

**University College London
Institute of Education**

**Doctor of Philosophy, Education
Thesis**

**Understanding the Home Language and Literacy
Environment
of Chilean low SES Families of Preschoolers**

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I, Mercedes Rivadeneira, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLE) of preschoolers from a sample of low socio-economic (SES) Chilean urban households, to examine how it fosters their familiarity with the school literacy register and supports their acquisition of language and literacy skills. Four specific measures of these skills were examined: vocabulary, letter and word identification, spelling and text comprehension. A comprehensive theoretical model of the HLE and its influence on these skills was built. This included meso influences (caregivers' values, beliefs and expectations regarding their child's literacy development and education, and language and literacy resources) proximal influences (frequency and type of literacy practices and parent-child conversations), and distal influences (SES, family demographics).

A mixed-methods' approach was used to explore this HLE construct, including: (i) a quantitative study (N=1,132) and (ii) a qualitative study with a subsample (N=30) informed by direct observations of the child in their HLE and a semi-structured interview with their caregiver.

This research provides a predictive model of the HLE that increases our understanding of the paths of influence of different HLE components. It found that after controlling for minor SES variations there was still variability of HLE resources, beliefs and practices within the sample; these predicted the four measures of language literacy and skills examined. Families that provided a higher HLE had more holistic views of literacy development and higher educational expectations for their children, as well as a higher sense of self-efficacy regarding their children's education and learning.

Finally, this research found that the caregivers studied tended to: a. hold high educational expectations for their children, b. hold a skills-based, purely phonetical approach to literacy, viewing literacy learning as a discreet process, c. saw school as the child's main source of literacy instruction and home as a place of "reinforcement" of school, d. have few pre-established home routines, e. consider one of their main attributes to be to protect the child from external dangers or distractions, f. hold a maturational view of children's development; g. foster family and community interdependence. h. rely more on observation and physical closeness than oral interaction, i. frequently support their preschoolers' literacy development through homework and the use of ABC books, and j. almost seldom engage in shared or independent reading.

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Introduction

General overview

This research is composed of two related studies, one quantitative and another qualitative, both focused on the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLLE) of a sample of low-SES Chilean urban preschoolers. The purpose of this research is to explore the specific characteristics of the HLLE of low SES Chilean families of preschoolers; the relationship among HLLE components (such as beliefs and practices); the variations in HLLE that exist among these Chilean families; and the impact that HLLE variations might have on these children's language and literacy skills.

The construct that this research examines is the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLLE). A model of the HLLE was specifically developed for the purposes of this research so as to encompass a broad view of the children's environment and their language and literacy knowledge and understanding. As such, it is a holistic model, including several HLLE components from different dimensions (for example, meso or micro). The HLLE construct hereby studied has similarities with constructs used by other authors but it is more specific to language and literacy than the *Home Learning Environment* construct used by some researchers (Melhuish, Phan, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2008; Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011). At the same time the HLLE construct hereby studied is broader than the *Home Literacy Environment* construct studied, for example, by Van Steensel, 2006 or Burgess, Hecht & Lonigan, 2002 as it considers not only the children's home literacy environment but also their language environment.

This research considers children's language environment as encompassing all verbal efforts at intentional communication from the child or from anybody in his/her direct surrounding that are part of a meaningful, organized system. This definition of language is adapted from Katz's definition (Katz, 2001), in the sense that it excludes gestures (which Katz includes) as its focus is on verbal communication. Moreover, consistent with Heath (1983), this research considers *children's literacy environment* as the sociocultural and cognitive ways of constructing and conveying meaning with written language sustained by the community and organizations in which a child's life takes place.

This research is based on the understanding that literacy is both a sociocultural and a cognitive practice based on a set of multidimensional skills that develop during the life of the individual from early childhood to adulthood and are acquired in part through explicit or implicit teaching in the home environment. It rejects viewing non-Western

populations with a deficit perspective and considers that there are different literacy forms or registers linked to different contexts and uses (a register being defined as a different sociocultural form of literacy; see Chapter I for more detail). However, following studies such as those by LeVine, Schnell-Anzola, Rowe and Dexter (2012), it argues that the acquisition of the school-based literacy register has several benefits that increase children's opportunities.

Literature has consistently proved the strong relationship that exists between children's oral language skills and their reading development, especially in the preschool period (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony, 2000). Oral language experiences such as sustained decontextualized or conceptually rich conversations contribute to a child's language and literacy development. Prior to entering school, children learn concepts about the world and also about language and literacy, and their uses and purposes. Research has demonstrated that children enter preschool with varying amounts of literacy experience and varying levels of language and literacy skills, and also, that the conceptual knowledge and literacy skills children have before entering school affects their school literacy achievement (Dickinson, McCabe & Essex, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2004; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001).

This research was conducted with data from preschoolers and their families living in three districts of Santiago, Chile's Metropolitan capital. The quantitative data analyzed in the first study ($N=1,132$) was part of the data gathered by the *Un Buen Comienzo* ('UBC') project (*Un Buen Comienzo, A Good Start*). UBC is a Chilean non-governmental intervention project, which includes an intensive and large randomized evaluation. UBC provides professional development to prekindergarten (pre-K) and kindergarten educators and aims at improving children's language, literacy, health and socioemotional development (further details on UBC can be found in Appendix C). The qualitative data analyzed in the second study was gathered by this researcher from a subsample of 30 families, specifically for this research, and aims at triangulating and providing depth, as well as to explain some of the findings from the larger quantitative data set.

A broad concept of 'the family' is used for this research, one that includes all the people living in the same household and related by blood, marriage, adoption, or through a cohabiting relationship. Following this definition, family size depends on the number of siblings, parents, and other adults or children living in the home. Similarly, this research uses the concept of caregiver in reference to the person/s that care/s for and spend/s most of the time at home with the child. In most cases, this was the mother of

the child but sometimes it was the grandmother, both of the parents, or a combination of these. Consequently, for the purpose of this research the terms “parent” and “caregiver” are used synonymously.

The first chapter of this research reviews existing evidence focused on the HLE, as well as studies that have looked at specific home language or literacy practices and their relation to literacy outcomes. It also reviewed literature on Western, non-Western and Latino populations that has analyzed how the quality of home structural and process components varies throughout ethnic, cultural or socioeconomic groups. With the input of this literature, a multidimensional theoretical model of the HLE and its distal and proximal influences on language and literacy development was built.

The second chapter describes and provides the rationale for the methodological design of this research. It outlines the main research questions, together with the data and methods that were used to answer each of these questions. It also explains how, through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, the methods selected allowed for a thorough exploration of the multidimensional HLE and for triangulation of the findings. By including a qualitative study and statistical analysis with both an exploratory and confirmatory focus, the methods responded to the need to study the HLE in a way that allowed for cultural variations to emerge. This chapter also explains the sampling, recruitment and analytical decisions made.

Chapters III and IV address this research’s quantitative study (Study I). Chapter III comments on the descriptive statistics results obtained with the data from the UBC parent questionnaire. It describes a wide array of HLE characteristics for this sample of Chilean families and compares frequencies of findings with results from previous studies. The chapter starts by describing the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the families, finding that, even though there was variability, they mostly belonged to the first two quintiles. It then progresses to describe meso-level components of these families’ HLE, such as parents’ educational expectations or their views on how and when literacy develops as well as micro-level interactions such as the frequency of decontextualized conversations, shared reading and letter and word identification and writing.

Chapter IV explores and compares the relationships between HLE components and background variables (such as family demographics and SES) as well as the influences among HLE components and between HLE components and language and literacy skills. Through factor analysis, correlations and path analysis, the HLE scales that predicted more of children’s language and literacy skills at the beginning of preK were

selected. One of the products of this chapter is a predictive model of these families' HLLLE with direct and mediated influences on language and literacy skills. Through the use of discriminant analysis and controlling for background aspects such as variation in SES or family demographics, the quantitative study arrives at a definition of the quality of the HLLLE. Following this, the differing characteristics of three groups of families emerged, those that provided an HLLLE of low quality, those that provided an HLLLE of medium quality and those that provided an HLLLE of relatively higher quality.

The qualitative study (Study II), corresponding to chapters V, VI and VII of this research, provides fine-grained descriptions of the language and literacy practices as well as the language and literacy beliefs, parenting styles, values and expectations of a subsample of 30 families. This second study also aims at understanding how familiar these Chilean families were with the school-based literacy register. The results of the qualitative study indicated that parents had high educational expectations and were responsive to what they perceived to be their children's needs but that, in their view, these needs mainly related to protection, fostering of family interdependencies, physical closeness and support in learning decoding skills, which they saw as the necessary basis for learning to read.

The qualitative study also found that during the observations the low SES Chilean parents and children in the sample seemed to often use language at home for instrumental, regulatory and interactional purposes and infrequently for imaginative, heuristic or informative purposes. Moreover, besides TV, children had few ways of listening to new words in their home environments and scarce opportunity for using these new words. Another finding was that shared reading with their preschoolers was an almost inexistent activity for these caregivers but that letter and word identification activities were very frequent, through homework sent home by school and the use of ABC books such as the *Silabario*.

The three qualitative chapters analyze how parents from homes with different levels of HLLLE varied in their language and literacy practices, and also in their views. Thus, for example, parents that provided an HLLLE of higher quality had a higher sense of self-efficacy, established more routines for their children's time at home, had higher educational expectations for their children and referred more often and more extensively to these expectations than parents from low HLLLE households. Likewise, children from homes with HLLLE of higher quality were exposed to a larger variety of words and had more parental support during completion of their homework.

This research responds to the need for information about the characteristics of home

language and literacy environments of non-Western populations, specifically of Chilean families of preschoolers from low SES households. Thus, before considering the HLLC specifically, it is important to provide some context about Chile and about Chilean families from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds.

Chile and Chilean low SES families

Chile is a Spanish-speaking country located in South America, with a population of approximately 17.9 million and a Gross National Index (GNI) per capita of \$21,030 (World Bank, US, 2013). One of Chile's mayor challenges is its social inequality. With a Gini coefficient of 0.50, the country is the most unequal of the 34 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries. In 2011, 14.4% of families lived in poverty, while 2.8% of families lived in extreme poverty. Moreover, 23.9% of children younger than 6 years of age and 22.3% of children of 6-17 years of age were poor (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2012).

While the average Chilean family size is 3.7 people per household, Chilean low SES families tend to be larger with an average of 4.5 people per household. However, the number of people in Chilean low SES households who work is lower than in high SES households so the number of people dependent on the person who works is higher with 4.1 dependent people in low SES families versus 2.4 dependent people in higher SES families. In addition, 37.2% of low SES households (versus 21% of high SES ones) are headed by a woman (Fundación Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza, 2009).

Latin American birth rates have decreased by 53% from six children per woman in 1963 to an average of 2.8 children per woman in 2004. Within Latin America, Chile's decrease in birth rates between 1963 and 2004 has been even larger: from an average of 5.4 children per woman in 1963 to 1.9 children per woman in 2004, representing a 65% decline (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2006). This decrease is higher than both the 53% decrease in birth rate experienced by Latin America referred to above and the 47% decrease experienced by Europe in the same period (where, by 2004, there was an average of 1.4 children per woman).

During recent decades the percentage of Chilean children born from an adolescent mother younger than 20 years of age has increased from 13.8% in 1990 to 14.9% in 2004 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2006). Teenage parents are a marker for at-risk children since they tend to be associated with school failure, child abuse and neglect, persistent poverty and health and mental issues (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2008). Furthermore, the Chilean III Bicentenary Poll shows that, in

recent decades, while the total number of marriages has decreased, cohabiting arrangements have increased and that by 2008 approximately 20% of women from 15-49 who declared themselves as in a relationship were cohabiting with their partners. Cohabiting arrangements are also significantly more frequent among young and low SES couples (12% among high SES couples versus 33% of low SES couples) (Pontificia Universidad Católica & Adimark, 2008). In relation to this, there has been an increase in the number of children born outside of marriage, reaching 58% of total children born in 2005. In relation to high SES families, low SES Chilean families exhibit more cohabiting arrangements, monoparental families, female-led households, and extended family arrangements (Fundación Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza, 2009; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2006). Allegedly these demographic aspects could influence the quality of low SES Chilean children's HLLÉ.

The Chilean educational system

A description of the available educational facilities in Chile will provide an initial understanding of the educational context and opportunities in which the Chilean low SES children studied by this research developed.

Chile's schooling system is structured into the following levels:

- *Educación Parvularia* or early childhood education attended by children from birth until the end of kindergarten.
- *Educación Básica* or basic education: attended by children from first grade to 8th grade.
- *Educación Media* or secondary education (high school): this lasts for 4 years after completion of basic education.

Education is compulsory from kindergarten (5 to 6 years of age) and until the end of secondary education. While the Ministry of Education guides Chilean educational policy, public schooling is provided by municipalities and also by private subsidized schools (which receive varying amounts of public subsidies depending partly on the number and SES of the children they serve). Municipal schools are free of charge but some private subsidized schools charge families a fee.

During recent years Chile has heavily increased its expenditure on education. According to OECD's *Education at a Glance* figures (2013), in 2011, the government allocated 6.4% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education. Of this, 0.6% was destined to early childhood education, 3.4% to primary and secondary education and 2.4% to tertiary education (university and technical studies). In comparison to other

OECD countries, Chile spent a similar % of its GDP on early childhood education, a lower % on primary and secondary education and a much higher percent on tertiary education (2.4% versus 1.6 on average for OECD countries). In total, 18% of the public budget was destined to education. Between 2006 and 2011 Chile increased its per child expenditure by 37%, reaching \$4,100 USD per child per year, which is approximately half of the average of OECD countries. This expenditure increase has mostly been spent on increasing coverage, especially in early childhood and tertiary education.

A notable improvement made by the Chilean educational system in recent years is the increased rate of access to tertiary education. By 2011, 40 to 45% of Chileans between 19 and 20 years of age were enrolled in tertiary education, 29% of the population between 25 and 64 years of age had completed tertiary education (versus 32% in OECD countries), 44% had completed high school (the same as the 44% in OECD countries) and 28% had not completed high school (versus 25% in OECD countries). Moreover, the differences in average income between individuals that have finished each educational level are larger in Chile than for other OECD countries. In fact by 2011, Chileans who had not finished high school on average received a salary that was 34% lower than those that had. Similarly, people that had completed tertiary education on average earned 2.6 times the salary of those that had only completed high school (1.5 times for those that completed technical studies and 3 times for those that completed university studies) (OECD, 2013). Nevertheless, as the percentage of people with tertiary education increase, and if the quality of tertiary education is not looked after, the benefits could diminish, in fact a disaggregated analysis conducted by Urzúa (2012) of Chilean tertiary education access as a mechanism for social mobility found that around 40% of the population, specially those that started but did not complete their tertiary education, had negative return for their investment.

Parents' educational expectations for their children have experienced a large increase during the past decades. In fact, between 1999 and 2009 the percentage of parents without secondary studies who expected their children to reach tertiary education increased from 20 to 65%, and the educational expectations held by Chilean parents from the first quintile went from 18 to 63% (Urzúa, 2012). Chilean educational or public policy stakeholders have referred to this phenomenon as an expectations bubble (Briones, 2014), or as "a gigantic revolution of expectation" (Carlos Peña, chancellor of Universidad Diego Portales in *The Economist*, 2012).

Further challenges faced by the Chilean higher educational system and its labour market are: a) that 22% of young people (15 to 29 years of age) are neither studying or working (which is high, compared to the average of 16% for OECD countries), b) the

low levels of female participation in the labour market (37% in 2011) and c) the lack of uniform tertiary education of good quality, which, according to the OECD, is uneven and often unrelated to the skills needed in the labour market: “*Strengthening vocational education, which is currently of poor quality, with weak links to what is demanded in the labour market and with few possibilities for students to move within the vocational system and towards higher education, could also help to improve skills.*” (OECD, 2013).

For these reasons, amongst others, over the past decade, Chile has experienced a series of extensive student demonstrations and protests, some of which were violent and others of which paralysed the education system: for example, students went on strike or ‘occupied’ schools to prevent other students from being able to attend. This student movement, which has flared up several times (most significantly in 2006, 2008, 2011) and continues to persist, is referred to colloquially as: the ‘*Revolución de los Pingüinos*’ or the Revolution of the Penguins (named after secondary school students’ traditional black and white school uniforms).

A primary objective of the ‘*Pingüinos*’, who have also motivated other educational stakeholders to pressurise the government and parliament, is increased access to tertiary education, by changing the way it is funded, which was and continues to be by private individuals. The *Pingüinos* have had an effect: by way of example, the interest rate on the state-backed loan students can access to pay for their tertiary education (the ‘*Crédito aval del estado* or *CAE*, state-guaranteed loan) was changed from 5,8% to 2% in 2012. Most significantly they have made education and educational reform a central issue for any Chilean Government. The *Pingüinos* continue to clamour for free access for all to tertiary education. What they have not focused on, necessarily, is the quality of such education, or educational levels other than tertiary-level. By way of context the *Pingüinos* may be relevant to some of this research’s findings, in particular, for example, their widely broadcast demands may have helped inflate parent’s aspirations and/or expectations for their childrens education.

A widely discussed public literacy project that took place in Chile during the initial years of this research and which relates to the HLE of low SES families was that of “*El Maletín Literario*” (translated as ‘the literary briefcase’). This was a project undertaken by the Chilean government between 2007 and 2010 and consisted of giving 400,000 low SES families a pack of 15 books each intended for different members of the family together with a short pamphlet highlighting the value of reading. Some of the objectives of the *Maletín Literario* project were to foster reading habits in the children and shared reading practices in the families, increase the families cultural capital and foster the children’s literacy and socioemotional development. The project faced much criticism

in the media from different Chilean educational stakeholders who pointed out it was populist or not an effective or efficient way of fostering reading habits (El Mercurio, 2011). The government has never evaluated the effectiveness of this project. The only known study of its effectiveness was conducted by Sepúlveda, Saez & Opazo (2013) with students and parents of private subsidized and municipal schools from districts in the Los Lagos Region located in the south of Chile. This study, which looked at parents and students and gathered data through a survey and a questionnaire, found that the 'literacy briefcase' had not been effective in fostering the reading habits of children, shared reading or the bond between parents and children.

For the purpose of the present research, the literacy briefcase serves to illustrate that during the past decade there has been an increasing awareness in Chile of the shortfalls in the literacy habits of the Chilean population. At the same time, this project also serves to illustrate that significant inroads are still required in Chile, both in terms of measuring the impact of reading policies undertaken and in terms of the need to develop a more comprehensive perspective of family literacy.

Improving the quality of education provided by the Chilean educational system remains as a major challenge. Advances have been made in this area. For example, Chilean school students' educational attainment and reading performance have largely improved in recent years as measured by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests from 2000 and 2009. Moreover, these increases were higher for low-performing students. There are still, however, important achievement gaps: for example, 30% of students in Chile are not proficient in reading and science and 50% are not proficient in mathematics. Moreover, low SES and rural children perform significantly lower than their urban or more advantaged peers (Education at a Glance, 2013).

These coexisting advances and deficits are also present in Chile's literacy rates. On the one hand a UNESCO study (2012) found that the Chilean youth literacy rate for males and females defined as *the percentage of persons in this age range that could read and write* was 98.9% (15 to 24 years of age) and that the adult literacy rate (percentage of persons aged 15 or above) was 98.6%. On the other hand, however, a nationally representative study on adults' skills conducted in 2013 by the OTIC de la Cámara Chilena de la Construcción & Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, that defined literacy as *the ability to understand and use printed information for daily activities in the home, in the community and at work* found important deficits in the literacy abilities of Chileans. This study which assessed Chilean adults' literacy skills across three

dimensions (prose, document, and quantitative) categorized the scores into five levels where one was the lowest and found that: a) literacy rates had remained similar for Chilean adults from 1998 to 2013 (when a similar study had been conducted); b) by 2013, 44.3% of the adult Chilean population was functionally illiterate in texts, 42% functionally illiterate in documents and 51.4% functionally illiterate in relation to quantitative information; c) by 2013, more than 80% of the Chilean population was at the lower two levels of skills on all the measured dimensions (according to the report this implied that most Chilean adults were “unable to integrate or compare information, to perform inferences or mathematical calculations based on given information” (p.8); and d) the literacy levels were strongly correlated to years of education but still 27% of Chilean adults with tertiary education were in the lowest level of literacy and 38% of Chilean adults with tertiary education were in the second lowest level.

The discrepancies between the results of these two studies illustrate how Chile oscillates between recognition of the educational advances made in the last decades, and growing awareness of the challenges regarding the quality of literacy education provided, as well as concern regarding the negative implications these deficits could allegedly have for Chile’s human capital.

There is evidence that this awareness regarding the existing literacy challenges of the Chilean population might not have yet permeated beyond educational policy and academic stakeholders. In fact, the aforementioned OTIC study also included a self-assessment, according to which 52% of the participants believed they had a good literacy level and 13.5% believed they had a very good literacy level. However, of the 13.5% that believed they had a very good level of literacy, 55% had narrative literacy levels that only reached the first or second level (OTIC de la Cámara Chilena de la Construcción & Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2013).

Early childhood education in Chile

Early childhood education in Chile serves children from birth until they enter first grade and comprises three levels:

- *Sala Cuna*: for children from 0 to 3 years
- *Nivel Medio*: for children from 2 to 4 years
- *Transición*: for children from 4 to 6 years and corresponds to pre-K and kindergarten.

Publicly funded early childhood education in Chile for children aged 0 to 4 years is

provided by two different institutions: the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI) and the INTEGRA Foundation. The transition level (4 to 6 years of age), however, is mostly provided by public or private schools subsidized by the state. During past years the country has heavily increased the budgets of JUNJI and Integra. Thus, the per-child expenditure for pre-K and kindergarten has increased by 20% and the preferential expenditure for children with low SES backgrounds by 21% (Subvención Escolar Preferencial, SEP).

By 2011 Chile had increased its early childhood education coverage so that, for example, 59% of Chilean children between three and four years of age attended early childhood education. The coverage rates are higher as children grow in age so that, for example, while 4.1% of children between nought to one years of age attend early childhood education, 94% of children between five and six years of age do so.

Attendance rates are also higher for children from higher SES backgrounds, for children in urban rather than rural areas, and for children from homes with a lower family size. Chile's early childhood educational coverage is currently below the average of OECD countries, but above that of Latin-American countries. In fact, there is currently some 'idle supply', which has partly been explained by parents' reluctance to send their young children to educational centres.

Two important laws regarding early childhood education have been passed in recent years: one in November 2013 that makes kindergarten mandatory and another that guarantees that all children have access to pre-K and that the state must guarantee funding and access to the first educational levels (younger than 3 years) for children that belong to the country's most vulnerable population.

There is little information on the quality of Chilean early childhood education. However, the information that does exist suggests that there are important quality challenges. Strasser, Lissi & Silva (2009) found that, irrespective of preschooler's SES and sources of funding, more than half of the time in the Chilean preschool classrooms observed was spent in non-instructional activities, defined by those researchers as any activity in which it was not possible to distinguish any learning objective or purpose and which was not guided by an adult. These researchers also found that the instructional time, defined as the exact opposite, i.e. time spent on activities with a clear learning objective or purpose and guided by an adult, was not, in their view, spent in activities highlighted by research as effective in promoting children's development.

In a similar vein, Eyzaguirre & Fontaine (2008) found that literacy instruction in kindergarten was weak and children's exposure to reading scarce. By way of example,

none of the classrooms that participated in that study had a reading corner where children could directly access books. These researchers also found that the outcomes of the Chilean education quality measuring system test (Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación, SIMCE) related to the time dedicated to shared reading in kindergarten and first grade.

During recent years, and especially since Chile became a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2010, it has become increasingly common to hear Chilean politicians and economists compare the country's educational system with those of more developed countries such as Finland, the US, or EU countries. These comparisons, however, tend to focus on aspects of educational institutions (such as the schoolteacher/child ratio or infrastructure) and aspects of equality (per child expenditure, access to university or segregation issues within the educational system). All of these are certainly real pieces of the educational challenge that Chile faces, but the absence of a focus on empowering parents as first educators of their children sometimes appears to suggest that children's families, and even the children themselves, have little agency in educational progress. Moreover, the frequent comparisons of Chile's educational system with those of Western developed countries also overlooks sociocultural mismatches between the Latino culture or low SES Chilean families' culture and the culture and register promoted by the schooling system. The schooling system has its historical roots in foreign processes such as protestantism's idea of universal schooling (to enable all children to read the Bible); enlightenment thinkers such as Condorcet who promoted universal schooling and "a universal language" in order to foster social equality and the needs of democratic citizenship and Fichte's promotion of individuality and self-definition (for a fascinating review, see Levine et al., 2012).

In summary, the Chilean educational sector has made great progress during recent decades. The country has heavily invested in increasing educational expenditure and improving coverage, and has also taken steps to improve quality and equity of education provision. However, there are still major challenges in terms of improving the quality of education at every level and more specifically at improving the quality of literacy education provided. Currently, the low quality of education has resulted in adult functional literacy rates that threaten Chilean's chances of overcoming inequality and succeeding in the labour market.

The present research precis aspects of the misalignment between low SES families' home culture of literacy education, their increased educational expectations, the school based literacy register demands and the literacy demands allegedly implied by a

modern labour market which as stated in the literacy definition above allegedly include *understanding and using printed information for daily activities in the community and at work*, (OTIC de la Cámara Chilena de la Construcción & Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2013).

In this socio-political context, and considering that children's development takes place not only in the formal educational system but also in children's homes and communities the following chapters focus on low SES Chilean families' HLE, its characteristics and variations and its impact on their preschool children's language and literacy learning. In doing so, this research intends to answer the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of the HLE (resources, beliefs and practices) of Chilean low SES urban families of preschoolers? For example: how familiar are these families with the school-based literacy register? What are caregivers' views on literacy learning and on language development? And how can these views help to explain their home language and literacy practices?
- Which components should be included in a conceptualization of the Chilean low SES HLE to help to explain in part the initial differences in language and literacy development among Chilean preschoolers from low SES backgrounds?
- What are the relationships between the different components of the HLE and what are the direct and mediated trajectories through which the different background variables and HLE components exert their effect over the emergent language and literacy skills studied?
- What characterizes families with different HLE levels? For instance, what are their family routines, parenting styles, sense of self-efficacy and theories of learning and how do these parents use language and literacy when interacting with their children in the home?

A better understanding of the characteristics of the HLE and its sociocultural origins could serve to improve the fit and, therefore, the effectiveness of school-based or family-oriented language and literacy interventions or reforms aimed at improving children's language and literacy development.

CHAPTER I. A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONCEPTUALIZING THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOME ENVIRONMENT ON THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) YOUNG CHILDREN

Introduction

Research in Western developed countries has shown that the emergent literacy skills children develop before they start their formal schooling are related to reading, writing and general school achievement at a later age (Dickinson et al., 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; Sylva et al., 2004; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). A substantial understanding of oral language, the ability to relate sounds to letters, the ability to identify letters as well as the knowledge of narrative structures and the purposes of reading and writing are some of the emergent literacy skills that children need to develop in order to succeed later on in school (McKenna & Stahl, 2003). As such, emergent literacy refers to the literacy skills, attitudes and knowledge that are considered developmental precursors to reading, writing and to later school achievement (Barnett, 2001).

Over the last three decades an accumulating body of research by sociologists, psychologists and educationalists has focused on emergent literacy development and how this is affected by different proximal, meso and distal characteristics of the young child's home and family environment. This research has demonstrated that most children start learning these skills well before they start school through their home environment (for an overview, see Hoff, 2006). Distal influences such as parents' SES, as well as meso influences such as parents' literacy cultural schemas (beliefs and attitudes towards learning, literacy and language), have been associated with proximal characteristics such as the literacy opportunities that parents provide in the home (Goldenberg, Gallimore & Reese, 2005). Early home experiences with language and literacy that have been found to be effective in promoting later literacy outcomes include, for instance, shared reading, print exposure, the number of children's books in the home and parents' use of narratives, explanatory talk and rare words (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hoff, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001; Zill & Resnick, 2006). The current research considers these home experiences with language and literacy as a broad construct, one that incorporates distal, meso and proximal home characteristics that influence the development of the child's emergent literacy skills, and refers to this construct as the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLLE).

Longitudinal studies with large samples such as The Home School Study in the US concluded that the 'Home Learning Environment' (HLE) has a statistically significant effect size of 0.28 on children's narrative production, of 0.32 on their emergent literacy skills and of 0.44 on their receptive vocabulary skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). More generally, the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) Project in the UK concluded that after 'age', the early 'Home Learning Environment' has the strongest effect on cognitive development with a statistically significant effect size of 0.38 on cognitive outcomes at age seven (Sylva et al., 2004).

A large number of studies have also made it increasingly clear that not every family is similarly effective when it comes to providing a HLLE that optimally promotes the development of children's emergent literacy skills.

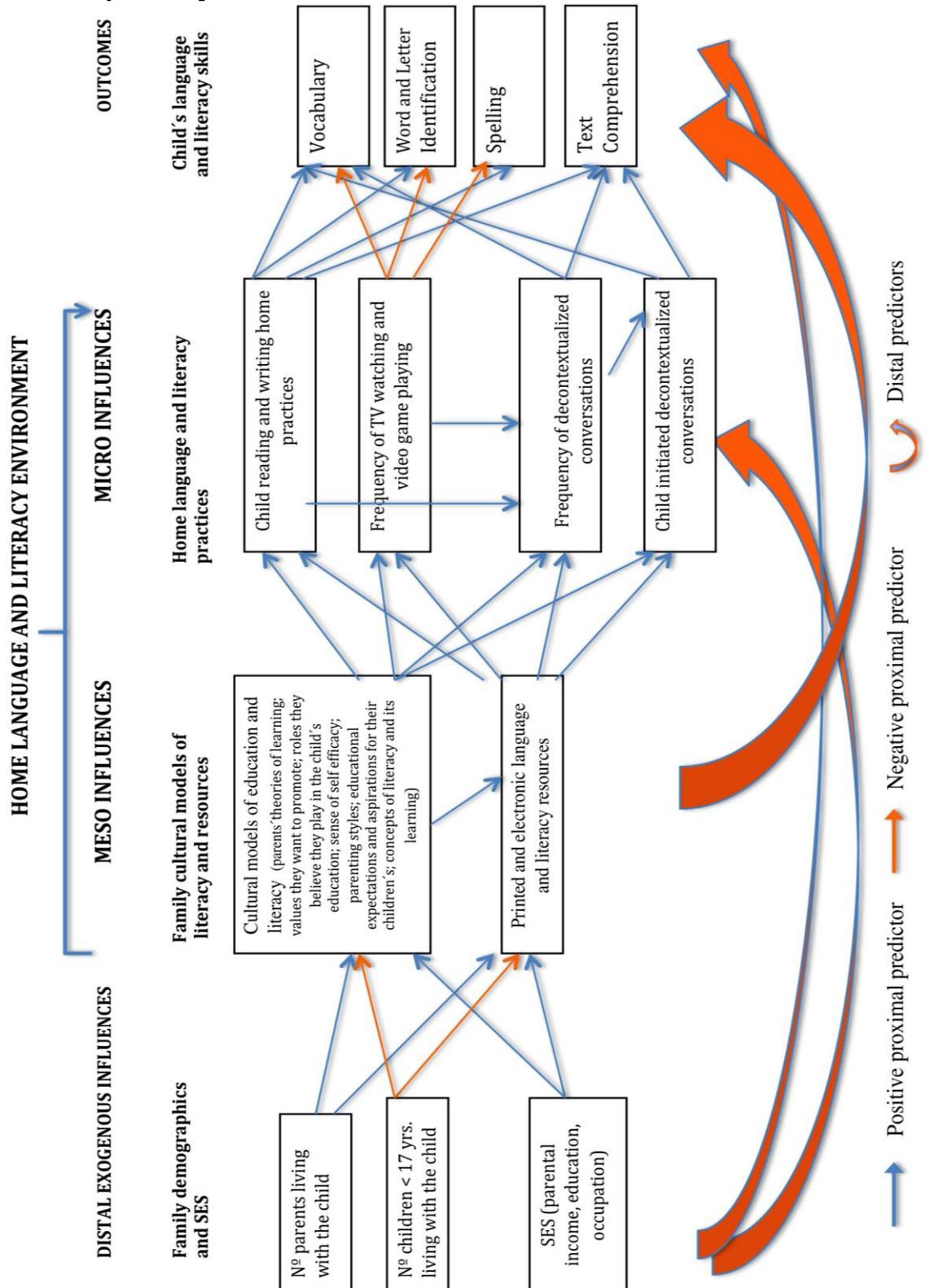
The HLLE's capacity to foster language and literacy development has been associated with socio-economic status (SES) and parents' cultural beliefs regarding early learning and development (for instance, see Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Goldenberg et al., 2005; Hart and Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2006; Leseman & van den Boom, 1999). Research in the US, for instance, indicates that the environments in which preschoolers from low SES families typically live tend to provide fewer quality early language and literacy experiences (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Furthermore, the language and literacy experiences provided by low HLLE homes tend to be less effective for developing language and literacy skills as, for instance, they less frequently include the use of rare words, less conversation during shared story book reading and provide fewer extensions of children's utterances (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hoff, 2006).

Other studies show that home literacy experiences are partly dependent on parents' cultural schemas (beliefs and attitudes), such as the importance they place on informal preschool experiences (Goldenberg et al., 2005) or their beliefs towards literacy. For instance, when studying an African American working-class community in southeast USA, Heath (1983) found that reading by oneself was seen as an indication of poor social skills rather than an expression of personal motivation towards literacy.

Drawing from this large body of literature, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical model of the HLLE (Figure 1) that incorporates the different proximal and distal contexts of family life that influence the development of children's emergent literacy skills. It also seeks to address possible mechanisms through which these contexts affect this developmental process, in particular focusing on literature that provides information regarding sources of social and cultural inequality in emergent literacy

development. The purpose of this literature review is to identify key characteristics of these distal and proximal contexts and to increase our understanding of how these might positively or negatively influence children's emergent literacy development.

Figure 1: Theoretical model of distal, meso and micro components of the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLLE) and their influence over language and literacy development



I. Conceptualizing language and literacy and its development

I.1 Different literacy registers

This study defines literacy as a sociocultural and cognitive practice, which involves reading, writing, knowledge and skills in specific subject matters, and the creative and analytic acts involved in understanding or producing a text (such as understanding, evaluating and interpreting what is read or written) (Snow et al., 1998; Wasik, Dobbins & Herrmann, 2001). From a sociocultural perspective there are different forms of literacy, referred to as registers, which are linked to different contexts and uses. One of the aims of this study is to examine the existing literacy registers of low SES Chilean homes of preschoolers and the familiarity that these families have with school-based literacy. School-based literacy is a very specific literacy variety or register, which has its origins in Western, developed countries and tends to use certain types of texts or genres such as expository knowledge genre or narrative genre (for example, storybooks) (Leseman & De Tuijl, 2006). School-based literacy has commonalities with what Pellegrini (2001) calls a "literate language register" used by Western middle class families. Both use decontextualized language in which meaning is communicated through language rather than through shared knowledge, gesture or interactive negotiation of meaning (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991).

According to educational anthropologist LeVine (2012) the acquisition of a school-based literacy register has several benefits that go beyond the academic development of the mother. LeVine found that in Western and non-Western settings, and in settings with low quality of schooling, there was a relationship between maternal education and declining fertility rates as well as between maternal education, declining child mortality and improved child health and development. Moreover, LeVine contends that the causal pathway of influence of maternal education on these desirable outcomes is the positive effect of the school-based literacy register over mothers' behaviours. The author argues that the widespread effect of the school-based literacy register is in part due to the fact that this register is common to other types of bureaucratic organizations such as hospitals or government services which spread around the globe during the second half of the twentieth century in Western and non Western settings.

Latin American formal educational systems are based on a traditional Western model of schooling (Romero-Contreras, 2006); therefore, allegedly they promote a traditional school-based literacy register. Considering that the Chilean schooling system is also based on the Western model of schooling (Serrano, Ponce de León & Rengifo, 2012), and in line with LeVine et al.'s (2012) arguments about the importance of the school-

based literacy register, acquired and transferred by mother to child, on the child's development and health, it seems of great relevance to study the presence of the school-based literacy register in the homes of Chilean Low SES families of preschoolers.

Researchers such as Anderson, Anderson, Lynch & Shapiro (2003) or Carrington & Luke (2003) argue that the large gap in early language and literacy skills between children from Western and non Western countries, as well as between SES groups might be related to the imposition of this foreign register and to a mismatch between the school's literacy register and the literacy register used in the homes of non Western or low SES families. These researchers also advocate for schools that teach literacy registers that are natural to the population they serve. However, there is no evidence that children cannot acquire more than one literacy register or that managing different forms of literacy might be harmful to them (McNaughton, 2001, cited in Anderson et al., 2003; Pellegrini, 2001). For instance, in her study with two families from Puerto Rico, Compton-Lilly (2007) refers to how the children functioned simultaneously in different social fields where different forms of capital were valued, how they integrated school literacy practices in their homes, and how they maintained their local socio-cultural practices alongside knowledge about official contexts and capital.

There is evidence that interventions with low SES children and families that promote practices attuned with school-based literacy can have long-lasting positive effects on developmental outcomes (Ramey & Ramey, 2006, cited in Dickinson et al., 2006) and that low literacy achievement in school has long term negative consequences that can be difficult to undo (Walker, Greenwood, Hart, Carta, 1994).

This study argues, therefore, that schools should indeed work to bridge the gap between the literacy register that children bring from their homes and the school literacy register. It also contends that families should help bridge this gap by teaching a literate language register early on in the home so that children do not fall behind once they enter formal schooling. This school-based literacy register could be taught in the home *in combination with or alongside* the literacy register that is natural to the social context of the families.

I.2 Literacy components and early indicators of success

Literacy is based on a set of multidimensional skills that develop during the life of the individual from early childhood to adulthood and that are acquired in part through explicit or implicit teaching in the home environment. Sénéchal & LeFevre (2002) showed that, to disentangle the relations between home language and literacy activities

and children's language and literacy skills development, a model needs to consider separately oral language, phonemic awareness and literacy skills (such as decoding or letter knowledge) as outcomes. The reason for this is that they found evidence that a given home language or literacy activity (for instance, shared book reading) does not affect all outcomes or does not necessarily affect all of them in the same way (for instance, in the case of shared book reading there is no evidence that it affects phonemic awareness but there is of its effect on vocabulary).

The following section provides an overview of four emergent language and literacy skills that have been identified as critical for the development of literate language and school-based literacy and predict later reading success (for a review see Scarborough, 2001):

- i) Oral language development;
- ii) Knowledge of letters;
- iii) Phonological awareness; and
- iv) Text comprehension

i) **Oral language development** "includes the ability to understand and use vocabulary, to put words together in grammatically appropriate phrases and sentences (grammar, syntax), to use words together to convey meaning (semantics) and to use language flexibly to meet the demands of differing social contexts (pragmatics; Dore, 1979)" (Landry & Smith, 2006 p. 135). There is evidence that early vocabulary is a predictor of subsequent success in reading (Snow et al., 1998) and of children's later reading comprehension outcomes (for a review, see Sénéchal, Ouellete & Rodney, 2006). Oral language development is positively related to maternal use and frequency of use of rare words (Hoff, 2006) and frequency of shared book reading (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992).

ii) **Knowledge of letters** is the awareness that letters have names and are associated with sounds (Tunmer, Herriman & Nesdale, 1988, in Landry & Smith, 2006). Research shows that knowledge of the alphabet at school entry is one of the best single predictors of eventual reading achievement (Adams, 1990; Stevenson & Newman, 1986, in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Letter knowledge is a predictor of phonological awareness (Burgess & Lonigan, 1998) and is also related to word-decoding skill, which is the ability to "figure out the pronunciation of written words" (Scarborough, 2001 p. 98). Activities or tasks that promote knowledge of letters are reading alphabet books and promoting invented spelling, i.e. writing activities in which children have to select plausible letters to write certain sounds (Ehri & Roberts, 2006).

iii) **Phonological awareness** refers to "the sensitivity to sounds in words, the understanding that sounds can be combined to make words, and the ability to manipulate the sounds in words" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001 p. 15). Phonological awareness has a direct impact on reading skills (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1999; Ehri et al., 2001, in Sénéchal et al., 2006). Activities or tasks that promote this ability include games with rhyming words and asking the child to blend sounds or syllables into words (Ehri & Roberts, 2006). According to Bus and van IJzendoorn (1988), reading ABC or alphabet books promotes phonological awareness (cited in Ehri & Roberts, 2006).

iv) **Text comprehension** is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language..." (Snow, 2002 p.11). This sociocultural view of text comprehension considers that it includes the reader who is comprehending and who faces the text with specific capacities, abilities, knowledge and experiences; the printed or electronic text that is to be comprehended and the activity of comprehending which includes the purposes, processes and consequences associated with the act of reading" (adapted from Snow, 2002 p.11).

The acquisition and operation of these skills are connected. For example, oral language development and letter knowledge set the stage for the emergence of phonological awareness (Scarborough, 2001; Snow et. al, 1998; for a review, see Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001); and improvements in phonics skills can result in better comprehension (Connelly et al, 1999)

II. A model of home influences on children's language and literacy development

This study uses a model (Figure 1; see p. 26) that draws mainly on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the model created by Feinstein, Duckworth & Sabates (2004) to explain the mechanics of intergenerational effects of parents' education on children's learning outcomes.

Young children's literacy and language skills develop largely as a function of home environmental factors (Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Within the home, the environment relevant to language and literacy development is not just the immediate setting in which the child grows up (such as the mother-child language and literacy interactions) but is also influenced by the broader settings in which the immediate setting is embedded such as the literacy culture of the community or the literacy skills which the parent or caregiver has to use at his or her workplace. This broad view of what constitutes an environment is informed by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory which presents a nested arrangement of interdependent

concentric systems in which an individual's development is embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Examples of constructs that have been used to analyze home environment influences on language and literacy development are parenting style, cultural models of literacy, routines of daily life and home literacy practices.

Recently studies addressing the impact of the HLE on children's literacy development have moved from only including shared reading or SES as an influence on language and literacy outcomes or vocabulary as a potential outcome of the influence of parents' beliefs to more complex conceptualizations that include measures of the opportunities for literacy and language activities that the child has in the home and of the instructional support or quality of these interactions. Leseman & de Jong (1998) and Burgess (2002) provided evidence that more complex conceptualizations, which combine multiple correlations of different home facets, have stronger associations with language and literacy outcomes than simpler conceptualizations. Longitudinal studies conducted over the past ten years have confirmed that home environmental influences perceived in this broad way have a significant effect on children's literacy development (see for instance Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Leseman & De Jong, 1998; Sylva et al., 2004).

In line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this study considers that within the home environment the input provided by the main caregiver is a central source of sophisticated language and literacy experiences through which the caregiver engages the child to interact in its zone of proximal development (Bodrova & Leong, 2006). Consequently this study's theoretical model of home influences on language and literacy development primarily focuses on structural aspects of the caregivers which are thought to affect child outcomes (such as their cultural models of literacy, or their educational background) and on process aspects or interactions between the caregiver and the child (such as the frequency and characteristics of conversations between the caregiver and the child or shared book reading interactions).

The model of proximal and distal factors used by Feinstein et al. (2004) to explain the mechanics of intergenerational effects of parental education on children's learning outcomes also influences this research's theoretical model. Feinstein et al.'s model takes into account that distal factors can exert part of their influence on outcomes through the mediation of more proximal factors. In line with that model, and also taking into consideration evidence from the empirical literature, the present study organizes the different environmental influences as distal influences, meso-influences and

proximal influences, according to which meso-influences might mediate the effects of distal influences on proximal influences and outcomes and proximal influences might mediate the effects of meso components on children's outcomes.

Feinstein observes that, although structural demographic factors such as teenage motherhood and family composition could have effects on children's attainment, the most important demographic influences on attainment are parental education, family income and family size (Feinstein et al., 2004). Accordingly, the theoretical model of the present study includes these three aspects as distal components that exert a mediated as well as a direct influence on the language and literacy development of children.

Furthermore, for this research's model, meso-influences include family literacy resources (such as the number of books or magazines at home and environmental print) and also the caregiver's cultural models of education and literacy (these are their theories of literacy learning, their aspirations, expectations and attitudes about, for example, the purposes of literacy and about how literacy develops; their views on the roles they play in their children's education and literacy learning and their sense of self-efficacy). Feinstein et al.'s model (2004) also incorporates this assumption that parents' behaviours in relation to their child's development are partly explained by their values, beliefs and expectations and that it is not possible to change parents' language and literacy practices in a permanent way without transforming their values, beliefs and expectations. Since this study aims not only to describe existing practices but to increase our understanding about the origins of the HLLE, it follows that the model for this study incorporates the influences of caregivers' background experiences with literacy.

Caregivers' past and current experiences with literacy may partially explain the HLLE that they provide to their children because the environments in which children's literacy development unfolds have a background that is related to the caregiver's culture, SES, past and current experiences with literacy and upbringing and their beliefs and attitudes about language and literacy. Intergenerational studies have shown that family literacy practices and beliefs "are affected across generations as a function of family members' interactions with their environments, especially educational institutions" (Wasik, et al., 2001 p. 445).

This study also assumes that micro-level home interactions in which the child actively engages with language and literacy mostly with the support of a more competent person (main caregiver, sibling or another member of the household) are proximal influences that have a direct influence on children's language and literacy outcomes.

Examples of proximal factors are the quality and quantity of language input in the conversations the child has at home or the frequency and quality of home interactions with resources that expose the child to language and literacy (such as books, letter games or even television). There is evidence that much of the influence of these interactions on outcomes comes from their quality (defined in part by aspects such as the number of utterances exchanged or the use of rare words on the part of the caregiver) (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hoff, 2006). In this research's HLL model, these proximal factors mediate part of the effect of meso-influences.

It is important to state that, although this study acknowledges that students can have individual attitudinal, cognitive or motivational disparities that can affect their language and literacy outcomes, these are omitted from the model. This is because it does not aim to provide a comprehensive model for all children. Rather it aims to provide a model that will allow for testing of a number of hypotheses about the mechanisms that lead to gaps or delays in the literacy development of children.

The following sections provide more in-depth descriptions of the components of each level of influence (distal, meso, proximal) commenting on the evidence that supports their immediate or mediated relationship with language and literacy outcomes.

III. Distal influences

III.1 Family demographics

Research conducted in developed countries has showed that the frequency and quality of home opportunities for verbal and literacy interactions the child has with his or her parents are essential for the child's language and literacy development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Sénéchal et al., 2006; Snow et al., 1998). As reviewed in this section, these opportunities can be related to family size and structure.

As underlined by Wasik et al. (2001), in order to study family literacy it is essential to embrace a broad definition of family that takes into account cultural differences and changing social conditions (p. 445).

In relation to high SES families, low SES Chilean families exhibit more cohabiting arrangements, monoparental families, female-led households, and extended family arrangements (Fundación Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza, 2009; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2006). As discussed in the Introduction to this research, while the average Chilean family size is 3.7 people per household, Chilean low SES families tend to be larger with an average of 4.5 people per household. The number of people within Chilean low SES households who work is also lower than in high SES households

so the number of people dependent on the person who works is higher with 4.1 dependent people in low SES families versus 2.4 dependent people in higher SES families. In addition, women head 37.2% of low SES households (versus 21% of high SES ones) (Fundación Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza, 2009).

Acs and Nelson's review of the US population (2001) supports that children living with at least one married parent do better in material measures than those with single mothers and cohabiting parents or stepparents. The authors also found evidence indicating that children who lived with both parents, even if not married, did better on nonmaterial measures of well-being than children living with single mothers, married stepparents, and unmarried stepparents (p.4). In line with this, the pilot study for the UBC intervention in Chile showed that low SES preschool children living with only one parent had significantly lower scores on two of the language and literacy tests applied, namely letter identification and spelling (Yoshikawa, Barata, Rolla, Snow & Arbour, 2008).

According to Pelletier's review (2008), the number of siblings or other young children in the home could affect literacy development. However, this author underlines that the directionality of this effect is not clear. Pelletier indicates that some of the researchers who support the view of the benefits that sibling interactions have in literacy development are Gregory (2001) who talks about the synergy between siblings who are close in age with the older one tutoring the younger one and benefiting in turn from teaching. However, the author also reviews the work by other researchers such as Zajonc (2001) and Downey (2001) who support a negative view of sibling effects on literacy with each new child having access to less time and talk with their parents.

Consequently, the hypothesis of this research, as represented in its theoretical model, was that the number of children in the home would negatively predict preschoolers language and literacy skills. Moreover, the number of parents in the household was expected to be a positive predictor of emergent literacy skills. Family structure and size was, however, considered to be a distal predictor that exerts its effect through other mediating variables such as the frequency and quality of home language and literacy interactions that parents experience with their children.

III.2 Socioeconomic status (SES)

One common way of studying the effects of young children's home environments on their language and literacy development is by analyzing the influence of their family's

SES. SES is usually assessed through parents' occupations, educations and household incomes (or a combination of these).

An extensive body of literature has provided evidence that emergent language and literacy skills of students beginning kindergarten (such as vocabulary skills, phonological awareness or letter knowledge) vary significantly as a function of their families' SES (Dickinson et al., 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In the US, for example, at the beginning of kindergarten only 10% of children from the lowest SES families are able to identify initial sounds of words and 69% can identify primary colours, compared to 51% and 90% respectively of children from the highest SES groups (for an overview, see Neuman, 2006). Similarly, in the UK, the Effective Provision of Preschool Education Project (EPPE) found that preschool children were disadvantaged in terms of the development of language and numeracy skills when the mother had no educational qualifications, one parent was unemployed or the father was semi-skilled, unskilled, had never worked or was absent (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004).

Research with Latino families corroborates the relationship between SES and children's language and literacy development. For example Reese et al.'s research (1999, in Goldenberg et al., 2005) found that fathers' job-related literacy and education, which are aspects of SES, correlated with children's reading achievement. Longitudinal studies show these differences in language and literacy skills between children from different SES backgrounds can be found very early in life and that they persist and generally increase during the following school years (Walker et al., 1994).

III.2.1 Impact of SES on HLLE

One of the suggested mechanisms through which SES influences children's literacy achievement is its effect on the family's capacity to acquire resources and provide out-of-school opportunities to support children's literacy development, for example extra tuition, reading and writing materials or visits to stimulating places such as museums or libraries. The inability of low SES families to pay for many of these seems to contribute to the maintenance of the knowledge gap between children from different SES backgrounds (Entwistle, Alexander & Olson, 1997; Neuman, 2006). The number of books available in the home also varies as a function of SES, with Western high SES families having on average more children's books in their homes than lower SES families (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996).

Nonetheless, over the past two decades, there has been an increasing awareness that the mechanisms through which SES affects language and literacy development are still not completely understood and the effect of SES is not necessarily a direct one, but

partly mediated by other aspects of the child's developmental context, such as the learning experiences provided in their proximal learning context. For instance, Bradley & Corwin (2002) found that low SES parents tend to read less to their children, engage them less in deeper conversations and provide less learning experiences than high SES parents. Low SES is also related to fewer years of school completed and a lower rate of school attendance. These authors also comment on the stressful conditions under which low SES children and their parents live and that are negatively related to the health, cognitive and socioemotional outcomes of the children. Likewise, Van Steensel (2006) in Holland found an association between how stimulating the HLE was and families' SES. Similarly a review by Hoff (2006) indicated that measures of the richness of maternal speech (such as mean length utterance and use of rare words) explain most of the SES-related differences in young children's vocabulary development and the syntactic complexity of their speech.

Health related risk factors such as poor health, nutrition or exposure to lead are also more prevalent among low SES populations and could also mediate the effect of SES on children's language and literacy outcomes (for a review, see Vernon-Feagans et al., 2001). In sum, low SES is associated with conditions that put the child's language and literacy development at risk.

Most of the SES connections to language and literacy development found in Western developed countries have also been replicated with the Latino population in and outside of Latin America. A longitudinal study conducted with Latino immigrants to the US showed that parents' SES and grandparent's educational levels predicted children's reading development (Reese, Kroesen & Gallimore, 2000). In Costa Rica, Romero-Contreras, Arias & Chavarría, (2007) found that SES was significantly and positively associated with five of the seven literacy development measures they used, with the largest difference in phonological awareness and the smallest difference in decoding skills. They also found that, while 70% of Costa Rican homes have less than 25 books, 30% of low SES Costa Rican households don't have any children's books.

In Chile, a study by Susperreguy, Strasser, Lissi & Mendive (2007) comparing home literacy activities between 187 urban families from different SES and the correlation with preschool children's literacy outcomes and with the mother's education confirmed that low SES is also a strong risk factor for Chilean preschool children. That study also found that most associations between low SES and home literacy from Western countries are also true for urban Chilean children and that family SES was significantly and positively correlated with home literacy resources, frequency of shared reading and frequency of parents' reading for pleasure. Also, compared to their more

advantaged counterparts, low SES Chilean urban families who reported that they started teaching literacy skills later to their children, used language at home with the child more for disciplinary purposes and less for explaining or having a conversation and focused their literacy teaching more on teaching letters.

III.2.2 Variability of HLLLE within same SES groups:

The above-mentioned studies suggest that strong correlations exist between a family's SES and a child's language and literacy outcomes. However, there is also evidence that when language and literacy outcome scores and SES are measured individually for all children in a large sample, the strength of the correlation between SES and language and literacy outcomes is less strong (Snow et al., 1998). The UK's Effective Provision of Preschool Education Project (EPPE) (Sylva et al., 2004) and The Home School Study in the US (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001) as well as studies done with Head Start preschools in the US (Love et al., 2002), demonstrated that within same SES groups there are important differences in the quality and quantity of children's exposure to meaningful artefacts and to interactions or activities that promote literacy skills.

Through their study with a group of low SES Latino mothers of preschoolers in the US, Farver, Xub, Eppea & Lonigan (2006) found that variations in parents' direct involvement in and encouragement of literacy-related activities in the home, as well as variations in parenting stress, explained the within-group differences in children's receptive vocabulary and social functioning. Similarly, in her descriptive study of 24 four-to-six-year-old children from low SES mixed ethnic backgrounds living in the Boston/Cambridge area in the US, Purcell-Gates (1996) found that there was a large variability (range= 0.17-5.07) in the number of literacy activities that the children observed and took part in within their homes.

In the UK, Siraj & Mayo's study (2014) with school-aged children from different SES and ethnic backgrounds who either succeeded as expected or below or above expected also found evidence that within same SES and ethnic groups there were relevant variations in aspects such as the parents' expectations, sense of self-efficacy and parenting styles and that these differences influenced children's achievement trajectories.

Likewise, Van Steensel (2006), while studying a sample of Dutch families from mixed ethnic and SES groups, found considerable variability within ethnic groups and within low SES groups in the range of literacy activities children were engaged in within the home. Additionally, in the case of the US's Head Start schools, researchers were surprised to find that the largest variability of language and literacy outcomes was

within children from the same classroom (rather than between classrooms or schools) (Zill & Resnick, 2006). This mirrors the findings of a Chilean study that concluded that the largest variation in mathematics performance was not across different schools but within each classroom, that is to say amongst children from the same SES and communities who had received similar input at school (Ramírez, 2007).

These findings might explain why, when evaluating interventions that intended to help low SES preschoolers and their families such as Sure Start (2005) or Head Start in the US (Love, Kisker, Ross, Schochet, Brooks-Gunn, Paulsell, et al., 2002), researchers found that the interventions had different effects on different subgroups of disadvantaged families. For example, in the case of Head Start, the evaluation showed that the intervention positively affected moderately disadvantaged families but had no effect on severely disadvantaged families.

These findings have important implications for this study, which intends to look at a low SES population, because they suggest that there might be subgroups within low SES families. They also point to the importance of identifying the protective and risk characteristics of these subgroups in order to inform interventions such as Chile's UBC project (*Un Buen Comienzo, A Good Start*). Furthermore, if the largest variability in attainment seems to be within SES rather than between SES groups the question that needs to be answered is: what explains these large differences? One possible explanation might be that same SES caregivers can provide different types or levels of support in their homes for the language and literacy development of their children. This of course raises the question: what factors explain these differences in the kinds of support provided by same SES parents? The following sections explore some possibilities.

IV. The meso level: caregivers' cultural models of education and literacy, their literacy history and the home literacy resources

IV.1 Caregivers' cultural models of education and literacy

Regarding meso-level components of the HLLE, Reese & Gallimore (2000) conceptualized parents' literacy beliefs, values and expectations as aspects of parents' cultural models of literacy. According to these researchers, cultural models are assumptions of which the person is normally unaware and can be individual or group-related. These assumptions can include (a) parents' theories of learning; (b) the values they want to promote; (c) the roles they believe that they and other educational actors should play in their child's education and upbringing; (d) their sense of self-efficacy in

fulfilling their role; (e) their parenting styles; (f) their educational expectations and aspirations for their children; and (g) their concepts of literacy and its learning ('literacy beliefs'). These assumptions and how any associated beliefs or views have been found to relate to children's development and achievement are discussed further below.

a. Maturational theories of learning

Parental theories of development have been shown to affect the interactions with and views they have and pass to their children. As reviewed by Aldrige & Goldman (1992), maturational theory (originally developed by Arnold Gesell (Kanner, 1960) had a strong influence on literacy instruction in the mid 1900s. According to this theory, development has a biological basis and the learning difficulties a child might experience are explained by biological problems that lie within the child. Moreover, children were not considered to be mature or biologically ready to learn to read before they achieved six or seven years of age.

Previous research has related parents' maturational views of development with negative outcomes in "academic knowledge" (Johnson & Martin, 1983, in Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). Likewise, Dweck (2007) found that people with a fixed mindset, that is people who believed their basic qualities were fixed birth traits and worked to document these qualities rather than to develop them, had worse academic outcomes than people with a growth mindset who believed basic abilities could be developed through sustained dedication. Research with teenagers and college students indicates that fixed mindsets are related to lower achievement and lower motivation towards learning (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).

There is evidence that low SES parents still frequently sustain views of development that resemble a more maturational or fixed mindset perspective. In Chile, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that Chilean parents with less years of education tend to start reading stories to their children later on than their more advantaged counterparts. Allegedly, this could be because low SES families might hold more maturational views of development. Likewise, Savage & Gauvain (1998) found that, in comparison to their Euro American peers, Latino parents consider that their children can develop decision-making skills in different areas at later ages. Also, research by Claro, Paunesku & Dweck, C. (2015) with Chilean children at high school proves that children's mind-sets predict their cognitive outcomes.

b. Learning through observation or learning through interaction

Different cultures and social groups have different ways of organizing and viewing children's learning opportunities. Research by Rogoff, Correa-Chavez & Silva (2009) highlights the existing differences in two learning traditions. One approach, followed by middle class communities of European heritage, is to segregate children from other groups and to create specific lessons for children to do in specified settings (such as schools). According to this approach, parents believe that children learn mainly through motivating conversations, interactions and verbal explanations rather than through observation. Parents that sustain this view feel responsible for making their children learn and for arousing their interest and focusing their attention. This perspective resembles the learning methods used in the Western schooling system. The other tradition, which Rogoff et al. call "learning by intent community participation" (2009, p.3), promotes children's learning through their participation in various family and community activities. The researcher found this tradition to be common in Indigenous-heritage communities in North and Central America (for example Mayan and Guatemaltecan families). Under this approach, children managed their own attention and motivation and mothers expected their children to learn by observing other people in the community doing tasks.

Rogoff et al's studies show that these different perspectives of learning have effects on children's development. Thus, children from families that follow the "learning by intent community participation" model have a higher capacity for focusing their attention on several events at the same time and learning through the observation of interactions in which the child is not directly participating. Rogoff et al. conclude that middle class children's learning would benefit if their institutions included the "learning by intent community participation" perspective.

Likewise, Lareau's ethnographic study (2003) found evidence that middle class American families regard concerted cultivation of their children's talents and eliciting their child's feelings, opinions and thoughts as essential aspects of good parenting. In contrast, American low SES parents consider facilitating the accomplishment of natural growth as a central component of their role as caregivers. According to this author, however, one of the results of these differences in parental beliefs and attitudes is that low SES children not only have fewer opportunities to experience language and literacy but are also more likely to perceive a mismatch between the home culture and the school culture (Lareau, 2003).

c. Values parents want to promote

The Western model of educational institution that spread between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth century reflects and promotes Western ways and values (LeVine et al., 2012). Researchers such as Valdes (1996), Romero-Contreras (2006), Lareau (2003) and Rogoff et al. (2009) have suggested that mothers from different cultures or SES groups are responsive to their children's needs but that their ways, values and objectives sometimes differ from Western ways.

Western culture groups strongly value independence, the development of an autonomous self, privacy and personal agency (Kagitcibasi, 2005), as well as the ability to manage an abstract, objective, institutionalized language (LeVine et al., 2012). In contrast, there is evidence that a common feature of Latino families is that they foster familial interdependency, and grant priority to family unity and well-being over personal, academic or professional success. This value was conceptualized by Valdes (1996) as *familismo*.

Familismo not only includes the promotion of harmonious relationships among the nuclear family members but also with extended family and the immediate community. Miller & Harwood (2002) found, for example, that Puerto Ricans tend to promote children's interdependence with the mother, while Euro American mothers tend to promote children's personal choice.

Furthermore, Latino groups conceive of education not only as the promotion of cognitive or academic skills but also as related to the promotion of the social and moral self (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995, in Goldenberg et al., 2005). In connection to this, there is evidence that Latino parents tend to prioritize the goal of respect, for oneself and for others. A respectful child is conceived as one that is close to his family, listens to the *consejos* or advice that his parents or elder family members give him, has a sense of responsibility and solidarity with his community and is well-mannered and respects the elder and authority figures (such as teachers). In Chile, the *Valoras* qualitative study (Catalán & Egaña, 2013) confirmed that the concepts of family, community and respect were central in the upbringing perspective of low and mid SES Chilean families.

d. The roles parents believe that they and other educational actors should play in their child's education and upbringing

Parents' views regarding who is responsible for what in children's education and their literacy learning have also been found to differ according to culture and SES. Literature is consistent in that Latino parents believe that teachers are responsible for teaching

school-related skills, such as early literacy, while parents are considered to be more responsible for the moral and emotional development of their children (Valdés, 1996; Reese et al., 1995; Reese & Gallimore, 2000; for a review, see Romero-Contreras, 2009).

Likewise, the research that exists (it is scarce), indicates that the dominant view in Chilean society is that parents should delegate the responsibility for academic education to the school or educational centre, while the child's moral and social education is considered part of the mother's role. One of the implications of this view is, for example, that fathers are not expected to play an active role in their children's education (Martinic, 2009; Catalán & Egaña, 2004).

Moreover, there is evidence that Latino parents' views on their role in their children's education can be in conflict with that held by teachers or other educational stakeholders. Valdés (1996) found that Mexican immigrant parents considered the teacher to be in charge of academic instruction and themselves responsible for the child's moral and social development. However their children's teachers expected these parents to support their efforts in the home and to engage in academic activities in the home.

The *Valoras* study (Catalán & Egaña, 2013) that looked at the beliefs and value system of low and mid SES Chilean mothers found evidence that they considered one of their roles to be physically close to the child in order to transmit the values described in the previous section (respect, solidarity, *familismo*, etc.). Children that did not spend time at home with at least one of their parents were seen as defenceless. These families also considered that mothers were responsible for fostering communication with their children in order to prevent the child from following "the bad path" in the future (*"los malos pasos"*) and to teach them to avoid nasty gatherings (*"malas juntas"*). Mothers considered that they had to get their child to trust them so that later on they could know what the child was up to and who the child was meeting. This trust however seemed to go one way only because the mothers considered that their role was to be distrustful of the child's environment and cautious of dangers such as violence, drugs or school desertion.

e. Parent's sense of self-efficacy

Studies have shown a link between parents' perceptions of self-efficacy, that is their belief about their own "capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage their children's education" (Bandura, 1995, p.2), and the degree to which they actually help their children with their homework (Epstein, 1986 in Wentzel, 1998). Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli (2001), in their research with Italian

parents of middle school children, found that parents' academic self-efficacy also influenced their academic aspirations for their children.

Likewise, in their 50 case studies with school-aged UK children, Siraj & Mayo (2014) found that parents' perceptions of self-efficacy varied even within same SES families and that parents of children who were doing well and parents of children from low SES families who were succeeding against the odds had a strong sense of self-efficacy. In contrast, they found that parents' fatalistic self-efficacy views could be risk markers, especially for boys from disadvantaged families.

Research indicates that low SES Hispanic parents living in the US have a low sense of self-efficacy as supporters of their children's school learning, partly because they themselves had a story of school failure and because they attribute the responsibility for children's academic learning solely to school and teachers (Hyslop, 2000). As a consequence, this study's theoretical model of HLLC considers parents' sense of self-efficacy as promoters of their children's literacy as mediating the influence of SES on children's language and literacy skills.

f. Parenting styles

There is evidence that parenting characteristics are related to children's outcomes and behaviours. Baumrind's typology (1991) of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting has been used to study the effects of parenting styles on children's development. Authoritative parenting has been found to relate to positive child outcomes. Authoritative parents are highly supportive, set high standards, provide moderate control, encourage verbal negotiations and share the reasoning behind parental rules with the child. Siraj & Mayo (2014) showed that elements of this type of parenting, normally associated with Western middle class families, were also present in UK working class families of children who succeeded against the odds.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting have been negatively associated with children's and adolescents' developmental outcomes. Authoritarian parents have been shown to provide low warmth and high levels of control. Permissive parents on the other hand tend to be indulgent or neglectful, provide low levels of control and make few demands regarding household responsibilities or orderly behaviour. Permissive parents also tend to allow children to regulate their own activities avoiding the establishment of routines (Baumrind, p. 889). This lack of routine could hinder children's development because, as children get to know a certain routine, they can devote less mental energy to its structure and more mental energy to

the “*meaningful substance of the activity and the language that accompanies the activity*” (Van Kleeck, 2004, p. 186)

There is evidence, however, that certain cultural or socioeconomic groups have parenting styles that do not fit in Baumrind’s typology. Kagitcibasi’s review (2005) shows that some populations (for example, some ethnic groups in the Netherlands) can indeed provide high levels of control, such as authoritarian parents provide, while at the same time providing high levels of support and warmth like those provided by authoritative parents (Dekovic, Pels & Model, 2006, in Kagitcibasi, 2007). Likewise, there is evidence that the associations between Baumrind’s parenting styles and children’s achievement vary when looking at different populations, for example Asian American children with authoritarian parents had higher school achievement than their peers (Okagaki & French, 1998 in Siraj & Mayo, 2014).

This research’s qualitative study will explore the specific characteristics of a sample of low SES Chilean parents of preschoolers and aim at understanding how these parents’ parenting styles are aligned with the HLLC they provide and their children’s development of language and literacy skills.

g. Parents’ educational expectations for their children

Parental expectations for children’s educational attainment are associated with educational outcomes and their early expectations tend to hold through the child’s schooling years (Entwistle et al., 2004). Parent’s expectations for children’s academic performance have also been found to be a positive predictor of parent’s aspirations for their children’s educational success (Wentzel, 1998).

Siraj & Mayo’s 50 in-depth mixed methods *Child and Family Case Studies* with UK school-aged children (2014) also found that one feature of parents of low SES children that succeeded against the odds was that they openly expressed their academic expectations and aspirations for their children. Research done in other Western countries has found that parents’ literacy experiences, expectations and developmental goals influence their home literacy practices (Goldenberg et al., 2005; Eccles & Harold, 1996).

However, in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Chile, researchers have documented that parents have very high expectations for their children but these are not matched by adequate literacy development goals or home literacy practices. In Costa Rica, a study with 193 low-income families with preschool children showed that 96% of the families expected their children to go to college or university and wanted them to learn to read

and write stories. However, very few of these families read to the child, taught the child letters or held long conversations with the child at home (Romero-Contreras et al., 2007). In El Salvador, Rolla (2007) documented that parents' expectations and beliefs regarding the duration of their child's schooling were related positively with children's outcomes but that the frequency and quality of home language and literacy practices were not aligned with parents' high educational expectations for their children.

Similarly, in their longitudinal study Goldenberg et al. (2005) found that Mexican US immigrant parents saw themselves as playing a supporting rather than a leading role in their children's academic development. Although these parents valued formal schooling and aspired to high levels of education for their children, they believed that their attainment depended on the child's moral development and that their literacy goals for their children were mostly dependent on the child's advances in literacy. One of the implications of these beliefs was that parents were attentive to the child's moral capacity (for example, keeping away from street gangs) as a mark of the child's literacy attainment however they did not tend to engage the child in regular literacy practices in the home.

In Chile, there is evidence that low SES parents highly value education as a tool to improve life opportunities (Catalán & Egaña, 2004). Moreover, as described in the Introduction (see p. 16), Chilean parents expectations regarding their children's access to tertiary education have experienced a large growth during the past decades, for example the educational expectations for their children held by parents from the first quintile increased from 18 to 63% between 1999 and 2009 (Urzúa, 2012).

h. Parents' literacy beliefs

Although most parents/caregivers, regardless of SES, value literacy, different cultures and SES groups naturally differ in their beliefs about how children should learn to read and write and which literacy skills they should actually promote.

Lynch, Anderson, Anderson & Shapiro (2006) categorize the various different literacy learning approaches into two broad categories. One is the top-down or constructivist perspective which focuses on the learner, starts teaching literacy with texts and views reading mostly as an inference process. This approach is considered to have a holistic perspective of literacy learning because it considers that children learn literacy through a variety of activities. It considers that emergent literacy skills precede school-based literacy skills, reading and writing should be taught in an integrated manner and literacy should be taught within a meaningful context (Evans et al., 2001; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The other is the skills-based or traditional approach, and is also referred

to as a bottom-up approach because it considers that reading is mostly a decoding process and starts teaching literacy by teaching letters and sounds. The focus, here, is on teaching conventional reading and writing skills (such as phonological awareness and letter and word identification) and discrete skills, normally in a sequential form.

There is evidence that parents' views on literacy learning tend to be related to their SES. Low SES parents tend to value the development of technical reading skills such as letter knowledge (a traditional approach), while high SES parents tend to view literacy as a cultural activity and to reinforce this by promoting a positive attitude towards reading behaviours in the child and developing comprehension activities as well as conversations around literacy (a constructivist approach) (Fitzgerald, Spiegel & Cunningham, 1991). This has been found for US parents (Stipek, Milburn, Clements & Daniels, 1992) as well as for Latin American parents (Romero-Contreras et al., 2007).

A study with Latino US immigrant families with preschool-aged children documented that most parents viewed literacy development as something that was learned through formal schooling by repetitive practice mostly of the letters and syllables (Reese & Gallimore, 2000). In other words, they did not perceive emergent literacy as a process that is developmentally significant and that takes place naturally in the child's home and family setting before schooling starts. This explained the fact that the parents did not recognize their child's experiments with emergent writing as writing, viewing these early experiences as meaningless scribbles or cute situations in which the child was deceiving himself or herself by believing he or she was actually writing something. It also explained why the parents did not encourage emergent literacy in the home and expressed that, before the child went to school, he or she knew nothing.

In other words, cultural aspects as well as socioeconomic status not only affect the way in which parents view their place in their children's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) but also their views of how literacy is developed ('their literacy beliefs') as well as the language and literacy activities parents do with the child in the home ('their literacy practices').

In Chile, a study by Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that there was no significant variation between parents from different SES in their beliefs of what literacy skills a five-year-old could achieve. Moreover, both low SES and high SES parents considered that teaching letters had great relevance for learning to read but high SES mothers also promoted literacy as a fun and entertaining activity for children to do. The researchers showed that literacy practices in the home were significantly different for high versus low SES mothers with high SES mothers reading more frequently and reporting more

extended discourse than their counterparts. Romero-Contreras (2006) hypothesized that the mismatch found in different Latin American populations between parents' high educational expectations and the home support for literacy they provided was related to parents' lack of awareness of school demands and expectations and also related to their ignorance of their potential to promote children's literacy skills in the home.

Research also shows that parents' skill-based or holistic beliefs of literacy learning influence their home literacy practices. Stipek et al. (1992) and Lynch et al. (2006) found that parents with holistic beliefs of literacy engaged in more encouraging-type activities and less in direct teaching of literacy activities (such as teaching children the alphabet or to write their names or the names of things) than parents with skills-based views. Furthermore, Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Turitt & Munsertman (1997) evidenced that parents' holistic views of literacy learning were positively associated with children's achievement. In contrast, parents' skills-based beliefs were not related to children's achievement.

IV.2 Caregivers' literacy history

The HLE in which the parents grew up and their literacy practices when growing up or as adults may also partly explain the educational expectations they have for their children and the cultural models of literacy that guide their home practices.

Cultural models of literacy development are normally shared among a culture or cultural subgroup and have developed gradually in an ontogenetic and historical time frame. The intergenerational historical continuity of family's literacy models has been researched with Latino immigrant populations in the US by Goldenberg et al. (2005), who documented that family literacy practices could be partly predicted from grandparents' educational levels in their culture of origin.

Through ethnographic studies and in-depth interviews Reese & Gallimore (2000) obtained evidence that in their childhoods most of the Latino immigrant parents in their sample did not have a variety of literacy resources in the home (books, writing materials), were not read to often and were raised by parents who thought that learning to read started with school and through formal instruction. The reading instruction they received had also been marked by the syllabic or phonetic method that is common in Latin America; consequently they believed that reading is learnt by firstly learning letters, then vowels, then syllables and then words. This was also the literacy path they expected for their children.

While literacy models develop and are sustained on a historical timescale, they are adapted on an ontogenetic timescale depending on the experiences that parents have during their lives. During their lives caregivers experience situations that might challenge and change aspects of this socialized model of literacy. For example, if a relative goes to university the expectation of his or her own children going to university can increase and affect the literacy model. In fact, the influence of familiarity with the university system through the experience of relatives was positively correlated with children's kindergarten and first grade achievement and teacher ratings of children (Goldenberg et al., 2005). These findings reveal that it is possible to influence parents views of literacy, and that there seem to be windows of opportunity for influencing parents' understanding of literacy development and for empowering them as first educators of their children.

IV.3 Literacy resources available in the home

The importance of the availability of books at home and its relation to SES has already been commented on (see p. 32) but books are not the only print resources available in the homes of young children that can influence language and literacy outcomes.

Environments that have abundant reading and writing materials (posters, labels, signs, newspapers, materials for writing, and books) have been positively associated with children's awareness of print (Snow et al., 1998).

There is also evidence, however, that such print rich environments do not necessarily provide many opportunities for informal letter learning. Environmental print is generally presented through visual cues that dominate the identity of individual letters or words and as a result the child learns to depend on the colours and shapes of the print rather than on individual words or letters to identify the meaning (Ehri & Roberts, 2006). It seems that the positive effect of the presence of print is mediated by children's exposure to parents that consciously or unconsciously model how to use those print materials for different purposes (for example parents modelling how to use a poster with a prayer on it, or how to use a paper and a pen to write a shopping list).

Having reviewed the potential influence of distal and meso aspects, the following section will review micro or proximal influences that allegedly could have an influence on the language and literacy development of young children.

V. Micro or proximal influences affecting home language and literacy experiences

Children enter school with large individual differences in their language and literacy skills and these differences affect their literacy development and academic achievement (Burgess, Hecht & Lonigan, 2002). In comparison to high SES children, children from low SES backgrounds, on average, might not have the same exposure to school-related literacy activities (such as shared reading) or to the values and beliefs in which that literacy is embedded. However, they are far from living in a language and literacy vacuum.

Among low SES households there is variety regarding the different opportunities for language and literacy interactions that families provide to their children. In the US, the Home School Study provided detailed descriptions of the interactions between the HLE and the school language and literacy environment of three- to six- year-old children from low-income families. Within the home component, the Home School Study focused on the frequency and types of literacy-related home activities (which this study called Home Support for Literacy) and on the use of extended discourse and rare word density during home book reading, mealtime conversations and play sessions. All these components were significantly related to children's kindergarten language and literacy outcomes, as measured by the SHELL-K battery of tests. With these home learning environment constructs, this study explained 28% of the scores on the Narrative Production task, 32% of the scores on the Emergent literacy task and 44% of the scores on the Receptive Vocabulary task (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

Purcell-Gates, Heath and Lareau are researchers who have studied non-mainstream populations (such as non Western and/or low SES groups). Their studies have increased our understanding of literacy learning processes, by not just making clear which mainstream literacy practices do not take place in these homes, but by identifying other forms of language and literacy interactions that do take place and that can explain the language and literacy skills that these children have acquired, such as informal conversations, play and problem-solving situations, and participation in household chores (for a review, see Leseman & van de Tuijl, 2006). These studies explore how diverse home literacy practices are rich but are not always recognised as such or valued in school systems.

The following subsections comment on three potential micro level or proximal influences of the home environment on language and literacy outcomes, all of which are included in this research's theoretical model of the HLE: (i) quantity and quality of

home verbal interactions with the child, (ii) shared book reading and authentic literacy practices and (iii) TV viewing. This research focuses on quantity and quality of home verbal interactions with the child and on shared book reading because the literature reviewed indicated there is robust evidence of their influence on children's language and literacy skills. Furthermore, home authentic literacy practices and TV viewing were also included in the theoretical model of the HLLC for Chilean low SES pre-schoolers because they were considered to be potentially relevant in the Latin American context as there is evidence that the Latin American population does not engage in shared book reading as frequently as Western middle class families but there may be an array of informal literacy interactions through which the child may equally be acquiring language and literacy skills.

V.1 Quantity and quality of home verbal interactions with the child

Hart and Risley's (1995) study demonstrated that the development of children's language skills depended on the exposure to language at home but also on the child's participation in interactional talk, which requires "attention and response from the children" (McKeown & Beck, 2006, p. 283). The quantity of verbal interaction in the home is closely related to children's vocabulary scores, which, in turn, explains a significant part of children's reading comprehension outcomes and plays an indirect role in phonological awareness and listening comprehension (Sénéchal et al., 2006; Snow et al., 1998).

There is strong evidence that low SES families tend to provide their young children with fewer verbal interactions than high SES families (Hart and Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2005). Low SES parents on average use shorter sentences and more controlling language (Hoff, 2006). Furthermore, the genres or types of oral language exchange vary with SES and culture of the family (Hart and Risley, 1995; Leseman & Van Tuijl, 2006). Narrative retelling of family stories was found to be recurrent in the non-mainstream households studied in the ethnographic work by Heath (1983). This researcher argued that these narratives probably familiarized the child with the structure of narrative texts. Leseman & Van Tuijl, (2006) found that in comparison to the Dutch-Surinamese or the Dutch-Turkish families in their study, Dutch families tended to have more mealtime conversations, children were more involved during conversations in which the parents shared past experiences, told true stories to the child or explained how an artefact worked. However they found no differences in the reported amount of jokes or fictitious stories told to the child, or in the affectionate caregiver-child talk or caregiver's talk with other adults while the child was present. Qualitative and

ethnographic studies such as those by Heath (1983) and Lareau (2003) also provide evidence of differences in stylistic aspects of language use between different SES families. For example, Lareau mentions that the low SES African American mother that she observed often issued "short clear directives and expected prompt, respectful compliance" (p. 139).

In the US, the Home School Study provided evidence that part of the predictive value of shared reading experiences and mealtime conversations for language and literacy outcomes depended on the quality of oral interactions that families provide during these activities (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). According to this study, mothers' use of rare words as well as the clues they provide in their sentences about the meaning of these words predicted children's literacy development through vocabulary. In line with this, Hoff (2005) demonstrated that maternal speech mediates SES's influence on language and literacy development. Within maternal speech the most important aspects were the number of word tokens, the number of word types and the mean length of utterances (MLU). Together all these aspects predicted 25% of the variance in children's vocabulary skills with MLU as the best single predictor explaining 22% of the variance in child's vocabulary. According to Hoff, once the influence of maternal speech was taken into account, SES diminished its predictive power from 5% to a non-significant 1% of the variance in children's vocabularies (Hoff, 2005, p. 165). These findings indicate that mothers who talk less, use fewer different words, use shorter sentences or simplify their comments for their preschool children could be negatively affecting their language and literacy development.

The differences in quantity and quality of language input in interactions with children is reflected in differences in children's language output, with low SES children producing shorter responses to adult speech, and less complex utterances at ages five and six (Snow, 1999). However, children's (and adults') language output not only depends on their SES but also varies according to the setting and conversational partner (for a review, see Hoff, 2004).

In Latin America, there is evidence that Latino mothers respond orally to their children less often and in a less elaborative style than Western middle class mothers and other low SES mothers from Western countries. In their study about maternal responsiveness, Richman, Miller & LeVine (1992) found that Mexican mothers of ten-month-old children responded to their children looking at them frequently, keeping them at eye-distance but tended to use fewer oral answers to respond to their children than American mothers. Also among this group of Mexican mothers there were observable differences in maternal responsiveness according to the mother's level of

formal education. Thus this study concluded that maternal verbal responsiveness during infancy depended partly on mothers' "participation in institutionalized systems of communication and education" (p. 614).

Furthermore, in the study by Romero-Contreras et al. (2007) with 193 low SES preschool children from Costa Rica only 55% of caregivers reported dedicating some of their shared time with the children to having conversations with the child and 50% reported spending some of this time playing with the child.

Leyva, Reese, Grolnick & Price (2008) found that Hispanic mothers used fewer open-ended, elaborative questions than Black and White American mothers did when reminiscing about past misbehaviour. In line with this, the Hispanic children in their study had less developed autobiographical narrative skills than their White and Black peers.

In Chile, Susperreguy et al. (2007) reported that in their sample of families from different SES only half of the families supported children's language development by playing or talking to the children frequently. Moreover, most of the associations from developed countries were corroborated with high SES parents reportedly using significantly more elaborated language while low SES parents reportedly used significantly more language for controlling purposes. Consequently, although there is some evidence that many low SES Latin American parents do not engage frequently in conversations with their child we know very little about the specific characteristics of these oral interactions and if they include some of the aspects that research in Western countries has identified as central for language and literacy development (such as long utterances and use of rare words) or not. Moreover, almost all the studies reviewed which researched Latin American families based their findings on parents' written self reports of the types and purposes of language they used with their children, so naturalistic research studying the oral interactions that take place at home would be necessary to corroborate the validity of these self reports (one of the reasons that this research incorporates naturalistic observations).

V.2 Shared book reading and authentic interactions with literacy

a. Shared book reading

Shared reading is a collaborative interaction in which a skilled reader reads a text out loud to a less or non skilled person while showing him the text and modelling the strategies and behaviours that proficient readers use when reading. Leseman & De Jong (1998) distinguished four aspects of home literacy: (i) frequency of opportunities for

interaction with literacy and exposure to print, (ii) the instructional quality or quality of the guidance provided by a more competent reader, (iii) the degree of cooperation during the literacy activities of the child and the more experienced reader and (iv) the socioemotional quality of the event.

The *National Household Education Survey* in the US (reviewed in Snow et al., 1998) provided evidence that children who were read to three or more times per week had better emergent literacy skills than children who experienced less shared reading. The frequency of shared reading was also recognised as a statistically significant predictor of the HLE of a family (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004); it was associated not only with higher initial achievement for children as they entered preschool but also with larger gains during the program year, with larger gains for children who had been read to every day and significantly lower scores for children from families that reported reading to them once per week (Zill & Resnick, 2006). However, the percentage of total variance in children's later literacy achievement that could be linked to shared book reading was only around 8% (for a review, see Reese, Cox, Harte, McAnally, 2003).

There is increasing evidence that it is not shared reading per se but the language and literacy interactions that take place during shared reading that are responsible for the positive effect on language and literacy development skills. Repeated shared readings of the same text and explanations of word meanings during shared reading have been significantly associated with increased vocabulary and world knowledge gains (Biemiller, 2006). Shared reading has a positive influence on vocabulary development (de Temple & Snow, 2003) but there is no clear influence on word recognition skills (Stahl, 2003). Furthermore, Reese et al. (2003) showed that the effects of shared book reading on language and literacy development also depend on the parents' style of reading, on the child's initial skill level and on the particular skill that the reader wants to foster. For example, a describer style of shared reading (with low level descriptions and labels) was more beneficial for children with lower initial vocabulary skills, while a performance-oriented style (which introduces the characters and asks the children for predictions before reading and provides inferences and evaluations after reading) was more beneficial for children with higher initial vocabulary levels. Finally, there is evidence that the effect of shared book reading is also positively related to the emotional bonding of parent and child (Bus, 2003).

The presence, frequency and styles of family book sharing with young children vary across SES and across cultures. Children from high SES families experience more shared book reading with an adult than their more disadvantaged counterparts (Hoff, 2005). In Latin America, the evidence from different countries seems to suggest that

shared book reading experiences are less common and provide fewer opportunities for interaction than in Western developed countries. For example, in Costa Rica only 15% of the parents of a low-income sample of families of preschoolers reported reading to them while 11% reported giving a book to the child so that he or she could read it alone. Moreover, observations of parent-child shared reading sessions showed that most dyads read a ten-page book in less than two minutes, sometimes parents did not read the text of the book, that the few comments made during the book reading session centred on the book's plot or features with almost no connections made with the child's experiences or previous knowledge. Furthermore, the adults involved in these sessions asked the child close-ended questions which did not allow the child to expand. Finally, the books were not used to teach the functions of literacy or conventions such as the organization of the story or the place where the author's name goes (Romero-Contreras et al., 2007).

Many of the elements of book reading in Western developed countries have also been found to be present in Chilean society (Susperreguy et al., 2007), with high SES parents starting to read books to their children at an earlier age than their low SES peers. However, the frequency of shared book reading was on average very low among all SES groups, with 45.5% of parents not doing any shared reading with their preschool child (Susperreguy et al., 2007).

b. Authentic literacy interactions

Printed language is present in virtually every household if not through books via magazines, newspapers or even through print that comes on the packaging of products (Van Steensel, 2006). In their study of Dutch, Dutch-Surinamese and Dutch-Turkish families, Leseman & Van Tuijl (2006) found "strong differences between these cultural groups in the reported frequency of literacy events such as shared book reading and the caregiver's reading a book or newspaper or writing a letter or postcard in the presence of the child; but... no or only small statistically insignificant differences in the frequency of the caregiver leafing through a magazine or advertising paper, or reading the instructions for use of a certain product..." (p. 217).

In Romero-Contreras's study (2006) with 193 kindergarteners and their caregivers from six public schools in an urban and semi-urban area outside San José, the capital of Costa Rica, these families reported that they often used literacy for instrumental purposes such as reviewing receipts, invoices or other documents, keeping an address and phone books, keeping a budget and writing shopping lists. In contrast, only one third or fewer of the families reported often reading newspapers or magazines, reading texts for school or work and using dictionaries or encyclopaedias.

Likewise, Purcell-Gates (n.d.) identified that some informal literacy-related activities that are mediated by print and take place in the homes of Costa Rican low SES children are bookkeeping, housekeeping, cooking and eating. The texts used for these activities are considered authentic texts because they are used for authentic purposes, which are related to everyday functioning rather than academic purposes (Purcell-Gates, n.d.). During these activities parents use print or text by making lists, writing memory notes or reading instructions or food package labels.

The modelling of these purposes and uses of print allegedly could have a positive influence on their children's learning of knowledge about print and print conventions. Thus, one of the aims of this research is to uncover potential authentic literacy activities that could be taking place in Chilean low SES children's homes and that could be related to the language and literacy skills they have at school entry.

V.4 Television ("TV") watching

Television might also constitute a source of language learning for children and, according to Purcell-Gates (1996), is a source of print exposure. However the benefits of TV watching depend largely on the frequency of exposure as well as on the content watched and on the interaction among viewers.

Several correlational and longitudinal studies have looked at the effects of TV on cognitive development but there are very few experimental studies. Typically, the studies performed during the 1970s and up to the early 1980s focused on total TV viewing; their conclusion was that there was a negative correlation between total viewing and children's skills development. For example, in their meta-analysis, Williams, Haertel, Walberg & Haertel (1982) found that the average correlation of total TV viewing with school achievement was -0.5. Later studies, however, have differentiated more between type of program watched and differential effects according to the age or SES of the child watching TV.

Up to 2003, most of the research on TV and its effects on cognitive development had been done with children of preschool age or above. Two exceptions to this were the studies by Wright, Huston, Murphy, St. Peters, Piñon, Scantlin & Kotler (2001) and by Rideout, Vandewater & Wartella (2003), which studied children from the age of six and below.

Regarding TV and its effect on language and literacy development, the literature seems to indicate that this effect is a function of (a) the type of programs watched, (b) the amount of time spent watching TV and (c) the alternative uses of the time spent

watching TV, as discussed further below. Finally, there is evidence that the relationship of TV-viewing to school achievement could be curvilinear (Williams et al. 1982).

a. Type of program watched

There is evidence that watching certain children-directed educational programs and informative programs might be associated with higher achievement and school readiness skills. In the longitudinal study by Wright et al. (2001) with a multi-ethnic sample of children aged from two to seven from middle to low SES families, watching informative programs for children was related to letter word skills, number skills, receptive vocabulary and school readiness.

Few specific educational TV programs, however, have showed significant positive effects on language and literacy outcomes. Studies have showed that watching *Sesame Street* between the ages of three and five improved school-related skills in kindergarten (Zill, Davies & Daly, 1994) and receptive vocabulary at the age of five (Rice, Huston, Truglio & Wright, 1990). Similarly, watching the program *The Electric Company* improved reading performance between first and fourth grade (Ball & Bogatz, 1973, in Wright et al., 2001). There is also evidence that watching informative programs could have a positive impact on letter recognition and reading skills (Truglio, Huston & Wright, 1986). As a consequence of this evidence, studies such as the family literacy intervention *Early Access to Success in Education* (project EASE), included among their measures of home literacy, a measure of the frequency of exposure to educational programs (Jordan, Snow & Porsche, 2000).

On the other hand, watching general entertainment programs, or adult entertainment programs, has been negatively related to school achievement (Rosengren & Windhal, 1989). Furthermore, it has also been associated with poor letter word recognition at the age of five (Truglio et al., 1986) and with diminished results in reading comprehension (Koolstra, van der Voort, & van der Kamp, 1997). Further, in a study of Dutch children from second to eighth grade, TV-viewing was related to a subsequent decrease in positive attitudes towards reading which, in turn, predicted reading achievement and time spent reading (Koolstra & van der Voort, 1996, in Wright et al., 2001, p. 1349). (For a review, see Wright et al., 2001).

b. Amount of time spent watching TV

Research indicates that children who have access to TV or videogames spend part of their time at home using these resources. For example, in Romero-Contreras et al.'s study ($N=193$) with Costa Rican families from different SES backgrounds (2007), 46% of caregivers reported that when they had free time to share with the child they

watched TV together, while 7% reported that they turned the TV on for the child to watch.

A report from Rideout et al. from the Kaiser Family Foundation, (2010) estimated that children of eight to 18 years of age viewed almost five hours of TV and other screen media a day. Furthermore, in their 2003 representative study with American children, Rideout et al. (2003) found that American children aged six and under spent on average approximately two hours per day watching screen media. Also, in two thirds of these children's homes, TV was on half of the time or more; one third lived in homes where the television was always on or most of the time. Moreover, 43% of children aged between four and six had televisions in their bedrooms.

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Birth Cohort (ECLS-b) (2010), a US-based, longitudinal, observational study with a nationally representative sample of over 10,000 children born in 2001 with diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds found that on average, US preschool children were exposed to about four hours of screen time on weekdays. This screen time included time spent using TV, DVDs, computers, and video games (Tandon, Zhou, Lozano & Christakis, 2010).

c. Alternative uses of time spent watching TV

One of the explanations that researchers have given to the fact that entertainment TV generally has a negative effect on cognitive developmental measures is that TV watching could be displacing other activities of higher cognitive value such as reading or social interaction (Huston et al, 1999; Wright & Huston, 1995), especially since young children frequently watch general entertainment programs with adults who, while watching TV, could be less responsive and therefore provide less linguistic interactions with the child (Wright et al., 2001). Other researchers, however, have argued that there is no evidence to support this displacement theory and that the time children spend watching TV or reading is unrelated (Vandewater, Bickham, Lee, Cummings, Wartella & Rideout, 2005).

There is evidence that low SES children's skills development might benefit more than their more advantaged peers from TV. For example, Comstock (1991) concluded that low SES children's general achievement might benefit from TV viewing and Searls, Mead & Ward (1985) found that low SES's children's reading achievement improved with TV viewing while high SES children did not. As claimed by Wright et al. (2001), this differentiated effect of TV viewing on high SES and low SES children might be due to differences in alternative opportunities for learning provided by their environments.

Discussion

The review above provides abundant evidence that home language and literacy practices are central for children's language and literacy development.

An aspect that also emerges from the review is that, as Burgess et al. (2002) contended, research that aims at studying the HLLC needs to define very clearly what it means by HLLC. The present research is interested in understanding not only the home language and literacy practices or activities but the home language and literacy ENVIRONMENT (HLLC), which, following Bronfenbrenner's theory also includes cultural models or blueprints as well as micro system interactions. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, the HLLC definition is an adaptation of the one given by Burgess et al. (2002): that is to say that the HLLC is a broad construct that incorporates meso and proximal home characteristics that influence the development of the child's emergent literacy skills.

This multidimensional conceptualization of the HLLC has methodological consequences because it implies that it will be necessary to study simultaneously a) the frequency of home language and literacy practices and their relation to outcomes (which are ideally studied through quantitative methods such as correlational analyses, regression analyses and factor analyses); b) the quality of the home language and literacy interactions (which can be studied through qualitative and quantitative methods) and finally; c) the cultural and historical reasons that can help explain those behaviours (which call for qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and/or naturalistic observations in the homes of the children). Consequently, a multidimensional conceptualization of the HLLC calls for the use of a mixed methods approach.

The ethnographic studies reviewed (Heath, 1983; Goldenberg et al., 2005; Lareau, 2003; Purcell-Gates, 1996) provided valuable insight into caregivers' life experiences that have shaped their cultural models of literacy. Similar studies focused on the Chilean or South American population and specifically on low-income families are needed in order to improve our understanding of the cultural and historical causes that might explain the home literacy practices of these specific groups.

This study argues that this multidimensional conceptualization of the HLLC is necessary if a multidimensional view of literacy as a sociocultural and cognitive practice is taken. A sociocultural view assumes that the literacy registers that a family develops and more specifically the knowledge a family has of the school-based literacy register are largely dependent on the context and on the uses that the family gives to

literacy. Hence it is important to study literacy practices in their natural context in order to understand the role they play in these children's lives and also to understand how to introduce the child to new types of literacy (such as school-based literacy, for example) without creating cultural mismatches that could confuse the child and might hinder the child's literacy development. Again one of the implications of this is methodological because naturalistic observations would be needed to discover the characteristics of the literacy registers that are natural to low SES Chilean population. Another implication of this sociocultural approach to literacy is a general concern for discovering these families' literacy registers (as opposed to focusing on their disparities in relation to elements of Western literacy).

In this research, literacy is perceived as both a sociocultural and cognitive practice, which is based on (several) emergent language and literacy skills, literacy foundations, beliefs, environment and knowledge. Each of these aspects can be affected by different home language and literacy practices in an individual or combined way. Each of these, in turn and interdependently, constitute the basis for literacy ability which is a requisite for children to become fluent readers who can derive meaning from text and use literacy to achieve their purposes. Understanding the patterns of influence of specific home language and literacy activities on the different emergent language and literacy skills would provide valuable information for the design of home literacy programs that are effective in enhancing specific language and literacy skills.

Most of the research on emergent literacy and family literacy has focused on English-speaking children and families (or populations from other developed countries such as Dutch families and Dutch immigrants). Consequently it is unclear to what extent the concepts and correlations from developed countries' research on emergent literacy, family literacy practices and connections between home literacy practices and children's attainment apply to Latin American children who not only have a different cultural background but also grow up learning languages other than English. Furthermore, within Latin America, most of the research on home or family literacy practices and their connection to children's attainment has been conducted in Central American countries, with the exception of Susperreguy et al. (2007) who studied Chilean children from different SES backgrounds. The sociocultural and historical context of these Central American countries might be different to the South American and specifically to the Chilean context. This research aims at contributing to the existing literature on Latino population's HLLLE. Specifically, it aims at finding commonalities and variations between Chilean low SES families and other Latino populations previously studied.

A large amount of the research reviewed compared the HLE of children from different SES groups or from different cultures. However, there is evidence that the variability in outcomes is larger within same SES children rather than between different SES groups. Programs such as the US Head Start program have indeed found that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to literacy interventions for low SES young children can be ineffective for certain sub groups. This poses several challenges and questions for the study of language and literacy development of children from low SES backgrounds because it suggests that there might be subgroups within low SES families and that these subgroups need to be identified in order for interventions or policies to have a positive effect. At the same time the question arises: what environmental factors can help explain these large differences in language and literacy outcomes within children of similar SES? One hypothesis is that caregivers with similar SES vary in the type of language and literacy interactions they conduct with their pre-schooler in their homes. In which case, the question that emerges is: what explains these variations in home language and literacy interactions?. Potentially, they could be influenced by family size and structure, or by the cultural models of literacy of these families or the past or present experiences of the caregivers themselves with literacy or by fine grained within-group variations in SES. More research is needed in order to understand this within-group variability of children's language and literacy outcomes and to acknowledge the connections between home dimensions and children's language and literacy development.

Bronfenbrenner's theory of nested systems assumes that the most enduring child outcomes occur from interventions that include a wide spectre of people and settings that are significant in the child's life (Wasik et al., 2001). However, interventions have limited resources and they need certain intensity in order to be effective. Consequently those who design them normally have to choose between influencing many of the child's settings with little intensity and influencing a few of the child's settings but in more depth. This decision should be informed by an understanding of the specific characteristics of the population with whom the intervention takes place: that is by understanding the environments in which these children develop and the mechanisms that affect different components of their environment.

This thesis' specific studies, (I and II), will provide more information about the nature of the HLE as a social context in which Chilean low SES children's language and literacy develops. These studies also explore the qualitative differences within adult-child interactions of Chilean low SES backgrounds and the implications that these differences have for literacy development.

Before proceeding to the results, it is first necessary to set out in detail the methods used to conduct these studies; this is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER II. METHODS AND DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter explains the particular methods used by this research to provide an in-depth analysis of the HLE of low SES Chilean urban preschoolers, exploring the rationale for the various methodological processes selected.

Of primary critical importance is the fact that there are several methodological challenges that researchers face when studying the HLE. One of these is that, even though the HLE is a recognised theoretical construct, its components tend to vary according to the population studied. Furthermore, components of the HLE such as storybook reading, home literacy resources, parental expectations or the frequency of parent-child conversations are associated with different language and literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Van Steensel, 2006; Suk-Kim, 2009) and how they are associated with these skills changes over time (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas & Daley, 1998). Therefore, to explore the components of the HLE of an understudied population, and their associations with the development of language and literacy skills, it is necessary to explore the HLE and the language and literacy outcomes as a set of interrelated constructs or composites rather than as unitary constructs.

This approach reflects Bronfenbrenner's view of the environment in which children develop as a bio-ecological system of nested contexts of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and, as such, the methods for this study consider simultaneously (i) the immediate settings in which the child interacts directly with its social world and (ii) the broader settings in which those immediate settings are embedded, and their relationship to children's language and literacy skills. This research views these broader settings as the result of cultural-historical processes or processes of socio-genesis that have shaped and modified language and literacy use as well as educational and literacy beliefs in the child's family and community (Tomasello, 1999).

The methodological approach of this research is also influenced by Feinstein et al.'s model (2004) of proximal and distal factors that explain the mechanisms of intergenerational effects of parents' education on children's learning outcomes. Feinstein et al.'s model centres on the interaction between parents and children and assumes that an outcome is influenced by distal factors, which exert their influence through proximal processes. As such this study's model is composed of proximal, mediating and distal influences that shape young children's language and literacy development (Figure 1, p. 26).

Moreover, studying the HLE of *Spanish-speaking preschoolers* and their families poses a further methodological challenge as there are few instruments for measuring the HLE in Spanish for which there are reported reliability scores. The present chapter explores these challenges and explains the rationale for the instrument and data used.

Consistent with Gonzalez et al. (2011) and Faulstich-Orellana & D'warte (2010) who claimed that one of the limitations of current theories and conceptualisations of the HLE is that they fail to measure cultural variations in literacy practice thus risking that spheres of the HLE may remain unobserved by the current instruments used, this research uses an exploratory focus with a view to filling this gap and providing information on the specific literacy practices, and literacy beliefs, of non-Western and non-mainstream populations, specifically Chilean low SES families of preschoolers.

The literature on the early Home Learning Environment ('HLE') suggests that, by using a mixed methods approach, such studies can provide more meaningful results and support stronger research inferences as well as provide wider evidence for policy makers and practitioners than would be the case if only one form of data analysis were used (Goldenberg et al., 2005; Siraj-Blatchford, Sammons, Sylva, Melhuish & Taggart, 2006). In addition, mixed methods approaches can provide explanatory power to models that predict important skills such as children's narrative production, receptive vocabulary and emergent literacy (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001) and have proven to be particularly useful to identify variation in the quality of immediate learning contexts (La Russo, Brown, Jones & Aber, 2009).

By using both quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide in-depth descriptions of the HLE and the sociocultural and economic processes that shape these environments, this research aims to increase Chilean educational stakeholders' understanding of the home and family backgrounds of their young pupils. It also aims at shedding light on the connections and disconnections between this background and the typical Western school culture, which these children face in their schools (see Chapter I, section I.1). Therefore this research uses a mixed method approach and is organized into two studies:

- Study I is a quantitative study in which secondary analyses of data were performed. This study aims to increase our understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the home literacy environment of low-income Chilean urban preschool children and of the paths of influence that the home literacy environment has on children's literacy skills at the start of their formal schooling.
- Study II is a qualitative study based on data specifically collected for this purpose.

This study aims at understanding and providing richer descriptions of these families' literacy beliefs and practices and of the home language and literacy opportunities they provide.

The two studies in this research are not independent. Study 2 is nested within study 1 and serves to triangulate its findings. An objective of Study 1 was to develop an HLLC index, which then serves to select the sample for study 2. Moreover the findings from the observations and interviews conducted in Study 2 are subsequently discussed in relation to the data from the Study 1. An objective of the research was for the qualitative study to improve further the HLLC model developed from the quantitative study, as well as to help to clarify some of the possible cultural origins of specific HLLC aspects.

This study seeks to extend earlier studies done with Latino low-income preschoolers' HLLC and specifically to answer the research questions set out in the table below.

The following sections of this chapter explain in more detail the selected sample, instruments and analyses used to explore the research questions. Table 2.1 provides the summary of all the central points of this analytical plan.

Table 2.1: Summary of the Analytical Plan

Study 1: Quantitative Study				
Analyses	Purpose	Research Question	Sample	Instruments
1. Descriptive statistics	- Describe the home language and literacy resources, beliefs and practices as well as the literacy outcomes of the sample under study.	- What are the characteristics of the HLLC (resources, beliefs and practices) of Chilean low SES urban families of preschoolers? For example: How familiar are these families with the school-based literacy register?, What are caregivers' views on literacy learning and on language development? And how can these views help to explain their home language and	N=1132 Preschoolers from low SES families that attended pre-K in Chilean public schools in the Metropolitan region of Chile. This sample is a subsample of the sample used by the <i>Un Buen Comienzo</i> project for their Experimental Study.	- Four tests of the Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey-revised (WMLS-R) applied by the UBC Project: Test 1: Vocabulary, Test 3: Word & Letter Identification, Test 4: Spelling, Test 7: Passage Comprehension - Parent questionnaire created and

		literacy practices?		applied by UBC
2. Regressions	- Provide a preliminary idea of which variables should be included in a predictive model of HLE for Chilean low SES families.	- Which components should be included in a conceptualisation of the Chilean low SES HLE to help to explain in part the initial differences in language and literacy development among Chilean preschoolers from low SES backgrounds?		
3. Correlations	- Analyse the relation between background variables (such as SES or family composition) and the development of language and literacy skills.			
4. Exploratory Factor analysis	- Analyse the relation between caregivers' expectations, language and literacy beliefs and home literacy resources and the four outcome variables. - Reduce the number of variables in the HLE model by providing more information about the factor structure underlying these scales, or how the different variables could be combined in meaningful factors. - Construct a hypothetical model of the HLE of Chilean low SES urban families with preschoolers, that takes into consideration the literature reviewed, the results of the previous regressions, correlations and factor analysis.	- What are the relationships between the different components of the HLE and what are the direct and mediated trajectories through which the different background variables and HLE components exert their effect over the emergent language and literacy skills studied?		
5. Path	- Test the hypothetical model	- What are the relationships		

Analysis	by first conducting four separate path analyses, one for each of the outcomes. Then test the overall path analysis model with all four outcomes included. - Analyse the trajectories of influence within the HLE model.	between the different components of the HLE and what are the direct and mediated trajectories through which the different background variables and HLE components exert their effect over the emergent language and literacy skills studied?		
6. Direct Discriminant Analyses	- Construction of an HLE Index that helps to categorize the families into three groups according to the quality of the HLE they provide. This categorization is instrumental for the selection of the families for the qualitative study that follows.	- What characterizes families with different HLE levels? For instance, what are their family routines, parenting styles, sense of self-efficacy and theories of learning and how do these parents use language and literacy when interacting with their children in the home?		
Study 2: Qualitative Study				
Analyses	Purpose	Research Question	Sample	Instruments
1. Thematic analysis with a coding protocol developed for this study.	- Provide fine-grained descriptions of Chilean low SES families' language and literacy resources, their cultural beliefs and expectations regarding education and literacy development and their language and literacy home practices. For example: explore what meaning literacy & education have in the every day life of low SES urban families of Chilean preschoolers and what type of literacy	- What are the characteristics of the HLE (resources, beliefs and practices) of Chilean low SES urban families of preschoolers? How familiar are these families with the school-based literacy register? For example: what are caregivers' views on literacy learning and on language development? And how can these views help to explain their home language and literacy practices? - What is the role of caregivers' cultural models of language	N= 30 This is a stratified subsample of preschoolers from the larger sample.	- In depth semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) focused on the caregiver's language and literacy experiences, values and beliefs. - A general guideline to be used by the researcher during a three-hour naturalistic observation focused on the child in his/her home

	<p>activities they do with the child at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide fine-grained descriptions of the familiarity that Chilean low SES families' have with the Western school type literacy register. - Understand what characterizes families with similar SES level but that provide different qualities of HLEs? 	<p>and literacy in preschoolers' language and literacy development? For example, how do caregivers' views of literacy acquisition affect the type of support they provide in the home for their children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What characterizes families with different HLE levels? For instance, what are their family routines, parenting styles, sense of self-efficacy and theories of learning and how do these parents use language and literacy when interacting with their children in the home? 		<p>environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coding protocol developed for this study. (Appendix B)
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I. Methods for the quantitative study (Study 1)

I.1 The source of the sample and scope of the current research

The quantitative study of this research is a secondary analysis of data. The children and families participating in this research were selected from the participants in a randomized controlled trial for a professional development preschool intervention called *Un Buen Comienzo* (UBC) (A Good Start). UBC is an ongoing project, which was developed in 2006 by the Chilean nongovernmental agency Fundación Educacional Oportunidad (FEO), the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), the Harvard Medical School (HMS) and which included the collaboration of several Chilean municipalities. It aims to promote health, socioemotional abilities, literacy, and language in Chilean preschoolers from low-income families (for more details on the UBC project, see appendix C).

A UBC experimental study took place in Santiago (Chile's capital city) between 2008 and 2011. During this study, UBC provided two years of continuous professional development to preschool teachers and assistants as well as family sessions for the parents or caregivers of the preschool children. The program was implemented in low SES districts of Santiago and targeted four to five year-old low-income children who attended prekindergarten (pre-K) and kindergarten classrooms in urban public preschool centres. The project aimed to facilitate the development of language skills through enriched interactions between teachers and children in the classroom and also between families and children in the home. It also aimed to promote children's socioemotional and self-regulatory skills as well as improve children's health measured by certain indicators. The teachers from the schools that were randomly assigned to the control group received an intervention of much lower intensity than those in the intervention group. Prior to doing this PhD research, this researcher was involved in the UBC project between 2006 and 2008 designing some of the language and literacy workshops that the teachers from the intervention group attended as well as coaching some of these teachers.

It is important to state clearly the extent to which the UBC data has contributed to the current research. Likewise, it is necessary to acknowledge the similarities and differences in focus and methods between that study and the current research.

From a practical perspective, the UBC sample included low SES Chilean preschoolers who were also the primary focus of interest for the current research (see below). UBC's experimental study collected data with a view to understand the effect that their

intervention had on preschoolers' socioemotional language and literacy skills as well as with a view to understanding the effect of their intervention on family practices and views. It did not consider or focus on the construct of the HLE, which is the primary focus of the current research.

Furthermore, as part of the aforementioned randomized controlled trial, UBC gathered extensive data regarding children's language and literacy development. This was collected by UBC using standardized instruments frequently used with other populations around the world. As such, it provided unique and valuable data to which this researcher probably would not have had access to otherwise. Moreover, UBC's large sample size permitted this researcher to explore quantitatively (using a subsample of 1,132 cases) the direct and mediated effects of distal and proximal environmental components on children's language and literacy skills. Also, as part of its experimental study, UBC collected data on family demographics, parents' literacy beliefs and practices as well as child-directed home literacy practices through a family questionnaire. These aspects were extremely relevant to an objective of the current research, which was to develop a predictive model of the HLE for low SES families with a view to understand the trajectories of influence of different HLE components and their effect on children's language and literacy skills.

Another objective of the current research was to obtain fine-grained descriptions and explanations of the characteristics and variations of the HLE of these Chilean low SES families. To this aim, this researcher conducted observations and semi-structured interviews in the homes of a subsample of 30 children. This was beyond the scope of the UBC project.

In summary, some of the UBC data was extremely useful to address a subset of the questions in this research. Thus, the secondary analyses of data completed for study I were a cost and time effective way to start exploring and understanding the HLE of low SES Chilean families of preschoolers. However, the overall focus of the present research and that of UBC differed. The current research aimed to understand the naturally existing characteristics of the HLE for low SES families to understand the trajectories of influence of different HLE components and their effect on children's language and literacy skills.

There were, however, several disadvantages from doing a secondary analysis of data, which had to be weighed against the advantages. Firstly, this researcher had no control of the design of the parent questionnaire. This questionnaire included several items that were not of interest to the current research and overall it was very extensive. This

could have affected the validity of the data collected. Moreover, it did not inquire about certain constructs that were of interest to the current research in enough depth (such as the type of tv programs watched by the child). However, the data had a good fit with some of the purposes of this research. It allowed for a description of several HLLÉ resources, beliefs and practices and it allowed for regression analysis and correlations between these aspects and language and literacy outcomes. Moreover, the large size of the sample allowed for sophisticated statistical analyses, which were necessary to answer some of the research questions. Another important advantage of using the UBC data was that the information to judge the quality of the data was made available by UBC. As mentioned by Hox & Boeijs (2005, p.598) having detailed information about the operationalization, purposes, data collection details and sampling criteria is important in order to judge if the original data can be used for secondary analyses. These researchers also pose that *“it is acceptable if the limitations of the available data limit the secondary analysis to some extent, for instance by impeding tests of some specific hypothesis. However, it is not acceptable if the limitations of the data make it necessary to change the research question in order to be able to use them at all”*. In the case of the present research, the limitations of the UBC data did not make it necessary to change the research questions. Thus, considering all the advantages and disadvantages, the UBC data was deemed to be fit to use for secondary analysis in the quantitative study of the present research.

Section II.1 in the final chapter of this research discusses in further detail the implications of using a secondary analysis of data.

In summary, some of the UBC data was extremely useful to addressing a subset of the questions in this research. Thus, the secondary analyses of data done for study I were a cost and time effective way to start exploring and understanding the HLLÉ of low SES Chilean families of preschoolers. However the overall focus of the present research and that of UBC differed. The current research aimed to understand the naturally existing characteristics of the HLLÉ for low SES families to understand the trajectories of influence of different HLLÉ components and their effect on children’s language and literacy skills.

I.2 The sample for the quantitative study

The sample for this research’s quantitative study was composed of 1,132 children, of which 564 were boys (49.8%). The average age of the children in the sample was 53 months or 4.4 years. The 1,132 children in the sample lived and attended preschool in

35 different public schools within three districts of the city of Santiago, the capital of Chile.

As mentioned, these 1,132 participants were a subsample of the sample used by the UBC experimental study, which included three cohorts of children. More specifically, the sample used for the present research was a subsample of UBC’s cohort 1 (children that entered the UBC study in 2008) and cohort 2 (children that entered the UBC study in 2009) because they included children that met the following criteria:

- Children whose parents had signed the consent form by April 2010.
- Children for whom UBC had data either on the Time 1 parent questionnaire and/or on the Time 1 Spanish Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey-Revised battery (WMLS-R).

Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the sample in terms of schools, districts and UBC cohorts.

Table 2.2: Sample distribution in terms of schools and districts

	Frequency	Valid Percent	N Schools	UBC Cohort
District 1	309	27	6	1
District 2	350	31	11	2
District 3	473	42	18	2
Total	1132	100	35	

All the children and their families were evaluated at three different times by the UBC project. This study uses data from Time 1, which was taken at the beginning of the first year of preschool. In Chile, this is called *prekinder*. This data was gathered in April 2008 for cohort 1 participants and in April 2009 for cohort 2 participants. The age of the children when they and their families were evaluated at Time 1 was on average 4.4 years old (or 52.8 months old), with a range of 3.27 to 5.28 years.

An analysis of the descriptive statistics of this research’s sample and those of previous surveys and studies conducted with representative Chilean populations shows that the children in this sample were more disadvantaged than the average Chilean preschooler and mostly came from families with low socioeconomic backgrounds. From an educational perspective, 45.5% of the mothers had less than high school education, 42.2% had completed high school, 9.5 % had completed some years of university or technical studies; only 2.8% had graduated from university. These educational levels corresponded approximately to those of the caregivers from the second quintile of the nationwide representative 2012 Chilean ELPI survey (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012). In terms of the working status of the mother, the percentage of mothers working in this study’s sample (56.6%) was below that of the national average for urban areas (60.6%). Finally, in comparison to the national

average, fewer of the children in the sample lived with both parents in the home than the national average.

I.3 Instruments used for the quantitative study

The data for the quantitative study comes from two sources: 1. UBC's data on children's language and literacy skills, which were measured with the Spanish Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey-Revised battery (WMLS-R), and 2. UBC's data on these children's families, demographics and HLE, acquired through the application of a parent questionnaire developed by the UBC Project.

1.3.1 Children's language and literacy skills' data measured with the Spanish Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey-Revised battery (WMLS-R)

Children's emergent language and literacy skills were measured with the Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey Revised Spanish Form (WMLS-R; Woodcock, Muñoz, Sandoval, Ruef, & Alvarado, 2005). The WMLS-R is a major revision of the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey (WMLS) (Woodcock & Muñoz-Sandoval, 1993, 2001) and the tests from the Spanish version were adapted from the parallel tests in English and reviewed by professionals from different regions of the Spanish-speaking world. The WMLS-R was normed on 8,800 individuals between two and 90 years of age, belonging to more than 100 geographically diverse communities from Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, and the United States. For each test, the calibration-equating data was obtained from approximately 2,000 native Spanish-speaking subjects from the US (reviewed by Barata, 2011). Past research has demonstrated high levels of internal reliability and predictive validity for these three subtests and also that the reliability and the validity of the Spanish Bateria tests are comparable to the English WJ III versions (Schrank, McGrew, Ruef, Alvarado, Muñoz-Sandoval & Woodcock, 2005). The WMLS-R battery is composed of seven tests: Test 1: Picture Vocabulary, Test 2: Verbal Analogies, Test 3: Letter-Word Identification, Test 4: Dictation, Test 5: Understanding Directions, Test 6: Story Recall, Test 7: Passage Comprehension. The UBC project only used four tests, however, which measured the following areas:

Test 1. Vocabulary: this test measured receptive and expressive vocabulary by asking children to name the objects represented in certain pictures. This test had a median reliability of .91 in the five to 19 age range (Woodcock, Muñoz-Sandoval, Ruef, & Alvarado, 2005).

Test 3. Letter-Word Identification: this test evaluated letter and word reading identification skills. The first items measured children's abilities to identify some

letters and the later items measured the children's abilities to read some isolated words. This test had a median reliability of .97 in the five to 19 age range (Woodcock et al., 2005).

Test 4. Dictation: this test assessed prewriting skills (for example tracing or copying letters), as well as letterform, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and word usage. The administrator dictated the tasks orally to the child. This test had a median reliability of .94 in the five to 19 age (Woodcock et al., 2005).

Test 7. Passage Comprehension: this test assessed children's understanding of orally-read written discourse. The tasks included matching a rebus with a picture of the object, pointing to the picture represented by a phrase, and also inferring the missing word or words from a provided passage. This test had a median reliability of .82 in the five to 19 age range (Woodcock et al., 2005).

Appendix D shows the test summary and reliability statistics reported by Woodcock et al., (2005) for the aforementioned four tests, for children aged three to five years, which is the range of ages of the sample in the current study.

All 1,132 children in the current study's sample were assessed by UBC through these four WMLS-R subtests at three different times during the two years of the UBC intervention. Research assistants, trained by UBC, administered the subtests individually in the children's respective schools.

Since the current research aims at exploring and understanding the existing HLE of low SES children as they enter preschool, the emergent literacy skills data used was the data collected by UBC during the first of the three measurement periods. More specifically, the data collected at the beginning of (pre-K), which corresponded to April 2008 for cohort 1 students and April 2009 for Cohort 2 students.

The scores from the WMLS-R tests were interpreted using a SPSS syntax created by the UBC team for this purpose (this syntax can be seen in Appendix D).

1.3.2 Children's family and home data measured using a parent questionnaire

Even though the importance of the HLE is widely recognized, there are few instruments for measuring the HLE, which are in Spanish and also have reported reliability scores. This is partly due to the fact that there are few quantitative studies of the HLE of Latino populations and most of these are of Latino immigrants to the US. Hence, they tend to use HLE-measuring instruments in English.

Three HLE-measuring instruments in Spanish, for which reports regarding their

reliability exist, include: 1) Romero-Contreras Family Environment Survey (Encuesta sobre Ambiente Familiar, EAF) (Romero-Contreras, 2006), 2) the Spanish version of the Familia Inventory of family literacy practices (Taylor, 1996), and 3) a version of the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) by Caldwell & Bradley which was translated in Chile in 1979 by a team of researchers led by M.I. Lira from CEDEP (*Centro de Estudios de Desarrollo y Estimulación Psicosocial*).

In Chile, Bustos, Herrera & Mathiesen (2001) applied the HOME to 60 four- to five- year old preschoolers from low SES and middle SES backgrounds and concluded that the instrument was reliable and feasible in the Chilean context. However, there is evidence to the contrary from other Chilean-based studies. For example, in 1979, the CEDEP team applied their translated version of the HOME to a sample of 60 low SES families and then, in 1981, reapplied it to a sample of 60 medium to high SES families. They reported that its validity and reliability was lower than it was reported for the same instrument by US studies.

Similarly, Gonzalez, Taylor, McCormick, Villareal, Kim, Perez, Darensbourg & Haynes (2011) examined the Spanish version of the Familia Inventory of family literacy practices (Taylor, 1996) and provided evidence that the Inventory varied between the Spanish and English versions. Moreover, they also said that there was a poor fit between the model suggested by the structure of the inventory and the results (the Spanish data) they analysed.

Romero-Contreras mentioned two other challenges that are also related to the selection of instruments for measuring the HLE. The first is that some instruments are not appropriate for a study with a large sample because their administration is time-consuming, involving home visits and application on a one-to-one basis (Romero-Contreras, 2006). This is the case for the HOME instrument, for example (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984), which involves an interview with the caregiver and a semi-structured home observation of the parent-child dyad. This is also the case for the Ecological Inventory Form (Baker, Sonnenschein, Serpell, Fernandez-Fein, & Sher, 1994), which gathers data from interviews with parents and through analysis of parental diaries. A second challenge is that some of the instruments require the student to respond; this, of course, makes them unsuitable for studies of younger children.

UBC's parent questionnaire was based on Silvia Romero-Contreras's Family Environment Survey (Encuesta sobre Ambiente Familiar, EAF). The EAF is a survey that has eight components. Its author tested this instrument with a sample of 247 Costa Rican children. Most of its items were relevant in characterizing language and literacy

practices; in fact Romero-Contreras's analysis indicated that all components had moderate reliability as assessed through the Cronbach's Alpha. Moreover, the EAF also had predictive validity when tested by its author (Romero-Contreras, 2006).

The UBC questionnaire was 18-pages long and had 97 questions, most of which were in multiple-choice format. It considered HLE and family variables. It gathered information about several aspects of the family, including the socio-economic status (SES) (income, working status, educational level of the parents, home equipment), language and literacy resources in the home (number of books, magazines), parental educational aspirations and expectations and developmental and literacy-related beliefs. Furthermore, it asked about home language and literacy practices, such as the frequency of shared reading or conversations with the child. Finally, it also gathered data on aspects that were not considered for this study such as the child's general health, socioemotional development, special needs and it also enquired about the presence of depressed adults in the child's home.

It is important to note that UBC made some changes to the parent questionnaire forms between cohort 1's time 1 (beginning of pre-K) and time 2 (end of pre-K academic year). For example, the questions relating to socioeconomic status (SES) of the family (income, parent education, etc.) were modified and asked in much more detail at time 2 (see below). Since the variables incorporated were important for this study, it has considered the SES data gathered at time 2. As such, this study is based on an assumption that the UBC intervention had no effect on families SES between times 1 and 2 (the beginning and end of the first year of transition).

The variables relating to frequency of watching TV and playing video games and time spent playing outside the home were considered to be important for the present study and UBC only included them in the parent questionnaire from Cohort 1-time 2. Allegedly these practices could have been affected by UBC's first year of intervention, which, in part, emphasized the importance of reducing hours of watching TV and improving language and literacy interactions with the children at home. Therefore, the data relating to the cohort 1 children who had participated in the UBC intervention was not considered for these variables. This had the effect that, for these variables, data for 154 of the 1,132 children was excluded.

The UBC research assistants ('RAs) were responsible for administering the parent questionnaire. Mostly, they handed the questionnaire to the parents during meetings at the children's schools, and ensured it was filled in. However, in those cases when the parents did not attend the meeting at school, some of the RAs went to the children's

homes to gather the information. In certain cases, the RAs filled in the information while the parent answered the questionnaire verbally.

Most of the relatives who answered the parent questionnaire ('PQ') were the mother or the father of the child; however, in certain cases, some other relative or caregiver, who attended the meeting at school or was at home when the RAs visited, answered it. Table 2.5 shows the participants' relationship to the child(ren) they reported on.

Table 2.3: Relationship of the person who answered the PQ with the child

Mother	84.2
Father	6.8
Grandparent	5.4
Sibling	1.0
Uncle or Aunt	1.5
Cousin	0.1
Care taker	0.9
Valid N	1,059.0
Missing %	6.4

Several researchers have pointed out the limitations of questionnaires and self-reports for studying the HLLC. Issues such as social desirability biases or caregivers' difficulty to fully understand the questions and estimating the frequencies of their practices have been underlined. However, the use of survey reports in HLLC studies has been partly validated by the fact that the data they provide has proven to correlate significantly with observational and diary assessments (Burgess, 2002). Also, as pointed out by Sénéchal et al. (1998), parental self reports have the advantage that they allow the researcher to gather information on a wider range of language and literacy beliefs, expectations and practices that otherwise would have to be collected through the application of several single instruments.

I.4 Quantitative data analysis procedures

The quantitative study starts by describing the sample, with the mean, standard deviation and range of different components of the HLLC (such as the expectations of the parents of the child's schooling and the beliefs they held in relation to language and literacy development, the number of children's books in the home, frequency of shared book reading, other print matter shared with the child, frequency of letter and word identification activities at home and time watching TV). The frequencies of these variables are then compared to the results obtained by other Chilean and international studies that have analysed the same or similar components.

Following the descriptive analyses, exploratory factor analyses and correlations were then used to provide a preliminary idea of which variables, combined in which composites should be included in a predictive model of the HLLC for Chilean low SES families.

Factor analyses have been amply and successfully used in previous study for example to determine if different subsets of literacy skills represent the same underlying ability (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony, 2000) and to see if different measures of oral language grouped together (Senechal et al., 1998).

In order to do the factor analyses, variables from the family questionnaire were grouped according to their theme and four theoretical scales were built with related variables. The first one included variables on the language and literacy resources available in these low SES homes. The second group included variables related to language and literacy beliefs and expectations. The third group included variables which assessed the frequency and variety of child reading, writing and decoding experiences in the home. Finally the fourth group included items which measured the frequency of decontextualized conversations in the home.

Four separate factor analyses were then conducted, one on each of the four groups. The second, third and fourth groups of variables mentioned above included between 10 and 13 variables. Through the use of principal axis factoring, the exploratory factor analysis permitted the selection of the least factors that could account for the common variance. The factor analyses thus served to reduce the number of variables, which was necessary to obtain a certain degree of parsimony in the HLLC model.

The exploratory factor analyses were performed using the Mplus 6.11 program. More than 5% of data was missing for each variable so missing data treatment was used. Mplus treats missing data by analysing the frequency of the missing data patterns, after which it imputes data for the missing data and then checks that the assumptions are met. Since the assumption of normal distribution was not met for many of the variables, the MLR estimator was used because it was considered the most robust estimator to deal with violation of the assumption of multivariate normality. Varimax rotation was used because as argued by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) this type of rotation allows for a clearer interpretation of the data, where factors are more clearly distinguished from each other.

The dichotomous variables within each of the theoretical dimensions were excluded from the factor analysis. Since Mplus does not calculate Cronbach's Alpha, it was

calculated manually with the data from the correlation matrix using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Correlations average} * N^{\circ} \text{ items}}{(N^{\circ} \text{ items} - 1) * (\text{correlations average} + 1)}$$

The rotated factor loadings are thus presented as well as the composites that were created with the resulting items.

Then, correlational analyses looked at the relationship between background variables (such as SES or family demographics) and the development of language and literacy skills as well as the relationships between caregivers' expectations, language and literacy beliefs and home literacy resources and the four outcome variables (vocabulary, letter-word identification, spelling and text comprehension). Correlational analyses have been used in previous HLE studies such as the one by Leseman & de Jong (1998) as a preliminary step to path analyses and to improve the understanding of the relationship between background characteristics and home literacy practices and between home literacy practices and language and literacy skills. The present research however goes a step beyond by also including correlations between these components and caregivers' language and literacy beliefs.

Taking into consideration the results of these analyses, a hypothetical model of the HLE of Chilean low SES urban families with preschoolers was developed and is presented. As a first step, four separate path analyses models were tested, one for each of the four outcomes. These models were then compared and their fit indices discussed. The fit of the path models for each individual outcome supported the plausibility of an overall model with all four outcomes. This "overall" model includes distal and proximal components and presents a hypothesis of their direct or mediated influence on the four language outcomes as measured by some tests of the Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey revised (WMLS-R). The results of this overall model, and of the four individual models are compared and commented.

Path analysis had several features that fit well with the specific purposes and holistic perspective of the current HLE research such as a) the flexibility regarding the types of relationships that can be specified in the hypothetical model, b) the comprehensive view it provided of the relationship between distal and proximal variables, or c) the fact that it allowed for several outcome variables to be included simultaneously. Section III in chapter IV provides a more detailed explanation of the advantages of path analysis over other types of regression analysis in relation to the purposes of this research.

This research was informed by the experience of previous studies that explored the Home Learning Environment using path analysis. For example, Leseman & de Jong, (1998) used path analysis to assess “*the relationships between sociocultural and ethnic-cultural background, home literacy, home language, and early language and literacy learning in school*” (p.311).

In a similar fashion to Leseman & de Jong’s study, in the present research background characteristics were considered exogenous variables that predicted home literacy and language practices.

Leseman & de Jong’s conceptualization of home literacy included measures of frequency of literacy-related interactions in the home, but also included measures of the quality of these interactions. Similar measures of the quality of interactions were unfortunately not available in the UBC parent questionnaire.

Leseman & de Jong’s conceptualization of home literacy was mostly focused on shared reading. However, since there is evidence that shared reading is not a frequent practice in Chilean homes, for the purpose of the present research it seemed more valid to include measures of word and letter writing and identification in addition to the measures of the frequency of shared reading in the path model because there is evidence that these practices happen more frequently in Chilean homes.

When analysing their sample that included different ethnic subgroups Leseman and de Jong discovered that background characteristics of the families were strongly associated to home literacy practices and to language and literacy measures. Considering that the present research analyses represents a seemingly more homogeneous sample of mid to low SES Chilean families, it seemed interesting to investigate if minor variations in background characteristics, such as SES, would still be strongly associated with home literacy practices and language and literacy measures.

Finally, the home literacy opportunity facet included in Leseman & de Jong’s study was based on self-reports and measured by a questionnaire. Even though they acknowledged the desirability bias that this might have implied, they argued that none of the analyses indicated that such an effect was present. This supported the use of data from a questionnaire for the present research.

Path analysis is usually considered a confirmatory rather than exploratory type of statistical analysis. However, several studies using path analyses models test the fit of their model, then modify it (by deleting or adding parameters) and retest the new

model. For example, Farver et al. (2006) used a path analysis to first assess the fit of a model that assessed the relations between *“parents’ literacy involvement, mothers’ parenting stress, and children’s PPVT-R/TVIP scores and social functioning, without considering the children’s literacy interest”* and then entered another HLE scale (parents’ reports of children’s literacy interest) to test how much it mediated between parents literacy involvement and children’s school readiness outcomes. Then they dropped some of the non-significant associations that emerged and produced an overall model with acceptable fit.

However, as reviewed by Hox & Bechger (1998, p. 9-10) there is evidence that *“model modification often fails to find the correct model (Spirtes, Scheines & Glymour, 1991), and that models so achieved cross-validate badly (Maccallum, 1986; MacCallum, Roznowski & Necowitz, 1992)”*.

One alternative way of testing the stability of the present research’s model would have been to divide the sample in two groups, test a path analysis model on a first group, modify it until the fit indices were acceptable and then cross validate the model with the second group.

However, in the view of this researcher, path analysis is more a model testing, rather than model producing procedure, i.e. it is a procedure where a model based on theory and knowledge of a specific set of variables and populations is tested. Consequently, a more confirmatory rather than exploratory approach to path analyses was taken in this research.

After the path analysis was conducted, a direct discriminant analysis was performed using the scales from the path analysis model as predictors and a composite of the results of the four outcome tests as a dependent variable. The main purpose of the discriminant analysis was to build an index to help categorize the families according to the quality of HLE provided. As a result, the homes in the sample were then classified into three groups: high HLE, medium HLE and low HLE. A subsample from each of these three groups is used for the qualitative study.

II. Methods for Study II (qualitative study)

The second study provides an in-depth narrative account of the resources, cultural models of literacy and practices present in homes with different qualities of HLE

provision. This study complements and triangulates the findings from the quantitative analyses conducted in the first study.

This researcher conducted a pilot for the qualitative study in a rural area of a central Chilean region during January and February 2010 to investigate themes within the home literacy environment of low SES Chilean children that might emerge during the full qualitative study such as children's home routines, their language and literacy practices as well as caregivers' views and beliefs on education and literacy development. For the purpose of this pilot study a semi-structured interview protocol that asked about these themes was designed. Participants for this pilot study included five low SES Chilean rural preschool children (ranging from 3.5 to six years of age) and their mothers. This pilot study also provided this researcher with the opportunity to practice interviewing and conducting home observations. As a consequence, the pilot study enabled this researcher to reflect on and refine her approach to collecting, transcribing, coding and analysing the qualitative data. In particular, the pilot study was useful for testing the semi-structured interview protocols for caregivers and the use of an MP3 machine, a photographic camera and this researcher's note taking to record the children's home environment and interactions during the naturalistic observation. The MP3 recorder did not seem to pose a privacy issue for the caregivers. However, taking pictures of the homes did; indeed all five caregivers in the pilot study tried to order their homes before photos were taken. In other words, the families did not seem to care if others heard what went on in their homes but were embarrassed to have others see their homes. This embarrassment, in the view of this researcher, disrupted the flow of the meeting and conversation. Furthermore, the anonymity of subjects was compromised in the photos of their home environment, thus entailing an ethical issue. Further, the notes taken by the researcher during the home observation served to capture several environmental details and proved to be critical during the data transcription in order to understand the flow of people in the home, how the child moved in his environment and the non-verbal communication and socioemotional environment in the home. Since little added benefit was obtained from photographs, a decision was made not to use photographs as a data collection tool for the larger study, and to use the MP3 recorder and to take notes during the home observations only.

Two themes emerged during the pilot study, which resulted in new questions being added to the protocol. The first related to the concern that caregivers expressed about the child becoming stressed if they read to the child at home or tried to teach the child letters at home; they were also concerned they should not go ahead of the school in teaching literacy to the child. The second related to the parents' views on TV: in their

view, TV contributed positively to the child's learning of vocabulary and world knowledge. The final version of the semi-structured interview protocol can be seen in Appendix A.

II.1 Participants for the qualitative study (sampling and recruitment procedure)

II.1.1 Criteria for the sampling of the qualitative study

For the main qualitative study, a stratified subsample of 30 families was selected from the 1,132 families in the quantitative study, Study 1. The table in Appendix E shows the basic descriptive statistics of this qualitative sample.

This subsample was stratified in terms of districts, gender and HLE levels. It was stratified in terms of district in a way that was representative of the number of children from each district in the large sample. Consequently 12 children in this subsample were from district two and 18 were from district three. Furthermore, the subsample was stratified in terms of gender so that half of the children from each district were boys and half were girls. Finally, the qualitative sample was stratified in terms of the HLE levels of the families as defined by the index obtained through the quantitative study. Therefore, ten children came from homes that provided low HLE, nine from homes with medium HLE and 11 from homes that had scored high in the HLE index.

The criteria used to select 30 cases from among the 1,132 from the quantitative study also took into consideration other issues. Since the intervention group from the UBC project had attended UBC's family literacy workshops, which aimed at having an effect on their home literacy beliefs and practices, the subsample for this qualitative study was chosen only from the UBC 2010 kindergarten control group, which included 836 children (half girls, half boys).

The ability to participate was also a criterion; for example, several children were no longer attending the schools that participated in the UBC study. Tracing their steps was not an option; consequently they were excluded from the selection.

Self-selecting factors also affected the participants for the qualitative study:

- For example, access to parents was gained through the school principals and kindergarten teachers, thus excluding children from the few schools in which the principals or teachers did not show interest in having the initial meeting with the researcher. Also, caregivers were recruited when they dropped their child off at school or picked up them up, thus excluding children not picked up from school by a caregiver. As a consequence, the qualitative sample included,

by default, a higher percentage of caregivers who were open to receiving a stranger in their homes observing their interaction with their children, than could be said to be the case in reality. This bias can be interpreted as resulting in a proxy of families either with a strong sense of agency over and confidence about their preschoolers' upbringing, or, perhaps, with less awareness of its challenges.

- Also, during the meeting with the children's kindergarten teacher, which always took place before approaching the parents, the researcher asked if there were any homes they believed it could be dangerous to visit. On two occasions teachers pointed out a couple of families or homes where they believed there was physical violence or drug abuse. These families were eliminated from the list of potential participants. This could explain why there were few examples of family dysfunctionality during the home observations.

Allegedly, these self-selecting aspects could introduce a bias and infer that the qualitative study did not include the 'more at risk' families. To check that this was not the case, a comparison was made between the homes in the large quantitative sample and the 30 homes in the qualitative sample in terms of caregivers' SES. As can be seen in Table 2.4, this comparison found that for both the quantitative and the qualitative samples the cases followed a fairly similar pattern of distribution among the three SES levels. In the qualitative sample, however, the parents in the medium SES group are slightly overrepresented in relation to the quantitative sample (approx. 5%) while those in the low SES and high SES groups are slightly underrepresented (approx. 5%) in relation to the large quantitative sample. Therefore it was concluded that these self-selecting factors had not introduced a significant bias hence the sample was found valid for the purpose of this research.

Table 2.4 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative sample in terms of SES

	SES Quantitative Sample		SES Qualitative Sample	
	Frequency	Valid %	Frequency	Valid %
Low SES	491	43.37	12	40
Medium SES	323	28.53	11	36.67
High SES	318	28.09	7	23.33
Total	1132	100	30	100

II.1.2 Preliminary planning for the sampling

In order to understand how to gain access to the families, the researcher talked (i) to the head of the UBC evaluators' team who had directed the people in charge of meeting with caregivers and obtaining information for the UBC parent questionnaires and (ii)

with a post-doctorate student who was doing her research with UBC data and had already collected information from a subsample of parents but had not succeeded in obtaining access to the homes of the children. Both suggested that, in order to gain access to the families, the researcher should respect the school hierarchy, approaching the school principal first, then the school educator, and finally the parents. They also advised that some of the children from the original UBC sample might have left or moved to another school. Neither thought it would be useful to introduce some type of extrinsic motivation, such as supermarket vouchers or some form of gift, in order to increase participation in the study; however, they did underline that caregivers tended to trust the educator so a key issue was to obtain the trust of the educator. Experience gained during the pilot study also indicated that the preschool teacher was pivotal for obtaining information about caregivers, in particular those who might be wary of receiving a stranger in their homes to observe. Moreover, the preschool teacher was also a central source of information regarding which homes could be a safety hazard for the researcher to visit.

II.1.3 Initial meetings with the principals and the teachers

The initial meetings with the principals and preschool teachers took place in the first weeks of June 2010. The researcher met individually with each principal, explained the study briefly and asked to be introduced to the preschool teachers. Most principals did not make extensive comments about the study but seemed to appreciate that they had been approached formally prior to the preschool teacher being approached. Having obtained permission from the school principal, the researcher then met individually with the preschool teacher in each school and exposed the central lines of the study. During the meeting with each teacher, the researcher explained the interview protocol and shared the list of children from their groups that were part of the large (quantitative) sample. Immediately teachers provided information about which children were still in their group and which had left the school since UBC had gathered information at the beginning of the first year of transition. Most of the teachers were very receptive and supportive. Some were openly enthusiastic about the fact that the study looked for predictive factors not only regarding the practices in their classrooms but also in the homes of the children and the practices of the caregivers at home. None of them provided any feedback on the interview protocol or the informed consent form. Teachers were asked what the typical arrangement was for the children to be picked up from school since the ideal way to contact the parents and ask them to participate in the study was to approach them when picking up the child after school. It was also during this initial meeting that the teachers were asked if, based on their knowledge of

the families, any of the homes or families in the sample might present a danger for the researcher (see self-selecting factors above).

II.1.4 Meeting and recruiting the parents

Most parents were recruited when they left their child at school or picked them up. In those cases, the teacher, already aware of which parents could be potential subjects for the study, introduced the researcher to the parent. This was very helpful because parents' trust in their child's teacher made them confide more in the researcher, thus perhaps making it easier for the parent to accept the intrusion of the researcher in their homes.

Some parents immediately agreed to participate in the study and the researcher gave them a card with the date and time agreed for the home visit and the researcher's contact details. In other cases, parents were receptive to the idea but asked for time to think about it or to consult their spouses.

In all cases, the researcher asked the parent for their contact information and called each of the parents either the same day or the day after they had met at the school. During this phone call, the parent expressed their decision about whether to participate in the study or not and where they agreed to, a date and time was scheduled.

II.2 Data collection methods used for the qualitative study

Based on the experience with the pilot study, both direct home observations and semi-structured interviews were used for collecting detailed data on the HLL of these low SES preschoolers as well as to elicit caregivers' educational and literacy experiences. Both of these data collection methods have several advantages and disadvantages, as discussed below.

II.2.1 Direct home observations

There are several advantages and disadvantages to using observations as a data collection tool. A first obvious advantage is the access to the child's natural environment, this is to say that observations permit the researcher to examine directly how the children interact with their caregivers and other family members, as well as with different language and literacy resources in their home environment. In this sense the researcher is the instrument in direct observations (see below for the issues associated with the researcher being the instrument).

A disadvantage that derives from this direct contact between the observer and the observed is that there are several distortions that need to be addressed so that their

effects are counteracted. Some ways in which the current research dealt with these biases were (i) by having a systematic way of capturing information as faithfully and fully as possible (the MP3 recording and the notes taken by the researcher on the spot which served to remind the researcher of what was happening in the home environment during the observation); and (ii) by making a conscious effort during the observations to “distribute my attention widely and evenly” (Robson, p. 324).

One of the major issues or disadvantages when choosing to do direct observations is the extent to which the observer (as ‘the instrument’) affects the situation observed. This is especially an issue in the current research, which aims at exploring language and literacy in the home environment. One way in which studies try to overcome this is by ensuring that the observed is unaware of being observed (virtually impossible in the context of the home environment as well as ethically problematic). Another way in which studies try to overcome the effect of the observer on the observed situation is by ensuring that the observed is accustomed to the presence of the observer to such an extent that they do things as usual as if the observer was not there. Generally this latter way of dealing with this problem is done through repetitive observations performed over an extensive period of time. This was out of scope for the purpose of the current research, which was focused on three subgroups of families (high HLL; mid HLL and low HLL) and had mixed methods. A third way of dealing with the effect of the observer in the observed environment is to have a very detached role as an observer. However the focus of the present research is the Home Environment, therefore one of the main issues was to gain parents’ trust and a totally detached observer could have had a negative impact on this.

Adopting a very involved role as an observer could have compromised this researcher’s role distorting the findings. Thus, for the purpose of the current research the specific observational approach chosen was unobtrusive direct observation. The main characteristics of the ‘unobtrusive observation approach’ are that the observer makes his role clear to the observed from the beginning and that the observer is “*non-participatory in the interests of being non-reactive*” (Robson, 1993, p. 310). This observational approach was chosen for the present research because it lends itself to an exploratory purpose and also lends itself as a supplementary method within a mixed methods’ study. Moreover, it is a midway point between a totally detached and a totally involved approach of the observer during the observation. In order to minimize the effect of the observer on the observed, this researcher tried to engage in minimal interaction with the family members during the observations (for example, by choosing a spot in the home which was out of the way of the family members, by avoiding eye

contact and also by not reinforcing the family members' attempts at interaction). These simple techniques proved to be helpful because in most of the homes, after some minutes of observation (normally 10 to 15 minutes) the caregivers seemed to accept the presence of the researcher and did not seek interaction. The target preschoolers, however, sometimes continued seeking interactions. When this happened a decision was made to respond in a friendly but brief way because avoiding any response seemed to be potentially more disturbing. The observer could have been perceived to be antisocial which could have resulted in parents' distrust and in them possibly reacting during the observations with their child in ways different to those in which they would normally react when not being observed.

The use of a mixed methods' approach, according to which the data from the semi-structured interviews complements and triangulates the data from the observations and the data from the parent questionnaire analysed in the quantitative study was also useful for understanding the extent of the observer effect problem.

Another disadvantage of using direct observations as a data collection tool is that it is time consuming. As pointed out by Robson "*since classic anthropology observation studies demanded between 2 and 3 years of immersion in the community studied ... There is a trend toward a more condensed field experience based on observation*" (Stenhouse, 1982 in Robson 1993).

Since spending years in the field was beyond the scope of the current research, a more condensed field experience based on observation and complemented with other types of data-gathering methods was chosen. As such, the researcher spent approximately four months collecting the data in the field. Of these, the first month and a half (all of May and the first half of June 2010) was spent approaching school directors and other agents who were key in obtaining access to the families, and the last two and a half months (from the middle of June to the end of August 2010) were spent conducting observations and interviews in the homes of the 30 families that complied with the sampling criteria and who had agreed on participating in the study.

Regarding the degree of structure used during the observations, a decision was made to use an approach that was more informal than structured. Thus, although the researcher did not go into the field with a coding schedule, she went into the field with a specific recording device, and with a certain view of how to gather the data during the observation (through notes taken by the researcher and also through the use of a recording device which was placed near the places where the child was in the home

environment). The multidimensional theoretical framework derived from the literature guided the focus of the observations.

II.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are interviews in which the interviewer has a list of the topics they want to enquire about, but they also have a certain freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics (Robson, 1993, p.278).

The flexibility to modify the line of enquiry, to follow up on specific responses, and to explore in more depth underlying issues and views of the interviewee are a major advantage of using semi-structured questionnaires (in comparison, for example, to questionnaires). This flexibility was in tune with the exploratory purpose of the present research because it allowed for new issues to emerge during the interviews.

There are also, however, several disadvantages that needed to be considered with the use of semi-structured interviews. The following are some of these: 1) semi-structured interviewing is time-consuming (for example, one hour of recorded interviewing can take up to eight hours of transcription). 2) If the protocol has not been checked properly, the questions can confuse the interviewee or lead the interviewee to answer a topic in a certain way ('leading the witness'). In this sense, the semi-structured interview protocol was checked to avoid long questions, to put questions in a straightforward, clear way and to eliminate cues which might lead the caregivers to respond in particular ways.

Finally, another typical disadvantage of interviews is that due to desirability or memory bias there might be discrepancies between what people do and what they say they do. This could potentially affect the reliability and validity of the gathered data. In the present research, however, this was in part counterbalanced by the mixed methods approach. Thus, the beliefs and practices reported by caregivers in their semi-structured interviews were contrasted and complemented by those observed during the direct observations and by those they had reported in the parent questionnaire.

II.2.3 General procedures of the home visits

The home visits, during which the family interviews and observations were conducted, took place from the middle of June to the end of August of 2010. At the time of the home visit and until after the qualitative data had been analysed, the aim was for the researcher to be blind to which families belonged to which HLE level in order to

prevent, as much as possible, bias in making observations about what might indicate or confirm a higher or lower HLE.

Most of these home visits were conducted on weekday mornings or afternoons depending on the child's school schedule (some children attended school in the morning only and others in the afternoon only). However, in three cases, parents requested that the home visit take place on Saturday because they worked away from home from Monday to Friday.

The day before the home visit the researcher called each family to remind the parent of the time for the visit. Seven families changed their minds and no longer wanted to take part. Where they provided reasons for their change of mind, these mostly related to family events that the mother was stressed about hence was no longer available (for example, illness of other children or changes in their or their partners' working schedules). In those cases, the researcher revisited the list of potential children for the qualitative study and revisited the schools in order to recruit new parents.

Each home visit included a three-hour observation of the child and his or her naturally occurring activities in the home environment, as well as a semi-structured interview that typically lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. During the home visit normally the observation took place before the interview. This was the preferred order because the objective was to observe a typical afternoon or morning of the child in his or her home environment and there was a danger that, if the interview took place first, both the caregiver and the researcher either consciously or subconsciously might react to the content of the interview during the observation, in particular as several of the interview questions enquired about the importance of literacy and shared literacy activities in the home. For example, the caregiver might consciously or subconsciously alter the 'normal' routine, creating a more literate home environment with a view to it being perceived to be more positive by the observer. Alternatively, the researcher might consciously or subconsciously look for confirmation or refutation of themes introduced in the interview. In some cases, when it was problematic to do the observation first, the visit had to start with the interview. In the two or three homes where this happened (i.e. this was rare), it did not seem to the researcher that the environment changed significantly from the period of the interview to that of the observation.

On arrival at the home the researcher focused on establishing a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and told the caregiver the procedure for the interviews and for the observation. The informed consent form was then read together, with the researcher

explaining it. The caregiver signed two copies (one to be retained by the caregiver and one by the researcher).

II.2.4 Home observations

During the three-hour observation the focus was on the child in their interaction with the home environment. Therefore, the researcher followed the child around the home with the MP3 recorder and took notes of salient aspects and of the general atmosphere of the home during the observation, the child's interactions with the caregiver and their home environment and any print matter in the home. Following Purcell-Gates et al. (2007) the observations also focused on the reading and writing artefacts used in the home and the purposes children or their families had for using literacy. To ensure that the observed interactions reflected the child's typical home environment during the observation the researcher asked the caregiver if what was going on was an example of a typical day for the child.

Most of the homes consisted of several small rooms and, since it was winter, children tended to spend most of their time inside. The spaces in which the observations normally took place were the main living space and in a couple of homes when the caregivers suggested so, the child's bedroom (for further details see below). Typically the main living space was a room with a small dining table and chairs, some kind of heating appliance and a large sofa in front of a shelf which contained the music system, a large TV, several DVDs and CDs and some family photos; often the kitchen was also part of this living place. In a few homes, it also held some books. The principal reason for observation in the child's bedroom, which was rare, was because the child went in there and the caregiver suggested the researcher accompany the child in order to be able to continue with a full observation. On other occasions, the caregiver needed the main living space and asked for the researcher to continue observing the child elsewhere in the home; for example, on one occasion, the grandfather of the child returned home drunk and the mother asked the researcher and child to continue the observation in the child's bedroom where she had all her toys.

Throughout the observation the researcher tried to speak as little as possible to the child and/or other people in the home. However, if the child or the caregiver asked questions or initiated conversations the researcher answered, so that the child or caregiver would feel at ease and also to ensure any concerns they had about the study were addressed. In fact, sometimes speaking for a while about trivial things seemed necessary in order to put the family and the child at ease and create an atmosphere of trust. During the three months of the home visits the researcher was in the last

trimester of pregnancy so the participant families and children typically asked questions about this.

During the observations the researcher took hand-written notes because the pilot study experience had shown these notes to be extremely helpful during the analysis of the data. After leaving the child's home, the researcher generally took further notes describing the general atmosphere of the home visit and the home environment.

II.2.5 A semi-structured interview protocol

For the interview, the researcher and the caregiver normally sat on the sofa or at the dining table in the living room space. Sometimes, when the TV or radio was too loud, the researcher had to ask for the volume to be turned down. In many cases, the child interrupted the interview and the researcher explained to the child that the caregiver and the researcher were in the middle of talking and offered the child a pencil and paper to draw something. As mentioned before, the semi-structured interview with the caregiver was also recorded on the MP3 device.

Following Heath's (1983) and Lareau's (2003) findings on the influence of habits and values on the place that a family and community give to language and literacy, the initial section of the semi-structured interview protocol focused on children's routines and family habits in the home. In contrast, the second section enquired about caregivers' values, beliefs and expectations regarding language and literacy development. Caregivers were asked about their beliefs regarding literacy development and the value of education, their confidence in their children's academic abilities and their concepts of how intelligence develops and their beliefs about their own roles in promoting their children's education and literacy growth. The interview protocol, which is included in Appendix A, also enquired about caregivers' literacy practices and their recollections regarding the place that literacy had had in their upbringing.

III. Data analysis procedures

III.1 Transcription of the audios

The audios from the 30 interviews with the caregivers were transcribed as verbatim as possible. The researcher transcribed three interviews and three home observations and, due to the extensive time required to transcribe each interview and observation, hired three undergraduates as research assistants (RAs) to assist and transcribe the rest.

The length of the recordings and the background noises in the homes posed a challenge when transcribing the data. Typically, all the homes had the TV on all the time and very frequently music was also playing on the radio. In many cases, especially when families lived in an apartment or a public housing block, noises from the neighbouring families were also audible. Two of the RAs resigned after transcribing a couple of cases, so the remaining RA performed 80% of the transcriptions. The researcher checked 25% of the transcriptions back to the audios in order to verify their accuracy.

III.2 Data analysis

The thematic analysis of the transcribed data was performed with the N-Vivo software. This researcher developed a preliminary coding protocol with relevant themes based on the literature review, the research questions and the quantitative analysis. Examples of themes included in the coding protocol were: caregiver attitudes or feelings about the child's school; caregivers' expectations about preschool education; caregivers' self-efficacy in relation to their own life goals; caregivers' views on the importance of observation for learning.

This protocol was then tested by this researcher through a preliminary analysis of the data via an iterative process, which included three rounds of coding with the data from five different cases. This researcher improved the coding protocol between each round and added some emerging themes. After these three rounds of coding, each time with an improved version of the coding protocol, the coding protocol seemed stable enough to proceed with the analysis of the rest of the cases. Appendix B shows the final coding protocol with the different hierarchies of codes and themes and each code/theme definition.

The researcher also trained the RA in the use of the N-Vivo software and the coding protocol, after testing and refining it, as explained above. The researcher and the RA then coded five more cases independently using the final coding protocol (in Appendix B) until an intercoding reliability of 0.80 was achieved. This was to enable the RA to code the data from the rest of the cases consistently with the coding protocol. This was the extent of RA involvement.

Once the data was coded according to the protocol, this researcher produced word documents with all the quotes that referred to each theme or category. Then, within each of these word documents (containing the quotes for a specific theme) this researcher grouped the quotes for each of the 30 children according to the HLLC level of the child's home. So, for instance, within a specific N-Vivo-word document

containing all the quotes about a specific subtheme, the quotes of children from low HLLLE were put together, as were those of the children from the mid and high HLLLE categories. Subsequently, this researcher read each document several times in order to extract the main tendencies or trends for each topic. One of the aims of this first reading was for the local Chilean low SES HLLLE themes to emerge.

This researcher noted the themes that emerged on the margins of the document. Then a short outline of the primary and secondary trends found in respect of each topic was made. Subsequent to this, the researcher went back to the literature to see how and whether these themes correlated with or had been identified in previous research. It was then sometimes necessary to go back to the N-Vivo document to see if the specific categories mentioned by the literature were indeed observable. Ultimately, the researcher developed a quantitative checklist with aspects of the trends for a particular theme analysed. This quantitative checklist was necessary to control how representative a certain qualitatively observed trend was amongst the sample and within each of the three HLLLE subgroups. In this sense, it provided a control from concentrating on cases that were notable and tempting to focus on but not necessarily representative of the views of these families or specific HLLLE subgroups within these families. Moreover, at this point in the analyses, this researcher was immersed in what Goldenberg et al. (2005) refer to as “steaming green Hell of context” ... : thus the quantitative checklist served as an intermediary step and mid-journey pit stop enabling this researcher to get some distance from the data before diving once again into its complexity. An example of this checklist is provided in Appendix F.

Via this iterative process, certain themes and subthemes, which seemed to capture and characterise the backbone of these Chilean children’s HLLLEs, emerged and crystallized. A level of consensus around certain trends and themes emerged and around which specific cases and quotes could serve to illustrate these. This researcher then began to write up these thematic findings, which resulted in three chapters for the qualitative study, one focussing on general learning and parenting views, another one on HLLLE practices, and a third chapter that explored these families’ beliefs in relation to language and literacy development. . As is normal in these types of qualitative analyses, during the writing, new coding categories became clear. It was then necessary to go back to the N-Vivo documents to confirm whether a potential new subtheme was verifiable, in which case it was incorporated into the checklist. One example of a theme that emerged through this iterative process was that of “cossetting versus demanding too much from the child”. Quotes selected to illustrate the findings were translated into English by this researcher and then translated back into Spanish to ensure accuracy.

Two native Spanish-speaking educational researchers also fluent in English checked these translations and provided feedback and comments.

IV. Ethical considerations

The UBC project officially granted the researcher permission to use its database for the purposes of this study, which required the researcher to sign a confidentiality agreement. The researcher followed the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004) for the qualitative study.

Prior to the interviews or observations, voluntary informed consent was obtained from the caregivers who participated in the in-depth interviews and observations.

The researcher explained the process for the interview and observations to the participants. An effort was made to clarify all the issues that were raised by the caregivers.

Participants were told that the purpose of this research was exploratory and not evaluative and that the research would be used for the purpose of a doctoral thesis and to improve the '*Un Buen Comienzo*' project. They were also told that a research assistant would help with the coding of the data, and that the research findings would first be shared with the researcher's PhD supervisor and co-supervisor at the Institute of Education, London and with the '*Un Buen Comienzo*' team and that possibly once the thesis was finished it would be made available for others to read.

Participants were told that they had the right to withdraw or opt out at any time. Participants were also consulted about what steps could be taken to reduce a sense of intrusion and to put them at their ease during the qualitative data collection process; and during the observations an effort was made not to alter family dynamics.

The home observations were guided by a deep respect for the families and the caregivers. This implied that this researcher made an effort not to judge the upbringing practices observed or reported by the parents. The underlying notion was that parents were most probably doing the best they could and that the purpose was to understand (and not judge or defend) their views and practices.

Once gathered, participants' data was treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms were used for all the children and families in the data and conclusions herein presented.

There could have been an ethical issue in the fact that the researcher had previously been involved in the Un Buen Comienzo project and then became an independent researcher (PhD student), and as such collected the data for the current qualitative study. Allegedly, the families under study could have had a previous relationship with the researcher or they could have thought that their child's participation in the UBC project was dependent on their participation in the qualitative study. However, this was not the case because the families in the qualitative sample were from districts that were not participating in the UBC project when this researcher worked in the project. In fact, the researcher only met these children, their families and their schoolteachers and principals of the schools attended by the target children when she approached them for the purpose of the present qualitative study. Moreover, the families in the qualitative study all belonged to schools that were part of the control group of the UBC experimental study. In fact none of the caregivers ever asked a question about or commented on the UBC intervention. A couple of caregivers did recall however that the child had been tested the year before. When this happened this researcher again underlined to them that this qualitative study was not part of the UBC research and the fact that they had signed the previous consent form for the UBC study did not imply they had to participate in the current research.

Another ethical issue stemmed from the fact that while the 30 families under study were all from mid to low SES, this researcher is a professional woman and would qualify as high SES in Chile. Whilst recognizing that educational and socioeconomical background give shape to a person's views, reasoning and assumptions, this research follows previous researchers who have done more complex ethnographic studies such as Lareau (2003) in taking the position that it is possible and legitimate for an outsider to study a certain specific social group to which he or she doesn't belong (p.10).

Power issues could of course arise when an outsider from a socioeconomically advantaged position studies a low SES population. In the Chilean context of great socioeconomic inequality (as described in the introduction to this thesis), there could be a danger, for example, of reinforcing negative stereotypes or deficit theories. This researcher was acutely aware of these dangers and checked for the emergence of these views during the analysis of the data and writing process. Conversely, however it is equally important to acknowledge that in trying to avoid a deficit perspective sometimes achieving balance was difficult. For example, this was the case during the observations and data analysis, when this researcher was eagerly looking out for the presence of authentic literacy practices (used for authentic purposes rather than limited to academic purposes) like the ones that Purcell-Gates (2008) had identified in

a low income Costa Rican Community. Thus, during the first home observations this researcher sometimes found herself keenly looking out for memory notes, shopping lists, book-keeping, or literacy related to cooking and eating or literacy related to parents work places. The possibility of not finding several literacy uses in the homes studied was perceived as something that could immediately condemn the study to a deficit approach. The field notes taken during the observations and the completion and checking of field notes in the immediate hours after a home was visited, were useful tools for detecting this researcher bias. This episode, which could seem like more of an issue of methodological rigour, is also an example of an ethical problem because participants should be able to expect rigour and imposing such specific expectations upon the field and the families is unfair even if (or more so) these expectations are not explicitly known to the families.

Discussion

The introduction to this chapter referred to some of the methodological challenges that a researcher faces when studying the HLE. One of these challenges is that different aspects of the HLE may have different relationships with different language and literacy outcomes (Burgess et al., 2002). This research faced this challenge both in the quantitative analysis - where different components were described separately and their relations to the different outcomes were also separately analysed through regressions, correlations and path analysis, and also in the qualitative analysis, in which the HLE components were treated as different constructs.

Another challenge referred to in this chapter is that there are few instruments for measuring the HLE available in Spanish with published reliability scores and evidence of their reliability. This research avoided this problem by using quantitative data from the UBC project, gathered through the application of the Romero-Contreras- parent questionnaire (2006), which had met the validity and reliability criteria when tested with a Costa Rican population in 2006.

The methodological design herein described was based on the specific purposes of this research and the literature reviewed. Some specific purposes of this study were (i) to provide descriptions of the main components of the Chilean Low SES HLE as well as of the relationships and trajectories of influence between components of the HLE and language and literacy outcomes of the children and (ii) to provide an HLE conceptualisation or model that helps to explain, in part, the initial differences in language and literacy development among Chilean urban preschoolers from low SES backgrounds. This model should include all the components that, according to the

quantitative analysis, turned out to have a direct or mediated influence over the language and literacy outcomes studied. All these purposes called for the quantitative methods used in study 1, specifically factor analyses, correlational analyses, path analysis (SEM) and discriminant analysis.

This research aims at studying the literacy practices and beliefs of an understudied population in order to discover and expose their specificities. Thus, an exploratory purpose underlies both the quantitative and the qualitative studies. The quantitative study fulfils this purpose by producing a model of the HLE that is specific to the population studied, that is to say, a predictive conceptualisation of the Chilean low SES HLE.

By determining the effect size of constructs that measure early home experiences, longitudinal studies such as the EPPE project in the UK (Sylva et al., 2004) and the Home School Study in the US (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001) have convincingly demonstrated the significant importance of the home environment for children's general cognitive outcomes (Sylva et al., 2004) and for specific emergent literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Gonzalez et al. (2011) identified, however, the need for studies that focused on understanding how the HLE relates to outcomes. This quantitative study responds to this need by exploring the factor structure of the HLE as well as the paths through which the different components affect the different outcomes.

The longitudinal studies reviewed show that the magnitude of the effects of HLE components (such as storybook reading) on language development is small. For example in the longitudinal study by Sénéchal et al. (1998) the effect size of storybook reading was .31 in kindergarten and .54 in first grade. This implies that researchers who study the effect of the HLE over language and literacy skills should work with large samples which give them the statistical power they need in order to make the potential associations visible.

Through the study of a large sample ($N=1132$), the present study aims to obtain a deeper understanding of the relationships between distal and HLE components and language and literacy outcomes. Since this research aimed at studying variations of HLE provision within a SES-disadvantaged population (rather than among different SES groups) the large size of this research sample also increased the chances for more specific differences to emerge.

Study 2, in turn, was designed to explore and increase our understanding of complex phenomena such as Chilean low-income urban families' literacy culture and literacy

and educational beliefs, values and expectations, and the connection of these cultural models to these parents' practices and to the language and literacy resources they provided to their preschool children in the home. Along these lines, this research aimed at producing detailed descriptions of the families' HLE. It also aimed at exploring what meaning literacy and education have in the every day life of low SES-urban families of preschoolers. These objectives called for qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and naturalistic observations in the homes of the children, all of which were used in study 2.

As mentioned in this chapter's Introduction, the two studies in this research are not independent. Study 2 is nested within study 1 and serves to triangulate its findings. The HLE index, which results from study 1, serves to identify the specific cases for study 2. The findings from the observations and interviews conducted in Study 2 are discussed in relation to the data from the parent questionnaire, the HLE index and also in relation to the children's outcomes. As a result, the qualitative study further improves the HLE model that results from the quantitative study; it also helps to clarify some of the possible cultural origins of specific HLE aspects. Moreover, both studies provide information that could help to design culturally appropriate observational tasks for measuring language and/or literacy input of parents and children. In this sense, this research supports and inform projects such as the UBC project by providing; a) a deeper understanding of how parents perceive literacy, their beliefs regarding literacy development and the purposes of literacy and how these perceptions and beliefs relate to the parents' experiences; b) more granular descriptions of the home literacy routines and children's home environments; c) an HLE index which could help to identify families in possible need of more guidance in supporting their children's learning; d) information on the different qualities of HLEs within the UBC population.

This approach and its findings responds to the need for Chile to increase its understanding of what constitutes the natural HLE of Chilean children, what are their natural literacy registers and how familiar they are with the Western school literacy register, in order to improve their chances of succeeding at school. This type of research not only serves to extend our knowledge beyond the traditional focus in Western countries but can also serve to inform and improve intervention projects by providing more specific knowledge of the risk and protective factors in children's early learning environments.

CHAPTER III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOME LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ENVIRONMENT IN A SAMPLE OF MID TO LOW SES URBAN CHILEAN FAMILIES WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Introduction

This chapter aims to contribute to the discussion about the characteristics and relevance of the Home Language and Literacy Environment ('HLE') by providing information on several home language and literacy relevant aspects and what they looked like in Chilean urban homes of low SES families, for instance: what types and amounts of literacy resources such as books, magazines or newspapers were available; what were the Chilean urban mid and low SES parents' literacy beliefs and expectations for their preschool children; how frequently did these children do shared reading with family members and how frequently did they participate in decontextualized conversations.

As discussed in Chapter II, the sample for the present quantitative study consisted of 1,132 preschoolers starting their first year of preschool (preK) in urban public preschool centres in Santiago, Chile's capital city. These children had an average of 4.4 years of age and 49.8% were boys ($N=564$). The children and their families were a subsample of the control group that participated in the '*Un Buen Comienzo*' experimental study, which took place in Santiago between 2008 and 2011 (see Introduction). The present study analyzed data about family demographics and parents' literacy beliefs and practices as well as child-directed home literacy practices, all of which was gathered by UBC through a parent questionnaire. It also analyzed data about children's language and literacy development through the children's outcomes according to the Woodcock Muñoz battery scores. (For more information on UBC, see Appendix C).

Throughout the chapter the frequencies for these and other aspects are reported using the valid percentage finding. For most of the variables of interest to the current study more than 5% of the data was missing. This missing data in percentage terms has been provided. In lieu of brevity only some of the tables that describe frequencies have been included within this chapter. All of the tables with the frequencies are however in Appendix G.

Furthermore, tables 3.22 to 3.28 in Appendix G show the mean, standard deviation, valid N and range for all of these variables.

Previous studies that have described the HLEs of different populations have generally focused on a small number of components. For example, some studies have described the frequency and quality of parent-child shared reading (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Jordan et al., 2000; Sénéchal et al., 1998); other studies have described the amount of home literacy resources (Sénéchal et al., 1996; Reese & Gallimore, 2000); while further studies have focused on describing aspects of parental literacy beliefs and values (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier, 2001; Durand, 2010). There are few studies that have focused on or simultaneously described a wider array of HLE aspects from different dimensions (beliefs, resources and practices). This hampers one's ability to have a clear holistic picture of the HLE of specific cultural groups and also to compare HLEs between different populations.

Many of the previous studies of the HLE have also generally focused on describing the differences in HLE between different SES groups within a certain population. A limitation of this is that its implication is that, within a group of similar socioeconomic status, the HLEs are more or less the same. Through the analysis of data from children that attend public schools in districts mostly inhabited by low SES families this study will focus on the variability of HLEs that coexist among families of similar SES. Also, since the data for this study was gathered at the beginning of the academic year in the first year of preschool, the outcomes for the children and the characteristics of their HLE as reported by their parents should reflect any variability among these families rather than the influence that schooling may have over the children and their home environment.

Until 2000 there were very few studies about the characteristics of the home environment of non-Western populations. Goldenberg, Gallimore and Reese and their numerous studies on the HLE of Latino populations in the US and Mexico were an exception. In the past two decades, however, a number of studies have started to look at the HLE of non-Western populations. This is the case for researchers such as Suk-Kim in Korea (2009), Romero-Contreras in México (2006) and Romero-Contreras et al. in Costa Rica (2007).

In Chile, in the past decade or so, Bustos et al. (2001); Susperreguy et al. (2007); and Strasser & Lissi, (2009) looked at the HLE of Chilean families from different SES backgrounds. Moreover, they saw that several of the foreign patterns of variations in HLE among families from different SES groups were also replicated when looking at Chilean samples. These researchers did not fully agree, however, about how adequately Chilean families prepared their children for language and literacy development. For example, Bustos et al. (2001) concluded that language development was one of the

areas most stimulated by parents in the family context and that the quality of the average HLE was adequate. In contrast, Susperreguy et al. (2007) and Strasser & Lissi (2009) both concluded that when compared to families from Western countries Chilean families showed low frequencies for certain HLE interactions (such as shared reading) that in certain environments were positive predictors of language and literacy development.

As discussed in Chapter II, the current quantitative study uses a broad theoretical conceptualization of the HLE informed by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Feinstein et al's (2004) model of environmental influences as distal influences, meso influences and proximal influences (where meso influences might mediate the effects of distal influences on proximal influences and outcomes and proximal influences might mediate the effects of meso components on children's outcomes). According to this perspective, language and literacy development depend not only on the immediate or proximal setting in which the child grows up (such as the mother-child language and literacy interactions) but also on more distal dimensions in which the immediate setting is embedded such as the language and literacy resources or cultural models of literacy (including aspects such as the caregivers' mindset, their educational and literacy-related beliefs, sense of self-efficacy and views regarding their roles in their children's education and literacy learning). As a consequence, the results, which will be presented in this chapter, will be grouped according to the dimension of the model they represent: firstly, the distal influences that could potentially affect the HLE and then the meso and proximal components of the HLE.

Through the description of these characteristics a picture of Chilean urban mid and low SES children's HLE will start to emerge. The following chapters will then add detail by analyzing the relationship between different HLE components and providing detailed qualitative descriptions of the HLE.

I. Distal demographic factors that could potentially influence the HLE

A hypothesis of this study's theoretical model, is that parental education, occupation, family income and family size or number of siblings have a distal direct and a mediated influence on the language and literacy development of the children in the sample (see Chapter I for more detail).

This first section describes the frequencies of these variables and other distal factors for our sample of low SES Chilean families. In this way, other possible aspects of the SES or demographic components (such as home access to books, computers or other

literacy resources) are not included here but are considered in other dimensions of this research's theoretical model (see meso and proximal influences).

I.1 Family structure

Most families surveyed (94.35%) answered the questions related to family structure. In 46% of these cases, the children lived with both their mother and their father. However, in almost as many (42%) the children lived with their mothers but not with their fathers. The recent Chilean ENPI survey (Unicef, 2010) that worked with a national sample of urban children from all SES backgrounds found that 62% of Chilean urban children younger than six years of age lived with their mother and father, while 32% lived with their mother only. Likewise, in the Chilean Encuesta Longitudinal de Primera Infancia or Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (ELPI) survey, which was representative nation-wise (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012) in more than 95% of the homes surveyed the mother lived with the child and in more than 65% both parents lived with the child.

The ELPI showed, however, that the largest percentage of homes in which both parents lived were from the highest income quintiles. Consequently, in terms of both parents living at home the children in the present study's sample were more disadvantaged than the average Chilean child of up to six years of age.

On average the homes in the sample were inhabited by three adults, 1.5 children younger than six (including the target child), and 1.2 children of between seven and 17 years of age. It is interesting to note that, while more than 40% of the children in the sample did not live with their fathers, the average home in the sample had three adults. This was indicative of family arrangements that were different to the 'two parents and children' model. This could affect the HLLE since it implies access for the children to more adults with whom to have language and literacy interactions. The frequencies described above also showed that in most of the homes the target child was the only child younger than six years of age.

Finally, in terms of family structure, around 9% of the children in the sample lived with neither their mother nor their father and their main caregivers were other close relatives such as uncles, aunts or grandparents.

I.2 Attendance at a child-caring centre before attending preschool

In the present sample, 48.6% of the children had attended a nursery or child-caring centre before attending preschool ($N=1,132$, Missing %=5.5).

Attendance at a child-caring centre seemed to be above the national average for this study's sample. According to the 2009 version of the governmental CASEN survey, only 37.4% of Chilean children younger than five years of age had attended an educational centre (with 52.6% of children from the highest quintile attending, in contrast with 32.3% of children from the lowest quintile), (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile, 2009).

Furthermore, the results from the 2012 ELPI sample indicated that centre-based early childhood care was not necessarily caregivers' preferred option. In fact 56.9% of the caregivers in the ELPI sample considered that the person caring for the child should be someone "close" or "trustworthy" and 22.3% considered it ought to be a relative who should take care of the child in the child's own home (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012).

I.3 Socio-economic level of the family

The data obtained on parents' socio-economic levels should be read with caution because, for all the different measured variables (education, working status, occupation and monthly earnings), around 30% of the data for the fathers and 20% of the data for the mothers was missing. Moreover, the percentage of parents' answers missing for SES-related questions was higher than that for other variables in the questionnaire. Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in Appendix G show the frequencies for these variables.

The data available indicated that the families of the children in the sample were mainly from low SES backgrounds.

1.3.1 Parents' education

45.5% of the mothers in the sample had less than high school education, 42.2% had completed high school, 9.5% had completed some years of university or technical studies and only 2.8% had graduated from university. These educational levels would correspond approximately to those of the caregivers from the second quintile of the 2012 Chilean ELPI survey (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012).

As can be seen in Table 3.1, a comparison of the percentage of fathers and mothers who had completed high school deemed that both groups were not too different (approximately 42% of the mothers and 39% of the fathers). However, the fathers in the present study's sample tended to have more years of education than the mothers, as the percentage of mothers that had not completed primary or middle school was almost double that of fathers (12.4% versus 7.6%). The percentage of fathers that had studied beyond high school was higher than that of the mothers (15% versus 12%). In

this respect, it is worth noting that, when studying the Latin population in the US, Goldenberg et al., (2005) found evidence that familiarity with the higher education system through the experience of relatives correlated with kindergarten and first-grade achievement and teacher ratings.

1.3.2 Parents' working status

Regarding their working status, caregivers who answered the questionnaire reported that 56.6% of the mothers in the sample ($N=906$) were working, in contrast with 96.7% of the fathers ($N=784$). According to a poll by the Chilean NGO Comunidad Mujer (Comunidad Mujer, 2010) Chilean women between 18 and 65 years of age from urban areas increased their participation in the labour market from 43% to 60.6% between 1992 and 2009. Therefore, in terms of the working status of the mother this study's sample had a smaller percentage of working mothers (56.6% versus 60.6%). In a survey conducted by Bravo & Medrano (2012), which was representative of the urban population of Santiago in December 2011, male participation in the labour market was almost 73%, while female participation was 48.7%. In comparison to that survey, the frequencies obtained in this study's sample showed a bigger gap between the percentage of mothers and fathers participating in the labour force. Again, this seemed to indicate that the families in this study's sample were more disadvantaged than the average family of Santiago.

Chilean women's labour force participation has been shown to be determined not only by human capital variables such as age, schooling, marital status and number of children but also to be more affected, and negatively, by cultural characteristics such as sexism and conservative values (Contreras & Plaza, 2004). In fact, in the 2012 ELPI sample, among the main caregivers (96.6% of whom were the mothers), 24.6% of those not working stated that they did not work because they had no one to leave their child with, 24.4% stated that they did not work because they believed nobody looked after their child better than they did and 28.4% stated they did not work because of the household chores they had at home. Furthermore, the 2012 ELPI survey also evidenced that: a) in all quintiles Chilean caregivers of children under six years of age tended to consider that "the woman should dedicate herself to taking care of the children and working partially" b) 73% of the main caregivers (the vast majority of whom were women and also the child's mother) declared they were the ones who most frequently did the rest of the household duties such as doing the laundry and cleaning, while 67.7% declared that they took care of the child by themselves without anyone else's help (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012).

1.3.3 Parents' occupation

In the current study's sample, mothers' most common occupations were housewife (47%) followed by service occupations such as cashier or waiter (12.3%) and domestic help (9.9%). The fathers, on the other hand, most frequently worked in jobs not specified in the survey (24.7%) followed by construction (23.6%) and service occupations (16.6%). Only 5.8% of mothers and 7.1% of fathers did some kind of administrative job such as secretary or receptionist, which would presumably involve a higher amount of literacy use in comparison to other jobs (such as working in construction or as a farm worker). This could prove relevant to the present research because according to Reese, Gallimore and Goldenberg (1999) fathers' job-related literacy correlated with frequency of home literacy learning opportunities, ratings of the home literacy environment and also the child's reading achievement (Goldenberg et al., 2005).

1.3.4 Parents' monthly earnings

Looking at the earnings of the parents of the children, only 5% of mothers in the sample and 20.4 % of fathers earned more than \$300,000 Chilean pesos per month in their current or last job. According to the above mentioned study by Bravo & Medrano (2012), which included urban people from all quintiles, the median monthly salary was \$280,000 Chilean Pesos while the average was \$474,000 Chilean Pesos.

Unfortunately it was not possible to calculate the total monthly income of the families under study with the data from the parent questionnaire because there was no information about how much economic support was provided by fathers who did not live in the home (which accounted for 52% of the fathers of the children in the sample). Also there was no information about any subsidies that the families might have been receiving or about the earnings of other family members that lived in the home (such as aunts or uncles, older siblings that worked, grandparents, partners of the mother or father), who could have been contributing to the total family income.

II. Meso level HLE components that might have a direct or mediated influence on language and literacy development

The present study aims not only at describing existing practices but also at understanding the parental beliefs that were at the basis of the language and literacy resources and practices that parents provided their children within the home.

This is because, following Feinstein et al. (2004), one of the hypotheses of this study was that caregivers' values, beliefs and expectations as well as their past and current

experiences with literacy could help to explain the HLLC they provided to their children. In other terms, the assumption was that the environments in which children's literacy development unfolded had a historical foundation relating to their caregivers' sociocultural and historical experiences with literacy and institutions, and their beliefs and attitudes about language and literacy.

As such, the present study's theoretical model of the HLLC includes as meso influences: (i) caregivers' cultural models of literacy (their beliefs, expectations and attitudes about, for example, the purposes for literacy and about how it develops) and also (ii) family literacy resources (such as number of books or magazines at home and environmental print).

II.1 Caregivers' beliefs relating to literacy development

The data obtained from several questions in the survey provided relevant information on the caregivers' cultural models of literacy acquisition and development, for instance (i) whether their perspective of literacy learning was more holistic or skills-based, (ii) what roles they believed they played as parents in their child's literacy and educational development, as well as (iii) their educational and literacy-related aspirations and expectations for the child.

II.1.1 Parents' perspective of literacy learning: holistic or skills-based

Research indicates that low SES parents tend to have a more skills-based approach to literacy learning than their more advantaged peers. Research also suggests that parents with more skills-based beliefs around literacy learning engage in less encouragement of literacy activities than those with more holistic views. Moreover, parents with a more skills-based view of literacy tend to focus on teaching discrete literacy skills (such as decodification or fluency) in a sequential manner, as opposed to integrating literacy learning in a meaningful context and/or teaching reading and writing in conjunction through a wider range of activities. (For a review, see Lynch et al., 2006).

While studying Latino mothers in the US, Madding (1999) found that they thought children could not learn to read until they were five years of age. Likewise, Goldenberg et al. (2005) concluded that Latino parents believed literacy development started when children began formal schooling and, as a consequence, they did not typically create preschool literacy opportunities for their children. Susperreguy et al. (2007) found a similar tendency in Chile: while studying the literacy beliefs and home practices of 188 Chilean families from different SES levels they found that those families thought that five-year-old children could write small sentences but could not read a story by

themselves. This idea seemed consistent with a maturational view of literacy development.

Consequently, the hypothesis of this researcher regarding the views of this study's sample's on literacy learning was that the caregivers would probably hold a maturational view of literacy development. Thus, they were expected to start relatively late with home literacy activities or the provision of literacy material at home. Furthermore, based on the literature reviewed, the parents in the sample were expected to hold more skills-based rather than holistic views on literacy learning.

Appropriate age for giving books to children: almost 90% of the sample gave their opinion on what they considered to be a good age for handing books to children. The data seemed to support the findings from previous research with other Latino populations: thus, even though there was a wide range (0 to ten) of ages mentioned as appropriate for handing books to children, the average age was quite high (4.2 years) and more than 20% of caregivers considered that a good age to start giving books to children was six or more years of age.

Appropriate age to start reading to children: when asked about a good age for parents or older siblings to start reading to children, the average age was 3.4 yrs. Only 18.5 % of the parents considered that a good age for parents or siblings to start reading to children was one-year old or younger. This can be contrasted with studies that looked at Western middle class parents: for example, in Burgess et al.'s study (2002) with Caucasian children from Florida, on average parents reported that they had started reading to the child at 7.32 months of age. In their study with a Chilean sample, Strasser & Lissi (2009) saw a strong correlation between this aspect and SES and found that 19.3% of the Chilean preschoolers' mothers in their sample with 12 or fewer years of education started reading to the child before he/she was one year old, while 56% of the mothers in the sample with postsecondary education did so.

Likewise, in their study, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that the age at which parents started reading stories to the child had a significant negative correlation with parents' schooling ($r = -0.184$, $p < 0.05$), so that parents with more years of education initiated shared reading of storybooks earlier on. Consequently, for the present sample of low SES Chilean parents it was expected that they would consider it appropriate to start reading books to children relatively late on, compared with their more advantaged peers.

Tables 3.4 (in the following page) and 3.5 (in Appendix G) summarize the views of the caregivers in the sample.

While for the variable “appropriate age to start reading to children” the range of answers in the current sample was wider and the standard deviation higher than it was for the variable on the “appropriate age for handing books to children” ($SD=2.1$ versus $SD=1.6$), almost 24% of the respondents considered that children under three years of age should be read to. In other words, it was interesting to note that caregivers, on average, would consider reading to their three-year old more appropriate than handing them books for them to explore by themselves. This seemed to point towards a controlling view of literacy learning. Again this confirmed the literature reviewed by Leyva et al. (2008), which indicated that Hispanic mothers tended to make more unilateral decisions, to be more intrusive and to have more rules and more physically controlling behaviours than European American mothers.

Table 3.4 Appropriate age for child to start reading

	What do you think is a good age to start giving books to children?	What do you think is a good age for parents or siblings to start reading to the child?
0	0.7	4.0
1	6.4	14.5
2	7.6	15.2
3	13.9	17.4
4	32.5	25.3
5	17.2	10.3
6	15.9	8.3
7	4.4	1.4
8	0.8	1.6
9	0.2	0.3
10	0.4	0.7
More than 10	0.0	1.0
Valid N	1,015	1,005
Missing %	10.3	11.2

Activities that could help the child read or write later on: caregivers were asked how much the following activities helped the child to read and write later on: taking the child to preschool; talking to the child or telling the child stories; reading books to the child; playing, singing and other activities. More than 92% of caregivers answered these sets of questions and 85% or more of the parents considered that all of these activities helped the child later on to read or write “a lot”. Reading books to the child was the activity most valued, followed closely by talking to the child and telling him/her stories and then by singing songs to the child. All these activities were considered by more than 90% of caregivers to help “a lot”. Taking the child to preschool was considered to help “a lot” by 89% of caregivers and playing with the child was considered to help the child “a lot” by 85% of caregivers. 168 people mentioned “other activities” that also helped the child to read and write later on. Among the activities specified were: painting, drawing, cutting or copying pictures (19 respondents), taking the child for walks or trips (18), dancing (9), watching educational programs (8),

watching movies or cartoons (6), cuddling and support by the family and educator (6), eating and cooking (5), making poems and riddles (3), doing homework (3) and teaching the child to pronounce well (2). Six caregivers mentioned “drawing letters” as an activity that helped the child to read and write later on. This contrasted with the findings of Susperreguy et al. (2007) where parents indicated that teaching the child letters was very important for their reading development.

II.1.2 Parents’ views on parental and educator roles

Roles of the caregiver and the educator: Parents were asked what they thought was the main role that they and the child’s educator played in the current life of the child. The answers, which can be seen in table 3.6, showed more disparity around caregivers’ perceptions of their own roles rather than that of the role of the educator. Keeping the child safe and healthy was considered the main role of the caregiver by almost 54% of parents while 28% considered that teaching the child to relate well to others was their main role. Teaching the child skills for school was considered to be the educator’s main role by more than 76% of the parents while only 15% considered it to be their main role. This evidence is consistent with the findings of Reese et al. (1995) and of Reese & Gallimore (2000) with respect to Latino parents in the US, which indicated that, during the preschool years, such parents do not see the promotion of early literacy as part of their role.

Parents’ views on their roles and those of the educator reflected the importance these parents gave to their task of socializing the child. Moreover, it strongly highlighted how these parents considered that protecting the child was one of their main responsibilities. The qualitative study that follows will explore the specific dangers that these parents perceived in their children’s surroundings in more depth.

Table 3.6 Caregiver’s Beliefs- Role of caregiver and teacher

	Keep the child safe and healthy	Teach the child skills for school)	Teach the child how to relate well with others	Other	Valid N	Missing %
What is the main role you play in the current life of the child?	53.9	15	28.1	3	1,040	8.1
What is the main role the teacher plays in the current life of the child?	4.5	76.3	18	1.3	1,036	8.5

II.1.3 Parents’ literacy-related aspirations and expectations for the child

Expected difficulty for learning to read: only 0.6% of the caregivers indicated that the child already knew how to read. Despite this, parents tended to consider that learning to read would be easy or at least moderately hard for their child. In fact, almost 60% of

the caregivers who answered this question ($N=1,065$) expected that learning to read would be easy for their child (see table 3.7 in Appendix G).

This perspective could be indicative of a parental tendency to have a high opinion of the child's abilities to acquire new skills. It could also reflect a skills-based view of literacy learning, where reading is considered a discreet skill that children can acquire swiftly once they enter school or are mature enough. This view contrasts with a more holistic view of literacy learning, which sees it as a process that depends on the development of several different skills and that starts early on in the child's life through the development of emergent language and literacy skills.

II.2 Caregivers' educational aspirations and expectations for their children

Expectations and aspirations for the child's education: there is evidence that parental expectations for children's educational attainment are associated with educational outcomes and that their early expectations tend to hold throughout the child's schooling years (Entwistle et al., 2004). Parent's aspirations in this sample were considerably higher than their expectations. While 92% of the caregivers in the sample *wanted* their child to obtain a university degree, 63% of them *expected* this to happen. Whereas 18% of parents expected the child to obtain a technical degree, a similar number of parents, 17%, expected them to finish high school.

These expectations contrast, however, with the reality of low SES students' access to higher education. The data provided by the CASEN 2011 survey found that in 2011 only 22% of Chilean young people (8 to 24 years of age) in the lowest two deciles attended higher education (university or technical studies) (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile, 2012, b).

Urzúa (2012) found that Chilean parents of public school children had increased their educational expectations over the past decade. Thus, while, in 1999, 30% of them expected their children would go to university, by 2009 this number had risen to 70%. Furthermore, parents from the lowest quintile raised their expectations that their child would attend university from 18% to 63%. Thus, one could conclude that the parents in this study's sample were representative of the educational expectations of parents from the first SES quintiles.

A comparison of these expectations and aspirations with those obtained by Romero-Contreras (2006) for a sample of Costa Rican parents revealed that the current sample of Chilean low SES parents had higher *aspirations* than those of Costa Rican low SES parents. Specifically, 92% of Chilean parents versus 80% of Costa Rican parents wanted

the child to obtain a university degree. The *expectations* held by the parents, however, were much more similar with 63% of Chilean parents versus 60% of Costa Rican parents expecting that the target child would reach that educational level.

The educational expectations reported by parents in this sample were also higher than those reported for US low-income parents. For example, after analyzing data from 2003 and 2007 National Household Education Surveys, researchers from Child Trends reported that approximately half of low SES North American parents expected their children to attain a bachelor’s degree or higher (Child Trends, 2010).

Ostensibly, the high educational expectations reported by the parents in this sample might partly have been a by-product of the social and educational turmoil experienced in Chile in 2009 and 2010 when the data for this study was gathered. As explained in this research’s Introduction (see p. 17), during these years, students, as well as other educational stakeholders, grouped together and pressurized the government and parliament to change the financial structure of tertiary education, which depended greatly on family funds or access to loans. The high educational expectations of the parents in the current sample might therefore have reflected an atmosphere of potential change in the education system.

In any case, in the light of the higher education attendance rates found by the CASEN survey in 2011 (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile, 2012, b) and the expectations held by parents in more developed countries such as the US, the high educational expectations of the low SES Chilean parents in the current sample seemed unrealistic and were interpreted as a reflection of the belief they had that access to university education would continue to increase over the next decade.

At the same time, a question arose about whether these parents’ high educational expectations might also have been a reflection of these parents’ lack of familiarity with the skills that university education demands from students.

Table 3.8 Educational aspirations and expectations

	Do you think the child will be able to finish...?	Would you like the child to finish...?
Primary education & Middle school	2.3	0.1
High school	16.6	1.3
Technical education	17.9	6.4
University	63.1	92.2
Valid N	1,042	1,046
Missing %	8	7.6

Expectations related to preschool: almost 92% of the caregivers indicated that their main reason for sending their child to preschool was so the child could learn basic skills or abilities that would prepare him for primary education; 5% reported their main reason was so that the child could share with other children and 3.2% indicated they sent their child to preschool mainly so that he or she could be in a safe place while the main caregiver was working. It can be inferred from this that most caregivers believed school would demand certain skills or abilities from the child and that by attending preschool the child would acquire those skills more easily than at home.

Parental aspirations related to preschool education: parents were asked to mention two positive attributes they would like their child to have in first grade. The responses to this question can be interpreted as a proxy for parental aspirations relating to preschool education since one can assume that parents see children's first grade attributes as something that could and should be developed in preschool. The attributes caregivers mentioned were classified into four categories: (i) those related to learning and development (such as "learning to read", "being a good student" and "learning to write"); (ii) those related to responsibility and obedience (such as "being respectful", "obedient" and "responsible"), (iii) those related to the development of social aspects and personality (such as "having high self esteem", "being sociable" or "friendly"); and (iv) other aspects (such as "express his feelings better", "more sporty", "more curious", "improve his understanding of instructions"). As table 3.9 in Appendix G shows, and in line with caregivers' main reasons for sending the child to preschool, most caregivers aspired that the child would have acquired attributes related to learning and development by first grade.

II.3 Home language and literacy resources

II.3.1 Number of children's books and other books in the home

Through the parent questionnaire, caregivers in the sample were asked about the presence of literacy resources such as children's books or other books in their homes as well as newspapers and other resources that could be related to language and literacy development (television, DVDs, computer, mobile phone, etc.). Previous research in Western culture countries (Sénéchal et al., 1996) and with the Chilean population (Susperreguy et al., 2007; Strasser & Lissi, 2009) has shown that the number of children's books in the home correlates with parents' educational levels and children's language and literacy outcomes. Moreover in a 2004 survey in the Metropolitan Region of the country, the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes & Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, reported that only 39.7% of the population surveyed

(1524 Chileans above 15 years of age) had read a book other than school text during the past 12 months (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2004).

The average number of children's books that parents in the current study reported to have was 12.5, while the average number of other books was 24.5. These numbers should be interpreted with caution, however, because some extreme cases pulled the average up. Ten people reported that there were 100 or more children's books in their homes, and seven people reported having more than 200 other books at home. There was even one caregiver who reported having 600 children's books and 1,000 other books at home. These extreme cases raised some suspicion since almost all of the 30 homes visited for this research's qualitative study had less than five children's books and less than ten other books. The extreme cases could be true cases of families that have invested more in book resources but they might also be the result of a desirability effect in the answers to the survey. They could also represent special circumstances; this was the case in one of the homes observed for the qualitative study where there were hundreds of books in the home because an uncle who lived with the child's family traded old books in flea markets. Excluding the three extreme cases in which the family reported owning more than 150 children's books, the average drops from 12.5 to 11.3 and excluding the four extreme cases reporting having more than 300 other books, the average for this variable drops from 24.5 to 22.4.

The number of children's and other books in the homes reported by the families in the current sample are higher than those reported by previous studies with the Chilean population:

- According to the findings of Susperreguy et al. (2007), even though their sample included Chilean families from higher SES levels, the average home had around seven children's books ($N= 188$, $M= 2,72$ where 2= 2-9 books and 3= 10 to 30 books).
- Strasser & Lissi (2009) also report that only 27.5% of the mothers in their sample with 12 or less years of education had ten or more children's books at home.

Finally, the number of children's books reported by the families in the current study also seems higher than those reported by Bustos et al. (2001) who applied the HOME instrument to a sample of 60 Chilean preschoolers with different SES levels, and reported that 65% of the total sample, and more specifically 97% of high SES children but only 33% of low SES children, had more than ten children's books in their homes.

The number of children’s books and other books in the home in the current sample was also higher than that in the findings of Silvia Romero-Contreras’s research with Costa Rican low SES families (2006), in which 70% of the families reported owning ten or fewer other books while 75% reported owning ten or fewer children’s books and 40% of the households had 16 or more other or children’s books.

The number of books owned according to the current sample is, however, similar to that reported by the NCES (2000) for Hispanic families in the US (25 books or fewer in the homes) and for US families with school-aged children (25 or more books at home).

II.3.2 Newspapers, and other home language and literacy resources

54.2% of caregivers in the survey reported having daily newspapers at home. This contrasts with the findings of Bustos et al. (2001) who reported that only 12% in their sample bought and read the newspaper on a daily basis (representing 17% of high SES families and 6% of low SES families in their sample). This large percentage of families reporting having daily newspapers at home also contrasts with what was observed during this study’s home observations with a subsample of 30 families: very few newspapers and almost no daily newspapers were seen.

Music systems and radios, which could conceivably constitute language and literacy resources for the children, were reported to be present in around 90% of the homes surveyed in the current study, while telephones (mobile or land line) were reported to be present in 95% of the homes. Table 3.10 in Appendix G shows in detail the frequencies for these resources.

Table 3.10 Other home language and literacy resources

	Yes	No	Valid N	Missing %
Newspapers	72.3	27.7	1,065	5.9
Daily newspaper	54.2	45.8	1,053	7
Television	99.7	0.3	1,061	6.3
Music or sound system	89.3	10.7	1,062	6.2
Radio	90.6	9.4	1,058	6.5
Telephone (landline or mobile)	95.7	4.3	1,053	7
Computer	52.6	47.4	1,054	6.9
VHS	39.7	60.3	1,041	8
DVD	88.6	11.4	1,057	6.6

III. Micro level components of the HLLE that might have a direct influence on the child’s language and literacy development

The current study’s model is based on the premise that micro level home practices with language and literacy are proximal influences that have a direct influence on children’s

language and literacy outcomes. These interactions include all those in which the child actively engages with language and literacy, either with the support of a more competent person (such as a caregiver, sibling or another member of the household) or through the use of a device such as video games, TV, books, magazines or others. These proximal factors mediate the effect of the meso influences described in the previous section.

Research indicates that the influence of these interactions on outcomes depends on their quality (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hoff, 2006). However their frequency, which will be commented on in this section, has also been shown to be relevant for the development of children’s language and literacy skills.

III.1 Child’s reading practices in the home

The parent questionnaire asked families about the occurrence and frequency of the child’s reading practices at home either by themselves or with other family members. Table 3.11 summarizes some of the results.

Table 3.11 Preschoolers lone and shared reading frequencies in the home

	Never or almost never	Once or twice per month	Once or twice per week	Three or more times per week	Valid N	Missing %
How frequently does the child look at or read books or magazines by him/herself at home?	10.5	11	24.4	54	1,064	6
How frequently does the child ask you to read to him/her?	25.2	13.2	23.6	38	1,060	6.4
How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	20.6	12.2	22.2	45.1	1,060	6.4
How frequently do you read to the child at home?	17.7	21.2	27.7	33.3	930	17.8
How frequently does the mother or father (if not the interviewee) read to the child at home?	24.4	19.3	27.6	28.6	814	28.1
How frequently does his/her sibling read to the child at home?	43	15.4	19.2	22.4	735	35.1
How frequently does his/her grandmother or grandfather read to the child at home?	58.4	12.7	14.9	14	623	45
How frequently does his/her aunt or uncle read to the child at home?	64.1	15.7	11.5	8.7	574	49.3
How frequently does his/her cousin read to the child at home?	79.2	11.2	5.1	4.5	490	56.7
Other	40.1	15.9	17.9	26.2	302	73.3

III.1.1 Frequency of reading practices in the home

Almost 79% of caregivers reported that the target child read by him/herself at least once per week, with 54% of caregivers ($N=1,064$) indicating that the child looked at books by him/herself three or more times per week. However, 10.5% of the children

never or almost never looked at or read books or magazines by themselves in their homes.

III.1.2 Type of reading practices: frequency of shared reading

61.6% of caregivers ($N=1,060$) reported that the child asked them to read to him/her more than once per week but more than 25% of the children never or almost never asked. Respondents also reported that 45% of the children ($N=1,060$) asked to read to their caregivers three or more times per week.

Families were asked which relatives read to the child in the home and with what frequency. The parents were reported to be the ones who read most frequently to the child, with 30% of them reading three or more times a week to the child. At the same time, 32% of the caregivers reported that they or the child's parents never or almost never read to the child at home. 40% of the children ($N=735$) were read to more than once a week by a sibling and almost 30% of the children ($N= 490$) were read to more than once a week by a grandparent. Cousins, followed by an uncle or aunt were the relatives that read least to the child in the home. Some respondents identified other people who read to the child at home, such as neighbours (twice mentioned), a man from the evangelical church (once mentioned) and friends (three times mentioned).

III.1.3 Types of books usually read to the child

When asked what type of reading material they used when reading to the child, 91% of the respondents indicated they read children's books or stories, 50% said they read school text books, 40% used religious books and 43% used the newspapers; whereas 102 people indicated that they read other types of text to the child. Of these, 43 said they read magazines; three read cooking books; two read spelling or phonics books; three read atlases; four read encyclopaedia; three read dictionaries; four read novels, seven read animal-, insect- or dinosaur- related material; two read history books; five read health- and human-body- related material; two read science material; five read comics, two read street signs and announcements, two read books belonging to the child's siblings, and 17 read other various types of materials.

These frequencies for types of books usually read to the child are summarized in table 3.12 in Appendix G.

III.1.4 Summary

It is not possible to make straightforward comparisons between the results above and those obtained by Susperreguy et al. (2007) for a Chilean sample of families from different SES or those of Romero-Contreras (2006) with Costa Rican families because

the variables and possible answers are not exactly the same. Nonetheless, the frequency of shared reading in the current sample seemed much higher than that found by Susperreguy et al. (2007): in their sample 45.5% of the parents did not read storybooks to their children while, in the current study, 32% of caregivers reported that they or the child's parents never or almost never read to the child at home. Susperreguy et al. also asked the parents in their sample how much they had read to their child the previous week and the average reading frequency reported was 1.71 (where 1= I could not read to the child in the past week, 2= 1 to 2 times, 3= 3 to 6 times, 4= 7 or more times).

The frequency of home shared reading reported by the current sample also seemed higher than that reported by Strasser & Lissi (2009). In their study with a Chilean sample from different SES levels they reported that only 54.7% of all parents and 45.7% of low SES parents stated that they had read to the child at least once during the past weeks. This is much lower than the 72.2% of respondents from the current sample who stated that they read to the child once or more times per week.

The frequency reported by this sample is similar to that reported by Romero-Contreras's research with Costa Rican families of preschoolers (2006), according to which 71% of informants reported engaging in shared reading with the child *sometimes*, while 20% reported engaging in shared reading *often/always*.

However, the frequency of shared reading within the current study's sample is much lower than that obtained in studies with Hispanic families with kindergarten children. For example, in the US, Nord et al. (1999) reported that 62% of such families read at least three times a week to their preschoolers.

III.2 Frequency of word and letter writing and identification

Most parents (84%) reported that they helped their child to write letters or numbers once or more times per week. In fact 56% of the caregivers reported that they did so three or more times per week. An even larger percentage (60%) reported that they helped the child to identify letters or numbers three or more times per week.

Table 3.13 Frequency of word and letter writing and identification

	How frequently do you help the child write letters or numbers during the week?	How frequently do you help the child identify letters or numbers during the week?
Never or almost never	7.5	5.6
Once or twice per month	8.5	7.3
Once or twice per week	28.1	26.6
Three or more times per week	55.9	60.6
Valid N	1,065	1,060
Missing %	5.9	6.4

These frequencies are similar to those reported by previous studies with Chilean samples. For instance, 92% of the 60 parents from the different SES levels that Bustos et al. studied (2001) indicated that they taught letters to the child while 87% of their sample taught the child some words. In the study by Susperreguy et al. (2007) the average frequency reported by parents for teaching letters at home was 2,28 (where 2= 1-2 times per week, 3= 3 to 6 times per week).

Whereas, in the study by Strasser & Lissi (2009), on average, 73.8% of the parents reported that they had taught letters to their child at least once in the previous week (85% of low SES mothers and 65.6% of high SES mothers).

III.3 Conversations in the home environment

There is evidence that, on average and in comparison to their more advantaged peers, children from low SES backgrounds are exposed to less word types, less word tokens and shorter sentences (lower frequencies of mean length utterances). There is also evidence that they tend to be exposed to more controlling and less explanatory language (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2006) and that, when talking with their children, low SES caregivers use less rare words and provide less clues about the meaning of these words (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

Decontextualized conversations, which are conversations that revolve around something that is not present or happening when and where people are talking (for instance conversations in which someone narrates a past experience, or conversations in which someone explains how a non-present artefact works) offer more exposure to rare and specific words, extended utterances and explanatory language than contextualized conversations (Jordan & Legrand, 2007). Moreover, this type of talk involves less shared knowledge and less non-verbal clues (gestures or faces) and depends more on the use of specific words for transmitting meaning.

III.3.1 Topics of conversation in the home

Through the parent questionnaire caregivers in this study's sample were asked about the frequency with which they engaged in conversations about certain past experiences. Among the six options for past events provided in the questionnaire the most frequent one used as a topic of conversation was the child's day at school (almost 94%). Also a little more than half of the parents indicated that they talked three or more times per week with the child about a past event in which the child behaved well (51.5%) or about special events in the past (50.7%). The fourth option of topic of conversation, which parents recognized they used most frequently in conversations

with the child, was talking about when the child was a baby or about his/her birth (46.6%). Whereas, although 42% of parents indicated that three or more times per week the child listened to others in the family narrate something that happened to them, a very high percentage (17%) indicated that the child never or almost never did so.

Asked about other topics they talked to the child about, 84% of caregivers recorded family stories ($N=1,051$), while 50% of parents indicated they talked about bible stories ($N= 1,016$). Only 41% talked to the child about their neighbourhood ($N=1,011$). A quarter of the sample ($N=258$) provided details about other things they talked about with the child about such as movies (42 respondents), friends (ten respondents) or football, trips and topics relating to wishes the child had or the future occupation of the child (five respondents for each of these topics).

When asked who initiated these conversations about past events caregivers indicated that it was mostly themselves, except for conversations about special events in the past which tended to be initiated more often by the child. This was consistent with the evidence provided by Blum-Kulka and Snow (1992) who, when looking at a sample of US homes, found that in working class families most stories were initiated by adults while in middle class families the child tended to initiate stories.

Previous studies with Chilean and Latin American populations have found evidence of differences in child-parent home conversations between high and low SES families thus replicating the findings from US and European countries. For example, in the study by Bustos et al. (2001), almost all of the high and low SES parents declared they listened to the child and encouraged him to talk (97%). However, while all of the high SES parents in the sample talked to the child at least twice during the home visit, only 73% of the low SES parents did so; also 97% of high SES mothers responded to the child's questions or petitions verbally in contrast to only 60% of their low SES counterparts. Furthermore, while 83% of the high SES mothers responded verbally to the child's utterances, only 53% of the low SES mothers did so. Similarly, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that the high SES Chilean parents in their sample tended to talk to their children mainly to explain, comment on or narrate events while their less advantaged counterparts tended to use language more for purposes related to controlling the child's behaviour.

Table 3.14 Frequency of different conversation topics

	Never or almost never	Once or twice per month	Once or twice per week	Three or more times per week	Valid N	Missing %
How frequently do you and the child talk about special events in the past?	7.4	18.3	23.6	50.7	1,070	5.5
How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which the child behaved well?	5.9	16.7	25.9	51.5	1,067	5.7
How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which the child behaved badly?	17.1	15.1	25.6	42.2	1,068	5.7
How frequently does the child listen to others in the family tell stories or narrate something that happened to them?	16.9	15.5	24.7	42.9	1,067	5.7
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or about his/her birth?	10.9	23.2	19.3	46.6	1,066	5.8
How frequently do you talk to the child about his/her day at school?	0.9	1.5	3.7	93.9	1,063	6.1

Table 3.15 Who starts these conversations?

	You	The child	Half of the times you and half of the times the child	Valid N	Missing %
About special events in the past	19.4	40.4	40.2	1,046	7.6
About a past event in which the child behaved well	41.4	27	31.6	1,053	7
About a past even in which the child behaved badly	74.1	11.2	14.7	1,041	8
About when the child was a baby or about his/her birth	45.6	27.1	27.3	1,046	7.6

III.4 Frequency of child watching TV or playing videogames at home

TV viewing has been negatively correlated to school achievement (Williams et al., 1982) and has also been found to have a negative association with positive attitudes towards reading which, in turn, has predicted reading achievement and time spent reading (Koolstra & van der Voort, 1996). However, the evidence is inconclusive; for example, Searls et al. (1985) found that low SES parents' children's reading achievement improved with TV viewing.

Caregivers in the current study were asked to recall how much time the target child had spent watching TV or playing Nintendo or other video games the previous day. The N for these questions was smaller than the N for other variables because these items were added by UBC to the parent questionnaire in time for the second round of assessment of the first cohort only; the N was also smaller because the families of the children in UBC's cohort 1 intervention group were excluded. The reason for this was that the current study aimed at describing the naturally existing HLE of the children and presumably these values might have been affected by the UBC intervention (See Chapter III, Section 1.3.2 for more detail).

According to their caregivers, around 47% of the children in the sample watched between one and 60 minutes of TV per day while almost 45% of the children ($N=355$) watched more than one hour of television daily, with more than 19% watching more than two hours of television daily.

Compared to the results from the ELPI Chilean nationwide survey (Centro de Microdatos, Universidad de Chile, 2012), the children in the current sample seemed to watch less hours of TV per day. For example, in the ELPI sample more than 44% of the parents reported that their child watched more than two hours of TV on a daily basis (compared with 17.6% of children who allegedly did so in this study's sample).

Regarding time spent playing Nintendo or other video or computer games, even though 52% of the caregivers reported that the child spent no time in that activity, 14.4% of the children ($N=271$) spent more than one hour per day in this activity, while 33.2% spent between one and 60 minutes per day playing video games.

Compared to the results from the ELPI survey, the children in the current study appeared to devote less time to playing electronic games than the children in the ELPI survey. This, however, could be related to the fact that on average the children in the ELPI survey were older than those in this sample (60 months versus 53 months) and also the fact that the ELPI sample included children from all SES backgrounds whereas the current sample was limited to children mostly from the two lowest SES quintiles.

It is not easy to make comparisons between different countries regarding preschoolers' TV exposure and videogame exposure because different studies focus on different age ranges and further the measure used varies thus some studies look at screen time while others focus more specifically on TV viewing. Taking this into consideration, comparing these Chilean preschoolers TV watching frequencies to those reported by American parents of preschoolers, the frequencies in the present study's sample seemed similar but lower. For example, according to the nationally representative based Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-b) (Tandon et al., 2010), US preschool aged children were exposed on average to four hours of screen time each weekday (which included time spent using TV, DVDs, computers, and video games).

Table 3.16 Time spent watching TV or playing videogames

	Nothing	Less than half hour	Between half hour and one hour	Between one and two hours	More than two hours	Valid N	Missing %
Daily time spent by the child watching TV	8.2	15.5	31.5	25.6	19.2	355	68.6
Daily time spent by the child playing computer games, Nintendo or others?	52.4	15.9	17.3	10.3	4.1	271	76.1

* Think of all the TV programs the child watched yesterday (movies, news...) and try to calculate approximately, how much time did the child spend watching TV?(*T2)

* Think of all the computer games, Nintendo or others and try to calculate how much time did the child spend yesterday playing these games? (*T2)

III.5 Frequency of child playing outside

Through the parent questionnaire caregivers were asked how much time the target child had spent playing outside during the previous three days. The information for this question, which is summarized in table 3.17 in Appendix G, should be interpreted with caution because there was a large percentage (63%) of data missing. By way of background it might be useful to remember that the data was gathered during April, which is the beginning of autumn in Chile when the weather is normally warm or mild.

In the study by Romero-Contreras et al. (2007), 22% of the 193 Costa Rican caregivers in the sample reported that when they had free time to spend with the child they used it to go out with the child ("*ir de paseo*"). Research with Latino parents living in the US (Reese & Gallimore, 2000) found that the perception caregivers had of the dangers in the neighbourhood increased the constraints on children's activities, sometimes also increasing the frequency of literacy-learning opportunities (p. 27). The *Valoras* study (Catalán & Egaña, 2013) which looked at the beliefs and value system of low and mid SES Chilean mothers found evidence that they considered that one of their roles was to protect their child from the moral and physical dangers in their immediate environment.

Within the 416 caregivers in this research's sample who responded to this question, more than 20% reported that the child had not spent any time playing outside during the past three days; 28% that the child had spent an average of ten to 30 minutes per day playing outside, 20% that the child had spent between 20 and 40 minutes per day, and 21% that the child had spent on average more than 40 minutes per day playing outside.

When asked for other reasons not provided in the questionnaire for why the child did not go out to play, 29 caregivers specified further reasons. Six of these indicated that the child was not allowed to go outside or that they did not like the child to do so; five mentioned that the child had temporary or permanent health problems; four said that

they had plenty of space at home, three said that the child had been punished during the past days by not being allowed to go outside to play; three said the child did not want to go; three said the child just played at home; and three mentioned “other types of reasons” such as being new in the neighbourhood or the fact that the child slept at home during the afternoon. Finally two caregivers said that they did not have time to go outside with the child or that it was hard to go outside because there were too many children in the home.

IV. Language and literacy outcome scores

Finally, the results from four tests of the Spanish Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey revised (WMLS-R battery) indicated the level of development of the children in the sample with respect to (i) vocabulary, (ii) decoding, (iii) spelling and (iv) text comprehension.

As mentioned in the methods chapter, Chapter II, children’s language and literacy skills were measured with the WMLS-R at the beginning of their first preschool year. The tests were applied individually to each child. From the 1,132 children in this study’s sample, there was no WM text data for around 161 of these. The percentages below reflect the proportion of children for whom WM test data did exist.

IV.1 Vocabulary

The scores in the picture vocabulary test showed that 43% of the children for whom outcome data existed were fluent in expressive vocabulary. These children were supposedly able to manage the vocabulary demands of instruction designed for their chronological age or for pre-K. Also, almost 18% of the children had vocabulary skills that were above fluent level. However, around 39% of the children had a medium to low level of expressive vocabulary (limited and limited to fluid), which suggested that their language skills were somewhat impaired. Thus, the children in the sample tended to have medium to low expressive vocabulary skills.

Table 3.18 WM test 1- Picture vocabulary

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	10	0.9	1.0
Very limited	27	2.4	2.8
Limited	171	15.1	17.6
Limited to Fluid	171	15.1	17.6
Fluid	420	37.1	43.3
Fluid to advanced	104	9.2	10.7
Advanced	64	5.7	6.6
Very advanced	4	0.4	0.4
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

IV.2 Decoding (letter and word identification)

44.4% of the children in the sample for whom data on outcomes existed showed an advanced or very advanced ability for identifying letters and for reading some isolated words. These children would find letter and word identification tasks aimed at their age group or grade level easy or extremely easy. In contrast, 15% of the children assessed would purportedly find these same tasks difficult, extremely difficult or impossible to manage.

Table 3.19 WM test 3- Word and letter Identification

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	0	0.0	0.0
Very limited	9	0.8	0.9
Limited	44	3.9	4.5
Limited to Fluid	92	8.1	9.5
Fluid	193	17.0	19.9
Fluid to advanced	202	17.8	20.8
Advanced	178	15.7	18.3
Very advanced	253	22.3	26.1
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

IV.3 Spelling or dictation

This test assessed children's knowledge of letter form, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word usage and prewriting skills. In comparison to letter and word identification, there was a larger variation in the children's spelling results. 53% had advanced or very advanced levels of spelling ability. However 27.2% were in the lowest three levels of achievement, which means they would find spelling instruction aimed at their age group difficult, extremely difficult or impossible to manage.

Table 3.20 WM test 4- Spelling

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	34	3.0	3.5
Very limited	40	3.5	4.1
Limited	190	16.8	19.6
Limited to Fluid	0	0.0	0.0
Fluid	170	15.0	17.5
Fluid to advanced	18	1.6	1.9
Advanced	383	33.8	39.5
Very advanced	135	11.9	13.9
Total	970	85.7	100
Missing N	162	14.3	
Total	1,132	100	

IV.4 Text comprehension

The children in the sample clustered around three levels of achievement in the text comprehension test: imperceptible, fluid and very advanced. Children's text comprehension was measured assessing their understanding of orally read written discourse. Half of the children (51.5%) had a fluid level of text comprehension and 30.6% had a very advanced level. Almost 18% showed, however, imperceptible or virtually non-existent text comprehension skills, which indicated that they were probably unable to manage text comprehension demands appropriate for their age or for pre-K. The fact that 30.6% had very advanced text comprehension skills, while 18% had imperceptible ones, implies that these children would have needed differentiated levels of support from preschool teachers and institutions. It also implies that there might have been differences in their immediate environments that were, in part, responsible for this large ability gap.

Table 3.21 WM test 7- Text comprehension

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	174	15.4	17.9
Very limited	0	0.0	0.0
Limited	0	0.0	0.0
Limited to Fluid	0	0.0	0.0
Fluid	500	44.2	51.5
Fluid to advanced	0	0.0	0.0
Advanced	0	0.0	0.0
Very advanced	297	26.2	30.6
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

The language and literacy outcomes herein described seemed to indicate that, even though the sample was relatively similar in terms of SES, there was variability of language and literacy skills. This variability was largest for children's text comprehension skills and spelling, rather than for letter and word identification or expressive vocabulary.

These results also indicated that, on average, children in the sample seemed to have developed more word and letter identification skills than vocabulary skills. This suggests that these preschoolers' homes or their educational experiences prior to preschool might have included practices that served to develop their word and letter identification skills or their spelling skills. It also suggests that these environments might not have included much exposure to new vocabulary. This could possibly explain

why children's expressive vocabulary scores tended to cluster in the medium to low levels.

Discussion

In summary, the data showed that a high percentage of these Chilean low SES urban parents of preschoolers gave importance to the development of their child's language and literacy skills, which they believed were necessary to succeed at school. The data also revealed that these parents were willing to invest time and resources (books, computers, etc.) to provide their children with what they thought was necessary for the development of these skills.

A comparison between some of the descriptive statistics of the current sample and those of previous surveys and studies conducted with representative Chilean populations indicated that the children in the current sample mostly came from families of low socioeconomic backgrounds. In fact, these parents reported educational levels that would correspond approximately to those of the caregivers from the second quintile of the nationwide representative 2012 Chilean ELPI survey. Also in terms of the working status of the mother, this study's sample was below the national average for urban areas (60.6% versus 56.6%). Finally, in comparison to the national average, fewer of the children in the sample lived with both parents in the home (46% versus 65%).

1. Meso-system aspects of the HLL

The information gathered through the parent questionnaire allowed for some initial conclusions about characteristics of meso system components such as the cultural models of literacy fostered by these caregivers, as well their home language and literacy resources.

In a similar fashion to Reese et al.'s (1995) findings for Latino parents in the US, the caregivers in this study's sample seemed to think that literacy development started with formal schooling and that creating literacy opportunities for preschoolers was not part of their parental responsibilities. Instead, they indicated that teaching their preschoolers skills for school was the educator's main role. Caregivers in the sample also tended to consider that children should not be read to before 3.4 years of age. This was in strong contrast with Burgess et al.'s study with Western US parents (2002) who, on average, started reading to their children at 7.32 months of age. Furthermore, parents in the sample also tended to believe that children should not be given books to handle before 4.2 years of age and more than 20% of caregivers considered that a good

age to start giving books to children was six years of age or older. However, despite the fact that caregivers considered that children should not handle or have books read to them until they were “preschool-aged”, almost 60% of the parents also believed that learning to read would be easy for the child. This seemed to suggest that these parents might hold maturational and skills-based views of literacy development with literacy learning being perceived to be a discreet skill, unrelated to the development of previous skills and unrelated to previous input such as vocabulary or knowledge of the purposes of literacy. These initial findings call for more in depth study to find out the subtleties of these parents’ views of literacy and education. The qualitative study that complements this present quantitative study will explore these issues in more depth.

In their study with a Chilean sample, Strasser & Lissi (2009) concluded that parents showed “*a preference for school-like literacy activities over more developmental and natural literacy activities*” (p. 24); they proposed that this could reflect caregivers’ views about which activities were better for promoting children’s literacy skills. In the present study, however, even though it could be said that parents also showed a preference for school-like literacy activities (such as letter-word identification), when asked about which types of activities better developed literacy and could help the child to read or write later on, the answers provided by the caregivers were somewhat vague. Further, even though reading to the child was selected by the largest percentage of parents as an activity useful for literacy learning, parents indicated that all the interactions given as alternatives in the questionnaire (singing songs, talking to the child, reading the child books and playing) were *very helpful*, i.e. equally helpful, for developing literacy. This suggested these parents had not rationalized or thought in great detail about activities and interactions that could foster their children’s literacy skills, perhaps because, as explored above, they considered literacy development largely to be the responsibility of the school. The following qualitative study explores these possible views in more depth in Chapter VII.

The findings described above and the comparatively high educational expectations held by these parents for their preschoolers also indicated that these Chilean parents a) valued literacy development and learning but were considered they had a secondary role in the development of these skills; b) wanted their child to acquire literacy but their views about how literacy was best developed were not aligned with what current research suggests as effective ways to foster it (such as shared reading, extended conversations and emergent literacy practices); c) had views about *when* a child should start developing literacy that differ from the views held by Western middle class parents.

The frequencies of home literacy resources reported by these parents, with an average of 12.5 children's books per home and 24.5 other books per home, were somehow similar to those of US Hispanic parents, who on average reported having approximately 25 books or less at home (NCES, 2000). These frequencies were larger, however, than those reported by previous studies which had focused on other low SES Latin American populations. The patterns of book ownership reported by the caregivers in this study's sample were also larger than those found by previous studies with the Chilean population (Bustos et al., 2001; Susperreguy et al., 2007) but they were similar to the frequencies of books in the home reported by around 30% of the low SES subsample in the study by Strasser & Lissi (2009). Likewise, the patterns of newspaper presence in the homes studied contrasted with findings from previous research with the Chilean population that had reported much smaller frequencies (Bustos et al., 2001). One potential explanation could be that the average number of books owned by low SES Chilean families has increased since the previous studies were made. Indeed, there were widely discussed public literacy campaigns in Chile such as the "*El Maletín Literario*" ("The literary briefcase") during the years previous to this study (see the Introduction for more on this project) which allegedly could have increased the number of books in low SES families homes. The higher frequencies of book ownership reported by the parents in the present sample could, however, also be due to a desirability effect which would reflect that low SES parents awareness of the positive effects of having books in the home has increased.

The qualitative study that follows and complements this current quantitative study will discuss the presence of books, newspapers and other literacy resources in more detail for a subsample of 30 homes where naturalistic observations were conducted. However, the numbers of books reported in the parent questionnaire were not confirmed or observed in the subsample of homes that are the subject of the qualitative study. In fact, during the qualitative study, this researcher did not see more than five to ten books in the homes, including children's books. Likewise, this researcher hardly ever saw any newspapers in the homes observed in the qualitative study. This evidence would support the idea of a desirability effect bias, with parents in the sample inflating the numbers of books reported. In turn, this could indicate that Chilean low SES caregivers have increased their awareness of the benefits of having literacy resources such as books and newspapers in their homes.

It is important to note that the data obtained through the parent questionnaire did not provide information on the quality of the literacy resources available in the home or the quality of the interactions that took place with these resources. However, when asked

what type of books they usually read to the child, almost all caregivers reported that they used children's books or stories, while half used text books and almost half used religious books and/or newspapers. In their study Susperreguy et al. (2007) asked the parents in their sample to name their child's favourite books. Most of the books mentioned were colouring books, versions of movies (such as "Searching for Nemo") and compilations of classical stories. What followed from these findings was that, in order to understand the implications that having books and literacy resources in the home could have, it was necessary to know more about the type and quality of books and other home literacy resources that children access to in their homes.

2. Micro-system aspects of the HLL

The frequency of language and literacy home interactions such as (i) shared reading, (ii) having the child read alone, (iii) home conversations, and (iv) the identification and writing of letters and numbers were analyzed. Here again, tendencies seen in previous studies with Latin American and Chilean homes were replicated. The most frequent literacy interaction that these low SES Chilean urban preschoolers shared with their parents was the identification and writing of letters and numbers. Indeed most caregivers in the sample reported that they often helped the child to write letters or numbers (once or more times per week) and 60% of them helped the child to identify letters and numbers three or more times per week.

In terms of language and literacy outcomes, these children's scores in four WMLS-R tests indicated that, even though the sample was relatively homogeneous in terms of SES, there was variability in language and literacy skills. This variability was greater for children's text comprehension skills and spelling than for letter and word identification or expressive vocabulary.

2.1 Shared reading/having the child read alone

Shared reading seemed to be less frequent than (i) word and letter identification and (ii) having the child look at books or magazines by him-/her-self at home. Shared reading did not seem to be part of the literacy register in Chilean low SES HLLs. Using Purcell-Gates' terminology it did not seem to be an "authentic experience" within the studied population (Purcell-Gates et al., 2007). For example, 32% of the caregivers in the sample reported that they or the children's parents never or almost never read to the child at home. Also the respondents said that the child asked if they could read to the caregiver more frequently than asking the caregiver to read to him/her.

2.2 Home conversations

According to the data analyzed, the caregivers in the sample talked about past events with their preschoolers several times per week. This was especially so when talking about the child's day at school but also when talking about special events in the past or about times when the child had behaved well. This resonated with the findings of Goldenberg et al. (2005) who claimed that Latino families in the US and in México gave great importance to the moral development of the child.

2.3 Letter and word identification/vocabulary

Children's language and literacy measures also seemed to indicate that, on average, their word and letter identification skills outweighed their expressive vocabulary skills, which were poor. 44.4% of the children in the sample for whom data on outcomes existed showed an advanced or very advanced ability for identifying letters and for reading some isolated words. These children would find letter and word identification tasks aimed at their age group or grade level easy or extremely easy. In contrast, 15% of the children assessed would purportedly find these same tasks difficult, extremely difficult or impossible to manage. This seemed coherent with some of the literacy beliefs and practices reported by parents (for example with the large percentage of parents that reported that they frequently engaged in letter and word identification at home) and with their more skills-based rather than holistic views of literacy and literacy learning.

3. Summary

Several of the findings that emerged from the analysis of this Chilean sample confirmed findings from previous research with other Latino populations thus indicating that despite the differences between different Latino populations there were also commonalities. This was the case, for example, regarding Chilean parents' focus on teaching letters and words and the frequency of home conversations about child's moral development, values and behaviour. Another commonality was the scarcity of shared reading that these Chilean caregivers did with their preschoolers. So, even though Latin American countries include a great variety of populations as well as diverse local cultures and traditions, the commonalities that exist at the level of children's HLLs seem to support the hypothesis of a shared culture of language and literacy beliefs and practices.

The main differences between the current sample and findings from previous studies with Latino populations were observable in areas such as language and literacy home resources where the current sample reported higher frequencies of book ownership,

newspaper presence and other language and literacy-related resources such as computers. This could have been due to a social desirability bias. In fact, the evidence gathered through the home observations performed for this research's qualitative study supports this notion. However, the more abundant home language and literacy resources reported by these parents could also have been due to the economic development experienced by Chile in recent decades. In other words, maybe the fact that Chile has experienced economic growth has permeated the HLE of Chilean low SES families. As a result, allegedly the language and literacy resources available in the homes may have increased.

In any case, however, the results from the present study clearly showed that, even if the resources had increased, the language- and literacy-related beliefs, practices and interactions held by the families in the sample were still consistent with a skills-based approach to literacy and learning.

The following chapter will assess how these different HLE aspects or components influenced each other as well as the impact they had on children's outcomes.

CHAPTER IV. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AND WITHIN BACKGROUND VARIABLES, THE HOME LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ENVIRONMENT (HLE) AND CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE AND LITERACY OUTCOMES IN A SAMPLE OF CHILEAN LOW SES FAMILIES OF PRESCHOOLERS

Introduction

The previous chapter described the frequency of a wide spectrum of variables that could be part of, or relate to, a predictive conceptualization of the HLE of a sample of 1,132 Chilean urban preschoolers from mid and low SES families. One of the conclusions was that there was sufficient variation in the frequencies to support the hypothesis that families of relatively similar SES provided HLEs of different qualities. Even though it is the variations in HLE provision between groups of different SES or ethnic backgrounds that have been largely the subject of more studies to date, several researchers have documented the within-SES group variations in the HLE or in components of children's HLE (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Love et al., 2002; Sylva et al., 2004; Farver et al., 2006; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Siraj & Mayo, 2014; Zill & Resnick, 2006; Van Steensel, 2006) (for more on this, see review in Chapter I, pp. 30-31).

Several studies have aimed at finding HLE components that are predictive of children's language and literacy skills. In the UK, the EPPE study found that reading to the child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching the alphabet, teaching numbers, taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home were all associated with higher cognitive and social/behavioural scores (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). In India, while studying Indian children's HLE and their English oral language and literacy skills, Kalia & Reese (2009) found that the level of English used by Indian parents in the home predicted children's phonological awareness; parents reading aloud to their children and teaching of print predicted children's print skills and parents reading aloud to their children compensated for low levels of English in the home. In the US, the Home School Study found that the frequency and types of literacy-related home activities, and the use of extended discourse and rare word density during home book reading, mealtime conversations and play sessions were all significantly related to children's kindergarten language and literacy outcomes (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

In Chile, the scarce previous research that has studied HLE components has mostly done so with a confirmatory perspective. That is to say, assessing frequency of some of those HLE variables in the Chilean context, which were predictive of language and literacy outcomes in foreign studies. For example, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that regardless of the family's educational level, the frequency of home literacy practices in a Chilean sample was lower than that found in developed countries; their findings also affirmed certain associations between a family's educational level and home literacy practices.

One limitation of adopting a confirmatory perspective is that many of the variables measured reflected practices that were not part of the cultural repertoire of activities in the Chilean home, especially for mid to low SES families. For example, in the context of low SES Chilean families, the frequency of visits to the library did not seem to be a very relevant measure because libraries and book shops were not easily accessible in many of the districts where mid to low SES Chilean families tend to live. Moreover, there is evidence from a study by Fundación La Fuente-Adimark (2006), that only a small percentage of the population (6.5% of their study's sample) had become a library member.

Another problem is that studies with a more confirmatory focus tend to have a deficit perspective (Jimenez, 2003), which does little to explain the specific cultural and socioeconomic combinations that influence families' provision of a certain HLE.

The present quantitative study worked with the data from the UBC parent questionnaire. This had the effect that findings were limited to the responses to the questions included in that instrument, most of which were there because they had been shown to be predictive of language and literacy outcomes in Costa Rica (Romero-Contreras, 2006) and in México (Romero-Contreras, 2011).

In this sense, and also in the sense that this study was guided by the literature reviewed, it had, undeniably, a confirmatory focus. However, one of the overall objectives of this research was to explore the patterns of influence among these variables in Chile, with a view to identify any relationships or interdependences between the factors and, as a consequence, see if it was possible to create a predictive model of the HLE. This objective required a fixed data set.

This chapter, therefore, builds on the previous chapter's descriptive findings by exploring and responding to the following two research questions:

- *Which components should be included in a conceptualization of the Chilean low SES Home Language and Literacy environment to help to explain in part the initial differences in language and literacy development among Chilean preschoolers from low SES backgrounds?*
- *What are the relationships between the different components of the HLLE and between these components and children's language and literacy outcomes?*

To explore possible new patterns of influence among the variables, an exploratory analytical framework guided the selection of the quantitative methods and procedures used. Figure 4.1 displays the sequence of methods employed.

Figure 4.1:



To respond to the two research questions set out above, the following statistical strategy was used:

- First, a conceptual model was built of the Chilean low SES HLLE to help to explain part of the initial differences in language and literacy development among Chilean urban preschoolers from low SES backgrounds. This conceptual model was built using selected HLLE variables measured by the UBC parent questionnaire. Further, this selection of variables was informed by the literature review (Chapter 1) and also determined by the use of quantitative analyses. Thus, a combination of factor analyses and correlation analyses served to reduce the number of variables and create composites that were conceptually coherent and statistically related to the language and literacy outcomes of the children in the sample. With the resulting variables and scales, a hypothesized model of the HLLE of the families in the sample was constructed.
- Secondly, to improve our understanding of the paths of influence between the different background and HLLE variables as well as among the three different HLLE dimensions of beliefs, resources and practices, the hypothesized model

was tested through path analysis. This enabled this researcher to answer the following more specific question: *What are the direct and indirect trajectories through which the different background variables and HLE components exerted their effect over the emergent literacy skills studied?* In this way, this research builds on the experience of previous studies that have explored the paths of influence within the HLE and between the HLE and other related components (Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Farver et al., 2006; Goldenberg et al., 1992, 2001, 2005, 2009; Lynch et al., 2006; Proctor et al., 2005).

- Finally, through the application of a direct discriminant analysis, an index was calculated. This helped distinguish those families that fostered an HLE of higher quality (more effective in developing language and literacy skills) from those families that provided an HLE of medium and low quality. This discriminant analysis also provided an initial characterisation of each of these groups of families, their cultural models of language and literacy, and their practices.

I. Selection of scales for the HLE model

To obtain a conceptualization of the Chilean mid to low SES HLE that was helpful in explaining the variance in language and literacy outcomes of the children prior to preschool, it was necessary first to select the factors for the hypothesized HLE model. Exploratory factor analyses and correlations were used for this purpose. As indicated in Figure 4.2, this exploratory factor analyses were the first of the four steps of the quantitative analysis performed.

Figure 4.2:



The overall aim of the factor analyses were a) to discover latent variables or meaningful underlying factor structures that could help in understanding the HLE of the families under study, b) to reduce the number of variables to be considered for the hypothetical model of the HLE by eliminating those items that did not load significantly in the factors.

First, variables from the family questionnaire were grouped according to their theme. Three theoretical scales were built for SES and family demographics.

Then, in order to build the HLLC composites the HLLC related variables in the questionnaire were grouped under five scales:

- 1) Language and literacy resources (which included three variables)
- 2) Language and literacy beliefs and expectations (which included 11 variables)
- 3) Frequency of decontextualized conversations in the home (which included 10 variables)
- 4) Frequency and variety of child reading and writing experiences in the home (which included 13 variables)
- 5) Frequency of TV viewing and video game playing in the home (which included two variables)

Some of the variables in each of these scales were categorized, recoded and/or recategorized. Following this, four factor analyses were then performed using these HLLC scales. The first factor analyses explored latent structures underlying the 3 variables related to the presence of language and literacy resources in the home. The second factor analysis was performed on the 11 variables that related to language, literacy and educational beliefs and expectations. The third factor analysis included the 10 variables from the scale on frequency of decontextualized conversations in the home. Finally, the fourth factor analysis was performed with the 13 variables related to the frequency of certain home literacy practices such as shared reading or letter identification and writing.

The exploratory factor analyses were performed using the Mplus 6.11 program. All items that loaded above .4 on a factor were retained. These exploratory factor analyses arrived at the following conclusions:

Regarding the factor analysis performed with the three variables related to home language and literacy printed and electronic resources, all three variables loaded in one factor that explained 60.63% of this scale's variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.73.

Another factor analysis was performed with the variables that theoretically represented caregivers' beliefs and expectations in relation to their child's language, literacy and educational development. Here, the 11 variables grouped together under one factor. The four variables in this factor that loaded above .4 were about parental

beliefs regarding which activities were helpful for the child's literacy learning and development (talking to the child and telling the child stories, singing songs, reading books and playing). Interestingly, these variables pointed towards a more holistic, less structured and less teaching-directed view of how literacy develops: in Sonnenschein's terms, a more "entertainment" rather than skills-oriented perspective (Sonnenschein et al., 1997). However, the other seven variables that grouped in this factor but had loadings of below .4 tended to be more about parents' expectations regarding the child's educational and literacy achievement. This factor explained 29.3% of the scale's variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.99.

A third factor analysis was performed with the variables related to decontextualized conversations. Two factors clearly emerged and together they explained 51.74% of the scale's variance. Each of these two factors included three variables that loaded above .4. The first factor was about the frequency with which the child participated in decontextualized conversations in the home. This factor explained 28.87% of the scale's variance and had an eigenvalue of 2.2. The second factor represented the frequency with which the child initiated decontextualized conversations in the home. This factor explained 22.87% of the scale's variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.58.

A fourth factor analysis explored latent structures within 13 variables that focused on frequency and variety of child reading and writing experiences in the home. One single factor emerged which represented shared reading and word- and letter-learning practices. Of the seven variables that loaded above .4, five pointed to the frequency of shared reading in the home with the child while two were about the frequency with which the child engaged in letter and words writing and identification. This factor explained 44.95% of the scale's variance and had an eigenvalue of 4.27.

Unfortunately there was only one item in the questionnaire that addressed exposure to TV and only one that addressed exposure to video game playing. Therefore, a factor analysis could not be performed with this last scale.

Table 4.1 describes the factors that emerged from this exploratory factor analysis, their Cronbach alphas, eigenvalues and the variables in each factor that loaded above .4. Table H2 in Appendix H shows the totality of the variables that were taken into account for these factor analyses with their loadings and it included the variables that loaded below .4 (which are highlighted in red).

Table H1 in Appendix H shows the six scales that were defined with the input obtained from the factor analyses as well as the three scales built with the SES and family

demographic variables. This table also provides details of what individual variables were used to build each of these scales and their answer options.

Table 4.1 Description of the Home Language and Literacy Environment factors

Scales	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Eigenvalue
Home language and literacy resources	Total № children's books in the home	.635	.63	1.73
	Total № non-children's books in the home	.746		
	Electronic language and literacy resources	.438		
Literacy learning beliefs	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on?		.85	1.99
	Talking to him and telling him stories	.488		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on?			
	Singing songs	.469		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on?			
	Reading books	.467		
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on?	.447		2.20
	Playing			
	How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which he behaved well?	.638	.78	
Frequency of child initiated decontextualized conversations	How frequently do you and the child talk about special events from the past?	.621		1.58
	How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or when he was born?	.426		
	Who starts these conversations about a past event in which the child behaved well?	.638	.66	
Frequency of child home reading and writing practices	Who starts these conversations about special events from the past?	.562		4.27
	Who starts these conversations about a past event in which the child misbehaved?	.413		
	How frequently does the child ask you to read to him?	.744	.97	
	How frequently do you read books to the child at home?	.709		
Frequency of exposure to TV and video games*	How frequently does the child look at books or magazines by himself in the house?	.616		...
	How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	.544		
	How frequently during the week do you help the child identify letters and numbers?	.508		
	How frequently during the week do you help the child write letters and numbers?	.501		
	Total number of types of books you usually read to the child	.473		
How much time did your child spend yesterday watching TV?	
How much time did your child spend yesterday playing video games?	

* This scale only had two variables so it could not be analyzed with factor analysis

* Varimax rotation was used

II. Correlational analysis

A second step in defining which components should be part of the hypothesized model of the HLE of Chilean mid to low SES urban families was to run a correlational analysis. This analysis considered the HLE factors that resulted from the exploratory factor analysis, the background composites and the four outcome variables. This was the second of the four steps in the analysis of the HLE relationships.

Figure 4.3:



The resulting correlation matrix, which can be seen in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, deemed the following statistically significant findings:

Table 4.2 Correlation matrix of distal and HLE scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. N° parents living with child	1								
2. N° children <17yrs.	-.034	1							
3. SES	-.094**	-.191**	1						
4. Literacy learning beliefs	.061*	-.145**	.283**	1					
5. Language and literacy resources	.006	-.127**	.432**	.307**	1				
6. Child reading practices	-.008	-.089**	.157**	.370**	.331**	1			
7. Frequency decontextualized conversations	-.021	-.026	.147**	.201**	.216**	.388**	1		
8. Frequency child-initiated decontextualized conversations	-.025	-.099**	.090**	.146**	.122**	.113**	.157**	1	
9. Frequency TV watching & video game playing	-.059*	-.024	.154**	.046	.115**	.03	.091**	.04	1

*p. <0.05 **p. <0.01

Table 4.3 Correlations between distal and HLE scales and language and literacy outcomes

	Vocabulary	Word and letter identification	Spelling	Text Comprehension
1. N° parents living with child	.018	.018	.014	.006
2. N° children <17yrs.	-.067*	-.071	-.056	-.06*
3. SES	.076*	.084**	.075*	.098**
4. Literacy learning beliefs	.086**	.082**	.086**	.095**
5. Language and literacy resources	.038	.040	.024	.05
6. Child reading practices	.047	.043	.051	.064*
7. Frequency decontextualized conversations	.021	.013	.010	.036
8. Frequency child initiated decontextualized conversations	.001	-.007	.005	.020
9. Frequency TV watching & video game playing	-.004	.006	.008	-.004

*p. <0.05 **p. <0.01

SES was moderately correlated with the HLE scale on literacy beliefs. This is in line with the findings from previous studies such as Fitzgerald et al. (1991) and Stipek et al. (1992), who found respectively that parents with more years of education viewed literacy from an emergent literacy perspective while their more disadvantaged peers

supported more traditional beliefs of literacy development and that mothers with less education fostered more skills-oriented instruction than those with more years of education. SES was also strongly correlated with language and literacy resources. Moreover SES was correlated with child's reading practices, frequency of decontextualized conversations, frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations and frequency of TV watching and video game playing. Finally SES was correlated with each of the four outcome variables.

The number of children younger than 17 that lived in the child's home negatively correlated with SES as well as with four of the six HLLC scales and with three of the four outcome variables.

Unexpectedly, the number of parents that lived with the child in the home was negatively correlated with the families' SES. It was positively correlated, however, with literacy beliefs. Thus, the fact that both mother and father lived with their child in the home tended to be associated with homes in which caregivers held more holistic literacy beliefs. The number of parents that lived in the child's home was also negatively correlated with the child's frequency of exposure to TV and video games. The number of parents living in the home with the child was not, however, correlated with any of the four outcomes.

Regarding the six HLLC scales, the first salient finding is that the literacy beliefs scale correlated with all background scales to all outcome variables and to all but one of the other HLLC scales (the exception being frequency of TV watching and video game playing). Caregivers with more holistic and less structured views of how literacy develops tended to engage their preschoolers more often in shared reading and/or letter and word writing or identification practices. These caregivers also engaged their children more often in decontextualized conversations. Furthermore, children raised by caregivers with more holistic views of literacy tended to initiate decontextualized talk in the home more often than their peers and had more language and literacy resources in their homes (such as books, magazines, DVDs, etc.)

These findings have important implications. Firstly, caregivers' literacy beliefs constitute a relevant component of low SES Chilean families' HLLC. This component was related to the background scales (SES and family demographics) and was associated with practically all the home language and literacy practices and correlated with the children's language and literacy skills. Moreover, the fact that the literacy beliefs scale correlated with most of the HLLC practices scales also seems to indicate that caregivers tended to act in accordance with their beliefs or at least that their

declared practices were in line with their declared beliefs. This consistency was also found by Lynch et al.'s research with a culturally varied sample of Canadian parents and by previous studies (see Lynch et al., 2006).

The language and literacy resources that children had in the home positively and strongly correlated with the frequency with which they engaged in reading practices in the home and also positively correlated with the other HLLC scales.

Children who watched TV and played video games more often also tended to engage more often in decontextualized conversations with their caregivers.

Children who engaged more frequently in shared reading or reading alone or in letter and word identification in the home also tended to engage more frequently in home decontextualized conversations than their less advantaged peers.

Another result from these correlational analyses was that the two scales about decontextualized conversations in the home and the scale on frequency of TV watching and video game playing were not correlated with any of the four outcomes. Moreover, reading practices only had a small correlation with one of the four outcome measures, namely with text comprehension.

The literature indicates that, although the relationship between HLLC models and outcome measures is reliable, the size of this correlation tends to be quite small, ranging between .27 and .33 (see Leseman & De Jong, 1998, p.6). In the current analyses however, the sizes of the significant correlations between the different HLLC scales and the outcomes were even smaller (below .1).

III. Paths of influence in the Chilean low SES HLLC model

Taking into consideration the literature reviewed as well as the results of the previous exploratory factor analysis and correlations, the scales and variables for the hypothesized model were constructed.

One of the scales of the model *Frequency of exposure to TV and video games* included only two variables. A correlational analysis found that frequency of exposure to TV and exposure to video game playing were not significantly correlated. However, including single variables in a model composed mostly of scales posed a reliability problem. At the same time, the descriptive statistics and the experience acquired during the home observations for the qualitative study indicated that TV watching and video game playing were very frequent activities of the children in this study. Thus, a decision was

made to preserve these variables in the model and a composite was built with both of them.

One alternative approach to path analysis could have been to use stepwise regression, beginning with the more distal variables such as demographics and then adding more proximal variables in steps. However, even though path analysis and regression analysis have similarities, (such as the fact that their validity depends on certain assumptions being met, or the fact that they are both based on linear statistical models) they also have several differences. Moreover, for the purpose of the present research path analysis presented several advantages over regression analysis.

While regression analysis uses a default model, path analysis permits the specification of a model and it is more flexible than multiple regressions about the types of relationships that can be specified in the model. Thus, path analysis responded better than regression analysis to the confirmatory purposes of the present research.

Path analysis also provided a more comprehensive view of the relationships between distal and proximal variables that were estimated to be part of a network of relations. This “comprehensiveness” made path analysis more appropriate than regression analysis to study home environment dynamics. This feature was also well aligned with the holistic perspective of the HLLE that guided the present research.

While regression analysis can only have one outcome variable, path analysis can have more outcome variables. Furthermore, it also allows the researcher to see the relationship between the different outcome variables.

Moreover, unlike stepwise regression, variables in path analysis can simultaneously be independent and dependent. Thus, path analysis allows for the simultaneous testing of hypothesis about the relationships among the measured variables (Hoyle, 1995). While in regression models it is possible to see one level of variables mediating the effect over the outcomes, in path analysis models the variables can be exogenous and endogenous at the same time and there can be more levels of mediating variables (some more proximal and some more distal).

In this sense, path analysis was more instrumental to this research than more classic regression analysis techniques because this research aimed at exploring and understanding the relationship between different HLLE components and the direct and mediated trajectories through which the different background variables and HLLE components exerted their influence on different emergent language and literacy skills.

Finally, one other advantage of path analysis is its graphical quality. This method tests the relationships of a diagram and also results in a diagram. Even though regression analysis can also be graphically depicted, for the purpose of this research path analysis models were considered friendlier to allow the reader to visualize more complex sets of relationships.

Figure 4.4 depicts the hypothetical model of the expected relations between background scales, HLE scales and language and literacy outcomes. The table in Appendix H provides the details of the variables included in each of the scales, how they were built and their answer options.

Figure 4.4: Hypothetical Model of the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLLE) for this sample of low SES Chilean families

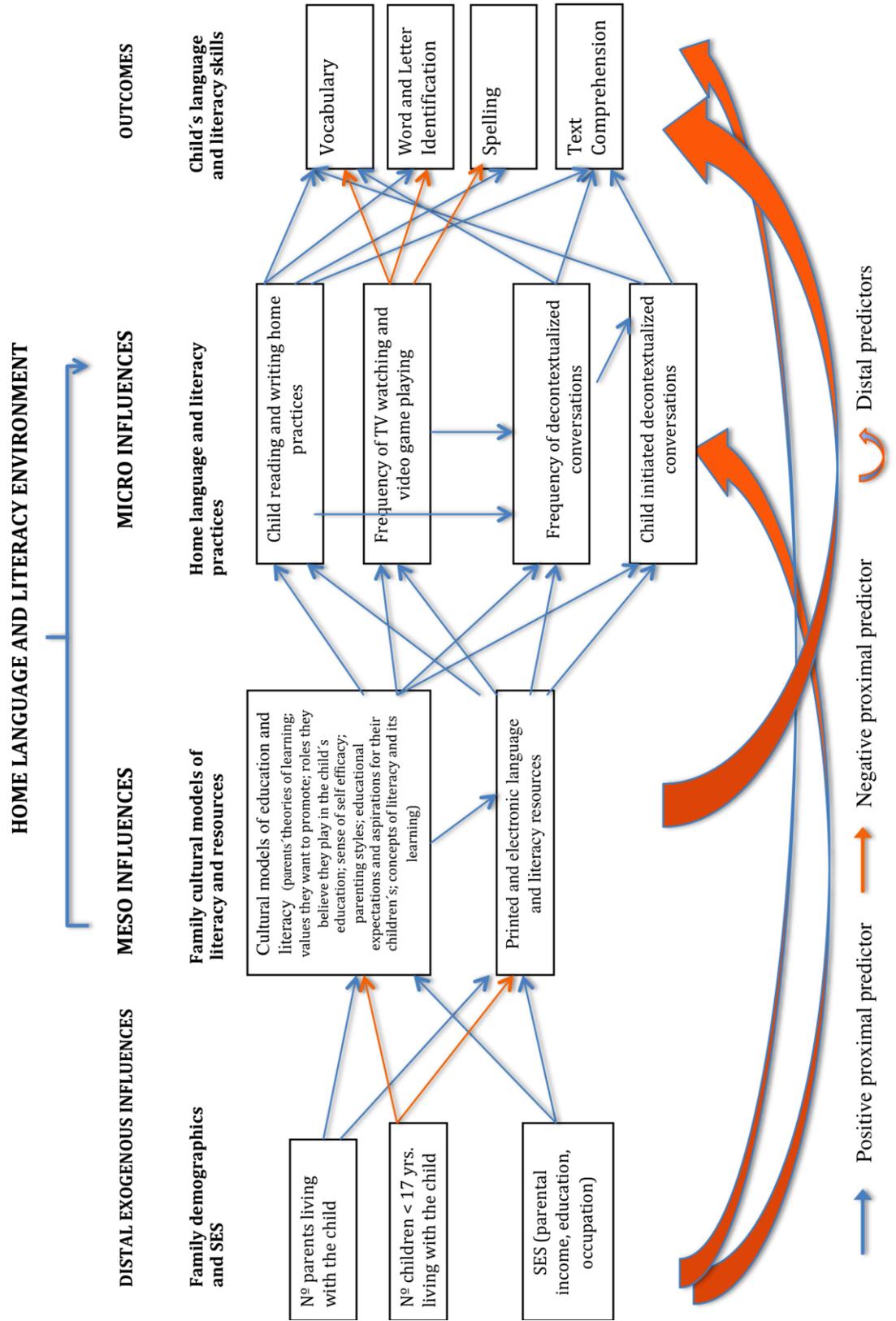


Figure 4.5 reminds us that the path analysis constituted the third step of our quantitative analysis in search of a better understanding of the relationships between distal and proximal dimensions of the HLLC and outcomes in this sample of Chilean low and mid SES preschoolers.

Figure 4.5:



Before running the path analysis, an exploration of the variables that were to be included determined that they all had more than 5% of data missing and that most of the missing data was missing completely at random (MCAR). Consequently, a decision was made to impute the data using the Norm software (Schafer, 1997). More details on this imputation and the descriptive statistics of the imputed data can be seen in Appendix I. This imputed database was used to calculate the new descriptive statistics; it was also used for building the scales, and for the path analysis.

Using the Mplus 6.11 program, (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010) path models were constructed with the full sample for each of the four outcomes. An MLR estimator was used because non-normality of the variables was assumed.

(i) SES, (ii) number of parents that live with the child and (iii) number of children in the child's home younger than 17 were considered exogenous variables that had both a direct and a mediated effect on the outcomes. The direct effect on the outcome was expressed in the hypothetical model through the wide red arrow that went from these distal variables to the outcome. The endogenous variables, which corresponded to the six HLLC scales, were also considered to mediate the effect of distal SES and demographic variables on the outcomes.

The path analyses were done in two phases. First, separate path analyses were carried out for each of these individual outcomes in order to examine the role of HLLC and exogenous variables in accounting for differences at the beginning of preschool in vocabulary, word and letter identification, spelling and text comprehension skills. Following this, a path analysis was performed which included all four outcomes. This

“complete” path model of the HLLC, provided a more comprehensive view of the hypothesized relationships among the several measured variables and the four outcomes considered in this quantitative study.

Figures 4.6 a, b, c and d show the four models each with the standardized structural regression weights for the HLLC components in the model as well as for one of the four language and literacy skills measured. The tables with the details for each of these models can be seen in Appendix J.

Figure 4.6 (a): Path analysis model for the relationship among distal variables, HLLC components and vocabulary skills (as measured by the WMLS-R test 1)

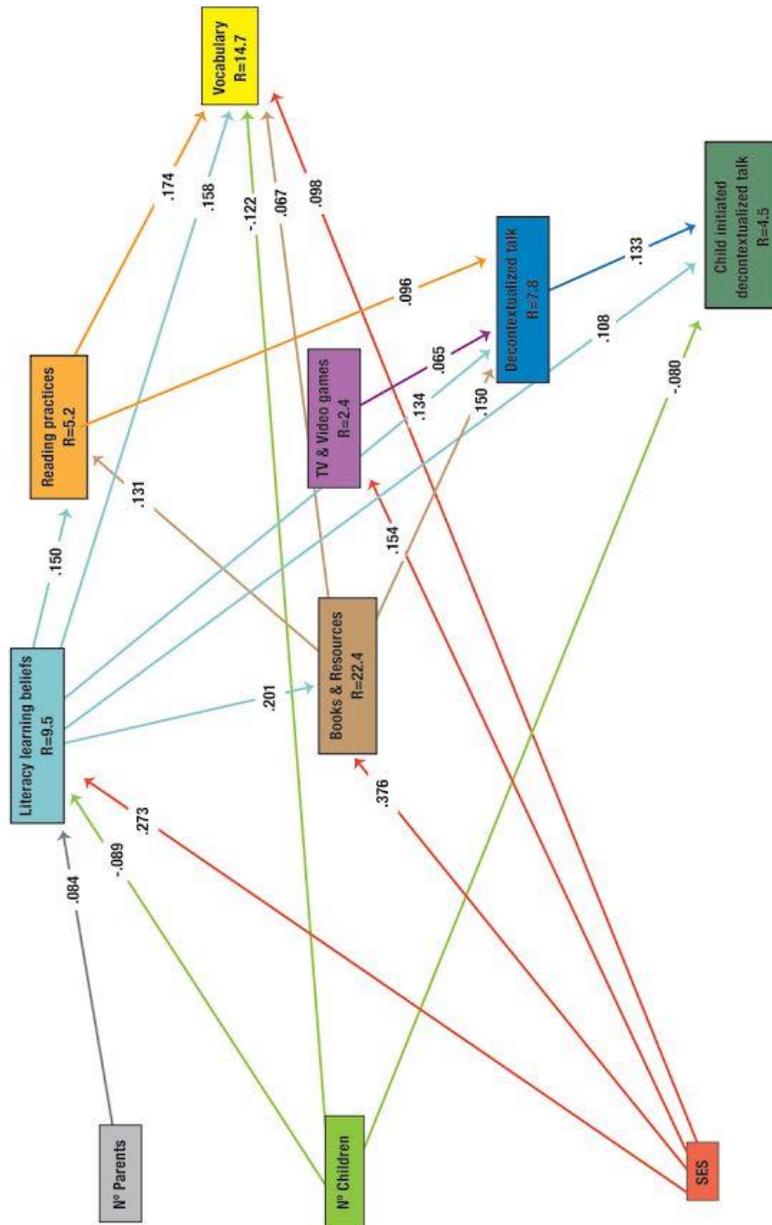


Figure 4.6 (b): Path analysis model for the relationship among distal variables, HLE components and word and letter identification (as measured by the WMLS-R test 3)

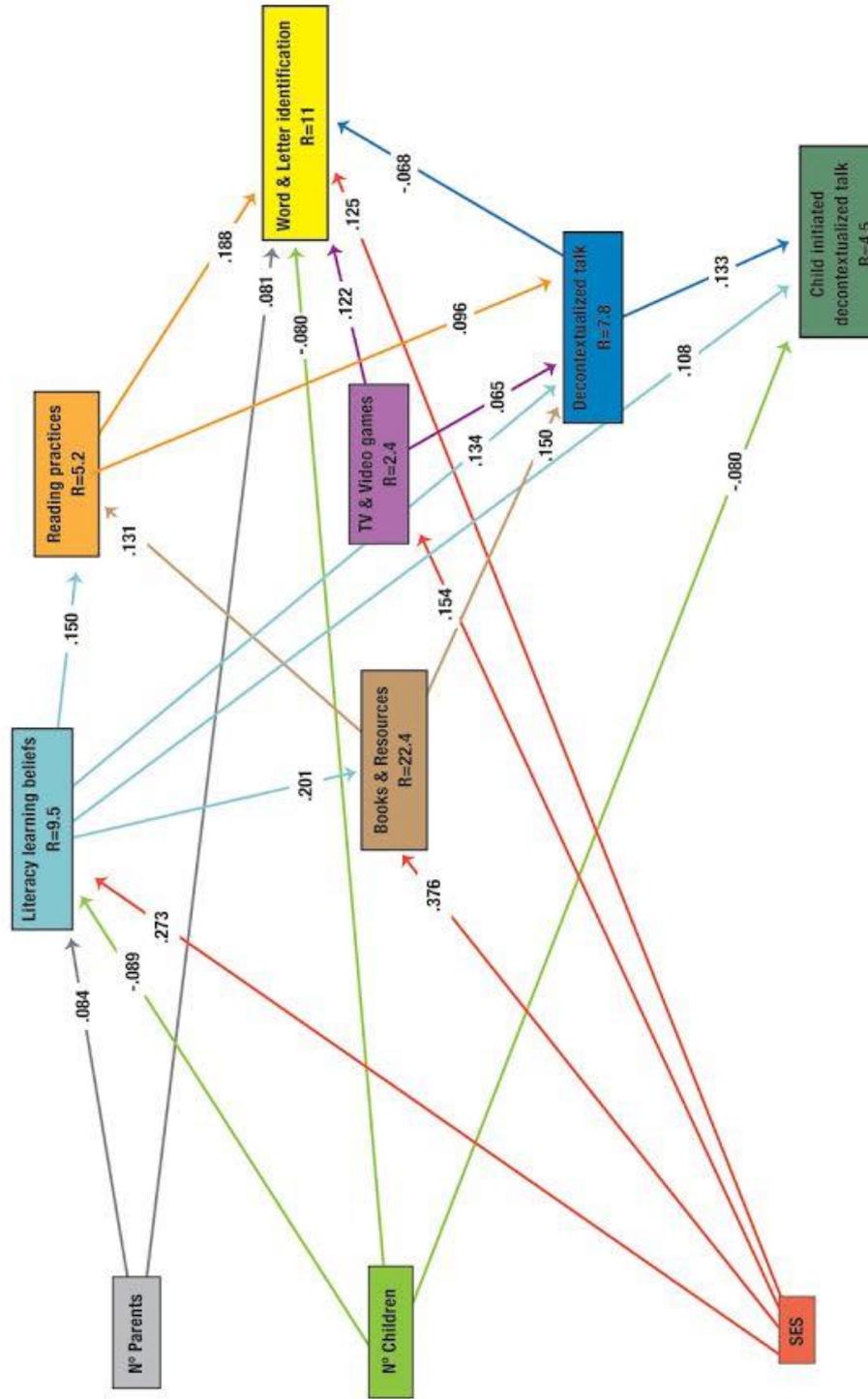


Figure 4.6 (c): Path analysis model for the relationship among distal variables, HLE components and spelling (as measured by the WMLS-R test 4)

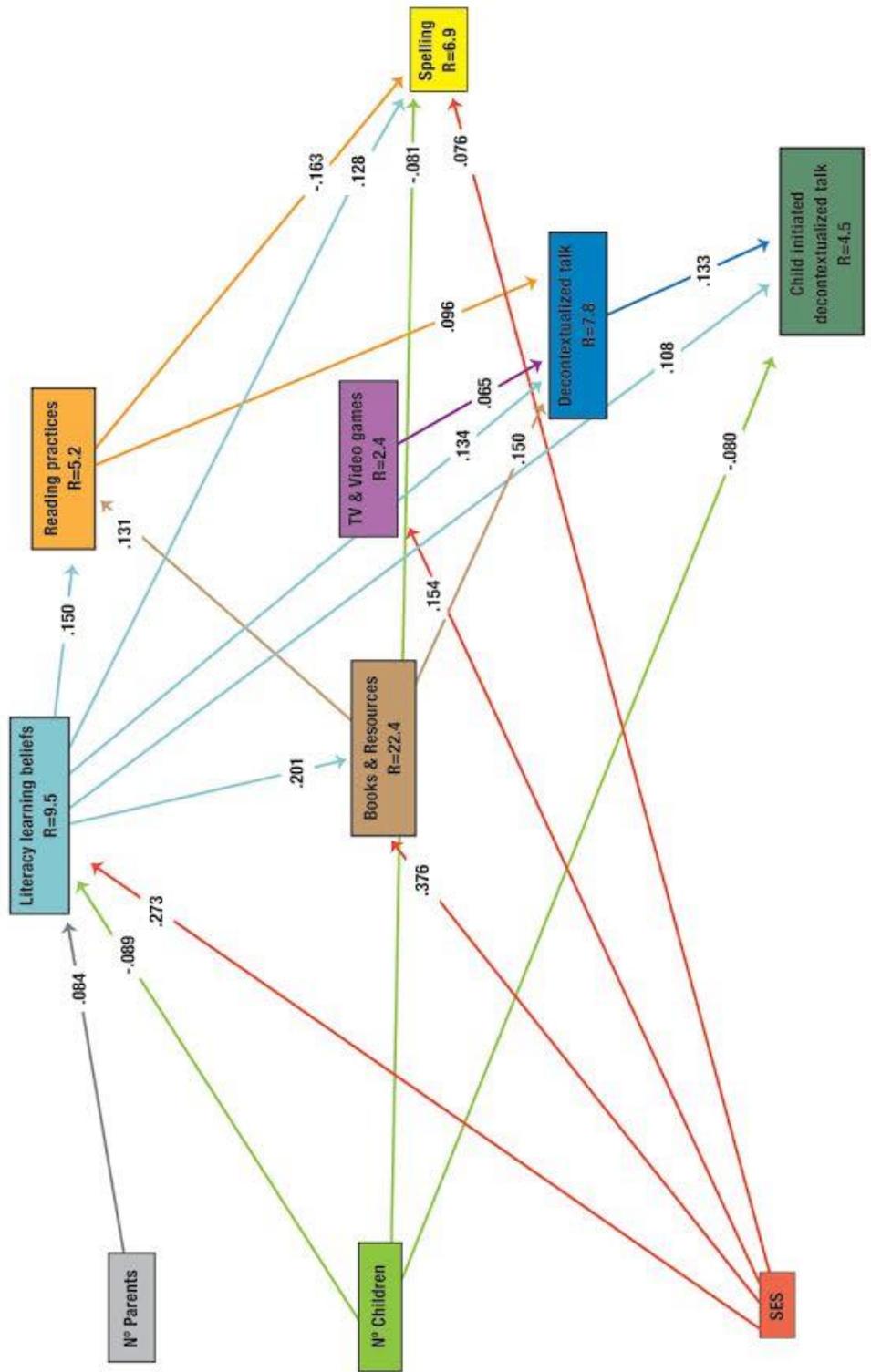
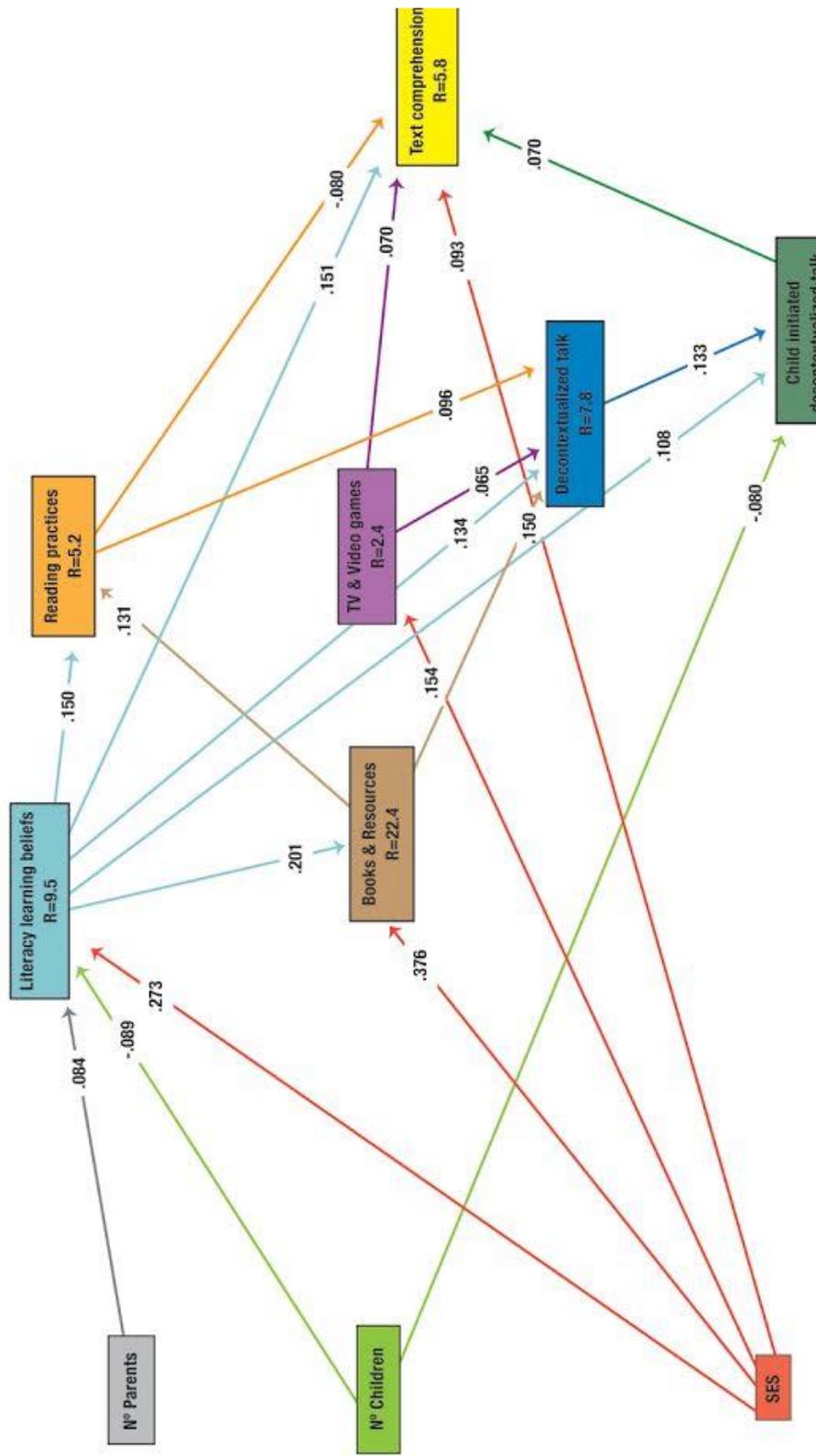


Figure 4.6 (d): Path analysis model for the relationship among distal variables, HLE components and text comprehension (as measured by the WMLS-R test 7)



Each of these four separate path analyses yielded an excellent model fit $\chi^2(18) = 16.150, p=0.58$. The RMSEA for each of these four models was .000 and this value lay within the confidence interval (CI = .000 – .024) thus confirming that the models adjusted well to the matrix of variances and covariances of the data.

Moreover, all four models had very good levels of parsimony. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 1.0 and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 1.006. Finally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) was 0.015.

Among these four models the model for WM test 1 (Vocabulary) was the one that better explained its outcome's variance at the beginning of preschool (14.7%) followed by the model for Word and Letter identification skills which explained 11%. In contrast, the model focused on Spelling (WM test 4) explained only 6.9% of the sample's variance in spelling skills at the beginning of preschool and the model that aimed at explaining the variance in Text Comprehension skill scores (as measured by W7) predicted a scarce 5.8%.

The excellent fit of the four path models for each individual outcome supported the plausibility of an overall model with all four outcomes.

A path analysis with all four outcomes was then performed. The dependent variables in this more comprehensive model were vocabulary, word and letter identification, dictation and text comprehension as measured by the WMLS-R tests.

The fit of this overall model was $\chi^2(38)=62.515, p=.00$. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.024 and it lay within the 90% Confidence Interval (0.012-0.034) thus indicating a good adjustment of the model to the data. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.978 and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.957. These indexes indicated good levels of parsimony, even if they were worse than the indexes of the individual models.

It is not rare that the chisquare in this model remained significant because this indicator can be very sensitive to sample size and it tends to be significant with a large N, such as the one this study had.

The standardized estimates and R^2 of this overall model are illustrated in Figure 4.7 and presented in detail in in Appendix J.

There were some differences between the overall model and the four models focused on individual language and literacy outcomes.

In comparison to the individual models, the overall model explained less R² variance for each of the language and literacy outcomes. This could be due to the fact that in the overall model, the dependent variables correlate and therefore share part of their variance. Thus, while the individual models explained respectively 14.7% of the variance in vocabulary, 11% of the variance in word and letter identification; 9.8% of the variance in spelling and 6.9% of the variance in text comprehension, the overall model explained 13.5% of vocabulary; 9.8% of word and letter identification, 6% of spelling and 4.9% of text comprehension.

Furthermore, in each of the latter four models the frequency of home decontextualized conversations in which the child participated was predicted by parents' literacy learning beliefs ($\gamma = .132, p < .005$). This was not the case however for the overall model.

Moreover, while in the vocabulary model the variance in vocabulary scores was predicted partly (even if with a small magnitude) by printed and electronic language and literacy resources ($\gamma = -.067, p < .05$), this variable did not significantly predict vocabulary scores in the overall model.

Similarly, while in the letter and word identification model this variable was partly negatively predicted by frequency of decontextualized conversations ($\gamma = -.068, p < .05$), this variable did not significantly predict word and letter identification in the final model.

Also, in the text comprehension model, frequency of TV watching and video game playing was a significant predictor of text comprehension skills ($\gamma = -.070, p < .05$), however in the overall model this was not the case.

Finally, in comparison to the overall model, the models with individual outcome variables explained a larger percentage of the frequency of decontextualized talk in the home (7.8% versus 6.2%); and a larger percentage of frequency of child initiated decontextualized talk (4.5% versus 4.1%).

There were, however, several commonalities or conclusions supported by all five path analyses models. Firstly, they all confirmed that caregivers' literacy learning beliefs were partly predicted by SES and family demographics. Thus, children with fewer siblings, who lived with both parents and were from higher SES households tended to have parents that held a more holistic, less structured and less teaching-directed view of how literacy develops. The path models explained 9.5% of the variation in literacy learning beliefs.

The scale on literacy learning beliefs also proved to be a relatively strong predictor with multiple direct and indirect effects on children's language and literacy skills. In all 5 models, this scale directly predicted three other HLLE scales (namely reading practices, language and literacy resources and frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations). In the four models focused on individual outcomes, it also predicted frequency of decontextualized conversations. This confirmed the finding from the correlational analysis and seemed to indicate that caregivers' declared reading practices were aligned with their declared literacy learning beliefs. Furthermore, caregivers' more holistic literacy learning beliefs directly predicted vocabulary, spelling and text comprehension outcomes. This direct relationship suggested that there might have been other behaviours or practices not included in the model which probably mediated the influence between literacy beliefs and language and literacy outcomes.

The language and literacy resources scale was the one best explained by the models (22.4%). As expected, in the hypothetical model, this scale was strongly predicted by SES. It was not, however, predicted by the number of parents living in the child's home. This last rejected relationship was a surprise since more parents in the home would have been thought to imply more language and literacy resources (such as more mobile phones or more reading material or more economic resources to purchase language and literacy resources for the home). This scale was also predicted by parental literacy learning beliefs in all five models indicating that homes where caregivers had more holistic literacy beliefs also had more language and literacy resources. Language and literacy resources also directly predicted the frequency of decontextualized conversations as well as the frequency of home reading practices. Furthermore, in the model for vocabulary, this scale had a positive direct influence on vocabulary outcomes.

Regarding the frequency of children's home reading practices, each of the models only explained 5.2% of its variance. Children's reading practices were directly predicted by caregivers' literacy learning beliefs and by language and literacy resources in the home, thus confirming this expected influence. They were also indirectly predicted by the three background scales via literacy learning beliefs and language and literacy resources. As expected, children's reading practices in the home positively influenced the frequency of decontextualized talk. Reading practices positively predicted children's vocabulary and word and letter identification outcomes. Surprisingly, however, in all of the models the frequency of reading practices had a negative effect on both spelling and text comprehension outcomes. The low percentage of variance in reading practices explained by the model, as well as the unusual direct influences it had

on two of the four outcomes, could reflect that the reading practices assessed in the family questionnaire were not culturally relevant within the sample studied.

The model explained a scarce 2.4% of the variance on frequency of TV watching and video game playing. Caregivers' literacy learning beliefs were expected to negatively affect the amount of exposure of TV and video games to children but the model did not support this hypothesis. In fact, only SES predicted frequencies of TV watching and video game playing. Since the descriptive statistics indicated that virtually all homes in the sample had TV, the influence of SES on this HLL scale probably refers to having a computer at home; or it could also be related to being subscribed to cable TV (which probably depends partly on SES and might have an effect on the amount of TV children watch in the homes). Interestingly, the frequency of TV watching and video game playing had a direct, positive influence on word and letter identification. A potential explanation for this could be that children might have watched educational programs with a certain focus on word and letter identification (such as *Word Wall* or *Dora the Explorer*). Similarly, the ways in which they used computers (youtube, video game playing, etc.) might also have fostered word and letter identification skills. The frequency of TV watching and video game playing also turned out to be a positive predictor of the frequency of decontextualized conversations with the child in the home. This suggested that TV viewing or video game playing could be a source of themes for decontextualized conversations in the homes studied.

The scale on child's frequency of engagement in decontextualized talk was also part of the resulting overall HLL model, which explained 6.2% of its variance. In all of the models, this scale was directly predicted by three other HLL scales: books and literacy resources in the home, frequency of TV and video game use, and frequency of reading practices in the home. Children's exposure to books and literacy resources in the home (such as computers, radios, phones, etc.) could imply a higher frequency of non-contextual topics of conversation. This scale also predicted the frequency with which children initiated decontextualized talk in the home.

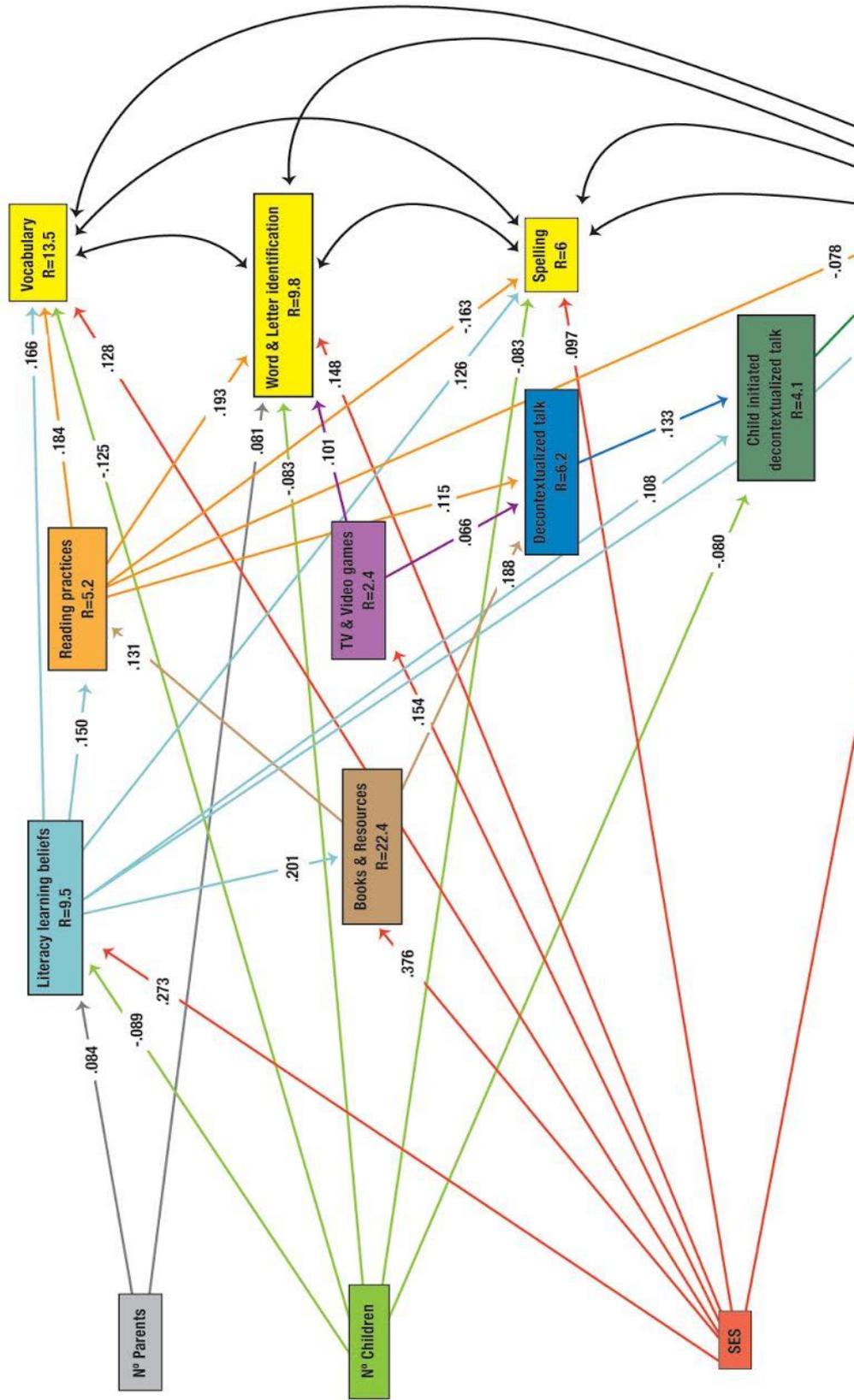
Unexpectedly, while in the word and letter identification model the frequency with which children engaged in decontextualized talk predicted this outcome, in the overall model it did not predict this or any of the other three language and literacy measures. In fact, in the overall model this scale only had an indirect effect on text comprehension via the scale on frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations. This could be due to the fact that the present study worked with the reported frequencies of decontextualized conversation rather than with direct measurements of its frequency and quality. US studies that have looked at decontextualized conversation, such as the

Home School Study (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001), Early Head Start or those conducted by Hart and Risley, which have looked at more fine-grained measures of parent-child conversations have, in contrast, found that the frequency and quality of decontextualized conversations predicts emergent literacy skills.

Finally, in the overall model, only 4.1% of the variance of the HLLC scale on frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations was explained. Two proximal HLLC scales directly predicted this scale: frequency of decontextualized talk and literacy learning beliefs. As expected, it was also directly predicted by the distal background scale on number of children of less than 17 years of age so that in families with more children, preschoolers initiated decontextualized conversations less often. This scale on frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations was one of the model's four direct predictors of text comprehension.

Surprisingly however, neither of the two decontextualized-talk-related scales had any significant direct effect on vocabulary outcomes. This could be a reflection of the quality of decontextualized conversations being held. For example, if the decontextualized conversations reported by parents were mostly about familiar topics (such as the day at school) and did not expose the child to new vocabulary, rare words or did not provide the child with the opportunity to use new vocabulary then these interactions could perhaps have had a less positive impact on the child's vocabulary development.

Figure 4.7: Final path analysis model of distal variables, HLLC components and language and literacy skills for this sample of low SES Chilean preschoolers



In summary, returning to the research question '*How can the HLLÉ help explain the variations in language and literacy skills that mid and low SES Chilean children have at the beginning of their preschool years?*' the final path analysis model did help explain some of the variations in language and literacy skills. Path analysis was instrumental for the purpose of simultaneously testing hypotheses among a wide array of variables and outcomes. Moreover, it allowed for the exploration, testing and viewing of several mediating relationships.

The final path analysis model confirmed many of the expected predictive relationships from the hypothetical model while at the same time it presented some unforeseen findings.

One of these unforeseen findings was that even though the model included several components for micro and exo systems of the child's HLLÉ, there were still several significant direct effects of the background variables on the outcomes. Such was the case, for example, with the "number of children living in the home", which was a direct negative predictor of vocabulary, word and letter identification and spelling. This led to the question about what other activities not considered in the model and dependent on the number of children might have taken place in these homes.

Likewise, in the final model, the number of parents that lived with the child was a direct predictor of vocabulary and text comprehension. Again, this suggested that there were other mechanisms besides reading practices and decontextualized conversations through which the number of parents in the home influenced children's vocabulary and text comprehension.

Finally, as expected in the hypothetical model, even within this relatively homogeneous sample, the variations in SES were relevant predictors of the HLLÉ scales and children's outcomes. Thus, in this final path analysis model, SES directly predicted the four outcome variables and four of the six HLLÉ scales. It also had an indirect effect on the two decontextualized-conversation-related scales. This implies that there were other mechanisms that escaped the model through which SES affected the development of the language and literacy skills of these preschoolers.

Furthermore, an analysis of the R^2 of all six HLLÉ scales in the final model showed that it explained a larger percentage of the variance of the more distal HLLÉ scales (such as literacy learning beliefs and home language and literacy resources) than that of the more proximal HLLÉ scales (such as reading practices, decontextualized conversations and TV and video game exposure). In this vein, the parameters in the path model

(represented by the arrows in the figure) indicate that the more distal HLL scale on literacy learning beliefs was a relatively stronger predictor of the outcomes than other more proximal HLL scales such as decontextualized talk or reading practices. Again, these findings point towards the notion that there might be other language and literacy practices, not measured in this study, which potentially could mediate the effects of literacy learning beliefs on the outcomes and mediate the effects of the three background scales on the outcomes. Moreover, it could be the case that practices such as shared reading are not culturally relevant in the population studied.

In summary, and returning to the research question about whether the background variables had a direct or mediated effect on the language and literacy skills of the children in the sample, from the path analysis, it is possible to conclude that there were both direct and indirect effects of the background variables on the outcomes.

IV. Creating an HLL index for Chilean low SES urban families

The fourth and final step in the analysis of the within-group variation in HLL quality was to build an index that helped to categorize the families according to the quality of the HLL they provided (see Figure 4.8). This categorization was also instrumental for the classification of the families for the qualitative study that followed, which aimed to provide more in-depth descriptions and to improve the understanding the HLL of a subsample of families that provided differing levels of HLL.

Figure 4.8:



A discriminant analysis was performed using as predictors five of the six scales from the path analysis model and using a composite with the Z score of the four outcome tests as the dependent variable. The aim was to try to answer the following research question: *What predictive HLL components discriminate children from similar SES backgrounds that develop in an HLL of high quality from those that develop in an HLL of medium or of low quality?* The five HLL scales from the final path analysis model selected for the discriminant analysis were: (i) literacy learning beliefs, (ii) frequency of TV watching and video game playing, (iii) reading practices, (iv) frequency of decontextualized conversations and (v) frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations.

This discriminant analysis aimed at understanding existing HLE variations among families with similar SES conditions. Consequently, and because even apparently minor SES differences might have affected the outcomes, a decision was made to exclude the scale on home language and literacy resources from this analysis because this scale had correlated with SES (.432), and was highly predicted by SES (the standardized coefficient in the path analysis was .376).

Group means and standard deviations for each of the discriminant scales and each of the resulting three groups of families are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Descriptives for the three HLE groups

	Low HLE		Medium HLE		High HLE		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Literacy learning beliefs	21.63	2.29	22.48	2.19	23.01	2.08	22.38	2.26
TV watching and video game playing	4.98	1.86	5.30	1.80	5.50	1.74	5.26	1.81
Child home reading practices	6.69	1.67	6.64	1.74	7.08	1.38	6.81	1.61
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	14.97	3.41	15.36	3.00	15.55	3.15	15.30	3.20
Child initiated decontextualized conversations	7.07	2.19	7.23	2.10	7.53	2.08	7.28	2.13

Two discriminant functions were calculated. The first function explained 92.6% and the second function explained 7.4% of the between group variability. As presented in Table 4.5, the discriminant functions that resulted from this analysis were significant within the statistical model.

Table 4.5: Discriminant functions

Function	Eigenvalue	Percentage of variance	Canonical correlation	Wilks Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.
1	.09	92.56	.28	.91	87.17	.000***
2	.01	7.44	.08	.99	6.72	.035**

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

An ANOVA test was performed to see if there were differences among the three HLE groups. The results of this test, illustrated in Table 4.6, showed that there were among-group differences in four out of the five HLE scales. The only scale for which the difference among groups was not statistically significant was the frequency of decontextualized conversations.

Table 4.6 Anova to test if there were differences among the HLE groups

	Wilks' Lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
Literacy learning beliefs	✓ .935	33.730	2	967	0
TV watching and video game playing	✓ .986	6.922	2	967	✓ .001
Child home reading practices	✓ .985	7.463	2	967	✓ .001
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	✓ .994	2.796	2	967	✓ .062
Child initiated decontextualized conversations	✓ .992	3.951	2	967	✓ .020

($f_{(2,967)}=33,730$; $p<.05$)

A post hoc test was performed in order to know where the between-group differences occurred in each of the HLE scales. As seen in Table 4.7, this test revealed that

regarding child home reading practices the mean of the low HLE group significantly differed from that of the high HLE group and the mean of the mid HLE group also differed from the mean of the high HLE group.

Regarding parents' literacy learning beliefs, the means of the three groups significantly differed from each other. Finally, in relation to the frequency of TV watching and video game playing scale, only the low versus the high groups differed in their mean. The same was true for child-initiated decontextualized conversations where the only mean difference was that between the low and high HLE homes.

Table 4.7 Multiple comparisons post hoc test

		Mean difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
				Upper	Lower
Child home reading practices	Low vs Mid	-0.05	0.13	-0.32	0.29
	Low vs High	-0.39*	0.12	-0.67	-0.09
	Mid vs High	-0.44*	0.12	-0.65	-0.08
Literacy learning beliefs	Low vs Mid	-0.85*	0.17	-1.3	-0.49
	Low vs High	-1.38*	0.18	-1.83	-1
	Mid vs High	-0.53*	0.17	-0.91	-0.12
TV watching and video game playing	Low vs Mid	-0.34	0.14	-0.62	0.04
	Low vs High	-0.54*	0.15	-0.93	-0.24
	Mid vs High	-0.2	0.14	-0.62	0.03
Child initiated decontextualized conversations	Low vs Mid	-0.16	0.16	-0.53	0.24
	Low vs High	-0.46*	0.17	-0.95	-0.12
	Mid vs High	-0.3	0.17	-0.78	0.01

* $p < .05$

Furthermore, Table 4.8 presents the standardized coefficients and the matrix structure of the discriminant model. This table shows the correlations between each variable and functions 1 and 2.

Table 4.8: Standardized coefficients and matrix structure for the discriminant functions

Function	Standardized coefficients		Matrix structure	
	1	2	1	2
Literacy learning beliefs	0.843	-0.376	0,894(*)	-0.210
TV watching and video game playing	0.412	0.021	0,405(*)	-0.113
Frequency of decontextualized conversations			0,246(*)	0.176
Child initiated decontextualized conversations			0,113(*)	0.038
Child home reading practices	0.241	0.994	0.329	0,929(*)

The matrix structure of correlations of the predictors with the two discriminant functions suggests that the differences among the three groups were determined by the high score that the high HLE group and the significantly low scores that the mid and low HLE groups had in functions 1 and 2.

As can be seen in Table 4.6, function one was determined by literacy learning beliefs and TV watching and video game playing. In this first function, the program excluded

both variables on frequencies of decontextualized conversations with the child at home because they were not relevant in the differences among groups. Child home reading practices determined the second function.

The centroids of the most extreme groups were low HLE (-0,373; 0,052) and high HLE (0,339; 0,061). The centroids of the medium HLE group (0,019; -0,122) indicated that this group was closer to the low HLE group in the first function and below both groups in the second function.

The first discriminant function indicated that families that provided a high HLE had more holistic views of literacy learning ($M=23,01$; $SD=2.08$) than families that provided a medium HLE ($M=22,48$; $SD=2.19$) or families that provided an HLE of low quality ($M=21.63$; $SD=2.29$). This first discriminant function also revealed an unexpected result, namely that preschoolers of families that provided an HLE of higher quality tended to spend more time per day watching TV or playing video games ($M=5.5$; $SD=1.74$) than their less advantaged counterparts ($M=4.98$; $SD=1.86$).

The second discriminant function that emerged in this analysis indicated that in comparison to their low HLE counterparts, families that provided a high HLE tended to engage their preschoolers more frequently in reading interactions and/or in letter and word writing and identification practices in the home ($M=7.08$; $SD=1.38$ versus $M=6.69$; $SD=1.67$). Children from medium HLE groups engaged in home reading practices even less than those from low HLE homes ($M=6.64$; $SD=1.74$).

Discussion

One of the main goals of this chapter was to explore and compare the relationships that existed between the HLE and background variables (such as family demographics and SES) as well as among HLE components and between HLE components and language and literacy skills. This goal was consistent with the ecological theoretical framework that guided this research. One of the implications of this ecological framework was that a Chilean low SES HLE model needed to be studied and perfected not only following internal relationships but also in relation to components that theoretically were from more distal environmental levels (such as family demographics and SES) as well as in relation to the language and literacy outcomes that the model aimed to predict.

Following this framework and using quantitative methods, the present chapter arrived at a predictive conceptualisation of the HLE of low SES Chilean urban preschoolers.

A certain tension between data-driven analyses such as the exploratory factor analyses and theory-driven analyses such as the path analyses runs through this chapter. This

tension reflected this quantitative study's pursuit of a balance between its exploratory and confirmatory objectives.

This chapter confirmed that there was variability of home language and literacy resources, beliefs, and practices within this apparently similar sample. Furthermore, this chapter confirmed that aspects of this within group variability resulted in varying qualities in the HLE that caregivers provided to their preschoolers. In turn, these variations in the quality of HLE had implications for the language and literacy skills with which the children entered school. Thus, one of the implications of these findings was that this variation in HLE within low SES families needed to be taken into account by educators and other educational stakeholders when they create public policies, intervention projects or curricula.

A second goal of the present chapter was to understand: *what characterises families with different HLE index levels?* This was accomplished through the discriminant analysis where the two functions that emerged differentiated the families in the sample that provided an HLE of higher quality (that fostered children's language and literacy skills) from those families that provided an HLE of medium or lower quality. Families that provided an HLE of higher quality had a more holistic (rather than skills-based) view of literacy learning. They tended to believe that talking and telling stories, singing songs, reading and playing were important to their preschoolers' literacy development. They gave more importance to these activities for developing literacy than their low and mid HLE peers. This was consistent with an emergent literacy perspective and with more holistic and less structured views of literacy development, all of which earlier studies have related to higher scores in language and literacy outcomes. Interestingly, children from high HLE homes also watched more TV and played more videogames than their less advantaged peers.

Another important finding was that within this sample of seemingly homogeneous Chilean families of preschoolers, the language and literacy *practices* were also significantly different in those families that provided a high quality HLE in comparison to those that provided a medium or low quality HLE. For instance, the children in the more advantaged group engaged more frequently in shared reading and reading alone in the home, and were read more types of books than the children in low or mid HLE homes.

The results from the quantitative analyses presented in this chapter were consistent in highlighting the pivotal role that caregivers' cultural models of language and literacy played in their HLE. In fact, in the final path analysis model, this component had

multiple direct and indirect effects on children's language and literacy skills. Parents' more holistic views of literacy learning were direct predictors of the amount of books and literacy resources available in the home, of the frequency of home reading practices with the child and of the frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations.

Caregivers' holistic literacy learning beliefs also directly predicted vocabulary outcomes, spelling outcomes and text comprehension outcomes. This direct effect suggested the existence of potentially predictive behaviours or practices that were not included in the current model and which probably acted as mediators of the influence of literacy learning beliefs on language and literacy outcomes. The qualitative study that follows uncovers details of Chilean low and mid SES parents' cultural models of literacy and education and also focuses on the existing language and literacy practices that potentially could be the ones that mediate the effects of literacy learning beliefs on outcomes.

The fact that caregivers' literacy practices in the home tended to be consistent with and driven by their literacy learning beliefs also has several implications for practitioners. On the one hand, it suggests that surveys and questionnaires might be a valid way of studying parental beliefs and expectations. At the same time however, it proves that these families' literacy practices are not only dependent on contextual aspects (such as access to books) but also on cultural views of education and literacy. Since cultural shifts tend to be slow, this finding challenges the potential effects of one-off parent-teacher meetings where teachers advocate more parental involvement or more literacy activities in the home, particularly if it is hoped that such entreaties will result in sustained changes in parents' home practices.

In this sense, the influence that parental literacy learning beliefs seem to have on children's language and literacy outcomes presents a great challenge for teachers. This challenge would seem to suggest that preschool educators should work to: a) know the literacy registers used and the cultural models of literacy held by the communities they serve; b) understand the potential tensions between the school-based literacy register and the community's literacy register; c) engage parents in a process of understanding and knowing how to implement the type of home interactions that could improve the child's management of the school-based literacy register. In summary, the relevance that meso system influences had in our analysis brings light to bear on these practitioner responsibilities.

Socioeconomic status and family demographics as measured in the model explained 9.5% of the variation in literacy learning beliefs. This raises the question: *what other factors unrelated to parental years of education, income, occupation or number of children and parents in the home could help explain the remaining variance?* Since the frequencies of the beliefs and practices' variables analysed in the current Chilean sample seemed to show that these Chilean parents shared several similarities with the Mexican populations studied by Goldenberg et al., (2005), their work could provide some hints about other community and institutional connections that could be explored in the Chilean context. For example, these researchers found that familiarity with the university system through the experience of relatives correlated with kindergarten and first-grade achievement and teacher ratings, and also, that, parents' commitment to traditional values (such as respect) correlated with kindergarten and first grade teacher ratings and that family church attendance correlated with children's reading achievement. Further quantitative research would be needed to explore the effect that HLE variables, such as these ones, might have on the language and literacy skills of Chilean low SES preschoolers.

In summary, the great relevance that literacy learning beliefs were shown to have in the model and the scarcity of studies on the language and literacy beliefs of mid to low SES Chileans, call for a more focused and detailed study of parents' cultural models of language and literacy.

Another interesting finding from these quantitative analyses was that despite the inclusion of a multifaceted model of HLE (which included literacy beliefs, resources and practices), caregivers' SES remained a powerful direct predictor of all of the measured language and literacy skills. This suggested that there were other components not included in the model, which potentially mediated part of these direct effects of SES on language and literacy skills. Parental stress could be an example. In fact, Farver et al. (2006) found that mothers' perceived parental stress was directly associated with PPVT-R scores. LeVine et al.'s research (2012) could also serve as useful theoretical background when trying to understand the strong direct influence of SES on skills. This researcher found that mothers' schooling years had a positive effect on children's outcomes even if mothers attended schools that provided a bad quality of education. Thus, one hypothesis could be that schools in Chile might be providing low SES mothers with an induction into a bureaucratic form of language that is universal to all public services. This could imply that more years of schooling might have an effect on language and literacy skills through mediators such as a mother's knowledge of bureaucratic forms of language and literacy, which could, in turn, impact skills'

development by way of a better understanding of medical prescriptions, frequency of health controls and a higher ability to use governmental aids or others.

Although the present study supported several findings from previous research about the existing relationships within the HLE and between the HLE and background variables and language and literacy skills, there are limitations regarding the interpretation of these results. A major methodological caveat stemmed from the fact that the data used for the analysis came from one point in time. Thus, it was not possible to control for alternative explanations of associations between home literacy components and language and literacy outcomes. This implies that causality cannot be established. As an example, the relationship found in the quantitative study between parents' holistic literacy beliefs and children's vocabulary development allegedly could actually be the other way around, (this is parents of children with better vocabulary tend to develop more holistic views of the type of language and literacy activities) or there could also be a "third factor" affecting both variables directly.

In order to increase causal validity and control for alternative explanations of associations between home literacy and language and literacy outcomes, it would be necessary to include developmental precursors of the language and literacy skills measured." (For a discussion on this see Leseman & de Jong, 1998 and Cole & Maxwell, 2014).

Another limitation was that the construction of the scale on TV watching and video game playing was problematic because it included only two variables. Further studies should aim at having a model with scales that are balanced in their construction.

One further limitation was that no correction for multiple comparisons was used in the path analyses. This is not rare in SEM, where several other measures are typically applied (such as measures of fit). Moreover, the *p* values from the 31 parameters in the final model were judged to be stringent because all were below .01 except for three, which were below .05 but above .01 (as can be seen in table C1, Appendix J). Moreover, the parameters found by the path analysis model seemed theoretically reasonable.

However, it is important to acknowledge the research that indicates that without controlling for multiple comparisons the Type I error rate can become inflated and that this could be controlled for by applying a correction such as an adjusted Bonferroni procedure (Smith & Cribbie, 2013). Further research studying the HLE with path analysis would perhaps benefit from including this or another procedure to control for Type I error.

Finally, another limitation of this study was that the resulting path model explained a low percentage of the variance of each of the HLL scales and also a low percentage of the variance in the four language and literacy measures. One potential explanation for this was that the data used came from a parent questionnaire. In this vein, Lonigan (1994) argued that the use of self-reports and surveys to measure the HLL could result in underestimating its relationship with outcomes (see Burgess, 2002). The extensive length of the parent questionnaire employed in the UBC study could also have affected the quality of the gathered data.

The descriptions of the HLL of Chilean low SES families of preschoolers obtained in Chapter III and this chapter, through quantitative analyses, have provided an initial picture of the environment in which these children learn about language and literacy. This picture however, still does not seem granular enough. Thus, it seems necessary to employ methods that allow for a deeper understanding. The following qualitative study, which looks at a subsample of 30 families with different qualities of HLL, aims at providing richer descriptions in order to obtain a more detailed understanding of the environments in which these children develop.

STUDY II

Introduction to study II

The following qualitative study, comprised of chapters V, VI and VII, provides a rich narrative description of the language and literacy practices as well as the language and literacy beliefs, values and expectations of a sample of Chilean low SES families with children of preschool age (preschoolers).

In accordance with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this qualitative study considers that, within the home environment, the input provided by the main caregiver is a central source of sophisticated language and literacy experiences through which the caregiver engages the child to interact in its zone of proximal development (Bodrova & Leong, 2006). Evidence from the EPPSE longitudinal study (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010) indicated that there were important variations among disadvantaged or advantaged families regarding what parents did with their children and that these variations in HLLC practices or beliefs explained why some children from similar backgrounds succeeded against the odds while others performed as expected. Likewise, the first study of this research, of a large sample of Chilean preschoolers of low SES backgrounds found significant variations in their language and literacy practices and in the beliefs they held. Moreover, these variations accounted in part for the differences in language and literacy skills that the children had on entering preschool.

The current qualitative study complements and triangulates the findings from the previous quantitative study. For instance, while the quantitative study found that there were differences in some of the practices and beliefs reported by parents of similar SES and that these differences accounted in part for the variations in language and literacy outcomes prior to starting preschool, the current qualitative study adds in-depth descriptions on the nature of these differences in HLLC and the factors that explain them.

This qualitative study is based on the understanding that literacy is both a sociocultural and a cognitive practice. Literacy is based on a set of multidimensional skills that develop during the life of the individual from early childhood to adulthood and that are acquired in part through explicit or implicit teaching in the home environment.

From a sociocultural perspective, there are different forms of literacy, referred to as registers, which are linked to different contexts and uses. This study will make use of Heath's definition of a literacy event as *"any occasion in which a piece of writing is*

integral to the participants' interactions and their interactive processes" (Heath, 1982, p.93). According to Ochs (1990) social groups index the sociocultural information and interactions they consider most important, so, for example, a group that considers physical closeness with relatives to be important will probably have markers of the relevance they grant to it in their discourse, in their syntax, in their prosody and so on in other language components.

There is a wide body of literature that provides evidence of the cultural and social richness and language and literacy strengths of different non mainstream populations and more specifically of Latino groups (Delgado-Gaitan; Compton Lilly; Goldenberg, Gallimore & Reese, Valdés; Heath; Lareau). There is also wide acceptance of the fact that schools often tend to dismiss or ignore these group registers and that they teach and assess children based on their management of the school-based literacy register. The latter uses certain types of texts (such as expository or narrative genres) and a certain type of language, such as decontextualized language (Pellegrini, 2001; Snow et al., 1991; Romero-Contreras, 2009).

The present study rejects viewing non-Western and specifically Latino families' language and literacy home environments with a deficit perspective (Farver et al., 2006). Characteristics that literature reports for Latino families' home environments such as the importance granted to the family and the community, the moral perception of educational attainment, or the focus on letter and word recognition are relevant elements of education and constitute aspects that in many ways probably strengthen these children's cognitive development. Researchers such as Ehri & Roberts (2006) and Bus & van Ilzendoorn (1988) have, for example, provided evidence that reading alphabet books or asking the child to blend sounds or syllables into words has a positive effect on knowledge of letters. Kagitsibaci's review and work, on the other hand supports the notion that fostering connectedness or relatedness (rather than separateness) does not imply a disadvantage for a sociocultural group (Kagitsibaci, 2007).

There is, however, literature that supports the notion that the school-based literacy register has extended its coverage to other settings such as hospitals or government services which are central to a family's developmental opportunities (LeVine et al., 2012). Kagitsibaci (2007), for example, argues that the increase in urban (rather than rural) lifestyle and the expansion in public education have made common standards for competence emerge. In Chile, several of the bureaucratic services as well as higher education institutions where these families expect their children to study are based on the Western model and therefore use the school-based register. Consequently, Chileans

who don't have a thorough grasp of the school-based literacy register are at a disadvantage. Based on the above-mentioned literature and on the Chilean context, the present research follows LeVine et al. (2012) in arguing that the acquisition of the school-based literacy register has several benefits that go beyond academic development and that increase children's opportunities.

The sample for this qualitative study comprised 30 homes. The table in Appendix E provides basic descriptions of the children in the sample such as gender, SES, district, HLLI index level as well as children's global score in the WMLI-R tests.

This was a stratified subsample of the sample used for the previous quantitative study. The stratification was done by reference to the percentage of children from each of the districts in the quantitative sample, the child's gender and the home's HLLI level as defined by the index obtained through discriminant analysis in the previous chapter. This index categorized the 30 families of the qualitative sample into three groups (high HLLI, medium HLLI and low HLLI) according to how their HLLIs related to their preschoolers' language and literacy skills (vocabulary, letter knowledge, phonological awareness and text comprehension) at the beginning of prekindergarten.

Considering these criteria, the sample of this study was composed of 12 children from district two and 18 from district three. Within each district 50% of the children were boys. Of these 30 preschoolers, 11 children came from homes that, according to the index, provided an HLLI of higher quality (in comparison to the rest of the sample); nine came from homes with an HLLI of medium quality and ten came from homes that were in the lowest HLLI group.

This qualitative study aims to describe and understand the naturally existing literacy registers of these families as well as their familiarity with the school-based literacy register. Consequently this sample of 30 families includes only kindergarten children from the UBC control group, i.e. children and families that had not received the UBC language and literacy intervention.

One of the limitations faced when selecting the sample for this qualitative study related to the availability of children to participate in it: some of the kindergarten children had moved to other schools since UBC had collected their quantitative data in pre-K. Since it was not possible to find out where they had gone, these children were automatically excluded from participating in the subsample used for the current qualitative study.

Furthermore, there was a self-selection bias. Access to the participating families was gained mainly through school principals and preschool teachers. However, when

contacting all the principals in districts two and three, a few of them were not open to meeting with the researcher. Therefore, the children eventually selected for the qualitative study came from the schools whose principals and kindergarten teachers were the most supportive or open to acting as a liaison between the researcher and the parents. Also, before approaching the parents, teachers were asked if any of the households posed an evident danger for the researcher; those few homes mentioned were excluded from the potential list of participants. Finally, participating caregivers were recruited when they left their child at school or picked them up afterwards; this excluded those children who were not picked up from school by their caregivers. All this could imply a selection bias where the most dysfunctional or at risk families had less chance of participating in this qualitative study, (for further methodological details please see the Methods Chapter II, pp. 55-62)

The qualitative data for this study was gathered during the Chilean Winter, between June and August of 2010. The range of ages of the children in the qualitative sample was 4.5- 6.1 years. When the data was gathered the target children were then in the middle of their kindergarten year, which, in Chile, constitutes the second and final year of preschool before children pass to first grade.

The observation visit to each of the 30 homes lasted four to five hours. During this visit the researcher did a naturalistic observation of the child for three to four hours and a semistructured interview with the child's caregiver (See protocol in Appendix A). The interviewee was normally the mother but, in some cases, it was both of the parents or the grandmother who took care of the child during the time he or she was not at school.

The data gathered through the naturalistic observation of the child and the semistructured interview was transcribed and analyzed with the N-Vivo Software. The protocol for coding this data was built through an iterative process and included themes that emerged from the literature review (such as shared reading or decontextualized conversations as potentially relevant home literacy practices) as well as themes that emerged from an initial analysis of the perceptions and views of a subsample of these 30 families (for example, parents' belief that one of their most important roles is to protect the child or their positive perceptions of TV as an educational resource).

The coded data from the interviews and observations was analyzed looking for emerging patterns. Checklists were made for each theme and subtheme in order to see if the emerging patterns were transversal to the whole sample, specific to any of the

three different HLE groups, related to other characteristics of the families or if they were exceptional cases. An example of this checklist is provided in Appendix F.

Participants' data was treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms were used for all the children and families. All the quotes used to illustrate the findings were numbered and translated to English by the researcher and then translated back to Spanish to assure accuracy. The translations were also checked by two other educational specialists who are fluent in both Spanish and English and familiar with the Chilean context. Appendix K presents the quotes in Spanish.

Chapters V, VI and VII present the main qualitative findings, and then the final Discussion and Conclusions Chapter discusses these qualitative findings in relation to the quantitative findings and in relation to previous literature.

In combination with the previous quantitative findings the present qualitative study both confirms and adds new findings to the existing research on home language and literacy practices and beliefs of parents from low SES households and/or Latino culture.

CHAPTER V. PARENTAL THEORIES OF LEARNING AND UPBRINGING PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

The present chapter is the first of three chapters that constitute the qualitative study.

This chapter sets the scene for the following two qualitative chapters by providing a description of the typical home routines and the ways in which these parents structured or allowed these children's home time to flow on an average preschool day. It then moves to describe salient aspects of these caregivers' parenting approaches, such as their sense of self-efficacy, theories of learning, academic expectations as well as their maturational views of development and the fostering of family and community interdependencies.

These parenting perspectives constitute part of what Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined as the macrosystem in which these children live, which includes cultural and political values as well as social conditions. These perspectives, thus, help to explain the more specific language and literacy practices and beliefs sustained by these caregivers.

Appendix M describes in more detail a typical morning or afternoon in these Chilean low SES preschoolers' homes. However, a summary of the main activities of the children at home is provided in the following paragraphs in order to better set the scene.

All of the caregivers in the sample seemed to have very busy lives. Some of them worked full time, generally in districts that were very distant to where they lived. Other mothers who did not work or had more informal jobs and were, in general, with their preschooler while they were not at school, also seemed to have quite a handful on their plates with all the childrearing responsibilities, household chores, various errands and extended family members' demands.

With a few exceptions, to be discussed later on, most of the homes in the sample had no pre-established routine and/or rules regarding the order or amount of time dedicated to their different activities, so children sometimes had snacks, watched TV or did homework at different times on different days.

Most of the caregivers, specifically those with preschool girls, would carefully prepare the girl for school, putting on cologne and taking their time to brush the girl's hair, put it in ponytails or plaiting it and dressing the girl meticulously. They then prepared the child's backpack packing it with a snack for recess and, if necessary, gym uniforms. At

this point some of the mothers checked the school memo (which they had normally stuck on the fridge door), which set out a suggested snack for each day of the week.

The schools attended by the preschoolers in the sample were normally located within walking distance of the home and most of the children in the sample walked to school with their caregiver.

Although the number and type of literacy resources available in the homes observed varied, all of the children in the sample had access to: environmental print in the streets to and from the school and in the home (for example, a poster with a prayer stuck on a wall, the labels of products used in the home, print on bedcovers or other home furnishings, occasionally a name and phone number written on the wall and a memo from school stuck on the fridge); an ABC book (the *Silabario*); a school notebook with homework; picture books to colour in which sometimes had a short text too (but normally very short), cable TV, and children's DVDs. Also, around 60% of the homes had a computer and in those cases the child also had access to print through video games or through the Internet. Children with elder siblings also sometimes had access to their siblings' books and school textbooks. In some homes the researcher also saw newspapers, magazines, phone books and, in a couple of homes, books for adults and children's books were also seen.

At the end of the school day, the caregiver normally picked the child up and they walked home together. In the home, the child would sit down with or without the mother to do his homework. Typically, the homework took between 15 to 60 minutes to complete and it was normally done at the dining room table located in the main living space.

After the homework was finished, the mother prepared the living/dining room table for "*la once*" (the Chilean term for an early dinner or late teatime gathering which is the final meal of the day). In most of the homes observed, this meal was the main time of the day during which the family gathered together. Generally it took place when the older members of the family got home from work (at around 19:00 or 19:30). During *la once* the families would sit together around the main table, which was invariably in the living room space, which is where the television, DVDs, music system and large couch were also located. The TV was often on during this time, but it was not normally a constant focus of attention. A couple of the preschoolers in the sample were asked to sit down at the table with their parents but most circulated and ate bread or had milk on the couch nearby listening, or played games on a cell phone or computer or watching the TV.

Bedtime time varied between the households in the sample and also varied for each child within each household but children typically went to bed between 20:00 and 23:00pm. Even though all of the children in the sample had a bed for themselves, at least half of them slept in their parents' bed. When in bed these preschoolers normally watched a bit of TV and then fell asleep.

I. Caregivers' learning theories: observation rather than conversation and "being attentive" as one of the child's responsibilities

One of the recurring themes that emerged during the analysis of the qualitative data was the appreciation the parents' had of their children's curiosity or capacity for observation. The parents tended to follow and document the child's "attentiveness" to things from the surroundings (in Spanish: *estar atento o estar pendiente a las cosas*). "*Estar atento*" implied looking actively or with interest at the environment and in some cases enquiring or asking questions.

Almost half of the parents expressed their appreciation for their children's observational capacity and attentiveness as an important indicator of learning. In contrast to parents from mid or low HLE homes, parents from homes that provided a high HLE made more frequent and more detailed references to their children's powers of observation and inner drive to learn and to the questions that their children asked in the home environment. In fact, nine out of eleven high HLE parents repeatedly made explicit comments about the child's curiosity as an indicator of intelligence, emergent literacy and/or future academic success. In contrast, only two out of nine mid HLE parent and two out of ten low HLE caregivers referred to their child's curiosity or attentiveness or capacity to pose questions. For example, one mother from a low HLE household who was concerned about her child's lack of curiosity or attentiveness to their environment and to the consequences that this could have for his literacy learning expressed this in the following way:

Quote 1:

Mum: I basically tell him "You must start learning to see, if you want to learn to read you will have to start looking around... when you are on the bus you have to watch around so that you can read and practice the letters that the teacher is teaching at school."(Eduardo Escobar, low HLE)

In general, caregivers seemed to believe that children who were curious or active observers could and should learn from the environment, by themselves without necessarily having an adult to mediate.

Quote 2:

Mum: "When she was younger I had to be looking out for her, for her homework and all. But now it's different, now she asks a lot of questions, like "Sister, Mum, which word do I have to use?" She asks and she writes, so she is not a child you have to be looking out for. No, she is not". (Emilia Araya, low HLLE)

The Chilean caregivers under study tended to believe that this capacity for observation was a fixed birth trait of the child. In this sense and following Dweck's mindset theory (2007), the parents in the sample had a fixed mindset in relation to their children's cognitive development.

This fixed mindset perspective, which was present throughout the sample, was illustrated in the following extract from the interview of a high HLLE mother. This mother had provided the child with environmental print and had talked to her mother-in-law about her son's literacy development. Yet, when asked to share her thoughts about why her preschooler son could already read and write, she said it was due to her son's interest, emphasizing that her child's achievement was unrelated to anything she had done.

Quote 3:

Int: Do you think he is skilled in relation to reading and literacy?

Mum: Sure, he has been reading and writing for a while now.

Int: And how do you think he became skilled?

Mum: He learnt to read so young because of the interest he had in reading, I mean he did it by himself, I never... I'm not a teacher, so I never used any techniques, nothing, he started when he was around three years of age asking "What is that letter? and that other one?"

Int: In magazines?

Mum: Everywhere. Wherever he went, because he is very watchful, and wherever he went he was "What's the name of that letter?" His bedcover also has some letters on it so he asked me about that. And so I realized he had a lot of interest in letters, he wanted to learn to read. At three years of age, my mother-in-law, who is a teacher, told me that if he showed a lot of interest then I could start telling him about it and teaching him.

Int: What did she tell you?

Mum: For example that when you teach a kid how to learn to read you should never teach the name of the letter but how it sounds, and only when they have already learnt that, only then you can teach them the name of the letter... so I did it just like that and I didn't even realize how but at some point he was reading. So I don't know how he reads but he does read. (Germán Cárcamo, high HLLE)

The caregivers in the sample also seemed to believe that it was a negative thing to tell children things they had not yet asked about, or as one of the caregivers put it, to "impose" new knowledge on the child.

Quote 4:

Int: what needs to happen so that children learn to read?

Mum: The thing is that my children at least have all been curious so I have not had to teach them much.

Int: You mean because they learn by themselves?

Mum: I mean because they ask what they need to know, so for example if she wants to know something I teach her. But I only teach her what she wants to know.

Int: What she asks you.

Mum: Sure, I don't impose things on her. (Jessica Alvarez, high HLLLE)

Furthermore, as illustrated in the following quote, caregivers did not seem to believe it was desirable or did not show any eagerness to build on questions the child might have asked on a previous occasion.

Quote 5:

Dad: What was it that she was asking me? That I told her later... something she didn't know how to write, ahh "Librería" (Bookshop)

Mum: Ah sure, yesterday she was asking, "BRE she asked, which one is BRE", she knew how to write "LI" but not "BRE".

Dad: We were not in the home so I started writing [the word] in the streets electric pole but the pencil didn't work, it couldn't write on the pole so I told her "later you can write it at home" but then later she didn't ask again. (Emilia Araya, low HLLLE)

One mid HLLLE mum that talked of her child's attentiveness compared it to her eldest daughter's lack of curiosity. As can be seen in the quote that follows this mother also talked extensively about the advice she had received from a language specialist that was helping her with her eldest daughter, who had made her aware that she should foster her child's curiosity more.

Quote 6:

Mum: Sometimes Marisol is looking attentively, which was something that Ana [elder sibling] never did... Ana never had that curiosity and I never developed it either. ...I think that they are born with that but you have to develop it too... give her tools... perhaps I have not been able to motivate her to go beyond ...you cut them the wings yourself because sometimes Marisol is attentive but then I'm doing something else so I say "Marisol, wait" or "Marisol, afterwards" and then when I want to I say "Ok, now" she is already up to something else.

You have to foster the curiosity and that's the complicated part. Guide them so that they discover things, motivate them to do so...with Ana I have a lot of problems and now I am seeing this lady with a method and she was talking about this. [She said] you have to give the child tools to seek and not always give the child everything... as I said she [Ana] sees too much television so inside her own head, she is filled only with cartoons. "She is very smart"- the lady told me- "but you have to start developing her intelligence. Have her have more contact with nature". I had just left them [the children]... because it's easier to leave them there lying around, watching television while I do the house chores.... its easier for me". (Marisol Moraga, mid HLLLE)

This case seemed to indicate that caregivers' appreciation of a child's general curiosity and the idea that they should promote that curiosity are views that could be fostered through parenting sessions. However, it also exemplifies how a mother's knowing that she should be fostering her child's curiosity does not necessarily mean that the caregiver knows' how to do so, nor does it mean that she will actually change her

practices.

The perspective, shared by most of the parents in the sample, in which parents are not responsible for eliciting children’s curiosity and thoughts is similar to the natural growth perspective described by Lareau (2003) for her sample of low SES parents.

In summary, while the parents in the sample considered their role to be to respond to the child’s questions regarding letters and numbers, they did not think it was to foster the child’s curiosity. In other words, they did not see the child’s lack of observational capacity as a reflection of their practices as caregivers but rather as a reflection of the child’s personal learning capacity. Consequently they took no credit for the child’s learning when, in their view, it had happened naturally just because the child tended to explore and be attentive to their surroundings. Similarly, they took little responsibility, therefore, for the lack of learning of a child whom they regarded as uninterested in exploring and learning.

II. Academic expectations “I can see him going to university”

All the parents in our qualitative sample wanted or aspired for their children to study beyond high school because they believed that more years of education would increase the child’s possibilities of success and could have a positive impact on their quality of life.

During the present study, in the semi-structured interview to the caregivers, the parents were asked about their educational expectations for the child, that is to say the possibility that their preschooler would follow secondary studies and on what, in their view, this depended. The following table classified the frequencies of the answers into the categories that emerged.

Table 5.1: What is necessary for the child to follow secondary studies?

	High HLE	Mid HLE	Low HLE
Parents home support (not leaving the child alone, motivating the child)	4	5	6
Child’s maturity	2		
Child’s interests	1	1	1
Economical resources and availability of scholarships	4	1	2
Child’s discipline	1		
Child’s abilities or intelligence	1	3	2
How studious is the child		1	2
Good school teacher		2	
Good school			1
Pre-college tutoring program			1

Across each of the HLE levels in the sample, caregivers’ emotional and practical support of the child at home was the most mentioned feature on which the

preschooler's higher education depended. Parents that gave further details of what this entailed mentioned sitting down with the child to do their homework, never leaving the child alone, motivating the child (for example "convincing the child" or "insisting on the child doing things") or giving advice (*consejos*) to the child about the importance of going to school or being responsible about school duties and continuing education after school.

Within the sample only seven out of 30 caregivers or 23% mentioned the cost of higher education as an issue on which the child's higher education depended. This seemed interesting for a sample of low SES Chilean families especially since, in 2010, when these caregivers were observed and interviewed, most Chilean higher education students were studying with the economic support of their families, and higher education represented a huge burden on mid SES monthly budgets.

Parents' educational expectations gathered in this qualitative study were aligned to the expectations that the larger sample had reported in the quantitative study where 63% of parents expected their child to obtain a university degree and 18%, a technical degree. The parents' educational expectations also seemed to reflect the explosive increase in educational expectations that all Chilean parents have gone through in the last decades (see the Introduction).

Almost all of the 30 caregivers from this qualitative study were observed or reported being attentive to the child's interests and deducing potential future careers from these interests. However, there were important qualitative differences in the ways parents expressed their academic expectations for their children and these differences were aligned with the quality of the HLE.

In comparison to their more disadvantaged peers, high HLE parents were observed talking more to other members of their family or to the researcher about their academic expectations for their children. For example, while all high HLE mothers made their aspirations of secondary studies for the child explicit to the interviewer, one mid HLE mother and three low HLE mothers did not do so. High HLE mothers were also observed to talk more to the child about these expectations. Seven high HLE mothers, versus four mid HLE mothers and only two low HLE mothers reported or were observed talking to their preschoolers about the possibility of following secondary education. Furthermore, high HLE parents also showed a higher level of certainty that the child would study beyond high school and specifically that the child would go to university.

In the present qualitative study, all parents expressed the view that they wanted their

preschooler to get a degree, follow a career and become a professional. However the comments of parents from higher HLE households indicated that they had a deeper understanding of the differences between alternatives for secondary studies such as studying at university, going to a technical institute or following a career in the military. In contrast, the comments and answers from lower HLE caregivers reflected less familiarity with the higher education system as well as a conceptualisation of higher education according to which the differences between alternatives such as university, technical institute or joining the military were unclear. Actually in some cases caregivers used these terms almost as interchangeable synonyms. The following comment from a low HLE mother illustrates this view, common among low HLE caregivers:

Quote 7:

Mum: I can visualize the kids studying in the university. I would like them to follow a career, for example a military career, or for them to be air pilots, I always tell them that's what you guys will be up to. However, if they don't want that for themselves... What I don't want is for them to stay here doing nothing (Spanish: "quedar marcando el paso")... but it scares me because I see how young people are right now. (Axel Castillo, low HLE)

In each of the three HLE groups, half of the caregivers expressed their belief that the child's future achievement of secondary studies depended not so much on school or teacher quality but rather on the mother's perseverance and capacity to convince the child to study beyond high school.

During the interviews and observations mothers reported or were observed having motivational conversations about higher education aspirations with older siblings of the target children. There were, however, differences in the ways caregivers framed these motivational conversations because mothers from homes that provided an HLE of better quality appeared to have a higher certainty that the child would make it to higher education and therefore the role of motivating the child to study beyond high school was expressed in terms of explaining different possibilities and being attentive to the careers that the child might show an interest in. The following quote illustrates this view:

Quote 8:

Int: Your eldest daughter, what does she want to do after she finishes school?

Mum: Well, she wants many things; she is excited about going to university because she likes dentistry, or psychology. I don't know. I've told her, "we'll see further ahead" because I tell her "I don't see you in that" because she is not too good for studying.

Int: You need high test scores to enter those careers

Mum: Exactly, we've told her, "you need to score above 800"... (Sofía Piña, high HLE)

This could imply that the aspiration to secondary education in high HLE homes could serve

to ignite conversations in which the children have the opportunity to reflect and talk about their interests and the specific requirements that would need to be met for the child to go to university. Moreover, it could also imply that conversations about secondary education expectations for high HLE children might have a dialogic style and include explanatory talk.

In contrast, even though mothers from low HLE households also believed that it was their role to motivate the child to study beyond high school, the motivational conversations they reported with the target child or with older siblings regarding higher education expectations were less specific in content and they included more comments about the potential obstacles their pre-schooler could face.

Finally there was also some evidence that low HLE caregivers more often tended to talk to their children about their future education through *consejos* (advices), a narrative form that has a monologue or homily style rather than a dialogic style. The following quote from a low HLE mother explaining how she talked with her elder son who had already finished school illustrates this type of interaction:

Quote 9:

Mum: My goal is for Tomás [elder son] to go to university... I talk to him and tell him "look son, in life everything is hard to obtain, it's not easy. So if you want to achieve something important in your life, if you want your work to be valued... sadly if you don't study a career you won't be able to go any further. Perhaps you will have to go on studying, maybe you will have to keep improving yourself and it's important that you do it". (Valentina Sepúlveda, low HLE)

III. Parents' varying sense of self-efficacy

The current study with Chilean parents found that there were varying levels of self-efficacy among these parents.

In general, high HLE mothers had a strong sense of self-efficacy, definitely stronger than mid and low HLE mothers, this is to say they had a stronger belief that they could help their child learn or deal with school responsibilities in a successful way. For example all three caregivers with the highest HLE in the sample had a high concept of their self-efficacy, were openly proud of running their homes with certain rules and having the child follow a routine that included an established time for homework in which they supported and motivated the child and/or a controlled time for watching TV or playing on the computer.

The following quote from the father of a high HLE girl illustrates this sense of efficacy:

Quote 10:

Dad: Thank God Laura is good at doing her homework. She says “Dad I have homework” and we are not like other parents that say “Ok, go do them” or “Ok we’ll do them afterwards”. We, I mean my wife mostly and me too now that I’m not working, we care a lot. (Laura Ferrer, high HLE)

Within the sample, there were variations in how families organized their children’s time within the home and these variations were related to the quality of the HLE provided.

High HLE parents showed a higher sense of self-efficacy in managing the child’s home routine; consequently they proudly shared, as examples of their efficacy, how they controlled the amount of TV-watching or computer time or ensured that homework was done at a specific time.

The following two quotes from high HLE parents illustrate this:

Quote 11:

Mum: At 3:00pm for example I prepare him his milk... I take it to him and he can have it wherever he is. After that... if he has brought homework from school we take some time to do it because I don’t let him leave that for last. Ideally it would be homework first and then fun, but I’m not going to have him sit down to do his homework as soon as he comes home from school... then I tell him if he’s [playing] with the playstation, “Ok, the playstation must be put away for a while, do something else”, it could be drawing, he likes playing with his toys or painting, anything he fancies actually, anything that’s not being glued to the TV or to the playstation. Then at around 7:00 or 7:30pm I call him so that he comes for dinner. (Germán Cárcamo, high HLE)

Quote 12:

Dad: We, I mean my wife mostly and now me cause I’m out of work so I can be around more, but my wife takes care that after she [the girl] arrives home, it’s one hour for homework, then one hour for playing, then another hour for...

Mum: ... Yeah she gets here [from school], plays in her room for a while, gets all her toys out, and then when the lunch is ready we have lunch and normally we finish at around two or two thirty and then we start doing the homework. We finish the homework and then she goes back to her room to play or she uses the computer for a while. (Laura Ferrer, high HLE)

In contrast to these examples from high HLE homes, only two children from mid HLE families and one child from a low HLE family seemed to have consciously established home routines. Most low HLE parents seemed to embrace the “accomplishment of natural growth” approach (Lareau, 2003, p. 3): their children’s routines were less structured and monitored and the children chose their own out-of-school activities. The following quote from a low HLE mother whose preschool girl does her homework and goes to bed at a range of different times illustrates this type of approach to upbringing.

Quote 13:

Int: And, more or less at what time does she go to sleep?

Mum: Late. Around 11pm, more or less... 12pm, sometimes later.

Int: So she stays in bed watching TV, or what does she do during those hours in bed before falling asleep?

Mum: She falls asleep once I get into bed. She sleeps with us. She stays doing her homework, and then she goes to bed. We normally do the homework at night after we come back from church, after we cook.

Int: So that means she'll go to bed at around what time? 8:30pm?

Mum: No, we come back from church at around 9:30 or 10:00pm.

Int: So she does her homework at around 10:00pm?

Mum: Sure, or later... and then she goes to bed but only when I'm ready to go to bed.

(Anahis Navarro, low HLE)

Most mid and low HLE mothers highlighted more the difficulties they had and how overwhelmed they were rather than any measures they had taken to deal with the child's needs. For example, they focused on how hard it was for the child to sit down and do their homework and how, since the child was not motivated, they just stood up and left the table. Or they dwelled on how difficult it was to sit down with the child and do the homework after the mother had come home from work.

In the same way, when they described the child's activities in the home they did not talk much about general patterns as if they did not have agency in the home schedule or in the child's activities in the home or as if they simply observed the child's decisions without intervention. The following quote represents the views of these mothers who had a lower sense of self-efficacy.

Quote 14:

Mum: when she brings her books from school I say "Ok, go do your homework" and she does them all but when I'm [helping] Ana [elder sister] and she asks me [to give her some homework] I do so but then she does two lines and that's it, she gets bored and leaves.

Int: I see, so she does the school homework better than the homework you make up for her

Mum: Sure...it's because she knows the teacher will scold her. Instead with the homework I make up for her she only completes it if she feels like it. If not she says "Ok, that's all I'm doing. I'll do a drawing now" and she starts drawing for example a family. I say, "No, you must do the whole page of homework" but she says "No, I'm already tired" and she starts doing her drawing. (Marisol Moraga, mid HLE)

IV. Protective parents with a maturational view of development

In the parent questionnaire analyzed as part of the previous quantitative study, the majority of parents reported that the main role they played in their child's life was keeping the child safe and healthy. In line with this, one of the findings of the current

qualitative study was that the parents strongly perceived the immediate world outside to be dangerous and believed that the presence or physical closeness to the child of the parents and specifically, of the mother, was necessary to protect the child from this hostile physical and immoral environment.

Almost none of the children in the sample were allowed to go outside to play in the street, sidewalk or square in front of or near the home. In fact, during the visits to these families' neighbourhoods, this researcher practically never saw children playing in the streets. Preschoolers played mostly inside the home or in the courtyards of their homes. The only exceptions to this were two high HLE families, who lived in newer and more middle-class-looking neighbourhoods that had small squares or parks. Furthermore, most of the children in the sample knew that there were places in the home where they could wander freely but also others where they could not. This was because other extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts or uncles, sometimes with their own nuclear families, shared many of the homes in the sample. Typically, although the target preschoolers were occasionally observed or reported to visit or use other extended family members' parts of the house, they mostly used their nuclear family's rooms and, in some cases, had to report to their parents when they went to other extended family members' rooms.

The caregivers interviewed considered that being at home with their mothers (rather than playing in the street or at a friend's home) was a marker for the child's moral development. The Chilean mothers in this qualitative current study also considered that, by being physically close to and watching over the child, they were fulfilling their duty of protecting the child from external dangers such as nasty gatherings, drugs, alcohol and early sexual experiences. This protective attribute had been previously found in studies with Chilean low SES families and also in studies with other Latino parents abroad (Catalán & Egaña, 2004; Goldenberg et al., 1992))

The data analyzed also indicated that most of these Chilean preschoolers parents' comments and actions evidenced a maturational conceptualisation of children's development, which implied that the child would naturally grow out of certain behaviours and would learn certain skills when he or she was biologically ready for that change. Before this happened, the mothers considered it was their role to attend and respond to the child's demands.

Nine of the 30 children in the sample lived, hence frequently interacted in their homes, with one or more grandparent, generally a grandmother. In three of these cases the grandmother acted as the main caregiver to the child because the child's mother

worked during the day. Practically all of the grandmothers interviewed, observed or referred to by the children's mothers, tended to have a maturational perspective. Thus, they were often concerned that the child should not become stressed or traumatized by some external demand they could not yet handle. None of these grandmothers had attended preschool themselves, recalling that first grade had been their first year of school and when they had first learnt letter identification and word reading formally. As a consequence, in relation to school learning and specifically to literacy learning, (which the adults in the community perceived as pertaining to school learning), grandmothers tended to have low expectations for the child's learning development in preschool. In fact, some of the grandmothers complained that the preschooler was being taught too much too early. Further research specifically focused on grandmothers' roles in bringing up low SES Chilean children would be necessary to understand more about how their views affect these children's learning environments.

These families' maturational view of development and the mothers' tendency to do things for the child instead of teaching them how to do them autonomously, was further supported by the data from the parent questionnaire in this research's quantitative study: parents in the larger sample reported on average that an appropriate age to start reading to the child was 3.4 years of age, which is much higher than the 7.32 months reported by Burgess et al.'s study for Western middle class parents (2002). Furthermore, in the parent questionnaire caregivers also said they thought an appropriate age for handing books to children was 4.2 years of age, with more than 20% of caregivers thinking that a good age to start giving books to children was six or more years of age.

Caregivers in the sample also tended to be physically close to and affectionate with their preschoolers, often taking the child in their arms and living in close physical contact with them. Thus, even though practically all the children in the sample had an individual bed in which to sleep and most had a separate bedroom, more than half of this sample of kindergarten children slept in their parents' bed because, according to the caregivers, this was what the child liked to do.

Quote 15:

Mum: Yes, [the child sleeps with us] because the other day he fell from his bed. How long ago was it son? Around three months ago? He fell off his bed so he was scared. (Matías Bravo, low HLLLE)

This preference for physical closeness and this maturational tendency to do things for the child without aiming to have the child become independent was more or less

present throughout the sample; it was more accentuated, however, among lower HLE families. For example, while the average age of the children in the sample was 5.4 years, seven children in the sample still had their morning or evening milk from a baby bottle and six of these belonged to families with a low HLE.

V. Indulging the child as a way of reassuring him

Caregivers in the sample often mentioned and complained that the child was too spoiled (*muy regalón*) but they did not appear to make a connection between this observation and their parenting style. Some of the mothers complained to the researcher about their child's indulged behaviour, for example saying that they were tired of the child being so *mamón* (dependent on the mother for everything) but, at the same time, the children in the sample were seldom taught how to become autonomous regarding their habits, how to look after themselves or help with household chores.

Only two of the 30 caregivers in the sample, both from homes with high HLE provision, explicitly mentioned it was a positive thing to have the child learn how to do things by themselves and become more independent. Moreover, three of the 30 mothers (two of them from the high HLE group and one from the low HLE group) even went as far as reporting that when the child was a toddler the doctor from the local health centre (*consultorio*) had suggested placing the child in an early education centre because the child was too dependent and spoiled. Certain gender differences were observed here in the sense that caregivers were seen to indulge boys more than girls, specifically in matters of bringing food to the child on demand and asking the child to help with household chores. For example, within the high HLE group most of the cases classified by this researcher as examples of the child being very cosseted corresponded to boys rather than girls.

Caregivers' comments also expressed a feeling of helplessness, indicating that they did not seem to believe it could be in their hands to change their child's level of indulgence, as if it was a fixed trait. In one low HLE home, for example, the mother extensively complained that her daughter was very *mamona*, that she got bored sometimes because the child was too demanding and frequently slept with her at night. However, while saying this, the mother was holding the preschool girl in her arms giving her warm milk in a baby bottle.

Regarding food, mothers gave importance to and made extensive reference to their child's food tastes and celebrated their child's appetites. Some of them provided their children with several food alternatives in case they did not like the first option.

It was also acceptable for the child to ask repeatedly for a snack that was not in the home, and for the caregiver to comply and go to a nearby food store to buy it for the child.

Quote 16:

Child: Mami, can you go buy me some chips?

Mum: Chips? It's raining outside!

Child: With ketchup or mayo (mayonnaise)?

Mum: Well, it's up to luck what they come with.

Child: If they come with ketchup I will eat them, if they come with mayo...

(The mother leaves the home to go to buy the chips from a local vendor, which is one block away) (Benjamín Vidal, high HLLE)

Children also had a say about their sleeping habits. Some of the caregivers mentioned that the child sometimes slept in their bed and sometimes in a sibling's bed, depending on where they wanted to sleep.

Furthermore, regarding their TV-watching habits, most of the children in the sample had a television in the room where they slept and watched television to fall asleep at night. Some of the parents, such as the high HLLE parents quoted below, said that they turned the TV off at some point so that the child could go to sleep while other parents seemed to have a more 'laissez-faire' attitude to TV-watching at bedtime.

Quote 17:

Int: And she falls asleep watching TV?

Mum: Sure, you've got to turn it off because if not she will keep watching... during the holidays for example ... I usually fell asleep fast, at ten, ten thirty I started getting sleepy, I fell asleep and then I woke up, went to see her and she was watching TV. It was about twelve at night. She had stayed up watching TV, so I told her to turn off the TV. But that was during the holidays. During this time however, at nine or nine thirty at the latest the TV has to be turned off.

Int: Sure, because by then she has already watched a lot of TV...

Mum: Sure, because we bathe her and put her in bed and there she has to [watch TV], we don't let her get up so that she doesn't catch a cold. (Sofía Piña, high HLLE)

One potential contextual explanation of why these Chilean low SES parents tended to be permissive and of why they cosseted their children could be that since birth rates in Chile have diminished all the attention and love of caregivers and other adults in the home is focused on fewer children. However, for this sample, the pampering of the child

did not seem to depend on the place that the child held among the siblings or on the number of siblings that the child had. Indeed the three caregivers who most cosseted their respective preschoolers were among those who had more children. An example of this was the mother of Victor Gutierrez, a healthy preschooler with three other male siblings, all below nine years of age. This mother extensively complained about how she did not have time to go to meetings at school or do different things because she had her four boys to take care of. However she also told the researcher that after several meetings at school she and her husband had finally succeeded in obtaining a special permit from the schools' authorities allowing her to go to the school every day at lunch time to feed Victor herself, because "*there are just so many things he doesn't really like eating*" (Victor Gutierrez, low HLE). Another possible contextual explanation for these caregivers pampering their preschoolers could be that they were so exhausted emotionally and physically that they did not have the energy to teach the child to do things on their own. It might also have been the case that, since these parents could not afford to give the child many luxuries, they indulged their children with the few things that they could afford such as snacks, toys and video games, and physical closeness at bedtime.

It could also be that these parents thought that a more authoritarian approach might harm the child emotionally. Indeed, some caregivers recalled that during their childhood their own parents had been very authoritarian and they saw it as a positive thing that they had not followed that model of upbringing. They contrasted the distanced parenting style that they had experienced in their own childhoods explicitly to the physical closeness and pampered lives they provided to their children.

Even though the above mentioned contextual or cultural-historical reasons may only explain in part the caregivers' indulgence of their preschoolers, the main values and beliefs that seemed to be at the centre of their indulgent parental practices appeared to be a) their maturational perspective which made them treat the child as an infant until the school years, b) the cultural fostering of the value of the family and of familial interdependencies, and c) the socioemotional value these parents granted to physical closeness and affection as a protective factor.

In line with this, some mothers explicitly referred to how they believed indulging the child could give the child more self assurance and how physical closeness was part of their way of bringing up their children.

Quote 18:

Mum: ... César [caregiver's older child] is still very close to me, very cosseted by me. He gets whatever he wants from me.

Int: I see. And do you think that that is something that helps him get further at school or elsewhere?

Mum: I think that kids, when you give them a lot of love they focus more. I think they become more self-assured. (Matías Bravo, low HLE)

Quote 19:

Mum: ...there's people that sometimes see things from outside and they have other views "you've got that kid too cosseted, too mamón and I ask them "Why?".

The thing is I'm a very affectionate person... So I like going around giving hugs, kissing but I don't think that's a bad thing. Because you see, when there's a limit to be placed I don't have any problem placing it, and it's not that he's untouchable or that he can't be scolded, that's not what's going on here. Over here anybody who makes a mistake must assume the consequences. (Germán Cárcamo, high HLE)

VI. Fostering of family and community interdependencies

Another salient feature of the parenting style of these caregivers was that they tended to foster familial interdependencies. For example, caregivers made frequent reference to how each child in the family was specially attached (*regalón*) to one or two specific adult relatives from whom the child could obtain almost whatever they wanted.

Parents perceived this special attachment or closeness to a certain adult as a positive protective factor.

For example, this special attachment was often expected between the child and at least one of their grandparents, generally the grandmother. As mentioned before, almost a third of the children in the sample lived with their grandmothers who, in some cases, acted as the main caregiver. It was accepted that this protective attachment that parents often commented on provided the grandparent in question with certain "pampering rights"; for example, a grandmother who was especially fond of a granddaughter could intercede for the child with the mother (and in front of the mother and child) when she felt the mother was being too harsh or demanding too much from the child.

The positive appreciation for this special bond between the child and an adult relative, who was, in many cases, the grandmother, implied that grandmothers had a say in the child's upbringing and that their views on education and development were important to the way in which the child was raised. Since, as mentioned before, several of the grandmothers observed in the homes tended to have a maturational perspective,

sometimes the fostering of familial interdependencies served to reinforced maturational approaches to these preschoolers' development.

The parents and the children in the sample also frequently made comments about their extended family members and about the way in which they interacted with them, for example how they went together to stay at a relative's place during the holidays, how they sometimes went to visit an aunt or uncle or how they relied on a sibling or on an older child for support.

The home economics of many families in the sample seemed to be largely dependent on and intertwined with that of their extended families. For example, some of the mothers interviewed commented that they had lived for years at their mother or mother-in-law's home before they had been able to buy their own home or before they obtained public housing for their nuclear family. In fact, some of the families still lived at their mother's or mother-in-law's house. Thus, it could be the case that these economic dependencies are at the basis of these families and communities' interdependencies.

Discussion

This chapter analyzed some characteristics of these Chilean low SES caregivers' theories of learning, as well as their views on who is responsible for what in the process of developing their child's capacities.

The parents in the sample were usually responsive to their preschooler's demands, attentive to their needs and active in fulfilling them. In general, their goal in so doing seemed to be to sooth and quiet the child, to show their affection and protect the child from frustration or danger.

This chapter has described how practically none of the families in the sample had an organized schedule of home or out-of-school activities such as the ones that Lareau (2003) and Heath (1986) have identified as characteristic of middle class American families. Also it found that these Chilean parents considered the immediate environment outside the home to be dangerous (which could be the case) and identified a family's morality in part by how physically close the mother was to the child and how much the child was kept indoors rather than allowed to roam freely in the neighbourhood.

This chapter also commented on these parents' maturational conceptualisation of children's development, which implied that the child would naturally grow out of

certain behaviours when they was biologically ready for that change, thus the preschoolers in the sample were rarely pushed to become autonomous regarding their habits, looking after themselves or regarding household chores.

The Chilean low SES parents in the qualitative sample also seemed to expect their children to learn more through observation rather than through verbal explanations. In general, caregivers seemed to believe that children who were active observers or curious could learn by themselves; and that children learn by themselves from the environment without necessarily having an adult mediate. Many were observed, however, giving their preeschoolers' *consejos* or advice about the importance of education or other moral values (such as persistence in a task). These Chilean parents believed that children's capacity for observation was a fixed trait of the child rather than a skill the child could develop or a reflection of any parental efforts to motivate the child as a learner. This could be problematic since there is evidence that fixed mindsets are related to lower achievement and motivation towards learning (Blackwell et al.'s research with teenagers and college students, 2007).

The parents' in the sample varied in their sense of self-efficacy but they all tended to have high academic expectations for their pre-schoolers.

Another feature of the parenting style of these caregivers was that they tended to foster familial interdependencies and believed that indulging the child would help develop the child's sense of self-assurance. This contrasted with values such as personal autonomy or individuality (Heath, 1986; Kagitcibaci, 2005) often fostered in Western middle class groups.

Parent's views on their child's cognitive traits, as well as their expectations, were transmitted to their pre-schoolers explicitly and implicitly in conjunction with parental views on how children learn and on the different roles that schools and parents have in this literacy learning process.

With the above-mentioned learning views and parenting-style features providing an initial explanatory background, the following section moves to describe in depth specific language and literacy practices observed in these homes.

CHAPTER VI. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE HOME

Introduction

The main purpose of the present chapter is to provide in-depth descriptions of the home language and literacy experiences. With both an exploratory and a confirmatory purpose this chapter seeks to uncover and describe the ways in which the parents use language with their children by focusing on aspects such as frequency and quality of letter and word identification in the home, rare word use and frequency of decontextualized conversations. As well as exposing the existing literacy practices in the HLLLE, it also tries to confirm if and how certain practices typical of the Western school-based literacy register are present in these homes (such as print awareness and shared reading).

The order in which the language and literacy practices are described in this chapter is in line with the frequency with which they were observed in the home studied. Thus, the chapter starts with a description of the high frequency and the varying quality with which the parents did school-related literacy activities in the home (such as homework, letter and word recognition with ABC books). The high observed and reported frequency of these activities throughout the sample proved that, in general, Chilean low SES caregivers were concerned about and responsive to, and tried to support their children's academic and literacy development.

Then, the chapter discusses the exposure these children have to new words when interacting with their caregivers and the views that caregivers have regarding vocabulary development. It looks at several commonalities in language use among the sample but then also analyses how parents from homes with different levels of HLLLE varied in their use of new words and in how elaborate or extended their conversations were when interacting with their preschoolers. This section also describes how these Chilean preschoolers learnt new words from watching the television, navigating the Internet and playing video games and describes the decontextualized conversations that were observed or reported in the homes studied.

Finally, the chapter turns its attention to literacy-related interactions in the home. It comments on the overall absence of shared reading experiences with the child in the home environment. It also analyzes the frequency and quality of other authentic literacy activities that other authors who have looked at Latino groups have found in their studies.

I. Supporting literacy development through homework

For this sample of low SES Chilean preschoolers' homework was perhaps the most frequent and regular encounter with literacy at home. In many cases, the teachers sent work home on a daily basis, if not at least once or twice per week. According to the observations and reports of the caregivers it normally took each child between 15 to 60 minutes to do their homework.

Generally, the homework focused either on phonics or letter or word recognition or on the development of fine motor skills (such as cutting shapes with scissors), i.e. it seemed to be focused on strengthening the child's alphabet knowledge and decoding skills. In fact, the homework sent seemed to indicate that these children's teachers held a traditional approach to preschool learning in general and to literacy learning, in particular. Thus, homework included (from more to less frequent) tasks related to letter and word recognition; fine motor skills (such as drawing something specific, cutting shapes with scissors, doing a drawing with play dough, etc.) or was focused on repeatedly copying numbers and syllables, normally with cursive handwriting. The absence of homework with engaging texts that the caregiver could have read to the child or focused on exposing the child to new vocabulary or exploring different types and purposes of texts also suggests that these preschooler's teachers had a phonics approach to literacy learning for children of this age.

The materials that the children needed to do their homework varied but in general they all used a graphite pencil, and also glue and scissors when the task called for it. Almost always the children used their copy notebook where the teacher had either written the homework instructions or attached a leaflet or guide with the instructions. Sometimes, during the homework, the child also used a school textbook with pictures and different types of activities. When the homework consisted of selecting different words or objects that started with a certain letter, the mother provided supermarket catalogues, newspapers and/or magazines in which the child could look for and cut out these words. In all cases where this happened, the mothers seemed to have some of these stored away to work with. In general, high HLE children and their mothers tended to have the materials they needed to do the homework (such as playdough or already sharpened pencils) more readily accessible than their lower HLE counterparts.

Only eleven of the thirty caregivers provided information about where the child did their homework: most did their homework in the living/dining room, generally at the main table that this space always had. This meant that the children could easily ask

their caregivers or siblings for help. However, this space was also generally the noisiest place in the house due to the presence of other family members, visitors, music and TV. For example, in Pablo Ortiz's home, while the boy was doing his homework at the table in the living room, a neighbour came in and started talking to the main caregiver. This distracted the child who stopped doing his homework and only went back to it once the mother told him to. Only two children, both from the high HLE group did their homework in other places such as their own bedrooms or siblings' bedrooms. It appeared that these caregivers and families valued physical closeness, the ability to watch over the child at all times and supervise homework so that it was done. Most mothers also considered that it was their responsibility to help their preschool and young children with their homework. This, of course, was more easily done in the living/dining room where mothers could simultaneously supervise the child doing the homework, other siblings, and carry out some other home chores such as cooking lunch. The following example illustrates how some mothers managed to support the child in their homework while doing household duties at the same time.

Quote 20:

Mum: We do the homework there, so that they come out beautifully... I do the homework with him. I'm looking at him, but I'm also doing other things. I'm either here in the kitchen or cleaning and I often go see how he's doing. [I say] "Hey that one is ugly erase it" and then the ugly ones are erased, I mark the letters he has to do again and that's how it goes. But I don't really have time to sit down next to him to help him. So I always leave him by himself and then we do the corrections and sometimes when I have time yes we both do the homework [together]. (Pedro Oviedo, mid HLE)

Regarding when the child did their homework, high HLE parents and children appeared to have more rules around or more specific times assigned for homework. In fact seven of the eleven high HLE parents, as compared to three of the nine mid HLE parents and four of the ten low HLE families indicated that in their homes there was a routine or a specific time or moment when the child had to do their homework.

During the homework sessions parents sometimes talked about topics related to the task and sometimes tried to inculcate values or new concepts in the child. These conversations however generally took the form of speeches or exhortations from the mother to the child (*consejos*), rather than conversations in which the mother tried to elicit the child's view or knowledge about the topic, or in which the mother tried to connect the task to the child's experience or interest. For example, in one home the child's homework was to colour in a printed picture of the four seasons of the year. The child asked the mother to help her paint the drawing and the mother instead, pointing

at the picture of one of the seasons, asked her: “*what is this?*” The girl did not answer so then the mother said:

Quote 21:

Mum: [talking to the child] Listen to me. In the summer, there’s sun and its very warm and we use fewer clothes. In the autumn, leaves start to fall, brown leaves. In the winter, it’s very cold and we have to use many layers. And in the spring the birds and flowers are born and the trees have new leaves. (Fabiola López, mid HLE).

The following interaction between a mother and her son Germán while doing homework is another example of how homework time was also used by some mothers (mostly from high HLE homes) to talk explicitly to the child not only about the task itself but also of certain values such as responsibility or persistence.

Quote 22:

Mum: [talking to the child] I know you don’t like it [doing homework], but duty is duty and if they told you had to do homework then you must do so. (Germán Cárcamo, high HLE)

Within the present sample of Chilean low SES parents there were important differences, which were positively related to the quality of the HLE provided. Ten of the eleven caregivers from high HLE homes were observed or explicitly reported sitting by their child and supporting them during homework. During these sessions, the mothers motivated their children to do and to learn what was being asked of them. They also praised their child’s progress, helped the child think about how to do the homework (for example, how to cut out certain shapes with scissors better) and corrected the child when the homework was not turning out as it should. At the same time, several of these mothers indicated explicitly that they were careful to support but not do the child’s homework themselves.

Taking into account both the observed and reported behaviour in the sample, this approach from the 11 high HLE mothers contrasted with that of their 19 mid and low HLE counterparts who, in general, provided less guidance to their children during homework or did most of the homework themselves because they appeared to think their child less capable of doing it. Only four out of the 19 parents in both the mid and low HLE groups supported their preschoolers during their homework. In this regard, there were no notable differences among the children from the mid and low HLE groups. Furthermore, when talking about the child’s homework, low and mid HLE parents tended to provide more vague or unspecific answers whereas high HLE parents talked at length. This could indicate that some parents had given more thought

to how their preschoolers did homework. Fifteen of the mid and low HLE parents typically did not sit down to support the child during homework. Some of the mid and low HLE mothers explicitly stated that they did not have time to sit down with the child to do the homework. The following example from a low HLE home illustrates these views.

Quote 23:

Int: They send him a lot of homework?

Mum: Yes, with stuff to cut out, so there I go cutting and pasting. I pasted twenty circles... one does most of the job, because it's kind of complicated, they are still so young, they help anyway, but... The thing is that when you work you don't have time to do the homework (Axel Castillo, low HLE)

Interestingly, some of these 19 mid and low HLE mothers reported or were observed supporting the child's older siblings with their homework. This might have reflected the fact that these parents gave more importance to schooling and learning in primary school rather than in preschool because allegedly there could be more consequences to not doing homework in primary school [detention, black marks or such].

In summary, school homework provided a frequent and regular encounter with literacy to these pre-schoolers. As will be discussed in this research's final chapter, the frequency with which these parents did school-like literacy activities in the home confirms the findings from the previous quantitative study of this research as well as the evidence from previous research with Chilean and other Latino populations in which most of the parents reported teaching the child letters and words frequently in the home (Bustos et al., 2001; Susperreguy et al., 2007; Strasser & Lissi, 2009).

II. Caregivers' extra steps: teaching letters and words at home with the *Silabario* or through dictations

While some of the low HLE parents seemed a bit overwhelmed by the school homework, other caregivers considered that, besides helping the child with their homework, they also had to complement or "reinforce" the literacy learning of the child at home with other activities. The ways in which they did so were similar: all the caregivers who mentioned "doing things beyond homework," mentioned teaching the child letters and words with the guidance of a phonics textbook (*Silabario*). A few caregivers also mentioned that they helped the child's literacy development by doing dictations of words or letters. The following case exemplifies how some of the parents in the sample consciously supported the child's letter and word learning at home.

Quote 24:

Mum: I bought Jennifer a *Silabario*, I support her letter learning with that.

Int: You bought it here at the local street market?

Mum: Yes.

Int: And that reinforcement you do, do you do it mostly in the evenings?

Mum: In the evenings, at the weekend... when they don't send her homework I help her, and when they do send her homework she can work on that. I help her five minutes, half an hour... every day. Or I do dictations, I tell her a word and she writes it. And she has no problem writing them.

Int: And did you come up with the idea of doing this?

Mum: Yes, I did. (Jennifer Gallardo, high HLLLE)

All the caregivers who used the *Silabario* used the same text, the "*Silabario Hispanoamericano*" by Chilean educator Adrian Dufflocq Galdames, which was first published in 1945. Throughout its 80 pages, the *Silabario Hispanoamericano* uses a synthetic phonics approach to teach first the short vowels, then open syllables using the alphabet consonants, followed by short vowel and consonant patterns and high frequency sight syllables (such as sal, sel, sil, sol, sul), and then finally the closed syllables. In the final pages there are five short stories, two poems and two letters each with their corresponding letter response. It is of note that Spanish lends itself to phonetic learning, unlike other languages perhaps, such as English. According to Peña Muñoz (2008) the *Silabario* has been widely used in Latinamerica and specifically in Chile since it was first published in 1945. In 1964 this *Silabario* was recognised by the Ministry of Education as an official textbook and distributed by the government. Currently the government does not distribute it in public schools; however, it is still sold by publishers and there are several unofficial versions sold in the local street markets, where most of the caregivers in the sample reported buying the text.

The *Silabario* is widely known in all types of schools in Chile. Following the evidence gathered with the families in this study, after almost 70 years of existence, this text still holds an undisputed place in the homes of low SES Chilean families. Practically all (23 out of the 30 caregivers or 77%) said that they used it to support literacy learning. The extensive use of the *Silabario* in this sample confirms the findings by previous research within the Chilean population that low SES Chilean parents of preschoolers frequently teach the child letters and words in the home. Parents in this sample believed that the *Silabario* was an important aid that made teaching the child to read easier.

Quote 25:

Int: And how do you think children learn to read? What do you think needs to be done for a child to learn to read?

Mum: I don't know. A lot of patience. I had brought him a *Silabario* too, and with the *Silabario* it was not too hard. (Victor Gutierrez, low HLLLE)

The only opinion that was critical of the *Silabario* as a literacy-learning tool originated

from the staff in one of the schools and was reported by the caregiver of a low HLLÉ boy. According to this mother the child's preschool teacher and the principal of the school had led a parent meeting on how to teach children to read and in this meeting they had suggested that the *Silabario* was "not adequate for current education... because the learning with the *Silabario* was too slow". (Axel Castillo, low HLLÉ)

The sessions in which the parents used the *Silabario* to teach the child reading generally involved sitting down on a daily or weekly basis with the child and helping them to learn to decode the letters and syllables in the text. Sometimes the caregivers, instead of teaching the letters in the order presented in the *Silabario*, used the text to reinforce the letters that were being taught at school. While some parents reported using the *Silabario* on those days when the child had no homework from school, others reported only using it intensively during a short period of time to teach the child to read.

Quote 26:

Int: When you say you taught your other child to read, how did you do that? How did you support him so that he learnt to read?, you say in a week he learnt.

Mum: Ah, with the "Silabario Lea"... ten, twenty minutes every day and they learned.

Int: You went page by page?

Mum: Page by page, and then I stuck the pages there on the wall... I stuck them and then at night when he went to bed he went over it again and he learnt. (Diego Henriquez, mid HLLÉ)

Quote 27:

Int: How frequently do you use the Silabario with Benjamín?

Mum: Ehhh... when we were teaching him how to read we used it every day. Last year we started with the Silabario at the end of the year. And then when his holidays started we dropped it, and then before he went to school we started again using the Silabario every day until he learnt to read. (Benjamín Vidal, high HLLÉ)

Finally, the other method of reinforcing literacy learning at home, which was less common than the use of the *Silabario*, was parents dictating to the child letters or words that the child had learned previously at home or at school.

III. Diversity of vocabulary and children's use of new words

III. 1 Language as a reflection of socio-moral development

Throughout the sample, when mothers were asked about where they thought their children learnt most things about language, or when they were asked "do you think the child can learn language and literacy from you?", the caregivers generally agreed and then they referred to how much they cared for the child to use an appropriate

vocabulary that showed respect for others, not to use foul language and for the child to pronounce the words they used properly. The following quote from a high HLLLE mother exemplifies this:

Quote 28:

Mum: [He has learned the words he uses] here at home. In fact, in general he has a good vocabulary and we are very interested in having him talk well, not using bad words. Those are forbidden. And ugly words too. For example "stupid" or "dumb" that kind of vocabulary is forbidden. (Germán Cárcamo, high HLLLE)

Initially, the researcher thought that the caregiver had not understood well the question, which intended to inquire further about parents' views on how children increased the depth and width of their vocabulary. However, after several observations had been undertaken, the researcher realized that parents repeatedly and almost automatically connected these questions on language development and vocabulary to the child's social and moral growth. This was interpreted as evidence of the high value that these parents placed on their children's social and moral development, on which, in their view, academic or cognitive development depended, and as evidence of how these parents saw their children's language as a reflection of their moral development.

III. 2 Diversity of vocabulary

The parents in the sample did not seem to focus specifically on the diversity of their children's vocabulary. In fact, only one of the parents (a high HLLLE father who worked as teacher at a nearby private school) mentioned or acknowledged the relationship between vocabulary development and literacy acquisition (see quote 33); he really seemed an exception to the norm for the sample. Children were observed to incorporate new words into their speech sometimes and generally they seemed proud of the new words they had learnt but it is noteworthy that the caregivers' reactions' to the child's use of these new words was typically surprise and watchfulness. The children's use of a new word was practically never accompanied by the parent extending the conversation to give the child more opportunities to practice with the word or to expand on the meaning of the new word.

The following example from a high HLLLE home illustrates this. The boy who was observed and reported to be a frequent video game player used several rare words related to the games he played. Some of these words however were used wrongly. His father came home and asked him about his day at school but the boy answered shortly, his whole attention on the videogame. At some point he used a rare word (disturbing)

but neither of his parents expanded on that word or on the videogame as a source of conversation and new vocabulary. The fact that these parents did not reinforce the use of the word in any way was more or less the norm throughout the sample:

Quote 29:

Dad: What did you do at school today?

Child: (playing playstation and ignoring his Dad's question) ohhh, my three powers.

Mum: Your dad asked you a question.

Child: Well.

Mum: What did you do at school?

Child: Emmm, we worked with pieces.

Dad: Pieces of what?

Child: Pieces that are like little balls.

Child: (still focused on the playstation game where he just lost one of his lives) Noo, Dad, that's disturbing!

Mum: That's all you did?

Child: Yes. (Benjamín Vidal, high HLE)

In a couple of cases, there was evidence that the people in the immediate environment disapproved of the children using more sophisticated words. For example, in the home of Juan Morales (high HLE) his grandmother, who took care of him during the day, said that Juan sometimes used more sophisticated words (such as “vehicle” instead of “car”). According to her, the boy had not learned these new words at home and, further, the preschool teacher had also told her that she was concerned that Juan was increasingly speaking “like a foreigner”. The implication here was that using such vocabulary was problematic, i.e. that it was important to use the ‘appropriate’ words. Moreover, she also reported that, whereas the child’s mother corrected the child when he used these more sophisticated words, personally she was pleased that the child used these words because it set him apart from street slang. This case illustrates how parents and close family members both cared about language appropriateness *and* had mixed feelings about having their preschoolers use new or rarer words.

During the qualitative data analysis, all episodes in which the child uttered, or was reported to have uttered, a rare word when talking to the caregiver, another family member or to the interviewer were selected, as well as those episodes in which the caregiver uttered a rare word either when talking to the child or to the interviewer. These rare words or concepts are given in Appendix L. There is a level of subjectivity in this selection, as there are no established criteria for what is a ‘rare’ word either in Chilean Spanish and/or for this particular preschooler age group. As such, this researcher identified from all the observations those words that were more complex, formal and difficult to use accurately.

The frequencies of all these rare word uses and exposures are reproduced in the following table.

Table 6.1: Frequency of rare word use and exposure during home observations

	Child to caregiver	Child to interviewer	Caregiver to child	Caregiver to interviewer
Low HLE	6	8	1	5
Mid HLE	14	0	1	3
High HLE	21	32	8	25

Even though most parents in the sample were alike in the sense that most of them did not seem to give too much importance to having their preschooler learn and use new words, Table 6.1 provides evidence that both the high HLE parents and children tended to use more diverse words when talking than their low and mid HLE peers.

The following subsections look at where and how the children learnt new words in the HLE.

III. 3 Learning words at home from television programs (‘TV’), the Internet or video games

The evidence gathered in the questionnaire and during the naturalistic observations indicated that all of the children in the large sample (1,132) and in the smaller subsample (30) spent a significant amount of their home time directly or indirectly watching TV.

Of the 30% (N=355) of the large sample for which data on TV watching and video game playing existed, around 47% of the children watched between one and 60 minutes of TV daily, 45% watched more than one hour of TV, and more than 19% watched more than two hours. For the subsample of 30 children in the qualitative study, most spent an average of 90 minutes watching TV during the home observation. Often they watched TV on their own while their parents were doing household chores nearby but sometimes the caregiver sat next to the child for a while and they watched TV together; sometimes the child watched TV with one or more of their siblings or with other relatives who lived in the home. In most cases, these preschoolers watched children’s programs such as cartoons, animated films, or other educational programs (such as “*Mister Maker*”).

When these preschoolers were not watching TV, they were often eating, playing or doing their homework in the main room where the caregiver or other family members

were watching general entertainment TV programs. In this sense, to this researcher, it seemed that TV had a pervasive presence and that there was a high level of environmental noise in the homes under study. However, what seemed to this researcher as a high level of environmental noise did not seem to be perceived by the families as affecting the quality of their communication. When something needed to be said it was said, generally in a few words. Most of the talking that took place in the homes observed appeared to serve a more instrumental function and extended conversations did not seem to occur. Of course, this may have been a direct consequence of having an observer in the room, or, alternatively, it could be that these types of conversations were rare (the limitations of naturalistic observations are discussed in Chapter II, see p. 60).

Many of the rare words that preschoolers from mid or low HLLC homes were reported or heard to use during the interviews or observations were words they had heard in TV programs. The preschoolers in the sample also tended to use rare words when talking *about* TV programs. For example, when talking to his mother about a cartoon he had watched, low HLLC boy, Matías Bravo, used words he apparently had heard in the program such as “aliens”, and “evil” (*maligno*).

Since many of the words these children learnt were from TV programs which had been dubbed in Spain or Mexico, sometimes children learnt and used terms that were more Spanish or Mexican rather than Chilean. For example, high HLLC Pablo Aguirre talked about *cacahuates* with his younger sister, *cacahuates* being the Mexican term for peanuts, which in Chile are called *maní*. Likewise, high HLLC Martín Contreras talked about *frijoles*, which is the Mexican term for beans; these are called *porotos* in Chile. Also, Eduardo Escobar (low HLLC) talked extensively to a neighbour and friend about the TV cartoon “Heidi” and used the Spanish term *heno* (hay), whereas the Chilean word for hay is *paja*.

Parents were often aware that their children were learning new words, songs and crafts from TV. For example, the following mother and father of a preschool boy considered that the child’s vocabulary improvements were a consequence more of the Discovery Channel and other paid TV channels the boy had watched at home than his school’s teaching.

Quote 30:

Dad: ... in the end, I don't think it was the school's influence, I think it was the TV that influenced because... in pre-K there were kids that talked better. So then you know what I did? Since he has abilities for learning English, movies in English, DVD's, music, so we

hired TV programs for children... and well, he chose the channels, mostly Discovery kids where they taught him crafts and he watched Sesame Street...

Mum: Those are programs that are very educational. About colours, triangles...

Dad: And then he improved a lot. He said words like "wonderful, exciting" words which before he had never said.

Mum: Things like "it's fabulous mum, this is fabulous." He is using another vocabulary.

Dad: I thought what would make the difference would be the preschool but it hasn't been so.

Int: You are saying it was the TV.

Dad: Sure, and when March came the teacher said, "Hey, this kid is more mature" I mean the same teacher he had had the year before in preschool. (Pedro Oviedo, mid HLE)

Caregivers also mentioned that their children learnt songs, words in the English language and crafts from programs that they saw on cable television.

Video games and the Internet were another but less prevalent source of rare word learning for some high HLE children in their homes. In the previous quantitative study, 52.6% ($N=1,054$) of the parents had reported they had a computer at home. However, in this subsample's qualitative study, 18 out of 30, so 60%, of the families had a computer at home, with a higher prevalence amongst high HLEs.

Most of the children who lived in homes in which there was a computer used it frequently (normally on a daily basis) either to play video games or to navigate on the Internet, for example, on www.youtube.com. Besides homework and some occasional emergent writing done as part of role-playing games, searching for things on the Internet provided these children with the opportunity to use their emergent writing skills and knowledge. There was also evidence that children had learnt new words from their exposure to using the computer. For example, a high HLE boy, Benjamín Vidal, used the terms *conduction*, *electrocute* and *Japanese* while playing a video game.

There was some evidence, however, that children had misunderstood the meaning of rare words they had picked up from the TV or the Internet and were misusing them. Soffa Piña, a high HLE girl, who was one of the children who used more rare words during the observation, used television- and Internet-learned words incorrectly, repeating them out of context. She was clearly proud of using these rare words but seemed unaware that she was using them incorrectly. More importantly, nobody in her home corrected her way of using these new words.

Quote 31:

Child: Yes, we must choose if we need more internet, let's see, here's more internet. I'm going to program it.

Int: You will program it?

Child: Yeah... it's ready!

Int: What does that mean that you are going to program it?

Child: That means that I will record it a bit.

Int: Ok.

Child: It means I will record many copies of it.

Int: Ok.

Child: There, I'll put a lot, I'll put more pendrive into it. (Sofía Piña, high HLE)

Similarly, Martín Contreras (high HLE) used several rare words such as *transfer*, *exclusive award*, *activating code*, *operation*, *abandonment*, *discharge* when navigating through the Internet, using his email account and playing a computer videogame. Moreover, this same boy also used ready-made sentences such as “*we cannot run any risks*” which sounded like ready-made sentences copied from TV programs or video games. It was not clear that Martín understood what all these terms meant. This could indicate that, even though TV viewing and exposure to the Internet and computer games increased the volume of these children’s vocabulary, it did not necessarily increase the depth with which they understood these new words.

III.4 Learning words at home from caregivers

A closer analysis showed that the high HLE parents in the sample tended to use rare words in conversations that seemed more elaborate or extended than the typical caregiver-child conversations within the mid and low HLE families. In fact, even though throughout the sample few extended conversations were observed, most of these took place in high HLE homes.

The next two cases, one from a low HLE home and one from a high HLE home, constitute some of the scarce examples of explicit parental rare word teaching and help to illustrate the high HLE versus low HLE caregiver’s approach to teaching new words. In both cases, the parent involved seemed to care deeply about spending time and doing activities with their preschooler and about new word learning so as to talk explicitly about it with the child. There were differences, however, regarding who instigated the conversation, the type of rare word on which these parents focused and the type of involvement these parents demanded from the child during the interaction: in the case of the high HLE parent, this conversation was more elaborate and instigated by the parent.

Firstly, the low HLE case was one of the very few low HLE homes in which the mother used rare words when talking to the child: Valentina’s mother seemed to be very warm and physically close to her children. She was also a lively and talkative woman who stood out for how she involved her two young children in different motivational activities. For example, during the observation she spoke to her two

children about a trip to the zoo they had made, using rare words in the conversation. She also talked about how every now and then she had the children decide if they wanted to get rid of some of their toys. She would go with them to sell the toys at the local street market and with the money obtained the child could buy a new toy. Furthermore, she liked cooking homemade food, inviting Valentina to help her with the cooking. During this activity she was observed to pause to remind her daughter of a related rare word, though she did not take advantage of this naturally occurring opportunity to extend the conversation for the child to acquire more experience with the word.

Quote 32:

Child: Mum, hand me the thing for rolling. That.

Mum: The rolling pin. What's it called?

Child: Rolling pin

Mum: That's it, rolling pin. There you go. (Valentina Sepúlveda, low HLE)

Secondly, a contrasting example of explicit parental rare word teaching took place in the home of Fernanda, one of the highest HLE children in the sample, whose father was a primary school teacher and gave importance to his daughter's vocabulary knowledge and her cultural capital. During the observation Fernanda's father explicitly referred to how he appreciated her use of rare words and recalled an elaborate conversation with her in which she used rare words.

Quote 33:

Dad: I appreciate the way she talks, how she uses words. In fact she sometimes uses words that are not common and she understands them. The other day we were looking at a picture of a painting by Van Gogh and I asked her which colour "predominated" and she said yellow.

Int: She understood the word 'predominates'.

Dad: Absolutely. That's what surprises me. (Fernanda Carrizo, high HLE)

In this case of a high HLE parent the exposure to the new word was orchestrated by the parent and the way the word was used demanded a more elaborate thinking process from the child. This could reflect the relevance this parent gave to vocabulary learning. In comparison, in the low HLE case, in response to the child not knowing what the word for the object was (*rolling pin*), the mother articulated the new word for the child and then asked her child to repeat it out loud herself, but without extending the conversation further. It's not possible to know if the mother would have talked about this new word had the child not asked about it. This contrasts with the high HLE example where the father actively asked the child to make an inference regarding a

new word he had introduced in order to see if the child had learnt what the word means. Moreover, the word taught by the low HLLÉ mother (*rolling pin*) had less potential for alternative use than the word *predominate* which the high HLLÉ father had taught his daughter. With the available data it was only possible to draw these preliminary findings.

In some mid and low HLLÉ homes in the sample, it was possible to observe how the parents' limited vocabulary knowledge seemed to diminish their ability to support their child's vocabulary learning during school tasks. The following example from a low HLLÉ home illustrates this: the preschooler was doing his homework next to his mother and grandmother and asked the mother about a new word in the homework text.

Quote 34:

Child: (Stops doing his homework and looks up at his mum) Mum, what does "pending" mean?

Mum: (shrugging her shoulders)... That it's pending, hehehe, (laughs with the grandmother who is sitting besides her). (Axel Castillo, low HLLÉ)

This was the extent of the exchange. As such, in this case, the mother dismissed her child's question about the word (*pendiente*). Perhaps she was embarrassed to explain the meaning in front of the observer, or was not be able to do so, or perhaps she did not have the means, e.g. a dictionary, to find a meaning for the word. It's not possible to know why she didn't or couldn't explain. In contrast, this word was frequently used by one of the high HLLÉ mothers in her conversation with her child.

Although different children and parents in the sample used rare words, conversations about the meaning of words were almost non-existent. In fact, the only cases in which any clarification of or conversation about a rare word was observed or reported were two high HLLÉ homes in which the caregivers were themselves frequent readers. One of these two cases was that of quote 33. In the other case, the mother had sorted out and rearranged some sewing tools and also some of the child's toys. The child who was helping her out got confused between the words *alfil* (chess piece) and *alfiler* (sewing pin), so the mother explained that they were different things very briefly.

Quote 35:

Child: Where can I find an "alfiler"? (sewing pin)

Mum: What do you want an "alfiler" for? (the child then points towards the bishop from the chess game)

Mum: (laughing) That's an "alfil" not an "alfiler". An "alfil" has nothing to do with an

“alfiler”.

Child: What is an “alfil”?

Mum: It’s a chess piece. (José Arteaga, high HLLÉ)

Even though this is one of the scarce examples in which a mother further clarified the meaning of a word and its difference to a similar word, it is unclear if this clarification was something that the mother would have shared, had the child not explicitly asked for it. Moreover, the mother did not take advantage of the conversation initiated by the child to have a more extensive, metalinguistic conversation with the child (for example, to explain that some words might be very alike but have different meanings) or with a view to enriching the child’s conceptual knowledge.

Another aspect not directly analyzed in the data but that emerged as potentially relevant was how the different family living arrangements might have impacted the children’s opportunities for interacting with more skilful conversational partners. Many of the children lived in the same household with one or two grandparents, sometimes with aunts, uncles, cousins or other family members. In a couple of cases there was evidence that this could have had a positive impact on the child’s language and literacy development, as these arrangements created opportunities for the preschooler to have extended conversations with some of those other family members (for example, José Arteaga talking with his uncle Juan); in others cases, such as those of some grandmothers who were concerned that the school was teaching the preschooler too much too soon, it appeared that the impact might not be so positive.

IV. Decontextualized conversations in the home

Excluding the conversations that took place in the homes between the child or family members and this researcher, several other decontextualized conversations were reported and/or observed in the 30 homes studied. Most of these were about the following topics: a) things that the child had done at school or other things that had happened at school (for example, gossip about peers or teachers); b) trips or outings to different places (street markets, malls, relatives’ homes, vacations); c) movies, cartoons, spots etc. that the child or parent had watched on TV, or about computer games or things the child had seen on the Internet; and finally d) decontextualized conversations about extended family members and events.

In some ways, this was coherent with the evidence gathered in the quantitative study where parents reported that most frequently conversations with the child about past experiences were about the child’s day at school.

There seemed to be two daily moments during which parents tended to have most decontextualized conversations with their child. One was during meal times (*la once*) which was the time of the day in all the homes under study when most family members gathered together. The other time of day was on the way back home from school. According to the parents these conversations were sometimes about things that they saw on the way home but mostly they were about things that had happened at school. The following case is an example:

Quote 36:

Mum: ... for example, I remember the day she told me about her teacher. She was sad because her teacher's son was sick, and she got sad when she saw her teacher crying about her son. She was telling me about that and other things I can't remember... I always ask her "How did you do today? Did you have lunch? What did you do?" And for example today she came home with a little star and I asked her "How did you win this star?" And she told me she had said the vowels, that the teacher had asked what were the vowels and she had answered and that's how she had won the star. (Martina Palma, low HLL)

TV, computers and video games seemed to both foster and limit the frequency of decontextualized conversations. On the one hand, TV fostered decontextualized conversations because it brought new topics (and new vocabulary) into the home. Some mothers actually commented on how themes that emerged from the TV ignited conversations with the child. Further, parents were observed talking about non-contextual themes to their children when recalling certain TV programs or channels. The following case in which a low HLL boy used words such as dinosaurs, volcanoes and earth formation illustrates how TV fostered conversations about non-contextual topics:

Quote 37:

Int: Where do you think Matías has learnt most of the words he uses? At home? At school?

Mum: I guess both. I think TV has helped a lot. The programs I talked about earlier, those that teach, such as "Mister Maker" and what's the name of that other one... the Disney one, what's the name? Where they teach geometric figures and stuff...

Sister: Disney Chanel, Disney Planet, that's the other one.

Int: And do you prefer him to see those channels than others?

Mum: Yes. Sometimes he likes watching, what's the name of that one with the earth in it?

Sister: National Geographic.

Mum: That one. And they start seeing volcanoes, how the earth was formed, what happened to the dinosaurs. When they talk about dinosaurs he goes crazy because he loves them. He liked those programs and watched them. He loves everything about dinosaurs, he knows which ones were herbivorous, which ones ate meat, all that.

Int: And in general he learnt those things from TV programs?

Mum: Yes. (Matías Bravo, low HLLE)

Television was one of the few things that took place in the central living space that seemed to “shift” frequently and motivate the mother or child enough to have decontextualized conversations about what they had watched while one or other of them was doing something else. The following example exemplifies this.

Quote 38:

Mum: What is it that you went to see in the TV?

Child: That yogurt break, the one with the ants.

Mum: What is it about?

Child: About a man that’s the lover of a woman (child’s mother and elder sister laugh because the child used the word “lover”). (Anahis Navarro, low HLLE)

On the other hand, TV also appeared to hinder decontextualized conversations because potential conversational partners seemed less interested, responding with shorter answers to questions raised, resulting in less fluid interactions. This was also the case when children were playing video games or using the computer. In fact, during the observations, children were generally happy and seemed motivated to participate in extended conversations *except* when they were watching TV or playing videogames. On these occasions they tended not to answer questions or when they did, answered in very short and disconnected ways.

Besides those times when they were watching TV or using the computer, children who did not seem to participate frequently in decontextualized conversations were happy to do so when something motivated them. Perhaps the most noticeable example of this was that of Victor Gutierrez, a low HLLE boy who had three older brothers very close to him in age. Their father worked in long shifts in a mine in the north of Chile so they saw little of him and their mother seemed to be overwhelmed by the amount of housework that having four children entailed. During the observations and interviews there was almost no evidence of extended or decontextualized conversation in Victor’s home. The boy himself spoke very little. The mother was physically very affectionate with her children. She was responsive to their preferences regarding food and looked out for her children’s safety within the neighbourhood, which was in a drug-dealing zone. She fed Victor with a bottle and cuddled him frequently but did not report and was not observed engaging in extended conversational interactions with him. However, at one point during the observation Victor grabbed a book that the researcher had in her handbag (“The Slave” by Isaac Bashevis Singer) the book cover catching his full attention. The picture on the cover showed a sinuous trail and a person walking away in the distance towards a small forest. Unexpectedly, he started talking extensively

about what he thought the book was about and described very intricate details of what he imagined happened to the walking character. During the four hours that this researcher spent in Victor's home, this conversation was the moment during which the child seemed most engaged and enthusiastic. For this conversation to occur, the child required external stimulus and an interlocutor with time to talk. In this sense, even if having decontextualized conversations with her children was part of Victor's mother's repertoire, which was not observed, the fact that she was the only adult in the home and had to take care of four young school boys, would probably have hindered the frequency with which she could do so.

V. Authentic literacy practices in the home environment

One of the secondary research questions of the current qualitative study was how much and what type of authentic literacy activities take place in the homes of Chilean low SES families of preschoolers.

There was evidence of shared or independent reading of the Bible for spiritual purposes in seven of the 30 homes studied (three from high HLLs, one from mid HLLs and three from low HLLs). However no evidence was seen of literacy reading or writing related to the caregivers' work, participation in politics or the community, finance or bill keeping, cooking or eating, all of which were authentic literacy purposes for which Purcell-Gates reports having found evidence in Costa Rican homes (Purcell-Gates, n.d.). There was also no evidence that these families used literacy for writing letters or to do lists. This, of course, doesn't rule out that they might have done so. In fact, most of the mothers had mobile phones through which they reported or were seen texting friends. They might have used these also to write messages and lists but were not observed or reported doing so.

For example, even though children were observed or reported accompanying their parents frequently to the local street market or to the small shop or deli near the house, there was never any evidence that these families made any shopping lists, probably mostly because these short trips generally aimed at buying one or two things that were needed immediately or a snack so there was little need for a list as a reminder. Furthermore, even though a newspaper or two were sometimes seen in the homes visited they were almost always old copies, which suggested that either the caregivers read the newspaper at their place of work or that reading the newspaper on a daily basis might not have been part of these families' authentic literacy practices. Actually no caregiver was ever seen reading a newspaper or magazine. Likewise, personal letters or official letters were seldom seen in the homes visited.

All the children in this qualitative study had some level of phonological awareness, that is to say that they understood that sounds could be combined to make words, and so looked out for letters in their environment and tried to sound them out or asked their parents to do so. They also had varying levels of knowledge of print convention and tried to understand the connections between texts and pictures. Moreover, they were motivated to understand better the messages contained in print, which led them frequently to ask: “what does it say there?” In general, they seemed interested in discovering literacy and frequently played with texts or pretended to read or write certain texts in the home. For example, children did role-play and pretended to “write” with old disconnected computer keyboards they found in the homes or they went through the telephone book trying to decipher what it was. However, these activities were not used by caregivers to model reading behaviours, or as a starting point of conversations or explanations about literacy and its purposes. Likewise, when their children looked at a supermarket catalogue or a telephone guide or any other printed material, caregivers observed them looking at these materials and sometimes watched the child pretending to read them but seldom stepped in to interact with the child around that material or to explain its purpose. The following example of a girl looking silently at a Bible that was lying on the living room shelf illustrates how these caregivers generally dealt with these child-print interactions.

Quote 39:

Mum: Are you going to read the New Testament?

Girl: Yeah, that one.

Mum: You read it?

Girl: Not yet.

Mum: You still haven't read it! And what are you waiting for that you haven't read it yet?

Girl: I'll read it some time.

Mum: Some time?

Girl: Mmmhh (Jennifer Gallardo, high HLLÉ)

In another high HLLÉ home the target preschooler Juan Morales found some maps of the urban bus system lying around and started looking at them, trying to understand what they said. He then asked his grandmother who took care of him during the afternoons what these maps meant, but she dismissed his question. He asked again and then she said they were maps of the bus routes. Finally, Juan asked if their house was somewhere on those maps but she dismissed his question again.

The reason why these caregivers dismissed their children's interest in print is unclear. Of note, however, is the fact that the opportunity was not taken to explore the material together further.

Children from homes that provided mid or low HLE tended to depend more on school-related texts for their authentic literacy practices. In some of these homes children and parents were seen interacting with the list of suggested lunches and snacks that the school sent on a weekly basis. Caregivers would normally put this list in a visible place such as the refrigerator door and the parents and children talked about and went to check the list as they prepared the child's bag for school. The following example illustrates one of these cases:

Quote 40:

Mum: Daniela, do you remember what snack you had to take today?

Girl: Let me go check, (she goes to the kitchen to see the weekly snack list sent by the school which is attached to the fridge but she doesn't know how to read so she goes to the second floor to ask her aunt if she knows what she has to take). (Daniela Jara, mid HLE)

A wider variety of authentic literacy activities took place in high HLE homes. For example, one high HLE boy was observed chatting on the computer with a cousin and another high HLE boy tried to read some of the text on the screen of the home computer while searching for a video on www.youtube.com.

Overall, throughout the whole sample, the scarcity of authentic literacy activities observed or reported seems to indicate that reading and writing was not as significant an element of these Chilean families' daily life as, and that they relied more on, observation, oral communication and screened media for learning new concepts, for entertainment and for communicating.

VI. Reading in the home

VI.1 Shared reading

Shared reading was not something that the mothers in the sample sought to do or fostered once it happened. The following quote exemplifies this:

Quote 41:

Int: And how frequently do you read to Emilia?

Mum: I read very little to her. My elder children read more to her. For example she likes stories and stuff, but [we don't read to her] very often. Only when she asks for someone to read to her then they read to her. She says "read me a story" so then they do. But reading to her is something that we initiate very infrequently. (Emilia Araya, low HLE)

Shared reading appeared to be, however, more frequent in high HLE homes. Excluding those parents who declared syllabic or letter reading to be shared reading, five out of eleven high HLE caregivers mentioned shared reading with the child. In contrast,

within the nine mid HLE homes only one mother mentioned shared reading and among the 10 low HLE families only two caregivers reported shared reading with the target child. Some of the mothers said that they had engaged more often in shared reading with the child when he or she was younger. This could reflect a more discrete model of literacy learning according to which mothers read to children until they start decoding by themselves at which point they considered them to be readers hence that shared reading was no longer necessary. The following chapter will look in more detail at the discrete model of literacy learning held by these parents.

The Western concept of shared reading appeared to be foreign to these Chilean families. Thus, when asked to describe *how* they did shared reading, many of the caregivers mentioned that they sat down with the child to do their homework. However the homework observed almost never involved reading texts other than some short instructions. Similarly, some mothers also referred to 'shared reading' of syllables and letters in the *Silabario*. In the rare cases in which shared reading did take place it was normally done with storybooks, the bible or school textbooks. The books that elder siblings brought home from school were also mentioned as literacy resources used for shared reading.

Even though shared reading did not appear to be a frequent occurrence within these families' repertoires of language and literacy activities, preschoolers in the sample liked being read to and often initiated shared reading by asking their caregivers to read them something from a book, newspaper, the Bible or a magazine. The following two quotes from homes with mid and low HLE illustrate how the few existing shared reading experiences took place.

Quote 42:

Int: Do you sometimes read with Anais?

Mum: No, very little.

Int: And when you read what things do you read? Things that you find when in the streets? Does she ask what does it say there?

Mum: She learnt the logos from the TV when she was little. She was around two years of age. Now I sometimes start reading and she pays attention or she asks me to read her something. I have to explain afterwards.

Int: So for example she or you grab something and she asks you to read to her?

Mum: Yes, a newspaper, the Bible, sometimes a magazine, or commercial stuff they send you... those type of things. (Anais Urbina, mid HLE)

Quote 43:

Int: Do you sometimes read to Bastián?

Mum: No. I like reading so sometimes he asks me "mum, what are you doing?" "I'm

reading” “Why don’t you read me a bit?” he says.

Int: I see. And what kinds of things do you like reading?

Mum: I just finished reading “Twilight Saga: Breaking dawn” and now I’ll start with the other book. So he knows I’m going to read the other book. And then he knows I will read the one that follows because I like reading. (Bastián Monardes, low HLLÉ)

When parents commented on why they did not do more shared reading the main reason given was that they lacked time to do so. One mother, however, said that she could not see very well so could not read to the child.

Many of these parents dedicated large slots of time to doing the child’s homework or teaching the child the letters at home. This could indicate that either shared reading was not a priority or alternatively it did not feature in these children’s homes or their parents’ culture of upbringing and perhaps also that these parents were unaware of its benefits. However, the frequency of reported ‘shared reading’ was higher for the large sample in the quantitative study where 61.6% of the caregivers ($N=1,060$) said that the child asked them to read to him/her more than once per week, 45% of the children ($N=1,060$) asked if they could read to their caregivers three or more times per week and 96.7% of the parents indicated that they thought that reading books to the child could help the child a lot to learn to read and write further on. These statistics suggest that the parents might be at least partially aware of the benefits of shared reading.

VI.2 Independent reading

Children from high HLLÉ homes were seen to do independent reading more often, perhaps because more of them already read and presumably also because they had more literacy resources in their homes (more books, computer, etc).

Only three of the 30 parents in this sample, two of them from high HLLÉ homes and one from a low HLLÉ home, said that they occasionally read for enjoyment. In these three cases there was evidence of this in their homes: it was possible to observe the books they were reading and they also made references to them in their conversation. There was also evidence that the reading that these parents did for their own enjoyment ignited their children’s interest in reading or conversations about reading. mentioned or acknowledged the relationship between vocabulary development and literacy acquisition (see quote 33);

Quote 43, above, from the home of Bastián Monardes (low HLLÉ) exemplifies this.

The mother of José Arteaga was another caregiver who did independent reading; she mentioned and talked about novels and articles from magazines that she was reading. She was by far the caregiver that used a greater variety of words and more rare words

in her speech to her child. The third case was that of the father of Fernanda Carrizo (high HLE) who, as mentioned before, was a primary school teacher and a frequent reader himself. Fernanda's home had many books very neatly kept on an open shelf. The father mentioned the titles of books he had bought for the girl.

Even though three cases are not numerous, the evidence they provide is that increasing parents' own motivations to reading could be beneficial for preschoolers' language and literacy development.

VII. Connections to popular culture and disconnections to world knowledge

The parents in the sample typically engaged in conversations with their preschoolers about their extended family, relatives' birthdays, what had happened at school, TV programs, pop culture figures and errands they had to do. They also engaged in conversations aimed at warning the child about potential environmental dangers in or outside the home or at checking if the child was happy or somehow frustrated by anything.

Most of the parents did not, however, appear to engage in conversations or other types of interactions about more general Chilean, Latin American or world culture and knowledge or to be concerned about transferring such content knowledge to the child. For example, parents were observed doing homework that involved cutting out words with a certain initial letter from old newspapers and magazines; however, none was observed taking advantage of this to comment on any of the news or stories in the magazine with the child. Typically, even when children did ask about something they saw in the newspaper or magazine, most of the mothers in the sample would respond briefly or evasively and refocus on the letter- or image-cutting.

In one low HLE home, when a couple of the children were doing their homework and had questions, the two caregivers present (mother and grandmother) did not use the resources at hand (an encyclopaedia or the Internet accessible via their smartphone) to assist with responding to the children, instead, consulting each other and providing the child with equivocal answers. It is not possible to know whether this was influenced by being observed or, for example, not wanting to look ignorant in front of the child and/or observer.

Three parents of high HLE children appear to be an exception to the norm here: these parents, who liked reading themselves, showed explicit concern for having the child see and appreciate topics related to Western, Chilean or Latin American culture. One of

these parents, Fernanda's father, who, as mentioned before, was a teacher, explained how he tried to "transfer culture" to his daughter by exposing her to masterpieces of classical music or books, or by bringing her a book from a museum visit. In another of these three high HLE homes the mother said that she had taken the child on a trip to the local Catholic Church, which is a famous historical place in Chile.

The children in the sample accompanied their mothers to places such as the supermarket, mall, and local street market or to relatives' homes, all of which were outings with practical or social reasons. With the exception of two children who had been to the zoo and one who had been to a local historical site, there was little indication that parents thought it was necessary or advisable to introduce their preschoolers to new and different social environments where they could, in theory, have learnt new concepts in a meaningful context (for example, theatres, historical places, touristic or cultural spots, museums, etc.).

It could be that the scarcity of traditional cultural outings outside their local communities was in part a consequence of parents' child-rearing views (protective parents). Or it could also be a question of economics, or other contextual socioeconomic issues, such as the layout of the city of Santiago. For example, Santiago is sprawling and has a struggling transportation system. According to the Global Metro Monitor Report Survey (Brookings Institute, 2011), in terms of cities worldwide, Santiago was 28 out of the 200 cities with the largest metropolitan area. The facilities aforementioned (museums, theatres, historical places, touristic or cultural spots, zoos, etc.) are normally located in the centre of town whereas low SES communities tend to live in the more peripheral areas.

Children were connected to and watchful of aspects of urban pop culture, however, in particular, through cable TV and the Internet. Many of the 18 children in the sample who had computers were frequently looking for YouTube videos of their favourite singers (such as Hannah Montana, Justin Bieber, or the Argentinian Violetta) and some of the children were observed or reported to rehearse the dance steps of some of these artists' songs. Furthermore, parents were observed to invest in having the child connected to urban pop culture. For example, in a couple of homes, family members talked about the prospective concert of a very successful teenage pop singer and mothers commented on how they planned on buying tickets for the child to go to the concert even though the price of the ticket (approximately 120 USD) seemed high in relation to the average monthly salary that these caregivers had reported in the parent questionnaire.

All this was interpreted by this researcher as a reflection of the cultural world in which most of these Chilean families lived, which, on the one hand, included nuclear and extended family but also included many references to pop culture and characters seen on television.

The scarcity of traditional cultural outings outside the local community thus seem to be related not only with socioeconomic issues (resources for tickets and transportation) but also appears to be related to these families' cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), their child-rearing views and to their belief that the child's place was either at home or at school but not "in the street" and, further, that their role was to protect the child from harm, to strengthen the child's connection to his close family group and to ensure the child felt safe, loved and supported (see Section III.1 of this chapter on p. 134 for a more detailed discussion of these reported views).

Discussion

An overarching aim of this chapter was to understand the home language and literacy practices and interactions that could affect the development of these preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. These home practices fall into four main categories or dimensions:

- a. letter and word identification practices;
- b. use of oral language that facilitates the development of emergent literacy skills;
- c. shared and independent reading practices; and
- d. practices that involved increasing the child's cultural background or world knowledge.

For each of these dimensions, commonalities and qualitative variations were found within the sample. This discussion summarizes and briefly comments on these findings and the implications of these commonalities and variations in relation to these preschoolers' opportunities to practice aspects of the school-based register before entering school.

a. Letter and word identification practices in the home

Practically all the preschoolers in the sample showed print awareness and interest in print. All of them practised letter and word identification and writing for schooling purposes at least a couple of times per week.

However, caregivers rarely or seldom intervened to explain or model print purposes or uses, nor were they observed to seize naturally occurring opportunities to foster literacy. These parents emphasized word and letter recognition rather than enjoyment, meaning and understanding of the texts being read. This appeared to be in accordance with these parents' observation-based views of learning and maturational perspectives. It also appeared to reflect a view of literacy (to be further explored in the next chapter) as a discreet skill in itself, rather than one with several aspects and layers, learnt in a variety of ways. For these parents, literacy appeared to be a function only of phonics and letter and word recognition and something learned mainly through schooling instruction in preschool or in the first years of primary school.

In many cases, the most frequent and regular encounter with printed texts and word and letter recognition at home was the homework set by their preschool teachers. Most of the children had between one and three pieces of homework each week. These pieces of homework generally involved tasks relating to letter or word recognition and copying or writing. 77% of the parents also supported letter and word learning with the aid of an ABC book (the *Silabario*). Homework time was used by some mothers (mostly from high HLLC homes) to talk to the child not only about the task at hand but also of certain values such as responsibility or persistence.

There were some within sample differences in the frequency, support and available resources that these children experienced during the completion of the letter and word recognition homework, again relating to the HLLC level provided. High HLLC children had the resources they needed to do their homework more at hand than their mid and low HLLC peers. More importantly, parents from high HLLC homes guided their children more frequently in these school-type activities. Also, high HLLC mothers gave more importance than low and mid HLLC mothers to homework as a promoter of children's learning and had a higher sense of self-efficacy in relation to their own role as supporters of learning.

b. Home use of oral language that facilitates the development of emergent literacy skills

As explained in the literature review in Chapter I, children from different SES and from different cultures are exposed to varying amounts of knowledge about the school-based register or to what Purcell-Gates refers to as the written register (Purcell-Gates, 2001). Extended conversations, decontextualized language and the value granted to depth and volume of word knowledge are features of the school-based literacy register.

Most of the observed home oral language interactions, to which these Chilean preschoolers were exposed, were short and served an immediate instrumental purpose.

The previous chapter also found evidence of instrumental rather than metalinguistic use of language by these families. Few extended conversations were observed. Some decontextualized conversations were observed and reported, mostly about the things the child had done at school, trips either the child or parents had been on to different places, extended family or TV programs; most of these took place on the way home from school or during meal times when most family members gathered together.

All of the children in the sample sometimes learnt new words at school and/or through TV. Parents, however, did not appear to show concern about or celebrate the children's acquisition and use of new or rare words; instead they appeared to care more that their child used language and a vocabulary that showed respect for others. Generally, these parents rarely took an active approach to new or rare word usage such as asking the child what word meant or extending the conversation to give the child further opportunity to use or comment on the word, for example to check how well the child had understood the word's meaning.

This seems problematic considering research indicates that Western middle class parents as well as bureaucratic and educational institutions tend to rely mainly on motivating conversations, interactions and verbal explanations for igniting children's learning (Rogoff, Correa-Chavez & Silva, 2009).

As such, most of these parents' theories of learning as well as their oral language practices were not very aligned and did not serve to familiarise their preschoolers with the schooling system's theory of learning or language register.

Some observable variations in oral language use were present within the sample, however, and seemed to be related to the quality of HLLC provided. Parents from high HLLC homes tended to speak more and to use more rare words than their less advantaged counterparts when talking to their preschoolers. The only two cases where caregivers forged a more elaborate conversation around a new rare word they intended the child to learn were in high HLLC homes. Also, high HLLC parents showed more awareness of their children's disposition and ability for learning. Finally, since high HLLC children more frequently had access to computers at home they were more exposed to rare words through the Internet or in videogames.

c. Shared and independent reading

Shared reading was an almost inexistent activity in the homes studied. It was not indexed by the caregivers, that is to say, that the parents did not seek to do it, and did not foster it when it could have taken place (for example, when the child showed curiosity in a text). Further, it was questionable as to whether the caregivers understood what shared reading meant (being a term used in the parent questionnaire). The parents showed little awareness of shared reading's potential benefits. The evidence also indicated that most of the caregivers in the sample were not frequent readers themselves (only three out of the 30 reported ever reading for enjoyment).

There were, however, some within sample variations related to the HLLÉ provided. For example, among the few mothers that did report or were observed engaging in shared reading most belonged to homes with high HLLÉ.

d. Practices that involved increasing the child's cultural background or world knowledge.

The evidence gathered indicated that all of the parents in the sample considered TV to be an important source of learning and relied mostly on this media to increase their children's world knowledge. Parents explicitly and repeatedly underlined to this researcher their capacity, or the obstacles they faced, to provide the child with educational or informative programming (which they associated mostly with cable TV, which was, in their view, better than only providing basic TV to their preschooler).

Another commonality was that outings for the children generally did not include trips to museums, theatres or historical sites but did include occasional visits to the cinema in the local mall, to the city Zoo, or even, in some cases, attending a teenage star pop concert; as commented on in the chapter, this could have been for a number of reasons (e.g., socio-economic, cultural or geographic). The ways in which these parents did report connecting their children to world knowledge were also indicative of the cultural world in which most of these Chilean low SES families lived, and included frequent references to close family, neighbours, school acquaintances, pop culture figures and TV characters. There were scarce or no references to Western world traditional culture (classical, contemporary or folk music concerts, dance performances, theatre, talks or other cultural exhibitions). Further research would be needed to understand if there are differences with or if this is also a feature of average middle and/or high SES Chilean families.

The next chapter explores in depth the literacy-related beliefs and cultural views of these families that might inform and underpin these practices, to help to explain these commonalities and variations further.

CHAPTER VII. CHILEAN PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS: VIEWS AND EXPECTATIONS ON LITERACY AND HOW IT IS LEARNED

Introduction

This chapter describes and analyzes some of these low SES Chilean caregivers' educational- and literacy- related views and beliefs. This helps explain the practices described in Chapter 6 with a view to improving our understanding of the sociocultural context in which Chilean low SES preschoolers develop language and literacy.

Cultures include shared perceptions, values, goals and beliefs about education, language and literacy. Goldenberg et al. (2005) grouped these aspects under the "cultural models of literacy" construct. These cultural models of literacy in turn are represented in interaction scripts and prescribe standards for language, literacy and educational behaviours and upbringing. There is evidence that cultural models of literacy are associated with behaviour (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982) and related to outcomes (for a review, see Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996).

As explained in the literature review, this research uses a heuristic framework that suggests that parents' cultural models of literacy, i.e. their educational- and literacy-related beliefs, aspirations and expectations as well as their views on who is responsible for children's literacy learning directly influence children's emergent language and literacy skills. This research's model also considers that these cultural models mediate the influence of parental background characteristics (such as years of education, income or family demographics) on parental practices, which, in turn, influence the development of emergent literacy skills.

This research's quantitative study (Chapters III and IV) found that for the large sample caregivers' more holistic literacy learning beliefs predicted the amount of books and literacy resources in the home, the frequency of reading practices in the home and the frequency with which children initiated decontextualized conversations in the home. Moreover, children with caregivers who held more holistic literacy learning beliefs

tended to start preschool with more advanced vocabulary, spelling and text comprehension skills.

The previous qualitative chapters already complement the aforementioned quantitative findings by describing some of the general educational and upbringing patterns and views of these parents as well as their language and literacy practices.

Considering this research's model of environmental influences, as well as the findings of the previous chapters, the present chapter aims at gaining a deeper understanding, specifically of these families' cultural models of literacy (a component of the HLLLE according to this research's model), with a view to answering the following research questions:

- what are the language and literacy- related beliefs, aspirations and expectations of these families and how do they help explain their language and literacy practices?

- Are there within sample differences in the beliefs of these families? If so, how do these differences relate to variations in the quality of their HLLLE?

To answer these questions, the present chapter starts by looking in more depth at the literacy conceptualisations that these families held and at their literacy expectations. It then moves on to describe these caregivers' views on the roles of the schools and of themselves as parents in the child's development. It also explores these caregivers' views of homework and television as promoters of their child's literacy learning. Finally, it comments the scarce role that shared reading had in these parents perspective of how literacy is acquired.

I. Conceptualisations of literacy and of literacy learning

I.1 Reading as "Putting the letters together"

An analysis of the literacy conceptualisation of these caregivers exposed in the answers to the semi-structured interview or reflected in their interactions with their children deemed that, in general, almost all the caregivers in the sample had a limited view of the skills involved in reading, and had a skills-based, almost purely phonetical and decoding conception of reading. While all caregivers expressed that phonological awareness, decoding and word recognition were central aspects of literacy, they rarely mentioned that, or acted as if, fluency, world knowledge or reading comprehension were abilities related to literacy development. Indeed, only five of the caregivers (all of them from the high HLLLE group) mentioned fluency as being related to literacy. Also,

only five out of the 30 families or 17% (two from high HLE; two from mid HLE and one from low HLE), mentioned or acted as if improving vocabulary was an expectation they had or considered to be an aspect related to the literacy development of their child. Finally, only four of the 30 families or 13% (three from high HLE group and one from the mid HLE group) made any comment or acted in any way that could be indicative that reading comprehension was part of their conceptualisation of literacy development.

Parents in the sample also did not seem to consider that increasing the child's vocabulary could have a positive effect on or relate to their literacy development. In fact, within the 30 parents interviewed, only one of them (a teacher himself at a private school) mentioned or acknowledged the relationship between vocabulary development and literacy acquisition. One of the consequences of this, already mentioned in the previous chapter, was that almost none of the caregivers consciously used new words or extended conversations about the meaning of words with the child. This is what Adams (1991) defined as a purely skills-based or bottom up approach whose characteristics are a focus on conventional reading and writing skills taught in a sequential and discrete rather than an integrated way. Moreover, in contrast to the constructivist, top-down or more holistic approach, the skills-based approach does not grant much importance to teaching within meaningful contexts that might reflect the child's authentic purposes for reading and writing (Lynch et al., 2006).

The skills-based and almost purely phonics view of literacy fostered by the parents in the qualitative sample seemed to be in line with the approach that the schools attended by these children were using to teach literacy. Indeed, caregivers' comments about conversations or meetings they had had with the preschool teacher about how to support the learning of reading and writing in the home indicates that these children's teachers were, in general, using a pure phonics approach for teaching letter sounds to the child.

Quote 44:

Int: How do you think children learn to read?

Mum: Well, according to the school's teachers, you have to start with the letters, the ones I mentioned, those ones must be taught first.

Int: The "n", the "m"...

Mum: Yes, first they start reading with those ones and then you can teach them the next.

Int: I see, you mean first one letter, then another letter and have them put them together.

Mum: Yes, they have to start putting them together. (Jennifer Gallardo, high HLE)

The homework that children were observed doing also indicated that these children's

teachers had a phonics-skills-based focus for teaching literacy. These pieces of homework generally focused on teaching individual letters and their sounds and on making the child practice reading syllables containing letters and vowels. None of the homework included any task that involved reading comprehension, reading for enjoyment or fostered the connection between literacy and its authentic purposes. For example, in one of the households, the homework that the girl and her mother were working on during the observation consisted firstly of having the child read and put together syllables that built non-existent words such as “nini” after which the child had to draw a “nini” (nini being an invented word).

The relationship between parental beliefs and practices was evident when comparing (i) the perspectives and home practices of most of the parents in the sample, who had a purely phonetical concept of reading, with (ii) that of one mother who, in contrast, was a frequent reader herself and had a more holistic view, paired with an enjoyment perspective of literacy learning. The views this mother held resonated in the literacy activities she fostered in the home which were embedded in the authentic conversations she held with her child. In fact, during the interview she said that she talked a lot with the child and tried to have the child “have a good time” with reading and writing. During the observation, this mother’s preschooler boy initiated a conversation, talked with the mother about bees and wasps after which she gave the child a pencil and a piece of paper in order for him to draw some of the things they had been talking about. They then talked about a spider they had seen in a television program and the child spontaneously made a list of different spider features with his emergent writing. This case constituted one of the few examples of authentic writing in the context of a child-caregiver conversation observed.

Quote 45:

Mum: What does it say there?

Child: Nothing, I wrote “hairy”.

Mum: You wrote “hairy”.

Child: No, here are the things from the hairy; here are my notes...the eyes...

Mum: You drew the hairs there, the eyes, I see, perfect. Now I got it.

Child: It’s like a list.

Mum: You are doing a list of the things it has. Ahh, perfect. She is hairy, has two eyes, what else?

Child: Head.

Mum: Sure.

Child: Legs.

Mum: Because if not it would be a worm... it would be a worm if it didn’t have legs.

Child: Legs.

Mum: Ok. What else?

Child: Spider web.
Mum: And what else is missing?
Child: Mmm... wait. Ehhh...
Mum: Is this it or is there something missing?
Child: Something is missing.
Mum: What is it?
Child: antennae.
Mum: the antennae. (José Arteaga, high HLE)

Another finding was that even though practically all the parents had a purely phonics concept of reading, lower HLE mothers appeared to have less familiarity than high HLE caregivers with the process of literacy instruction. Consequently, when asked how they thought children learned to read, mothers from homes with lower HLE provision gave fewer details in comparison to mothers from higher HLE homes. High HLE mothers used more specific words (such as vowels, consonants, syllables) to describe the literacy-learning process or to support the literacy learning of their children. In contrast, mothers from low HLE homes tended to provide vague answers and use non-specific terms (such as studying, letters, teaching, seeing). The following example from a low HLE mother illustrates this lack of detail:

Quote 46:
Int.: And how do you think children learn to read?
Mum: I don't know, I guess they follow what the teacher teaches them, they put them together, the letters and they start seeing. (Eduardo Escobar, low HLE)

These Chilean caregivers tended to see the literacy-learning process as a ladder of discrete steps rather than as a continuous process with several overlapping stages and interacting abilities. This was most evident in the indifference or even the disapproval that some caregivers showed towards different forms of emergent literacy. It might also have been indicative of the fact that these parents did not read for pleasure themselves.

Frequently, children were reported or observed engaging in emergent literacy behaviours, for example, when children grabbed books and pretended to read them, or acted as if they were reading a book to someone else, when they wrote letters or when they typed on a computer pretending to be writing something. The caregivers, however, did not seem to see the connection between these actions and the development of literacy. Some caregivers saw these emergent writing stages as "*chamullos*" (a Chilean term with a negative connotation that refers to lies, inventions or something that someone makes up). One caregiver even reported with a confessional tone:

Quote 47:

Mum: Now that she knows how to write she doesn't do so much scribbling, but before yes, she did, she made up stuff. (Anais Urbina, mid HLLÉ)

Other caregivers also gave these forms of emergent literacy a negative connotation but tried to overlook them. As one mother reported:

Quote 48:

Mum: My child says "Look mum, look, I made you a letter" but they are just lines. "Oh it's beautiful" I tell him so that his self-esteem is not lowered. (Victor Gutierrez, low HLLÉ)

This view of the literacy-learning process as a discrete step or as a reduced set of discrete steps was also evident in the comments made by some caregivers indicating that their preschooler could learn to read "very fast" even when they were referring to children that had not yet shown any letter recognition abilities.

Furthermore, this conceptualization of literacy learning as a discrete process rather than a continuum also explains the view expressed by parents in the larger sample of the quantitative study where, even though only 0.6% of the children read, 59.3% of the parents declared that learning to read would be "very easy" for the child. It could also explain why these parents did not think it necessary to use their children's emergent literacy attempts as an opportunity to build literacy-learning.

1.2 A traditional approach to literacy instruction or "Sitting down to study the letters"

The majority of the caregivers in the study held a formal, traditional approach to learning in general and specifically to literacy learning. They tended to believe that in order for literacy learning to happen it was necessary for the child to sit down and "study the letters" rather than to interact in more authentic or natural ways with literacy. This could be partially explained by the fact that these caregivers had themselves probably been taught in traditional ways without a focus on the learner or on the importance of developing children's intrinsic motivation towards literacy or learning in general.

Furthermore, caregivers from all HLLÉ groups seemed to use traditional academic terms intentionally during their conversations with the child and included frequent references to the potential grades the child would or could obtain, as well as references to homework. This was partly interpreted as a reflection of these caregivers' traditional

views on how children learn to read but also interpreted as a way of introducing the child to the academic world of school and the formal learning process that it would represent for them.

Frequently, the caregivers' approach to writing development evidenced a strong skills-based and formal approach towards literacy learning in which great importance was given to aspects of form such as keeping a neat notebook, writing the title on the centre of the top line, skipping lines between the title and the first paragraph, or obtaining good grades in school.

The following comment of a mother to the elder sibling of her preschool boy while doing homework, which, in this case, consisted of copying out an extract of the school language text book, reflected this traditional approach towards literacy learning as well as the use of schooling terms.

Quote 49:

Mum: The title... I've told you so many times Axel, why can't you understand? The title always goes here "I want to laugh", in big letters, then you skip three lines and then you write... This is wrong, why do you put it up here? You have to put the title in the middle, why do you always do the same thing? Look, how many times have I told you the same thing? If I were your teacher I'd look at it and I'd write it's wrong and I'd give you a two [very low grade in the one-seven grading scale used in Chile] because you shouldn't do it like that. (Axel Castillo, low HLLÉ)

Even though this traditional, view of writing and literacy as form was present throughout the sample, it was more frequently observed in low HLLÉ homes or in the three homes within the sample in which the main caregiver was a grandmother. For example, low HLLÉ parents appeared to believe more than their high HLLÉ counterparts, in the instructional value of traditional writing tasks such as homework in which the child had to make repetitive copies of letters and to place less value on other tasks such as recognising initial letters of printed text.

I.3 Reading as an activity disconnected from enjoyment or other authentic purposes

When focusing on the roles that these caregivers expected literacy to have in their children's lives, this study found that practically all of the caregivers in the sample viewed reading and writing as something that had to be mastered so that the child could progress in the educational system. However, the way in which these parents talked about learning to read implied a sense of duty and obligation rather than enjoyment.

Caregivers' conversations with their children almost never explained or implied that literacy could be entertaining; they also practically never connected reading to any authentic purpose or interest for the child. In this sense, caregivers did not seem to expect literacy or school activities to be a fun experience for the child. The only two counterexamples to this were the mother of a high HLE boy who read for pleasure herself and explicitly commented on how reading opened up new worlds and increased your imagination. Also a grandmother that acted as caregiver of the child said that she thought schools should teach things through screens because children liked TV, computers, cell phones and, in general, screened media.

When asked their thoughts about what literacy was useful for, most of the high and the low HLE parents, as well as three of the mid-HLE parents, expressed their belief that mastering literacy was necessary for extrinsic purposes such as for the child "to have good grades" or be well-evaluated at school. They also considered literacy was necessary "to make it to the higher educational levels". Some parents also indicated that literacy was useful for other aspects of life but they generally expressed this in non-specific ways, for example by saying that reading was necessary because "not knowing how to read will complicate everything" (Daniela Jara, mid HLE).

In contrast, only three caregivers, all from high HLE homes, made any reference to how literacy could bring enjoyment or pleasure to the child's life. Only one of these commented on how reading gave you more independence for exploring one's own interests.

Thus, these Chilean caregivers aimed for the child to be able to recognise letters and words, and to write familiar words and put a lot of effort and time into this. However, they did not aim to foster an intrinsic motivation for literacy in the child or to connect literacy to the child's world beyond school. Moreover, since the caregivers' idea of literacy did not include the concept of enjoyment or pleasure they overlooked the child's enjoyment of or boredom with literacy, as well as any authentic literacy practices initiated by the child. Most of the children were observed or reported to show interest in discovering literacy in their surroundings. For example, all the parents indicated that their preschooler had asked them

what some written text they had encountered said, what a certain letter or word sounded like or had seen the child pretending to write books or letters. Furthermore, many of the caregivers indicated that when they had read stories or books to their child they had enjoyed it. At the same time, several caregivers from homes that provided a different HLLE quality said that the child got bored during homework or home sessions of word and letter learning. In other words, the preschoolers in the sample showed interest in and seemed to enjoy discovering literacy in their environments and experimenting with it but caregivers were not observed encouraging these authentic literacy exercises initiated by the child, or building on this natural interest. Furthermore, the motivation children showed for different authentic literacy activities and the lack of motivation they showed for phonics-based homework did not make parents question their approach to supporting the learning of literacy in the home. This illustrates how strongly held this view of literacy as a school demand or obligation was in these caregivers' cultural models of literacy. It also seems to indicate that while constructivism has permeated the Chilean educational discourse it still has not permeated the children's homes or their parents' educational views and practices. Further research with less disadvantaged families would be necessary to see if this is also the case in mid and high SES homes.

I.4 Old versus new ways of teaching “the letters”

Practically all the caregivers did not seem to be aware that there were different approaches to literacy learning besides the phonics approach. To the parents in the sample learning to read was about learning the letters in the alphabet. Furthermore, none of the caregivers said anything that could indicate they were unhappy with the phonics instruction that their children were receiving; on the contrary, caregivers seemed to value it.

Quote 50:

Mum: I think Eduardo will soon start reading because he knows all the letters... I think it has to do with the teacher because she's been teaching the children well. Eduardo already knows all the letters and she is persistent with all the letters... I mean my sister says "doesn't she have any other letters to teach?" because the teacher keeps sending the same homework, I mean the same letter, but she [the teacher] says she does that so that children know the letter well and then she can move to another letter when the children already have that first letter tamed. So that's why I think the kids are doing so well. (Eduardo Escobar, low HLLE)

Some caregivers' referred to this phonics approach used by their child's preschool as a "new way" of teaching literacy, in most cases, referring to teaching the sound rather

than the name of the letter.

Quote 51:

Mother: ...the way in which letters are named now is different to in my time...

Int: How was it before?

Mother: before we did "Em" and now we do "mmm"... so it's easier now... the teachers in the meetings have explained this...and they say that that's the way they are teaching and that this is the way in which it is done now. (Anahis Navarro, low HLL)

This "old way" versus "new way" sometimes also referred to the context of different previous teaching approaches experienced by older siblings and/or the caregivers themselves. According to some parents' comments, it seemed they had experienced a certain shift away from a preschool model focused mainly on developing fine motor skills ("the old way") to one that also incorporated an accent on phonics ("the new way"). This was illustrated by one mother who explicitly contrasted the phonics approach with the type of instruction her elder sons had received in the same school in kindergarten, which according to her, had consisted mostly of what she described as "manual works" such as joining dots and doing drawings with wool and sticking papers.

II. Expectations regarding their children's literacy learning

In general, most parents in the sample expected the child to learn literacy during the preschool years and to learn to read in preschool or in first grade. This seemed consistent with previous research that found that Latino parents consider that children's literacy development only starts once they begin primary school (Goldenberg et al., 2005).

Within the current qualitative sample, there were, however, different patterns of literacy learning expectations that were related to the quality of HLL. On one hand, there were differences in what caregivers perceived as the indicator that a child had learnt to read, or the threshold for labelling a child as a "reader". High HLL parents not only referred to this threshold more often in their conversation, they also had a threshold that implied a more demanding goal. While six out of the eleven high HLL caregivers expressed that they believed a child was a "reader" only once he could read whole sentences by himself with certain fluidity, only one of the mid and three of the low HLL parents seemed to believe this. Moreover, some mid and low HLL caregivers indicated that they thought that children could be said to have learnt to read once they read some words by themselves.

Furthermore, high HLE parents had more specific expectations for their child's literacy learning during pre-school. Eight out of the ten low HLE mothers that commented on this tended to provide unspecific answers such as "I wanted her to learn", and regarding the reasons why they had sent their child to preschool they said things such as "so that she learned to study and to read" or "so that she can move to first grade". In contrast, while high HLE caregivers also mentioned their expectations about having the child "learn things" they also commented on more specific aspects such as learning to do cursive writing or acquiring socioemotional skills.

Among the low SES families in the sample, there were variations in caregivers' expectations for when the child would learn to read, which seem to be related to the quality of the HLE. In fact, while most high HLE parents said they expected the child to learn to read in kindergarten, only two of the mid and two of the low HLE parents had this expectation. Moreover, two of the mid and four of the low HLE parents indicated that they actually expected the child to learn to read in first grade.

The overall late temporal threshold for parental expectations for their children's literacy development can be partly explained by these caregivers' educational backgrounds. Preschool education was practically non-existent in public school when they were infants; most of these mothers had learnt to read at an older age than their children, namely during first or second grade. Consequently many of them expected their child to recognise letters or words only after he or she had entered first grade. This was accentuated when the main caregiver was a grandmother. For example two of the three grandmothers that acted as main caregivers, one from a low HLE household and one from a high HLE household, explicitly compared the child's situation with what they had seen "in their times" and criticised the amount of homework that the child was asked to do in preschool and the fact that the parents had to sit down with their children to do the homework (they claimed that before children did the homework by themselves). The grandmother from the low HLE household went further and emphasized that she thought teachers were currently demanding too much from the children by asking them to recognise letters and words before entering first grade. She recalled that in her school days pre-K and kindergarten did not exist and that literacy teaching was done at a slower pace, for example, in first grade, the teacher taught them to do straight lines and learn the vowels and "that was it" - only in second grade were they taught to read syllables and then words.

III. Caregivers' views on the roles of the school and of parents in the child's literacy learning

III.1 The school as the child's main source of literacy instruction and the home as an essential "reinforcement" of the school's teachings.

As mentioned in Chapter V the parents in the sample tended to consider that they were mainly responsible for their children's socioemotional well being and moral development on which they believed academic and cognitive development partly depended. Most of the parents in our qualitative sample also saw the school as playing a supportive role in the moral development of the child and a leading role in the child's literacy learning. This finding is in line with the evidence from the quantitative study of this current research where 54% of the parents considered that their main role was keeping the child safe and healthy, 28% that it was teaching the child to relate well with others and only 15% of the parents considered that teaching the child skills for school was their main role.

The caregivers in the sample respected the preschool teacher's expertise and thought the teacher knew better about how teaching literacy should be done. For example, six of these 30 mothers when seeking for more information on how to foster literacy in the home had asked the child's teacher. In contrast, two had looked for information on Google and one had asked other parents from the child's cohort.

Several parents in the sample believed they had a supportive role in their preschoolers' literacy learning. For example some parents reported that it was their role to be aware of the technique the teacher used in the classroom and to adapt their home support for literacy to that technique.

Quote 52:

Int: In your experience how do children learn to read?

Mother: well... they learn... they learn depending on the way the teacher teaches them...

The teacher teaches them a technique and we have to adapt to that technique. (Anahis Navarro, low HLLLE)

This study found variations among these low SES Chilean parents regarding their perceptions of what is the role they and the school play in the child's literacy development and it found that these variations related to the quality of the HLLLE provided. In general, all of the parents seemed open to incorporating suggestions on how to improve the literacy learning of the children in the home. There were, however,

differences related to the quality of the HLE of the homes regarding how keen they were on seeking extra information and also regarding whom they asked for this information. High HLE caregivers seemed more keen on seeking information about how to foster the literacy learning of the child at home than mid or low HLE mothers. Thus, while eight out of the eleven high HLE caregivers had looked for information, only three out of the mid HLE and two out of the low HLE caregivers had done so. Furthermore, there also seemed to be a difference regarding which parents asked for advice on how to improve the literacy learning of their preschooler. While low HLE mothers asked the child's teacher mostly, some of the high HLE mothers had also asked other professionals they knew, for example, teachers that worked in schools different to the ones attended by their child. As illustrated in the following quote, one high HLE mother asked and combined the suggestions of both the child's teacher and an acquaintance who taught at a private subsidized school in order to better support her child's literacy development in the home.

Quote 53:

Mum: Before leaving for holidays a meeting was done and there she [the teacher] said sort of, (because I had asked her before cause I'm always going ahead) she said "in the meeting I will explain to you how you can teach your child to read." I had also asked, because a friend of my child, her mum is a teacher at the San Luis School... so I asked her "what things can I teach Sofía?... what are they teaching over there?" and so I'm always comparing the things they teach. If I see that over here they have not taught Sofía stuff... for example the first months here they were very behind so I asked her what they were teaching over there and I taught Sofía that. I started teaching her. For example I bought her the books, what's the name? the Silabario. I asked the teacher what letter they were teaching her at school. She said they were teaching her the "m" with the "a", so I taught her to read me those parts [from the Silabario].

Int: So you find out what they are teaching her and you reinforce that.

Mum: Sure, I reinforce. (Sofía Piña, high HLE)

A salient belief that emerged and that was equally shared by parents from homes with different qualities of HLE was the idea that caregivers should not go ahead of school in the teaching of anything, especially in teaching literacy to the child because it could "confuse" the child or make him "bored" afterwards in school when the teacher taught what they already knew.

Quote 54:

Mum: ... the teacher was teaching him to read so I didn't want to go ahead because I thought he would get bored afterwards in school. Because it's common that those that know too much get bored, they don't find interest in what is being taught. So I try to go as

the teacher goes, I don't teach anything beforehand, it's just that sometimes he asks and then I answer. (Martín Contreras, high HLE)

Quote 55:

Mum: I can't complicate Marisol too much, I mean putting so many things in her head because she's supposed to wait for school, although sometimes I wonder if I should just go ahead. So for example when she came from school with the letter "m" I tried to prepare her for letter "p" and she was resistant to that but later at school the teacher taught her [letter p] and then she immediately came home talking about letter "p". (Marisol Moraga, mid HLE)

The idea that caregivers should not go ahead of school was expressed by several parents and it was also observed in action, for example, with parents who were teaching word recognition to the children and who skipped certain words that contained letters that had not yet been taught at school. This belief seemed to stem at least partly from the preschool teachers as suggested by the following case.

Quote 56:

Int: So do you think Benjamín is skilled at reading? I mean because you are saying that he learned to read before preschool.

Mum: Yes, in fact the teacher at preschool told me I shouldn't have taught Benjamín to read yet... because she said I had hurried him too much and that he would be ahead of the other children so when she would be teaching the other children Benjamín would just be there with his mind wandering ["como volando"] because he would already know. (Benjamín Vidal, high HLE)

This belief that caregivers should not step into the realms of what the school would teach was consistent with these families' views on the role of the school and the role of the family in relation to literacy instruction.

There were within sample differences in the roles parents gave to the school and the home in relation to literacy learning and these differences seemed to be related to different qualities of HLEs. In this sense, caregivers from homes with lower HLE tended to believe that the child learned literacy almost exclusively at school. For example, two out of the nine caregivers from medium HLE homes believed that children learnt literacy almost exclusively at school and four out of ten caregivers from low HLE homes believed that children learnt literacy exclusively at school.

In contrast, none of the eleven caregivers from the high HLE homes believed that children learnt literacy exclusively at school. In other words, caregivers from high HLE homes such as the one in the following quote felt more responsible for their child's learning in general and specifically for their child's literacy learning.

Quote 57:

Mum: If the father doesn't care about the child, if he just leaves him there, I think the child will not want to do homework, to study, he won't care. Because I try to help Jennifer as much as I can. One hour, half an hour, I stay with her looking at homework. Or when at school they send her homework I always sit next to her, I don't leave her alone any minute. (Jennifer Gallardo, high HLL)

Some caregivers expressed their belief that children acquired literacy in the home through the literacy interactions they had with other siblings, either by watching the sibling do homework with the help of the mother, or through games in which the target child acted as if teaching to read to another younger sibling. Some of these literacy-related interactions between the child and one or several of his siblings were actually observed by the researcher in the homes. For example, in one home the target child sat down next to a couple of older siblings who were trying to answer some of the questions from a school test that one of the brothers had brought home. In this case the child tried to read some of the text and the elder siblings corrected him and read him what the text actually said.

Quote 58:

*Int: And where do you think Marisol learns most of the letters and words she knows?
Mum: [She learns them] when I study with Ana [elder sister]. She is always there and attentive. For example last year [with Ana] we had to do a dissertation and she [Marisol] knew it all... I asked and she could answer. She was attentive and so by listening she starts making meaning of things. (Marisol Moraga, mid HLL)*

Practically all the caregivers however believed that the most useful activities or interactions that they could do at home for fostering the child's literacy development were to reinforce the phonics and the writing instruction received by the child at school mainly by sitting with the child to help him do the homework sent from school or by reinforcing the phonics teaching through the use of a phonics text book (the *Silabario*). A few caregivers also mentioned that they helped the child learn literacy by occasionally asking the child to read some environmental print (for example when they were out together in the street) and by doing dictations at home sometimes to reinforce the child's writing.

Quote 59:

Int: You say Jennifer talks a lot, with many words. And where do you think Jennifer has learnt those words that she uses?

Mum: Well, it's from all these things I'm telling you that go on in the school, because over there they are teaching the "m", the "i", the "q", the "s". I've taught her the rest. If we go out she asks "What does it say there?" I make her read... she asks...

Int: And you tell her what it says there?

Mum: No, I ask HER what does it say there, she puts the letters together and in the end she reads them. (Jennifer Gallardo, high HLLÉ)

The following section analyzes in more depth the important role that these Chilean low SES caregivers attributed to homework in their child's literacy learning.

III.2 "How will you learn to read if they don't give you homework?"

Caregivers' views on homework and its importance for preschooler's literacy development

Chapter VI evidenced that homework was perhaps the most frequent and regular encounter with literacy that these children had in their homes and that homework was focused on developing phonic and decoding skills, and sometimes, motor skills.

Furthermore, it also found that there were important differences between homes with different HLLÉ levels regarding the amount of support parents provided during the homework sessions of their preschoolers. Building on those findings, the present section adds evidence about parents' beliefs and views about homework and the role they believed they played in homework completion.

In general, most of the caregivers in this study's sample believed that children were taught and learnt literacy mostly at school and that it was the teachers' role to teach the child how to read. However most high HLLÉ parents and a few mid and low HLLÉ parents also considered it was their role to support or reinforce letter and word learning at home on a daily or almost daily basis by sitting down with the child to do the homework sent home by the teacher.

Caregivers seemed to consider that homework was the central or one of the most important ways through which children learnt literacy in the homes. Consequently they saw the frequency of homework as a positive indicator of the quality of the school's teaching. As exemplified in the following two quotes:

Quote 60:

Dad: We were thinking about changing her to another school because we thought, "better to put her right away in a school that's private or semi-private so that the teaching is a bit better," but you know what, we have not had a bad impression, on the contrary, [at the

current public school] they are always concerned, they send her homework every day, the teachers are excellent. (Laura Ferrer, high HLE)

Quote 61:

Caregiver (child's neighbour): Well, did they set you homework?

Child: mmm... no.

Neighbour: they didn't give you any homework?

Child: No

Neighbour: And then how will you learn to read if they don't give you homework?

Child: I don't know. (Diego Henriquez, mid HLE)

Practically all the high HLE caregivers and a few mid and low HLE caregivers believed that supporting their preschoolers in their homework was an important responsibility of theirs and they acted on this belief by providing lots of time and effort in supporting the child with his homework.

Quote 62:

Int: People have different beliefs about intelligence. For example, some think that some kids are born smarter than others but others think it depends more on how you stimulate the child. What do you think?

Mum: I think it [depends] more on the home than on the school ... if you are worried about him, about his homework.

Int: What things that you have done in your home do you think have contributed to making Benjamín become smarter?

Mum: Eh... for example, worrying about his things, about teaching him. Because since he went to the nursery I was always worried about his notebooks, that they were clean, his homework always. He has to do his homework and then he can keep on playing.

(Benjamín Vidal, high HLE)

The observed homework generally took between 15 and 60 minutes to complete, however several parents mentioned that normally they sat down for one hour per day to do homework or to learn letters or words at home. Parents reported and children were observed growing restless while doing the homework. This implied that parents often had to sit next to the child and had to be firm with the child in order for him to finish the work. However children's lack of motivation did not seem to challenge parents' perception of homework as a positive and necessary step in children's learning. This supports the finding previously commented on that parents did not expect school and specifically literacy tasks to be motivating or entertaining for the child. It can also be interpreted as proof of the importance that many of these parents gave to homework as an instructional tool for literacy learning.

There were variations in the ways in which caregivers from different HLE levels supported literacy learning through the homework and these variations speak of the different expectations that they had for their child's literacy development. For example,

a common homework observed or reported in different households consisted of looking in magazines or newspapers for words with a certain initial letter, cutting the word out and sticking it in the child's notebooks. Those mid or high HLE parents that commented on or were observed helping the child to do this type of homework understood the importance of having the child look for the words.

Quote 63:

Mum: I help [the child] in everything, I hand him the newspapers, I tell him "tell me all the words that start with Q, show me all the Q's". I'd rather have him look out for them himself. I prefer he does that rather than cut [the letters] out... because he will learn that [to cut out] later. That's where I help him, I do the cutting. That doesn't matter, but he has to look out for the words himself.

Int: I see, so you care that he recognizes the letters.

Mum: Sure, yes, that's the important part, for him to learn to read. Because cutting, I mean it's also important but he will learn that anyway. (Pablo Ortíz, mid HLE)

In contrast, most low HLE caregivers that commented on or were observed helping the child to do this type of homework did not expect their child to be able to recognize the initial letter. A few of them also suggested that this task was not as useful for learning to read and write as other more traditional tasks such as writing repetitive copies of letters. Consequently, these caregivers looked for the words themselves and then asked the child to cut them out and stick them in their notebooks, and even then, in some cases, only to stick the word in their notebooks. This could imply that this task was less helpful for the development of low HLE children's word recognition skills.

Low HLE parents had a finer 'motor-skills' approach to literacy learning in contrast to the more phonics-based approach of their peers. In fact, one type of homework that was mentioned by at least three caregivers consisted of the children writing repetitively a certain letter in their notebook, or, in the case of older siblings (for example, siblings in first or second grade), of copying pieces of text into their notebook. Low HLE parents valued these traditional types of homework more than their more advantaged counterparts and they also attributed more instructional value to this type of task rather than to that of finding words with a certain initial letter. For example, four of the ten low HLE caregivers, versus only one of the medium HLE caregivers and none of the high HLE caregivers expressed their belief in repetitive written copies as a task that fostered literacy development. Therefore, some of the low HLE parents that looked out for words with a certain initial letter (because they thought the child could not do that by himself), explicitly mentioned that when the child was asked to copy letters they did not intervene because: *"Those are the things he needs to learn so that he can read"* (Eduardo Escobar, low HLE).

III.3 Television ('TV') as an educational resource "That's where he learnt"

In the view of the parents in this study's sample, having certain cable television programs or channels at home was an active way of promoting the child's cognitive learning. While most of them thought open TV was not appropriate for preschool children they also considered that children channels or programs from cable TV were educational and constituted a desirable thing for the child to do at home.

Parents often highlighted the difference they saw between providing the child with general entertainment TV versus providing the child with educational or informative programming. In line with this, within those households that had Channel TV (which were almost all of the homes in the sample) parents often expressed that they were proud that they could provide the child with what they considered to be an important source of learning.

Quote 64:

Mum: There [from the TV] he learns those words "Mum I'm "uncomfortable" I want to be more "comfortable". Because he listens to those words.

Child: The scissors... I'll go fetch them, the metal ones.

Mum: "metal", those words. Where does he get them? I don't have that kind of vocabulary... Sometimes he says "Mum, you put too many vegetables in my dish."

Child: I don't like vegetables.

Mum: He has these words. The thing is he just watches Discovery Kids because I've forbid him to see the other ones.

(Pablo Ortiz, mid HLLÉ)

Since most of the caregivers in the sample had a theory of learning, which was to follow the child's interests, and many of these preschoolers showed interest for television programs, they made an effort to provide their preschoolers with child-directed programs and DVD's. Moreover, sometimes they mentioned this as an example of how responsive they were to the child's interests.

Quote 65:

Int: What type of things do you think can be done to stimulate the child and make him smarter?

Mum: Songs... I don't know, small kids often like the TV, videos. The other day I bought Vicente videos of "Cantando aprendo a hablar" (Transl.: "Through songs I learn to talk"). Because there they tell them stories, words that help their pronunciation, the alphabet, stuff like that. (Vicente Garrido, mid HLLÉ)

Some of the channels these children were observed watching or that parents reported their children watched were the Disney Channel, and Discovery Kids, National

Geographic and Nickelodeon (which is a channel that showed mostly cartoons). The most common criteria mentioned by these caregivers for considering that certain TV programs were educational could be summarized into the following categories: “TV programs that teach something”, “TV programs that are not violent” and “TV programs that have become classics or TV programs that caregivers themselves watched as children” (such as Sesame Street, Heidi or El Chavo del Ocho).

In summary, parents believed that child-directed TV programs were educational, that providing these to their children was an active way of promoting the child’s language and literacy learning and that their children learnt things from the media. The final discussion and conclusions chapter will discuss how these parent’s views are supported by the literature.

III.4 Shared reading and its scarce role in caregiver’s views on literacy development

In this qualitative study the incidences of shared reading observed or occasionally reported by parents during the semi-structured interview were much fewer than those that parents had declared in the parent questionnaire where 33.3% of caregivers reported that they read to the child three or more times per week, 27.7% reported that they read to the child once or twice per week, 21.2% indicated that they read once or twice per month and 17.7% said that they never or almost never read to the child. Looking at this difference from the beliefs’ standpoint the fact that parents seem to have over-reported doing shared reading in the parent questionnaire could indicate that they do have a certain awareness that shared reading is a desirable thing.

However, the analysis of the qualitative data indicates that shared reading was not only an infrequent practice in the homes under study, but also an infrequent notion in the parents’ theories and conversations about literacy learning.

Parents did not see the difference between reading with a focus on the meaning of the text and reading with a phonics-approach focused on the recognition of letters and words. Within the sample, there were several notions around shared reading but most caregivers were not familiar with the concept of shared reading as used in the Western world, being a collaborative interaction in which a skilled reader reads a text out loud to a child while showing the child the text and modelling the strategies and behaviours that proficient readers use when reading. For example, although some caregivers indicated in the interview that they did do shared reading, when they were asked to describe what form this took, they described reading the instructions for the school

homework or how they read individual syllables or letters to help the child learn to read. The following case illustrates this:

Quote 66:

Int: How often would you say you read with Pablo? Or is it that in general you don't read too much with him?

Mum: [I read with him] when we buy the newspaper and now that he's learning to read we read more... I go over the topic, for example I say "Look, what does it say there?... and he starts reading... he puts [the letters] together and he reads to me..(Pablo Aguirre, high HLLE)

Furthermore, caregivers in the sample did not seem to be fully aware of the importance of sharing different types of text with or showing the child the different purposes of reading and writing. In other words, they did not seem to associate reading to the child with children's literacy development. Evidence of this is that, excluding those parents that declared syllabic or letter-reading to be shared reading, when caregivers shared their thoughts about what activities or things that took place in the home helped to develop literacy, most did not mention reading to the child. Furthermore, when asked "from what things that take place in the home do you think your child learns literacy?" even some of those caregivers that had previously mentioned or that subsequently mentioned reading to the child (and included details of the types of text they read, etc.,) did not include reading to the child in their accounts. This supports the notion that even those caregivers who actually sometimes read to their children were not fully aware of the positive effects that it could have on the infant's literacy development.

This finding was further illustrated by the view expressed by an aunt of one of the girls in the sample. This woman reported doing shared reading with the child and commented that she had only recently started doing so because she had noticed the positive impact it had on the child's language.

Quote 67:

Int.: Where do you think Fabiola has learnt most of the words she uses when she talks or most of the letters she knows?

Aunt: From the stories that her mother reads to her. For example, I did not read stories to my son before and since last year that I'm doing so I've noticed that the same thing happens. He was not very talkative and now he talks a lot.

Int.: Ah,... and does he repeat words?

Aunt: Yes, words he has heard from the same stories. (Fabiola López, mid HLLE)

This quote supports the idea that teaching these parents the benefits of and how to do shared reading with their preschoolers could provide them with a useful medium to increase their children's literacy development and that, even though shared reading is

not part of their cultural repertoire, they might embrace this practice if they experienced its benefits.

Another even more explicit example of this dissociation between the theory of the child's process for learning to read and the concept of reading meaningful texts to the child is the case of a mid HLE girl, Mariela Pedreros, whose grandmother (who was her caregiver), said she reinforced the literacy learning of the child with the *Silabario* but that she skipped the texts within it (poems, letters and stories) and focused on the pages with syllables and individual letters.

Further qualitative research would be necessary in order to fully understand these caregivers' concepts and views of shared reading. However the findings exposed above indicate that researchers studying Chilean low and mid HLE populations should be careful when interpreting shared reading responses from questionnaires because parents seem to have a different understandings of what constitutes shared reading from the traditional Western world concept.

Finally, one third of the caregivers in the sample (six high HLE, three mid HLE and one low HLE) mentioned that the child did independent reading in the home. It could be, however, that due to their discrete view of the literacy learning process caregivers might have underreported independent reading because they might not have seen its connection to reading development (just as they did not see the relation between children's emergent writing and the learning-to-write process). An example of this was seen in the case of Mariela Pedreros. Her caregiver reported that the girl often opened shop catalogues, the telephone book sent by the telephone company and the *Silabario* on the floor and started looking at them, sometimes turning the pages and "playing with them". In this case, the caregiver expressed "*I don't know what meaning that has to her.*" This exemplifies how some of the caregivers in this sample could have overlooked their child's independent reading events because, in their view, these events were not categorized or indexed as activities through which literacy is acquired.

Discussion

The results of the present chapter provide new information regarding the educational and literacy-related belief system of Chilean low SES parents of preschoolers.

The qualitative evidence presented specifically concerns these caregivers' concepts of literacy and of literacy learning, their expectations regarding literacy and academic development, their sense of self-efficacy and their views regarding who is responsible for which aspects of the child's educational and literacy development and which type of

home practices foster this development.

In lieu of brevity and since the following chapter will comment in more depth this research's findings and relate them to the literature, this discussion will start by pinpointing the most salient findings presented in this chapter and then it will describe how families from high, mid and low HLLLE differed in their views of language and literacy development.

The most salient commonalities regarding language and literacy perspectives among these 30 caregivers were the following:

- practically all the parents had a skills-based, purely phonetical conception of reading which implied that they considered that learning to read depended on developing phonetical and decoding abilities.
- The literacy-learning process was perceived more as a ladder of discrete steps rather than as a continuum process with several overlapping stages and interacting abilities.
- most parents in the sample expected literacy learning to start during the preschool years
- caregivers' did not seem to expect school activities or literacy learning to be a fun experience for the child and they emphasized more external rather than internal motivations for learning literacy (such as: learning to read in order to have good grades at school)
- The majority of the caregivers in the study also held a formal traditional approach to learning in general and specifically to literacy learning
- . Therefore, when asked their thoughts about what literacy was useful for, caregivers mentioned that mastering literacy was necessary for the child "to have good grades" or be well evaluated at school.
- all caregivers in the sample aspired for their preschoolers to study beyond high school and most of them expected their child would obtain a technical or professional degree through higher education.
- One final common belief shared by most of the parents in the sample was that as parents they had a supportive role in respect of their preschooler's literacy learning. What seemed even more interesting was that with some minor

variations, all of the parents in the qualitative sample trusted the same type of instruments and tasks to promote the child's literacy and cognitive learning a) sitting down with the child and helping him do his homework b) using an ABC book to teach the child letters and syllables (Silabario) c) providing the child with cable TV or children-targeted TV programs.

These are the main commonalities found among the families of the sample in matters of educational and literacy beliefs. However, within this sample of low SES families there were also relevant variations in language and literacy beliefs that clustered according to the quality of HLE provided in the homes.

The main differences in beliefs that varied according to the quality of the HLE provided in the home were the following:

1. Differences in the familiarity these caregivers had with the process of literacy instruction

Even though practically all the parents had a purely phonetical conception of reading, lower HLE mothers had less familiarity than high HLE caregivers with the process of literacy instruction. Consequently, when asked about how they thought children learned to read, mothers from homes with an HLE of low quality provided very vague answers and used non-specific terms (such as "studying", "letters", "teaching", "seeing letters") to describe their child's literacy-learning process. In contrast, high HLE mothers used more specific words (such as "vowels", "consonants", "syllables") to describe the literacy-learning process or to support the literacy learning of their children.

Moreover, even though a traditional formal view of writing and literacy was present throughout the sample, it was more frequently observed in low HLE homes or in the few homes in which the main caregiver was a grandmother. For example, low HLE parents seemed to believe more than their high HLE counterparts on the instructional value of traditional writing tasks such as homework in which the child had to make repetitive copies of letters, and placed less value on other tasks such as recognizing initial letters of printed text.

2. Differences in the way parents framed their educational expectations for the child

As mentioned before, most of the parents had high educational expectations for their children. This is to say that most of them expected that their preschooler would attain higher education. Mothers from low HLE households, however, showed more uncertainty about the plausibility of this; therefore, the motivational conversations they reported with the target child or with older siblings regarding higher education were less specific in content and included more comments about the potential obstacles.

In contrast, mothers from homes that provided a high HLE exhibited a higher certainty that the child would make it to higher education and, therefore, the conversations with the child about his or her future education included more explanations about the different possibilities and also more references to the careers in which the preschooler showed an interest.

3. Differences in literacy-learning expectations

All parents in the sample expected the child to learn some literacy during the preschool years but there were within sample variations in what caregivers perceived as the indicator that a child had learnt to read. High HLE parents referred to this threshold more often in their conversation. They also had a threshold that implied a higher goal (reading sentences versus low HLE parents who mentioned reading some words). As a consequence, parents from households with different levels of HLE provided different levels of support to the child when faced with certain literacy tasks. For example, a common piece of homework consisted of cutting out words with a certain initial letter from magazines or newspapers. Those mid or high HLE parents that commented on or were observed helping the child do this type of homework understood the importance of having the child look for the words by himself. In contrast, most low HLE did not expect their child to be able to recognize the initial letter. Consequently, these caregivers looked for the words themselves and then asked the child to cut them out and stick them in their notebooks and even in some cases only to stick the word in their notebooks. This probably had implications for how much word recognition the child learned from the task.

High HLE parents also had more specific literacy-learning expectations for their preschoolers than their low HLE counterparts.

Finally, there were also qualitative differences in the expected time when the child would learn to read. While most high HLE parents expected the child to learn to read in kindergarten, several mid and low HLE parents indicated that they actually expected the child to learn to read in first grade.

4. Differences in parental sense of self-efficacy regarding the child's education

The mother's sense of self-efficacy also varied in line with the quality of HLE provided in the homes. High HLE mothers had a stronger sense of self-efficacy than mid and low HLE mothers. They had a stronger belief that they could help their child to learn or deal with school responsibilities in a successful way. In contrast, most mid and low HLE mothers tended to highlight more the difficulties they had and how overwhelmed they were rather than the steps they had taken or could take to support the child. For example, they focused on how hard it was for the child to sit down to do the homework and how he or she was not motivated so just stood up and left the table. Their descriptions of the routines and of the child's activities in the home included comments that showed more passiveness and less agency.

5. Differences in parent's views regarding who is responsible for their children's literacy learning

Caregivers from homes with lower HLE tended to believe that the child learned literacy almost exclusively at school. In contrast, caregivers from high HLE homes felt more responsible for their child's literacy learning and for their child's general learning.

6. Differences in parent's information-seeking process about how to foster literacy

In general, all parents seemed open to incorporating suggestions on how to improve the literacy learning of the children in the home. Some of them, however, were keener on reaching out for information about this. The differences again followed the quality of HLE provided in the home. High HLE caregivers seemed more keen on seeking information about how to foster the literacy learning of the child at home, than mid or low HLE mothers. Furthermore, while low HLE mothers asked mostly the child's teacher, some of the high HLE mothers had also asked informed relatives and teachers that worked in schools different to the ones attended by their child. This could imply that one component of a high quality HLE home is a stronger network that caregivers

can reach out to in order to ask for information about cognitive development and upbringing.

Overall, the results of this qualitative study indicate that focusing in depth on these parents' cultural models of literacy and education is useful for understanding the home language and literacy practices and resources that they provide for their children. The evidence also suggests that further studies on the HLLLE with quantitative and qualitative methods could benefit from looking at parents' mindsets, their educational and literacy-related expectations, their sense of self-efficacy, their concepts of literacy development and how these aspects relate to their home language and literacy interactions with their children.

The following chapter will bring together the quantitative and qualitative findings of this research and will discuss these findings in relation to the existing evidence from previous studies.

CHAPTER VIII. FINAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This final chapter attempts to draw together the main quantitative and qualitative findings of the present research and to discuss these in the context of the theoretical literature.

The findings, presented in sections I and II, are grouped under thematic categories but also in order of relevance. Considering that the focus of this research was on explaining the specific cultural and socioeconomic combinations that influence families' provision of a certain HLE and also in trying to avoid a deficit perspective, those practices and beliefs that were actually observed and found are discussed first. However, at the end of section II (specifically section II.3) there is a discussion about certain HLE practices (such as shared reading and others) that according to previous research are more typically present in western world homes and that were absent or infrequently observed in these low SES Chilean homes.

Following the discussion of the findings, this chapter then reflects on several methodological choices made by the present research and on the advantages and limitations that these posed. This section argues that mixed methods fit the aims of the present research, which had both confirmatory and exploratory purposes and allowed for stronger inferences. The chapter then moves to acknowledge and discuss salient limitations in the quantitative and in the qualitative studies.

Finally, the chapter suggests further research steps for future HLE studies, discusses the findings in relation to the Chilean sociohistorical context and it ends by commenting on implications that these findings have for teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders.

I. Findings regarding macrosystem aspects: parental perspectives on education and learning, discussed in relation to previous evidence

The low SES parents studied considered their children's education to be a central issue. This was evident at several levels. As part of their routines, the mothers observed in the qualitative study meticulously prepared their children for school, washing their hands, faces, hands and teeth, dressing their child with elaborate hairstyles and preparing

backpacks. They frequently supported their preschoolers' literacy learning by helping them with their homework, or by holding sessions on letter and word identification and motor skills' development. Furthermore, they invested in the resources that were available to them that they considered to be sources of learning for their children, such as cable TV. In their discourse, these caregivers had and referred to their high educational expectations for their children and how they worked to develop their social and moral values. Features of these values were that the child was and felt safe, and knew how to relate to and live interdependently with other family members, using respectful language.

At the same time, however, several of the views and practices of these parents differed from and did not promote the child's familiarity with and/or management of the school-based literacy register. It appeared that these caregivers did not have a comprehensive or balanced view of reading or of literacy learning, as advocated today by the latest literacy research and nascent changes to improve the Chilean education system, arising in response to the Pingüinos educational movement. These parents' literacy framework seemed to reflect a synthetic phonics approach and an assumption that literacy is learned in a discrete way. Also, the parents appeared to consider that literacy learning was mainly the school's responsibility and that, instead, they were mostly responsible for their children's moral and social development. The caregivers did, however, support the school and the child by doing homework with the child, teaching them the sounds of letters and to read syllables, i.e. the parents followed what appeared to be the school's phonic instruction.

In general, within the homes studied there were scarce opportunities for children to learn the different purposes of literacy, or to connect to literacy in meaningful ways (i.e., connecting their lives and interests with literacy) and/or to learn that literacy could be a source of pleasure in their lives. Parents perceived that learning to read was an important component of education but reading was not seen as an instrument that could help a child to explore their interests and develop their autonomy. Indeed the development of the child's autonomy did not appear to be not a priority for most of these caregivers because they favoured, as mentioned, the development of a more 'interdependent' rather than independent self.

I.1 Caregivers theory of learning

Almost half of the parents in the qualitative sample expressed their appreciation for their children's observational capacity and attentiveness as an important indicator of

learning. Moreover, the caregivers in the qualitative sample tended to believe that children who were curious or active observers could and should learn from the environment, by themselves without necessarily having an adult to mediate. In contrast to parents from mid or low HLLÉ homes, parents from homes that provided a high HLLÉ made more frequent and more detailed references to their children's powers of observation and inner drive to learn and to the questions that their children asked in the home environment.

The Chilean caregivers under study tended to believe that children's capacity for learning (through observation) was a fixed birth trait of the child. In this sense the parents in the sample seemed to have a fixed mindset in relation to their children's cognitive development.

According to Dweck (2007) people with a fixed mindset believe their intelligence and talents are fixed traits, do not feel responsible for their development and consider that success is based more on talent than learning and dedication. This type of parental mindsets have been related to children's lower achievement and motivation towards learning (Blackwell et al.'s research with teenagers and college students, 2007).

Forthcoming research by Claro et al. (2015) proves the strong relationship that exists between Chilean middle school children's mindsets and their cognitive development; specifically, how children from the lowest quintiles tend to have a fixed mindset, but also how among these SES groups there are some with a growth mindset who perform against the odds and tend to do better in the Chilean national testing system (SIMCE).

The current study supplements that research as it provides qualitative evidence of a sample of Chilean low SES parents which had a fixed mindset in relation to their preschoolers' literacy development, and it details how this perspective affected the type of language and literacy interactions in which they engage the child at home. This fixed trait perspective could also be being passed by these caregivers onto their children through their comments and opinions.

Most of the conversations between the child and the caregiver or between the child and other family members observed during the qualitative study were short and served an immediate practical purpose. Following Halliday's categories of the seven functions of language (1975), during the observations the low SES Chilean parents and children in the sample seemed to use language at home more for instrumental, regulatory, interactional or personal purposes (less often for informative purposes and scarcely for imaginative or heuristic purposes).

These parents' types of responsiveness and their theories of learning contrasted with evidence from Western middle class parents whose responsiveness seemed to aim more at arousing the child emotionally through conversational interaction and at increasing the child's autonomy (Richman et al., 1992). Research also sustains that middle class Western parents tend to believe that children learn mainly through motivating conversations, interactions and verbal explanations rather than through observation (Rogoff, Correa-Chavez & Silva, 2009).

The present research's findings in relation to parent's views on learning are similar however to what Rogoff et al. (2009) found among American indigenous communities, specifically Mayan and Guatemaltecan communities. These groups also expected their children to be alert, observe attentively and learn from events in their surroundings, most of which were not directed at them or designed for their learning. These researchers indicate that, in contrast, Western middle class families tended to provide their young children with less opportunities to observe community activities or their parents' productive activities and to provide their children with more activities specifically designed for their learning, and during which the parents felt responsible for the child's learning and for managing their motivation and attention levels. According to Rogoff et al.'s review (2009) the view that learning happens through participation in community activities and keen observation was also found in African communities such as the Gusii in Kenya or other communities in the Congo.

The current research, therefore, seems to suggest that Chilean low SES families of pre-schoolers could hold views of learning that resemble those of other non Western low SES communities.

I.2 Parental views on who is responsible for what in children's learning and development

In general the parents studied considered themselves responsible mainly for their children's physical and socioemotional well-being and moral development on which they believed academic and cognitive development partly depended. Parents also tended to consider that the school played a supportive role in the moral development of the child but a leading role in the child's cognitive development. In line with this these caregivers saw the school as the main source of literacy learning for the child. These views were reported in the quantitative study and then were confirmed and expanded by the data from the qualitative study.

Caregivers respected the preschool teacher's expertise and thought the teacher knew better how teaching literacy should be done. Following this, a salient finding which was

common to parents from homes with different qualities of HLLLE was the idea that caregivers should not step into the realms of what the school would teach, more specifically that they should not go ahead of school in teaching literacy to the child because it could “confuse” or “bore” the child afterwards in school when the teacher taught what they already knew.

In general, however parents seemed open to incorporating suggestions on how to improve the literacy learning of the children in the home, in fact many of the parents asked the school teacher for information on how children learned to read and believed their role was to be aware of the technique that the teacher used in the classroom and to adapt their home support for literacy to that technique.

Even though parents considered that part of their responsibilities was to answer the child’s questions regarding letters and numbers, they did not think it was their role to ignite or foster the child’s curiosity in relation to them. According to their theory of learning, this curiosity towards literacy and towards learning in general was a natural fixed trait and it explained why some children performed better than others. Parents also considered it was a negative thing to tell children things that they had not yet asked about, or, as one of the caregivers put it, to “impose” new knowledge on the child. This evidenced a maturational view of development, and again seemed to indicate that most of these parents had fixed mindsets in relation to cognitive development.

The findings regarding parents’ views on the different responsibilities that they, the child and the school had in their children’s educational and literacy-related development are summarized in Table 6.2.

Table 8.1: Educational responsibilities according to this sample of Chilean low SES parents of preschoolers

Person or institution	Responsibilities
Child	* Being attentive to print, being curious (asking questions about print).
Parents (specially mothers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Keeping the child safe and healthy * Connecting the child to his community and teaching him family interdependence. * Responding to child's questions about new knowledge acquired in school, but caring not to go ahead of school and not to impose knowledge that the child has not asked for. * Reinforcing school's teaching by supporting the child during his homework completion. * Fostering the child's moral development, which they see as essential for educational development.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Introducing and teaching the correspondence between letter and sound. * Teaching how to read. * Sending homework regularly. * Sometimes holding meetings with parents to provide some guidance.

These findings are in line with those from previous research with Latino mothers which found that mothers thought teachers are mostly responsible for teaching school-related skills while parents are mostly responsible for the moral and emotional development of their children (see review by Romero-Contreras, 2009).

In Chile there is scarce previous research about parents' views on the roles they play in their children's education. Martinic (2009) posed that the dominant view in Chilean society was that families should delegate the responsibility for academic education to the school or educational centre and that it was very difficult to involve both parents in the educational task because the child's education was considered part of the mother's role. The *Valoras* Study (Catalán & Egaña, 2004) on the other hand found that parents did feel responsible for their children's education but mainly for their children's emotional and moral education rather than for the development of school-related skills. The present qualitative study confirms the findings from the *Valoras* study in the sense that parents viewed the child's moral development as one of their main responsibilities. However it also found that parents thought that helping the child with his homework was part of their responsibilities and that it was a central piece in the child's literacy learning process.

Further research would be needed in order to understand if the difference between low

and high HLE caregivers regarding who they asked for advice on how to support literacy at home depended mostly on caregivers' motivation to find someone else to ask, or was a consequence of high HLE caregivers having more access to other educators and professionals.

I.3 Parents' varying sense of self-efficacy

Previous research with low SES Latino parents in the US showed that they tended to have a low sense of self-efficacy regarding their children's schooling activities and success (Hyslop, 2000 in Romero-Contreras, 2009). However the current qualitative study found varying levels of self-efficacy within the group and also found that parental self-efficacy views seemed to be related to the quality of HLE they provided to their pre-schoolers.

In general, high HLE mothers had a strong sense of self-efficacy, definitely stronger than mid and low HLE mothers, this is to say they had a stronger belief that they could help their child learn or deal with school responsibilities in a successful way.

These varying levels of self-efficacy among parents from children of similar SES was also perceived and compared to children's academic success in the UK by Siraj & Mayo (2014) where they found that low SES parents of children succeeding against the odds had a higher sense of self-efficacy than their peers who had children attaining as predicted.

I.4 Child's daily routines

One of the ways in which high HLE parents expressed their sense of self-efficacy during the interviews and observations was by commenting on aspects of their child's daily routines and by providing their rationalizations regarding how they "managed" those routines.

As expected, none of the families in the sample had an organized schedule of home or out-of-school activities such as the ones that Lareau (2003) and Heath (1983) have identified as characteristic of middle class American families. Like the American working class families from Lareau's study, planned events seemed to be unusual among this Chilean sample. The two exceptions to this were church attendance (which was mentioned by a couple of families as a regular activity) and upcoming relatives' birthdays or celebrations (which a few of the families commented on with the child or with the researcher). Research supports the notion that routines foster young

children's learning by limiting the amount of mental energy and attention they have to dedicate to the structure of the activity, energy that can instead be focused on the substance and language of the activity (for a review see Van Kleeck, 2004). Moreover, Bruner (1983) indicates that children's knowledge of routines or "formats" fosters their language development because it helps them to understand the meaning of the language used by adults throughout these social activities (Harris & Westermann, 2014). In line with these views, environments with little or no routines might put children at a learning disadvantage.

Thus, in comparison to mid or high SES western parents as a whole, none of the caregivers in the qualitative study of the current research provided a schedule of out of school activities. There were however important within group variations in relation to how the caregivers managed the child's time at home and again, these were in line with the HLE level provided by the family (as defined by the index computed in the quantitative study). Thus almost none of the children from low or mid HLE homes seemed to have consciously established home routines. In Lareau's terms, most low HLE parents seemed to follow the "accomplishment of natural growth" approach (2003, p. 3) where children's routines are less structured and monitored and children choose their out-of-school activities.

1.5 Academic expectations "I can see him going to university"

The parents studied through this research had high academic expectations for their children and believed that more years of education would increase the child's future wellbeing. Parents' educational expectations gathered in the qualitative study were aligned to the expectations that the larger sample had reported in the quantitative study where 63% of parents expected their child to obtain a university degree and 18%, a technical degree. This confirms the evidence found by the *Valoras* qualitative study (Catalán & Egaña, 2004) which looked at the beliefs and values of a sample of Chilean low and mid SES parents of school-aged children and found that these parents placed a high value on education as a tool to improve their children's living conditions. The parents' educational expectations also seemed to reflect the explosive increase in educational expectations that all Chilean parents have gone through in the last decades. According to Chilean researcher Sergio Urzúa, while in 1999 only 48% of Chilean parents of fourth grade children believed they would attain higher education, in 2009 this number had gone up to 85%. Likewise, among low SES parents, for example those from the lowest quintile, this increased from 18 to 63%. Furthermore, even parents with children who performed poorly in the national testing system (SIMCE) increased

their higher education expectations from 18 to 67% (Urzúa, 2012).

Besides confirming the high educational expectations that parents held for their pre-schoolers, the present research also adds qualitative evidence in relation to how low SES parents through their conversations motivate the child to become professionals and obtain a degree. The caregivers in the qualitative study were attentive to the child's interests and often commented about potential future careers based in these interests. There were however important qualitative differences in the ways parents expressed their academic expectations for their children and these differences were aligned with the quality of the HLE. Thus, in comparison to their high HLE peers, while mothers from low HLE households also believed that it was their role to motivate the child to study beyond high school, the motivational conversations they reported with the target child or with older siblings regarding higher education expectations were less specific in content and less optimistic, in the sense that they included more comments about the potential obstacles their pre-schooler could face.

These findings resemble the evidence found in the UK by Siraj & Mayo (2014) who saw differences among parents from similar SES regarding their expectations and how they expressed these. In their study they found that among low SES families, those parents of children succeeding against the odds were more explicit than their peers in expressing their aspirations and expectations. The Chilean high HLE parents in this sample were similar to Siraj & Mayo's parents of children succeeding against the odds in that they had a more positive attitude in relation to the possibility of their children studying beyond high school.

1.6 The protective attribute of parents

In the parent questionnaire analysed as part of the quantitative study, the majority of parents reported that the main role they played in their child's life was keeping the child safe and healthy.

The qualitative study confirmed this view and found that the Chilean mothers in the sample also considered that, by being physically close to and watching over the child, they were fulfilling their duty of protecting the child and that being at home with their mothers (rather than playing in the street or at a friend's home) was a marker for the child's moral development.

In this line, almost none of the children in the sample were allowed to go outside to play in the street, sidewalk or square in front of or near the home.

More specifically, the parents in the qualitative study perceived that the immediate world outside included dangers such as nasty gatherings (*malas juntas*), drugs, alcohol and early sexual experiences.

These views of the surrounding dangers and of the parents protective attribute was a recognised characteristic in previous research with Chilean low SES families and also of Latino parents abroad.

For example, the above mentioned *Valoras* qualitative study (Catalán & Egaña, 2004), supports the idea that low SES parents highly value the constant presence of the mother, and physical closeness and expression of affection, as instruments through which the family inculcates a sense of belonging in the child, which they believe improves their self esteem and protects them from external dangers.

Moreover, some of the specific dangers perceived by the parents in the current research were also similar to those addressed by the parents in the Chilean *Valoras* study (Catalán & Egaña, 2004) who also talked about “nasty gatherings” (*malas juntas*). These are also very similar to what the Mexican parents in the research conducted by Goldenberg et al. (1992) identified as “the bad path” (*el mal camino*), which included drugs, alcohol and early sexual experiences.

Thus, the present research supports the notion that this protective parental attribute could be a characteristic common to the views of different groups of Latino populations.

I.7 Indulging the child as a way of reassuring him

One further finding from the qualitative study was that within the home environment parents tended to indulge the child and to foster the child’s dependency rather than their autonomy. In general, the children observed were seldom taught how to become autonomous regarding their habits, how to look after themselves or help with household chores.

This seems to confirm evidence from previous studies that indicate that Latino parents consider that children acquired planning and decision-making skills in a variety of areas at a later age in comparison to their Euro-American counterparts (reviewed in

Pérez Rivera & Dunsmore, 2011). This maturational perspective could be problematic since previous research has associated parents' maturational views of children's development with negative outcomes in "academic knowledge" (Johnson & Martin, 1983, in Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996).

The ways in which the Chilean low SES parents in the sample cosseted their children differ from certain values, such as personal autonomy or individuality (Heath, 1986; Kagitsibaci, 2005), often fostered in Western middle class groups.

The way in which most of these Chilean parents tended to indulge their children, allowing them to decide what to eat, where to sleep and/or how much TV to watch, also challenges the idea that these families followed a traditional interdependency family model (Kagitsibaci, 2005). In fact, according to Kagitsibaci's framework, one of the characteristics of this model is that the parenting style that it fosters is authoritarian rather than permissive and that it tends to emphasize parental control and obedience. Further research would be necessary in order to understand better the parenting views of Chilean low SES families and how they might have transitioned from an authoritarian perspective in one generation to a permissive one in the next.

1.8 The fostering of family and community interdependencies

Another finding in relation to the parenting style of these Chilean low SES caregivers was that they tended to foster familial interdependencies. The caregivers from the qualitative study seemed to foster the child's attachment to certain specific adult relatives who could thus indulge the child. Parents perceived this special attachment or closeness to a certain adult as a positive protective factor.

The importance that these families gave to generating a sense of family belonging in the child and to fostering familial interdependencies resembles findings from previous Chilean and Latino studies. Specifically, the current study confirms the evidence provided by the Chilean *Valoras* research (Catalán & Egaña, 2004) where the values that parents considered most important were those relating to social bonding and interpersonal relationships (such as solidarity) or fostering in the child a sense of belonging and responsibility towards a community rather than a sense of individualism (which they related to selfishness and being competitive). The findings from the current study also confirm existing evidence from other Latino and low SES populations. For example, according to Valdés (1996) the nuclear and extended family is a central value in Mexican communities and consequently family loyalty and

cooperation are taught at an early age while competition, on the other hand, is discouraged to preserve family harmony. Also, studies from different cultural groups indicate that low SES and rural families tend to give priority to interpersonal relationships, hence upbringing practices are more oriented to the group's well-being rather than to the development of personal competencies (for more about this, see the review by Romero-Contreras, 2009 and Kagitsibaci, 2005).

Research has also documented several differences between Latino (especially low SES Latino) and traditional middle class Western cultural models of education, language and literacy. Research by Layendecker et al. (2002) provides evidence of how Latino families tend to foster interdependence, respect and harmonious social interactions. In contrast, Western style European or American families tend to promote individualism and independence. Likewise, Valdés (1996) studied the "*familismo*" cultural code followed by Latino families that dictates that personal academic success is subordinate to family well-being.

From a sociocultural perspective, however, the economic interdependencies between members of the low SES Chilean families in the current research, as well as the real and perceived environmental dangers (such as high levels of drug and alcohol use and violence) present in the neighbourhoods in which many of these families lived partly explained why they tended to embrace a family model which favoured physical and emotional interdependency rather than autonomy. In other words, it might be that, for socioeconomic and emotional reasons, there were limited opportunities for adopting an independence-oriented model of parenting because, as indicated by Kagitsibaci (2007), allegedly it could carry the risk of separation in adolescence and young adulthood.

II. Findings regarding language and literacy beliefs and practices, discussed in relation to previous evidence

II.1 Parental views on literacy learning

This research's quantitative study found, that even within this sample, which was seemingly homogeneous in terms of SES, the minor variations in SES that existed were associated with variations in parents' beliefs of how literacy is acquired. This finding confirms previous evidence by Stipek et al. (1992), who found that mothers with less education fostered more skills-oriented instruction than those with more years of education. It also supports previous evidence by Fitzgerald et al. (1991) who found that parents with more years of education viewed literacy from an emergent literacy perspective while their more disadvantaged peers supported more traditional beliefs of literacy development.

The path analyses in the quantitative study also found that caregivers with more holistic and less structured views of how literacy develops tended to: a) engage their preschoolers more often in shared reading and/or letter and word writing or identification practices, b) engage their preschoolers more often in decontextualized conversations c) have more language and literacy resources in their homes (such as books, magazines, DVDs, etc.). Finally, children raised by caregivers with more holistic views of literacy tended to initiate decontextualized talk in the home more often than their peers.

Furthermore, in the final path analyses model, caregivers' more holistic literacy learning beliefs directly predicted vocabulary, spelling and text comprehension outcomes.

Regarding the parents' concepts of literacy and its learning, the main findings of the qualitative study were that practically all the parents had a skills-based, purely phonetical conception of reading which implied that they considered that learning to read depended on developing phonetical and decoding abilities. In contrast, abilities such as reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary enhancement, world knowledge and knowledge of the purposes of literacy were not indicated by these parents to be important for literacy or educational development. Parents did not seem to be aware that there were different approaches to literacy learning besides the phonics approach. This was partly related to the fact that all of the parents also learnt to read with a purely phonetical and motor-skill development approach. It was also related to the fact

that their preschoolers were also being taught with a phonics approach. Thus, they considered this the only way to learn literacy.

The low SES parents of Chilean preschoolers in the qualitative sample also tended to see the literacy-learning process as a ladder of discrete steps rather than as a continuum process with several overlapping stages and interacting abilities. This was most evident in the negative connotations (or in the indifference in others) that some caregivers showed towards their children's demonstrations of emergent literacy, which they considered unrelated to learning to read.

The combination of a skills-based literacy-learning approach and a view of the literacy-learning process as a set of discrete steps that these Chilean caregivers held confirms the findings of previous research that indicates that low SES parents tend to have skills-based literacy beliefs (Fitzgerald et al., 1991; Stipek et al., 1992).

During observed and reported conversations with their children, caregivers' never made explicit, or implied comments that reading could be entertaining. In general, they did not seem to expect school activities or literacy learning to be a fun experience for the child. They also practically never connected reading to any authentic purpose or interest of the child. Consequently, they overlooked the child's enjoyment or boredom with literacy as well as any authentic literacy practices initiated by the child.

Most of the caregivers from the qualitative study also sustained traditional views of learning. In general, they seemed to consider that for literacy learning to happen, the child had to sit down and "study the letters" rather than to interact in more authentic or natural ways with literacy. In this sense, the evidence seemed to indicate that constructivist ways of learning had not permeated these families' developmental views.

These views of literacy sustained by their caregivers could represent a disadvantage for preschoolers since there is evidence that parents' more holistic views of literacy in which reading is seen as a source of entertainment (as opposed to skills-based, didactic views of literacy) are related to children's intrinsic motivation for reading (Baker, Serpell & Sonnenschein, 1995) and are also related to children's achievement (Sonnenschein et al., 1997 in Lynch et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the caregivers emphasized more external rather than internal motivations for learning literacy. Therefore, when asked their thoughts about the usefulness of literacy, caregivers mentioned that mastering literacy was necessary for the child "to have good grades" or be well evaluated at school. Consequently caregivers

tended to put a lot of time and effort in helping their children recognize letters and words and to be able to write familiar words, but they did not aim to foster the child's intrinsic motivation for literacy or connect literacy to the child's world beyond school. Parental views of the usefulness of literacy were partly explained by the fact that the parents themselves did not seem to use literacy for a variety of purposes in their everyday life. Indeed, as mentioned in the previous chapter, during the observations in the homes, caregivers did not use reading or writing very frequently (they were not seen making lists of any type or writing things on their computers or phones; there was almost no evidence of newspaper or magazine reading or writing and reading of letters being sent or received, etc.).

Regarding their literacy-learning expectations, most parents in the sample expected literacy learning to start during the preschool years. However, they also expected the child to be an able reader by the end of kindergarten or first grade. These two expectations which seemed to be at odds, were coherent when viewed in light of these families' concept of reading as a discrete skill which implied decoding with precision and an acceptable level of speed (rather than as a gradually acquired ability that also implied skills such as comprehension and vocabulary). The aforementioned literacy expectations were also coherent with these caregivers' educational history. Since most of these parents had not attended preschool themselves, they generally did not expect the child to be able to read before first grade, which was the time when most of them recalled having learnt to read.

There is evidence that Latino parents believe that children's literacy development starts only when they begin primary school (Goldenberg et al., 2005). Analogously, Madding (1999) found that Latino mothers living in the US thought that their children could not learn to read until they were five years of age. Likewise, research by Savage & Gauvain (1998), reviewed by Pérez Rivera & Dunsmore (2011), found differences between Latino and Euro American parents regarding the perceived age at which children acquire planning and decision-making skills. In a variety of areas, Latino parents consider these skills to be acquired later in comparison to their Euro-American counterparts.

In Chile, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that Chilean families from different SES levels believed that five-year-old children could write small sentences but could not read a story by themselves and that Chilean parents with less years of education tended to start reading stories to their children at a later age than their more advantaged counterparts.

The current research's findings support this existing evidence but also add that, within families of low SES, there are variations in caregivers' expectations for when the child will learn to read and that these variations are related to the quality of the HLE.

While parents tended to have a more fixed mindset in relation to children's learning and cognitive development they also seemed to have a more growth-oriented mindset in relation to their moral development. Evidence of this was the fact that in each of the three HLE groups about half of the caregivers expressed their beliefs that the child's future achievement of secondary studies depended less on school or teaching quality and more on the child's given cognitive capacities and on the mother's ability to foster the child's moral development or to keep the child "on the right track". In line with this, the present study confirms the importance of the self-attributed moral and emotional role of Latino parents in relation to their child's development.

II.2 Three frequent language and literacy practices and beliefs in these Chilean low SES homes

One common belief shared by most of the parents in this study was that they had a supportive role in respect of their preschooler's literacy learning. Moreover, the qualitative study found there were three practices that were most frequently observed and reported by these caregivers as ways of supporting the child's literacy learning in the home. Firstly, parents supported their children by helping them with homework. Secondly, parents used an ABC book to teach letter and word recognition to their children. Lastly, parents provided child-targeted, educational TV programs for their children. These three practices took place in practically all of the households observed and parents believed they were important for promoting the child's cognitive and literacy learning.

II.2.a Supporting literacy development through homework

The present research found that for this sample of low SES Chilean preschoolers, homework was one of the most frequent and regular literacy related practices in the home. The qualitative study also found that these children's homework generally focused on developing phonic and decoding skills, and occasionally, motor skills. The extensive time that the children in the qualitative sample (several of them with their parents) dedicated to homework each week, most of which focused on letter and word

identification and writing, seemed in accordance with the findings from the quantitative study. In the larger sample of the quantitative study 84% of parents reported that they helped their child write letters or numbers once or more times per week, while 60% indicated that they did so three or more times per week.

The parents in the qualitative study reported that it normally took each child between 15 to 60 minutes to do his or her homework and that teachers sent their children homework on a daily basis or if not at least once or twice per week.

The qualitative study found important differences in the quality of the support provided by the low SES mothers in the sample during homework time. For example, mothers from high HLE homes were observed or explicitly reported praising their child's progress, helping the child think about how to do the homework, and correcting the child when the homework was not turning out as it should. In contrast, mothers from mid and low HLE homes tended to provide less guidance to their children during homework or tended to do a larger part of the child's homework themselves because they appeared to think their children were less capable of doing it.

This also confirms the evidence from previous studies that looked at parental support during school-like activities and found that even within samples of low SES parents the quality of support provided by parents varied (Aram & Levin, 2001; Quiroz, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

However, the present research added new evidence because it found that these within group differences were positively related to the overall quality of the HLE provided in each household. For example, the parents of high HLE homes tended to provide more support during these homework sessions than their mid and low HLE peers and also tended to have the necessary materials more readily accessible.

From the perspective of cultural models of literacy, this research found that caregivers tended to see the frequency of homework as a positive indicator of the quality of the school's teaching, because they believed that homework was the central or one of the most important ways through which preschool children learnt literacy in the home.

Furthermore, this research found consistent qualitative evidence throughout the sample that caregivers believed that supporting their preschoolers in their homework was an important responsibility.

III.2.b Teaching Letters and words at home with the *Silabario*

The present research found that word and letter writing and identification were frequent literacy activities in these Chilean low SES families of preschoolers. In the quantitative study, 84% of the caregivers indicated that they helped their children write letters or numbers once or more times per week, and 56% reported that they did so three or more times per week, while 60% said they helped their children identify letters or numbers three or more times per week.

The qualitative study confirmed this evidence. In the interviews and observations, several caregivers mentioned that they taught or were observed teaching their preschooler letters and words, often with the guidance of a phonics textbook (*Silabario*). In general, during these sessions with the *Silabario*, these parents sat down next to their children and helped them decode the letters and syllables in the text, or at other times they used it to reinforce the letters that were being taught at school.

This finding, together with the observed and reported evidence of the high frequency of phonics and word identification homeworks, confirm previous studies with Chilean samples in which most of the parents reported teaching the child letters and words frequently in the home (Bustos et al., 2001; Susperreguy et al., 2007; Strasser & Lissi, 2009).

Moreover, these findings support existing similar evidence from studies with Latino populations in Mexico and Costa Rica which also found a high frequency of letter and word teaching in the homes (Romero-Contreras, 2006).

The factor analysis that was part of the current quantitative study showed that shared reading variables grouped together under the same factor with letter and word-writing and identification practices. This factor in turn served to distinguish those families that created an HLE of higher quality (which more frequently engaged their preschoolers in shared reading or in letter and word writing and identification in the home), from families from low HLE's that did so less frequently.

III.2.c Television ("TV") as an educational resource

As reported by their caregivers almost half of the children in the quantitative sample watched between one and 60 minutes of TV per day while almost 45% of the children watched more than one hour of television daily and more than 19% watched more than two hours of television daily. Television had a pervasive presence in the homes observed in the qualitative study. In fact, even when these preschoolers were not

watching TV, they were often eating, playing or doing their homework in the main room where the caregiver or other family members were watching general entertainment TV programs.

Since these caregivers had a theory of learning which was to follow rather than to ignite the child's interest and since many of these preschoolers showed an interest in TV programs, this caregivers saw the fact that they provided their child with cable TV as a reflection of their own self-efficacy as promoters of their children's cognitive learning.

Many of the rare words that preschoolers from mid or low HLLC homes were reported or heard using during the interviews or observations were words they had heard in TV programs. The preschoolers in the qualitative sample also tended to use rare words when talking *about* TV programs. There was some evidence, however, that children had misunderstood the meaning of rare words they had picked up from the TV or the Internet and misused them. More specific research would be needed to clarify how TV viewing and exposure to the Internet and computer games affects the volume and the depth of low SES Chilean children's vocabulary.

Interestingly, in the quantitative study the reported frequency of TV watching and video game playing had a direct, positive influence on word and letter identification outcomes. The qualitative study helped explain this result as it found that children who had access to computers used them generally for playing video games but they often also had to type url directions and passwords which required certain letter and word identification skills. Another explanation for this was that children in the qualitative study were reported to watch educational programs with a certain focus on word and letter identification (such as *Word Wall* or *Dora the Explorer*).

The quantitative study also found evidence that children who watched TV and played video games more often also tended to engage in decontextualized conversations with their caregivers more often. The qualitative evidence complemented these findings and showed that TV viewing, as well as computers and video games, seemed to both foster and limit the frequency of decontextualized conversations. On the one hand, TV fostered decontextualized conversations by providing new motivating topics of conversation for the child and his family members. On the other hand, TV also appeared to hinder decontextualized conversations because potential conversational partners seemed less interested and responded with shorter answers to questions raised when viewing the TV, which resulted in less fluid interactions.

The discriminant analyses on the other hand, showed that families that provided a high HLE had more holistic views of literacy development and higher educational expectations for their children than families that provided a medium or low HLE and that their preschoolers tended to spend more time per day watching TV or playing video games ($M=5.5$; $SD=1.74$) than their less advantaged counterparts ($M=4.98$; $SD=1.86$). Again, the qualitative study shed light on these results, as it provided evidence that high HLE parents more explicitly attributed part of their children's literacy learning to TV viewing and video game playing. In the view of the parents in this study's sample, having certain cable television programs or channels at home was an active way of promoting the child's cognitive learning. Caregivers mentioned that their children learnt songs, words in the English language and crafts from programs that they saw on cable television.

While most of them thought open TV was not appropriate for preschool children they also considered that children channels or programs from cable TV were educational and constituted a desirable activity for children to do at home.

The seemingly positive effect of TV viewing on children's language and literacy skills confirms previous evidence that indicates that low SES children's general achievement (Comstock, 1991) and /or reading achievement (Searls et al., 1985) might benefit from TV viewing. More specifically, previous research indicated that watching informative programs for children might have a positive effect on letter word skills, number skills, receptive vocabulary and school readiness (Wright et al., 2001; Zill et al., 1994; Rice et al., 1990; Truglio et al., 1986).

Previous research also suggests that low SES children might benefit more than their more advantaged peers from TV since their alternative home practice would probably be less enriched than that of high SES children. Further studies with Chilean populations from different SES groups would be needed in order to confirm these findings.

II.3 Three practices which did not seem to be part of the natural HLE repertoire of these low SES Chilean families

One of the secondary aims of this research was to explore these parents' familiarity with the Western school-based register and to confirm or reject previous evidence on how present or absent certain home practices are in Latino and in Chilean homes.

More specifically, the present research contributes to the existing evidence on Chilean HLE. Previous studies in the Chilean context have tended to assess the frequency of

certain HLE variables such as shared reading, which were predictive of language and literacy outcomes in foreign studies.

Thus, this section describes this research's main findings in relation to a) shared and independent reading, b) other authentic home literacy practices, c) decontextualized conversations, new words and connections to world knowledge in the home.

II.3.a Independent and shared reading

A practice that is central in the school-based register is shared reading that is focused on the meaning of the text.

In the parent questionnaire, 61.6% of the caregivers from the large quantitative sample of this research reported that their children requested to be read to more than once per week while more than 25% said the children never or almost never asked. The parents were reported to be the ones who read most frequently to their children, with 30% of them reading three or more times a week to the child. Siblings and grandparents followed as the family members who also often read to the child at home. Moreover, 91% of the respondents indicated they read children's books or stories, 50% said they read school text books, 40% used religious books and 43% used the newspaper.

The qualitative study on the other hand found that shared reading was not a common practice among the 30 families in the qualitative sample. Chapter seven expanded on this by analysing these parents' beliefs in relation to shared reading with the child in the home. Several findings emerged. The low SES Chilean parents in the study were not familiar with the concept of shared reading that is used in the Western world; (where it is understood as reading focused more on the meaning of the text and in which a more experienced reader models reading behaviours and strategies to a less or non skilled reader). Generally, they thought shared reading referred to reading with a phonics-approach focused on recognizing letters or syllables. For example, although some caregivers had indicated in the interview that they engaged in shared reading, when they were asked to describe what form this took, they described reading the instructions for the school homework or how they read individual syllables or letters to help the child learn to read.

Furthermore, these parents did not appear to believe that shared reading was a part of their responsibilities. Thus, they did not make any references to it. This is in contrast to the numerous spontaneous references they made, for example, to other frequently observed activities such as sitting down to help the child with their homework or reinforcing letter and word identification.

Overall, the evidence was somewhat unclear regarding whether parents saw shared reading as a positive activity to do with their children but generally they seemed to think so and there appeared to be a growing awareness of the benefits of shared reading. In fact, in the UBC parent questionnaire, the parents of the quantitative sample reported a higher frequency of shared reading than the one subsequently observed during the qualitative observations with a subsample. Moreover, the caregivers in the large quantitative sample reported frequencies for shared reading that were higher than those found by previous researchers who have studied Chilean populations. For example, Susperreguy et al. (2007) had previously found that 45.5% of parents never or almost never read to the child at home in contrast to 32% of the caregivers in the current large sample. Likewise, Strasser & Lissi (2009) found that 45.7% of low SES parents read to their children at least once during the past weeks (in contrast to 72.7% of the current study's caregivers who reported that they participated in shared reading with a child once or more times per week).

Considering that during the home observations and interviews shared reading was not found to be a regular activity in these children's homes, these reported quantitative differences seem indicative of a desirability effect or a certain awareness that shared reading is important for children's literacy development. However, this awareness does not seem to be totally established, because during the qualitative study, a few parents that occasionally participated in shared reading did not bring it up when asked what type of activities they participated in at home to promote the child to develop as a reader. Also, one of the caregivers declared that when teaching the child to read she skipped the short stories in the ABC book because that had nothing to do with learning literacy.

Further quantitative studies would be necessary to assess if parents have continued to increase the reported frequencies of shared reading, and further qualitative studies would be needed in order to advance our understanding of how Chilean low SES parents conceptualize shared reading. Both types of studies would serve to understand the validity of including questions about shared reading frequency in family surveys.

The scarce frequency of shared and independent reading reported by caregivers in this study's qualitative sample confirms previous evidence that shared reading is not a common practice within Latino culture. For example, in her research, Romero-Contreras found that only one or two out of a sample of ten adults in Mexico and Costa Rica had reported reading novels or stories during the past week (Romero-Contreras, 2009).

In this sample, the frequency of parent-child shared reading or parental independent reading is lower than and contrasts heavily with what research has found in typical middle class Western homes, who have been shown not only to engage more frequently than their more disadvantaged peers in shared reading but also to have a higher awareness of its benefits (Van Steensel, 2006). Research conducted in Western world countries indicates that shared reading frequency is part of the culture of parenting in middle and upper class families and that its frequency predicts emergent literacy skills, larger gains during the school year and the quality of the home learning environment of a family (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004).

This research also added quantitative and qualitative evidence that variations of frequency of shared and independent reading exist among Chilean households of similar SES. These differences positively related to the quality of the HLE provided and were also associated with childrens' language and literacy skills when they entered preschool. On one hand, the quantitative study found that within this sample of low SES Chilean families, caregivers with more holistic and less structured views of how literacy develops tended to engage their preschoolers more often in shared reading, and that children who engaged in shared or independent reading more frequently at home also tended to engage in home decontextualized conversations more frequently. Moreover, the path analyses found that the reported frequencies of reading practices positively predicted children's vocabulary and word and letter identification outcomes. Finally, the discriminant analysis showed that the differences in the frequency of shared reading were statistically significant among families that provided an HLE of higher quality in relation to families that provided an HLE of mid or low quality. In other words, the children in the sample that belonged to homes with a higher HLE quality engaged more frequently in shared reading, read alone in the home more often, and were exposed to more types of books than the children in low or mid HLE homes.

In addition, the evidence gathered during the qualitative study showed that children from high HLE homes did independent reading more often than the mid or low HLE children. This could have been related to the fact that in comparison, high HLE homes had more literacy resources available children, such as books or computers.

II.3.b Authentic literacy practices in the home environment

One of the aims of this research was to uncover authentic literacy activities that might have taken place in the homes of Chilean low SES families of preschoolers by exploring

the naturally existing literacy practices of these Chilean low SES families and also in trying to avoid a deficit perspective.

In the parent questionnaire, 40% of the respondents said that when reading to the child they used religious books and 43% said they used the newspapers. However, less than 10 caregivers from the large quantitative sample declared reading novels, cooking books, or other type of texts that could be more related to authentic rather than schooling purposes.

In the qualitative study, on the other hand, there was evidence of shared or independent reading of the Bible for spiritual purposes in seven of the 30 homes in the sample. However, no evidence was seen of literacy reading or writing related to the caregivers' work, participation in politics or the community, finance or bill keeping, cooking or eating, all of which were authentic literacy purposes for which Purcell-Gates found evidence in Costa Rican homes (Purcell-Gates, n.d.).

In the Chilean homes studied by the present research, there was also no evidence that the families used literacy for writing letters or to do lists. However, it could be the case that such lists or messages could have been done in the caregivers' mobile phones.

Further research using interviews with caregivers would perhaps benefit from directly asking parents questions such as if they write grocery or to do lists, if they write down recipes or follow written recipes when cooking, if they read and check the labels of the products they use at home, how often they write text messages and emails and if they have to check or use texts or email at work.

II.3.c Decontextualized conversations, new words and connections to world knowledge in the home

Extended conversations, decontextualized language and the value granted to depth and volume of word knowledge are features of the school-based literacy register. Children's early vocabulary has been found to predict subsequent success in reading (Snow et al., 1998) and also later reading comprehension skills (for a review, see Sénéchal et al., 2006). Research indicates that maternal use of diverse words, as well as the information they provide to the child about the meaning of new words, predicts children's vocabulary growth (Weizman & Snow, 2001). There is also evidence that preschoolers' exposure to narrations, explanations and other forms of elaborated conversations are central in the development of reading comprehension during the school years (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Consequently, parents' use of diverse words constitutes a relevant indicator of the quality of the HLL.

Research suggests that children from low SES backgrounds typically are exposed to more controlling and less explanatory language (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2006) as well as to less word tokens, lower frequencies of mean length utterances, less word types and fewer clues about the meanings of these words (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001; Zill & Resnick, 2006; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hoff, 2006).

In the present research, there was evidence that the children in the qualitative sample learnt new words at school and/or through TV but parents never commented on or showed concern for their children's acquisition of new words. Interacting with children regarding the use and expansion on the meaning of new words did not seem to be part of the cultural repertoire of these families. Moreover, these families seemed to value that their children used a vocabulary that showed respect for others more than new word acquisition (see Chapter VI pp. 197). This was interpreted as evidence that these parents placed high value on their children's moral development and that academic and cognitive development depended upon this moral foundation. This evidence supports that parents saw the child's language as a reflection of their moral development.

Decontextualized conversations (see definition on p. 83) include less shared knowledge and less non-verbal clues (gestures or faces) and therefore depend more on the use of specific words for transmitting meaning. Decontextualized conversations also offer more exposure to rare and specific words, extended utterances and explanatory language than contextualized conversations (Jordan & Legrand, 2007). Children who experience more decontextualized conversations within their family context tend to initiate and engage in more conversations during their early years (Tudge et al., 2003 in Siraj- Blatchford et al., 2010).

In their study with a Chilean sample, Susperreguy et al. (2007) found that the high SES parents tended to talk to their children mainly to explain, comment on or narrate events. However, their less advantaged counterparts tended to use language more for purposes related to controlling the child's behaviour. There is also evidence from previous research using the HOME inventory (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) that Chilean high SES parents talked and responded verbally to the questions, petitions or utterances of their preschool-aged children more often than low SES parents (Bustos et al., 2001).

The present research both confirmed and expanded this evidence. The parents in the large quantitative sample did report engaging in decontextualized conversations. Through the parent questionnaire, caregivers were asked about the frequency with

which they engaged in conversations about certain past experiences. Almost 94% of the caregivers declared they frequently (three or more times per week) talked about their child's day at school. Also around half of the parents indicated that they frequently talked with their children about a past event in which the child behaved well, about special events in the past, about when the child was a baby or was born and about bible stories. Although 42% of parents indicated that the child often listened to others in the family narrate something that happened to them, 17% indicated that the child never or almost never did so. Moreover, 85% of parents declared that talking to the child or telling the child stories could help a lot the child to read or write later on.

However, the caregivers in the large quantitative sample reported that it was mostly themselves who initiated these conversations. The sample replicated previous findings from Blum-Kulka and Snow (1992) who found that in a sample of working class families from the US, most stories were initiated by adults while in middle class families the child tended to initiate stories.

The quantitative study showed that variations in SES within this seemingly homogeneous low SES sample correlated with frequency of decontextualized conversations and with frequency of child-initiated decontextualized conversations. It also evidenced that within the sample, those caregivers with more holistic and less structured views of how literacy develops tended to engage their preschoolers more often in decontextualized conversations and that their children tended to initiate decontextualized talk in the home more often than their peers. The quantitative study also showed that within this low SES sample, preschoolers who watched TV and played video games frequently, engaged in shared or independent reading frequently or engaged in letter and word identification in the home frequently also tended to engage more often in decontextualized conversations with their caregivers.

In all the path analysis models, the child's frequency of engagement in decontextualized talk was directly predicted by the amount of books and literacy resources in the home, the frequency of TV and video game use, and the frequency of shared and independent reading practices in the home. The child's frequency of decontextualized talk also predicted the frequency with which children initiated decontextualized talk in the home so that homes in which more decontextualized conversations took place were also homes in which the child more frequently started decontextualized conversations.

The qualitative study of this research expanded the findings in relation to the types of conversations held in these Chilean low SES homes. In general, the families that were observed used language more for instrumental purposes than for matetic purposes.

However, during the home observations and interviews some decontextualized conversations were observed and reported. Generally, these conversations took place on the way home from school or during meal times when most family members gathered together. Most of these conversations were about the things the child had done at school, trips either the child or parents had been on to different places, extended family or TV programs.

The qualitative study helped to explain some of the evidence found in the quantitative study. For example, in the path analysis neither of the two decontextualized-talk-related scales had any significant direct effect on vocabulary outcomes. The qualitative study showed that even in the homes in the sample where decontextualized conversations seemed to be more common, most of the conversations revolved around familiar topics (such as the day at school) and used familiar words. The qualitative study thus evidenced that in the whole sample, children rarely seemed to be exposed to new vocabulary, rare words or unfamiliar topics or concepts where allegedly they could have had the opportunity to learn or use new vocabulary. The lack of exposure might have diminished the potential positive impact of decontextualized conversations on the child's vocabulary development.

Parents were not observed and did not report having conversations in which they explicitly aimed at transferring content knowledge to the child, nor were they observed or reported talking to the child about Chilean, Latin American or world history or culture. The only exception was a couple of homes in which parents reported talking to the child more extensively about aspects of urban pop culture. This seemed to reflect the cultural world in which these Chilean families lived, which included many references to pop culture and characters seen on television but was disconnected from more traditional aspects of world knowledge.

The findings from the present research seemed similar to Marsh's findings when she examined the home literacy practices of a group of three and four year-old children from working-class families in the north of England. She found that those children's literacy practices in the home were focused on media and popular cultural texts and that there was a dissonance between out-of-school and schooled literacy practice (Marsh, 2003).

This could be problematic because world knowledge has a relevant role in the development of literacy skills such as reading comprehension, specifically if a more skilful or knowledgeable other guides the learner to think about the connections between new pieces of information and prior knowledge (Pressley, 2000).

Furthermore, the lack of overlap between the low SES Chilean families' cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and the Western cultural capital transmitted in Chile's educational system or bureaucratic institutions could potentially make it harder for these children to prepare for or adapt to the demands of school and other institutions.

The scarce exposure that these low SES Chilean children seemed to have to new families of words and to experiencing their use in different environments, contrasts with Lareau's description (2003) of middle class families in the US. According to Lareau's study, middle class American families carefully planned their children's use of spare time and engaged in concerted cultivation of their skills and interest through a variety of extracurricular activities such as visits to libraries, museums or participation in sports leagues. In the UK, Siraj & Mayo's research (2014) found that high and low SES families with children succeeding against the odds took their children on outings to historical sites, museums and theatres (and also taking them to amusement parks, to visit relatives or on trips to the coast). These families perceived these experiences to be positive for the child's learning and academic development. Further research would be needed to understand if mid and high SES Chilean families differ from their less advantaged peers in their provision of outings for their preschoolers.

As such, most of these parents' theories of learning as well as their oral language practices were not very aligned and did not serve to familiarise their preschoolers with the schooling system's theory of learning or language register.

II. 4 Reflecting on these findings in relation to Lareau's "concerted cultivation" and "natural growth" upbringing perspectives

In her book "Unequal Childhoods" (2003), Anette Lareau describes how parents in middle class and working class homes tend to differ in their focus on their children's upbringing. According to this author, the middle class parents in her study followed a "concerted cultivation" approach, which implied that they saw themselves as active agents in the development of their child's talents, eliciting consciously their children's feelings, opinions and thoughts. Furthermore they tended to exert their agency through different organized activities and established schedules.

Lareau suggests that this approach resulted in these middle class children learning to treat adults as relative equals and acquiring a sense of entitlement, which taught them to interact with central institutions in society, such as schools, that also use strategies of concerted cultivation. In contrast, the author suggests that the working class parents

in her study tended to facilitate the “accomplishment of natural growth” in their children through an approach according to which the parents tended to use language for practical purposes only, did not feel responsible for eliciting their children’s opinions and thoughts, gave more directives and didn’t organize after-school activities for their children. According to Lareau, this approach resulted in these working class children having more control over their leisure time, frequently using this time to play with friends and relatives who lived nearby. The author also suggests that since this natural growth approach to a child’s upbringing is not aligned with the approach of educational institutions, and more specifically with the concerted cultivation child-rearing logic of schools, these working class children could experience distance and distrust when interacting with such institutions; which, in turn, could partly help to explain how such children become disadvantaged.

Even though the HLE index used by the present research to classify families into high, medium and low HLE was performed excluding SES variables, the findings from the present research show some similarities with the variations found by Lareau in different SES groups. Similar to Lareau’s middle class families, some high HLE parents in the sample tended to demonstrate more agency regarding their children’s out-of-school schedule. They intervened more than their mid and low HLE peers regarding when the homework was done or the amount of and at what time the child could watch TV or play videogames.

There were, however, other features shared by all these low SES Chilean families that distanced them from the “concerted cultivation” model. For example, in Lareau’s study, children from middle class families had several out-of-home activities such as music, dance or sport lessons; none of the children in this Chilean sample had these. Furthermore, Lareau found that children from families with a natural growth approach tended to be free to go out to play with neighbours, relatives or friends who lived nearby; whereas, for this Chilean sample none of the children were allowed to roam freely outside the home.

The theory of learning sustained by these Chilean parents resembled the natural growth perspective described by Lareau (2003) for low SES American families. According to Lareau, these mothers and fathers considered themselves to be responsible for providing physical care and comfort for the child (food, home, shelter) and moral development (teaching the difference between right and wrong), and that they considered language to play a practical role in these tasks. Language was used in these families for practical purposes and its development did not constitute an end in

itself. The Chilean parents in this study's sample used language mainly for practical purposes however they did report giving advice (*consejos*) to their children. The *consejos* are a parental monologue or exhortation of a certain value or behaviour. They constitute a form of cultural narrative aimed at influencing behaviours and attitudes and have been found in previous studies with the Latino population. For example, Valdés (1996) and Delgado-Gaitan (1994) found that Mexican parents used *consejos* in order to educate their children (in the moral sense). Quotes 1, 21 and 9 are examples of *consejos*.

The instructional value granted to verbal explanations over observation, as well as a more dialogical conversation style is a feature of educational institutions that follow the Western model, which is the case of the schools attended by these Chilean preschoolers (LeVine et al., 2012; Romero-Contreras, 2009). Consequently, the observed differences in theories of learning and language uses between these Chilean parents of preschoolers and average Western middle class parents could suggest that these Chilean low SES children are at a disadvantage in terms of adaptability to schooling. One could conclude that Chilean educational institutions should dedicate resources, therefore, to teaching parents how to include more verbal explanations, and more of a dialogical style and child-directed teaching in their homes. However, caution is necessary because the ways of learning currently used by these parents probably have benefits. For example, the aforementioned research by Rogoff et al. included experiments with children from traditional Mayan communities and their Western middle class peers and found that the former learnt more than their Western peers through events in their surroundings that were not specifically designed for them. Hence a balanced approach, which takes a sociocultural perspective, might prove useful to combine these different learning perspectives and to obtain most benefit out of them.

III.- Methodological reflections

III.1 Benefits of including cultural models of literacy in the HLE conceptualization

The broad conceptualization of the HLE used in this research, and more specifically, the strong focus on parents' cultural models of language and literacy and their educational beliefs, provided explanations for several of these parents' practices. The quantitative analysis in Study I showed that these sociocultural aspects directly and also indirectly predicted children's language and literacy skills at school entry.

There is evidence that cultural models of literacy, which include shared perceptions, values, goals and beliefs about education, language and literacy, (Goldenberg et al., 2005) are associated with behaviour (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982; Stipek et al., 1992). The present research confirmed this evidence and provided quantitative and qualitative evidence of the relationship between parents' cultural models of literacy and their language and literacy home practices.

The present research also found quantitative evidence that parents' literacy learning beliefs had both a direct and mediated effect on children language and literacy outcomes at the beginning of preschool. This also confirms previous findings (for a review, see Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). Moreover, this research also found that the parents' beliefs and expectations significantly varied among the three HLLLE groups in ways that predicted the children's skills.

Different researchers have proposed and tested theories regarding the nature of the relationship between cultural models of literacy and parental behaviours. For example, McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1985) says it might take place through parents' structuring of their child's physical environment, and Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2008) say that children incorporate parents' views as they form their self-concepts as learners. Both of these mechanisms were observed in the present research. Caregivers cultural models of literacy were represented in interaction scripts and prescribed standards for language, literacy and educational behaviours and upbringing.

The current research's findings suggest that in order to have parents' interact at home with their children in ways that support children's learning of the school-based literacy register, it would be necessary to explicitly discuss with them the literacy and developmental views that underlie this register and also to build bridges between these families ways with literacy and learning and those of the educational system.

III.2 Advantages and disadvantages related to the use of mixed methods

There were several previous studies that inspired this researcher to do the current research but the most salient ones all shared one feature: they all used mixed methods. The EPPE study in the UK (Sammons et al., 2005), The Home-School study in the US (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001), and the studies by Goldenberg, Gallimore & Reese (2005) all had results with a strong inferential basis and robust statistical findings. However, they also seemed grounded in the context of the families and children they studied. The granularity and the several examples provided by these studies seemed to make their results alive, sparking the interest of the reader and fostering new questions to emerge.

The present research included a qualitative study and a quantitative study, and each of these had both exploratory and confirmatory purposes. These two studies were intertwined. The qualitative study was nested within study 1 and the evidence it provided helped triangulate its findings and clarify some of the possible cultural origins of specific HLE aspects. The HLE index developed in study 1, served to select the sample for study 2.

Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) point out three aspects in which mixed methods excel in relation to single approach designs. a) mixed methods can answer simultaneously confirmatory and exploratory questions, b) mixed methods provide stronger inferences, c) mixed methods allow for the emergence of contrasting or different perspectives and findings.

These advantages were necessary for the purposes of the present research which had both confirmatory and exploratory purposes and aimed at both verifying and generating evidence.

Mixed methods however certainly have disadvantages. According to Onwuegbuzie & Johnson (2006) mixed methods demand the researcher to learn how to implement both qualitative and quantitative methods, and also to learn how to mix them. Furthermore, the interpretation of divergent or conflicting findings also poses a challenge for the researcher. Mixed methods can also be more time consuming and expensive than studies using single methods. In relation to the latter disadvantage, the current research diminished this cost by using data from the UBC Project (although secondary analysis of data also implied several limitations).

Finally, one other disadvantage mentioned by Onwuegbuzie & Johnson (2006) is the complexity of assessing the validity (which they call legitimation) of findings obtained with mixed methods. According to these authors legitimation is a process and there are several types of legitimation (they address nine types).

In using mixed methods it is important to use methods that *"have complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses"* (Johnson & Turner, 2003, p.299 in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 35). This principle was followed throughout this research not only between both studies but also within each study. Therefore, for example, within the quantitative study different methods were used some of which were more exploratory and allowed for latent findings to emerge (such as exploratory factor analyses) and some which were more confirmatory (such as path analyses) which allowed for the confirmation of associations previously found by other researchers. Likewise, in the

qualitative study, the naturalistic observations provided greater breadth while the semi-structured interviews provided more depth.

Qualitative methods were useful for divergent views to emerge, and also for understanding some apparent contradictions in parents' discourse. This was, for example, the case when the researcher asked about the frequency of shared reading in the home. Several parents in the quantitative study reported that they did do shared reading but when asked in the qualitative study to describe how they did it, it became evident that by shared reading they referred to what this researcher understood to be letter or syllabic reading.

The use of diverse qualitative methods (interviews and observations) was also helpful for the emergence and understanding of divergent views. Parents sometimes used certain concepts in a different way to that understood by this researcher. For example, this was the case when talking about the child's vocabulary development and use of new words. Parents were not observed fostering their children's use or acquisition of new or rare words but they did report caring about their children's vocabulary. The data from the semi-structured interview clarified this apparent contradiction because it became evident that these parents' concept of vocabulary mostly referred to children's use of respectful language.

Another case in which the use of mixed methods allowed for the triangulation of the findings was when trying to interpret what seemed like contradictory views of parents. For example, in the quantitative study parents indicated that teaching skills was mostly a responsibility of the school. However, at the same time, they reported that remaining and being successful in the educational system depended mostly on parental support. In this case the data from the semi-structured interviews allowed for explanatory concepts to emerge such as the important moral supportive role that parents attribute to themselves and which they see directly related to educational success.

The aforementioned cases, the use of mixed methods allowed for the clarification of different meanings and for stronger inferences to emerge.

III.3 Finding and describing variability of HLL

One of this research's questions was *What characterizes families with different HLL levels?*

The current studies found that within this sample of low SES families there were relevant variations in HLLC beliefs and practices that clustered according to the quality of HLLC provided in the homes.

The discriminant analyses found that families that provided a high HLLC had more holistic views of literacy development than families that provided a medium HLLC or families that provided an HLLC of low quality. Regarding parents' literacy beliefs the means of the three groups significantly differed from each other. Regarding the frequency of TV watching and video game playing only the low versus the high groups differed. Preschoolers of families that provided an HLLC of higher quality tended to spend more time per day watching TV or playing video games than their less advantaged counterparts. In relation to child-initiated decontextualized conversations the only significant difference was that between the means of the low and high HLLC homes.

The qualitative study on the other hand, found within sample differences in language and literacy development views held by these families as well as in their associated practices or behaviours. These differences were related to the quality of the HLLC provided, therefore confirming the quantitative results of Study I. Thus, for example, even though these parents tended to have a *laissez faire* approach to having a schedule in the home, a few high HLLC parents reported or were observed to have some rules about when homework should be done and/or about how much TV or video games the child could watch or play. High HLLC parents also showed a higher sense of self-efficacy in managing the child's home routine. Also, children from high HLLC homes tended to speak more and more clearly than their less advantaged peers. HLLC parents tended to use more rare words when talking to their children and they tended to use these words in conversations that seemed more elaborate or extended than the typical caregiver-child conversations of the mid and low HLLC families.

The preference for physical closeness and the maturational tendency to do things for the child without aiming at having the child become independent was more or less present throughout the sample but it was more accentuated among lower HLLC families. This evidenced that, even though parents tended to have a fixed rather than a growth mindset there were some within sample variations that seemed to indicate that high HLLC parents' mindsets might be more growth-oriented than those of their less advantaged peers.

Such variations in home literacy beliefs and practices within parents of similar SES group confirm findings from previous international studies such as Head Start in the US

(Love et al., 2002) and the EPPE longitudinal study in the UK (Sylva et al., 2004), which demonstrated that there are subgroups within same SES groups who expose their children to different quality and quantities of interactions or activities that promote literacy skills.

II. Limitations of this research

II.1 Limitations in the quantitative study

II.1. a Limitations from doing secondary analysis of quantitative data

The quantitative study of this research is a secondary analysis of data. The data from the parent questionnaire provided by the UBC project was judged to be useful for the purposes of the present research and was a cost and time effective way to explore the HLLÉ of low SES Chilean families of preschoolers. The parent questionnaire included a wide array of demographic, SES and HLLÉ related items thus allowing for the exploration of several aspects of the HLLÉ and for the testing of a complex model of the HLLÉ that included several distal and proximal composites. Moreover, the data from the UBC project also implied that this research had access to data on several language and literacy outcomes, that was measured individually with the WMLS-R battery, which is a costly standardized instrument. Finally, the large number of participants from the UBC project allowed for the current quantitative research to select a large sub sample of N= 1,132, which in turn allowed for the specific quantitative analyses that were conducted and increased the reliability of the findings. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that gathering data, such as the information provided by the UBC project, with such a large sample size and a wide array of variables and measured outcomes, would have been beyond the scope of this research's time and costs possibilities.

However, there were several disadvantages from doing a secondary analysis of this quantitative data. On one hand, the extensive length of the parent questionnaire together with the low general levels of text comprehension in the Chilean population (see p. 18 in the Introduction for specific details), could allegedly have affected the validity of the data collected.

Despite having acceptable fit indexes, the resulting path model explained a low percentage of the variance of each of the HLLÉ scales and also a low percentage of the variance in the four language and literacy measures. Again, this could have been partly

affected by the quality of the data gathered through the parent questionnaire.

There were several items within the UBC parent questionnaire that were not of interest for the current research while at the same time there were several themes of interest for the present research that were not asked or not asked in sufficient depth for the purposes of the present research.

Moreover, the way in which certain information was gathered complicated or prevented certain comparisons with previous existing evidence. For example, this was the case for the way that the questionnaire inquired about family SES. In relation to this, although maternal and paternal ranges of salaries was included in the questionnaire, it was impossible to determine the monthly income of the families under study because the questionnaire did not ask about the amount of economic support that was provided by the fathers who did not live in the home with the child (52% of the fathers in the sample), and it also did not ask about any governmental subsidies.

Likewise, the present research found evidence that TV watching and video game playing was a relevant component of the HLLC of these Chilean low SES children and that the frequency of these activities was associated with children's word and letter identification skills at the beginning of preschool. However, this evidence was obtained with analyses that were based on only two variables, which measured the frequency of these activities in any given week and were the only items in the questionnaire that inquired about these practices. The findings obtained in the quantitative study could have been more precise if there had been more detailed evidence about for example the types of programs watched by these children.

Regarding HLLC practices, the UBC family questionnaire asked about the frequency of shared reading in the home in a way that proved to be too unspecific for the purposes of the current research. In general, parents in the quantitative study seem to have over reported the frequencies of shared reading with their children. In part, this was interpreted as the result of a desirability effect. To control for this effect, the present research would have benefited if the UBC questionnaire had included more granular ways of finding out the frequency with which shared reading happened in the homes studied. For example, when studying family literacy practices and views of a sample of Chilean parents, Susperreguy et al., (2007) asked for the frequency of shared reading and also asked parents to remember and report the titles of the child's favourite books and stories. The rationale was that parents who frequently read to their children should be able to easily remember the titles of the books and stories they shared. The inclusion of this question not only allowed the aforementioned researchers to control

in part for a desirability bias on the frequency of shared reading, but it also allowed for another finding to emerge. The study found that these children's favorite books were colouring books, short versions of cartoon movies (Searching for Nemo) and brief compilations of classic stories, which generally do not expose the child to world knowledge, new concepts or new ideas.

II.1.b Limitations from using cross sectional data in the path analyses

One of the limitations of the quantitative study design is that while it aims to establish indirect effects or to test mediational hypothesis (via path analysis) it does so using cross sectional data. As explained by Cole & Maxwell (2014), causal inferences (which are implied in mediation models) require that the variable that causes another must precede it in time, i.e. it needs a certain amount of time to exert its effect. Moreover, mediation inferences made from cross-sectional data are based on assumptions such as a) stability of the variables involved (this is that their levels don't change over time); b) stationarity of the variables, which refers to the stability over time of the causal relations among the variables measured, and c) nonspuriousness, which is the assumption that the relationship between two variables cannot be explained by a third variable.

According to these authors, these assumptions are only met for cross sectional data under very restrictive conditions. In fact, in the case of our final path analysis model it could be the case that these conditions were not met. For example, in the path model, the number of home language and literacy resources (such as books or computers) mediates the effect of SES over the frequency of decontextualized conversations with the child in the home. But we also know that the availability of language and literacy resources in a home might change over time. This would imply that it would not be possible to assume stability of this variable.

In short, the current research is somehow effective in disentangling the effects of concurrent, correlated predictors. However, the use of cross sectional data introduces a bias that diminishes the validity of the estimates and the mediating relationships found in the path analyses. In order to strengthen its causal conclusion validity, future research would benefit from a longitudinal design and from including developmental precursors of the outcome measures.

II.2 Limitations for the qualitative study

There were also several limitations in relation to the qualitative study of the present research. Some of the most pressing limitations were the following:

II.2.a Limitations in the sampling of the qualitative data

As acknowledged in the methods chapter, the sampling of participants for the qualitative study could have been biased to a certain extent because the caregivers were selected in the child's school when they picked up their child. Thus, although the sampling was structured so that it included similar numbers of children from high, mid and low HLE homes, it was limited to those children that were picked up from school by their main caregivers. Children who were picked up from school by a neighbour, a different caretaker, or who used a local school bus (which was infrequent but not totally inexistent within this low SES sample), were automatically left out of the sample.

II.2.b Limitations in the data collection of the qualitative data

One of the findings of the qualitative study was that most of the talking that took place in the homes during observations had a more instrumental role and extended conversations did not seem to occur often. This reaction could be a possible effect of having an external observer in the room. Perhaps a more intimate environment is needed for children and caregivers to spontaneously engage in extended conversations. Researchers such as Lareau and Heath, who have done in-depth studies of the home environment in which children grow and learn, visited each of the homes in their studies several times. As a consequence, their findings not only had a wider basis of support but they also gave the families more time to get used to the presence of the intruding researcher and allegedly to act more naturally during the observations.

Alternatively, the presence of an outsider inquiring about typical home routines and practices could have fostered more remembrance of previous events and more decontextualized conversations than those that would have occurred naturally.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview protocol used to gather data in the qualitative study did not ask directly about other authentic literacy practices previously found in Latino homes. For example, it did not explicitly ask parents if they had to read and write at their work, if they wrote grocery lists, if they read or used cooking books, or if and how they read religious texts. Moreover, it also didn't ask parents if they wrote text messages often, or if they used their mobile phones to write to do lists. As a result,

the present research could neither confirm nor reject the previous evidence from Purcell Gates who found that low SES parents in Costa Rica held a wide variety of authentic literacy activities in the home.

II.2.c Limitations in the analyses of the qualitative data

The present research looked at a wide variety of constructs. However, the broadness of this study did not come without a cost. The depth of the qualitative data obtained for some of the constructs was less than ideal. For example, this was the case when focusing on the learning theories of grandmothers that acted as caregivers. There were only three grandmothers in the sample and not all of them explained their views on children's learning extensively. As a consequence, even though sometimes certain interesting conclusions emerged, in certain cases they were based on inferences made with thinner evidence than in other cases. Perhaps one could have selected a smaller group of constructs and have gone into more depth in each one, however value was granted by this research to explore an understudied field and population and to provide a panoramic view of the HLLC, which allowed for new connections and ideas for further studies to emerge.

Likewise, the current qualitative findings could have had a wider basis of support if this research had done only semi-structured interviews in a wider number of homes, instead of doing both observations and semi-structured interviews in 30 homes. However, this research assumed that caregivers would have certain blind spots that they might not make explicit in the interviews, and that naturalistic observations could help uncover. For example, the study uncovered a blind spot with the purely skills based view of how literacy learning takes place. Since parents were not aware of any other approach to literacy learning, they referred to their views briefly in the interview when the researcher asked them how they thought literacy was learned. But the whole extent of their purely phonetical approach was only evident during the home observations, which often included observing homework sessions or letter and word identification with the *Silabario*.

In this vein, it is necessary to acknowledge that among the qualitative findings, the features that were common throughout the sample probably have more validity than those concerning specific subgroups of families (for example families that provided a low quality of HLLC). Perhaps a recommendation for future research aiming to understand the qualitative differences among families from similar SES is that they need a wider number of participants in each group (for example a larger number of high HLLC parents, mid HLLC families and low HLLC families) and or a larger number

of observations and data collection points.

III- Further areas of research

Further research would be needed to confirm and deepen our understanding of some of the findings herein exposed.

- Since there is evidence that cultural groups are heterogeneous, it seems advisable to conduct further comparative studies of the HLE of Chilean families with different SES backgrounds. This would provide clarity about the inequalities faced by different Chilean children. It would also improve our understanding of common elements of Chilean families' beliefs and practices with respect to raising children and how they support their children's literacy development.

- There is evidence that not all children benefit equally from HLE aspects (Bus & Out, 2009). Hence, HLE research might also benefit from including measures of children's genetic influences.

- This research found that the differences among families from similar SES backgrounds but different qualities of HLE clustered together in somewhat meaningful patterns. In this sense, the information from the UBC parent questionnaire served for the purpose of studying low SES families' HLE. However, future research could focus on building a shortened measure that could be used potentially by teachers to improve their understanding of the families of the children they serve, identify the most vulnerable families in terms of HLE among low SES families and inform their practices. Such an instrument might also serve to potentially identify high HLE families who could support their peers or even serve as community coaches in family literacy interventions. From the standpoint of the research on language and literacy development and on the HLE, Chilean pre-schoolers homework completion time seems to be an event worth focusing on. Homework time was found to be rich in mother-child interactions around literacy as well as in literacy learning and upbringing perspectives of parents.

- One of the findings of this research is that parents tended to have a fixed mindset in relation to their children's cognitive development. Further research would be needed, however, to look also at the extent to which low SES children's varying levels of language and literacy skills might actually reflect genetic traits.

IV. The findings of this research placed in relation to the Chilean context

As mentioned in this research's Introduction, Chile has gone through several changes in recent decades. Many of these changes have been positive and have made Chile a country on its way to becoming a developed nation. As part of this progress, there has been an increasing focus on the access to and quality of education. Since Chile entered the OECD in 2010, comparisons are constantly made between the country's educational system and its academic results and those of other OECD member countries that are more developed. The debate, however, has not considered the sociocultural differences that exist between low SES Chilean families' culture and the culture and register promoted by the schooling system.

Some of this research's findings seem to suggest that the economic progress experienced by Chile in recent decades has increased these low SES parents' knowledge of Western-world educational practices. For example, during the home observations this researcher saw very few books in the homes - rarely more than ten books (including adult and children's books as well as school text-books); however, in the parent questionnaire, parents reported having an average of 11.3 children's books and 22.4 non children's books in their homes. Thus, it seems that although these parents may not in fact have the number of books they reported (which perhaps responds to a desirability bias), they already have awareness that having books is desirable; which is something that they did not appear to be equally aware of according to surveys in previous years (Susperreguy et al., 2007; Strasser & Lissi, 2009).

An analysis of the descriptive statistics results also indicates that if there is any permeation of westernised views, it probably relates more to resources than beliefs. For example, though it appears parents over-reported the number of children's books they had in their homes and the frequency with which they did shared reading with their children, they did not, however, seem to over-report or have adjusted their view on what was an adequate age for reading or handing books to a child. A possible explanation for this might be that during the past decade there have been public campaigns both in and outside of educational institutions increasing access to books (through the creation of public libraries, school libraries and specific projects such as "*El maletín Literario*"; see the Introduction). There have not been, however, comprehensive family literacy efforts or projects aiming at tackling these parents' views of literacy learning, which appear still to be largely maturational and skills-based.

Another consequence of Chile's transition towards becoming a 'developed country', and Chileans comparing Chile with other developed nations, could be the increase in

parents' educational expectations for their children, resulting in the misalignment between expectations and their views of learning, and more specifically of literacy learning. Parents aspire to and expect their children to complete university studies because they believe this will improve their children's wellbeing and social status. However, as evidenced in this research, they don't currently appear to understand the type of cognitive skills, the conceptual knowledge or educational path that the child will need to master in order to fulfil their high expectations. Nor do they appear to visualize the central roles they could and perhaps 'should' play in their child's cognitive skills attainment. Parents' views of the roles they play in their child's development, may partly be explained by the fact that almost none of these parents attended higher education themselves; however, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, it may also reflect the fact that there have been no sustained, systematic and explicit efforts to build the parents' capacity to effectively support their children's learning in a more comprehensive way.

This research did not look explicitly at schools' or teachers' views and practices in relation to language and literacy development. However, parents' comments and the homework that the children brought home indicated that these children's preschool teachers also had a skills-based perspective of literacy and a maturational and traditional view of how it is learnt. This represented a marked difference with much of the literature reviewed by this researcher that sustained that there is a misalignment between the learning culture of non-Western or disadvantaged families and communities and the learning culture of the schools they attend.

In contrast, this research with a sample of Chilean low SES families, found an important misalignment between two groups of factors:

- 1) on the one hand, the educational expectations they held for their children (which were higher than those of Western parents) and the language and literacy skills that higher education and professional careers would demand of these children.
- 2) And, on the other hand, the parents' conceptualization of literacy (which appeared to be skills-based and concerned only with phonics); their literacy-learning expectations (comparatively lower than those of Western parents); their fixed mind-set in relation to cognitive development; their view of their role in children's literacy learning as secondary to that of the school; the low frequency of conceptually rich interactions they provide to their children.

To address this misalignment, families need to incorporate more literacy activities that tap more literacy skills in the homes. However, as for any community intervention intended to change socio-cultural behaviours or practices, issues of power relations would need to be considered; any intervention would need to consider these families' views, values and language in order to build a bridge between their home language and literacy registers and those of the Western schooling system, which is largely the schooling system that Chile aspires to.

V. Recommendations

Family literacy programs seem to be a promising way of confronting the misalignments described above. There is evidence that, in comparison to other educational interventions, family literacy programs can have a relatively large impact on children's literacy acquisition and can also improve parents' literacy support skills. The meta-analysis reviewed by the UK's Institute of Education, National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) found that the impacts of family literacy interventions ranged from 0.25 to 0.68 and that family literacy programs had a larger impact than other educational interventions (Carpentieri, Fairfax-Cholmeley, Litster & Vorhaus, 2011, p. 2). However, according to this report, the success of family literacy programs depends on several issues such as cultural validity, a strong basis in research, implementation, sustained funding, effective piloting, establishing partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental organizations and well-trained and high quality project staff.

Hopefully, the findings from this research will inform educational stakeholders on issues related to family and schooling. Moreover, this research could provide valuable information for the development of culturally valid curriculum and family literacy programs. The findings from this research have several implications for teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders:

- Teachers should not underestimate low SES parents' dedication to foster their children's development or their interest in reaching out for information on how to improve. They should, however, plan ways of involving parents in school, aim to familiarise parents with the school-based literacy register and also provide them with opportunities to learn and practice interactions that foster their children's learning.

- SES-disadvantaged families are heterogeneous and therefore not all of them are equally at risk of providing an inadequate HLE. Thus, in order to improve the cost effectiveness of potential resources allocated to family literacy, it might be useful to identify families within low SES families that are in need of more intense interventions.

- From the standpoint of teachers and school administrators, this research also showed that homework is consolidated as a literacy- learning tool which is respected by children and by their families. In this line, homework has the potential to be useful for fostering more holistic literacy learning views among the parents as well as for developing emergent language and literacy skills. From what was observed, homework is currently used only to further develop children's phonic and decoding skills. Chilean preschool teachers need to acquire a more holistic perspective of literacy learning and incorporate this into assignments that students bring home. This should translate into homework that goes beyond phonic skills practice and aims at increasing children's passion for reading, exposure to conceptually rich content and rare words, and the different purposes of literacy and different written structures.

- Chilean low SES families would probably benefit from a culturally valid and evidence-based family literacy program.

- Teachers, policymakers and perhaps even the media could and should increase parents' sense of agency regarding their children's education and early literacy learning. This research showed evidence that parents tended to be open to advice about how to better stimulate their children's cognitive skills. Given the conceptual distance between these parents perspectives and that of the school-based literacy register, the information given to parents would probably be more beneficial if it included visual examples, for example including videos or ways in which parents could visualize the type of interactions that better promote children's learning.

- Both teachers and parents should be made aware of their language and literacy views and beliefs and how they relate to their practices. With caution, to avoid a deficit perspective, they should also be made aware that there are different literacy registers, learn about the particular elements of the school-based literacy register and learn different ways of teaching it to their children.

The evidence presented in this research indicates that the influence of the Home Language and Literacy Environment (HLE) of Chilean low SES children is already considerable before formal schooling starts. Efforts to diminish educational inequalities that affect low SES Chilean children have a higher chance of succeeding if they are accompanied by asset based policies or programs that simultaneously recognise the

strengths of the families', address these families' lack of familiarity with the school-based literacy register, and engage with them to demonstrate how they can improve the development of their children's language and literacy.

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APPENDIX A. SEMI STRUCTURED PROTOCOL FOR CONVERSATION WITH THE CAREGIVER PRELIMINARY WORK

- Arrive in the child's home at least 5 minutes beforehand so that everyone has a chance to understand what will happen before "formal proceedings" begin.
- Establish a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.
- Talk about myself a bit, if that seems appropriate, so the whole event isn't entirely one-sided. Go through the informed consent form and make sure the caregiver signs it before starting the conversation.
- Ask the mother or main caregiver if the child attends preschool in the afternoon or morning.
- Tell the mother what is going to happen (i.e. *Now we will have a conversation in which I will ask you certain questions about the things your child does at home on a regular afternoon or morning, about your family routines and about your thoughts on certain things related to your child. This should take about 40 minutes but if you want to say more things we can take longer*).
- Administer the conversation schedule. Record the conversation. If the conversation starts to get overly long, suspend it saying "we can come back to this later". Try again later or make arrangements to telephone and do the rest of the conversation then.
- During the conversation, if the child is interrupting too much, give the child paper and pencils and tell them to draw things they do at home.

PROTOCOL

This is a semi-structured interview focused on the domestic routines of the family and the activity settings at home.

I. Domestic routines and activity settings:

If the child goes to preschool in the morning say: *"Describe with as much detail as possible a typical afternoon of (CHILD'S NAME), starting from when he/she is picked up at school and until he/she is put to bed at night".*

If the child goes to preschool in the afternoon say: *"Describe with as much detail as possible a typical morning of (CHILD'S NAME), starting from when he/she wakes up until he/she is dropped at school".*

Prompt for:

- Average times at which the different events happen.
- People involved in the different activities
- What kind of things do you talk about at different times?
- Does he/she ask a lot of questions?
- Who picks the child up from school?
- At what time?
- How do they get back home?
- When you go out together, does the child ask questions or make comments? What things does the child ask about/comment on? (This can be followed up with more questions on the topics the child and caregiver talk about when they go out together).
- When you go out together (for example to or from school), do you normally go directly or do you stop somewhere?
- Do you talk with the child on the way home?
- What happens when you arrive home?
- What does the kid do once he gets home?
- Where is the kid once he gets home? (In which part of the house, or outside the house?)
- What do you normally do once you get home with the child?
- What things does the child do at home? Do you feel the child learns from that?
- Do you have a computer at home? How long have you had it?
- From which things or objects that are around your house do you feel your child learns?
- Who does the kid see or interact with during the evening at home?
- If the kid plays by himself does he/she talk while he is playing or make comments to a nearby adult?
- Does the child help any member of his/her family in any duties at home? (Cook, set the table for dinner, etc.)
- Does the child eat something in the afternoon or evening? At what time on average? Who are the typical people with him or her when he or she eats?
- At what time does the child normally go to bed at night? Who puts him/her in bed? Does he/she sleep by himself? Typically does he/she fall asleep immediately? Is there anything special you do at bedtime? (Watch TV, have a cookie, sing songs, pray, read the bible, read a story?)
- Do you go out together often? Where? How frequently?
- Does the child go with you when you go to visit friends or relatives? When you go to the supermarket or elsewhere?
- How often do you read with your child? (Everyday, three times per week, once per week, once per month, never.)

- Have you ever attended your child's preschool centre during class times? Have you ever volunteered to help at the child's centre?

II. Caregiver's beliefs and aspirations

Theories of literacy learning, self-efficacy and roles in children's language and literacy development:

- How do you think children learn to read and write?
- Where do you think your child learns most things about language and literacy?
- Do you feel your child can learn language and literacy from you?
- What is the role that literacy plays in the life of the child? Or what do you think its good/useful for?
- Before the child entered pre-K did he/she know letters or grab books?
- And now, does the child grab a pencil to try to write or does he/she read or try to read?
- When you go through the letters with the child (in the context of homework for example), how do you teach literacy to the child?
- When do you think your child will learn to read? Do you think he will enjoy reading?

Theories of intelligence and learning:

- From 1 to 10 how intelligent do you think your child is?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to affect his/her intelligence?
- There are parents who think that all children are born equally smart and that afterwards depending on how much stimulation they receive some children develop their intelligence more than others. There are also parents that believe that in the same environment some children are born much smarter than other children and that this difference explains that afterwards when they grow up some children seem to be smarter than others. Where do you stand or what are your thoughts in relation to these opinions?
- Do you think some children are more intelligent than others? Why do you think that is so?
- What things from your home stimulate the child most?
- What do you think your child is good at? And what do you think your child is not so good at?
- Do you think your child has language and literacy abilities? Why do you think so? Or how much confidence do you think you have in your child's language and literacy abilities?
- What abilities are you interested in having your child learn? Which abilities do you think are most useful or necessary?

Self-efficacy and achievement-related childrearing values:

- Think about things you want to achieve in your life. Do you think you will achieve them? Why (or why not)?
- What do you expect from the preschool centre?
- What do you expect your child will be able to do the following year in school?
- Which values do you feel you promote the most in your home?

Parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's language and literacy attainment

- What would you like your child to accomplish academically? What do you think your child will accomplish academically?
- What do you think your child will accomplish in relation to language and literacy?
- Do you think your child will finish primary school? High school? Get a technical education? Go to university?
- What do you think he/she would need in order to get further?

III. Caregivers language and literacy history:

- Until which grade did you study? Your husband? Other relatives close to the child?
- Do you remember when and how you learned to read and write?
- Do you like reading/ writing? Why do you think that is so?
- Tell me about your home when you were a child. Do you remember if as a child you saw anyone reading? (Prompt for descriptions of whom, where and how.)
- How were the mealtimes when you were a child? (Who was at the table, who talked and about what, etc.?)
- Do you think your current family routines are similar to those when you were a child? Do you think your child's afternoon and evening is similar to yours when you were his/her age?
- Describe your family routines as a child.
- In what ways is your preschoolers' childhood similar or different to what you remember of your own childhood?

On the way home: write or record a description of the home visit while it is still fresh in your memory.

Include a description of the neighbourhood and house (exterior and interior), the location of activities during the visit (kitchen, living room, etc.) and general atmosphere of the visit.

APPENDIX B. THE N-VIVO CODING PROTOCOL

I. Demographic factors

- Nuclear family
- Extended family
- Instability and significant changes in family circumstances
- Family's socioeconomic level

Parents' education

Parents' work

- Other children in the home
- Routines

Going to bed, sleeping, getting up

Children who sleep in their parents' bed

Lunches, dinners, tea or breakfasts

Helping with house chores

Baths

Who picks the child up from school, at what time and how?

On the way to or from school

Class timetable

Physical games or playing with toys at home

Noise level in the house

Rules in the home, discipline

Tidiness or disorder of the home

Other things the child does while at home

Danger in the home

View on how naturally the child and family behave during the observation

After school caretaker (if not the mother)

If the caregiver has gone to the child's school classes or has volunteered at school

If the caregiver and child go out together

The child accompanies the caregiver to the local street market

The child accompanies the caregiver on a trip to visit family

The child accompanies the caregiver on other outings

The child accompanies the caregiver to the supermarket or mall.

The child is accompanied on trips to parks or the square.

II. Socioemotional environment

II.1 Laziness or bad behaviour of the child

II.2 Shows of physical or verbal affection between the child and other family members

Cossetting versus demanding

II.3 Problems in the home's socioemotional environment

III. Meso Influences

III.1 Parents' beliefs relating to aspirations of educational success

III.1.a Parents' aspirations regarding academic achievements

III.1.b Parent's beliefs about how the child is doing or how well the child is going in academic tasks

III.1.c Parents' beliefs on the nature of intelligence

III.1.d Parent's self-efficacy views regarding teaching things to the child

III.1.e Beliefs on how to present new information or things to the child

III.2 Caregivers' cultural models of reading and writing

III.2.a Belief about how reading and writing develops or is learnt and the type of reading and writing support a child needs for reading and writing

III.2.b Attitudes or feelings with respect to reading and writing

III.2.c Expectations around the child's reading and writing development

III.2.d Other beliefs

- Caregiver's attitude or feelings towards school

- Child's attitudes or feelings towards school or reading and writing

- Beliefs about the help or support that children need to get ahead (not reading and writing related)

- Appreciation shown by the caregiver for the child's conversation

- Appreciation of the child's cheekiness/freshness

- Expectations of preschool
- Strengths and weaknesses of the child, according to the child
- 'The street' versus the home
- Articulating or speaking clearly
- Caregiver's optimism or pessimism with respect to his/her own goals
- Caregivers views on other strengths and weaknesses of the child
- Importance of respectful language (no swear words/foul language, etc.)
- Importance given to the fact that the child grasps things quickly
- Values most appreciated or fostered by the caregiver

III.3 History of the caregiver's relationship with reading and writing

III.3.a Relationship to child's current routines

III.4 Available language and literacy resources in the home

III.4.1 Environmental print in the house

III.4.1.a Books

III.4.1.b Magazines and newspapers

III.4.1.c Computer

III.4.1.d Mobile phone

III.4.1.e Product packaging in the house

III.4.1.f Posters or signs/notices

III.4.1.g Others

III.4.1.h Advertising pamphlets

III.4.2 Environmental print outside of the house

III.4.2.a Posters

III.4.2.b Product packaging

III.4.2.c Others

III.4.3 Pencils, pens, writing paper, notebooks

IV. Micro Influences. Language and literacy experiences in the home

Interaction with reading and writing relating to school homework or tasks

Doing homework

Siblings or other children helping to do the homework, with study or other school tasks

Other school matters

IV.1 Child's verbal interactions in the home

IV.1.a Occasions when the child is observed or reported to converse

During walks in the neighbourhood

While singing or listening to songs

While eating

While the child is getting washed

While playing physical games or games of of imagination (tongue-twisters, wording games, guessing games etc.)

While doing homework

While playing with toys

While playing on the cell phone

While playing on the computer

While drawing or painting

While on the way to or from school

While watching TV or a film

Occasions relating to reading or writing

Others

IV.1.b Places in which the child talks

On the way home from school

The bathroom

In the living room or main living space of the house

In the patio or garden of the house or villa

In the kitchen

In their bedroom

Other places in the house

The square, parks, street festivals, in the street

IV.1.c Topics that the child talks about

Food

Things to do with the computer

Things from the TV/films

School things or homework

Things relating to reading or writing

Photos

Games or toys

Other topics the child talks about

Other objects you see outside

About things to do with the observer

About drawings

About family

About pets or animals

About standards and rules of behaviour and discipline

About objects in the house

About home routines

IV.1.d With whom the child talks when at home or not in school

Friends

Animals, pets

To themselves (private speech) or their toys

The main caregiver

The interviewer

Siblings

The father

IV.1.e Conversations held in front of the child but not with the child.

IV.1.f How the child talks:

a. Open-ended questions

The child is asked questions and doesn't respond

- b. Closed questions
- c. Contextualised conversations
- d. How the child pronounces or pronounced words
- e. Decontextualized conversations
- f. Others related to talk

Gives orders

Emits sounds but not speech

Structures phrases poorly

Uses rhymes from songs/nursery rhymes

The child initiates a topic of conversation

The child asks a question and no one answers them

Negative reinforcement by the caregiver or other adult

Positive reinforcement by the caregiver or other adult

Syllabifying or spelling out

Use of rare words or more sophisticated words than is the norm

Amount that the child speaks

IV.1.g When the child speaks

IV.2 Shared reading of books or other material (quote and note reporting quality)

IV.3 Computer usage

IV.4 Other informal reading and writing interactions (originating in what, types, frequency)

Writing

Counting numbers

Drawings

Interactions with reading, writing, vocabulary in English

Reading

IV.6 Watching television ('TV')

IV.6.a *When* do they watch TV

IV.6.b Types of TV programmes child watches

Films or DVDs

Basic (terrestrial) television

Cable TV

IV.6.c What do the other persons in the home watch on TV

IV.6.d Uses which TV lends itself to

Company

To relax

To educate

To entertain

To inform

IV.7 Radio

V. Sound or letter recognition prior to preschool education

APPENDIX C. THE *UN BUEN COMIENZO* (UBC) PROJECT

The intervention program *Un Buen Comienzo* ('A Good Start') constitutes the first large-scale, randomised evaluation of an effort to improve the quality of preschool education in South America.

Un Buen Comienzo (henceforth 'UBC') is an intensive two-year intervention that provides a professional development program to pre-K and kindergarten teachers in Chile, with the goal of enhancing children's language, literacy, health and socioemotional outcomes.

Participants:

- 64 schools
- 91 classrooms
- 119 teachers and 94 aides
- 1,868 four-year-old children
- UBC Intervention group: 32 schools, 53 classrooms, 66 teachers, 54 aides, and 1,032 children (half girls, half boys)
- In the control group: 32 schools, 39 classrooms, 53 teachers, 40 aides and 836 children (half girls, half boys)
- Cohort 1 included one municipality and six schools
- Cohort 2 included two municipalities and 29 schools
- Cohort 3 included three municipalities and 29 schools.
- All schools served primarily children from low-income Chilean households in the Metropolitan area of Chile.

Description of the UBC Intervention Program:

The UBC program consisted of twelve modules overall (six modules per year). Each module consisted of four weekly activities, beginning with a half-day didactic workshop to introduce a particular topic and the corresponding instructional strategies (e.g., supporting children's predictions in book reading aloud). This workshop was followed over the next two weeks (each module consisting of two weeks) by two coaching sessions. During the first coaching session, the coach modelled for the teacher and the aide the strategies introduced at the workshop. In the second session, the teacher and aide either implemented the strategies in the classroom and the coach observed, or teachers co-implemented the strategy with the coach. Every two months, a group reflection at the school took place to discuss the successes and challenges of the module's topic and strategies. Each coaching session consisted of:

- a) a brief meeting between the coach and the teacher and aide to plan and share the activity plan;
- b) the implementation of the activity plan in the classroom; and
- c) an immediate post-observation meeting to discuss what went well and what could be improved.

UBC modules addressed the domains of preschool quality identified as central by Chilean stakeholders, policy makers and educators, as follows:

1. Oral language and early literacy development: teachers were trained in book-reading strategies, using extended discourse, and on developing vocabulary and emergent writing skills in children.

2. Socioemotional development: teachers were trained in behaviour management strategies, establishing a positive classroom climate, and individual case management for children with challenging behaviours.

3. Coordination of early childhood education with health services: teachers were equipped with specific skills and materials to address health problems affecting preschool-aged children in Chile, which include respiratory illnesses and lack of sufficient well-child visits (Ministerio de Salud, 2006; CDC Global School-Based Health Survey Chile, 2004).

* This information was extracted verbatim from Pages 1 and 2 of the abstract submitted for the presentation:

Can we improve preschool classroom quality in Chile? A cluster-randomized trial evaluation of a professional development program

Spring 2014 SREE Conference

Authors: Diana Leyva, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Catherine E. Snow, Ernesto Treviño, Andrea Rolla, M. Clara Barata, Christina Weiland

Abstract retrieved from:

<https://www.sree.org/conferences/2014s/program/downloads/abstracts/1255.pdf>

For more information on UBC see:

<http://www.fundacionoportunidad.cl/proyectos/un-buen-comienzo>

**APPENDIX D. TEST SUMMARY AND RELIABILITY
STATISTICS FOR THE FOUR WMLS-R TESTS IN SUBJECTS
AGED THREE TO FIVE YEARS**

Test reliability statistics for children 3-5 yrs.

Test	Statistic	AGE		
		3	4	5
Test 1: Picture Vocabulary	N	308	391	358
	M	445.34	460.57	468.22
	SD	19.88	17.45	16.68
	r11	0.92	0.91	0.90
	SEM (W)	5.63	5.25	5.16
	SEM (SS)	4.25	4.51	4.64
Test 3: Letter-Word Identification	N	139	333	335
	M	308.97	327.29	353.54
	SD	22.12	27.56	34.18
	r11	0.74	0.92	0.97
	SEM (W)	11.25	7.57	6.13
	SEM (SS)	7.63	4.12	2.69
Test 4: Dictation	N	262	328	337
	M	339.46	376.54	405.83
	SD	26.40	32.83	28.06
	r11	0.79	0.89	0.94
	SEM (W)	12.19	11.08	6.84
	SEM (SS)	6.93	5.06	3.66
Test 7: Passage Comprehension	N	205	277	323
	M	386.32	396.16	404.39
	SD	26.32	26.08	29.13
	r11	0.66	0.77	0.87
	SEM (W)	15.28	12.62	10.55
	SEM (SS)	8.71	7.26	5.43

Source: Adapted from Woodcock et al., 2005.

SPSS syntax for the interpretation of the WM data

The scores from the WMLS-R tests were interpreted using an SPSS syntax created by the UBC team for this purpose.

The WMLS-R battery comes with software into which the researcher could enter the data and that produces reports by case or group. However, in order to use that software, it's necessary to type all the data in because it does not possible to import data. For a study with a large sample such as the UBC experimental study this was a very time-consuming task. Furthermore, the databases that this software produces as output also had other limitations.

For these reasons, the UBC project created an SPSS syntax to work with the WM data. This syntax was based on the conversion tables of the WMLS-R Comprehensive Manual (Woodcock et al., 2005).

According to Joaquín Reyes, member of the UBC team in Chile, the following steps were taken. First the total number of correct answers was converted to a standardized development score. The WM software uses a logarithmic formula for this conversion; however, since this formula was not available for replication, the UBC project did a one-on-one conversion of each total correct answer scores to a development score.

The WM also provides the Latin American standards for each test. Consequently the UBC project then calculated the reference score for each child (what the child should obtain according to their age). The subtraction between the development score obtained and the reference score indicated the level of development of each child. This data was then recoded in categories.

APPENDIX E. DESCRIPTIVE DATA FOR THE CHILDREN IN THE QUALITATIVE STUDY SAMPLE

Child	Sex	Child's Age in months (a)	HLE Index (b)	WMLS-R global score (c)	Father's education	Mother's education	Father's salary (d)	Mother's salary (d)	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation	School ID	District
Fernanda Carrizo	F	66.5	high HLE	6,25	Complete university	Complete university	\$500,001 to \$700,000	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Profesional	Administrative: secretary, receptionist	308	3
Germán Cárcamo	M	Missing	high HLE	8	Some years of university or technical studies	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Administrative: secretary, receptionist	House wife/man	312	3
Laura Ferrer	F	69.9	high HLE	6,25	Some years of university or technical studies	Some years of university or technical studies	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Doesn't apply	Retail salesman	House wife/man	210	2
Jessica Alvarez	F	Missing	high HLE	5,75	Incomplete High School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Merchandise	Merchandise	206	2
José Artega	M	69.6	high HLE	5,75	Complete High School	Some years of university or technical studies	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	308	3
Sofía Piña	F	Missing	high HLE	5	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	312	3
Jennifer Gallardo	F	72.2	high HLE	6,25	Incomplete High School	Complete Middle School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Administrative: secretary, receptionist	House wife/man	303	3
Juan Morales	M	70.1	high HLE	6,25	Incomplete High School	Complete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Service occupations: for example cashier, waiter	Administrative: secretary, receptionist	210	2
Benjamín Vidal	M	Missing	high HLE	6	Some years of university or technical studies	Complete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	312	3
Martín Contreras	M	Missing	high HLE	7,25	Incomplete High School	Complete Middle School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Service occupations: for example cashier, waiter	House wife/man	206	2
Pablo Aguirre	M	54.3	high HLE	5,25	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	Other	308	3
Mariela Pederos	F	74	mid HLE	5,25	Some years of university or technical studies	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Other	Service occupations: for example cashier, waiter	312	3
Pablo Ortíz	M	62.1	mid HLE	4,25	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	206	2
Fabiola Lopez	F	65	mid HLE	4	Incomplete High School	Complete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	\$100,001 to \$150,000	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	Domestic help	211	2
Diego Henriquez	M	65.1	mid HLE	3,75	Incomplete High School	Incomplete High School	\$100,001 to \$150,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	211	2
Daniela Jara	F	64.9	mid HLE	3	Incomplete High School	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Doesn't answer	House wife/man	202	2
Vicente Garrido	M	73.3	mid HLE	4,75	Some years of university or technical studies	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	312	3
Pedro Oviedo	M	67.9	mid HLE	4,5	Complete College	Complete High School	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't answer	Profesional	Doesn't answer	308	3
Anais Urbina	F	Missing	mid HLE	4,25	Complete Middle School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Doesn't apply	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	House wife/man	312	3
Marisol Moraga	F	70.5	mid HLE	6	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Service occupations: for example cashier, waiter	House wife/man	308	3
Emilia Araya	F	54.6	low HLE	3,75	Incomplete High School	Incomplete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Doesn't apply	Manual worker: tailor, carpenter	House wife/man	303	3
Eduardo Escobar	M	68.3	low HLE	3,5	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Other	Other	206	2
Axel Castillo	M	66.8	low HLE	3,25	Fourth Grade	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Other	Domestic help	312	3
Anahis Navarro	F	65.5	low HLE	2,5	Incomplete High School	Seventh Grade	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	206	2
Javier Tapia	F	Missing	low HLE	3	Complete High School	Second Grade	\$300,001 to \$500,000	Doesn't apply	Other	House wife/man	308	3
Matías Bravo	M	64.1	low HLE	3,25	Complete High School	Complete Middle School	\$100,001 to \$150,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Manual worker: tailor, carpenter	House wife/man	303	3
Victor Gutierrez	M	70.9	low HLE	2,25	Complete High School	Incomplete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Doesn't apply	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	House wife/man	202	2
Bastián Monardes	M	66	low HLE	3,5	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$150,001 to \$200,000	Doesn't apply	Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, motor mechanics.	House wife/man	308	3
Valentina Sepúlveda	F	70.6	low HLE	3	Complete High School	Complete High School	\$200,001 to \$300,000	Doesn't apply	Street trader	House wife/man	308	3
Martina Palma	F	61.1	low HLE	2,75	Complete Middle School	Sixth grade	\$150,001 to \$200,000	\$1,000 to \$100,000	Manual worker: tailor, carpenter	Domestic help	210	2

* (a) Child's age in months reported in the UBC Parent questionnaire applied at the beginning of prekindergarten + 15 months (because the qualitative data was gathered in the middle of these children's kindergarten year)

* (b) Home Language and Literacy Environment Index obtained through discriminant analysis

* (c) WMLS-R global score= average of the child's achievement proportion in each of the four WMLS-R test

* (d) Father's and mother's salary in current or last job

APPENDIX F. TRANSLATED EXTRACT OF THE QUANTITATIVE CHECKLIST FILLED WITH QUALITATIVE DATA

Parental Beliefs: How is literacy learned and what type of supports do children need to develop literacy skills? Subtheme: Parents concept of literacy related skills (skills based or holistic?)									
HILLE index	Child's name	Does this parent's literacy concept include phon. awareness, decoding and visual recognition of letters	Does it include aspects of fluency?	Does it include comprehension, vocabulary or world knowledge?	Repetitively copying texts is an appropriate way to develop child's literacy?	Teaching the child letters is an appropriate way to develop child's literacy?	Doing school's homeworks is an appropriate way to develop child's literacy?	Does this parent perceive that there are different approaches to learning literacy?	Does this parent look around or inquire about how to support the child's literacy learning?
Low HILLE	Martina Palma	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes-esta es la unica cosa que la mamá	NR	NR
	Valentina Sepúlveda	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	Yes (looks for info in google)
	Bastían Monardes	Yes	NR	No	NR	NR	NR	NR	No
	Victor Gutierrez	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	No
	Matias Bravo	Yes	No	Yes (words from TV)	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	No
	Javiera Tapia	Yes	NR	No	NR	Yes	NR	NR	No
	Anahis Navarro	Yes	NR	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (great quote)	Yes (child's teacher)
	Axel Castillo	Yes	NR	No	Yes, (great quotes)	Yes	Yes	Yes-grandmother says before they taught the child to read later on	No
	Eduardo Escobar	Yes	NR	No	Yes	Yes, dictating words so that child learns to	Yes	NR	No
	Emilia Araya	Yes	NR	No	Yes	Yes	NR	NR	No
	Marisol Moraga	Yes	NR	No	NR	Yes	Yes	NR, but she teaches letters sounds instead of names	Yes (great quote, mum looked for help for elder daughter and talks
	Anais Urbina	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes	Yes (teach letters sounds instead of names)	NR
	Eduardo Palma	Yes	No	Yes (vocabulary & comprehension)	NR	NR	Yes	NR	No
	Vicente Garrido	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Daniela Jara	Yes	NR	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (asks other moms)
Diego Henriquez	NR	NR	NR	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	NR	
Fabiola Lopez	Yes	NR	Yes (mum reads stories and asks child)	NR	Yes	Yes	Says yes, but refers to teachers phonics techniques	No	
Pablo Ortiz	Yes	NR	NR	NR	Yes	Yes	No	NR	
Mariela Pedreros	Yes	No	No	NR	Yes	Yes	Yes (teach letters sounds instead of names)	Yes, (grandma went to course taught by child's preschool teacher)	
Pablo Aguirre	Yes	NR	No	NR	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Martín Contreras	Yes	NR	comments on childs reading	NR	Yes	Yes	Yes (before focus on motor skills now on phonics)	Yes, (mum frequently talks to childs teachers)	
Benjamin Vidal	Yes	NR	No	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	NR	
Juan Morales	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	Yes	NR	NR	
Jennifer Gallardo	Yes	NR	NR	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	Yes (talks about what the teacher told her)	
Sofia Piña	Yes	Yes (great quote)	No	NR	Yes	Yes	Yes (teach letters sounds instead of names)	Yes (mum of child's friend who is a teacher!)	
José Arteaga	Yes	Yes	Yes (example of authentic & engaging)	NR	NR, talks about rich content and	NR	NR	Si (mamá vio programa en la tele)	
Jessica Alvarez	Yes	Yes	No	NR	Yes	Yes	NR (just teachers that are more or less demanding)	Si (mum works in child's school so she asks)	
Laura Ferrer	Yes	Yes	No	NR	NR	Yes	NR	NR	
Germán Cárcamo	Yes	NR	No	NR	Yes	NR	Yes (teach letters sounds instead of names)	Yes (mother in law is teacher and mum asks her)	
Fernanda Carrizo	Yes	Yes	Yes	NR	Yes	Yes	NR	Yes (Interviewed parent is Dad, works as teacher and he asks researcher for	

APPENDIX G. FREQUENCIES AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MAIN HLE OR HLE RELATED VARIABLES

Table 3.1 Parent's education

	Mother's education	Father's education
Incomplete primary & middle school	12.4	7.6
Complete primary & middle school	11.8	13.5
Incomplete high school	21.3	24.3
Complete high school	42.2	39.4
Some years of university or technical studies	9.5	12.0
Graduated from university	2.8	3.3
Missing %	18.7	29.3
Valid N	920	800

Table 3.2 Monthly salary at current job

	Mother	Father
Currently not working	44.4	3.6
\$1,000 to \$100,000 CLP	14.1	4.0
\$100,001 to \$150,000 CLP	14.4	15.5
\$150,001 to \$200,000 CLP	13.9	30.4
\$200,001 to \$300,000 CLP	8.2	26.0
\$300,001 to \$500,000 CLP	3.7	15.5
More than \$500,001 CLP	1.3	5.0
Missing %	25.3	37.9
Valid N	846	703

* 1 GBP= 963,7 Chilean Pesos source: www.oanda.com, June 2015.

Table 3.3 Parent's Occupation

	Mother	Father
House wife/man	47.0	0.7
Student	0.9	0.1
Street trader	2.2	1.1
Merchandiser	3.6	5.2
Farm worker	0.3	1.4
Domestic help	9.9	0.0
Manual worker: tailor, carpenter	3.1	8.6
Construction or electric worker: carpenter, electrician, moto mechanics.	0.3	23.6
Service occupations: for example, cashier, waiter	12.3	16.6
Administrative: secretary, recepcionist	5.8	7.1
Retail salesman	4.0	5.4
Profesional	2.7	5.4
Other	7.7	24.7
Missing %	22.4	36.7
Valid N	878	717

Table 3.4 Appropriate ag

	What do yo good age to books to o
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
More than 10	
Valid N	
Missing %	

Table 3.5 How much do you think the following activities can help the child read or write later on?

	Taking the child to preschool	Talking to the child and telling him/her stories	Reading books to the child	Playing	Singing songs	Other activity
A lot	89.3	95.2	96.7	85.6	93.3	92.3
A little	9.1	4.7	2.6	12.3	6.3	3.6
Doesn't help at all	1.6	0.1	0.7	2.1	0.4	4.2
Valid N	1,047	1,049	1,057	1,045	1,042	168
Missing %	7.5	7.3	6.6	7.7	8	85.2

Table 3.6 Caregiver's Beliefs- Role of caregiver and teacher

	Keep the child safe and healthy	Teach the child skills for school)	Teach the child how to relate well with others	Other	Valid N	Missing %
What is the main role you play in the current life of the child?	53.9	15	28.1	3	1,040	8.1
What is the main role the teacher plays in the current life of the child?	4.5	76.3	18	1.3	1,036	8.5

Table 3.7 Expected difficulty for learning to read

Learning to read will be very hard for the child	6.6
Learning to read will be mediumly hard for the child	33.5
Learning to read will be easy for the child	59.3
The child already knows how to read	0.6
Valid N	1,065
Missing %	5.9

Table 3.8 Educational aspirations and expectations

	Do you think the child will be able to finish...?	Would you like the child to finish...?
Primary education & Middle school	2.3	0.1
High school	16.6	1.3
Technical education	17.9	6.4
University	63.1	92.2
Valid N	1,042	1,046
Missing %	8	7.6

Table 3.9 Two positive features you would like the child to have in first grade

	Learning and development	Responsibility and obedience	Development of social aspects and personality	Other aspect	Valid N	Missing %
Feature 1	55.39	21.47	17.49	5.65	1,071	5.38
Feature 2	36.4	27.21	26.68	10.07		

Table 3.10 Other home language and literacy resources

	Yes	No	Valid N	Missing %
Newspapers	72.3	27.7	1,065	5.9
Daily newspaper	54.2	45.8	1,053	7
Television	99.7	0.3	1,061	6.3
Music or sound system	89.3	10.7	1,062	6.2
Radio	90.6	9.4	1,058	6.5
Telephone (landline or mobile)	95.7	4.3	1,053	7
Computer	52.6	47.4	1,054	6.9
VHS	39.7	60.3	1,041	8
DVD	88.6	11.4	1,057	6.6

Table 3.11 Preschoolers lone and shared reading frequencies in the home

	Never or almost never	Once or twice per month	Once or twice per week	Three or more times per week	Valid N	Missing %
How frequently does the child look at or read books or magazines by him/herself at home?	10.5	11	24.4	54	1,064	6
How frequently does the child ask you to read to him/her?	25.2	13.2	23.6	38	1,060	6.4
How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	20.6	12.2	22.2	45.1	1,060	6.4
How frequently do you read to the child at home?	17.7	21.2	27.7	33.3	930	17.8
How frequently does the mother or father (if not the interviewee) read to the child at home?	24.4	19.3	27.6	28.6	814	28.1
How frequently does his/her sibling read to the child at home?	43	15.4	19.2	22.4	735	35.1
How frequently does his/her grandmother or grandfather read to the child at home?	58.4	12.7	14.9	14	623	45
How frequently does his/her aunt or uncle read to the child at home?	64.1	15.7	11.5	8.7	574	49.3
How frequently does his/her cousin read to the child at home?	79.2	11.2	5.1	4.5	490	56.7
Other	40.1	15.9	17.9	26.2	302	73.3

Table 3.12 Types of books usually read to the child

	Yes	No	Valid N	Missing %
Children's books or stories	91.3	8.7	927	18.1
School books/texts	49.6	50.4	898	20.7
Religious books, the Bible	39.9	60.1	902	20.3
Newspapers	42.9	57.1	888	21.6
Others	30.6	69.4	392	65.4

Table 3.13 Frequency of word and letter writing and identification

	How frequently do you help the child write letters or numbers during the week?	How frequently do you help the child identify letters or numbers during the week?
Never or almost never	7.5	5.6
Once or twice per month	8.5	7.3
Once or twice per week	28.1	26.6
Three or more times per week	55.9	60.6
Valid N	1,065	1,060
Missing %	5.9	6.4

Table 3.14 Frequency of different conversation topics

	Never or almost never	Once or twice per month	Once or twice per week	Three or more times per week	Valid N	Missing %
How frequently do you and the child talk about special events in the past?	7.4	18.3	23.6	50.7	1,070	5.5
How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which the child behaved well?	5.9	16.7	25.9	51.5	1,067	5.7
How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which the child behaved badly?	17.1	15.1	25.6	42.2	1,068	5.7
How frequently does the child listen to others in the family tell stories or narrate something that happened to them?	16.9	15.5	24.7	42.9	1,067	5.7
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or about his/her birth?	10.9	23.2	19.3	46.6	1,066	5.8
How frequently do you talk to the child about his/her day at school?	0.9	1.5	3.7	93.9	1,063	6.1

Table 3.15 Who starts these conversations?

	You	The child	Half of the times you and half of the times the child	Valid N	Missing %
About special events in the past	19.4	40.4	40.2	1,046	7.6
About a past even in which the child behaved well	41.4	27	31.6	1,053	7
About a past even in which the child behaved badly	74.1	11.2	14.7	1,041	8
About when the child was a baby or about his/her birth	45.6	27.1	27.3	1,046	7.6

Table 3.16 Time spent watching TV or playing videogames

	Nothing	Less than half hour	Between half hour and one hour	Between one and two hours	More than two hours	Valid N	Missing %
Daily time spent by the child watching TV	8.2	15.5	31.5	25.6	19.2	355	68.6
Daily time spent by the child playing computer games, Nintendo or others?	52.4	15.9	17.3	10.3	4.1	271	76.1

* Think of all the TV programs the child watched yesterday (movies, news...) and try to calculate approximately, how much time did the child spend watching TV?(*T2)

* Think of all the computer games, Nintendo or others and try to calculate how much time did the child spend yesterday playing these games? (*T2)

Table 3.17 Time spent playing outside

	Nothing	Less than half hour	Between half hour and one hour	Between one and two hours	More than two hours	Valid N	Missing %
In the past three days how much time did the child spend playing in the street, passage or nearby piazza or square?	20.2	9.9	27.9	20.7	21.4	416	63.3

Table 3.18 WM test 1- Picture vocabulary

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	10	0.9	1.0
Very limited	27	2.4	2.8
Limited	171	15.1	17.6
Limited to Fluid	171	15.1	17.6
Fluid	420	37.1	43.3
Fluid to advanced	104	9.2	10.7
Advanced	64	5.7	6.6
Very advanced	4	0.4	0.4
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

Table 3.19 WM test 3- Word and letter Identification

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	0	0.0	0.0
Very limited	9	0.8	0.9
Limited	44	3.9	4.5
Limited to Fluid	92	8.1	9.5
Fluid	193	17.0	19.9
Fluid to advanced	202	17.8	20.8
Advanced	178	15.7	18.3
Very advanced	253	22.3	26.1
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

Table 3.20 WM test 4- Spelling

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	34	3.0	3.5
Very limited	40	3.5	4.1
Limited	190	16.8	19.6
Limited to Fluid	0	0.0	0.0
Fluid	170	15.0	17.5
Fluid to advanced	18	1.6	1.9
Advanced	383	33.8	39.5
Very advanced	135	11.9	13.9
Total	970	85.7	100
Missing N	162	14.3	
Total	1,132	100	

Table 3.21 WM test 7- Text comprehension

Level of Achievement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Imperceptible	174	15.4	17.9
Very limited	0	0.0	0.0
Limited	0	0.0	0.0
Limited to Fluid	0	0.0	0.0
Fluid	500	44.2	51.5
Fluid to advanced	0	0.0	0.0
Advanced	0	0.0	0.0
Very advanced	297	26.2	30.6
Total	971	85.8	100
Missing N	161	14.2	
Total	1,132	100	

Table 3.22 Family demographics

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Child lives with mother AND father	1.068	0-1	0,46	0,50
Child lives only with mother	1.068	0-1	0,88	0,32
Child lives only with father	1.068	0-1	0,48	0,50
Child lives with uncles, aunts and/or grandparents	1.068	0-3	0,63	1,03
N° adults living in the home	1.062	1-15	3,23	1,69
N° children younger than 6 living in the home (includes child)	1.063	0-12	1,52	0,97
N° children 7-17yrs living in the home	1.044	0-14	1,26	1,26

Table 3.23 Socioeconomic status (SES)

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Mother's educational level	920	1-6	3,33	1,25
Father's educational level	800	1-6	3,44	1,19
Mother's current working status	906	0-1	0,57	0,50
Mother's current monthly salary	470	1-8	2,59	1,33
Father's current working status	784	0-1	0,97	0,18
Father's current monthly salary	678	1-8	3,54	1,29
Mother's weekly working hours	467	4-119	42,17	17,37
Father's weekly working hours	646	10-126	52,46	15,06
Mother's N° working days per week	482	0-7	5,08	1,38
Father's N° working days per week	683	0-7	5,66	0,83
Mother's N° working hours on a typical day	488	0-24	8,10	2,87
Father's N° working hours on a typical day	674	0-24	9,15	2,13
Mother's occupation	878	1-13	5,01	4,38
Father's occupation	717	1-13	9,48	2,74
Mother's N° years working in same job	412	1-31	3,93	4,91
Father's N° years working in same job	592	1-39	5,92	6,24
Facilities in the child's home- Electricity	1.053	1-1	1,00	0,00
Facilities in the child's home- Drinking water	1.063	0-1	0,99	0,11
Facilities in the child's home- Sanitary services	1.058	0-1	0,98	0,15
Facilities in the child's home- Shower	1.011	0-1	0,85	0,36
Facilities in the child's home- Working motorcycle	1.044	0-1	0,13	0,33
Facilities in the child's home- Car	1.041	0-1	0,32	0,47
Facilities in the child's home- Washing machine	1.058	0-1	0,94	0,23
Facilities in the child's home- Refrigerator	1.062	0-1	0,97	0,18
Facilities in the child's home- Electric or gas cooking stove	1.058	0-1	0,99	0,09
Facilities in the child's home- Microwave	1.059	0-1	0,69	0,46

Table 3.24 Educational and literacy beliefs and expectations

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
In your opinion what is a good age for handing books to children?	1.015	0-10	4,18	1,62
In your opinion, what is a good age for parents or older siblings to start reading to children?	1.005	0-20	3,45	2,14
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Taking the child to nursery	1.047	1-3	2,88	0,38
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Talking to the child and telling him/her stories	1.049	1-3	2,95	0,22
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Reading books to the child	1.057	1-3	2,96	0,23
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Playing	1.045	1-3	2,83	0,42
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Singing songs	1.042	1-3	2,93	0,27
How much do you think this activity can help the child read or write further on? Other activity. How much does it help?	168	1-3	2,88	0,44
In your opinion, how hard or easy will learning to read be for the child?	1.065	1-4	2,54	0,63
You think the child will be able to study up to what level?	1.042	1-4	3,42	0,85
You want the child to study up to what level?	1.046	1-4	3,91	0,34
Which of the following represents your main reason for sending the child to preschool?	1.048	1-4	1,13	0,47
What do you think is your main role in the child's current life?	1.040	1-4	1,80	0,95
What do you think is your child's teacher's main role in the child's current life?	1.036	1-4	2,16	0,50
Is the caregiver's main role teaching the child abilities for school?	1.040	0-1	0,15	0,36
Is the teacher's main role teaching the child abilities for school?	1.036	0-1	0,76	0,43

Table 3.25 Home language and literacy resources

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Aproximately, how many story books or children's books are there in the child's home?	1,065	0-600	12.52	27.21
Without considering children's books, how many books are there in the child's home?	1,061	0-1000	24.52	47.82
Are there newspapers in the child's home?	1,065	0-1	0.72	0.45
Is there newspaper on a daily basis in the child's home?	1,053	0-1	0.54	0.50
Is there a TV in the child's home?	1,061	0-1	1.00	0.05
Is there a music system in the child's home?	1,062	0-1	0.89	0.31
Is there a radio in the child's home?	1,058	0-1	0.91	0.29
Is there a phone in the child's home?	1,053	0-1	0.96	0.20
Is there a computer in the child's home?	1,054	0-1	0.53	0.50
Is there a VHS in the child's home?	1,041	0-1	0.40	0.49
Is there a DVD in the child's home?	1,057	0-1	0.89	0.32

Table 3.26 Family literacy practices

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Do you or any other member of the family read books to the child?	1.066	0-1	0,88	0,32
How frequently do you read books with the child at home?	930	1-4	2,77	1,10
How frequently do the parents (if not the interviewee) read books with the child at home?	814	1-4	2,60	1,14
How frequently does the child look at books or magazines by his own at home?	1.064	1-4	3,22	1,01
How frequently does the child ask you to read to him/her?	1.060	1-4	2,74	1,21
How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	1.060	1-4	2,92	1,18
How frequently do siblings read to the child at home?	735	1-4	2,21	1,22
How frequently do grandparents read to the child at home?	623	1-4	1,84	1,13
How frequently do aunts or uncles read to the child at home?	574	1-4	1,65	0,99
How frequently do cousins read to the child at home?	490	1-4	1,35	0,77
Who else read to the child at home? Please specify how frequently	302	1-4	2,30	1,24
How frequently do you help the child write letters or numbers during the week?	1.065	1-4	3,32	0,92
How frequently do you help the child read or identify letters or numbers during the week?	1.060	1-4	3,42	0,85
What type of books do you usually read to the child? Children's stories or books	927	0-1	0,91	0,28
What type of books do you usually read to the child? School texts	898	0-1	0,50	0,50
What type of books do you usually read to the child? Religious books or the Bible	902	0-1	0,40	0,49
What type of books do you usually read to the child? Newspapers	888	0-1	0,43	0,50
What type of books do you usually read to the child? Others	392	0-1	0,31	0,46

Table 3.27 Home conversations with the child

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
How frequently do you and the child talk about special past events?	1.070	1-4	3,18	0,98
How frequently do you and the child talk about past events in which the child behaved well?	1.067	1-4	3,23	0,93
How frequently do you and the child talk about past events in which the child behaved badly?	1.068	1-4	2,93	1,12
How frequently does the child hear others in the family tell stories or narrate something that happened to them?	1.067	1-4	2,94	1,12
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or when he/she was born?	1.066	1-4	3,02	1,06
Who starts these conversations about special events in the past	1.046	1-3	2,21	0,74
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved well?	1.053	1-3	1,90	0,85
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved badly?	1.041	1-3	1,41	0,73
Who starts these conversations about when the child was a baby or when he/she was born?	1.046	1-3	1,82	0,83
How frequently do you talk to the child about his/her day at school?	1.063	1-4	3,90	0,42

Table 3.28 TV watching, video game playing and playing outside

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Aproximately how much time did your child spend yesterday watching TV?	355	1-5	3,32	1,19
Aproximately how much time did your child spend yesterday playing video, Nintendo or computer games?	271	1-5	1,98	1,22
During the last three days how often did the child go out to play (to the garden or terrace, street, playground or nearby square)?	416	1-5	3,13	1,40

APPENDIX H. VARIABLES IN EACH SCALE WITH THEIR ANSWER OPTIONS

Table H.1 Variables used to build the scales and their answer options

Family and SES scales	
Variables within each of the scales	Answers for each of the variables included in the scale
Number of parents living in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 3 variables
The child lives with how many parents?	This variable was built with the sum of three variables and was coded in the following way: 1=Doesn't live with any parent 2=Lives with mother or father 3=Lives with both parents
Lives with mother	0=No 1=Yes
Lives with father	0=No 1=Yes
Number of young children in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 2 variables
How many children younger than 6 yrs. live in the child's home (including the target child)?	Ordinal
How many children between 7 and 17 yrs. live in the child's home?	Ordinal
Socioeconomic level	This scale was built with the sum of the following 5 variables
What is your educational level? Mother	1=Incomplete primary 2=Complete primary 3=Incomplete secondary 4=Complete secondary 5=Incomplete university or complete technical career 6=Complete university
What is your educational level? Father	1=Incomplete primary 2=Complete primary 3=Incomplete secondary 4=Complete secondary 5=Incomplete university or complete technical career 6=Complete university
How much do or did you earn monthly on that job? Mother	0=Currently not working 1=\$1,000 to \$100,000 2=\$100,001 to \$150,000 3=\$150,001 to \$200,000 4=\$200,001 to \$300,000 5=\$300,001 to \$500,000 6=\$500,001 to \$700,000 7=\$700,001 to \$1,000,000 8=More than \$1,000,000
How much do or did you earn monthly on that job? Father	0=Currently not working 1=\$1,000 to \$100,000 2=\$100,001 to \$150,000 3=\$150,001 to \$200,000 4=\$200,001 to \$300,000 5=\$300,001 to \$500,000 6=\$500,001 to \$700,000 7=\$700,001 to \$1,000,000 8=More than \$1,000,000
Home resources: Is there electricity in the child's home? Is there drinking water in the child's home? Are there sanitary services in the child's home? Is there a shower in the child's home? Is there a working motorcycle in the child's home? Is there a washing machine in the child's home? Is there a refrigerator in the child's home? Is there a gas or electric stove in the child's home? Is there a microwave in the child's home? Is there a working car in the child's home?	This variable on home resources was built with the sum of the ten dichotomous variables on the left (each of which had 0=No 1=Yes) and it ranged 0-10.
Home language and literacy environment scales	
Language and literacy resources	This scale was built with the sum of the following 3 variables
Total N children's books in the home	Ordinal
Total number of non children's books in the home	A scale were built to categorize the number of books owned
Other home language and literacy resources: Is there a TV in the child's home?; Is there daily newspaper in the child's home?; Is there a music system in the child's home?; Is there a radio in the child's home?; Is there a mobile or landline phone in the child's home?; Is there a computer in the child's home?; Is there a VHS in the child's home?; Is there a DVD in the child's home?	This variable on home language and literacy resources was built with the sum of the eight dichotomous variables on the left (each of which had 0=No 1=Yes) and it ranged 0-8.
Literacy learning beliefs	This scale was built with the sum of the following 8 variables
How much do you think this activity can help the child read and write further on? Talking to him and telling him stories	1=Doesn't help at all; 2=Helps a little; 3=Helps a lot
How much do you think this activity can help the child read and write further on? Singing songs	1=Doesn't help at all; 2=Helps a little; 3=Helps a lot
How much do you think this activity can help the child read and write further on? Reading books	1=Doesn't help at all; 2=Helps a little; 3=Helps a lot
How much do you think this activity can help the child read and write further on? Playing	1=Doesn't help at all; 2=Helps a little; 3=Helps a lot
Frequency of decontextualized conversations in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 5 variables
How frequently do you and the child talk about past events in which the child behaved well?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently do you and the child talk about special past events?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or when he/she was born?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
Frequency of child initiated decontextualized conversations in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 4 variables
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved well?	1=You 2=Half of the times you and half of the times the child 3=The child
Who starts these conversations about special events in the past	1=You 2=Half of the times you and half of the times the child 3=The child
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved badly?	1=You 2=Half of the times you and half of the times the child 3=The child
Frequency of child reading and writing experiences in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 7 variables
How frequently does the child ask you to read to him?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently do you read books with the child in the home?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently does the child look at books or magazines by himself in the home?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently do you help the child read or identify letters or numbers during the week?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How frequently do you help the child write letters or numbers during the week?	1=Never or almost never 2=Once or twice per month 3=Once or twice per week 4=Three or more times per week
How many types of books do you usually read to the child? Children's books or stories School texts Religious books, the Bible Newspapers Others	This variable on types of books usually read to the child was built with the sum of the five dichotomous variables on the left (each of which had 0=No 1=Yes) and it ranged 0-5 where 5 implied that the child was usually read all the alternatives to the left and 0 implied that the child was read none of the alternatives to the left.
Frequency of TV viewing and video game playing in the home	This scale was built with the sum of the following 2 variables
Approximately how much time did your child spend yesterday watching TV?	1=Nothing 2=Less than half an hour 3=30 to 60 minutes 4=1 to 2 hours 5=More than 2 hours
Approximately how much time did your child spend yesterday playing video, Nintendo or computer games?	1=Nothing 2=Less than half an hour 3=30 to 60 minutes 4=1 to 2 hours 5=More than 2 hours
Language and literacy outcome variables	
Achievement level- Picture Vocabulary Test (WM test 1)	1=imperceptible 2=very limited 3=limited 4=limited to fluid 5=fluid 6=fluid to advanced 7=advanced 8=very advanced
Achievement level- Word And Letter Identification test (WM test 3)	1=imperceptible 2=very limited 3=limited 4=limited to fluid 5=fluid 6=fluid to advanced 7=advanced 8=very advanced
Achievement level- Spelling test (WM test 4)	1=imperceptible 2=very limited 3=limited 4=limited to fluid 5=fluid 6=fluid to advanced 7=advanced 8=very advanced
Achievement level- Text comprehension test (WM test 3)	1=imperceptible 2=very limited 3=limited 4=limited to fluid 5=fluid 6=fluid to advanced 7=advanced 8=very advanced

Table H.2 Home Language and Literacy Environment variables and scales for the factor analyses

Scales	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Eigenvalue
Home language and literacy resources	Total N° children's books in the home	.635	.63	1.73
	Total N° non-children's books in the home	.746		
	Electronic language and literacy resources	.438		
Literacy and educational beliefs and expectations	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Talking to him and telling him stories	.488	.85	1.99
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Singing songs	.469		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Reading books	.467		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Playing	.447		
	In your opinion, what do you think is a good age to handle books to children?	.269		
	In your opinion, what do you think is a good age for parents or older siblings to start reading books to children?	.235		
	What year of education do you think the child will be able to finish?	.214		
	In your opinion, how easy or hard do you think learning to read will be for the child?	.209		
	What year of education would you like the child to finish?	.169		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Taking the child to preschool	.167		
	How much do you think the following activities can help the child learn to read and write further on? Other activities	.087		
	Frequency of decontextualized conversations	How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which he behaved well?		
How frequently do you and the child talk about special events from the past?		.621		
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or when he was born?		.426		
How frequently does the child listen to others in the family tell stories or narrate something that happened to them?		.375		
How frequently do you and the child talk about a past event in which the child misbehaved?		.318		
How frequently do you and the child talk about his/her day at school?		.235		
Frequency of child initiated decontextualized conversations	Who starts these conversations about a past event in which the child behaved well?	.638	.66	1.58
	Who starts these conversations about special events from the past?	.562		
	Who starts these conversations about a past event in which the child misbehaved?	.413		
	Who starts these conversations about when the child was a baby or when he was born?	.361		
Frequency of child home reading and writing practices	How frequently does the child ask you to read to him?	.744	.97	4.27
	How frequently do you read books to the child at home?	.709		
	How frequently does the child look at books or magazines by himself in the home?	.616		
	How frequently does the child ask to read to you?	.544		
	How frequently during the week do you help the child identify letters and numbers?	.508		
	How frequently during the week do you help the child write letters and numbers?	.501		
	Total number of types of books you usually read to the child	.473		
	How frequently does the grandfather or grandmother read to the child at home?	.328		
	Who else reads to the child at home?, please specify how frequently	.352		
	How frequently does the uncle or aunt read to the child at home?	.325		
	How frequently does a sibling read to the child at home?	.309		
Do you or any other member of the family read to the child at home?	.234			
How frequently does the cousin read to the child at home?	.201			
Frequency of exposure to TV and video games*	How much time did your child spend yesterday watching TV?	
	How much time did your child spend yesterday playing video games?	

* This scale only had two variables so it could not be analyzed with factor analysis

* Varimax rotation was used

APPENDIX I. DATA IMPUTATION AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE IMPUTED DATA

The Norm software (Schafer, 1997) was preferred over SPSS for this imputation because while SPSS underestimates the standard error, Norm allows for the adjustment of the data to the standard error. Another advantage is that unlike SAS or Mplus, Norm provides an imputed database. The descriptive statistics of the imputed variables can be seen below.

The analysis of the missing data patterns deemed that most of the missing data were MCAR (missing completely at random), which is one of the assumptions that the data needs to meet in order to impute data with the Norm.

This program works by generating several imputed databases. In this case five databases were created. According to Graham (2009), this is an adequate number for data imputation with Norm. The Norm used the EM algorithm in the imputation. Then the program produced a single database, which combined the five previously created ones.

This database was used to calculate the new imputed descriptive statistics and it was also used for building the scales, which were used for the path analysis..

Table I1: Family structure

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Child lives with mother AND father (a)	1,068.00	0-1	2.36	0.66
Child lives only with mother	1,068.00	0-1	0.88	0.32
Child lives only with father	1,068.00	0-1	0.48	0.50
Child lives with uncles, aunts and/or grandparents	1,068.00	0-3	0.63	1.03
Child lives with other adult, not mentioned above, which?	1,068.00	0-6	0.21	0.76
N° adults living in the home	1,062.00	1-15	3.23	1.69
N° children younger than 6 living in the home (includes child)	1,063.00	0-12	1.52	0.97
N° children 7-17yrs living in the home	1,044.00	0-14	1.26	1.26

I6: Home conversations with the child

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
How frequently do you and the child talk about special past events?	1,070.00	1-4	3.18	0.99
How frequently do you and the child talk about past events in which the child behaved well?	1,067.00	1-4	3.23	0.93
How frequently do you and the child talk about past events in which the child behaved badly?	1,068.00	1-4	2.93	1.12
How frequently does the child hear others in the family tell stories or narrate something that happened to them?	1,067.00	1-4	2.95	1.12
How frequently do you and the child talk about when the child was a baby or when he/she was born?	1,066.00	1-4	3.03	1.07
Who starts these conversations about special events in the past	1,046.00	1-3	2.22	0.75
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved well?	1,053.00	1-3	1.90	0.86
Who starts these conversations about past events in which the child behaved badly?	1,041.00	1-3	1.41	0.73
Who starts these conversations about when the child was a baby or when he/she was born?	1,046.00	1-3	1.82	0.84
How frequently do you talk to the child about his/her day at school?	1,063.00	1-4	3.90	0.42

17: TV watching, video game playing and playing outside

	N	Range	Mean	St. Dev
Aproximately how much time did your child spend yesterday watching TV?	355.00	1-5	3.32	1.19
Aproximately how much time did your child spend yesterday playing video, Nintendo or computer games?	271.00	1-5	1.94	1.39
During the last three days aproximately how much time did your child spend playing outside (in the street, playground, square or house patio)?	416.00	1-5	3.13	1.40

APPENDIX J. STANDARDIZED PATH MODEL COEFFICIENTS AND R2

Table J1: Standardized path model coefficients and R2 for WMSR 1- Vocabulary

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	R2
Predictors of literacy learning beliefs					9.5
N° parents	.084	.028	3.036	.002	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.089	.031	-2.915	.004	
SES	.273	.029	9.37	.000	
Predictors of printed and electronic language and literacy resources					22.4
SES	.376	.026	14.454	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.201	.028	7.276	.000	
Predictors of reading practices					5.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.131	.030	4.399	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.150	.029	5.134	.000	
Predictors of frequency of decontextualized conversations					7.8
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.150	.030	5.053	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations (*)	.134	.030	4.419	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.065	.029	2.226	.026	
Reading practices	.096	.028	3.385	.001	
Predictors of child initiated decontextualized conversations					4.5
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.030	-2.714	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.108	.030	3.541	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	.133	.029	4.536	.000	
Predictors of frequency of TV watching and video game playing					2.4
SES	.154	.028	5.583	.000	
Predictors of WM1- Vocabulary test					14.7
N° children <17 yrs.	-.122	.037	-3.34	.001	
SES	.098	.032	3.082	.002	
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources (*)	.067	.034	1.977	.048	
Beliefs & expectations	.158	.034	4.708	.000	
Reading practices	.174	.031	5.575	.000	

Note: all standardized estimates are significant ($p < .05$)

Table J2: Standardized path model coefficients and R2 for WMSR 3- Word and Letter Identification

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	R2
Predictors of literacy learning beliefs					9.5
N° parents	.084	.028	3.036	.002	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.089	.031	-2.915	.004	
SES	.273	.029	9.37	.000	
Predictors of printed and electronic language and literacy resources					22.4
SES	.376	.026	14.454	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.201	.028	7.276	.000	
Predictors of reading practices					5.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.131	.030	4.399	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.150	.029	5.134	.000	
Predictors of frequency of decontextualized conversations					7.8
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.150	.030	5.053	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations (*)	.134	.030	4.419	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.065	.029	2.226	.026	
Reading practices	.096	.028	3.385	.001	
Predictors of child initiated decontextualized conversations					4.5
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.030	-2.714	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.108	.030	3.541	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	.133	.029	4.536	.000	
Predictors of frequency of TV watching and video game playing					2.4
SES	.154	.028	5.583	.000	
Predictors of WM3- Word and Letter Identification test					11
N° parents	.081	.030	2.721	.006	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.032	-2.475	.013	
SES	.125	.034	3.649	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.122	.029	4.187	.000	
Reading practices	.188	.031	6.006	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	-.068	.033	-2.065	.039	

Note: all standardized estimates are significant (p<.05)

Table J3: Standardized path model coefficients and R2 for WMSR 4- Spelling

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	R2
Predictors of literacy learning beliefs					9.5
N° parents	.084	.028	3.036	.002	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.089	.031	-2.915	.004	
SES	.273	.029	9.37	.000	
Predictors of printed and electronic language and literacy resources					22.4
SES	.376	.026	14.454	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.201	.028	7.276	.000	
Predictors of reading practices					5.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.131	.030	4.399	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.150	.029	5.134	.000	
Predictors of frequency of decontextualized conversations					7.8
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.150	.030	5.053	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations (*)	.134	.030	4.419	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.065	.029	2.226	.026	
Reading practices	.096	.028	3.385	.001	
Predictors of child initiated decontextualized conversations					4.5
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.030	-2.714	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.108	.030	3.541	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	.133	.029	4.536	.000	
Predictors of frequency of TV watching and video game playing					2.4
SES	.154	.028	5.583	.000	
Predictors of WM4- Spelling test					6.9
N° children <17 yrs.	-.081	.030	-2.686	.007	
SES	.076	.037	2.085	.037	
Beliefs & expectations	.128	.036	3.598	.000	
Reading practices	-.163	.031	-5.283	.000	

Note: all standardized estimates are significant (p<.05)

Table J4: Standardized path model coefficients and R2 for WMSR 7- Text Comprehension

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	R2
Predictors of literacy learning beliefs					9.5
N° parents	.084	.028	3.036	.002	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.089	.031	-2.915	.004	
SES	.273	.029	9.37	.000	
Predictors of printed and electronic language and literacy resources					22.4
SES	.376	.026	14.454	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.201	.028	7.276	.000	
Predictors of reading practices					5.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.131	.030	4.399	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.150	.029	5.134	.000	
Predictors of frequency of decontextualized conversations					7.8
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.150	.030	5.053	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations (*)	.134	.030	4.419	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.065	.029	2.226	.026	
Reading practices	.096	.028	3.385	.001	
Predictors of child initiated decontextualized conversations					4.5
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.030	-2.714	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.108	.030	3.541	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	.133	.029	4.536	.000	
Predictors of frequency of TV watching and video game playing					2.4
SES	.154	.028	5.583	.000	
Predictors of WM7- Text Comprehension test					5.8
SES	.093	.035	2.686	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.151	.035	4.247	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.070	.032	2.158	.031	
Reading practices	-.080	.032	-2.469	.014	
Child initiated decontextualized conversations	.070	.032	2.168	.030	

Note: all standardized estimates are significant (p<.05)

Table J5: Standardized path model coefficients and R2

	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	R2
Literacy learning beliefs:					9.5
N° parents	.084	.028	3.036	.002	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.089	.031	-2.915	.004	
SES	.273	.029	9.37	.000	
Predictors of printed and electronic language and literacy resources:					22.4
SES	.376	.026	14.454	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.201	.028	7.276	.000	
Predictors of reading practices					5.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.131	.030	4.399	.000	
Beliefs & Expectations	.150	.029	5.134	.000	
Predictors of frequency of decontextualized conversations:					6.2
Printed and electronic language and literacy resources	.188	.028	6.659	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.066	.029	2.254	.024	
Reading practices	.115	.028	4.099	.000	
Predictors of child initiated decontextualized conversations:					4.1
N° children <17 yrs.	-.080	.030	-2.715	.007	
Beliefs & expectations	.108	.031	3.536	.000	
Frequency of decontextualized conversations	.133	.029	4.53	.000	
Predictors of frequency of TV watching and video game playing:					2.4
SES	.154	.028	5.583	.000	
Predictors of WM1- Vocabulary test:					13.5
N° children <17 yrs.	-.125	.033	-3.756	.000	
SES	.128	.030	4.294	.000	
Beliefs & expectations	.166	.032	5.104	.000	
Reading practices	.184	.031	5.85	.000	
Predictors of WM3- Word and letter identification test:					9.8
N° parents	.081	.029	2.826	.005	
N° children <17 yrs.	-.083	.031	-2.715	.007	
SES	.148	.030	4.945	.000	
Frequency of TV watching and video game playing	.101	.029	3.512	.000	
Reading practices	.193	.031	6.26	.000	
Predictors of WM4- Spelling test:					6
N° children <17 yrs.	-.083	.030	-2.759	.006	
SES	.097	.034	2.838	.005	
Beliefs & expectations	.126	.034	3.735	.000	
Reading practices	-.163	.031	-5.192	.000	
Predictors of WM7- Text comprehension test:					4.9
SES	.113	.032	3.55	.000	
Beliefs & expectations	.143	.035	4.114	.000	
Child initiated decontextualized conversations	.063	.031	2.061	.039	
Reading practices	-.078	.032	-2.424	.015	

Note: all standardized estimates are significant (p<.05)

APPENDIX K. QUALITATIVE STUDY QUOTES IN SPANISH

Cita 1:

Mamá: Entonces yo le digo. "Tienes que aprender a ver, si quieres aprender a leer vai a tener que ir viendo los éste ... cuando vayas en la micro ir viendo los letreros pa que vayas leyendo así, vayas practicando más para poder ir reconociendo más las letras que te pasa la tía en el colegio". (Eduardo Escobar, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 2:

Mamá: Cuando era más chica, en prekinder, había que estar ahí pendiente de ella, de las tareas todo. Pero ahora no, ahora pregunta harto, "hermana, mamá ¿cuál término tengo que ocupar?". Pregunta y escribe, pero no es así un niño al que le cueste, que tenga que estar pendiente de él, no. (Emilia Araya, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 3:

Ent: ¿Tu crees que tiene habilidades para la lectura?

Mamá: Habilidades claro que sí. Vicente ya sabe leer y escribir hace rato.

Ent: ¿y cómo crees que él adquirió esa habilidad?

Mamá: Vicente aprendió a leer tan chico por el interés que él tenía, el solo, yo en ningún momento... ves que no soy profesora, entonces en ningún momento hice técnicas, no, nada, el empezó como a los 3 años ¿y esta letra cual es? ¿y esta otra?

Ent: ¿en revistas?

Mamá: En todas partes, donde fuera porque es muy observador donde fuera ¿ay esa letra como se llama? En su cubrecama también tiene una parte con letras entonces me iba preguntando. Entonces yo ahí me di cuenta que Vicente tenía mucho interés por las letras, que quería aprender a leer...A los 3 años empezó. Mi suegra, que ella es profesora, me decía que si tenía harto interés entonces que yo mas menos a medida que el me fuera mostrando interés yo le fuera diciendo, enseñando en el fondo.

Ent: ¿y que te decía?

Mamá: Por ejemplo que cuando los niños aprenden a leer nunca hay que enseñarles como se llama la letra si no como suena es decir, esta se llama R por la R o sea esta suena así entonces luego cuando ya tienen eso aprendido ahí viene el tema de se llama (no se entiende) entonces yo lo hice tal cual me lo dijo y fijate que Vicente yo no me di ni cuenta cuando el Vicente estaba leyendo. Ahora tu no me preguntí como el Vicente lee, no me preguntí como lo hace pero lo hace. (Germán Cárcamo, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 4:

Ent: ¿Como crees tú que los niños aprenden a leer?

Mamá: Es que los míos por lo menos, han sido todos curiosos entonces no es mucho lo que yo les he tenido que enseñar

Ent: Porque aprenden solos ¿dices tú?

Mamá: Emm, porque ellos me preguntan lo que quieren saber, entonces por ejemplo si ella quiere saber algo, yo se lo enseño. Pero yo le enseño lo que ella quiere.

Ent: Lo que ella te va preguntando

Mamá: Claro, no lo que quien le imponga. . (Jessica Alvarez, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 5:

Papá: ¿Qué era lo que me preguntaba? Que le dije yo que después... algo que no sabía escribir ella... aahh "Librería".

Mamá: Ah claro, ayer ella preguntaba. "Y la bre" decía "¿cuál es la bre?", "y la li"?. Sabe qué es "li", pero la "bre" no.

Papá: Es que estaba escribiéndolo en los postes yo, y el lápiz no le rayaba en el poste, le dije yo "después lo escribís dentro de la casa", y después no me preguntó. (Emilia Araya, HLL E bajo)

Cita 6:

Mamá: La Marisol de repente, ella anda buscando, lo que la Ana [elder sister] nunca ha hecho, nunca busca... La Ana nunca la tuvo [esa curiosidad] y nunca se la desarrollé tampoco... deben nacer con un poco igual de eso y lo otro que uno tiene que irlo desarrollando también. Dándole herramientas... [quizás] no he sabido motivarla para que ella vaya curioseando más allá. Lo que te decía de que de repente uno mismo corta las alas, porque a veces ella anda pendiente, y a veces yo ya, estoy en otra cosa. "Marisol espérame", o "Marisol, después", y cuando yo quiero, ya le digo "Marisol, ahora sí", y ella como que ya [está en otra cosa]...

Lo otro es que uno le tiene que cultivar, y esa es la parte complicada. Como guiarlos por esa parte. De que ellos descubran cosas. Como motivarlos para eso... con la Ana tengo hartos problemas... ahora tengo una señora que hace un tema del método alfa, y ella decía eso, que uno tiene que darle herramientas para que el niño busque, no darle siempre... como le decía ella ve mucha tele, entonces ella está metida en su cabeza, está llena de monitos no más. "Muy inteligente" me decía, "pero tienes que empezarla a que desarrolle su inteligencia. Que tenga mas contacto con la naturaleza" me decía. Obvio uno no las deja... porque mejor que esté acostada viendo tele y uno avanza por otro lado. Porque es lo más fácil para mí. (Marisol Moraga, HLL E medio)

Cita 7:

Mamá: yo los veo estudiando en la universidad. A mí me gustaría que ellos tomaran una carrera, por ejemplo, de esto de ramas de milicia o... que sean aviadores, yo siempre les digo, así van a estar ustedes, o si no les gusta... pero yo no quiero que ellos queden marcando el paso. Pero igual me da miedo porque como está la juventud ahora. (Axel Castillo, HLL E bajo)

Cita 8:

Ent: Y tu niñita mayor, ¿qué quiere hacer después?

Mamá: Bueno, ella quiere muchas cosas, ella esta entusiasmá con ir a la universidad, porque le gusta odontología, odontología o psicología y no sé po, yo le he dicho, lo veremos más adelante, pero yo le digo a ella, no te veo para eso, porque ella no es muy buena para estudiar.

Ent: Se necesitan puntajes altos para eso.

Mamá: Exactamente, nosotros le hemos dicho, arriba de ochocientos tiene que tener puntaje... (Sofía Piña, HLL E alto)

Cita 9:

Mamá: Mi meta concreta es que Tomás (hijo mayor) fuera a la universidad porque yo sé que él... yo le converso y le digo "mira hijo, en la vida todo cuesta, no es tan fácil. Entonces

si tú quieres lograr algo importante en tú vida, que valoren tú trabajo, eh lamentablemente si no estudias una carrera no vas a poder llegar más allá. A lo mejor vas a tener que seguir estudiando, no te va a bastar con eso, vas a tener que seguir perfeccionándote y es importante que lo hagas". (Valentina Sepúlveda, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 10:

Papá: la Laura gracias a Dios, nos salió buena pa las tareas, dice "papá me dieron tarea"... entonces nosotros también no somos así, como "ya hacelas" como los papás de hoy día "ya, después la hacemos" no. Nosotros, la negra mayormente [su señora], y ahora yo que estoy sin trabajo puedo estar más presente, pero mi señora se preocupa bastante...". (Laura Ferrer, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 11:

Mamá: A las 3:00pm por ejemplo yo le preparo su leche, su once se la preparo se la llevo y se la toma donde el esté. Después de eso ... si es que ha traído tareas del colegio ya, destinamos ahí un rato para hacer la tarea porque no lo dejo como a que sea a última hora. Lo ideal sería que la tarea primero y después la diversión, pero tampoco llegando del colegio lo voy a poner al tiro a hacer la tarea... después yo le digo si está en el playstation, "ya el play se corta un rato haga otra cosa", Ya sea dibujar, le gusta jugar con sus juguetes o pintar cualquier cosa que el quiera en realidad pero que no sea digamos estar pegado en la tele o en el play. Después como a las 7:00, 7:30 lo llamo para que venga a cenar. (Germán Cárcamo, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 12:

Papá: Nosotros, la Negra mayormente, y ahora yo que estoy sin trabajo así que puedo estar más presente, pero mi señora se preocupa bastante desde que llega aquí, una hora pa tarea, después una hora pa jugar, después una hora pa que...
Mamá: [Llega del colegio y] juega sí en su pieza, entonces saca todos sus monos, todos sus juguetes, y después cuando está listo el almuerzo, almorzamos y por lo general terminamos a las dos y media, tres y de ahí empezamos a hacer las tareas. Terminamos las tareas... y después vuelve a jugar a su pieza o se mete al computador un rato. (Laura Ferrer, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 13:

Ent: Y, ¿cómo a qué horas más menos se acuesta?

Mamá: Tarde, tipo... 11pm más o menos ...12pm, a veces más.

Ent: ¿Y qué? ¿Se queda viendo tele, qué es lo que hace ahí a esa hora?

Mamá: Hasta que yo me acueste. Duerme con nosotros. Se queda haciendo la tarea, después se va a acostar. Hacemos las tareas normalmente a la noche cuando llegamos de la iglesia. Después de cocinar.

Ent: ¿O sea se acuesta como a qué hora? ¿8:30 pm?

Mamá: No, llegamos de la iglesia tipín 9:30, 10:00 pm.

Ent: O sea ella hace la tarea como a las 10:00pm.

Mamá: Claro, o más tarde. Y... después se acuesta, pero cuando yo estoy lista para acostarme ya.

(Anahis Navarro, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 14:

Mamá: cuando ella trae su cuaderno del colegio, "ya a hacer sus tareas" y las hace todas, pero cuando yo estoy con la Ana [hermana mayor] y ella me pide ayuda... yo lo hago, pero hace dos líneas y ya no, después se aburre y se va no ma.

Ent: O sea, las tareas del colegio las hace más...

Mamá: Claro...es porque ella sabe que es la tía y que la va a retar, pero en cambio las que le hago yo

Ent: Le da lo mismo.

Mamá: Si quiere las hace, [o sino] me dice "yaa, hasta aquí no ma. Ya mamá voy a hacer un dibujo". Y se pone a hacer la familia allí abajo, "no po- le digo yo, si es la pagina entera de tarea", "no si ya me canse" y se pone a hacer sus dibujos. (Marisol Moraga, HLLLE medio)

Cita 15:

Mamá: Sí [el niño duerme con nosotros] porque el otro día se nos cayó. ¿Hace cuánto hijo? ¿cómo tres meses? Se nos cayó de la cama y entonces el tenía miedo. (Matías Bravo, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 16:

Niño: Mami, ¿me podí [: puedes] ir a comprar unas papas?

Mamá: ¿papas? Está lloviendo afuera

Niño: Con Ketchup o mayo (mayonesa)

Mamá: A la suerte nomás

Niño: Si me sale kepchut me lo como. Si me sale mayo...

(La madre sale de la casa, afuera llueve, va a comprar papas fritas para el niño a un local que queda a una cuadra de la casa) (Benjamín Vidal, HLLLE alto)

Cita 17:

Ent: Ya, ¿y se queda dormida un poco viendo tele?

Mamá: Claro, hay que apagársela porque si no estaría viendo... en las vacaciones por ejemplo veía..., yo me quedo dormía ligerito, a las diez, diez y media a mi ya me da sueño, me quedo dormía y de repente yo despierto, voy a verla a ella, y ella viendo tele, eran como las doce, se había quedado viendo tele, así que le dije apaga la tele. Pero eso era en las vacaciones, pero en esta época, nueve y media yo creo que a más tardar se apaga la tele.

Ent: Claro, porque ahí ya lleva hartito rato viendo tele entonces.

Mamá: Sí po, si nosotros la bañamos y la acostamos, y ahí tiene que [ver tele], no la dejamos que se levante pa que no se refríe no más. (Sofía Piña, HLLLE alto)

Cita 18:

Mamá: ... el César (niño mayor) todavía está como muy fundido mío, muy regalón mío el grande. Como que todo lo consigue conmigo.

Ent: Ya. ¿Pero tú crees que eso lo hace llegar más lejos? ¿En el colegio? En otras cosas?

Mamá: O sea, los niños cuando uno les da hartito amor igual se concentran más. Yo pienso que tienen más seguridad. (Matías Bravo, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 19:

Mamá: ...hay gente que de repente que bueno la gente cuando lo ve de afuera tiene otra visión (no se entiende) "pucha es que tu lo teni muy mamón" yo les digo "¿por qué? si el tema es que yo soy muy de piel ... Entonces me gusta mucho el tema de andar abrazando el tema del beso" pero yo no creo que eso sea malo. Fíjate que cuando hay que poner algún, digamos algún límite eso no tengo ningún problema en colocar ni que el sea intocable por el tema de que no lo retes no eso no ocurre aquí, aquí si hay alguien que cometió un error tiene que asumir las consecuencias. (Germán Cárcamo, HLL E alto)

Cita 20:

Mamá: Estamos con las tareas ahí, porque para que le queden bonitas... yo estoy haciendo las tareas con él, lo estoy mirando pero haciendo otras cosas. Estoy acá en la cocina o limpiando. Entonces ahí voy a ver cómo vamos. No esa está fea se borra. Y ya, se borran las feas, le marco de nuevo y así. Pero sentarme así como al lado y ayudarlo, no tengo tiempo. Entonces siempre lo dejo ahí solo y después vamos corrigiendo. Y a veces cuando tengo tiempo sí lo hacemos los dos. (Pedro Oviedo, HLL E medio)

Cita 21:

Mamá (hablando con el hijo): "Escúchame. En el verano hay el sol y hace mucho calor y estamos con poquita ropa. En otoño empiezan a caerse las hojitas de color café. En invierno hace mucho frío y tenemos que andar muy abrigaos [: abrigados]. Y en primavera nacen las flores, y los pajaritos, y todos los árboles tienen hojitas nuevas". (Fabiola López, HLL E medio).

Cita 22:

Mamá: "Ya sé que no te gusta, pero las responsabilidades son las responsabilidades y si a usted le dijeron que tenía que hacer las tareas entonces tiene que hacerlas". (Germán Cárcamo, HLL E alto)

Cita 23:

Ent: ¿Les mandan hartas tareas?

Mamá: Sí, con recortes y cosas, vamos recortando y pegando. Pegue veinte círculos, pegando veinte círculos... más que nada lo hace uno, si igual es complicado, igual todavía son chicos, igual ayudan, pero... Uno cuando trabaja no tiene el tiempo lamentablemente para... hacer las tareas (Axel Castillo, HLL E bajo)

Cita 24:

Mamá: A la Jennifer le compré un silabario, con eso le apoyo las letras.

Ent: ¿Se la compraste acá en la feria?

Mamá: Sí.

Ent: El refuerzo que tú le haces. ¿Tú le refuerzas en general en la tarde?

Mamá: En las tardes, el fin de semana... Cuando no le mandan tarea le ayudo yo.... Y cuando le mandan tareas que se dedique a sus tareas. La ayudo así cinco minutos, media hora. Todos los días. O le hago dictados. Le digo una palabra y ella la escribe. Y las escribe sin ningún problema.

Ent: ¿Y eso se te ocurrió a ti hacerlo?

Mamá: A mí (Jennifer Gallardo, HLL E alto)

Cita 25:

Ent: *¿Y cómo crees tú que los niños aprenden a leer? ¿qué cosas son necesarias hacer para que un niño aprenda a leer?*

Mamá: *No sé, harta paciencia y le había comprado un silabario, con el Silabario como que no me costó tanto. (Victor Gutierrez, HLLÉ bajo)*

Cita 26:

Ent: *Cuando tú dices que le enseñabas a leer a tu otro hijo, a Aníbal, ¿Cómo le enseñabas a leer?, ¿Cómo lo apoyabas para que aprendiera a leer más rápido? ... tú dices que en una semana salía adelante.*

Mamá: *Eh, con el libro "Lea"... El silabario...diez minutos, veinte minutos todo los días y aprendieron.*

Ent: *¿Ibas página por página?*

Mamá: *Página por página y después le empezaba a pegar todas las hojas ahí en la muralla... se las pegaba y después en la noche cuando se iba a acostar él empezaba a repasar y ahí aprendió. (Diego Henríquez, HLLÉ medio)*

Cita 27:

Ent: *¿Con qué frecuencia tú tomas el Silabario y estás con Eduardo y todo eso?*

Mamá: *Eh... cuando recién estábamos enseñándole a leer era todos los días.*

El año pasado empezamos con el Silabario a fin de año. Y de ahí cuando ya salió de vacaciones como que lo dejamos de lado, y antes que volviera al colegio empezamos a retomar todo y ahí empezó él todos los días con el Silabario hasta que aprendiera a leer (Benjamín Vidal, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 28:

Mamá: *Acá en la casa de hecho él tiene un buen vocabulario en general fíjate y nos preocupamos bastante de que hable bien y que no diga garabatos, eso está prohibido y palabras feas tampoco. Como por ejemplo, no sé, "estúpido" o qué se yo "tonta, tonto" no, eso no, entonces ese tipo de vocabulario no. (Germán Cárcamo, HLLÉ alto)*

Cita 29:

Papá: *¿Cómo te fue en el colegio hoy día?*

Mamá: *Bien.*

Papá: *¿Qué hiciste?*

Niño: *Oh... tres poderes.*

Mamá: *Te está preguntado tu papá*

Niño: *Bien.*

Mamá: *¿Qué hiciste en el colegio?*

Niño: *Ehmm trabajamos con las fichas.*

Papá: *¿Y fichas de qué?*

Niño: *Una fichas que son como pelotitas.*

Niño: *Pucha papá... me perturbó.*

Mamá: *¿Eso no más hiciste?*

Niño: *Sí.*

(Benjamín Vidal, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 30:

Papá: ... al final no estoy muy como que haya sido el colegio el que haya influido, fue la televisión la que influyó, porque ... en pre-kinder habían niños que hablaban mejor y qué hice yo, como él tiene facilidad en inglés, un poco las películas en inglés, su DVD, y su música, entonces contratamos programación para niños... y bueno él eligió el canal, él te eligió solamente el Discovery Kids, que te enseñan manualidades, e incluso salía como el antiguo Plaza Sésamo, salía Pedro y Enrique, que desde chico te decían "cerca, lejos". Yo me acuerdo de esa tontera.

Mamá: Son programas como bien educativos. De colores, de triángulos.

Papá: Y ahí mejoró pero impresionantemente. Dijo es "maravilloso, excitante" y antes cuándo.

Mamá: "Es fabuloso mamá, esto es fabuloso". Está usando otro vocabulario.

Papá: Yo creí que iba a ser el kinder o el pre-kinder, pero no ha sido na.

Ent: Fue más la tele.

Papá: Claro. Y cuando llegó marzo la tía dijo "oye que llegó maduro, llegó un niño más maduro", la misma tía que tenía en pre-kinder (Pedro Oviedo, HLLLE medio)

Cita 31:

Niña: Sí, debemos elegir, es que necesitamos más internet. A ver, aquí hay más internet... lo voy a programar.

Ent: ¿Lo vas a programar?

Niña: Sí... está listo.

ENT: ¿Qué significa eso, que lo vas a programar?

Niña: Eso significa que lo voy a... a grabar un poquito.

Ent: Ya.

Niña: Eso significa... eso lo voy a grabar en otras copias.

Ent: Ya.

Niña: Ese, le voy a... luego le pone muchísima... le pone pendrive. (Sofía Piña, HLLLE alto)

Cita 32:

Niña: Mamá, pásame el cosito pa amasar. Eso.

Mamá: El uslero. ¿Cómo se llama?

Niña: Uslero.

Mamá: Ya, eso, el uslero. Cuidado. (Valentina Sepúlveda, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 33:

Papá: yo aprecio su forma de expresarse, la utilización de las palabras. De hecho utiliza palabras, que de repente no son de uso común y las comprende. Nosotros el otro día estábamos mirando una pintura de Van Gogh. Yo le decía cuál es el color que "predomina", y ella me decía el amarillo.

Ent: Te entendió la palabra predominar.

Papá: Absolutamente. A mí eso me sorprende. (Fernanda Carrizo, HLLLE alto)

Cita 34:

Niño: (Termina de hacer su tarea y mira a su mamá) ¿ Mamá, qué significa pendiente?

Mamá: (levantando los hombros)... Qué van a estar pendiente, jajaja, (se ríe con la abuela). (Axel Castillo, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 35:

Niño: ¿A dónde hay un alfiler?

Mamá: ¿Para qué quieres un alfiler? (the child then points towards the alfil)

Mamá: (riéndose) Eso es un alfil no un alfiler, nada que ver un alfil con un alfiler.

Niño: ¿Qué es un alfil?

Mamá: Es una pieza de ajedrez (José Arteaga, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 36:

Mamá: ...por ejemplo, me acuerdo del día que me conversó de su profesora. Se sentía super mal porque su hijo estaba enfermo, que le daba pena ver a la tía llorar por su hijito. Eso me venía conversando y no me acuerdo que más, varias cosas pero eso me acuerdo que me dijo... yo le pregunto ¿Cómo te fue? ¿Almorzaste? ¿Qué hiciste? Y por ejemplo hoy día venía con una estrellita y le pregunto ¿en qué te ganaste esa estrellita? y me dijo que había dicho las vocales, que la tía le había preguntado las vocales y por eso se había ganado la estrellita. (Martina Palma, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 37:

Ent: ¿Tú crees que Matías ha aprendido la mayoría de las palabras que sabe acá? O ¿dónde?

Mamá: Compartido. La televisión le ha ayudado harto encuentro yo. Los programas que le decía yo delante, esos donde enseñan. El Mister Maker, ¿cómo se llama el otro? ¿Disney? ¿cómo se llama?...donde enseñan, donde enseñan las figuras geométricas, todo eso.

Hermana del niño: Disney Chanel, Disney Planet, ese es el otro.

Ent: Y ¿te gusta más que vea esos canales que otros?

Mamá: Sí. A veces le gusta ver... el César pone el... ¿cómo se llama ese donde sale la Tierra?

Hermana del niño: National Geographic.

Mamá: Ese.Y se ponen a ver los volcanes, cómo se formó la Tierra, qué pasó con los dinosaurios. Cuando hablan de los dinosaurios se vuelve loco porque le gustan.

Le encantan esas películas, y los ve...Le gusta todo lo que es dinosaurio. Y sabe cuáles son carnívoros, herbívoros, todo eso.

Ent: ¿Y eso lo aprendió en general en los programas de televisión?

Mamá: Sí. (Matías Bravo, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 38:

Mamá: ¿Qué es lo que fuiste a ver?

Niña: Ese reclam del yogurt, ese con hormigas

Mamá: ¿de qué se trata?

Niña: De un hombre y su querida (La mamá y la hermana mayor se ríen porque la niña usó la palabra querida. (Anahis Navarro, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 39:

Mamá: ¿Vas a leer el Nuevo Testamento?

Niña: Sí, ese.

Mamá: ¿Lo leíste?

Niña: Todavía no.

Mamá: Todavía no lo lees. ¿Y qué estás [estás] esperando que no lo lees?

Niña: En algún momento lo voy a leer.

Mamá: ¿En algún momento?

Niña: Mmmhh (Jennifer Gallardo, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 40:

Mamá: Daniela, ¿te acordai qué toca hoy día de colación?

Hija: A ver, déjame ir a verlo, (va a la cocina a ver la minuta de colaciones que le mandan del colegio y que está pegada en el refrigerador, pero no sabe leer así que sube al segundo piso a preguntarle a su tía si sabe qué le toca). (Daniela Jara, HLLÉ medio)

Cita 41:

Ent: Y ¿con qué frecuencia tú le lees a la Emilia?

Mamá: ... le leo poco. Los chiquillos grandes más le leen. Por ser le gustan los cuentos y esas cosas, pero no tan muy, muy seguido... cuando más pide que le lean, ahí le leen. Dice "léeme un cuento", ya y ahí. Pero que nazca de nosotros que leamos, es bien poco. (Emilia Araya, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 42:

Ent.: ¿Usted lee con la Anais de vez en cuando o no?

Mamá: Poco.

Ent: Y cuando leen, ¿qué cosas leen? ¿Cosas que con que se topan en la calle, que ella le pregunte qué dice ahí?

Mamá: Ella aprendió los logotipos de la tele desde chica, tenía como dos años. Yo me pongo a leer y ella toma atención o me pide que le lea. Tengo que explicarle después.

Ent: ¿Toma por ejemplo un diario y ella pide que lea?

Mamá: Un diario, la Biblia, de repente una revista, hojas de esas que tiran, panfletos... todas esas cosas. (Anais Urbina, HLLÉ medio)

Cita 43:

Ent: ¿Tú le lees de repente a Bastián? ¿O pocazo?

Mamá: No. A mí me gusta leer, entonces él me pregunta "mamá ¿qué estás haciendo?", "Toy leyendo", "¿Por qué no me leí un pedacito?", me dice.

Ent: Ah, ¿Y qué te gusta leer a tí?

Mamá: Yo terminé de leer recién Crepúsculo y ahora voy a empezar con el otro libro. Entonces, él sabe que yo voy a leer el otro libro. Y después sabe que voy a leer Eclipse que es el que viene. Porque a mí me gusta leer. (Bastián Monardes, HLLÉ bajo)

Cita 44:

Ent: ¿Cómo crees tú que los niños aprenden a leer?

Mamá: Bueno, según la tía del colegio, dice que hay que empezar por las letras, por las letras que ya le mencioné. Primero esas.

Ent: La "n", la "m", la...

Mamá: Sí, que vayan leyendo con esas, y después ya, enseñarles las que vienen.

Ent: Ya, perfecto. O sea, primero una letra, después otra letra, y que las vayan juntando.

Mamá: Que las vayan juntado. (Jennifer Gallardo, HLLÉ alto)

Cita 45:

Mamá: *¿Qué dice ahí?*

Niño: *Nada po...escribí pelua [: peluda]*

Mamá: *Escribiste peluda.*

Niño: *No, aquí están las cosas de peluda, aquí están la anotación con ésta.*

Niño: *Los ojos.*

Mamá: *Ahí dibujaste los pelos.Los ojos, bien, ya perfecto. Ahora lo entendí.*

Niño: *Está así como si fuera una lista.*

Mamá: *Estás haciendo una lista como de las cosas que tiene.Ah, ya perfecto. Tiene peluda y tiene dos ojos, ya. ¿Qué más?*

Niño: *Cabeza*

Mamá: *Obvio*

Niño: *Patas*

Mamá: *Porque sino sería cuncuna... Sería una lombriz si no tuviera patas*

Niño: *Patas*

Mamá: *Ok.¿Qué más?*

Niño: *Telaraña*

Mamá: *¿Y qué más le falta?*

Niño: *Mmm... espera. Ehhh...*

Mamá: *¿Ahí tiene todo o le falta algo?*

Niño: *Le falta ango [: algo]*

Mamá: *¿Qué le falta?*

Niño: *Conmillos [:colmillos]*

Mamá: *Los colmillos. (José Arteaga, HLE alto)*

Cita 46:

Ent: *¿Y cómo crees que los niños aprenden a leer?*

Mamá: *No sé, supongo que siguen lo que la profesora les enseña, las juntan las leras y empiezan a ver. (Eduardo Escobar, HLE bajo)*

Cita 47:

Mamá: *Ahora que sabe escribir no hace tantos garabatos, pero antes sí. Antes chamullaba más. (Anais Urbina, HLE medio).*

Cita 48:

“Mi niño dice “Mira mami, mira, te hice una letra” pero son solo líneas. “Oh que lindo” le digo para no afectar su autoestima. (Victor Gutierrez, HLE bajo)

Cita 49:

Mamá: *El título, te he dicho no sé cuántas veces Axel, por qué no entiendes?. El título siempre va aquí “Yo Quiero Reír” en grande, te saltas como tres cuadros, y ahí escribes. Esto está malo “La Hormiga y el grano” ¿Por qué lo hacís aquí arriba? Tú tienes que poner el título aquí al medio, y ahí te saltas tres recuadros y lo haces acá. ¿Por qué siempre haces lo mismo?. Mira acá. Cuántas veces te he repetido lo mismo. Si yo fuera tu profesora*

te lo reviso y te lo anoto malo, y te pongo un dos, porque eso no se hace. (Axel Castillo, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 50:

Mamá: “Creo que Eduardo va a empezar a leer luego porque conoce todas las letras... creo que tiene que ver con la profesora porque le ha dado una buena enseñanza a los niños. Diego ya conoce las letras y ella es persistente con todas las letras... O sea mi Hermana me dice “no tiene otras letras que enseñar” claro porque la profesora manda y manda la misma tarea, o sea la misma letra, pero ella dice que lo hace para que los niños se aprendan la letra bien y ahí ella puede pasar a otra letra cuando los niños ya tienen esa letra amaestrada” (Eduardo Escobar, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 51:

Mamá: ...la manera en que dicen las letras ahora es diferente a mis tiempos...

Ent: Cómo era antes?

Mamá: Antes nosotros hacíamos “Em” y ahora decimos “mmm” ... así que es más fácil ahora... las profesoras en las reuniones han explicado esto... y dicen que esta es la manera en que están enseñando y que esta es la manera en que se hace ahora. (Anahis Navarro, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 52:

Ent: En tu experiencia ¿cómo aprenden a leer los niños??

Mamá: bueno aprenden... aprenden dependiendo de cómo les enseñe la profesora... La profesora les enseña una técnica y uno se tiene que adaptar a esa técnica. (Anahis Navarro, HLLLE bajo)

Cita 53:

Mamá: antes de salir de vacaciones se hizo una reunión, y ahí ella dijo más o menos, porque yo ya le había preguntado de antes, porque yo siempre me estaba como más adelantando, me dice, ya en la reunión yo voy a explicarle como pueden ustedes enseñarle a leer a los niños

Yo igual le preguntaba, porque yo tengo, una amiga de la niña, la mamá es profesora, es educadora del San Luis... entonces yo le preguntaba qué cosa podía ya estarle enseñando a la Sofía... qué están pasando allá, y estoy comparando siempre qué lo que le pasan, si veo que a la Sofía acá no le han enseñado cosas, por ejemplo los primeros meses estaban igual sumamente atrasados acá po, entonces yo le preguntaba a ella, qué le estaban pasando y yo le pasaba a ella po, Le empezaba a enseñar, por ejemplo yo le compré el libro, este libro, cómo se llama, Silabario. Igual le pregunté a la tía qué letra le estaban enseñando a ella. Entonces ella me dijo que estaban enseñándole la m con la a, entonces yo le enseño que me lea estas partes.

Ent: O sea tu averiguas qué le están enseñando, y tu le vas reforzando.

Mamá: Voy reforzando, claro. (Sofía Piña, HLLLE alto)

Cita 54:

Mamá: ...como la tía empezó a enseñarle a leer, porque yo tampoco quise adelantarlo mucho, porque yo dije se va a aburrir en la escuela... Porque es típico los que saben mucho

se aburren, no le encuentran interés a lo que les están enseñando, entonces yo trato de ir como va la tía, voy yo, yo no voy adelantándole nada, sino que de repente él pregunta, le respondo, le enseño. (Martín Contreras, HLLLE alto)

Cita 55:

Mamá: no puedo tampoco complicar mucho a la Marisol metiéndole tantas cosas, porque se supone que ella tiene que esperar el colegio o a veces digo a lo mejor estoy cometiendo el error de que si debería estarla explotando mas. Y así, porque cuando llego con la “m”, yo trate de ir preparándola con la “p”, y ella no, no, pero en el colegio ya se lo habló la tía, ella llego hablando al tiro de la “p” a la casa. (Marisol Moraga, HLLLE medio)

Cita 56:

Ent: ¿tú sientes que Benjamín tiene habilidades para la lectura por ejemplo? Porque aprendió a leer antes.

Mamá: Sí, de hecho a mi la tía, la misma tía del colegio, me dijo que yo no debería haberle enseñado a leer al Eduardo todavía... porque dijo que yo lo había apurado mucho y él iba a ir más adelantado que los otros niños. Entonces cuando ella estuviera enseñándole a los niños el Eduardo iba a quedar ahí como volando porque él ya sabía. (Benjamín Vidal, HLLLE alto)

Cita 57:

Mamá: Si el Papá no es preocupado por el niño, si lo deja estar, yo creo que el niño igual no va a querer hacer tareas, estudiar, le va a dar lo mismo. Porque yo a la Jennifer, la trato de ayudarla en lo que más puedo. Una hora, media hora la, estoy con ella viendo las tareas. O cuando en el colegio le mandan las tareas, estar siempre sentada al lado de ella, no dejarla sola ningún rato. (Jennifer Gallardo, HLLLE alto)

Cita 58:

Ent: ¿Y donde crees que la Marisol aprende la mayoría de las palabras o de las letras que conoce?

Mamá: Adonde yo estudio con la Ana [hermana mayor]. Ella siempre esta ahí como atenta. Por ser el año pasado teníamos que hacer una disertación, y ella se la sabía toda... yo le preguntaba y ella me contestaba de allá. Ella estaba atenta y así va escuchando y va tomándole sentido a las cosas... (Marisol Moraga, HLLLE medio)

Cita 59:

Ent: Dices que Jennifer habla mucho, con muchas palabras, ¿las palabras que ocupa la Jennifer cuando habla, dónde cree que las aprende?

Mamá: Bueno, todo lo que le digo a usted de letras en el colegio porque allá van pasando la “m”, la “i”, la “q”, la “s”. El resto se lo he enseñado todo yo. Si salimos, me pregunta “¿Qué dice ahí?”, yo la hago leer... Me pregunta...”

Ent: ¿Y usted le dice que es lo que dice ahí?

Mamá: No, yo le pregunto qué es lo que dice, junta las letras, y las junta y al final las lee. (Jennifer Gallardo, HLLLE alto)

Cita 60:

Papá: la pensábamos cambiar [de colegio] porque decíamos “pucha, mejor meterla al tiro a un colegio que pueda ser particular o subvencionado particular para que sea un poquito más arriba la enseñanza”, pero fíjate que no nos ha causado mala impresión, todo lo contrario, bien preocupados, le mandan tarea todos los días, las tías excelentes... (Laura Ferrer, HLLLE alto)

Cita 61:

Cuidador (vecina): Bueno ¿y te mandaron tareas?

Niño: mmm... no.

Vecina: ¿No te mandaron ninguna tarea?

Niño: No

Vecina: Y entonces ¿cómo vas a aprender a leer si no te mandan tarea?

Niño: No sé. (Diego Henríquez, HLLLE medio)

Cita 62:

Ent: Las personas tenemos diferentes creencias sobre la inteligencia, algunos creen que hay niños que nacen más inteligentes que otros y otros piensan que depende más de cómo uno los estimule ¿qué crees tú?

Mamá: Sí, [depende más de uno] porque si uno está preocupado de él, de las tareas de él, eso es de uno.

Ent: ¿qué cosas que tú has hecho en la casa crees que han hecho que tu hijo Eduardo sea tan inteligente?

Mamá: Eh... por ser, preocuparme de sus cosas, de enseñarle. Porque él de que fue al jardín, yo siempre preocupada de sus cuaderno, sus cuadernos limpios, sus tareas siempre, el tiene que hacer sus tareas y después él puede seguir jugando. (Benjamín Vidal, HLLLE alto)

Cita 63:

Mamá: Por eso le digo yo, yo le ayudo en todo, le paso los diarios, y le digo nómbrame todas las palabras con q, las q, yo prefiero que las reconozca él, que él sepa lo que son, prefiero eso a que recorte... porque eso igual lo va a aprender después. En eso lo ayudo, yo recorto, no importa, pero que él me busque todas las palabras.

Ent: Ya, o sea te interesa que reconozca las letras.

Mamá: Claro sí, eso es lo importante, que él aprenda a leer, a saber lo que está haciendo, porque un recorte, bueno igual es importante, pero lo va a aprender. (Pablo Ortíz, HLLLE medio)

Cita 64:

Mamá: Ahí él aprende esas palabras, “mamá estoy incomodo me quiero acomodar”, porque escucha esas palabras...

Niño: La tijera, eso... la voy a buscar, ah, esa es de metal.

Mamá: “de metal”, las palabras de dónde las saca, yo no tengo ese vocabulario tan... A veces me dice, “mamá tú le echaste muchos vegetales a mi comida”.

Niño: No me gustan los vegetales.

Mamá: Tiene unas palabras, es que él ve el puro Discovery Kids, es que yo le tengo prohibido lo otro. (Pablo Ortiz, HLLLE medio)

Cita 65:

Ent: ¿qué tipo de cosas puede hacer para afectar la inteligencia y estimularlo más?

Mamá: Canciones... no sé, los niños chicos se fijan harto de la tele, videos. El otro día yo le compré al Vicente videos de "Cantando yo aprendo a hablar". Porque ahí a ellos les van contando historias, palabras que a ellos les sirven para pronunciar, el abecedario, cosas así. (Vicente Garrido, HLLLE medio)

Cita 66:

Ent: ¿qué tan seguido dirías que tú lees con Pablo?, ¿o en general no lees tanto?

Mamá: Cuando compramos el diario y ahora que como él está aprendiendo a leer se lee más... le paso repaso del tema, por ejemplo "mira, ¿qué dice ahí?"... y él va leyendo... él va juntando y me lee. (Pablo Aguirre, HLLLE alto)

Cita 67:

Ent: Dónde cree usted que la Fabiola ha aprendido la mayoría de las palabras que ocupa al hablar, o la mayoría de las letras que conoce?

Tía del niño: Con los cuentos que le lee su mamá... Por decirle, yo no le leía cuentos a mi hijo. Y yo desde al año pasado que le estoy leyendo cuentos y me he fijado que también pasa lo mismo. Él no era tan hablador, y ahora se soltó.

Ent: Ah, se soltó. ¿Y repite palabras?

Tía: Palabras, que ha escuchado de los mismos cuentos. (Fabiola López, HLLLE medio)

APPENDIX L. LIST OF RARE WORDS OR CONCEPTS USED BY THE CAREGIVER OR CHILD OR ANOTHER FAMILY MEMBER DURING THE HOME OBSERVATIONS

Rare word/concept	English translation	Rare word/concept	English translation
abandonar	to abandon	heno	hay
acceder	to gain access to	imaginación	imagination
aceptar operación	to accept a transaction	incómodo	uncomfortable
acomodar	to accommodate	japonés	japanese
activo mi cuenta	I activate my account	karaoke	karaoke
agotador	exhausting	koala	koala bear
albóndigas picantes	spicy meatballs	kuchen	kuchen (German-style cake)
alfil	bishop (chess)	laser	laser
ámbito	scope	legendario	legendary
anfitrión	hostess	light	light
apuesta	bet	lodo	mire, sludge
arcoíris	rainbow	maligno	malevolent
Biblia	Bible	maltrato	mistreatment
botín	booty	maravilloso	marvellous
branquias	gills	marsupial	marsupial
cacahuete	peanut	mentalidad	mentality
calabaza	pumpkin	metal	metal/brass
calmadamente	calmly	motricidad	mobility (motor functions)
cesped	lawn (grass)	muelle	spring
chip	chip (computer)	naranja parlante	speaking orange
círculo	circle	obeso	obese
Claro de Luna de Beethoven	Beethoven's Clair de Lune	objección	objection
código de activación	activation code	objeto extra	extra object
combina	combines	oportunidad	opportunity
comentar	to comment on	paliza	beating/thrashing
complemento	accessory	pendrive	pen drive
conceptos	concepts	pequeñito	very little
conducción	conduction	permanente	permanent
consonantes	consonants	prematuramente	prematurely
copa de arbol	crown of a tree	perturbar	disturb
correr ningún riesgo	to run no risks	polluelos	chicks
cultura	culture	predomina	predominates
demostraré	I will demonstrate	programación	programming
derritió	it melted	programar	programme
desarrollo psicosocial	psychological development	psicomotriz	psychomotor
desespera	despair	querido	dear
deshacerme de uno	to get rid of one	recompensa	reward
dinero	money	retaguardia	rearguard
distinguir	to distinguish	rombo	rhombus
electrocutar	to electrocute	sacrificada	sacrificed/demanding
emocionar	to be moved	significa	signifies
enemigo	enemy	sonata	sonata
engañé	I deceived	subtitularlo a español	subtitle it in Spanish
ensayar	to try out	superior	superior
episodio	episode	título	title
esclavos	slaves	transferir	transfer
específicamente	specifically	transpiras	you sweat
estatura	stature	trazos	stroke
estriban	they are based on	triángulo	triangle
excitante	exciting	triple	triple
exclusivo	exclusive	truculentas	gruesome
experiencia	experience	truenos	claps of thunder
expresarse	to express oneself	uslero	rolling pin
extraño	strange	utilización	utilisation
extraterrestre	extraterrestrial	vagina	vagina
fabuloso	fabulous	vegetales	vegetables
fanática	fanatic	vehículo	vehicle
figuras geométricas	geometric shapes	versión regular	standard version
frijoles	beans	violencia	violence
genial	brilliant	vocales	vowels
gracioso	amusing	volvamos a la normalidad	let's go back to normal

APPENDIX M: A TYPICAL MORNING OR AFTERNOON IN THESE CHILEAN LOW SES PRESCHOOLERS' HOMES

All of the mothers in the sample had very busy lives. For example, four or five of the mothers worked full time: they left home every day at around 06:00, took the bus or underground for nearly an hour to get to work, left work at around 18:30 and travelled home, picking the child up on the way from a neighbour or grandmother or another relative's home at around 20:00 (who had taken care of the child while the mother was at work). Once home, they would prepare and have the evening meal or *once*, after which the mother would do all the household chores, help the child with their homework and then put them to bed. Other mothers who did not work or had more informal jobs and were, in general, with their preschooler while they were not at school, also seemed to have quite a handful on their plates with all the household chores, various errands and extended family members' demands.

An initial look at these children's daily home routines revealed several commonalities, which will be described here so that the reader can get an impression of the rhythm and main activities that took place on a typical day in the homes studied.

Some of the children attended the morning shift at kindergarten (09:00-12:45) while others attended the afternoon shift (14:00-17:45). The home activities which were observed were the same whether the child went to preschool in the morning or the afternoon. Therefore, for the sake of brevity, the following description of the typical home activities of preschoolers in the sample can serve as an example of both groups of preschoolers.

Asked what the child did during the mornings or afternoons at home, the mothers typically mentioned: resting, eating a snack, watching TV, doing homework or reinforcing letter learning, preparing their backpacks for school and playing in the home by themselves or with other siblings, relatives or neighbours. In 18 (or 60%) of the homes there was a computer and in those homes mothers also commented that the child spent home time playing on the computer. With a few exceptions, to be discussed later on, most of the homes in the sample had no pre-established routine and/or rules regarding the order or amount of time dedicated to their different activities, so children sometimes had snacks, watched TV or did homework at different times on different days. For example, most of the children observed had snacks in different parts of the home (such as their beds, the main living room, outdoors, etc.). Normally the mother

would go to where the child was in the home, to ask if he or she wanted something to eat, giving different options, and then returning with the snack.

Even during established mealtimes such as "*la once*" time it appeared that, while in some households the target child was expected to participate, in general, they would move around or stay on the couch watching TV and eating something while the adults talked at the table.

The children who were at home in the morning (and went to kindergarten in the afternoon) would normally wake up between 09:30 and 10:00. They often remained in bed for a while watching TV, having milk and perhaps some bread with a topping. Then they got up and dressed, generally with some help from the caregiver. Otherwise they got up and started playing remaining in their pyjamas until later on. In most of the homes where the father lived, at the time the child woke up, he had already left for work, as had older siblings who went to school, or other extended family members who worked and who, in many cases, lived in different rooms or parts of the home.

Therefore, in the morning, the preschooler was mainly with the main caregiver (mostly the mother) and perhaps with another younger sibling. Many parents encouraged their child to remain in bed after waking up, partly because of the cold weather (the observations for this study were taken in the middle of the winter) and also because, as the mothers reported, having the child in bed gave them more time to do other household chores without having to worry about what the child might be doing. After getting out of bed, some of the children were observed playing with siblings, others played on the computer or watched TV. Some of the children were also observed doing their homework at this time. In some homes children did their homework with their mothers helping sitting alongside them while in others they did their homework by themselves with occasional checking by, comments and/or encouragement from the mother. In a few homes where no homework had been sent home from school the caregivers spent some time with the child reinforcing the letters that the child had learnt at school, typically with the guidance of a *Silabario* (phonics letter and word book).

In a few homes, the child was accompanied by the researcher while walking with the mother to a nearby business, such as a local bazaar or local street market where they bought a couple of things needed at home and generally a small snack for the child (for example, some cookies or crisps). These were always short trips (rarely more than two blocks away). Some mothers reported that, on occasions, they took the child with them to more distant places, for example to downtown Santiago to buy certain things needed in the household. Likewise, when another sibling was ill and had to be taken to the local

public health centre the mother reported sometimes taking the preschooler with her. The main reason given by mothers for this was that they had no one to leave the child with but sometimes also because the child insisted on coming or the mother preferred to have the child's company.

Mothers of children who went to school in the afternoon typically served the child lunch at around 12:00. Children normally ate their lunch at the table in the main living space. Some children watched TV while having lunch. Normally their mothers did household chores or prepared food in the kitchen while the children ate lunch. After lunch the mother normally helped the child prepare for school, which meant helping the child to wash their face, hands and teeth. Most of the caregivers, specifically those with preschool girls, would carefully prepare the girl for school, putting on cologne and taking their time to brush the girl's hair, put it in ponytails or plaiting it and dressing the girl meticulously. They then prepared the child's backpack packing it with a snack for recess and, if necessary, gym uniforms. At this point some of the mothers checked the school memo (which they had normally stuck on the fridge door), which set out a suggested snack for each day of the week.

The schools attended by the preschoolers in the sample were normally located within walking distance of the home and most of the children in the sample walked to school with their caregiver.

Although the number and type of literacy resources available in the homes observed varied, all of the children in the sample had access to: environmental print in the streets to and from the school and in the home (for example, a poster with a prayer stuck on a wall, the labels of products used in the home, print on bedcovers or other home furnishings, occasionally a name and phone number written on the wall and a memo from school stuck on the fridge); an ABC book (the *Silabario*); a school notebook with homework; picture books to colour in which sometimes had a short text too (but normally very short), cable TV, and children's DVDs. Also, around 60% of the homes had a computer and in those cases the child also had access to print through video games or through the Internet. Children with elder siblings also sometimes had access to their siblings' books and school textbooks. In some homes the researcher also saw newspapers, magazines, phone books and, in a couple of homes, books for adults and children's books were also seen.

At the end of the school day, the caregiver normally picked the child up. They walked home together, arriving home at around 18:00 or 18:15. Sometimes on the way home the caregiver and the child would stop off to get sweets, an ice cream or a snack. The

mothers reported that, after arriving home, the child normally relaxed, sometimes had some milk and bread or cookies and watched TV or played video games or played with siblings or toys. Afterwards, in those homes in which the child had not done their homework in the morning, the child would sit down with or without the mother to do this. Typically, the homework took between 15 to 60 minutes to complete and it was normally done at the dining room table located in the main living space.

After the homework was finished, the mother prepared the living/dining room table for "*la once*" (the Chilean term for an early dinner or late teatime gathering which is the final meal of the day). In most of the homes observed, this meal was the main time of the day during which the family gathered together. Generally it took place when the older members of the family got home from work (at around 19:00 or 19:30). During *la once* the families would sit together around the main table, which was invariably in the living room space, which is where the television, DVDs, music system and large couch were also located. Most family members had a warm drink such as tea or coffee as well as bread with different toppings such as butter and, in some cases, slices of cheese or ham or marmalade or avocado. The TV was often on during this time, but it was not normally a constant focus of attention. Some of the preschoolers in the sample were asked to sit down at the table with their parents while others circulated and ate bread or had milk on the couch nearby listening, or played games on a cell phone or computer or watched the TV.

At the table family members normally commented on things that had happened during the day. Most of the conversations were between the adults but in several of the homes in which the observation included this meal, the child was asked about their day at school by the father. Also on a couple of occasions, the mother asked the child to tell the father about something that had happened during the day.

Bedtime time varied between the households in the sample and also varied for each child within each household but children typically went to bed between 20:00 and 23:00pm. Even though all of the children in the sample had a bed for themselves, at least half of them slept in their parents' bed. When in bed these preschoolers normally watched a bit of TV and then fell asleep.