

# Crossing Cultural Boundaries: Explorations in Multilingual Teaching and Learning

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Crossing Cultural Boundaries: Explorations in Multilingual Teaching and Learning

by

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedication to my daughter, Karice Chika Nyanganyi Smith and to my  
nieces and nephews, Terrell Jayden Marcion, Terrell Kellon Marcion, and Cheryl D. Atty  
Fregiste, the children dearest to my heart, who hol

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Throughout the course of this dissertation, God has served as the most important source of my strength. I am thankful for how God has preserved, provided and cared for, and imbued

ability to succeed despite the adversities I faced enabled me to work untiringly in my efforts to complete the doctoral program. Sixth, I owe special thanks to my mother, MaryAnna Smith, daughter, Karice Chika Nyanganyi Smith, and sister, Patrianna Smith, for their ultimate sense of sacrifice in ensuring that every academic endeavor required and every goal pursued was met during the course of my doctoral program, this, despite the deprivation it ultimately caused them and regardless of the discomfort they may have experienced. I must also thank my brother, Johnny Smith, whose consistent sense of humor throughout this extended period via the virtual world were a daily source of strength and joy to me. My sister, Gilda Marcion, must be acknowledged as well because of her willingness to support me, financially and otherwise, in every time tet6417(g)9.06272(n)-10.417(c)-6.86125(e)3.15789(d)-0.956417(,)-0..157M89(l)74115789(r)-17.669

dissertation process provided me with the impetus to complete this race. I could not have accomplished what I did without your help and for this, I will be eternally grateful.







**Multilingual Awareness**  
**Multicultural Awareness**  
**Practitioner Research**

**Literacy Research, Language Policy, Verbal Reports, and Language Learners  
Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Linguistic Diversity**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A transdisciplinary notion of learning considers what is between, above, and beyond the disciplines. Adherence to such a perspective warrants examination of any research endeavor from multiple entry points and from openness to the changing nature and infinity of knowledge.

In this dissertation, "Crossing Cultural Boundaries

reflected traditional conceptions of literacy. In addition, based on my examination of language policy in St. Lucia, the linguistic status quo appeared to function as the de facto policy for literacy education, St. Lucian Standard English was privileged as the language of instruction, and underperformance in literacy characterized students at all levels of the education system.

My second entry point to this dissertation was three-pronged. I first examined a multilingual English-Speaking Caribbean teacher's literacy practice beyond the context of the classroom, noting three recursive pathways, namely (trans) formation in attitude inclusive of shunning, accepting, and reflecting behaviors; the use of certain accommodative strategies such as the adjustment of language and speech; and distinct identity formation processes, including the construction of varied identities for school, home, profession, and friends. I secondly investigated my own practice. This



of verbal reports must be tapped to further facilitate understanding of students' literacy processes. Through consideration of how a socio-cultural approach might be merged with cognitivist notions of protocol construction within the multilingual contexts of the Caribbean, researchers can obtain insights into the more holistic processes of students' literacy development.

At the macro-level, literacy research in the multilingual context of the English-speaking Caribbean might be enhanced by research endeavors that allow multiple entry points, as has been illustrated via the unique approach to this dissertation, which merged literature syntheses, theoretical and methodological analyses, and empirical research to explore multilingual teaching and learning. However, as teachers utilize literacy practices and researchers investigate literacy processes, the literacy needs of language learners, as determined by historical, geographical, social, linguistic, and cultural contexts, must remain central to literacy research in the Caribbean region, and beyond. Efforts underway to strengthen and extend literacy research in the Caribbean would benefit from a holistic approach as undertaken in this dissertation whereby an understanding of language learners' literacy practices are understood within their broader contexts.







home and school, and is successful in allaying Mrs. Smith's fears, and ultimately, the negative connotation that Mrs. Smith might possibly have towards her impoverished language use.

Despite the particularities of this situation and the confinement of time and place, Malika's lingering concerns are by no means an exception. As English rapidly increases in its status as a global language (New London Group, 1996; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages: TESOL, 2008), learners of English must consistently grapple with challenges face-..621304(t)94725

levels (see Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; Mills, 2010; New London Group, 1996), remains rare.

Due to the increased prominence of English and the limited research exploring traditional

into their cultural experiences (Johnson, 2004). Navigation across native and target language cultures plays a major role in language learners' literacy development and multilingual teachers' experiences. Given, investigation into the practices of multilingual teachers and learners also cuts across varied social settings, languages, and backg

## **TOWARDS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: A NEVER-ENDING QUEST**

In positioning my own work, I struggled to identify an epistemological stance. Operating from a view of epistemology as “the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known,” my first challenge was to determine my orientation towards knowledge (Paul & Marfo, 2001, p. 541). Due to the format of this dissertation as an undertaking of multiple studies or research pieces all derived from the broader umbrella of multilingual teaching and learning, it was necessary to negotiate the landscape of philosophical discourse in an attempt to determine the overall epistemological paradigm from which I would operate. However, this attempt became further complicated due to the variations in terminologies identified in relation to epistemology.

The literature reflects considerable differences in framing epistemological standpoints depending on the form of theoretical discourse and the forum of discussion. Terms such as “paradigms” and “theoretical paradigm” seemed highly prevalent (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lather, 2007).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the constructs “theoretical perspective” and “epistemology” were chosen. A “theoretical perspective” is used to refer to a “philosophical stance informing the methodology” chosen by a researcher (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Also relying on Crotty’s definition, an “epistemology” represents “a theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective” (p. 3). Based on Crotty’s distinction, epistemologies represent the broader underlying assumptions concerning the knowledge that one brings to a particular

## **Table 1.1: Overview and Areas of Research in the Dissertation**

### **Crossing Cultural Boundaries: Explorations in Multilingual Teaching and Learning**

The following selected articles represent my progra

Table 1.1 (continued).

<b>Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Linguistic Diversity</b>	Exploring the Interstices of Literate, Linguistic, and Cultural Diversity	Smith, P. (2013c). (Sole author).	<i>Multicultural Perspectives</i>	In Progress.	A study of an English-speaking multilingual Caribbean educator's linguistic experiences across academic, social, and cultural contexts and his description of the impact on his perception of literacy and literacy teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The educator described navigation of the contexts by way of three paths:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attitude transformation</li> <li>○ Strategy use</li> <li>○ Attitude formation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Changes in the perception of what students should learn in order to be literate as a result of cross-cultural experiences</li> </ul>
	Linguistic and Cultural Appropriations of a Multilingual Educator.	Smith, P. (2013d). (Sole author).	<i>Studying Teacher Education</i>	In Progress.	A practitioner inquiry into multilingual and multicultural awareness as manifested in the practice of a literacy teacher educator who had transitioned across varied linguistic and cultural settings during her personal and professional trajectory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantive occurrence of multilingual awareness via multiple indications of reflection, monitoring, attending to clues and following discourse patterns</li> <li>• Moderate occurrence of multicultural awareness via awareness of individual predispositions, awareness of other cultures and attention to stereotypes</li> </ul>
	Accomplishing the Goals of Multicultural Education: Transdisciplinarity.	Smith, P. (2013e). (Sole author).	<i>Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue</i>	In Press.	A description of how transdisciplinarity allows for re-envisioning of multicultural teacher education as teachers and teacher educators strive to respect and value diversity in the teaching of literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy teachers and teacher educators can become more effect by               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Learning to know</li> <li>○ Learning to do</li> <li>○ Learning to live together with</li> <li>○ Learning to be</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Thinking about enacting the curriculum via transdisciplinarity changes the dichotomous and segmented approaches to teaching literacy</li> </ul>



**Table 1.1 (continued).**

Veridicality in Verbal  
Protocols of  
Language Learners

**Verbal  
Reports,  
Literacy  
Research, and  
Language  
Learners**



course of this research; the final perspective recorded here is far removed from that penned in its original state. As I will explain later, I attach much significance to writing as a means of knowing and therefore, in my view, proof of my knowledge of a personally established epistemological stance depended greatly on my capacity to narrate the process, or so it seemed, during my actual narration.

### **When and What is Knowledge?**

Epistemological frameworks ask the question “When and what is knowledge?” (Crotty, 1998, p. 46). Prior to determining an answer to this question, I pondered deeply on my interpretation of its components. Maxwell (2013) notes that while researchers are generally advised to base the decision of a research topic on the body of existing literature, the value of personal goals and experiences need not be underplayed. Strauss and Corbin (1990) concur: “the touchstone of your own experience may be more valuable an indicator for you of a potentially successfully research endeavor” (p. 36). I therefor

knowledge, the criteria underlying which I never questioned at the time. Notably, “knowing” at this point did not necessarily include oral speaking or manifestation of comprehension via oral communication. In my perspective, a provision of the material transmitted to me, once reproduced in written form, sufficed, provided that there was considerable consistency in its representation of the original.

The second pivotal era central to my process of “knowing” was embedded in my six years as a teacher of subject matter in elementary school classrooms. During this period, I decided that students “knew” concepts only if they were capable of representing them either literally or through application, as reflected by a test. The capacity of students to produce in a coherent written form the material they had been taught seemed to be the most logical basis for an assumption that they “knew.” In spite of the use of informal assessments on a daily basis, I ascribed greater significance to a 60-item literacy test as opposed to activities such as students’ illustration that they understood context clues during discussion of text. In fact, upon further reflection, I specifically recall valuing more highly the performances of students in subjects such as mathematics and science, an indication that my idea of the nature of knowledge privileged “knowing” certain disciplines over others.

The third era of my professional life, which seemed indispensable to my idea of the nature of knowing, was my engagement in teaching and studying in higher education. As a student embarking upon study at the graduate level, I initially maintained many of the stances towards knowledge previously embraced, this despite encountering a wide range of viewpoints concerning knowledge and its representation. It was only upon my identification of an area of interest for pursuit at the doctoral level, combined within rigid requirements for in-depth philosophical reflection of my beliefs, that I recognized a transition in my knowledge. In 2010,



to them, I experienced a significant amount of cognitive dissonance. Not only did I realize that knowing could no longer be measured via tests and writing, I was also forced to acknowledge the tremendous importance of oral discourse to knowing. Notably, this acknowledgement was also predicated on the requirements for oral demonstrations of “knowing” embedded within the Survey of Research in Reading course in which I was enrolled during this period. Personally, in my role as a student in higher education classrooms, and professionally, as an instructor of literacy with students in real classrooms, I realized that by the end of my second year of my enrolment in the doctoral program and completion of my first year as an instructor in higher education, I perceived knowledge in dramatically different ways than I had in previous years.

In 2011, after much deliberation in a Philosophies of Inquiry course, I wrote:

Ultimately, negotiating the perplexing notion that I belonged within no philosophical realm as cited within the readings, I am still perplexed being unable to choose one with which I am aligned. The professor of this course indicated that imbalance, conflict, dissonance, disequilibrium, and suspension of beliefs were supposed to occur as a result of this course. In fact, this was one of the major goals he hoped to achieve. I viewed the professor’s expectation for this class as aligned with critical theory. The professor accomplished his goals by effecting change through enabling me to realize that as an individual, superficial notions of power that have come to be conceived of in the literature are merely just the tip of the iceberg. As a result of this class, I now understand that if one realizes how critical it is to question all that one has been brought up to believe in one’s lifetime, one realizes how “marginalized” one’s thoughts have been and how one’s unidimensional thinking oppresses the ability to move past the obvious, beyond the concrete, above the ordinary. The professor’s approach would fly against a

post-positivistic perspective and the notion that there is one truth, one reality that we may subscribe to in the social sciences. I therefore realize that perhaps this struggle within me to dichotomize my perspectives is not necessary, and reflects just what has been emphasized throughout this class all along – the cr

come to respect and to embrace the idea of a stance of not-knowing as the true essence of knowledge. In other words, knowledge became a construct that I comfortably believed, and I relied on the recognition that the unknown could influence what I felt was known, invoking a humility of temporary familiarity with concepts, the nature of which would eventually undergo significant and infinitesimal change. For me, these three characteristics are concrete and real, representative of the dissonance experienced in my personal and professional life, and most importantly, subject to change.

### **Embedding the Personal within the Philosophical: Theoretical Perspectives**

Upon identifying the descriptive characteristics above, it was then necessary to determine how my orientations fit within the broader theoretical and epistemological discourse. I now identify the theoretical perspectives emerging from my personal epistemology and how this personalized epistemology fits within broader epistemological frameworks.

In my descriptions and during my consolidation of the research processes in which I engaged, I noticed that the major theoretical perspectives – interpretivist, critical, and pluralist – all informed, to a certain degree and in distinctive ways, the manner in which I viewed knowledge in my framing of studies. However, the interpretivist notion seemed to assume the greatest prevalence. To a much lesser degree, the critical and pluralist also influenced my work.



interpretivism. However, prior to Weber's discourse on *Verstehen* (i.e., understanding), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) proposed that natural sciences and human sciences differed, and as such, required distinctive methods suited to each entity. Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936), Neo-Kantian philosophers who also operated within the same period, conjured a distinction, not between the two sciences, but in the logic underlying the two stances (Crotty, 1998). As a result, because natural sciences tended to be concerned with "law(s)"[*nomos*] of nature and human sciences tended to be concerned with "individuals"[*idios*], the former came to be focused on the nomothetic while the latter came to be concerned with the idiographic (Crotty, 1998, pp. 68-69). Based on these assertions, Rickert further explained that generalizations occurred in the natural sciences and individualization in the human sciences (Crotty, 1998). In opposition to these views, Weber insisted that the nomothetic and idiographic need not apply to either the human or natural sciences. In fact, this appeared to be the single most important tenet responsible for Weber's preoccupation with the expansion of a methodology in





An interpretivist perspective is based on the assumption that individuals create personal subjective and intersubjective interpretations of the world with which they interact. In direct contrast to positivist reliance on an objective reality (Crotty, 1998), as designated by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the epistemology of an interpretivist approach to which this dissertation subscribes designates knowledge as socially constructed by participants involved in the research (Paul, 2005). Therefore, researchers' social constructions are equally as valid as the constructions of the participants involved in their studies. Within this epistemological paradigm, "knowledge and the knower are inextricably linked" (Paul, 2005). Interpretivism in this context considers the mediation of reality through language via the active role of the mind and is construed as elemental, given the fact that the world is transformed to fit the shape of human sentences (Paul, 2005).

### **Critical Theory**

A critical perspective is merged with the interpretivist epistemology, given the focus of this dissertation. Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) first defined the term "critical theory" in his essay Traditional and Critical Theory, written during his sojourn at the Frankfurt School of Social Science in 1937 (Horkheimer, 1976). Operating from the social perspective, critical theory was based on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century uses of the term "critique" by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) and came to signify the restrictions posed by validity and the necessity for social revolution. Also from the Frankfurt School, but differing in agenda from his predecessors, Juergen Habermas (1968) reconstructed the notion of critical theory as an ability to free one's self from the clutches of domination.

In more recent times, critical theory has been described by Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) as "a form of cultural criticism revealing power dynamics within social and cultural texts"



## **Pluralism**

Pluralism, more recently construed as a theoretical perspective in its own right, advocates the use of multiple methodological and epistemological approaches to engage with the social (Lather, 2007). Pluralistic notions generally operate from a hybrid standpoint whereby “getting lost” and situating one’s self as “curious and unknowing” are privileged based on the nuances of social context (p. 9). Throughout the process of this dissertation, my experience of being “lost” in my pursuit of knowledge and my belief in the infinity of knowledge informed a personal epistemological framing consistent with a pluralistic theoretical perspective.

### **Theoretical, Personal, and Epistemological Alignment**

With the identification of the theoretical perspectives governing my research and their alignment with my personal epistemological framing now achieved, I now demonstrate how I contextualize the alignment between my theoretical and personal epistemological approaches within the broader epistemological context.

Based on the previous discussion, and given the title page  
 are constructivism; constructionism,  
 Boundaries Explorations in



the use of a critical stance required continuous attention to preconceived notions of the ways in which certain learners' languages and language uses are privileged over others, as well as the contexts within which these circumstances were perceived to be most prevalent. The use of a critical approach within the reviews, analyses, discussions, and original studies conducted further demanded a sense of personal intentionality to bring about change in participants' realities and in the academic discourse encountered here, based on perceived injustices.

The epistemological framework espoused in this dissertation considers the personal sense of self of participants involved and allows for permeation of the research process during each stage of this research. As a participant in some instances and a researcher in others, my research framework requires acknowledgement of my biases as a researcher and a reference to these biases, as a function of transparency, allowing for personal musings concerning the research process to be brought to light. Moreover, through an adoption of this framework, insight is provided into participants' imagined realities and in the connotations embedded within the academic discourse explored, as defined by the interrelationships inherent in the research process. In my engagement of analysis, discussions, and synthesis of studies already conducted, the moral implications of the epistemologies adopted required me to consider the broader contexts in which the pieces of writing came to being and to rely on the intertextual relationships underlying meaning construction, as duly significant in subsequent interpretations.

The epistemological stances embedded and explicated in this dissertation are used to undergird the decisions made concerning reviews of research in theoretical and methodological endeavors as well as in application to data-driven (i.e., original) studies and their respective research questions, overall methodology, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.



## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Considering the importance of the following terms to this dissertation, I provide operationalized definitions as follows:

**Acrolect:** In the literature, the acrolect is referred to as the language variety “closest to the lexifier” – in other words, the language variety closest to the standard (Bailey, 1974). In this dissertation, acrolect refers to the language varieties in the English-speaking Caribbean closest to Standard English. For instance, St. Lucian English Vernacular is closest to Standard English, and



**English-Speaking:** In the Caribbean region, a variety of languages are spoken. For certain countries colonized by the British, English became the official language. In this dissertation, the region referred to is comprised of countries in which the official language is English. In this dissertation, the term English-speaking is therefore used to denote nationals of these countries whose official languages are English. The term English-speaking is also used as a qualifier for

the extent that they can use them confidently and a

**St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC):** In this dissertation, the St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC) is used to denote the language in St. Lucia derived from the contact formed between different language groups, primarily St. Lucian Standard English and French.

**St. Lucian Standard English (SLSE):** In this dissertation, St. Lucian Standard English (SLSE) refers to the Standard English used in St. Lucia primarily for academic instruction and in formal contexts.

**Studies:** In this dissertation, the term ‘studies’ is used to refer to both empirical and non-empirical research. ‘Studies’ refer to the various lines of inquiry, as denoted by individual papers, in which issues or questions raised are explored conceptually, theoretically, methodologically, or empirically.

**Tobagonian English lexicon Creole (TOB):** In this dissertation, the Tobagonian English lexicon Creole (TOC) is used to denote the language in Tobago derived from the contact formed between different language groups, primarily Tobagonian Standard English and previously existing languages in Tobago.

**Trinidadian English lexicon Creole (TEC):** In this dissertation, the Trinidadian English lexicon Creole (TEC) is used to denote the language in Trinidad derived from the contact formed between different language groups, primarily Trinidadian Standard English and previously existing languages in Trinidad, two of which were Spanish and French.

**Trinidad and Tobago’s Trinidad Standard English (TSE):** In this dissertation, Trinidadian Standard English (TSE) refers to the Standard English used in Trinidad, primarily in formal contexts and for academic purposes.

## OVERVIEW AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISSERTATION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a multifaceted approach to literacy learning is critical and narrow conceptions of culture no longer suffice. For teachers and learners of various languages whose goals are to enhance literacy, linguistic diversity as an element of multicultural education assumes even greater importance (Buchanan, Correia, & Bleicher, 2010; Jimenez et al., 1999; Wallace, 2000). To date, non-native English speaking (NNES) and non-native speaking (NNS) educators continue to experience a sense of inferiority based on their linguistic variations (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Specifically, in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean, bilingual and multilingual students must face the challenges of acquiring literacy in a language they are simultaneously expected to learn (i.e., English). As such, the necessity for exploring and understanding the processes as well as challenges faced by such teachers and learners cannot be overemphasized.

The significance of these concerns is reflected in the agendas of both national and international organizations, whose goals are to ensure that students and teachers whose first languages are not English and who navigate multiple languages receive the attention deserved (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; IRA, 2006; NCTE, 2011; TESOL, 2010).

In response to the needs highlighted above, this dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One serves as the introduction. Chapter Two introduces the reader to reviews, analyses, and discussions that concern literacy research and language policy in the English-speaking Caribbean. Chapter Three focuses on the linguistic and cultural diversity of multilingual teachers and teacher educators. Chapter Four highlights how the verbal report methodology has functioned in the research of language learners' reading processes. Chapter Five provides a synthesis of the interrelationships between and among various components of the dissertation, as







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## CHAPTER TWO



on policy provided in this chapter point to the need for St. Lucia to develop and/or adopt a language policy delineating approaches to literacy instruction for what appears to be a majority language learner population.

### **Literacy Research in the English-Speaking Caribbean**

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**Note: This paper is in progress and will be submitted to *Harvard Educational Review*.**

#### **Abstract**

In this literature review, empirical literacy research in the context of certain countries in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean is examined. Through the application of methodologically appropriate criteria to studies conducted in literacy within the English-speaking Caribbean between the period 1990-2010, 15 studies were obtained. Though a limited body of research exists, findings from the literature revealed a concentration on language of instruction, initiatives in literacy and literacy assessment. Upon further review, concerns related

review, are discussed. Recommendations for future literacy research in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean are subsequently presented.

*Keywords:* literacy, Caribbean, multilingual, bilingual, research

### **Literacy Research in the English-Speaking Caribbean**

Historically, the use of standard and local varieties of English across international contexts was tremendously stigmatized and received little acceptance within the academic arena (Craig, 2006; Siegel, 1997; 1999; 2002; 2005; Simmons-McDonald, 2004). More recently, however, English varieties have increasingly become acceptable languages for international communication throughout the world (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages; TESOL, 2008). Notwithstanding, the status ascribed to English, and the power it holds remain indisputable (New London Group, 2000; TESOL, 2008).

The prominence of English as a global language is reflected across the world, and particularly, within the United States. In this country, the population of students learning to speak multiple varieties of English is currently the fastest growing student population (i.e., five million) (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition: NCELA, 2011; NCTE, 2008a). And in fact, English language learners (ELLs) have been reported to constitute 10.5 percent of America's K-12 population (NCTE; 2008a). As learners who must participate in the global community, learning English is therefore no longer considered optional but now constitutes an academic necessity (TESOL, 2008).

For students who must contend with the acquisition of English proficiency, the added challenge of developing literacy skills in academic contexts where English is the language of schooling is a consistent struggle. Position statements concerning the literacy development of

language learners indicate that adequate time, appropriate levels of support, meaning-based and balanced instruction, and culturally and developmentally appropriate instruction and materials are all fundamental to cultivating language learners' literacy skills (International Reading Association: IRA, 2001; TESOL, 2008). Despite indications that reading in a second language reflects many underlying reading processes of a student's first language, a growing body of research shows that second language reading consists of processes uniquely different from those in a student's L1 (August & Shanahan, 2006; Bernhardt, 2005; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Koda, 2007). And, though researchers have long insisted that the home language be the vehicle through which literacy instruction is provided in schools (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), in many international contexts, the academic conditions, historical backgrounds, social contexts, and linguistic situat

programs operated and implemented in these countries emanate from the recommendations of empirical research (Simmons-McDonald, 2004).

To date, measures of literacy relied upon as provided by United Nations Educational Scientific Organization (UNESCO) define a literate individual as one “who can, with understanding, both read and write a short statement on his or her everyday life” (UNESCO, 2000; UNESCO, 2006, p. 158). With data on hand indicating less than excellent gains on local

3. What concerns emanate from the empirical literacy research in selected territories of the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean?
4. What recommendations can be made for future literacy research in selected territories of the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean?

### **Method for Reviewing the Research**

Certain criteria functioned as a guide for performing a review of the literature. The following parameters were used in the review of research concerning literacy conducted in the selected territories of the English-speaking Caribbean region.

### **Selection of Original Studies for Review**

Original studies were chosen based on the location in which they were conducted (i.e., the English-speaking Caribbean), the time period in which they were conducted (i.e., 1990-2010), their focus (i.e., literacy and language in academic contexts), and their method of review (i.e., peer-reviewed).

**Location.** Original studies were selected when they had been conducted within the academic contexts of territories of the English-speaking Caribbean selected for the review. Smith (1965) summarized the relationships among the colonial backgrounds, language varieties, cultural contexts, and educational characteristics of the English-speaking Caribbean territories as follows:

It is clear that whatever the common patterns the British [Anglophone] West Indies share with other Caribbean territories, or with countries outside this Caribbean region, these British colonies nonetheless form a separate area for social research, on the ground of their present political relations as well as histor

Craig (1974) further justified consideration of “the West Indian Creole language situation as a whole” based on similarity of speech, social structure, traditions and institutions (p. 371). Others who engage in discourse concerning the English-speaking Caribbean territories at the political, national, educational, and economic levels further justify the view of these territories as an entity (Armstrong & Campos, 2002; Brereton, 2004; Engerman, 1982; Lewis, 2004; Watts, 1990).

**Time Period.** Original studies conducted within the period 1990-2010 were selected. Emancipation in the English-speaking Caribbean occurred in 1838, accompanied by the formulation of education systems and policies based on the education systems of the colonial-era metropolis (i.e., from the 1800s onwards) (Simmons-McDonald, 2004). However, the English-speaking Caribbean territories achieved independence between the period 1960-1980, with the specific dates of independence as follows: Jamaica [1962], Trinidad [1962], Guyana [1966], Grenada [1974], Dominica [1978], St. Vincent [1979], and St. Lucia [1979] (Poddar & Johnson, 2005). Given the reasonable assumption that post-independence educational policies implemented within the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels in these territories could not have been successfully evaluated empirically prior to 1980, and allowing for a period of 10 years for implementation to be realized, the period 1990-2010 was decided upon as a reasonable time frame for the review.

**Method of Review.** Original studies emanated from peer-reviewed journals. This selection ensured that empirical findings upon which this review was based had been subjected to standards of peer review relied upon within the academic community.

### **Search Process**

Searches were conducted within the databases ERIC, JSTOR, WorldCat, EBSCO, PsycInfo, SAGE, Web of Science, UNESCO and World Bank. The search terms used were

associated combinations of “literacy,” “reading,” “Caribbean,” “West Indies,” “Latin American

of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I conducted open-ended observations of the following: title, abstract, research questions, purpose for the study, conceptual and theoretical basis, methods, and discussion of findings. Based on this review, I grouped the studies. Categories identified at this stage were “teachers’ predispositions to English,” “teacher attitudes to vernaculars,” “teacher literacy instruction with English and vernaculars”, “students’ acquisition of English and vernaculars,” “phonetic factors in literacy development,” “evaluation of literacy and language assessments,” “assessment of literacy performance,” “implementation of literature programs,” and “literacy initiatives.”

The second phase involved constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), through which I examined the emergent categories above for similarities and differences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This phase took me back to the original studies to identify the ways in which studies in one category might be similar or different from those in another. Through this process, certain categories were merged, while others were modified. Broader themes representing similar categories then emerged.

### **The Literature**

The preliminary goal of this paper was to determine the original studies conducted in literacy across eight English-speaking Caribbean countries. Overall, 15 studies met the criteria for review. Of these, the majority were conducted in Jamaica (Bogle, 1997; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Lacoste, 2007; Lewis-Smikle, 2006; Mitchell, 2007; Tyson, 2003; Webster, 2009; Webster & Walters, 1998), two in St. Lucia (Simmons-McDonald, 2006a; 2006b), one in Dominica (Bryan & Burnette, 2006), two in Trinidad and Tobago (Williams & Carter, 2005; Deuber & Youssef, 2007), and one across a number of countries in the region (Armstrong & Campos, 2002). The location of the remaining study was unknown. Most studies focused on



students at the elementary level of schooling (e.g., Bogle, 1997; Mitchell, 2007; Simmons-McDonald, 2006b) and were published in Caribbean or international journals (e.g., *Caribbean Journal of Education*, *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies*). The following are the findings based on thematic analysis of the studies: teachers' predisposition to language of literacy instruction; literacy initiatives and impact; and literacy assessment.

### **Teacher Predisposition to Language of Literacy Instruction**

Research investigating teachers' predispositions to language in the English-speaking Caribbean context has explored teachers' attitudes toward, use, and knowledge of SLSE, SLEV, SLFC, Dominican Creolized English (DCE), Dominican Standard English (DSE), and Kweyol and Kokoy language varieties in St. Lucia and Dominica (Armstrong & Campos, 2002; Bryan & Burnette, 2006; Simmons-McDonald, 2006a).

Questionnaires were administered to pre- and in-service teachers via mixed and qualitative methods (Simmons-McDonald, 2006a). The mixed method approach involved the use

language pattern and DSE simultaneously in the classroom. St. Lucian teachers' responses varied

greatest challenge to instruction. Moreover, teacher participants noted that low levels of significance were attached to foreign languages, specifically among males.

The challenges faced with bilingual learning appeared were corroborated by qualitative reports from teachers which indicated that Caribbean language learners had the tendency to read with little to no understanding and were very often receiving an initial exposure to reading content often used in classrooms, and though many teachers reportedly clarified instructions in Creole, there appeared to be no underlying knowledge of bilingual and biliterate principles for language and literacy instruction (Amstrong & Campos, 2002).

**Instructional Reading Strategies.** Studies related to literacy strategy implementation have gauged the effect of the use of literature in various settings (Lewis-Smikle, 2006; Warrican, 2006; Webster, 2009; Webster & Walters, 1998). In certain instances, studies focused on the effects of primary grade students' exposed to a wide range of literature, particularly in regards to students' literacy skills, attitudes to, and interests in reading (Lewis-Smikle, 2006; Webster, 2009; Webster & Walters 1998). In other studies, first grade study participants were exposed to read-alouds and post-reading activities within the context of a natural science classroom environment (Webster, 2009). Further, one study focused on participants in the third year of high school, engaging students in read-alouds, discussion, and silent reading of informational and fictional texts during 45-minute sessions over a period of 16 weeks (Warrican, 2006).

Qualitative approaches were employed across the studies, with interviews, field notes and analyses of students' work samples triangulated to generate themes over varying lengths of time (2 months to 3 years) across multiple sites (1-6 schools).

Results from studies conducted at the lower grades illustrated the capacity of students to express themselves using longer phrases in comparison to limited responses produced at the beginning of the intervention. Students improved in their comprehension of concepts and were more familiar with genre elements (Lewis-Smikle, 2006; Webster, 2009). Moreover, students

inculcated their personal experiences into narratives and used the material encountered in various genres to make sense of their encounters with others (Lewis-Smikle, 2006; Webster & Walters, 1998). In contrast, findings from the study conduc

consonant clusters across Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) (Lacoste, 2007; Mitchell, 2007).

Approaches to studies on informal writing and oral literacy involved qualitative analysis, mixed methods, and statistical quantitative analyses. Researchers utilized observations and interviews to explore students' writing, while quantitative analyses were used to examine phonetic performance and use of consonant clusters. In-depth analysis and the use of tables for data presentation characterized certain studies (i.e., Lacoste, 2007). Further, results appeared consistent with the research questions and implications for the school setting were discussed thoroughly (Lacoste, 2007).

Despite different foci, specifically in regards to primary grade reading, findings across the studies reflected students' tendencies to read below grade level and to possess knowledge of very few letter sounds (Mitchell, 2007). Primary grade speakers and readers demonstrated the tendency to attach known Jamaican Creole sound systems to words requiring Standard Jamaican

**Standardized Assessments.** Investigation into standardized assessments of literacy performance has been achieved through the use of qualitative methods. To examine factors

literacy instruction (Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Sigel, 2005; Simmons-McDonald, 2006b). In the case of St. Lucia, no consensus appears to exist on whether the country should be solely referred to as “bidialectal” (SLFC and SLEV; Yiakoumetti, 2007) or “bilingual” (with two





Simmons-McDonald, 2006a), that is, French Creole remains unaccepted and is yet to be used as a language of instruction. Notwithstanding, over the past three decades, transitions in communicative patterns in St. Lucia have accompanied a marked increase in the number of St. Lucian English Vernacular (SLEV) speakers. Moreover, a growing sense of national pride registered in St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC) has led to a marked change in the value attached to SLFC (Carrington, 1987; Simmons-McDonald, 2004; St. Hilaire, 2007; 2011).



connections in conjunction with a problem-solving approach to the investigation of bananas (Webster, 2009).

The National Reading Panel (2000), in its report on

Paradoxically, the definitions espoused across English-speaking Caribbean countries bear a close resemblance to international conceptions of literacy as a construct. One example is the definition adopted by St. Lucia's Ministry of Education, which reads as follows:

Literacy involves a complex set of abilities to use and understand all aspects of communication in the modern world. Literacy abilities are not static and will vary according to the needs of our changing societies. Literacy development requires the integration of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and problem solving. It includes a range of skills required to cope in a dynamic and complex world. The process

present knowledge-based and information-intensive societies, literacy needs now to be viewed as the ability to understand and to use various types of information, in the various communities; it must be linked to societal and cultural practices for the definition to be meaningful. Literacy encompasses among other things the ability to read, write and comprehend in one's native/standard language; numeracy; the ability to comprehend visual images and representations such as signs, maps and diagrams – visual literacy; information technological literacy and the understanding of how



on the linguistic characteristics of numerous Caribbean countries, is a highly laudable effort. Yet, through this emphasis on the sociolinguistic, empirical research promoted in the region continues to be devoid of a focus on language learning in relation to literacy in the educational and classroom context. The emphasis on linguistics and



### Summary and Future Directions

In this review, the goal was to describe the empirical literacy research currently available in certain regions of the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean; identify areas of focus in this body of research; highlight concerns emanating from the review; and provide recommendations for future literacy research in the English-speaking Caribbean. The findings, though based on a limited number of empirical studies, revealed that language of instruction for the literacy teaching and learning of language learners is a registered concern. Moreover, an emphasis on lower level, or constrained (Paris, 2005) literacy skills suggests that certain conceptions of literacy frame research, mainly graphophonics, despite literacy definitions and evidence to the contrary. Based on the review, a need for the following interventions has been recognized, some of which relate to language of instruction, and others, to avenues for approaching discrepancies in the translation of conceptions of literacy from theory to practice.

First, more decided efforts need to be made to identify a body of scholars specifically responsible for spearheading research, particularly exploratory studies and surveys, to gain adequate knowledge of the linguistic proficiency of students within the context of early, childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions across the Caribbean region (see Au, 2000). To date, no record was found of reports indicating the percentages of students in a given school who are likely to speak language variations in each territory. When students are enrolled in school from the pre-kindergarten years, evidence exists to indicate that they are assessed to determine their proficiency in the English Language and English literacy (e.g., St. Lucia Education Statistical Digest, 2005). However, no documentation was found to show that national systems have been designated by the Ministries of Education of these countries to determine the extent of student mastery of other language varieties as a means of facilitating literacy





instruction (see American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; AACTE, 2010; 2013; Borko, Whitcomb, & Byrnes, 2007; 2008; National Council for the Accreditation of Teachers of English; NCATE, 2010; Zeichner, 2007) stands to reveal much about how teachers may respond to the linguistic needs within the context of literacy instruction in the Caribbean.

the local, regional, and international levels and with educational stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations may result in greater benefits for the region.

### **Conclusion**

A review of empirical literacy research in English-speaking Caribbean countries reveals that while the body of literature is limited, indicators can be gathered based on the research implemented to inform future directions in literacy research. Evidently, for the countries under review, despite a literacy definition that focuses on complexity, change, integration, social and cultural factors, and in certain cases, multiple literacies, the research conducted thus far fails to capture the true essence of literacy as situated within its social and cultural contexts, and falls short of assessing linguistic diversity in ways tha

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continues to be primarily English. While an increasingly positive attitude towards St. Lucian Creole and vernacular as a symbol of identity is now present, teachers and educational administrators continue to harbor negative stereotypes towards vernacular languages for use





and understood by more than 70% of the population, mainly in the rural areas (Pan American Health Organization, 1998). The language situation further comprises a third language variety, the English-Lexicon Vernacular, referred to here as the St. Lucian English Vernacular (SLEV). Craig (1983) described this vernacular as a Caribbean mesolect in which a “varied range of nonstandard speech bridges the linguistic gap between Creole and Standard English” (p. 65).

The recent emergence of St. Lucian English Vernacular (SLEV), a mesolect intelligible to both Creole and SLSE speakers, resulted from two factors, namely the efforts of St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC) speakers to acquire English in the school context (Christie, 1983), and communication among English and French Creole speakers in various communities (Garrett, 2003). Simmons-McDonald (2000) consolidated these views in her explanation of the phenomenon, attributing the initial development of St. Lucian English Vernacular to speakers’ efforts in the school setting and further emergence of the vernacular to the increased interaction among speakers in communities.



majority and French aristocrats, but also among the Africans themselves. Due to the fact that African linguistic and cultural groups were separated as much as possible on their arrival to St. Lucia, African slaves resorted to using French for communication among themselves as well as with French inhabitants (La Belle & White, 1980).

A direct result of this process was the St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC), co-existent with French, both of which were exclusively spoken in St. Lucia up to 1803 (Alleyne, 1961). Despite a large African Creole-speaking majority, when Britain regained possession of the country, English became the official language of St. Lucia in 1842 (Ford & St. Juste-Jean, 1995). According to St. Hilaire (2007), the underlying rationale for the change was “to advance the social and cultural development of the island” (p. 522). Not only was English instituted as an official language, but it also became instituted as the exclusive medium of instruction (Ramcharan-Crowley, 1961) under the assumption by the majority of “Caribbean educators and the general public that the road to educational, and therefore political and economic, success of an individual was very much tied to that person’s ability to command a high level of formal standard English” (Winer, 2012, p. 107).

Yet, in practice, few indications existed that reflected the reality of English as an official language. One reason for the lack of English was the labor shortage accompanying British emancipation in 1834 led to the introduction of large-scale importation of indentured laborers from South Asia in 1858 (Ford & St. Juste-Jean, 1995; Murdoch, 2009), increasing the complexity of the ethnic and linguistic situation. And, from 1911-1921, according to census statistics, approximately 57% of the St. Lucian population had no knowledge of English. This figure decreased significantly by 1946, when it was reported as approximately 43% (West Indian Census, 1950). Another reason for the lack of English was that St. Lucia achieved

political independence in 1979, with this landmark in its political history accompanied by the first manifestations of pro-Creole cultural nationalism (St. Hilaire, 2007). Advocates for Creoles and the vernaculars initiated national acceptance of Caribbean Creoles, promoting these as symbols of cultural identity and highlighting their significance as avenues for national development (Devonish, 1986). Today, the St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC) vocabulary is predominantly French (84%), followed by English, (2.8 %), Indian (0.4%), African (0.5%), Amerindian (0.6%) and Spanish (0.1%) (see Figure 1.1; Frank, 2007). As observed, the majority of lexical items present in SLFC originate from the French language.

### **St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC)**

Whereas the St. Lucian English Vernacular (SLEV) is hardly discussed in the literature, St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC) has been featured as a well-represented subject in Caribbean and St. Lucian discourse. The Creole factored into SLFC is better clarified by Murdoch's (2009) unique description of the term "Creole," which portrays its multidimensionality and prefiglann

**Figure 1.1: Contribution of Each Language to SLFC  
(Frank, 2007)**

It was from such a perspective that Alleyne (1961) described SLFC during the era of slavery. Alleyne observed that French aristocrats posed no objections to Creole use at the time, but that “amicable relations between French and French Creole in a slave society gave way to extreme hostility between English and Creole in the newly free society” after emancipation (p. 4). Alleyne summed up the condition when he stated:

Creole fell into the general depreciation of all the cultural items, and all of the ethnic characteristics identifiable with the black African slave. Ascription became the basis of the system of values. And so today in the West Indies ‘a good complexion’ is said of one ranging from light brown to fair; similarly ‘good hair’ describes a type of hair resembling

complexes and self debasements, Creole was despised even by people who could speak no other language. That explains the discrediting of creolized languages throughout the Caribbean. (p. 5)

Not only was SLFC degraded by its colonial contexts, but the educational history of St. Lucia, which originated with Mico School missionaries in 1838 (St. Hilaire, 2007), exacerbated the situation and significantly increased negative attitudes ascribed to the St. Lucian French Creole (SLFC). Understandably, this situation existed because Mico-trained teachers were protestant English speakers trained in Mico Training Colleges where French Creole had never been spoken. Their lack of knowledge of SLFC therefore led to rejection of Creole and the prohibition of its use to the extent that students were beaten if found in the act (Alleyne, 1961; Ramcharan-Crowley, 1961; St. Hilaire, 2007).

The denigration of Creole and devaluing of SLEV as “little more than the corruptions of the standard language... and therefore not [a] “real” language[s]” (Stewart, 1962) continued well into the twentieth century. Among the many denotations of Creole, the following were marked in their assertions: statements by St. Lucia’s Education Officers that “Creole is not a language” (Lowenthal, 1972, p. 272) and conclusions regarding Creoles such as “Patois is making (St.

predominantly SLFC speakers. Even on the global front, Caribbean Creoles continue to remain the most stigmatized of world languages (Alleyne, 1



on the Common Entrance Examination between the period 1996-2005 was on average 50% or less (St. Lucia Education Statistical Digest, 2005).

Though the recent past has seen efforts to curb illiteracy in the form of Universal

With the absence of language policy in St. Lucia, the linguistic status quo appears to function as the de facto policy, a condition that poses a challenge for language policy development in the country. While efforts around language policy in other English-speaking Caribbean counterparts provide an avenue for addressing language in the St. Lucian educational context, the multilingual nature of St. Lucia deviates from the bilingual nature of countries such as Trinidad and Jamaica, where policies have been ratified. Specifically, St. Lucia's multilingual situation consists of SLFC, SLSE, and SLEV (Simmons-McDonald, 2004), a sharp contrast to the bilingual situation in Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. The SLFC, very similar to the Dominican French Creole (DFC), has been documented to have been influenced by varying languages as is indicated in Figure 1.1 (Frank, 2007). In contrast, Trinidad and Tobago's Trinidad Standard English (TSE), Trinidadian English lexicon Creole (TCE) and Tobagonian English lexicon Creole (TOB), as well as Jamaica's Jamaican Creolized English (JCE) and Standard Jamaican English (SJE; Jamaica Language Education Policy, 2001; Language and Language Education Policy, 2010) are all predominantly based on variations of the English language.

Another challenge for the development of language policy for St. Lucia stems from the research that confirms that despite improved attitudes towards the vernacular languages in St. Lucia (Simmons-McDonald, 2006a; St. Hilaire, 2009; 2011) and recognition that instruction in vernacular languages poses no obstruction to students' acquisition of Standard English in the country (Simmons-McDonald, 2004; 2006b), the tendency to encourage the teaching of St. Lucian Standard English as the first language of instruction remains ingrained in the consciousness of St. Lucian education personnel (Bousquet, 2010; Compton, 2010; Josie, 2008). This issue is problematic because it reinforces in the general populace the preexisting notion that



the native languages should remain merely symbols of national identity and, further, implies that certain detrimental effects are associated with the utilization of these languages to facilitate acquisition of literacy in schools.

The third prominent factor affecting policy implementation in St. Lucia is that St. Lucian students continue to demonstrate unsatisfactory performance in the English Language exam at all levels of the education system (Winer, 2012). Currently, two Minimum Standards tests are used to assess literacy at the second and fourth grade levels of elementary school and one Minimum Standard test in the third form of secondary school in St. Lucia. In 2002, the national mean performance on the Grade Two examination was 34.7% for English Language, and in 2007, the mean was 54.2% (World Data on Education, 2010/2011). In 2002, the Grade Four examination was 45.1% for English Language while in 2007, the percentage pass rate was 48.1% (World Data







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### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In Chapter Two, K-12 literacy research and language policies in the English-speaking Caribbean were discussed (Smith, 2013a; Smith, 2013b). Examination of research, policy, and the experiences of language learners and teachers across the English-speaking Caribbean contexts (e.g., Borli. 2 , , W





literacies among multilingual learners in the elementary grades. In L. Parker (Ed.), *Technology-mediated learning environments for young English learners: Connections in and out of school* (pp. 111-153). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **TEACHERS' AND TEACHER EDUCATORS' LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

In this chapter, three selected studies represent my emphasis on linguistic and cultural diversity of multilingual teachers and multilingual teacher educators: (i) Exploring the Interstices of Literate, Linguistic, and Cultural Diversity (Smith, 2013c); (ii) Linguistic and Cultural Appropriations of a Multilingual Educator (Smith, 2013d); (iii) Accomplishing the Goals of Multicultural Education: A Transdisciplinary Perspective (Smith, 2013e).

In an effort to accomplish the goals of multicultural education, a growing body of literature suggests that multilingual teachers possess the capacity to bridge educational, linguistic, and cultural gaps (Haddix, 2010; Murti, 2002; Safford & Kelly, 2010). In this chapter, I therefore begin by exploring an English-speaking Caribbean multilingual educator's experiences regarding his linguistic and literate proficiency in academia across a range of academic levels, within a variety of contexts, and in response to various learners. Observing the paths of this educator and the ways in which he had been affected by and responded to linguistic diversity, the question arose as to the measures to be taken in ensuring that teacher educators, while expecting teachers to be more cognizant of K-12 students' needs, also express in their practice and habits, the predispositions required for embracing diversity, and specifically, linguistic diversity.

Given that the emphasis on teacher educators as fundamental to the process is often overlooked, I continue the chapter with an examination of a teacher educator's (i.e., myself)



multilingual and multicultural awareness within the context of practitioner research. During this process, there appeared to be an overall sense that predispositions required to accomplish the goals of multicultural education resulted not only from the knowledge of “differing others,” but also from a capacity to develop ways of being that permeated one’s overall approach to functioning as a person and as a professor in teacher education.

responses to language learners in various geographical and social contexts. Through in-depth semi-structured topical interviews, I identified three distinct recursive “pathways” representative of the educator’s experiences. These pathways constituted his processes of attitude

backgrounds come to hold based on their past linguistic and cultural experiences and their predispositions to the languages and cultures of the diverse students in their care (Lapp, 1997; Lowenstein, 2009; Zeichner, 1999).

In the context of the United States, some attention has been given to the need for recruiting teachers whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds differ from those typically found in U.S. schools (Lowenstein, 2009). This emphasis appeared to be based on deficit notions of European-American teachers in US schools, whose cultures and monolingual backgrounds were thought to be insufficient to deal with a growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse students (e.g., Gomez, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Yet, in pluralistic non-American contexts, such as the United Kingdom, South Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the situation is reversed. In these regions, culturally and linguistically diverse teachers are the ones primarily responsible for instructing language learners (e.g., Bryan & Burnette, 2006; Simmons-McDonald, 2006a; Tyson, 2003). To date, little is known of the experiences of educators in such contexts who, though often overlooked, are expected to be responsive to the needs of students from varied backgrounds, but whose share the same cultures with their students. In fact, many operate under the assumption that the familiarity with cultures and language variations of students supposedly privileges these teachers to respond to the instructional needs of learners.

In a search for in-depth understanding of the experiences of such teachers, the decision was made to focus on one such teacher – an English-speaking Caribbean multilingual educator – in order to gain insight into his literate and language experiences, both within and beyond the Caribbean, and therefore, across various geographical and social contexts.

### **Cultural, Intercultural, and Linguistic Diversity**

In the literature on educators' capacities to develop the dispositions required for culturally responsive teaching, significance has been found in teachers' personal experiences based on cultural, intercultural, and linguistic features. A review of the research reveals that the examination done in these areas has been undertaken

Butler, 2007; Liu, 2005; Reves and Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999) based on their experiences as educators. Research in teacher education that has considered linguistic minority pre-service teachers has been more reflective of teachers' cultures in relation to the academic institutions in which they function (e.g., Guerrero, 2003) and with regards to teachers' consistent grappling with their individual linguistic predispositions and the ways in which they are expected to function in institutions of learning (e.g., Kornfeld, 1999).

More recently, despite this approach, findings from investigations into bilingual Spanish and English speaking teachers' experiences have disrupted the notion that a dichotomy need exist in the experiences of linguistically diverse teachers (Haddix, 2010; 2012). In the place of the dichotomous experience of a linguistic "other" as typically conceived of in situations where linguistically diverse teachers are in the minority, Haddix (2010) proposes instead a hybridization, one that positions teachers with multilingual capacities to determine the ways in which they choose to enact language use in distinctly diverse settings. Yet, the settings in which teachers such as those observed by Haddix (2010) operate are typically different from those in many English-speaking multilingual countries where teachers and students share the many languages spoken.

### **The English-Speaking Caribbean**

In the history of the English-speaking Caribbean, teacher attitudes towards language varieties in the Caribbean have consistently inhibited their willingness to provide instruction in

background of St. Lucian French Creole and its association with inferiority provide insight into the basis for such preconceived notions towards language variations (St. Hilaire, 2007; 2011).

And in Dominica, the English-speaking Caribbean country from which my study participant in this research originates, similar notions abound (Bryan & Burnette, 2006). The multilingual situation in Dominica is such that four linguistic

social contexts, this educator's description of his literate and linguistic and literate experiences served as a way in which to longitudinally and holistically understand linguistic diversity.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions served as the basis for the inquiry:

1) In what ways does the multilingual educator describe his language and literate experiences in the Caribbean?

2) In what ways does the multilingual educator describe his responses to language learners in the Caribbean?

3) In what ways does the multilingual educator describe his language and literate experiences beyond the Caribbean?

4) In what ways does the multilingual educator describe his responses to learners beyond the Caribbean?

5) In what ways does the multilingual educator describe his responses to linguistic and literate expectations beyond the Caribbean?

For the purpose of this inquiry, the following are operational definitions of the terms utilized throughout this paper:

**English-Speaking:** In the Caribbean region, a variety of languages are spoken. For certain countries colonized by the British, English became the official language. In this study, the Caribbean region referred to is comprised of countries in which the official language is English.





Virgin Islands); (c) his facility with four languages (i.e., Dominican Standard English, Dominican French Creole, Dominican Kokoy, Dominican

and background (pp. 96-99). I avoided asking “leading” and “why” questions, as advised by Merriam (2009), but utilized open-ended, and in most cases, interpretive questions. As such, the semi-structured in-depth interview proved to be an effective method for obtaining data from Juan in relation to his past experiences with language in multiple contexts (Seidman, 2006). A copy of

As a researcher familiar with the English-speaking Caribbean and whose emphasis is Curriculum and Instruction in Literacy, I engaged in this review from my vantage point as a citizen of a Caribbean country and with clear opinions about the literacy practices in this and other Caribbean countries. However, in acknowledging my biases and experiences, I attempted to also look critically at the practices in which I engaged. I did not separate myself from them; rather, I viewed them anew and through the lens of scholarship. Being a Caribbean national who had resided in the region, a researcher in literacy studies conducted from a global perspective, and a resident of and traveler to other countries o





implemented after the manuscript had been written and the excerpts from our conversation identified. In returning the final manuscript after review, and having received the impression that he was an active participant in the research, “not bound, static, atemporal, and decontextualized” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 11), Juan felt comfortable enough to question my use of the word “dismissive” within an interpretation. True to the inquiry and to my integrity as a researcher, I indicated I would remove the word and I did.

Thirdly, credibility was established was through the use of “thick” and “rich description” through which Juan’s voice as participant emerged and contributed to external validity, which in turn, increases the capacity for transferring the findings to similar individuals and contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Analysis**

I employed narrative analysis in this study because in many ways the recounting of the educator functioned as “story.” According to Frank



the risk for ‘essentialization’ through the subtle implication that all Caribbean nationals or Dominicans supposedly experience and will report similar experiences as Juan did, I took precautions to avoid generalizations in my inferences and interpretations.

### **Juan’s Initial Responses – Getting to Know the Participant**

In this study, I set out to explore Juan’s literate and language experiences use across multiple contexts. The goal was to mine Juan’s personal experiences to determine the influence he believed they had had on his literate and language use. In Juan’s initial conversation with me, I was reminded of his Dominican nationality. He began his teaching career at the Dominica Grammar School and then moved on to St. Mary’s Academy and Clifton Dupigny Community College in Dominica. Following this period, Juan migrated to London, where he lived for a period of six months. Subsequently, Juan migrated to the United States, where he pursued his undergraduate and graduate degrees while also employed as a tutor and otherwise in multiple cities within the states of Oklahoma, Texas, and Miami over a period of six years. Overall, Juan possesses competence in four language varieties: Dominican Standard English (DSE), Dominican French Creole (DFC), Dominican Kweyol, and Dominican Kokoy. Throughout his lifetime, Juan has used all forms of the language varieties for different purposes and in different contexts.

As we began exploring Juan’s experiences, he explained how he had gotten into the teaching profession:

Growing up, I was an A student in all my work. What they did is they would teach at the high school and then they would go on high school and then go on to community college. Once you had that community college education, you would come back and teach at high



school level and these very bright individuals, they were my role models so I decided to follow in their footsteps.

Juan also explained how he came to work as a teacher. For example, Juan described how was chosen for his first teaching position:

My unique ability in computers, I'm very good at computers, and I was one of the better students at that school when I went there in computer programming, so I was one of the top three students in computer programming so they brought me in to share that knowledge with the students.

Juan told me about his motivation for becoming an Information Technology expert:

I got into computers to pretty much make money, so that I wouldn't depend on my income as a teacher, so I got into computers to pretty much make money.

Juan also spoke of his experiences with students in the education system, his use of language with students in and out of the classroom, his language use in his native homeland and his current language use.

As Juan relayed information about his use of language, he paused momentarily several times, indicating a sense of thorough self-reflection. He shared with me a deeper understanding of the processes underlying his initial responses in relation to language and culturally related phenomena, experiences to which I could relate because of my background. For example, speaking of his work here in the United States, Juan explained, "On the job, I use English because most people don't speak Creole. Actually nobody on the job actually speaks Creole except me." I immediately identified with Juan. I too had done the same since my arrival in the United States. It was therefore intriguing as Juan shared more about how he got into the habit of speaking Creole with his friends:

Well, I would use language at home by speaking to my friends from back home or St. Lucia or Haiti that actually speak the same language because to be able to speak a foreign language here, it's really good. One of the ways I actually realized that is when I went to London back in 2001. You would go on this bus, their double-deckers, and London is like a melting, a real melting pot, similar to New York, and kind of like Miami, and you'd have everybody speaking a different language – people from the Middle East, people from Asia, people from all over would use language to identify themselves to each other. I actually got in that habit of doing the same thing – speaking Creole to my friends as part of like, that's our thing, yes ...!

Juan's face lit up as he spoke. I could see this meant a lot to him, being able to use Creole as a “thing.”

I listened as Juan described similarities between teaching and his work in information technology, and the impact his professors had on his language growth. For instance, Juan spoke of his future professorial role:

I'm excited about it. Again, I don't know. Some of my role models are the teachers that come to class with their tweed jackets and their coffee mug so I see myself being a professor like that when I'm probably close to retirement age.

Ideally, it's the only thing I really think about when I turn to be about fifty years old.

As I thought of Juan's goals to become a professor, I reviewed the experiences he had related, the many areas of his work, home, and social life. I remembered too the situations where he appeared to become more passionate, and noticed at these points, he spoke in great detail. Juan's passionate reliving of his experiences in many instances reminded me of my past. I too





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**Path One: Transformation in /**

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**Figure 1.3:**

Juan demonstrated an ove  
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forced to engage in reflection on his negative attitude to the language varieties encountered in his home country (see Figure 1.3). Speaking of the United States, he noted:

Even from my personal experience, the fact that I spoke English with an accent,





would have looked upon me as someone that was intelligent but as I got older, I realized I should meet them at their level, where they're at, because you don't want to be too different. You want to be able to identify with them by speaking the same, like joking around and making jokes, but doing this in Creole, the language they are comfortable with.

### **Path Two: Strategies for Dealing with Differences in Language**

*“It wasn't even the fact that I didn't speak English properly,  
I just spoke it with an accent...”*

I identified several distinct strategies (see Table 1.2) employed by the Caribbean teacher as he navigated various geographical and social contexts and attempted to deal with individuals' expectations of him with regards to language (see Table 1.2). The strategies outlined beneath the major headings “Adjusting Language” and “Adjusting Speech” in this table are indicative of the high-level processing this Caribbean educator was required to undergo throughout his everyday use of language while operating within a society that was different from his own.

Juan's capacity to (a) manage matters of audience,

When I grew up, we were taught that speaking Creole was bad in the sense that it wasn't English and there was a big emphasis on speaking proper English to fit into society.

From this excerpt, it can be seen that even in Juan's childhood, the adjustment process had begun. In much the same way, as a teacher, Juan was also required to speak Standard English at school, to which he complied. As an IT expert in the Caribbean as well as the United States, it became necessary to speak Standard English at his part-time job. When asked how he felt about this, he stated:

It's one of those things, it's a situation where I picture it as something where I did what I had to do.

Here, it appears that Juan's increased understanding about the need for employing Standard English in the workplace caused him to achieve a certain level of automaticity with this language form.



**Table 1.2: Summary of Processes Involved in Strategy Use**

Quote from Transcript	Adjusting Language	Adjusting Speech
<p>Sometimes you hear an expression and someone asks you to translate it and you would find it funny in French or Spanish but when you translate it in English, it's like, it's not the same. Certain jokes just sound so much funnier in Creole.</p>	<p>Using Creole to convey certain desired content thereby retaining the intended meaning of that content.</p>	
<p>One of the things about the use of the language is more, I believe it's more when you are using language, you just have to know who your audience is and if you have an audience that can identify with Creole, then you can speak to them in Creole, and if you have an audience that identifies with perfect English then you speak proper English. So my use of Creole at home will continue but, if I'm in a setting where I'm required to speak proper English, I will do it also.</p>	<p>Determining whether to use Creole or Standard English based on context and audience. If the audience requires SE, he used SE. If Creole, then he used Creole.</p>	
<p>When I speak it doesn't matter necessarily where I am, more of it matters who I'm speaking to, so if I'm speaking to someone like you from the Caribbean, I would get into my comfort zone and I would speak like we speak back home, which is relatively quickly and with me also as I said, at an earlier stage of this interview, growing up I spoke with a lisp, so even back home it was difficult for individuals to understand me and so what I tend to do to be understood is I tend to speak loudly and if I'm speaking to someone that's not from the Caribbean, I tend to slow down especially in Texas and Oklahoma.</p>		<p>Speaking loudly and slowing down to individuals in Texas and Oklahoma who had difficulty understanding what he said.</p>
<p>I try to ensure I am understood. I try to speak Standard English at all times because if you listen to someone speak, and they are speaking Standard English, it might sound different but I believe that the individual, the other person will understand what you're saying as long as you speak Standard English and you try to meet them halfway. So if they speak quickly, you can try to speed up and if they speak slowly, you can try to slow down. To a child, back home it's different because that child has to grow up in society and that child has to face that issue that hey, if you don't have a good command of the English language, then you're going to be looked upon as someone that's not too intelligent right, and then right away that child is being set up for failure, so I would speak to that child in proper English as much as I can but as an adult, my parents, my grandparents, I would speak to them as to how they speak.</p>	<p>Using Standard English in the United States to convey information in spite of his accent as a standard pattern to communicate with Americans.  Changing from Creole to Standard English when speaking to children in his hometown because he believed it would help them succeed in the world. Choosing to speak Creole/broken 19.4231( )249.999]TJ 10.44 TL T*[(s5371574(17)2585758((b)-5.71342(i)11.87500(s)3.06</p>	<p>Matching speech patterns to that of individual to ensure successful communication.</p>



Juan went on to state that in the United States where there was a high level of diversity such as Miami, New York, and London, all areas in which he had lived, “if you didn’t have a native tongue, you actually felt like an outcast because everybody would be speaking in a different language except you.”

Not only did Juan use language as a mark of identity with his friends, but he also viewed it as critical if he was to function with his parents/grandparents in a communicative relationship where they shared mutual identities in spite of the fact that they continued to live in the Caribbean while he resided in the United States. In other words, Juan viewed the use of the native tongue as a mediator through which he and his family could share a bond uninhibited by the constraints of imposing his standardized use of language on them. He captured the essence of such a relationship when he elaborated:

Language is part of your identity. Language is part of who you are, and to be comfortable with who you are, to be comfortable with your identity, it’s always good for someone to meet you at your level, and not necessarily try to

tkl change you or talk to you in a different way. When they do that 2.53658(i)-2.53658(t)-(k)-0.95.5353

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surface via his allowance to speak “broken” English and Creole. I have labeled his use of Standard English in the workplace and in other circumstances where he saw it fitting, such as when speaking to children in his hometown, as being required and therefore characteristic of a

*Requisite Mode*





very Standard English he had defended and condemned students for in his past experience became the area with which he was now unable to successfully function. Having been in a similar situation, I found Juan's response to be a reflection of how I felt. I therefore understood the resulting dramatic shift in Juan's identity, which he described occurred when he developed the awareness that while Standard English was indispensable, it was the Dominican French Creole, Kokoy and Creolized English that allowed him to exist within his Comfort Zone. As observed in participation/practice theory, Juan developed patterns of practice resulting from the gradual adoption of local linguistic practices within the social settings in which he was immersed (Gee, 2008; Hasan, 2002). In the view of Haddix (2010), Juan demonstrated the literate hybridization needed to bridge the gaps between and across multilingual and multicultural contexts.

While Juan experienced a change in attitude and developed more pride in his native languages, he maintained awareness that modifying his speech via the use of strategies developed based on the context in which he operated were central to his success. This realization





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## **Linguistic and Cultural Appropriations of a Multilingual Educator**

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**Note:** This paper is in progress and will be submitted to *Studying Teacher Education*.

### **Abstract**

Over the past decade, increased discussion has ensu

within the context of two reading and writing courses over a period of four months. The findings from teaching videos, written responses to students, and student evaluations indicated that communication patterns with students reflected a greater level of multilingual than multicultural awareness. Further analysis revealed the capacity of practitioner research to deepen my sense of reflexivity and meta-awareness. Implications for teacher education include the necessity for attending to linguistic diversity of teacher educators whose responsibility it is to train pre-service and in-service teachers to cater to the needs of linguistically diverse learners.

*Keywords:* multilingual awareness, multicultural awareness, teacher educators, linguistic diversity, multicultural education, literacy educators

### **Linguistic and Cultural Appropriations of a Multilingual Educator**

Exploration into educators' experiences in learning about diversity (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; AACTE, 2013; Banks, 2002; Banks & Banks, 2009; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Sleeter, 2001; 2011) and specifically,

In the following study, practitioner inquiry is employed. Along with national developments reflecting the need for investigation of practice, my personal impetus served as a basis for undertaking this inquiry. This impetus stemmed from my experience teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels as a prospective teacher educator. Over the past year, a “wondering” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) emerged in relation to my capacity to demonstrate multicultural and multilingual awareness and the possible interrelationships existing therein. Possessing the ability to communicate in various language varieties, but unsure of the ways in which this phenomenon was reflected in my practice, an opportunity availed itself for interrogation.

Given the inextricable nature of language and culture (Halliday, 1980; Vygotsky, 1981),

### **Multicultural Teacher Education**

The field of multicultural education is a novel one. Notwithstanding, numerous approaches exist. Among the many conceptualizations proposed for construing diversity in education is Banks' depiction, the emphasis of which is geared towards integration of content, construction of knowledge, reduction of prejudice, equity of pedagogy and empowering of school culture are emphasized. Alternatively, Nieto (2004) focuses less on prescriptive pedagogical recommendations and considers multicultural education as school reform providing education for all students and challenging discrimination in all its forms. Similarly, Bennett (2003) emphasizes democracy and cultural pluralism, and instruction geared towards equal educational opportunity. Despite their variations, these notions of multicultural education possess one common characteristic, that is, the intent to interrogate assumptions underlying culturally dominant practices in schools and instead, to perpetuate cultural pluralism (Gay, 1994).

Born of the multicultural education reform movement, multicultural teacher education was designed to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching learners from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 2002). In Cochran-Smith's (2003) conceptualization, multicultural teacher education can be explored via eight critical questions. Among these are examination of the purpose of schooling, determination of the knowledge most necessary for teachers, investigation of the complex nature of diversity, documentation of best practices in education, and the evaluation of the critical nature of teacher outcomes.

To date, a substantive body of research exists concerning inquiries into various dimensions of teaching as related to the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. Across the board, continued emphasis has been geared towards multicultural education as it relates to pre-service and/or P-12 teachers (e.g., Buchanan, Correia, & Bleicher, 2010; Cochran-Smith, Piazza,









Yet, due to challenges in accomplishing the goals of multicultural education (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2000; Gay, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009) and despite calls to increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse teacher educators hired within higher education systems (e.g., Gay, 2000, 2010; Pang & Park, 2011), much of the literature addressing this concern remains in the theoretical or conceptual stage. Furthermore, as noted, little is known about the personal and professional experiences of multilingual teacher educators within higher education and the extent to which they possess the capacity to contribute to the goals of multicultural

From both perspectives, multicultural awareness appears to be a process. In Nieto's (2000) proposition, this process seems grounded within the individual, whereas in Pederson's (1988) approach, the process appears to occur as a function of both the individual and the social context in which s/he is immersed. As an English-speaking multilingual educator, the use of these lens to explore whether multicultural awareness was demonstrated in my practice and the process through which this occurred would allow me to determine whether prevailing conceptions of the construct aligned with my experience.

### **Dynamic Model of Multilingualism**

The dynamic model of multilingualism (DMM) and multilinguality (Jessner, 2008) also functioned as a framework for conceptualizing multilingualism during the study of myself as a multilingual educator and as a participant in this inquiry. In the dynamic model of multilingualism, multilingual proficiency is described as the complex interaction among various psycholinguistic systems, crosslinguistic interaction, and multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Within this context, multilingual awareness constitutes the ability to reflect on language and its use, monitor linguistic processing in comprehension and production of language, monitor (watching and correcting) use of language, fulfill monitoring functions such as reduction of performance errors, correct misunderstandings, develop and apply conversational strategies based on feedback, attend to clues that help one to determine whether to use formal or informal language in a given situation, and recognize when and how to follow socio-culturally determined discourse patterns in conversations with others (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). As a multilingual educator, examination of my practice via an understanding of this model would reveal the extent to which this framework corresponded with my responses to students.

### **Research Questions**

“Wonderings” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) are necessary for inquiry in practitioner research. Similarly, in any qualitative research endeavor, the researcher’s personal impetus for conducting inquiry is deemed indispensable (Maxwell

respond to students' needs. I further embedded the formal qualitative and practitioner research (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009) endeavor within the broader context of a self-study (Schon, 1987).

In practitioner inquiry, the classroom teacher functions as knowledge generator. Teacher inquiry is conceived of as dealing with concerns of teachers, engaging teachers in design, data collection, and interpretation of data surrounding a question (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). Action research in this context takes the form of diagnosis of practical situations needing improvement or practical problems to be resolved; formulation of action strategies to enhance a situation; implementation of action strategies and evaluation of their effectiveness; and clarification of situations, so as to result in new definitions of a problem or area for improvement. The end result is the emergence of new questions developed for investigation, then perpetuated as continuation of the spiral (see Elliott, 1988). In this regard, practitioner research served as an appropriate framework for this study (see Zeichner, 2007 for more on practitioner research for teacher educators).

In utilizing self-study to undergird this inquiry, I acknowledged Zeichner's (1999) assertion of the value of self-study to teacher education as "probably the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research" (p. 8). The use of practitioner

### **Context of the Inquiry**

Inquiry into the phenomenon occurred at a large public university in Florida over the course of 15 weeks in the year 2012, within the broader context of a Supervision course in which I was enrolled. The Supervision course was designed to enhance my teaching as a Graduate Assistant. While I was enrolled in the Supervision course, I taught reading and writing undergraduate courses, both required components of the Elementary Education program offered through the College of Education. Each week, I taught the courses in three-hour blocks. The content in these classes included theoretical perspectives of reading and writing, practical application in the classroom, approaches for developing integration of reading and writing across content areas, modifications for diverse students, reading and writing assessments for K-12 levels of education, and local, state and national implications for reading and writing in the United States. My instruction took the form of lectures by PowerPoint, engagement through group discussions, group work and presentations, and online group and individual collaborations.

Upon determining that I could proceed with the study, I was careful to inform students of the research being conducted and to constantly remind them of my engagement and progress in data collection and interpretation. The students stated they were comfortable with the process and the information gathered.

### **The Student Informants**

I interacted with 52 students over the course of the tuof th



course consisted of 17 Elementary Education students, two students specializing in Music and two in Special Education. One student majored in Psychology. In the writing course, there were 13 Special Education students and 15 Elementary Education students. Two students from this class also majored in psychology. The majority of the students in the two classes were between the ages of 20-30. Ten students were 30 years or older. For a number of the students, this was their first year in the given programs. Others were at varying levels of their respective programs.

The majority of the students in both classes were Caucasian; the Reading course included one African-American student and two Hispanic students while the Writing course included two African-American students. Students originated from a variety of states in North America and spoke English as their native language. In the Reading class, one student spoke Dutch fluently.

### **The Multilingual Educator**

As course instructor/prospective teacher educator and doctoral student, I pursued studies in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on literacy. Within this context, I explored literacy in multilingual populations, linguistic diversity in multicultural teacher educators, and verbal reports as a methodological tool for understanding the literacy processes of multilingual learners. Prior to this inquiry, I taught a reading course within which this inquiry occurred. However, this was my first instance teaching the wr

As an individual actively involved within this inquiry, I can be adequately described as a circumstantial multilingual teacher educator of African ancestry, whose language learning was based on survival and not choice. My citizenship is St. Lucian and my linguistic status is that of a Non-Native English Speaker (NNES) whose first language is English.

Considering Ellis's (2004) definition of the multilingual, this term is used here to refer to:

someone who considers themselves as 'speaking' .... two or more languages to the extent that they can use them confidently and achieve their communicative ends in a majority of everyday adult encounters, not restricted to tourism. It does not necessarily include specialized uses of the language such as in the law or business, and does not imply 100% accuracy. (p. 94)

Additionally, Ellis distinguishes among multilinguals that have to learn another language to survive – circumstantial multilinguals – from those who choose to learn another language – elective multilinguals. My status as a circumstantial multilingual educator was therefore a function of my acquisition of additional language varieties in a survival context.

**My Background.** St. Lucia, the island from which I originate, is considerably small with area of 238 square miles. Situated between Martinique and St. Vincent in the West Indies, this island, once colonized by Britain, is home to approximately 170,000. The majority of the islanders are of African descent with a small percentage of the citizens of Indian, Asian, or Caucasian heritage. The official language is St. Lucian Standard English (SLSE), an acrolect that serves as the language of formal and official communication (Carrington, 1984). This acrolect is the most representative of “standard” or internationally accepted English (Ford & St. Juste-Jean, 1995). SLSE has existed for some time in conjunction with Saint Lucian French Creole (SLFC: Kweyol or Patois), a “language” spoken and understood by more than 70% of the population,

mainly in the rural areas (Pan American Health Organization - PAHO, 1998). The language

As a multilingual study participant, participant observer, and as overall researcher in this study, I functioned in multiple roles, interacting with the study and with my experience in an effort to make sense of my world. As an educator of

multilingual literacy educator?" interactive interviews as well as the data sources for Research Question 2 functioned as the data.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this inquiry were collected in three phases. In phase one, I documented my thoughts on my practice in relation to the research questions posed within the researcher reflective journal. A researcher reflective journal (Janesick, 2002) functions as a tool for reflecting on the research process within the stages of the research. I documented four entries within the researcher reflective journal based on the first four classes held in the first two weeks of the Spring 2012 semester. As I read and reread m

content of the course, my instructional methods, as well as jot any questions lingering on their minds upon the completion of each class. In addition, I gathered students' written evaluations emanating from class exit slips and from the students' midway evaluations of my teaching. Fifty-three exit slips were derived from the two courses, representing students' responses to my weekly teaching activities. During this period, I continued to record one entry per class in my researcher reflective journal.

In phase three, which occurred at the end of the semester, I interrogated my practice via two methods. First, I utilized video-stimulated recalls/reflections (Borg, 2006; Calderhead, 1981) to mine the video recordings I had gathered. I obtained one video stimulated recall/reflection based on each video. While I watched the videos, I asked myself the four research questions I had posed and documented the responses to these questions. As a result, I compiled 10 video stimulated recalls/reflections based on my teaching. Secondly, I created a compilation of my researcher reflective journal protocols, of which I had collected 30 entries.

### **Data Analysis**

In this inquiry, I explored the components of multilingual and multicultural awareness demonstrated in my practice. I also sought to understand the associations present in the types of

part of the researcher. Given this rationale, I pro





my lenses via an emic approach (Maxwell, 2013), espousing a unique, indigenous, reflexive, and layered point of view, while simultaneously adopting an etic perspective (Maxwell, 2013), purposefully, via approximations as an onlooker of my personal practice, creating a window through which other multilingual teacher educators



**Table 1.3: Coding System and Frequencies**

<b>Level I (Grounded Codes): Response Types: What did my responses indicate?</b>		<b>Frequency for each Code</b>
Reassurance ( <i>RT: R</i> )	Response letting a student know things will be okay. Example: "No worries!"	<b>11</b>
Personalization ( <i>RT: P</i> )	Response using a student's name. Example: "Sure, Monica! I would be happy to take a look!"	<b>15</b>
Affirmation ( <i>RT: AF</i> )	Response commending a student on doing something well. Example: "Dear Group Five, You all did a fabulous job with your presentation!"	<b>12</b>
Emotion ( <i>RT: E</i> )	Response where words and symbols to a student expressed emotion. Example: "It looks like you may have missed something on Blackboard. ☹"	<b>25</b>
	Response expressing belief in students' responses in spite of my suppositions. Example: "I am very sorry to hear about your niece, Letitia. I hope she feels better soon."	<b>8</b>

**Table 1.3 (continued).**

<b>Level II: Multilingual Awareness (A Priori Codes): What forms of multilingual awareness did I demonstrate (MLA)?</b>		<b>Frequency for each Code</b>
Multilingual Awareness (/MLA)	Multilingual awareness constitutes a range of behaviors as follows (Herdina & Jessner, 2002)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection (/MLA: R)</li> </ul>	Think back about or on my language and its use. Example: ME: "What did I just say? Maybe I should paraphrase this."	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring (/MLA: MLP)</li> </ul>	Monitor linguistic processing in comprehension and production of language. Example: ME: "I think I am hearing you saying that you disagreed with Marlon on this?"	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring (/MLA: MWC)</li> </ul>	Monitor (watch and correct) use of language. Example: ME: "You really should use a different objective. Wait, I should not say 'you should.' What do you think about using a different objective here?"	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring (/MLA: MPE)</li> </ul>	Fulfill monitoring functions such as reduction of performance errors. Example: ME: "I think I did a good job today taking my time to speak slowly and to pronounce my words clearly. Plus, based on their exit slips, the students seemed more satisfied."	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correction (/MLA: C)</li> </ul>	Correct misunderstandings. Example: ME: "It looks like I made an error in my weekly update this week. Please note that you are not required to submit your first draft of the lesson plans next week."	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy Use (/MLA: S)</li> </ul>	Develop and apply conversational strategies based on feedback. Example: ME: "I think using shorter Weekly Updates makes more sense. It looks like they don't even read the updates. Either that, or they don't understand."	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend (/MLA: A)</li> </ul>	Attend to clues to help determine formal or informal language use. Example: STUDENT: "I enjoyed class today. I didn't feel like I struggled to understand."	10

**Table 1.3 (continued).**



work to me via email, I will return feedback via email” (Written Responses to Students, April 16, 2012).

**Attending to Clues and Following Discourse Patterns.** In many instances, I was sensitive to the clues (*MLA: A*) provided in students’ communication to me, and so I noticed that I followed their discourse patterns closely. Whether this was in an email or during a conversation in class, I responded to the clues provided in varying ways. For instance, when a student explained a situation in which her niece was unwell, which had affected her ability to submit an assignment, I used reassurance (*RT: R*) and replied, “Hi Natika, I will take this into consideration. Hope all goes well with your niece” (Written Response to Students, April 3, 2012). In another instance, one pre-service teacher from the special education department became very uncomfortable during an elementary education major’s student description of why having a disability should not be an excuse for requiring lower level comprehension strategies

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overwhelming because of how extensive they were (Student Exit Slips, March 6, 2012). Further, in my individual emails to the pre-service teachers, it appeared that both classes felt more comfortable when I used less academic language in response to completed assignments. For instance, students were more “open” in their responses when emoticons (*RT: E*) and forms of informal discourse considered popular were used. They also appeared to be more relaxed when responding to me in the class setting when this was the case.

### **What components of multicultural awareness did I demonstrate?**

This research question required me to determine the components of multicultural awareness (MA) reflected in my practice as a multilingual educator. Based on Herdina and Jessner’s (2002) model, the components of multilingual awareness were the ability to reflect on language and its use, monitor linguistic processing in comprehension and production of language, monitor (watching and correcting) use of language, fulfill monitoring functions such as reduction of performance errors, correct misunderstandings, develop and apply conversational strategies based on feedback, attend to clues that help one to determine whether to use formal or informal language in a given situation, and recognize when and how to follow socio-culturally determined discourse patterns in conversations with others.

Findings from the data indicated that my written responses were representative of a moderate level of multicultural awareness (MA) as evidenced by the limited number of categories (three) in which MA was reflected. The multilingual awareness components displayed were my awareness of individual predispositions, awareness of other cultures, and attention to stereotypes.

**Awareness of Individual Predispositions.** Awareness of individual predispositions (*/MA: IP*) occurred in my tendency to require students’ opinions regarding my feedback (*RT:*



*RF*). Quite often, after I had provided a response to students, both orally and by mail, I noticed I used the question, “How do you feel about this?” or “What do you think?” (Video Stimulated



And a week later, reflecting on the comments I had made, I wrote:

I wonder what I should do with this data because it looks like if I tell Johnny to bring in a doctor's note that I do not believe him. Looking back on things, my email to Johnny didn't even refer to a note. Perhaps, I do believe him, or do I?

(Researcher Reflective Journal, March 23, 2012)

Despite this quandary, my responses to students indicated that I took them at face value (*RT: FV*)



to these students due to the recognition of the difference in cultures (*/MA: K; MA: MC*) reflected how my multicultural awareness facilitated my multilingual awareness.

**Symbiosis.** Symbiosis emanated from the recognition of how awareness of individual predispositions (*/MA: IP*) facilitated my application of conversational strategies based on feedback (*/MA: IP*), which in turn heightened my attention to stereotypical attitudes and behaviors (*/MLA: S*).

The awareness of students' individualities and what they might or might not appreciate (*/MA: IP*) guided my application of conversational strategies based on feedback (*/MLA: S*). Patterns in my responses indicated options students might pursue in relation to a given task (Researcher Reflective Journal, March 19, 2012). Rather than providing definite responses to students' questions, I tended to pose questions to students, allowing them to think about various options they believed would function appropriately within a given situation. For example, one such response to a student was: "Is there a way you can have a conclusion added in at the end? Like bringing it all together? Or perhaps you might do this by using a short quiz where all students become engaged in the process and have to respond via a written assignment? Or you might choose something entirely different that you think will work?" (Written Responses to Students, April 15, 2012). Alternately, I posed questions such as, "How about that?" "How does this sound?" and "Does this work?" (Video-Stimulated Reflection, February 27, 2012).

As I engaged in this advocacy for students' perspectives and consistently monitored how I used language (*/MLA: MLP*) to respond based on their feedback, I increasingly questioned my sense of which assessments were most representative of students' learning. I developed awareness of the stereotypical thoughts (*/MA: C*) attached to certain forms of assessments. For instance, assignments such as weekly syntheses requiring multiple layers of connections (i.e.,

personal, text-to-text, and text-to-world) drew resistance from many students (Video-Stimulated Reflection, February 7, 2012). Similarly, extensive specifications regarding in-depth lesson planning eliciting detailed descriptions of students' literacy instruction in the classroom were generally met with astonishment and dismay. And while I did provide students with an avenue to express themselves in non-traditional formats, I struggled to come to terms with the levels of acceptability of the assessments as indicated by th

collection process, videotaping my teaching and being aware of the presence of video capturing my every move, I was more attuned to how I used language to respond to students, whether I was clear in my speech, and the ways in which I attended to the diverse needs of students within courses that predominantly comprised of Caucasian students with linguistic and cultural backgrounds significantly different from my own. Phase three deepened my sense of the microscopic nature of this task because it was during this phase that I negotiated meaning, making sense of the video data and the written response artifacts I had collected (Researcher Reflective Journal, March 30, 2012).

**Transformation.** I constantly modified my habits of thinking and doing throughout the course of investigation (Researcher Reflective Journal, April 27, 2012). An example of this was as follows. In an email, Elisa forwarded me a description of a phenomenal idea to get students interested in reading. In this email, she stated, “we could play newscasters who read off teleprompters.” In my written response expressing thanks for Elisa’s innovative idea, I responded positively to her request that the class enact the proposed idea during our next meeting. However, upon receiving a subsequent response from Elisa, I realized that her reference to “we” had been made in connection to her and prospective students. In this instance, I could not help but reflect on the language use by this student and on the discrepancy between my interpretation and the student’s intended meaning (Researcher Reflective Journal, January 18, 2012). My reflection on this circumstance resulted in my questioning of understandings derived from subsequent emails throughout both courses. I began to recognize the varied possibilities in meanings attached to the interpretation of students’ emails and to anticipate that I may be wrong in my interpretations. In response, I also paraphrased students’ responses to enable to them to





multilingual teachers' to demonstrate great (er) levels of metalinguistic proficiency (Ennaji,



meanings too were possible from the background, experiences, and beliefs derived from my past experiences both in the personal and professional world.

### **Practitioner Research**

Practitioner research clearly functioned as a tool, infiltrating and transforming my

education context. Through developing an understanding of the components of awareness demonstrated in practice, this inquiry provides an insight into the propensity for multilingual educators to display certain attributes of multilingual and multicultural awareness. Interpretation of the underlying reasons for the presence of types of awareness in practice is critical because of the nature of the concerns raised. Given the multilingual components displayed and the monolingual context in which this occurred, the findings of this study reveal that multilingual educators utilize their metalinguistic proficiencies, not only in ESL teaching contexts, but also in classrooms with students from various linguistic backgrounds. By tapping into specific practices to which educators, and specifically, multilingual educators, can relate, this inquiry creates an avenue through which teacher educators can begin to think about and explore linguistic diversity in higher education.

As with previous calls for linguistic diversity in multicultural teacher education (Garcia, 2008; Gay, 2010; Pang & Park, 2011), the notion of multicultural awareness explored in this inquiry posits linguistic diversity as an extension of and as a critical basis for developing the tenets of multicultural teacher education. Not only was the multilingual educator capable of demonstrating multicultural awareness, albeit with certain limits, but the basis for demonstration of this awareness appeared to be associated with multilingual proficiency. Through an examination of the stereotypical notions that accompanied the multilingual educator's view of multicultural education and the notions of diversity perpetuated in academia, and my personal

Practitioner inquiry as utilized in this study has been demonstrated as a fundamental tool for infiltrating and transforming practice. With the capacity to influence, guide, contribute to, and allow the researcher to remain open to novel ways of examining phenomenon, practitioner research not only functions in generating knowledge of, in, and for practice (Zeichner, 2007), but moves beyond to allow for the generation of knowledge *beyond* practice.

While this inquiry is limited due the inability to generalize to larger settings, the limited

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education complements the thrust on literacy research, policy, and examination of the practices of K-12 learners through illuminating one's understanding of diversity as a holistic endeavor. Multiple perspectives are sustained through considering linguistic and cultural diversity from the standpoint of teachers, teacher educators, and K-12 learners.





2013e) also fulfilled my endeavor.

Throughout this endeavor, evidence that my epistemological stance to knowledge informed my sense of humility, and therefore, an acknowledgement of the fluidity of my findings remained front and central. From my established pluralistic epistemological

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### VERBAL REPORTS AND LANGUAGE LEARNER LITERACY RESEARCH

In this chapter, I explored two studies in my concentration on the verbal report methodology as employed in original studies focused on the literacy practices of language learners at the K-20 levels across international contexts: (i) Veridicality in Verbal Protocols of Language Learners (Smith & King, 2013) and (ii) Verbal Reports in the Reading Processes of Language Learners (Smith & Kim, 2013).

The decision to concentrate on research methods for language learners emanated first from the observation that an emphasis on diversity and on multicultural education necessitates consideration of the methodological approaches used to explore language learners' literacy processes if change is to be effected at the broader levels. Secondly, the exploration of the processes through which K-20 language learners become literate warranted a more systematic understanding of particular methods as used to undertake research involving these learners. Thirdly, to date, no review of research was found which investigated the characteristics of studies in which verbal reports, the research methodology chosen for concentration, have been deployed to understand language learners' literacy processes. And fourth, through examining the ways in which verbal reports functioned across international contexts, and through the recommendations emanating from these reviews, future directions could be proposed for countries within the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean, whose literacy research endeavors are only now gaining implementation.

As such, the first study in Chapter Four takes an analytical approach to one of the verbal reports based on its use within an information-processing framework and with research conducted within language learners. The intent is to investigate the extent to which researchers adhere to considerations governing this methodological tool and to identify how cognitive approaches either privilege or limit exploration of language learners' literacy processes. The second study delves further into the use of verbal reports through an in-depth examination of studies in which verbal reports were used, and via

### **Abstract**

In this paper, we concentrate on veridicality within verbal protocols when they are used to examine the reading processes of Language Learners (LLs). Eight methodological recommendations and considerations for verbal protocols proposed in Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993) are used to interrogate 20 LL qualitative reading research studies that utilized verbal protocols in research from the previous decade. Issues related to errors of commission and omission as well as errors associated with language as an inherent variable within LL verbal protocols are then examined. Among the implications for research is the need to reconceptualize the theoretical basis for elicitation of LLs' verbal protocols during the reading process.

*Keywords:* veridicality, verbal protocols, verbal reports, language learners, second language learners, think-alouds

### **Veridicality in Verbal Protocols of Language Learners**

Over the past decade, there has been a trend towards the re-conceptualization of second language acquisition (SLA). This trend results from an acknowledgement of the interaction between cognitively-based theories and socially-oriented approaches (Grabe, 2009), and their impacts upon language learning. Proponents of a socially-based theory favor a dialectical approach (e.g., Lantolf, 2007), in which constructs originally considered contrary to each other

“polar opposites” (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006) and are synthesized to understand more closely, the facility of English Language Learners’ (ELLs’) with two languages as they interact in social contexts. The emerging awareness of this collective “social” within a cognitive whole is largely responsible for the increasingly modified view of language learners and for re-envisioning the latter as a “national asset” (Castek et al., 2007).

However, this more expansive and inclusive perspective is not so evident in second language research conducted with certain methodologies. Considered a methodological tool, verbal protocols have been used to investigate the reading processes of Language Learners (LLs) in a majority of the studies in the second language acquisition (SLA) field. During the inception of this methodology, Aristotle and Plato utilized verbal protocols to invite individuals to provide feedback concerning their thoughts (Pritchard, 1990). Thousands of years later, John Watson (1920) recognized the connection between thinking and the neural activity of “inner speech”, which led to the proposition of “thinking aloud”/verbal protocols as a substitute for introspection.

In subsequent decades, Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993) produced a seminal piece based on studies in which researchers utilized concurrent verbal protocols to elicit information concerning participants’ thoughts during prescribed tasks. Ericsson and Simon’s (1984/1993) approach, based on information processing (IP), encapsulated the concepts of both long-term (LTM) and short-term memory (STM) in order to explain the architecture of verbal protocols. These tenets became critical to the use of the verbal report methodology and the specific operations of verbal protocol methodology. Among the conclusions drawn from Ericsson and Simon’s (1984/1993) seminal review is the realization that the debate surrounding validation of protocol data was no longer problematic since a reasonable assumption existed that participants’ self-reports *did not* reflect actual processing, but rather traces of processing. And upon these





Analogously, within the sociocultural context, Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) identified social contextual factors involved in the reading process in their response to Ericsson and Simon's seminal review (1984/1993). In Pressley and

Within this context, we assert the need for a parad

while retrospective verbal protocols occur after the task has been completed. Certain verbal protocols further allow the study participant to interpret and/or explain the thought processes accompanying a task and are referred to as introspective verbal protocols (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, p. 8).

In spite of efforts to validate verbal protocols as a methodological tool, protocol elicitations continue to be criticized with regards to reactivity (Ellis, 2001; Jourdenais, 2001; Leow, 2002). Reactivity refers to the extent to which the content accessed from verbal protocols reflects (or fails to reflect) the actual contents of short-term memory (Ericsson & Simon, 1984/1993, p. 109). Among the recent studies into reactivity (e.g., Bowles, 2010b; Bowles & Leow, 2005; Goo, 2010; Leow & Morgan-Short, 2004), three studies acknowledged that the



the course of an experimental session” (p. 231). He further explains that participants would find it difficult to describe a single strategy utilized consistently within an experiment and therefore, makes the argument that their reporting of such a strategy would be very poorly related to their performance on a task. Ericsson (2006) concluded that reports based on *descriptions* of strategy use therefore tend not to be valid.

Given the concern with veridicality of verbal reports in Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993), as well as the recent acknowledgement of the questionable nature of verbal reports with regards to veridicality (Ericsson, 2006), it is surprising that verbal reports continue to be relied upon as a basis for reading research, particularly within the SLA field, with little investigation into the scientific productivity of this tool. Furthermore, despite the cautions expressed about using this method in isolation (Ericsson, 2006), there appears to be sole reliance on the methodology within the SLA field.

Considering the overall need for an evaluation of veridicality of verbal reports (Ericsson, 2003; 2006; Ericsson & Simon, 1983/1994; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Russo, Johnson & Stephens, 1989) as well as the specific necessity f

Secondly, we revisit arguments concerning the presence of non-veridicality in verbal protocols, namely errors of omission, errors of commission, an

on qualitative studies in this review would illuminate understanding of the processes engaged in when using verbal protocols from a qualitative research perspective.

- (d) asking subjects to provide a generalized description of their processing across trials is particularly problematic because it is possible that only the operations involved in early trials were conscious (*tap current processing*);
- (e) the directions given to participants producing verbal protocols and the testing situation should be such as to discourage participants from providing descriptions or explanations of their processing since reports of intermediate and final products of processing are preferred above descriptions of explanations of processing directions to think-aloud (provide verbal protocols) can be rather open ended, or they can direct participants to report a specific type of information that they have in working memory (*direct participants to provide non-explanations*);
- (f) there are individual differences in ability to provide think-aloud reports; it is possible that general verbal ability provides individuals with an advantage to report verbal protocols (*consider participants' verbal abilities*);
- (g) it is critical for the researcher to be able to predict what study participants will self-report as they attempt a task (*predict study participants' self-reports*). (as cited in Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, pp. 9-13. The italicized restatement is our elaboration.)

Utilized as a framework for investigation, we use these methodological recommendations and considerations to examine veridicality of verbal protocols within the 20 original studies reviewed. We acknowledge Ericsson's (2006) caution against lumping all forms of protocol analysis together in seeking a resolution to the challenges faced. We therefore specify the type of protocol being concentrated on as we proceed with analysis.





The three areas of strategy use in Stevenson, Schoonen, and de Glopper's (2007) study were characterized by distinct, but nuanced, differences. Content-oriented strategies in this case involved an attempt to compensate for absence of linguistic knowledge or processing ability in the participants' attempts to understand the linguistic code of the text. Further, the content-oriented strategies focused on the participant's use of methods to create mental models of the text. The mental models were observed to integrate important text-based propositions with participants' prior knowledge. Participants' regulatory strategies, revealed in their protocol data, were comprised of reflective processes in reading text (e.g., planning, evaluating). Their other cognitive strategies included direct processing which involved mental operations (e.g., translating, paraphrasing) and cognitive-iterative strategies involved reprocessing of text without changing fundamental surface structure of the text (e.g., rereading). Above-clause level, clause level and below-clause level strategies were based on readers' attempts to understand reasonably large chunks of text (e.g., whole paragraphs), whole clauses or smaller parts of text (e.g. morphemes/words/phrases) respectively. Clearly, this elaboration of Stevenson et al. (2007) reveals the constitutive nature of individual's social and cognitive strategies deployed while generating a protocol, as well as the use of concurrent methods.

The use of exclusively concurrent methods in these nine studies is significant because it reflects researchers' adherence to Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) first consideration: "think-aloud data should reflect exactly what is being thought about through the use of concurrent

these was Upton and Lee-Thompson's (2001) investigation of university-level L2 readers' use of their L1 to aid in understanding of L2 general expository text. The study design had participants think aloud while they read transcripts of their own protocols that had been recorded previously. After they read the transcripts of their protocols, the participants were asked to make comments about their reading processes in order to explain what they had done while they were reading. The validity of such a data generation and collection process is in part supported by the method of stimulated recall (Gass & Mackey, 2000), wherein participants are confronted with data that they have previously created and asked to respond to it in some way. However, the issue in the current review is the degree to which this stimulated data is related to the thought processes of the participants when they were engaged in the proscribed experimental task. According to guidelines, the stimulated recall would have less to do with traces of processing than would the concurrent data.

In Weshe and Paribakht's (2000) exploration of ten intermediate-level ESL students' responses to different words learning tasks, participants were required to (a) read a list of target words, and locate these underlined words in the text, identify which target words were "connectives" and then find and circle them in the text, (p. 201), (b) match a given list of target words with a longer list of definitions to ensure that they could recognize the target words and their meanings, (pp. 201-202), (c) use a derivational grid on which target words were located to fill in derivations that had been omitted, (d) read given text and identify underlined words which corresponded to the definitions provided, (e) replace underlined words as presented in novel sentences with similar underlined words from the text (p. 203), (f) identify discourse functions of target connectives as these were used in the reading text and (g) rearrange strings of words in which target words were included into sentences in order to direct learners' attention to the

characteristics of target words as required in producing new sentences (p. 204). In this research study, the researchers employed both immediate and delayed retrospection, along with concurrent protocols. For the retrospective protocols, the researchers had participants engage in reflection on how they had performed each task, both at the end of the each exercise as well as at the end of the research session. In fact, both of the reflective responses, at the end of each exercise and at the end of the research session are after the fact, and decidedly different from the concurrent protocols. Characteristically, comparisons between concurrent and retrospective data are not undertaken with any of these studies. It is also likely that with such an elaborate task array, participants' attention would be distributed and less likely to be focused on concurrent processing.

The preceding five studies, (Bengeleil & Paribakht, 2004; Nassaji, 2003; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000; Yang, 2006) utilized retrospective protocols in contrast with Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) recommendations for concurrent use as a means of increasing representativeness of verbal protocols. Therefore, the results of these studies may

Related to the issue of representativeness, two studies utilized introspection to accompany concurrent protocols (Chun, 2001; Lee-Thompson, 2008). For example, Lee-Thompson (2008) explored 8 Chinese students in their third year of learning English. The study focused on the students' uses of reading strategies when processing two Chinese texts (narrative and argumentative). Researchers first asked participants to th)'heseri

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Overall, the guideline for *representativeness* through concurrent protocol use is generally found to be incorporated into many of the studies, even in the presence of other verbal report methodologies (i.e., introspection, retrospection). Specifically, in the context of *concurrency*, even when retrospection and introspection were deployed, participants were invited to state their thought processes *as* they read, indicating that the reports were more likely based on verbal cognitions as opposed to non-verbal cognitions. It is therefore safe to say that in the first nine studies referenced which relied solely on concurrent reports (e.g., Akyel & Ercetin, 2009;

studies reviewed manifested evidence of the researcher' attempt to slow down the reading process in keeping with this recommendation (e.g., Lee-Thompson, 2008). In Lee-Thompson's (2008) approach, break points in the form of red dots at the end of each paragraph functioned as prompts to the study participant as the protocol was obtained. The fact that the reading process was interrupted at the conclusion of the paragraph, and not sentence or word level, is significant as one may argue about the effectiveness of such a method in slowing down the reading process, without disrupting processing within sentences or clauses.

At the end of a paragraph, a researcher would be more likely to tap comprehension as a completed product and less likely to intercept comprehension as a process. Since protocols intend to tap process information, waiting until the end of the paragraph has serious implications for representativeness of the data. While the task (reading) is in fact slowed, it is not until the process is likely completed. Interrupting the reading process at the end of a paragraph would be less likely to create a problem with comprehension for readers but more likely to be related to the *content* of processing. Consequently, researchers' verbal prompts such as random "tell me what you're thinking" interspersed inter- and/or intra-sententially are likely to interrupt the processing of the immediate clause. Conversely, embedded red dots at the sentential (and less frequently) intra-sentential clause boundaries would not interrupt syntactic processing (Bresnan, 1978; Fodor, Garrett & Bever, 1968). This is due to the fact that evidence from the literature on semantic processing shows that such processing required of comprehension happens more interstitially at clause boundaries (Jackendoff, 1978). Nevertheless, it remains clear that end-of-paragraph prompting would not interfere with process.

Lee-Thompson (2008) not only used red dots as a signal for interruption of the reading process, but also prompted participants to state what they were thinking while they read.

Notably, this practice of prompting was more of an exception than the rule. The absence of prompting during the collection of concurrent reports is problematic as Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993) acknowledged that fully automatic processes such as reading are difficult to self-report. They therefore recommend the use of concurrent protocols, which *do* interrupt with prompting, to facilitate this process. However, Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993) also supported the use of retrospective protocols by having subjects specify their thoughts in response to the





(2003) used immediate retrospective protocols to find out whether learners had additional comments on their familiarity with the words and/or concerning their inference processes regarding the meanings of the words. Similarly, Upton and Lee-Thompson (2001) collected both concurrent protocols and immediate, retrospective protocols as they examined how 20 native speakers of Chinese and Japanese used their L1 as an aid to understanding English general, expository text. In neither of the studies was retrospection employed independently. This is potentially productive research practice as independent retrospection is not likely to tap processes.

Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) recommendation that researchers take pains to "slow down" the reading processing

could recall. In this study, participants vocalized thoughts about the text or thoughts occurring during the product-oriented task.

On the other hand, Paribakht's (2005) 20 Farsi-speaking undergraduate students were first required to read English text quickly for general comprehension, and then asked to repeat the reading in order to guess meanings of unfamiliar boldfaced target words in text (p. 711). While the students completed these process-oriented





their processing as reports of intermediate and final products of processing are preferred above descriptions of explanations of processing. Directions to think-aloud (provide verbal protocols) can be rather open ended, or they can direct participants to report a specific type of information that they have in working memory. (pp. 10-11)

“Descriptions or explanations of their processing,” as noted above may more explicitly be referred to as “introspective” protocols. In two of the 20 studies (Chun, 2001; Lee-Thompson, 2008), the researchers employed such introspection. The directions for introspection procedures in these studies required study participants to describe and/or explain their thought processes. For instance, in Chun’s (2001) investigation of 23 learners’ consultation of internal and external glossaries while reading on the web, students were to explain each action, what was going on through their minds while they worked, and to comment on the usefulness of features of the program they used during the exercise.

Asking for introspective data conflicts with Ericsson and Simon’s (1984/1993) recommendation as well as Ericsson’s (2006) confirmation that the









“provides a set of possible thought sequences for its successful performance, where the application of each alternative procedure is associated with a different sequence of thoughts” (Ericsson, 2003, p. 9). In the research studies considered, while there is reference to the expected responses (strategies, inferences) from study participants (e.g., Chun, 2001; Bengeleil & Paribakht, 2004, Lee-Thompson, 2008), there was no study in which a task analysis is provided as an indication of the probable and possible sequences to be expected for alternative procedures in a task or a given series of tasks. While the tasks referenced by Ericsson (2003) for illustration were largely mathematical in nature, it may be possible that a similar procedure can be followed to appropriate a method for determining predictability of verbal protocols of reading, in an effort to enhance veridicality.

**Summary.** In the previous discussion, we explored the extent to which studies involving language learners (LLs) adhered to Ericsson and Simon’s (1984/1993) recommendations with regards to veridicality of verbal protocols. While researchers tended to adhere to the recommendations related to the use of concurrent protocols, the elicitation of responses concerning current processing and in general, the avoidance of requiring participants to provide verbal explanations, there was evidence to indicate that researchers failed to slow down processing, consider variations in participants’ verbal abilities within interpretations of the data and to predict the probable contents of participants’ self-reports. This indicates that due consideration has not been given to verbal protocols as utilized within a cognitive framework, and specifically within Ericsson and Simon’s (1984/1993) cautionary rubric. Failure to attend to their rubric may result in protocols with embedded erroneous data. Awareness of these errant data have created certain other fundamental arguments regarding veridicality which have arisen

in the literature, resulting from, but apart from those proposed by Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993). We now consider these arguments.

### **Fundamental Arguments**

“multilingual monitor”. The interactions between and among these elements then promote cognitive flexibility, creativity, and divergent thought (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, pp. 63-64). It is therefore problematic to assert that errors of omission for LLs be derived from their incapacity to engage in metacognitive processing. Nonetheless, we pursue studies that suggest such disability for LL participants.

Among other reasons provided for incomplete concurrent verbal reporting are situations in which study participants: (1) engage in a reasonably high level of cognitive activity (Sachs & Polio, 2007) and may not have the cognitive reserve to fully report processes; and (2) mediate their steps immediately preceding a challenging solution (Ericsson & Simon, 1984/1993) and therefore do not report prior mediation in their think-alouds.

With learners at early levels and stages of learning a second language, and presumably relying heavily on translation strategies when reading a second or third language passage (Leow & Morgan-Short, 2004), navigation of multiple simultaneous processes increases complexity. Therefore, such theorizing would hold that such students may omit relevant detailed components in reports of their processing may be greater than would be observed in the monolingual learner.

In objection to such a view, it may be argued that the researcher cannot possibly detect detailed omissions if it is indeed impossible to determine all the processes present in any learner’s short-term memory at a given period. It is for this very reason that testing the veridicality of a concurrent protocol becomes even more questionable and almost impossible

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Considering the above, if veridicality directly influences validity of a verbal report, and testing veridicality is almost impossible, then, as Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) confirmed, there is hardly any basis for proposing a constructive responsivity theory for deriving information about cognitive processes based on studies whose fundamental basis is verbal protocols. It may be even more questionable to suggest that this method be adopted for interpreting the cognitive processes of LLs, whose complexity and utility with language use varies significantly from the monolingual norm (Bernhardt, 2005; 2011; Jessner, 2008). This is especially true since monolinguals formed a majority, if not all, of the study participants comprised in the research upon which this theory (Ericsson & Simon's [1984/1993] review) is premised.

### **Errors of Commission**

Errors of commission constitute another part of the debate surrounding veridicality of verbal reports as data. Such errors exacerbate the situation presented above because they represent learners' reports of events – from memory – that did not occur. For the ELL, Ericsson & Simon (1984/1993) illustrated the complexity involved in the basic process of producing a protocol when they state:

Persons fluent in a second language can usually think aloud in that language even while thinking internally in the oral code of their native language or in non-oral code. In this case, there is nearly a one-to-one mapping between structures in the oral code of the first language and the code of the second language that is used for vocalization. How much the thinking is slowed down will then be a function of the subject's skill in the second language. (p. 250)

As such, for individuals reading text in a second or third language, the language of information reception (L2/L3) and the language cueing used for heeding information (L1) may impede the thinking process and lead to loss of information in short-term memory (STM). To amend this process, individuals tend to generate a “fix-it” method by “theorizing” about relationships present among concepts encountered in the text and this fabricated data is taken to be analyzed as veridical. Researchers who rely partly on explicit verbalization of the thinking process agree that such fabrications are prevalent in the reports obtained during data collection

so is the reifying insistence that verbal protocols do provide *some* information about second language learners' cognitive processing (Bowles, 2008). However, researchers' "satisfaction" with the amount of information (i.e., *some information*) obtained from verbal protocols does not necessarily address the quality or veridicality of that information. In support of this view, Russo, Johnson and Stephens' (1989) noted that retrospective protocols (with information coming from a reconstruction from long term memory) are more prone to fabrication than concurrent protocols. As support, they cite Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) preference for the use of concurrent protocols to reduce the chances of reconstruction in verbal protocols.

With regards to concurrent verbal reports from language learners, Bowles (2008) asserted that veridicality does not affect validity because of the limited time between verbalization and performance of the task. However, even with concurrent protocols, study participants are expected to describe thought processes subsequent to reading. Considering that it is virtually impossible to relay information about memory contents while simultaneously reading the text, it may be that validity of verbal protocols is not as dependent on its concurrent or retrospective nature as it is on the extent to which information reporting is delayed following the reading task, as well as the capacity of the researcher to minimize such delays when obtaining concurrent and retrospective protocols (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Pr

Pressley and Afflerbach (1995), only two studies comprised of second language learners. With LLS, whose linguistic abilities further confound representation of memory processes, depending on verbal reports to access their reading processes raises even further issues of credibility.

Whereas certain studies in second language learning do allow such learners to verbalize processes in the language with which they are most familiar, the challenges inherent in reading and performing a task in a second language (e.g., usually English), subsequently conducting interpretation through the native language, and deciding whether to revert back to English or to relay the contents of memory in the native language are significant and do influence the composition of protocols.

Yet another linguistically-based concern arises from Russo, Johnson and Stephens, (1989). They raised concerns regarding the entire enterprise of collecting protocols, and suggest that judgments and decisions concerning veridicality in the use of verbalized protocols are misplaced. These beliefs in the futility of testing the veridicality of a verbal report are potent when its accuracy, relative to the underlying processes, is already significantly altered by verbalization of the process. The immediate response that comes to mind is “Why bother?” And our answer is that protocols continue to be used. Russo, et al.’s concern has been largely dismissed in studies with monolingual learners because of the English language existing across groups and across studies. That is not to suggest that these issues are no longer operating, but that research attention has shifted in focus, away from this problem of representation. It remains a crucial point for L1 and L2 research, particularly considering L2 research often is influenced by research undertaken in single language studies. In L2/SLA/LL research, language is an added, inherent variable, which dictates the linguistic product of such learners, and therefore any attempt to verbalize reports not only undergoes transformation during verbalization, but also



experiences alteration due to linguistic interference. In other words, the language task required and the demand to verbalize that task find themselves competing for the linguistic capacity (Sanz, Lin, Lado, Bowden, & Stafford, 2009), thereby affecting completeness (omission) *and* accuracy (commission) of the verbal protocols.

Consistent with these claims, contemporary theoretical trends seem to justify the illogicality of attempting to validate verbal protocols. Smagorinsky's sociocultural view of verbal protocols asserts that speech is socially constructed and therefore not a reflection of cognitive processes. Therefore, there is less focus on whether contents of the mind "spill over" in contents of talk (Smagorinsky, 2011). His attempt at reconceptualizing verbal protocols draws from both Ericsson and Simon's (1995) information processing (i.e., cognitivist) and Vygotsky's socio-cultural-historical theory. In this regard, Smagorinsky (2011) presents verbal protocols as a methodological tool that elicits 'talk about thinking', and therefore may be altered in literacy research to elucidate understanding of the social nature of speech (Smagorinsky, 2011). Drawing upon Cole's (1996) view of the interrelatedness between cultural and biological development, and Bakhtin's (1986) addressivity and dialogicality, Smagorinsky (2011) maintains that "egocentric speech and think-aloud methodologies are both part of a hidden dialogue" (p. 237) and that the researcher's concern in obtaining a verbal protocol, should be to explore the intersubjectivity between the researcher and participant in the participant's construction of the verbal report within a particular reading context and task. This presupposes that veridicality



This finding is credible from a solely cognitive perspective on verbal protocols. Not only is there a heightened possibility of errors of omission with LLs, but there is also the tendency for errors of commission to be exacerbated. But this argument, made from a cognitive perspective, is

Akyel, A., & Erçetin, G. (2009). Hypermedia reading strategies employed by advanced learners of English. *System*, 37(1), 136-152.

Alsheikh, N. O. (2011). Three readers, three languages, three texts: The strategic reading of

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revision task. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 29(1), 67-100.

Sanz, C., Lin, H., Lado, B., Bowden H. W. & Stafford. C. (2009). Concurrent verbalizations, pedagogical conditions, and reactivity: Two CALL studies. *Language Learning*, 59(1), 33-71.



**Note: This paper is in progress and will be submitted to *Second Language Research*.**

### **Abstract**

This review synthesizes 34 original studies published within the period 2000-2011 in which verbal reports were used to explore language learners' (LLs') reading processes. The findings are presented in four major categories. The first category concentrates on areas of focus in original studies, namely strategy use, comprehension, vocabulary, and technology. Category two focuses on theoretical background of studies with emphasis on the prevalence of cognitivist approaches versus sociocultural perspectives. The third category yields information on social contexts, languages, and participants, demonstrating that studies were conducted equally within and beyond the U.S., with adult learners, in predominantly English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) settings. The final category of findings explores methodologies of studies, reflecting that while concurrent verbal reports were used most frequently, retrospective and concurrent reports were consistently combined in qualitative studies. The findings raise significant concerns regarding theoretical approaches and verbal report methodologies applied to reading research.

Han & Anderson, 2009; Grabe, 2009), both on the national and international front, continues to be geared towards affordances made available for the literate development of language learners (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; IRA, 2006; NCTE, 2011; TESOL, 2010).

In the United States, the fastest growing student population is English Language Learners (ELLs; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). ELLs practice second-language (L2) reading and literacy daily. Consequently, their L2 reading and literacy skills are closely connected to their academic success (Cummins, 1984) and can empower these students with

Given the aforementioned, the purpose of this review is to synthesize the literacy research

considering trends consistent throughout studies in which the common methodological tool, verbal reports, was employed.

This review questions the long-standing assumption that deployment of verbal report

*International Review of Applied Linguistics, Language Learning, Language Learning and Technology, Reading Research Quarterly, ReCALL, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, System, and TESOL Quarterly.* Our decision to review the journals described above was based on recommendations by Smith and Lafford (2009) and *U.S. News and World Reports* and observations from reviews and meta-analyses of the reading literature in second-language acquisition (SLA; e.g., Biber, Nekrasova, & Horn, 2011; Bowles, 2010a; Fitzgerald, 1995; Norris & Ortega, 2006). In order to obtain articles that met these criteria, we searched the titles of every article in every issue of the 13 journals listed. While reading the titles, it became necessary to review the abstracts as well as the entire manuscript of certain articles to ascertain whether the methodology and focus of the study met our criteria. We then utilized similar search terms and combinations to search the PsycInfo and E





conclusions are warranted if judgments concerning theme identification are presented clearly (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). We therefore provide a description of our analytical process as it occurred within three stages.

Following this identification of categories we positioned ourselves as researchers, taking on the role of “constructors” of the reality of the textual material under scrutiny (Patton, 2002). We made specific observations in the material outlined within our organizational templates (Patton, 2002). Our process of observation involved scrutinizing the data in multiple phases and underlining in different colors words or phrases that represent repetitions (topics that occur and reoccur), indigenous typologies or categories, similarities and differences, and theory-related material (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). For example, we noted similarities and differences in methodological choice within studies, such as the type of verbal report used and participant characteristics such as age/grade level.

Our second phase of analysis involved finding key words in context, noting word co-occurrence, and metacoding (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Through this process, we

We embarked upon the third phase of analysis to con

**Table 1.4: Summary of Key Features of Original Studies**

Study	Theoretical Perspective	Participants/ Language/Context	Research Questions/Purpose Statement	Research Methods and Analysis	Key Findings
Akyel, A., & Erçetin, G. (2009)	-	N=10. Advanced-level learners; ages 21-24; Turkish University ESL ELT Department	To examine advanced L2 readers' processing strategies in reading hypermedia text.	Mixed Methods. Concurrent verbal reports, text recall, prior knowledge, standardized reading test, tracking tool; qualitative analysis, descriptive statistical analysis	919 propositions generated by 10 learners while reading hypermedia text: 829 were processing strategies and 90 were navigation strategies
Alsheikh, N.O. (2011).	-	N=3. Graduate students; Midwestern university in the US  Hausa as L1; French as L2; English as L3	To explore strategies used by multilingual readers when reading across three languages -- Hausa, English, and French.	Qualitative. Background questionnaire, Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), Set of expository reading passages in 3 languages, verbal report assessment for text comprehension, concurrent verbal reports; constant comparative analysis, descriptive statistical analysis	Limited use of reading strategies in native language as compared to English and French; most proficient reader used greater variety of strategies
Bengeleil, N.F. & Paribakht, T.S. (2004).	-	N=17. Intermediate and advanced-level learners; ages 22-25; Libya; Arabic speaking medical students  EFL			

s4.82573(-)-2.85921(e)4.82491(f)00.2924 241(i)-1.47ptad(n)-5.71517(d5.771517(o)-5.71517S)10.3591( )JTJ 10.324 TL T\*[(pd)

**Table 1.4 (continued).**

Camps, J. (2003).	N=74. First-year Spanish college students; native English speakers Spanish as L2 Language laboratory in university Spanish classes	To determine whether L2 learners who notice target forms obtain better scores than those who do not; whether type of verbal report and time in course affects scores.	Mixed Methods. Questionnaire, concurrent and retrospective verbal reports; descriptive statistical analyses, two by two way ANOVAs, t-tests,
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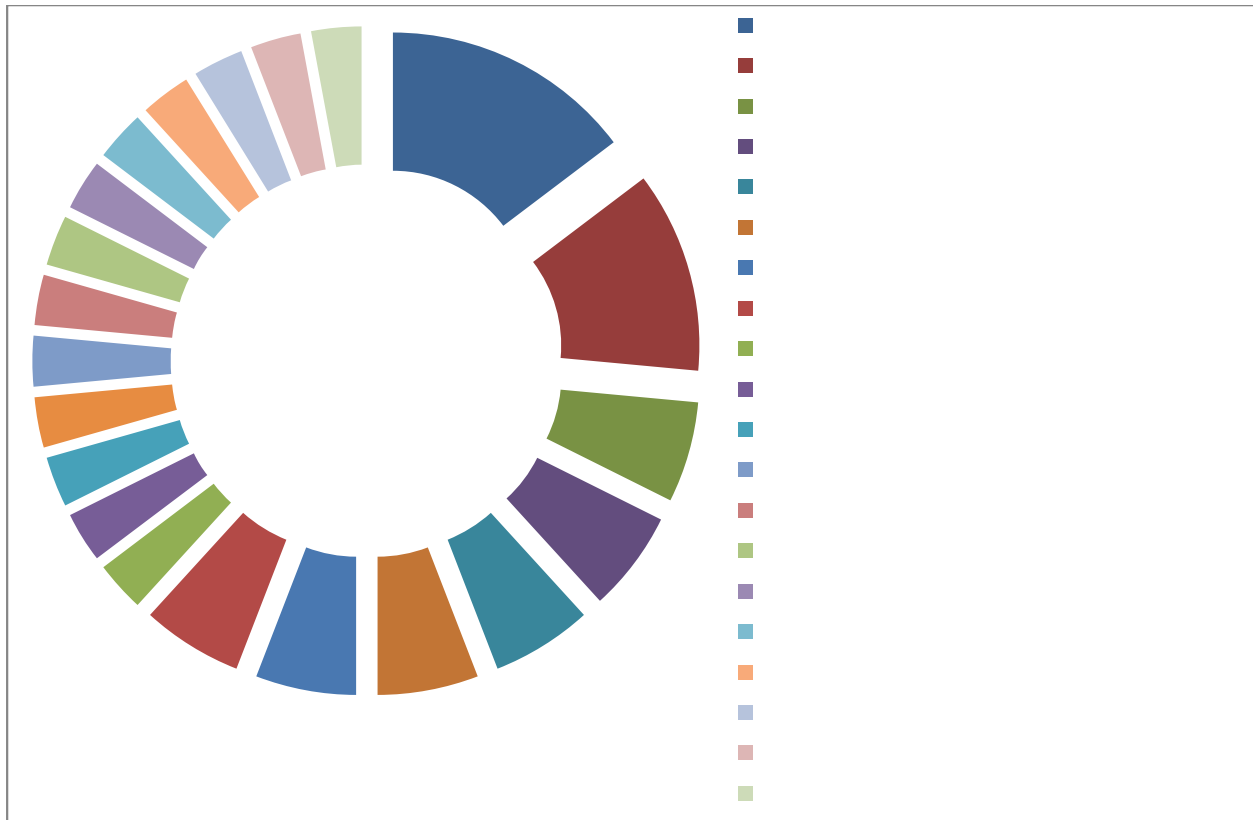












**Figure 1.4: Distribution of Original Studies by Journal**

### Areas of Focus

As is observable in Figure 1.6, areas of focus revealed four themes from key findings from studies. These were: (a) strategy use; (b) comprehension; (c) vocabulary use; and (d) technology.

**Strategy Use.** Researchers examined strategy use in relation to EFL learners, ESL learners, multilinguals (Alsheikh, 2011; Geladari, Griva, & Mastrothanas, 2010; Lee-Thompson, 2008; Zhang, Gu, & Hu, 2007), and K–12 learners (Geladari et al., 2010; Stevenson, Schoonen, & de Gloppe, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007). Strategy use was also examined for its comparative ability to generate positive results in learners' processing of text (e.g., Stevenson et al., 2007; Yang, 2006).

**Figure 1.5: O**

Several reading strategies  
and inferencing (Hamada, 2009)  
ESL and EFL learners' successfu  
al., 2007). In other studies, Yang  
comprehension monitoring strate  
investigated Japanese ES







2008; Nassaji, 2003; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001; Weil, 2008; Zhang et al., 2007); and sociocultural theory (Park & Kim, 2011; Seng, 2007). In addition, a few researchers depended on L1 models of reading as a basis for research of L2 reading processes (Gascoigne, 2010; Nassaji, 2003; Zhang et al., 2007).

**Cognitive Perspectives.** Among studies in which the cognitivist perspective was prevalent, Schmidt's framework of attention and noticing hypothesis (e.g., Bowles, 2004; Camps, 2003; Leow, 2001) proved to be used frequently as a basis for research. Alternatively, other cognitivist perspectives employed, such as the primacy of meaning principle, goal theory, and Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) framework for the use of verbal reports, were observed in individual studies (e.g., Bowles & Leow, 2008; He, 2008; Leow et al., 2008).

**Reading Theories.** The few researchers who relied on models of reading to undergird studies grounded these experiments in L1 and L2 reading models. L1 reading models observed included the top-down/bottom-up models of reading, Pressley and Afflerbach's model of good strategy use, Stanovich's short-circuit effect, Goodman and Smith's reader-driven versus text-driven reading, and Anderson's information processing model of comprehension (Gascoigne, 2010; Nassaji, 2003; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001; Zhang et al., 2007). An L2 reading model upon which studies were premised included Bernhardt's constructivist model of reading (Lee-Thompson, 2008; Weil, 2008).

**Sociocultural Theory.** Researchers who adopted a sociocultural approach to language-reading research involving verbal reports primarily relied on Bakhtinian and Vygotskian notions of the sociocultural nature of learning (Kim, 2011; Park & Kim, 2011; Seng, 2007). In an attempt to understand elementary and undergraduate students' reading strategies and processes, researchers approached the data collection process with an emphasis on the interactions



developed with the text, between and among study participants, and between and among researchers. For instance, in Park and Kim's (2011) investigation into the reading strategies used

While logical arguments present themselves for such validation of verbal reports within a cognitive perspective, subscription to a sociocultural approach dissolves this necessity. In a sociocultural approach to verbal reports, as conceptualized by Smagorinsky (2011) speech is socially constructed and therefore not a mere reflection of cognitive processes. As a tool that elicits ‘talk about thinking,’ Smagorinsky (2011) asserts that verbal reports may be altered in literacy research to elucidate understanding of the social nature of speech. This position, which highlights the importance of “the socio-cultural” in reading while also maintaining the inherent cognitive capacities of the reader provides an alternative to debates grounded solely in the cognitive conceptions of verbal reports (e.g., Bowles, 2010a; 2010b; Bowles & Leow, 2005). As such, a focus on whether contents of the mind “spill over” in contents of talk as reflected within the cognitive perspective, may be abandoned for consideration of the negotiation which occurs within the context of the “conversation” between the participant and researcher. From this standpoint, reactivity, as well as other methods of validation from an information-processing standpoint, lose their potency.

While no study within this review employed a sociocultural approach to verbal reports, the past three years have seen attention directed towards sociocultural approaches to verbal report reading studies (i.e., Kim, 2011; Park & Kim, 2011; Seng, 2007). The possibility that researchers may begin to tap into sociocultural approaches to verbal reports is therefore anticipated. Researchers who approached LLs’ reading processes using sociocultural notions of learning explored dimensions of participants’ social interactions as observed within verbal reports. For instance, Park and Kim (2011) noted the emergence of dialoguing as a theme within participants’ protocols. Participants maintained dialogues with self, others, and online resources in their engagement with online reading tasks. In much the same way, Seng (2007) observed how

participants producing think-alouds as they read in a collaborative environment performed better on reading comprehensions tests than students who did not. Reflecting Vygotsky's (1987) notion that ideas evolve and recognize completion through speech and writing, the use of sociocultural theory as a basis for verbal reports may further allow researchers to examine how participants' verbalizations regulate their evolving conceptualizations of a given dimension of language learning.

To undertake investigation of LLS' reading process from such a perspective would require researchers to delve more deeply into qualitative analyses of reports. Further, the use of a sociocultural approach to verbal reports would likely diminish the current preoccupation with the validation measures to which verbal reports are subjected within an information-processing model. Consideration of the social factors embedded in the reading task, and within the interactions manifested between researcher and participants in construal of the task may therefore attract greater attention.

**Monolingual Reading Theories.** The use of monolingual reading theories as the basis for the majority of studies in this review is not surprising. In previous reviews of research on ESL learners, it has been acknowledged that ESLs undergo "substantively the same" cognitive reading processes observed in native speakers of English, allowing for latency with some facets of these processes for language learners (Fitzgerald, 1995, p. 180), findings consistent with Grabe's (2009) conclusions. Despite this evidence, and while L2 reading continues to be heavily informed by L1 reading theory (Grabe, 2009; Kim, 2011), applying L1 reading models to L2 reading processes has been criticized for lack of consideration to the cross-linguistic nature of L2 reading (Grabe, 2009; Kim, 2011). Similarly, in spite of Grabe's (2009) acknowledgement that L1 reading models helped explain L2 reading, he noted that L1 reading models failed to consider

the cross-linguistic features of L2 reading because they are based on English and tended to reflect English conceptions of literacy.



(Nassaji, 2003; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000) to areas

Although few studies focused on learners within the K-12 levels, and even fewer within the lower elementary grades, learners' age difference emerged as one of the important reading factors. Of significance is Zhang, Gu, and Hu's (2007) findings, which indicated that 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade primary school ESL learners' degree of metacognitive awareness and regulation not only differed from that of adult ESL learners, but reflected less resilience and systematic organization in metacognitive attempts and use of cognitive strategies as compared to that of their adult counterparts.

**Languages.** A wide range of languages was reflected in the studies. Of these, the most common language was English as a second language. Spanish (Goo, 2010; Rossomondo, 2007) and German (Chun, 2001; Rott, 2005) functioned as foreign languages in a few instances. In other studies, Farsi (Paribakht, 2005), Korean (Weil, 2008), Chinese (Nassaji, 2003; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001), Japanese (Hamada, 2009), Dutch (Stevenson et al., 2007), Hausa (Alsheikh, 2011), French (Alsheikh, 2011; Gascoigne, 2002; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000), French Creole (Wesche & Paribakht, 2000), Arabic (Nassaji, 2003; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000), and Mandarin-2.53536(,31( )-0.)-0.479431( )-0.47941(C)-4.28308(s)-1.7465((n)-0.956417(c)3.15789(t)-2.53(c)3.814

Paribakht, 2004; Ko, 2005; Nassaji, 2003; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000; Yang, 2006). Such studies also focused on native English speakers (e.g., Bowles, 2004; Camps, 2003; Chun, 2001; Gascoigne, 2002; Goo, 2010; Lee-Thompson, 2008; Rott, 2005). Overall, three studies reported including advanced English proficiency students (Akyel & Ercetin, 2009; Bengeleil & Paribakht,



and participation in research. Researchers' tendency to examine adult learners' reading processes using verbal reports has also been an existing phenomenon (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1995), most likely predicated upon Ericsson and Simon's (1993) observation that younger learners are

language officially learned by students in school. If students' identities are to factor into the reading process during research of their experiences and if a true representation of their reading is to be obtained, it may be necessary to capture, as much as possible, a representation of their varied backgrounds – home languages and cultures – and these will need to be valued for their capacity to inform the verbal reports from a given context, all of which are influenced by the former (NCTE, 2008).

### **Methodological Concerns**

As stated in the criteria presented for the inclusion of articles in this review, all studies utilized verbal reports in conjunction with students' reading tasks. In order to explore this area thoroughly, we report findings based on: (a) mixed-method studies (16 studies); (b) quantitative studies (9 studies), (c) qualitative studies (9 studies), and (d) verbal report methodology (all studies) (see Tables 1.6 and 1.7).

qualitatively code this data based on predefined models of strategy use (e.g., Akyel & Ercetin, 2009; Geladari et al., 2010; Hamada, 2009; Lee-Thompson, 2008; Stevenson et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2007) and/or other categories (Leow, 2001), and subsequently, use the categories to conduct further quantitative analyses; that is, qualitative quantitative (e.g., Akyel & Ercetin, 2009; Geladari et al., 2010; Paribakht, 2005).

In certain situations, mixed-method studies deviated from this norm. In these exceptional situations, researchers utilized verbal reports to both generate categories for quantitative analysis and for qualitative analyses to extend their conceptual understandings of phenomena appearing in the findings; that is, qualitative quantitative qualitative. For example, Chun (2001) and Gascoigne (2002) both successfully employed concurrent verbal reports to code propositions from protocols, submit these to statistical analyses (e.g., *t*-tests) and subsequently, used

**Table 1.7: Verbal Report Methodologies of Original Studies**

Verbal Report Methodology	Study	Number of Studies
Concurrent Verbal Reports	Akyel & Ercetin (2009); Alsheikh (2011); Bowles (2004); Daalen-Kapteijns, Elshout-Mohr & de Glopper (2001); Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, & White (2009); Gascoigne (2002); Goo (2010); Hamada (2009); Ko (2005); Leow (2001); Leow & Morgan-Short (2004); Leow, Hseih, & Moreno (2008); O'Donnell (2009); Rossomondo (2007); Rott (2005); Seng (2007); Stevenson, Schoonen, & de Glopper (2007); Yanguas (2009); Zhang, Gu, & Hu (2007)	19
Concurrent Introspective Verbal Reports	Chun (2001); Paribakht (2005)	2
Concurrent and Immediate Retrospective Verbal Reports	Geladari, Griva, & Mastrothansis (2010); He (2008); Kim (2011); Nassaji (2003)	4
Introspective Concurrent, Immediate Retrospective and Delayed Retrospective Verbal Reports	Wesche & Paribakht (2000)	1
Concurrent and Retrospective	Bengeleil & Paribakht (2004); Camps (2003); Park & Kim (2011); Upton & Lee-Thompson (2001); Yang (2006)	5
Concurrent and Concurrent Introspective	Bowles & Leow (2005); Lee-Thompson (2008); Weil (2008)	3

information from the protocols to qualitatively identify and derive salient points concerning participants under observation.

In the case of Chun's (2001) study designed to identify the frequency with which learners consulted an internal glossary in a hypermedia environment, she observes that the four participants whose think-aloud protocols were examined revealed several varied metacognitive

2007). Participants were generally expected to perform reading tasks, production tasks,

While a few researchers relied upon concurrent verbal reports (i.e., Alsheikh, 2011; Dressler et al., 2011; Hamada, 2009), researchers tended to utilize concurrent reports in combination with retrospective reports to facilitate qualitative analyses of verbal report data (Kim, 2011; Nassaji, 2003; Park & Kim, 2011; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000; Yang, 2006). Interviews, observations and questionnaires, while notably absent from studies conducted from a quantitative perspective, appeared to be present in qualitative studies (e.g., Dressler et al., 2011; Park & Kim, 2011; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

The number of participants involved in qualitative studies ranged from 3-21 with few studies involving smaller numbers of participants (e.g., Hamada, 2009; Kim, 2011) and more numbers of studies involving larger numbers (i.e., 20+) of participants (e.g., Nassaji, 2003; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001; Park & Kim, 2011; Yang, 2006).

Based on the findings, methodological concerns arose. Verbal reports as a methodological tool, as conceived within a cognitivist perspective, supposedly captured the contents of memory assocese7(i)-2.53597(o)-0.08( )-0.4-1.7465(s)-1.7465(o)-10.97614( )-0.47e.7465(s)-1.7465(o)

products of reading. The recognition that verbal reports may not merely be used as a means of deriving information for coding in quantitative analysis, but are also a functional tool for understanding the qualitative processes of readers, implies that in studies where reports are used to confirm or refute relative hypotheses, more may be done to explore the manner in which LLs accomplish the reading tasks in which they are engaged.

Overall, researchers' use of a three-pronged approach to mixed-method studies—  
qualitative quantitative qualitative—

obtained a particular concurrent thought, whereas delayed retrospective reports occur after a significant amount of time has elapsed following the reading task. Overall, several patterns emerged in the type of verbal report methodology utilized within and across mixed-method,







report contents of memory and, therefore, assessments of language proficiency may not necessarily reflect participants' verbalization capacities. As such, the absence of this distinction may have inhibited the potential identification of differences in verbalization, and thereby, affected comparisons performed in studies reviewed.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this review was to synthesize original studies in which verbal reports have been used to capture information concerning the reading processes of language learners (LLs) over the past decade. Based on the review, several trends were noted. First, cognitivist approaches to verbal reports (e.g., Bowles, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Bowles & Leow, 2005; Charters, 2008; Ellis, 2001; Ericsson, 2002, 2006, 2009; Ericsson & Simon, 1984/1993; Jourdenais, 2001; Leow, 2002) appeared to be prominent despite contemporary theoretical assumptions inviting alternative approaches (i.e., Deschambault, 2011; Kim, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2011; Swain, 2006) to the verbal report tool. Secondly, though past decade has seen the nature and definition of literacy evolve significantly (i.e., Castek, Leu, Coiro, Gort, Henry, & Lima, 2007; Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; The New London Group, 1996), the extent to which verbal reports in their current form capture perceived nuances embedded in social practices surrounding LLs' literacy development remains questionable. Third, second language reading research remains grounded on L1 theoretical reading models despite concerns that cross-linguistic and social e

technology. Moreover, it illustrates that mixed-methods approaches are most popular, and very few studies were solely qualitative or quantitative. In contrast, the review demonstrates that verbal reports appeared to be largely concurrent with very little reliance on qualitative analyses in interpretation of the protocols obtained. From the findings of this review, we note that though studies were distributed equally across U.S. and non-U.S. territories, research in second language and foreign language settings were more common and English commonly functioned as the second language under investigation.

Based on these and other findings, a renewed effort is needed in several areas of the second-language reading research literature to facilitate the necessary strides with verbal reports and improve the capacity of this prominent tool as pertaining to documentation of LLs' reading processes.

First, research in this field needs to concentrate on an examination of LLs' reading processes within the elementary grades in the United States and in other geographical regions as well as the investigation of reading processes of non-ELLs. Second, while Bowles (2008), Cohen (2013) and others (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1995; Leow & Morgan-Short; 2004; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995) concur that more systematic research is necessary to facilitate the modification of the verbal report tool for use with ELLs, the indication that sociocultural approaches to verbal tools is equally valid for exploration of participants' reports of their reading processes implies that a holistic view is needed in this process. A holistic view will require the dismantling of dichotomies that maintain verbal report investigation from a singular perspective in favor of an approach where sociocultural and cognitivist approaches function within an integrated model to best represent talking about thinking in reading.

Third, consideration needs to be given to multiple forms of verbal reporting within studies as a means of capturing linguistic as well as metalinguistic processes that accompany the reading process. Fourth, the emphasis on reading in its traditional forms as is evident in the literature reviewed, reflects the failure to capture the more dynamic processes prevalent in reading in this era of new literacies. A systematic effort to explore students' thinking in conjunction with multimodal forms of literacy ranging from the Internet to other mobile and technological tools, within appropriate frameworks as informed by contemporary theories and research on new literacies is therefore warranted.

Fifth, more emphasis should be placed on the value of qualitative inquiry to LL and SLA research as a means of elucidating understanding of the reading process. As such, rather than functioning primarily as a tool for coding categories in preparation for quantitative analysis, qualitative inquiry may begin to provide vivid depictions of the reading process. In addition, qualitative inquiry further allows for examination of how individual differences and learner



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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In beginning this dissertation, I invited you to engage with a vignette of Malika, a 10-year old student who grew up in a multilingual context of St. Lucia. I illustrated Malika's thinking in relation to her use of Standard English and the St. Lucian English Vernacular in an academic



Given my personal epistemological standpoint, I maintained continued collaboration in relation to each study over extended periods of time, allowing for the notion of change in knowledge to be sustained and reflected. And, throughout the process of preparing this dissertation, I further adhered to multiple and interconnected underlying paradigmatic assumptions of knowledge as infinite and unending in my acknowledgement of the humility of claims and findings observed in my research.

### **Summary, Discussion, and Future Directions**

In this chapter, I summarize and synthesize the findings of my work, demonstrating the connections and interconnections between and among them. To accomplish this, I first reflect on the use of epistemological frameworks, theories, forms of data, forms of analysis, and findings across the dissertation to demonstrate how issues facing language learners such as Malika were illuminated within and approached from varied and novel perspectives (see Table 1.8). Secondly, I outline implications for the field of literacy an

My first step was a self-reflection process to dete

Table 1.8: Overall Summary

	<b>RESEARCH AGENDA: I. Language &amp; Literacy</b>	<b>RESEARCH AGENDA: II. Diversity</b>	<b>RESEARCH AGENDA: III. Verbal Reports</b>
<b>EPISTEMOLOGIES</b>	1. Interpretive 2. Critical	3. Interpretive 4. Interpretive, Critical 5. Critical, Pluralist	6. Interpretive 7. Interpretive, Critical
<b>THEORIES</b>	--	3. Cultural, Intercultural, and Linguistic Diversity; Narrative Research 4. Dynamic Model of Multilingualism; Multicultural Awareness; Multicultural Teacher Education 5. Transdisciplinarity	6. Cognitivist 7. Cognitivist, Sociocultural
<b>FORMS OF DATA</b>	1. Original Studies 2. Historical Artifacts, Integrative Reviews	3. Interviews, Artifacts 4. Videos, VSRs, Written Correspondence 5. Theoretical Propositions	6. Original Studies 7. Original Studies
<b>FORMS OF ANALYSIS</b>	1. Content Analysis 2. Historical and Integrative Analysis	3. Narrative Analysis 4. Qualitative Analysis 5. Conceptual Analysis	6. Content Analysis 7. Content Analysis



dissertation was evident in the stance that “knowle



Lincoln, 2000). Through an iterative process, and in collaboration with researchers characterized by multiple paradigmatic lenses (see Paul & Marfo, 2001), I developed and revised through and through, the various methods and associated decisions designated to my examination of the field of study. Pluralism was reflected at the macro-level in my approach to this dissertation via the pluralistic choice to utilize analytic discussions, syntheses of research, and original studies, the result of which was a more holistic perspective on the issues involved in literacy as approached from the standpoint of multilingual learners, teachers, and the verbal report method of research.

### **Theories, Forms of Data, Forms of Analysis**

Across the studies, certain patterns emanated in the ways theories, forms of data, and forms of analysis functioned in this dissertation (see Table 1.8).

#### **Theories**

Theories were prominent in the second and third par





other researchers were to perform similar analysis as I had conducted, they may conceive of the findings in ways different from mine.

### **Implications for the Field**

Based on the findings across the studies in this dissertation, implications at the micro- and macro-levels emerged. First, based on the dearth in literacy research in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean, the region stands to benefit from a consideration of how international approaches to literacy research can serve to inform the development of a research base applicable to the social and linguistic contexts in which language learners function (Smith, 2013a). Yet, in doing so, attention must be paid to the social, cultural, and linguistic contexts in which language learners function in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean. As has been observed, certain native languages are yet to develop the orthographic registers needed for bilingual teaching and lack the literature base so critical for biliterate instruction (Smith, 2013b). Moreover, the absence or failure of language policy to effect change in the procedures for literacy instruction in schools in conjunction with the siloed efforts of local, national, and international organizations around efforts to enhance literacy in the region reflects the need for the bridging of this gap.

Secondly, recognition of the conflicting perceptions towards language of instruction from teacher and parental perspectives (Smith, 2013a) warrant further investigation. Through exploration of the perceptions towards language and literacy instruction from students, teachers, parents, and administrators, opportunities may exist to view the situation holistically, and to tackle the challenge of perceptions, which obstructs an understanding of the need for reliance on native language instruction and/or use in schools.

Third, the indication that experiences undergone by specific multilingual teachers and educators may not necessarily result in extensive demonstrations of linguistic and cultural awareness (Smith, 2013c; Smith, 2013d), as emerging from this dissertation reflects the



Already in the field of measurement, efforts are underway to engage in sociocultural approaches to verbal reports for language learners (Agans, Deeb-Sossa, & Kalsbeek, 2006; Chan & Pan, 2011; Daveson, Bechinger-English, Bausewein, Simon, Harding, Higginson, & Gomes, 2011; Reeve, Shariff-Marco, Breen, Williams, Gee, & Levin, 2011; Ridolfo & Schoua-Glusberg, 2011; Tschann, Gregorich, Penilla, Pasch, de Groat, Flores, & Butte, 2013; Willis, Lawrence, Hartman Kudela, Levin, & Forsyth, 2008). Despite challenges in these efforts, recent studies reveal deepened discourse surrounding efforts to enhance the method for language learners (see Smith, 2013f, forthcoming). Based on these efforts, the second-language learning field stands to benefit in its approaches to literacy research for language learners. In fact, due to the specific efforts in assessment to validate cross-cultural (i.e., sociocultural) approaches to this methodological tool (see Willis & Miller, 2011), second language researchers stand to benefit from interdisciplinary efforts to enhance verbal reports for capturing more concisely the social processes of language learners.

### **Future Directions for Research**

In undertaking research concerning literacy, language learners, language policy, multilingual teachers, and verbal reports in the multilingual English-speaking Caribbean, researchers may be interested in concentrating on the following areas.

#### **Literacy Research, Language Policy, Verbal Reports, and Language Learners**

First, early childhood literacy experiences of children in the Caribbean and the nature of language development in the early years would serve to provide a view of the ways in which students' cultural and linguistic contexts merge in their acquisition of the various linguistic





In order to maintain coherence, and to sustain communication between the regional and sub-local bodies, meetings at the sub-local, local, and regional levels would need to be conducted throughout the duration of the research collection process. The expectation would be that upon obtaining a representative account of the literacy situation, as defined by the linguistic contexts of schools within territories across the region, government officials, linguists, educators, literacy scholars, and international proponents could develop a pathway for determining the specific needs of schools with regards to implementation of literacy education.

### **Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Linguistic Diversity**

First, more research is needed on multilingual teachers in the context of the English-speaking Caribbean. As is, the explorations contained in this dissertation were very limited in focus because they concentrated on a limited sample. Exploring the experiences of these teachers as persons and professions is necessary. However, even more critical is developing an understanding of how their perceptions are effected in literacy instruction in the Caribbean region. Second, research is needed to examine how multilingual teacher educators contribute to an understanding of diversity in literacy education programs, specifically within the contexts described in this dissertation where language learners are targeted. Understanding the perceptions of these teacher educators as well as the ways in which their perceptions serve to shape the teacher education programs in which literacy teachers are trained may serve to provide insight into how negative perceptions towards native languages may be disrupted. Moreover, monolingual teacher educators in other contexts may be able to gain insights into responses to linguistic diversity based on the findings of this research.

### **Researcher as Instrument**

Self-reflexivity has been described as “a way of looking back on the self and on inquiry





easier.

These were serious concerns with which I struggled as I consolidated my role as researcher with the individual whom I was socialize







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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**APPENDIX B****Interview Protocol A**

1. Tell me why you decided to become a teacher.
2. What did you like about your job as a teacher?
3. What did you dislike about your job as a teacher?
4. Tell me what you remember about your use of language while you were growing up.
- 5.

13. In which contexts do you speak: (a) Creole (or other language variation) (b) Creolized English (or other language variation)? (c) Standard English and/or (d) other language variations?
14. What language forms did you use in the classroom/at school? What language forms do you currently use in the classroom/at school? How do you react when your family members use Creole/Standard English/Dialect at home?
15. How did this change or remain similar based on the territory you were in over the past ten years?
16. How did this affect your relationships with students?
17. What language forms do you use at home? How do you react when your family members use Creole at home? Other language variations?
18. Tell me more about how migrating to different areas affected your use of language forms with your family members/friends over the past ten years.
19. What was it like teaching in different geographical regions? At different academic levels?
20. How has your use of language forms in professional contexts changed over the years? Talk about the language forms you use most often in your professional life. How has this changed or remained the same?
21. How did this affect your relationships with colleagues?

### **Interview Protocol B**

1. How did you feel about the changes in your use of language? In your use of language in different countries?
- 2.

3. How do you feel about the way you responded to students' use of language in your home country?
4. How would you use language differently if you returned to Dominica? How would your use of language remain the same?
5. Talk to me about your cultural norms in Dominica. How has your observance of these norms changed over the years? How has your use of language impacted your observance of your cultural norms?
6. How do your family members/friends/colleagues respond to your language use when you visit Dominica? How do you feel about their response?

### APPENDIX C

Dear Patriann Smith,

This is in response to your email below in which you have requested permission to use the copyrighted paper in a chapter of your dissertation. We are happy to grant this request.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Content]

Figure 1.8: Copyright Permission

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Patriann Smith is a Doctoral Candidate in the Literacy Studies department at the University of South Florida and a resident of Tampa, Florida in the United States.



Tampa, Florida. In 2010-2011, Patriann functioned as a Research Assistant where she

Committee. As a member of the Organization of Teacher Educators (OTER), Ms. Smith has also served in an editorial capacity with the *Journal of Reading Education* (JRE) during the period 2010-2012. Ms. Smith is currently a Student Reviewer for the *Literacy Research Association Yearbook* and the *Journal of Teaching Education*. Additionally, she has served as a reviewer for the AERA and LRA conferences over the past two years and now serves as a reviewer for the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education* (JIS) and for *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*. Ms. Smith's work on transdisciplinarity as applied to multicultural education and teacher education has been accepted by and is to