Reading Motivation in an Economically Disadvantaged/ELL Dominated Environment

By: Janette Lizette Chavez
Living in poverty contributes to lower than average reading academic performance that can be seen as early as kindergarten and can continue on to elementary, middle school, and high school (Kena, Musu-Gillette, Robinson, et al., 2015).
A contributing factor to this education reading gap is the amount of time that poverty stricken children spend reading. Reading frequency is strongly linked to educational level and wealth of students’ families (Tankersley, 2005).

Reading motivation is a contributing factor to the number of English Language Learners (ELL) and poverty stricken struggling readers. Parental involvement fosters reading motivation amongst these readers (Mohr & Mohr, 2007).
In 2013, there was an increase in the amount of children living in poverty compared to the year 2000. One in five children were documented to be living in poverty in 2013 (Kena, Musu-Gillette, Robinson, et al., 2015).

“In 2013, approximately 10.9 million school-age children 5 to 17 years old were in families living in poverty” (Kena, Musu-Gillette, Robinson, et al., 2015, p. 50).
Barriers to Parental Involvement and Reading Motivation

- Language is a barrier that many families have stated as being the main culprit for the decline in parental involvement (Brilliant, 2001).

- According to Peregoy and Boyle (2000), “students who must acquire language and reading simultaneously, drumming up motivation to read in English can be a daily challenge” (p.1).
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Reading in a native language (L1) permits a transfer of competence and skills in a foreign language (L2) (Aydin, 2011).

Using reading strategies that have been acquired and have made the learners successful in the L1 language can make it easier to raise learner awareness in the L2 language (Grabe & Stroller, 2013).
Solution to Parental Involvement (Native Language Books)

- Fear of confusing their children or being unable to help with more complex material is an obstacle that parents face (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

- Language is also a barrier that many families have stated as being the main culprit for the decline in parental involvement (Brilliant, 2001).

- English Language Learners are motivated to read material that is of high interest to them (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).
Importance of Parental Involvement

- A child’s educational achievement and language and literacy development are impacted by their home environment and family (Bonci et al., 2010).

- Family involvement in children’s literacy development is more influential than a family’s social class, size, and level of parental education (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004).

- Students’ interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom are all positively impacted when reading activities are present in their homes (Rowe, 1991).
Motivation drives students to achieve their desired goal (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

“The importance of motivation in children’s primary language (L1) reading development suggests the need to thoroughly explore the potential impact of motivation on the language being acquired (L2) reading behaviors and outcomes” (Komiyama, 2013, p. 149).
“In marked contrast to the increased presence of bilingual students in the U.S. schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001) stands the continued relative absence of educational research on questions and phenomena of a bilingual nature, even in the crucial areas of language and literacy” (Bialystok, 2001, p. 242).

“Storybook reading has been studied largely as a new or unfamiliar activity for a rather circumscribed group of bilingual children and their families relatively similar in terms of language, class, and acculturation status, for example” (Stahl, Kleeck, & Bauer, 2003, p. 243).

“The focus of these studies clearly has been on the target, or second, language, rather than on storybook reading in the native language or a combination of the two languages” (Stahl, Kleeck, & Bauer, 2003, p. 243).
Research Questions

Research Question 1: Will an increase in parental involvement improve reading motivation amongst ELLs/Economically Disadvantaged children?

Research Question 2: Will using native language recreational reading books increase parental involvement in ELLs/Economically Disadvantaged children’s daily reading?
Objectives

With this research, the researcher hopes to do the following:

- Increase parental involvement in poverty stricken/ELL dominated classrooms.

- Improve reading motivation amongst poverty stricken/ELL children using native language books.
The researcher will survey students from two second grade classrooms with similar student demographics in order to document the initial reading motivation score without any intervention.

This will give the researcher a level of reading motivation to compare before and after the intervention to see if parental involvement had an impact on the reading motivation.
### Demographics of Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Girls</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Boys</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged/ ELLs</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
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The survey used for the children will contain questions regarding their feelings towards reading recreational books during certain situations.

Their scores will be tallied up using the scoring system provided by the survey.

This will be done before and after the intervention in order to determine if the intervention had an impact on the level of reading motivation amongst the participants. (Pre-and-Post Survey)
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School__________ Grade_______ Name____________________

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

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The researcher will also survey the students’ parents from the same two second grade classrooms.

The survey will contain questions regarding the parents’ involvement in their children’s reading in different situations.

This will help determine whether the intervention helped improve parental involvement.
Survey: Helping your child to enjoy reading

Are you? ______ Female _____ Male

A: Questions about your child’s reading

How old is your child? ________________

1. How much does your child enjoy reading? (Check one only)
   _____ Not at all       _____ A bit    _____ Quite a lot    _____ Very much

1. How often does your child read? (Check one only)
   _____ Every day or almost every day
   _____ Once or twice a week
   _____ Once or twice a month
   _____ Never or almost never

1. How often does your child read each day?
   _____ 0-5 minutes       _____ 10-15 minutes       _____ 20-40 minutes
   _____ more than an hour
4. Which of the following does your child read outside of school? (Check as many as you like)

- Websites
- Magazines
- Fiction Books
- Audiobooks
- Emails
- Books in other languages
- Newspapers
- Song lyrics
- Novels
- Poetry
- Comics

5. How do you encourage your child to read? (Check as many as you like)

- Read to them
- Ask them to read to you
- Use magnetic letters/words on the fridge
- Model reading at home
- Discuss what your child reads
- Play reading-related games
- Encourage older children to support younger children
Once children’s and parent’s surveys are administered and tallied and scored to serve as the pre-survey, the students will then begin with the intervention.

Class A will be administered a total of 25 English reading books so that students can choose from.

Class B will be administered the same amount of books but in Spanish.

Students will also be given a reading log to document their daily readings and parent signatures to serve as an indicator that parents are reading with their children.
After 6 weeks of intervention, students and parents will be given the same surveys administered at the beginning to determine the level of reading motivation. (Post-Survey)

Both surveys will be compared to the Pre-Surveys to see the following:

1. If parental Involvement impacted the reading motivation.
2. If native language reading books help improve parental involvement.
Motivation is the key to literacy growth and development. It also sets the motivated readers apart from their less motivated peers, because these students tend to read more and become better readers while doing it (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).


