baby for his age."

"She has two half brothers, 14 and 13. The 13 year old lives with us."

"She is an only child but she sees her aunts every day. They are 9, 12, and 14 years old."

"She has a brother who is 19. He doesn't live with us anymore. She has two sisters, 1 and 2 years old."

"She has two brothers, 11 and 3 years old, and one sister who is 2. She has a lot of cousins and she sees them daily."

"She has one brother who is 2 years old. Her cousins are 1 and 4 and she spends an hour or so with them every day until I get home from work."

"She has one brother who is 1 year old. She has a sister who is three but she lives with her dad. Her cousins are always around. They are 3, 6, and 5 years old. Her 6 year old cousin is so lazy."

"She lives in foster care, has since she was 1 year old. I always come to the school to see her on special days. I have one other baby and she lives with me."

"She has 7 brothers and 2 sisters. The girls all live with me but only 4 of the boys live with me. Their names are not the same and some of them live with their dads but they're not all living in the same house."

"She is an only child, but my boyfriend's daughter has been living with us for the last six months."

Tribal Group: Most of the mothers interviewed belong to the Blackfeet Tribe or the Chippewa-Cree Tribe. At the Havre site two mothers were Blackfeet, two mothers were Chippewa-Cree, and one mother was Gros Ventre. At the Great Falls site five mothers were Blackfeet, four were Chippewa-Cree, and one was Little Shell. They were all urban Native Americans with only four reporting that they had spent time with relatives on the reservation.

Language Spoken in the Home: English was the only language spoken in the homes of the mothers who were

interviewed. However, some of the girls had spent time with their grandparents who spoke another language such as Cree, Blackfeet, or German.

Comments:

"She spends some time with my mom in North Dakota and she speaks a little German. Mostly English but a little German now and then. We go over to see my dad about three times a week. He is Cree but he speaks only English."

"My mother was Crow and white and my father is white and he lives in Havre so we see him often. I'm divorced so she seldom sees her grandparents on that side. They live in Browning and are both Blackfeet and speak both English and Blackfeet. When she is with them they usually try to speak only English. They love Mary because she is so cute and Mary will say to her grandpa, 'Speak some Indian for me.'"

"We are both Blackfeet and speak English. All of her grandparents live in Browning and speak both English and Blackfeet. We see them on the week-ends and during the summer."

"I am Polish and Norwegian and she spends quite a bit of time with my mother in Monarch. She doesn't know her dad. We're divorced. He is Blackfeet and his parents lived here in town. Her grandfather is dead now and we don't see too much of her grandmother on that side. She's gotten real weird."

"She has a grandfather and uncles and aunts in Browning and we go up to visit them. We never stay over, we only go one day at a time."

"She sees her great-grandmother about once a week and she can speak Blackfeet, but she seldom does."

Literacy: How often do you read together? The mothers reported reading to their daughters frequently or seldom. The majority said that they have been reading to their daughters since they were born.

Comments:

"She gets read to about every other day. Usually my mother or grandmother reads to her."

"We read every night and go to the library every other week."

"We read once in a while, about three times a month. Her older brother reads to her all the time."

"Mostly her dad reads to her. I would say they read about twice a month."

"We read together, about three books a week. I use it as a punishment. If she doesn't listen, then I don't read to her."

"We read whenever we get a chance. Usually we read at night."

"Not as much now, we used to read to her a lot when she was little. Now she is independent and likes to play by herself."

"I don't like to read myself."

What do you read? The mothers reported a variety of materials for reading, but the most frequently read were the current popular movie theme books, such as The Little Mermaid. None of the mothers reported reading magazines or newspapers.

Comments:

"We read little kids books."

"We read The Little Mermaid and popular Christmas books."

"She likes Mother Goose Rhymes."

"Her uncle likes to read to her and they change the story a lot."

"We go to the library and just get a stack of kids books, mostly picture books."

How much TV do you watch per day? All the mothers reported that their daughters watched TV every day. There was a variety of times reported with cartoons being the most popular form of show.

Comments:

"She watches a lot of TV. In the morning she watches cartoons before school and then in the afternoon and evening that is about all she does. We have a VCR so she likes to watch movies like 'All Good Dogs Go To Heaven.'"

"She watches TV but not too much. She likes more active stuff."

"She watches mysteries with me."

"She always watches cartoons in the afternoons."

"She likes cartoons in the mornings and we usually watch a movie on the VCR in the evenings."

"She's a real couch potato. She likes to cuddle up with her pillow and suck her fingers while she watches TV. She never watches in the mornings before school because we never have time."

"She doesn't watch too much. She likes stuff like the Cosby Show, Full House, and Who's the Boss."

"She watches cartoons in the morning while I fix her hair. She watches about an hour in the evenings. The TV is always on but in the evenings I like to watch my shows."

"She doesn't watch much. Maybe two hours every day."

"She likes movies and cartoons. She watches every day but not very long at a time."

"She loves TV. She watches cartoons all morning and then watches Nickelodeon at night."

Other Findings

How do you discipline your daughter? The mothers reported similar methods of discipline. The most common form was to talk to the child and to remove her from the situation when that was necessary. Some mothers reported spanking but only as a last resort for something serious. Several mothers talked about how their sisters or their sisters' children had no discipline.

Comments:

"I talk to her, raise my voice, and if I have to I swat her on the leg."

"I yell at her."

"I take away a privilege."

"I give her a time out. She cries easily and is kind of a whiner."

"She is pretty good, but acts up around her grandparents. She throws a fit to get her way. I send her to her bedroom and take away her favorite toys. Once in a while I spank her."

"I think I am stricter with the girls. Her young aunts have no discipline. I have a lot of patience so she usually doesn't get into trouble."

"She is real good. She knows what she can get away with. When she's good, she is perfect."

"Discipline varies. Usually I just talk to her. But if it is serious like walking in the road, I spank her."

Strengths: All of the mothers could report a strength for their daughter. Several mothers said that their

daughters were smart, and several mentioned athletic abilities.

Comments:

"She learns quickly. She learned how to write her name in a week. She's learning her numbers."

"She is athletic, likes basketball, dancing, jumping. She goes to the gym with her dad."

"She is smart. She knows colors besides just the primary ones. She is athletic. She is generous. Her younger aunt is kind of stingy. She expresses herself well and is not shy."

"She likes to clean the house, and she is really good at it."

"She is good at comforting other kids. She's sympathetic."

"She is very artistic and likes to paint and draw."

"She can ride a 20 inch bike without the training wheels."

"She is a good singer."

"She does real well considering she had open heart surgery last year and has a pacemaker now. She also has some problems with her kidneys. I think she is real strong the way she handles it."

Weaknesses: Several of the mothers had a difficult time thinking of a weakness for their daughter. However, when their comments were analyzed, shyness was a major theme. Shyness in public situations or around strangers was mentioned by several mothers.

Comments:

"She is deaf in her left ear."

"She wants to play with other kids from her class but she is too shy."

"She sucks her fingers."

"Her weakness is minding. She doesn't mind her dad or grandparents. She is the oldest grandchild and should be raised by her grandparents but they are just too old. Her cousins are all jealous of her because she is the favorite granddaughter. She is cute and the old folks really flip over her."

"She is very shy. Her dad was like that."

"She doesn't eat and she doesn't clean her room. She talks a lot."

"She talks at home, but she never talks to her teacher."

"I can't think of a weakness."

"She's pretty good, just shy."

"She is shy in public."

"She wants a lot of one-on-one attention."

Other Findings: One mother reported that she did some drinking when she was pregnant and that now she is afraid that her daughters problems are because of her drinking. Several of the mothers are college students and believe that they are helping their daughters by getting a better education. Several mothers in the study were a combination of Native American and Anglo heritage. They made comments about their daughters not being raised in the Native American culture.

Comments:

"She may spend a few weekends with her grandparents who are Native American, but

basically she has not been raised in the general extended Native American family."

"Her dad is Native American, but he lives in Texas. We never see him and about the only reminders we have about him are some Indian paintings."

Table 2. Data from Interview Form.

Siblings	Only Child	1 Sibling	2 Siblings	3 or More Siblings
	4	3	2	6
Tribal Group	Little Shell	Blackfeet	Chippewa-Cree	Gros Ventre
	1	7	6	1
Discipline	Talk	Separation	Spank	Rewards
	6	4	2	3
Strength	Smart	Athletic	Artistic	Cute
	5	3	3	2
Weakness	No Weakness	Shyness	Others	
	5	6	4	

Test Results

Data was gathered through the administration of the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test. This data was analyzed through a simple t -test to determine if there were differences in the test scores of Native American girls as compared to Native American boys, Anglo boys, and Anglo

girls. The statistic to be tested was the difference between the two means. The significance level was set at .05. Testing provided another piece of information to help describe the characteristics of the preschool Native American girl. The t -test was used as a tool to help understand the test results.

The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) was administered to 179 Head Start students in Great Falls, Montana, and Havre, Montana. The raw scores were converted to a Language Standard Score (LSS) which indicated the extent to which a child's EOWPVT performance deviated from the average performance of children at that designated age level. Tables for language standard scores corresponding to raw scores were provided for each age level.

The mean LSS was 90.57 for the total group. The mean LSS for the Great Falls population was 88.56, and the mean LSS for the Havre population was 94.27. There was a significant difference at the two sites ($t=2.61$, $df=177$, $p=.01$). The scores ranged from a low of 55 to a high of 121 at both sites (Figure 1).

Because there was a significant difference in the two sites, the LSS means of the Native American students at the two sites were compared. There were no significant differences between the LSS means for the Native American students at the two sites ($t=1.43$, $df=49$, $p=.16$). The LSS

