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The effect of a structured story reading intervention, story retelling and higher order thinking for English language and literacy acquisition

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of structured story reading intervention, *S*tory re*T*elling and higher order thinking for *E*nglish *L*anguage and *L*iteracy *A*cquisition (STELLA), delivered to 38 Hispanic English language learners (ELL) placed in an enhanced transitional bilingual programme over 2 years from first to second grade as compared with 34 control students placed in a typical practice transitional bilingual programme during the same time period. Both treatment and comparison ELL students' retellings of two stories in Spanish and English were measured by five story elements. Findings were that (a) students receiving intervention outperformed their comparison peers in all five story elements in English and Spanish of both stories; (b) students showed stronger ability in their native language in four of five story elements; and (c) students performed at a higher level in the narrative-informational story than a narrative story in both languages. Educational implications are discussed.

School-aged children speaking a language other than English in the United States increased rapidly between 1979 and 2007, from 3.8 to 10.6 million (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2007), and 79% of those students were Spanish speakers and were considered to be English language learners (ELLs) (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2008a). With such large numbers of Spanish-speaking ELLs, educators face challenges in addressing such students' academic requirements (Carlo et al., 2004). Yet, according to Calderón et al. (2005), the educational system has not prepared adequately for those challenges.

The lack of preparedness may be observed through test data with an English reading achievement gap between white and Hispanic students in 2005 based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data (NCES, 2005), and 2 years later, data showed that Hispanics remained behind their white counterparts academically (NCES, 2007). Not only has it been stated that this academic gap is due to educators'

underpreparedness, but also, according to Goldenberg (2008), a possible cause of academic underachievement or the academic gap could be a consequence of the lack of English language proficiency or lack of content knowledge and skills. Even 15 years ago, such ELL academic concerns were noted by Kame'enui, Adams and Lyon (1996) related to learning to read, specifically in the area of vocabulary, comprehension skills and knowledge of target language structures. Indeed, many ELLs have experienced difficulties in academic achievement and more specifically in learning to read. For younger ELLs, in particular, oral language proficiency is of vital importance to academic achievement, because it is associated with subsequent English literacy skills, which in turn account for school success (August & Shanahan, 2006).

To address ELLs' academic achievement concerns, Calderón et al. (2005) recommended increasing English vocabulary to improve ELLs' reading comprehension in English. In addition to vocabulary development, listening and reading comprehension, defined as making meaning from read or written text (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000), are considered critical for academic success (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). Another recommendation related to developing ELLs' English academic achievement made by Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes and Kwok (2008) was that ELLs be taught using explicit and systematic English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction including structured story retell through interactive story reading which provides modelling of language structure, intonation and prosody. Further, the Texas Reading Initiative (2002, p. 6) stated that:

> listening to and talking about books on a regular basis provides children with a demonstration of the benefits and pleasures of reading. Story reading introduces children to new words, new sentences, new places, and new ideas.

More specifically, story reading has been found to increase both new vocabulary and concept development (Baker, Simmons & Kameenui, 1995; Ewers & Brownson, 1999; NICHHD, 2000), comprehension and narrative ability among ELL students (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004).

Therefore, the overarching goal of our study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a 2-year structured story reading intervention, titled, '*S*tory re*T*elling and higher order thinking for *E*nglish *L*iteracy and *L*anguage *A*cquisition' (STELLA), a systematically developed amalgam of story reading, retelling, instructional strategies, vocabulary instruction, story grammar, listening and use of higher-level questions and question generation (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quirós, Mathes & Rodríguez, 2004; Irby, Quirós, Lara-Alecio, Rodriguez & Mathes, 2009) on bilingual second graders' oral language proficiency in English, their second language (L2) and Spanish, their first language (L1), as measured by story grammar elements within a story retell format (see the Method section for detailed description of STELLA). Although the STELLA intervention was delivered in English, we decided to measure the effect of STELLA in both languages because (a) researchers have supported the reciprocal language learning process, that is, the knowledge of L1 assists L2 acquisition, and this L2 acquisition process facilitates subsequent L1 development (August, 2003; Cummins, 1989; Vaughn et al., 2006); and (b) the student participants in our study had Home Language Surveys indicating Spanish was the primary language spoken in the home. More specifically related to the overarching goal of the study, we were interested in determining if the STELLA intervention produced a positive effect on treatment (enhanced transitional bilingual education) students' oracy in the two languages (i.e. English and Spanish) and for two story types (i.e. narrative and narrative informational).

Review of related literature

Oral language is the most important skill a child needs to acquire literacy (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). As many researchers have suggested, the level of L2 oral communicative competence functions as a precursor to subsequent literacy development (Smith & Ellis, 2003; Snow, 1983), and a higher level of academic oral language proficiency appears to be more associated with reading achievement in English (Genesee, 1999; Riches & Genesee, 2006). There are three significant factors of oracy in English: vocabulary, grammar and listening comprehension (August, 2003).

Vocabulary and listening comprehension will be the focus of this paper through story retelling and story grammar structures. Children's vocabulary knowledge plays a decisive role in their oral communication and reading comprehension. Gottlieb (2006) suggested that successful oral communication in academic settings is dependent on aural proficiency. Therefore, for the purposes of our study, both vocabulary and listening were considered in combination as the assessment of oral language should include measures of auditory comprehension (NICHHD, 2005).

According to Ovando and Collier (1998), children subconsciously acquire oral language from birth to age 5, and progressively acquire phonology, vocabulary, grammar, semantics and pragmatics in their L1. If a child is deprived of an environment that promotes literacy, the child could very well show reading problems that could be prevented (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Therefore, it has been recommended that oral language development be emphasised in early grades by English learning programmes, until students achieve a minimum level of proficiency (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). The emphasis in oral language development is a priority, because it increases listening and speaking vocabulary that later will transfer, through phonemic direct instruction, into reading and writing vocabulary, increased language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge, and subsequently, better comprehension (Miller et al., 2006; Reese, Garnier, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2000). Our intervention targeted the expressive and receptive oral language development among ELLs over time.

Vocabulary development and story reading

The NICHHD (2000) examined many studies following a set of criteria to determine the best method to teach vocabulary. It was determined that vocabulary instruction improves comprehension as long as the methods are appropriate to the age and reading ability of the student. Vocabulary should be introduced in many different ways, but to be effective, especially with ELLs, it should be introduced through direct instruction (Kamil, 2004).

A pedagogical tool that has been shown to benefit vocabulary growth is repeated story reading. Vocabulary can be developed during story reading in a form of interactive, text-related dialogue (Calderón et al., 2005); that is, it can be developed through incidental instruction when appropriate, and scaffolded with visuals. In addition, Calderón and colleagues determined that providing multiple exposures to the words introduced previously in subsequent storybook readings allows for rapid recognition and a better understanding of the story, and during those subsequent readings, words can be discussed during story reading in an interactive way making learning meaningful. Educators have agreed on the benefit of teacher repeated read-aloud practice and its impact on vocabulary development, listening and reading comprehension, and knowledge of syntax of primary and second language learning (Beck & McKeown, 1991; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola & Vaughn, 2004).

Listening comprehension and story reading and retelling

With frequent story reading by the teacher, students are exposed to language structure, fluency, prosody and listening strategies (Isbell et al., 2004). Specifically, related to listening strategies affiliated with the story reading, it has been noted that ELL students who have good listening comprehension use an array of strategies to assist them in successfully recalling the information (Murphy, 1985). For second language learners, listening comprehension is a complex process as well as an active one as determined by Vandergrift's (1999) work, which was focused on the second language of French. Vandergrift indicated that listeners must process information as it comes to them without retracing the information or looking ahead and must deal with rate of delivery. Such listeners must discriminate phonemes, recognise and know the meaning of words, and understand the grammatical structure of the target language. As Vandergrift stated, 'the listener has to interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered' (p. 168) and base interpretation of the information acquired on a personal sociocultural context.

As suggested by NCELA (1997), one strategy for listening comprehension which provides ELLs additional scaffolding as they acquire the second language is meaningful repetition. It was stated that 'Repetition and paraphrase can be used to reinforce concepts and provide a rich environment for language acquisition' (NCELA, 1997, p. 17). As children repeatedly listen to the same story, they increase their vocabulary knowledge and content in ways that will allow them to connect with the next story they hear (Herrell & Jordan, 2008; Webb, 2007). For the purpose of our study, repetition is rereading of the same storybook providing multiple exposures of vocabulary and text.

Another strategy to facilitate listening comprehension is a post-listening activity, such as story retelling, used to assess story comprehension. For ELLs, story retelling has been found to offer students the opportunity to orally reconstruct the story (Snow, 2002), which is a challenging process for ELLs. For non-ELLs, this strategy was determined to provide students with a scaffold or a model of the language that they can imitate (Isbell et al., 2004), and it has been found to play an important role in the process of oral or writing text reconstruction for non-ELLs (Gambrell, Koskinene & Kapinus, 1991; Goodman, 2001).

Further, comprehension relies on connecting to general background knowledge, previously learned vocabulary, concepts and principles that tie words together, and oral discourse structures for telling stories, all of which are stored in memory (Vandergrift, 2007). A specific strategy to increase listening comprehension that can be taught is to make the listener aware of connections between prior knowledge and story read orally (Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert & Goetz, 1977; Sjogren & Timpson, 1979). According to the Merriam dictionary, memory is the process of reproducing or recalling what was learned and retained or the store of things learned and retained evidenced by recall. The process of recalling aural information (receptive vocabulary) in L2 learners at early stages is yet to be studied. Listening comprehension, as a component part of oral language proficiency, is dependent on factors including repeated exposure to L2, that is, the opportunity for the repetition of aural input or to revisit text for comprehension, and access to prior knowledge stored in long-term memory (NICHHD, 2000; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007).

Story retelling is defined as post-reading and post-listening recalls used to express what was learned or remembered (Morrow, 1996). Certainly, active listening engagement is required in story retelling activities, which includes the reading of a story, discussing it in a reading group and summarising the main points with a partner or a small group. Additionally, Saenz, Fuchs and Fuchs (2005) defined story retelling as a component of an

intervention of peer-assisted instruction for ELLs, in which a peer retells parts of the story in paired reading teams. Because retelling requires organisation of thoughts (Goodman, 2001; Pappas & Pettegrew, 1991), it provides the teacher valuable information regarding students' oral composition and use of wording and strategies to organise the text in an oral reconstruction process, and therefore, has been noted to be preferred over other comprehension-like assessment formats among mainstream students (Roberts, Good & Corcoran, 2005). Story retelling not only builds story comprehension, but also it demonstrates what the listener or reader remembers and understands (Gibson, Gold & Sgouros, 2003). During the discussion of the story content, the teacher acts as the facilitator of students' oral expression; in retelling the story or content from the text, students are not only demonstrating their skill in comprehension, but also using oral language to express and elaborate upon their ideas and thoughts. Hence, story retelling is important to the language development for ELLs (Anderson & Roit, 1998; Au, 1993).

To assess progress in listening and reading comprehension either during or after story reading, story grammar can be used to instruct students on the general structure of stories and on how they can ask important questions about the stories heard or read (Merritt & Liles, 1989). Dimino, Taylor and Gersten (1995) found that when they worked with students with learning disabilities, story grammar provided the students with a framework to learn about the structure of stories and how to ask important questions. According to Dimino and colleagues, all stories follow a general underlying structure. This structure is made up of elements such as setting (i.e. time and place where the story happened), characters, problem or plot, solution and theme and such pattern appears to be consistent across cultures. Using story grammar as a guide and assessment tool to identify the story elements also has proven to be beneficial and effective in helping teachers evaluate what their ELLs have retained during story telling time in L2 (Fiestas & Peña, 2004). Moreover, according to Heilmann et al. (2008), story grammar is a common assessment procedure used to overcome biases present in tests not developed for native Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Considerations of story reading and story retelling for ELLs

The review of literature on story reading and story retelling has revealed several limitations. First, not only is published research scarce as it relates to story reading with ELLs, but also, it is difficult to find studies published related to story retelling with ELLs. Schneider and Dubé (1996) emphasised the need for further investigation on the impact of the way a story is presented, including story reading, picture only and a combination of picture and story reading. Unfortunately, the use and benefit of story retelling and story grammar in ELLs has not been extensively studied, especially in longitudinal research, and few studies have been conducted measuring oral language, and particularly listening comprehension, in populations of ELLs whose L1 is Spanish, and little is known about the conditions under which this population acquires English (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006; Vandergrift, 2010). Considering that Hispanics represent the fastest growing population in elementary and secondary schools in this nation (NCELA, 2006), English oral language development and reading research on this population is vital to best determine such conditions conducive for their English language acquisition. We report on one such condition, STELLA.

Second, story retelling has been recognised as an assessment tool effective to measure comprehension in students with learning disabilities (Alexander, 1985; Gardill & Jitendra, 1999; Hansen, 1978; Wright & Newhoff, 2001). It has also been determined to

be effective in monitoring monolingual reading fluency and comprehension (Irwin & Mitchell, 1983; Roberts et al., 2005), but few studies (Calderón, Hertz-Lazarowitz & Slavin, 1998; Slavin & Madden, 2001) have been conducted on the use of retelling to monitor listening or reading comprehension with ELLs who are considered at risk of falling behind native English speakers.

Third, there have been limited empirical studies on listening and reading comprehension assessments in two languages among ELLs who encountered the challenge of learning a new language at the same time as meeting academic standards; instead, there have been numerous studies in the area of listening and reading comprehension conducted among mainstream students (e.g. Price, Roberts & Jackson, 2006; Schoenbrodt, Kerins & Gesell, 2003) and learning-disabled students (e.g. Hayward, Gillam & Lien, 2007; Humphries, Cardy, Worling & Peets, 2004; Seung & Chapman, 2003; Skarakis-Doyle, Dempsey & Lee, 2008). Therefore, longitudinal research addressing the effect of story reading and story retelling on ELLs' oracy in both languages is much desired to fill in such a research gap.

Research questions

We sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by group (i.e. treatment vs comparison)?
2. Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by language (i.e. English vs Spanish)?
3. Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by story genre (i.e. narrative vs narrative-informational)?
4. Is there an interaction effect among group, language and story for ELLs' oral language proficiency?

Method

Context and design

Our study is part of a 5-year (from kindergarten to third grade) longitudinal field-based research project, whose main purpose was to identify best practices that are most effective in helping native Spanish-speaking children to acquire English language and literacy skills in an urban school district in Southeast Texas. The majority of the student population in the district in which the study took place is from low-socioeconomic status (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2007) qualifying for free lunch.

The school district follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Spanish Language Arts and English as Second Language (ESL). The TEKS are the K-12 state curriculum guidelines that establish the skills and concepts that a student is expected to learn. A student expectation for comprehension in second grade is as follows:

> 128.3 Spanish Language Arts Grade 2 (2.9) Reading/Comprehension. The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently. The following expectations apply to the second language learner at his/her level of proficiency in English. The student is expected to: (A) use prior knowledge to anticipate meaning and make sense of texts (K-3); (C) retell or act out

> the order of important events in stories (K-3); (G) identify similarities and differences across texts such as in topics, characters, and problems (1-2). Additionally, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skill for second grade states: (I) represent text information in different ways including story maps, graphs, and charts (TEA, 2001, ch. 128).

In the larger longitudinal research project, a school was randomly selected and assigned to either treatment or control condition. Therefore, schools were located distant from each other, and there was no overlapping practice between treatment and control classrooms on the same campus to avoid contamination of the intervention. Our current substudy randomly selected students (see the following section on student participants) from this larger project and followed them from first to second grade.

Student participants

The study participants were all identified by state criteria as limited English proficient (LEP); they all had a Home Language Survey at the time of admission indicating Spanish as the primary language spoken at home. For the intent of our study, a power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007) was conducted based on an α of .05, power of .80 and effect size of .3, resulting in a random sample of 70 students. To account for attrition, 75 second-grade students were randomly selected from the larger project, with 40 students in treatment and 35 in comparison group in the school year of 2007–2008. Two students withdrew from the project, one from the treatment group and one from the comparison group. A third student from the treatment group had an identified disability and the inclusion of this student would bias the results because all students in the project were considered mainstream ELLs with no disability. This resulted in a total sample of 72 second-grade students (38 in treatment and 34 in control) enrolled in either an enhanced or control version of a transitional bilingual education programme. There were 22 male and 16 female students in the treatment group, and 20 male and 14 female students in the control group. The mean age of the final sample at the end of second grade was 8.44 years ($SD = .30$) for the treatment group, and 8.34 years ($SD = .34$) for the control group. These same students were followed over time from first to second grade.

Teacher participants

A total of 11 teachers from 9 schools participated in this 6-week substudy with 6 (five schools) in treatment condition and 5 (four schools) in control condition. Both groups of teachers read the same story titles for the duration of this study. Scripted lessons and biweekly training to practise lesson structure and delivery were provided for treatment group teachers. Using scripted questions about each story, treatment teachers interacted with students and encouraged them to produce oral language, while control teachers continued with their typical ESL instructional plans with no additional support from the research team.

STELLA intervention

The English structured story reading intervention, known as STELLA (Irby et al., 2004, 2009), was the treatment of interest for the current study. This structured story retelling component was designed to assist ELLs in the English oral language development and story comprehension. The development and implementation of STELLA was grounded

with the recommendations from existing literature reviewed earlier on story reading and vocabulary development, oral language and story retelling, and story grammar. A detailed description follows.

Story reading. The time frame for STELLA in first and second grade was 40 and 35 minutes, respectively. During this time, teachers read aloud the story everyday during first grade with some review and retelling activities each day, while in second grade, teachers read aloud on Days 2–5, and students did choral reading (to assist fluency and pronunciation) on Days 3–5 with teacher assistance. Story retelling was practised on Day 4 through story circle (allowing students to perform the teacher's role) and story grammar (see descriptions that follow) used as strategies to assist retelling. An example of the 5-day lesson in second grade is as follows.

On *Day 1*, vocabulary selected from the story was introduced using explicit vocabulary instruction. All words introduced included the following: (a) activation of prior knowledge, (b) friendly definition, (c) teacher modelling, (d) teacher-guided practice and (e) students practising using the word in context just as the author used the word in the story and out of context – using the word in other settings. The storybook of the week was introduced, but was not read, on Day 1 in order to stimulate curiosity about the book. The teacher discussed the cover of the book with students and students were expected to make predictions about the story based on the cover and the title. Connections to previous lessons were made and prior knowledge about the theme of the story was activated using a topic web organiser, an instructional tool used to brainstorm and generate ideas related to a single concept or theme. Collectively, as a class, the students developed a topic web organiser with the centre circle noting the topic and outgrowth spokes with circles including students' prior knowledge about the topic. The activation of prior knowledge sensitises listeners to the story read aloud. The lesson closure included a review of vocabulary introduced during the lesson of the day using word wall cards – cards with the new vocabulary words on each card posted on a designated classroom wall space for a 2-week period.

On *Day 2*, the teacher read the entire story to the students and asked levelled questions (see Appendix A for examples) through interactive dialogue after each page was read to increase comprehension. Students were encouraged to answer in complete sentences. The teacher provided feedback when students did not use proper English grammar, and modelled the answer with correct grammar. The information or prior knowledge activated on *Day 1* facilitated students' understanding of the story and second language use and increased their comprehension in the target language. Each storybook page ended with a series of teacher-directed questions to assist students in analysing text into bits of information, thus making connections between text and illustration. This strategy guided students in the comprehension process showing that illustrations convey a message apart from the text. In addition, story elements such as character, setting, problem and solution were discussed. For the lesson closure, vocabulary words introduced on Days 1 and 2 were reviewed.

On *Day 3*, vocabulary was reviewed and new words were introduced and posted to the word wall. Then, the teacher read aloud the story and conducted choral reading with students to assist in fluency and pronunciation. The story was reviewed through the use of questions. Word wall cards from Days 1 and 2 were used to assist students during writing activity time serving as visual scaffolding. The writing activity included a prompt that the students completed with one or two sentences.

On *Day 4*, vocabulary followed the Day 2 format; students and teacher spent time on choral reading and writing about the story elements. Additionally, interactive group retelling

via story circle was implemented, where students had to (a) use preprepared sentence strips and put them in order of the story and (b) use preprepared questions in which a pair of students guided each other in retelling the story using those questions. In addition, activities for story retelling, such as story circle, were practised for the story.

On the last day, *Day 5*, the story was reread by the teacher; students were engaged in the story circle activity used on Day 4. A culminating activity was included in which the students wrote a short paragraph about the story topic.

Vocabulary. Systematic direct and indirect vocabulary instruction was prominent in structured STELLA scripted lessons to assist in story comprehension. Second grade story lessons included an average of 12 new words per week. Additionally, to increase vocabulary knowledge, STELLA lessons provided teacher modelling, student practice and introduced words revisited. For example, the teacher provided practice on how to use the word in or out of context. The fundamental strategies used in STELLA to increase comprehension in L2 were repetition of the story read and vocabulary, cloze sentences and retelling. Teachers' rereading of the same story and repetition of activities related to the story allowed for students' development of oral language skills and their active engagement in a risk-free environment. Students had multiple exposures to the information in the second language and structured connections to their background knowledge. In first grade, five cloze sentences related to the story were used, and students were asked to select the correct word and explain the reason for that selection. Rhyming words were selected at first as scaffolding, in order to allow students to acquire necessary skills. In second grade, a word or two per page were covered from the story, which was presented using an ELMO, a document camera connected to a television that magnified the pictures and text in the storybooks. As students became more successful at recalling the missing words, phrases were then covered instead of single words, moving eventually to whole paragraphs, and progressing into every other page and finally the entire story. Teachers acted as facilitators scaffolding, when necessary, especially with the more challenging words.

The procedure to teach these new words included a friendly and easy to remember definition of the words found in the story. Once consensus about vocabulary selection was reached by the research team, a cloze sentence or completion idea was created for guided practice. Vocabulary cards were designed using yellow index cards and red font with the definition and a cloze sentence or completion idea on the back of the card to facilitate instruction. The teacher modelled the use of the word, followed by guided and independent practice using the new word both in and out of context (see Appendix B for an example of vocabulary instruction).

The word selection followed Beck, McKeown and Kucan's (2002) three tiers of vocabulary instruction criteria with modifications provided by Calderón et al. (2005) to accommodate the needs of ELLs. According to Beck et al. (2002), the words are classified as follows: (a) Tier 1, basic vocabulary such as table, pencil, book and so on; (b) Tier II words are high-frequency encountered words such as forecast, interest, determined and so on. These Tier II words are considered as the most productive and frequently encountered of the three tiers; and (c) Tier III words are content related. The research team took into consideration that for ELLs in early grades, Tier I words might not be part of their vocabulary and therefore should be introduced followed by Tier II words. As aforementioned, modifications for ELLs in our study included the use of Tier I words for early grades, use of cognates, depth of meaning and high utility. Finally, STELLA systematically organised and introduced ESL strategies to facilitate vocabulary knowledge

and comprehension. (ESL strategies are instructional strategies that support and accommodate ELLs' needs allowing them to better understand the English language by reducing the level of anxiety and increasing knowledge of the target language [see Appendix C for a list of ESL strategies used in STELLA].)

Story grammar. STELLA provided instruction and modelling of story grammar or story elements (setting, characters, plot, problem and solution) with other activities such as story circle, story map (a visual representation with simple outline or detailed picture of the structure/main elements of a story), and ordering sequence of events using picture cards as scaffolds to comprehension in the target language. Because English oral language development was minimal at the beginning of first grade, students used signals, such as thumbs up/thumbs down, to show if they liked the title of the story, illustration, setting, character, ending of the story. Each story element was discussed and introduced individually in first grade. STELLA focused on one element at a time beginning with the character element by week 4 of first grade treatment implementation. As students moved to second grade, the element of sequence of events was introduced and practised using the story circle strategy, story map and sequencing cards. To further assist in comprehension, story grammar was practised on the third and fourth day of the lesson each week. The author and illustrators of the books were introduced first, followed by the setting and the characters, and later the students progressed into incorporating one or more elements of the story at a time. By the mid-first grade and throughout the second grade, students transitioned from oral responses to writing about the story grammar elements, including setting, characters, problem and solution. Because this instruction was in English, written story grammar for STELLA was not introduced until second grade, with the purpose that by that time students had acquired enough writing skills and enough English vocabulary to express their thoughts and knowledge in the second language. Teachers provided kind and encouraging feedback to the students and scaffolding when specified in the scripted lesson.

Storybook selection

A key ingredient to a good story lesson is the storybook selection. STELLA storybooks were selected to address the diverse cognitive levels in the classroom. Fiction stories were introduced first in the larger longitudinal study in kindergarten, because this genre uses human characteristics related to students' everyday life experiences. Narrative-informational and expository books were introduced later in first grade. By second grade, both narrative and informational books were used and each author's biography was made part of the 5-day lesson. Besides genre selection, vocabulary encountered in the stories played an important role in the selection of the story for the children. All six storybooks in our 6-week study were of interest to the children, and their illustrations were enticing, with many different types of art media to create effects that would assist ELLs in making meaning from the text (see Table 1 for a list of all six stories). Each book contained one story that was discussed during the 5-day lesson.

For the purpose of our study, the first and sixth books (within a frame of 6 weeks) scheduled within the larger project from weeks 21 to 26 in second grade were chosen for the retelling assessment. The first storybook (hence, Story 1) was *The Great Fuzz Frenzy* (Stevens & Crummel, 2005), a fable consisting of 981 words. It is a conversational story with two protagonists. A dog dropped a tennis ball down a hole, the underground town of the prairie dogs, where they lived in harmony until the strange fuzzy thing (tennis ball) was

Table 1. Storybook selection for the 6-week period as scheduled.

Week	Storybook	Author	Language	Published Date
1	*Great Fuzz Frenzy*	Janet Stevens	English	9/1/2005
2	*Song and Dance Man*	Karen Ackerman	English	1/15/1992
3	*Our Tree Named Steve*	Alan Zweibel	English	3/17/2005
4	*Jack's Garden*	Henry Cole	English	3/19/1997
5	*Water Beds: Sleeping in the Ocean*	Gail Langer Karwoski	English	8/20/2005
6	*Double Bones*	Michael Dahl	English	2005

Note: Stories used for this study.

discovered. The animals were afraid to touch this mysterious thing, but one was brave enough to touch it and remove some fuzz. They found out that the fuzzy thing could be easily removed and discovered many creative ways of using it and the prairie dogs had a party. This is a predictable book, appropriate for inferencing and lessons on friendship and community cooperation. Their reaction to events was written for ages 4–8, grades prekindergarten to the third grade. The sixth book during the 6-week intervention (deemed Story 2), *Double Bones: The Adventures of Diplodocus* (Dahl, 2005), contained 577 words. This narrative-informational book is a simple story where characters do not converse but it provides details about a single day in the land of the dinosaurs. A young diplodocus hatched from the egg and began to look for his mother. The mother diplodocus showed the young diplodocus where to look for food and water. A T-Rex showed up and attempted to attack them, but mother diplodocus plunged in the lake and young diplodocus followed her. Both mother and baby diplodocus escaped from the carnivore T-Rex. The illustrations for this storybook were simple, depicting the environment where the prehistoric animals lived. Each page contains additional notes in small print to enhance knowledge about the prehistoric creatures' behaviour and environment. This simple story about dinosaurs was written for ages 5–8, grades kindergarten to the third grade.

The time for STELLA strictly accounting for Story 1 reading by the teacher was 20 minutes on Day 2 and 15 minutes on Days 3–5 with choral reading (the story was not read on Day 1). For Story 2, the reading time was around 20–25 minutes on Day 2, and approximately 5–8 minutes on Days 3–5.

Typical/comparison practice

An ESL block was delivered daily in typical practice classrooms, but the times varied between 45 and 60 minutes. Each control classroom teacher was required to read the same storybook as was used in the treatment classrooms during the 6-week intervention. Field notes from classroom observations conducted during the intervention of our study revealed that the majority of the comparison teachers did not expect students to answer in complete sentences. Of the five control group teachers, only one expected students to answer in complete sentences. Most of the time, the questions asked during story reading activity, which was usually around 15 minutes, only addressed low cognitive levels. Yes and No answers were accepted, but no further inquiry was encouraged. Students did not receive feedback when not using proper English grammar, nor did the teacher model how to answer with correct grammar. None of the control teachers were observed providing structured vocabulary instruction before story reading. Rather, they provided concurrent translation of the vocabulary or introduced the word with a definition using incidental vocabulary instruction, but did not provide practice on how to use the word in or out of

context. It was evident during the observation that lessons were not planned for the ESL time. Inconsistency was also observed in the use of language.

Testing and scoring procedures for retellings

For our study, story retellings were collected to measure story comprehension in English and Spanish utilising story grammar, because bilingual students' comprehension monitored in both languages provides a clear picture of comprehension. The English retellings were elicited first to minimise native language contribution to the retellings in the second language. Students retold Story 1 (a fiction storybook) and Story 2 (a narrative-informational book) selected for this study, after being instructed concerning the procedure to follow (see explanations below). Retellings have, in the past, been used by speech specialists and researchers to measure oral language development and to monitor progress.

At the end of week 21 and at the end of week 26 in second grade (the weeks of our study), the retelling assessment in English was conducted on Day 5 after all lessons were completed. The tester explained the intention and procedure of the retelling assessment to each student independently in a quiet area, then proceeded to show the respective storybook to the student participant and asked if he/she could retell the story.

Upon completion of the retelling assessment in English to the group, the tester read the same story to each student in Spanish (no STELLA lessons were delivered for the Spanish story reading) (see Appendix D for scripts used to elicit retellings in English and Spanish).

The story retelling assessment in both languages and stories were recorded, transcribed verbatim and scored. The English recordings were transcribed by native English-speaking graduate students, and the Spanish recordings were transcribed by native Spanish-speaking graduate students. Once all retellings were transcribed, each audiotaped retelling was listened to twice by the graduate student who transcribed the particular retellings to make sure that he/she captured all the words and expressions. One of the bilingual researchers listened again to all recordings while reading the respective transcriptions. Story grammar elements, in English and Spanish, were obtained using direct questions and retellings revision. Student participants in control and treatment groups had experienced being recorded previously for the purpose of the larger research project. All retellings were completed at student participants' schools in a quiet area.

A rubric for the story grammar was developed following a modified version of Thorndyke (1977), with the omission and addition of some elements in order to adapt to ELLs (see Appendix E). The major story elements described by Thorndyke as important for making the schemata for the story are setting, theme, plot and resolution. For our study, the elements used to score each retelling in English and Spanish were (a) setting (where and when), (b) characters (the main and secondary characters), (c) plot (beginning, middle and end, with supporting events), (e) the problem and (f) the solution.

Inter-rater reliability of story grammar measurements

The story grammar consisted of four direct questions about the setting, characters, problem and solution. One category was scored by revisiting the retellings for information regarding plot (sequence of events). The percentage of agreement was calculated for each comprehension measure, and raters reached 91% mean agreement for story grammar scores on 25 samples. Table 2 portrays the inter-reliability of the story grammar measurements.

Table 2. Inter-rater reliability of story grammar measurements.

Measure	Agreement	Disagreement	%
Setting	24	1	96
Character	23	2	92
Plot	20	5	80
Problem	24	1	96
Solution	24	1	96

Data collection and analysis

During spring 2007, retellings for the two stories were collected among the same students who had progressed towards the end of second grade. To examine initial equivalence between the two groups, students' vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills and nonverbal ability were measured for the larger research project, and were collected at the beginning of first grade (Fall, 2005). These measures included the subtests of Picture Vocabulary, Listening Comprehension and Passage Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R; Woodcock, 1991; Woodcock & Munoz-Sandoval, 1995), standardised instruments assessing a broad range of language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English and Spanish. The Picture Vocabulary is an expressive semantic task assessing vocabulary. In the Listening Comprehension subtest, test takers listen to a passage read to them and are asked to supply the single word missing at the end of the passage. The Passage Comprehension subtest includes multiple-choice questions that require test takers to point to the picture represented by a phrase. It also measures skills of reading a short passage and identifying a missing key word. A composite score was calculated based on the average *W* scores of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension, and was used as an indicator of oral language skills. Finally, students' nonverbal ability was measured by the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT; Naglieri, 1997). It is designed to give a concise but reliable and valid nonverbal appraisal of general ability for children 5–17 years of age. All the test items require the student to analyse the associations among the parts of the divided matrix, the design and to determine which answer choice was correct, based on the information in the item. The NNAT has been utilised as an identification of gifted children, especially those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The test is a group administration with approximately 30 minutes.

As a first step, students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in both languages, as well as their nonverbal cognitive ability were compared between treatment and comparison groups before the implementation of STELLA using independent samples *t*-test. No statistically significant difference was detected on vocabulary in either language (for English, $t = .537$, $p = .593$; for Spanish, $t = 1.551$, $p = .126$); or on reading comprehension (for English, $t = -.916$, $p = .363$; for Spanish, $t = -.540$, $p = .591$); or on nonverbal ability, $t = -.910$, $p = .366$). Therefore, it is evident that initial equivalence was established.

In the next step to determine if there was significant difference in the performance on each story grammar element between the treatment and comparison groups, between the two stories, as well as between English and Spanish, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Thus, there were two within-participant factors: language (English vs Spanish) and story (Story 1 vs Story 2) and one between-participant factor of

Table 3. Means and standard deviation of story grammar in English and Spanish.

	Group	Setting		Character		Events		Problem		Solution	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
English											
Story 1	Treatment	1.03	.66	2.20	.80	2.37	0.84	2.23	1.05	1.96	1.21
	Comparison	0.39	.50	0.76	.83	1.00	1.00	1.08	0.86	0.82	0.85
Story 2	Treatment	1.34	.64	2.77	.49	2.63	0.60	2.66	0.90	2.44	0.90
	Comparison	0.48	.51	1.67	.96	1.27	0.84	1.32	1.29	1.21	1.27
Spanish											
Story 1	Treatment	1.34	.73	2.47	.66	2.53	0.75	2.53	0.75	2.03	0.90
	Comparison	0.62	.65	1.35	.69	1.56	1.05	1.56	1.05	1.06	0.94
Story 2	Treatment	1.38	.65	2.85	.44	2.71	0.58	2.82	0.61	2.47	0.97
	Comparison	0.71	.52	1.91	.93	1.76	0.82	1.72	1.18	1.28	1.18

group (treatment vs comparison). Interaction effects between the main factors were also included. The reason to conduct a univariate analysis instead of a multivariate analysis is that we were interested in each of the story grammar measures so as to direct instruction. Such practice has been recommended in existing literature (e.g. Fiestas & Peña, 2004; Myers & Well, 1991). While a conservative approach for a univariate analysis would adjust for Type I error rate, we chose to report uncorrected effects given the unavailability of data about the storytelling intervention effects in this population. Effect sizes were reported in the form of η_p^2 (symbolised as η_p^2). Preliminary analyses were performed to determine if the data met assumptions for repeated measures on story grammar scores collected in English and Spanish for both stories. Data were checked for normality and homogeneity of variance. Results indicated that data were normally distributed. Levene's test showed no statistically significant differences, and therefore it can be concluded that the assumptions were met. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Results

In this section, results are presented by research question. Table 4 includes statistically significant main and interaction effects by story elements.

Research Question 1: Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by group (i.e. treatment vs comparison)?

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ repeated measures ANOVA yielded statistically significant effect of group on all of the five story elements, Fs > 50.709, ps $< .001$, η_p^2s $> .438$, with treatment group obtaining a higher marginal mean than did comparison group for both languages and stories (see Table 4).

Research Question 2: Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by language (i.e. English vs Spanish)?

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ repeated measures ANOVA yielded statistically significant effect of language on four of the five story elements, Fs > 4.133, ps $< .05$, η_p^2s $> .059$, with students scoring higher in Spanish language than they did in English language for both stories and groups. No significant difference was found on the element of *solution*.

Table 4. Significant main and interaction effects by story element.

Effect	Setting		Character		Sequence of events		Problem		Solution	
	F	η_p^2	F	η_p^2	F	η_p^2	F	η_p^2	F	η_p^2
Group	50.709***	.438	120.507***	.646	73.71***	.531	65.424***	.498	52.868***	.445
Language	10.954**	.142	18.252***	.217	10.627**	.141	4.133*	.059		
Story	3.551	.051	36.343***	.355	6.982**	.097	14.077***	.176	8.191**	.11
Language × Group	0.404	.006	0 3.059	.044	4.726*	.068	0.258	.004	0.237	.004
Language × Story	1.697	.025	2.917	.042	0.012	<.001	1.368	.020	0.193	.003
Group × Story	0.376	.006	1.298	.259	0.216	.003	<0.001	<.001	0.201	.003
Group × Language × Story	1.697	.025	0.452	.007	0.012	<.001	0.898	.013	0.025	<.001

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$; ***$p<.001$.

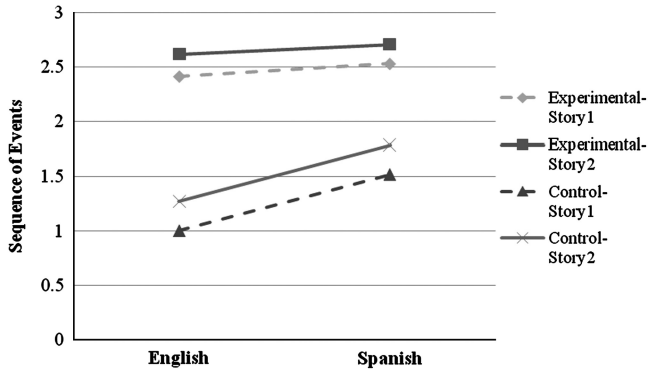

Figure 1. Average English and Spanish performance on sequence of events by group and story.

Research Question 3: Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by story genre (i.e. narrative vs narrative-informational)?

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ repeated measures ANOVA yielded statistically significant effect of language on four of the five story elements, Fs > 6.982, ps < .01, η_p^2s > .097, with students performing at a higher level in Story 2 as compared with Story 1. No significant difference was found on the element of *setting*.

Research Question 4: Is there an interaction effect among group, language and story for ELLs' oral language proficiency?

In addition to these main effects, the only significant interaction effect was identified between language and group on the element of *sequence of events*, $F = 4.726$, $p = .033$, $\eta_p^2 = .068$, indicating that the difference between Spanish and English was more evident in the comparison group but not observed in the treatment group for both stories. Such an interaction effect is depicted by Figure 1. All other interaction terms were found to be nonsignificant (see Table 4).

Discussion

We examined the effect of a story retelling intervention, STELLA, in English for Spanish-speaking ELLs' comprehension as measured by story grammar. We sought to answer the following research questions: (a) Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by group (i.e. treatment vs comparison)? (b) Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by language (i.e. English vs Spanish)? (c) Does ELLs' oral language proficiency, as measured by story grammar elements, differ by story genre (i.e. narrative vs narrative-informational)? And (d) is there an interaction effect among group, language and story for ELLs' oral language proficiency?

In response to the first research question, results suggested that students receiving STELLA, which included systematic and explicit instruction, outperformed their comparison peers in all five story elements with the effect sizes ranging between .438 and .646. Weekly practice of research-based instructional strategies such as: sequence of events, levelled questions and story circle oral or guided with prompts, story mapping, repeated story reading and summarising, shown to be effective when used in combination (Ramírez, 2000), might have accounted for the difference between structured story reading instruction and typical instruction in both languages. These strategies, when systematically planned, assisted in thought organisation and sequential ordering of events in the story, and therefore increased story comprehension. The findings suggest similarities to other studies' findings in oral language development. For example, story reading positively impacts vocabulary development and listening comprehension (Beck & McKeown, 1991; Hickman et al., 2004; Isbell et al., 2004). It is evident that students benefited from this intervention because they were able to comprehend what was read to them and to retell it based on the story elements of setting, character, sequence of events, problem and solution of the story.

In response to the second research question concerning difference in language, students showed stronger ability in their native language in four of five story elements, effect sizes ranging between .059 and .217, with the exception of solution, where there was no difference. Such results were expected in the Spanish oral production, because all students were identified as native Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency upon entering school. Findings of our study are consistent with Cummins (1983), Escamilla (1987), Miller et al. (2006) and Tong et al. (2008) that native language (L1) acquisition supports rather than hinders the transfer of skills from one language to the next. For example, Tong et al. (2008) determined that structured and explicit ESL instruction stimulates oral language development of ELLs in the target language, while sustaining this progress in their L1. Further, Isbell et al. (2004) found in their study that students performed better in the formal ending of the story. Their claim may illuminate our finding in that there was no difference between the two languages on solution element, because students appear to be able to retrieve story-ending information. Higher performance in students' native language could have been attributed to having the story read just before retellings were collected and the familiarity with the story that was practised in English before retelling in Spanish. However, as was mentioned earlier, we decided to elicit English retelling first because the participants were native Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency, and the retelling of the same story in their native language before English could have inflated their performance in English due to possible cross-language transfer.

In response to the third research question in which students' comprehension was measured by the production of the structural component of the story (story grammar) and

compared by genre (narrative vs narrative-informational), results showed that the treatment group receiving structured story reading performed significantly better in story elements, and students on average performed at a higher level in Story 2 with effect sizes ranging between .097 and .355, except for the element of setting where no difference was detected.

On the elements of problem and solution, Story 1 contained multiple episodes in making the recall more challenging. As Mandler and Johnson (1977) explained, overall, it is more likely that recalling of cumulative stories is less because people tend to omit entire episodes. A potential explanation for the higher performance in Story 2 in comparison with Story 1 could have been the challenge to recall information when multiple cause and effect is part of the structure as it is the case in Story 1.

Limited research is available regarding ELLs' retelling performance as a result of story type/genre. We found that ELLs achieved a higher level of comprehension on the narrative-informational story as compared with the narrative story. There might have been two confounding factors that influenced the results. For example, the text structure of Story 2 is simple, facilitating recall of story elements. In addition, this narrative-informational book was about dinosaurs, a favourite theme of elementary school children. As a result, students' prior knowledge (schema) about dinosaurs and dinosaurs' habitat could have influenced the recall of information. Further, we found that the magnitude of difference was particularly strong in the element of character, because there were fewer characters in Story 2 (only three characters) in comparison with Story 1 containing more than five characters. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the content, style, topic and varied levels of story grammar elements that impact ELL students' comprehension.

Finally, we were not able to find any difference between the two story genres on the element of *setting*, and the examination of Table 2 reveals a low average score in both groups and languages on this element compared with other story elements. There are two possible explanations: first, STELLA may not have spent enough instructional time on this particular element, and second, the performance on setting may be age related. However, due to the limited literature on story reading and ELLs, no research can be located to provide a theoretical or empirical base. Therefore, future research is needed to investigate ELLs' comprehension as measured by story element of *setting*.

In the fourth research question, the interaction effect among group, language and story was investigated. The only interaction effect identified was among language and group in the element of sequence of events. On this story element, treatment students' performance was comparable in both languages; whereas, comparison students' Spanish performance exceeded their English performance. In addition, treatment students scored significantly higher than control peers in English retellings in both story genres. Such an interaction effect could have been due to the ceiling effect, which may have masked any potential improvement when the experimental participants responded in Spanish retellings (with means of 2.53 and 2.71 out of 3). An additional possibility for the result could be related to the district curriculum of Spanish language arts and ESL which were aligned with state standards, because under those standards, a second grade ELL student in a typical bilingual classroom is expected to (a) use a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently in Spanish; (b) retell or act out the order of important events in stories in English; and (c) identify similarities and differences across texts such as in topics, characters and problems in English. Therefore, STELLA, the structured story reading in English during the ESL period used in the treatment group, could explain the significant difference in students' performance on the element of sequence of events between comparison and treatment groups (examples of students' retellings are listed in Appendix F).

One might argue that the higher performance of the treatment group might have been a result of more exposure to and repetition of the story and the vocabulary instruction used in the lessons. However, according to NCELA (2008b), repetition is essential for second language learners to improve vocabulary learning. Further, both groups of teachers were spending similar amounts of time reading the same stories and incorporating the ESL strategies (as indicated by district curriculum aligned with state standards). Yet, compared with treatment students, control peers lacked expressive vocabulary in their second language and found it difficult to retell in English.

In summary, we found a positive effect on the 2-year practice of structured story reading through STELLA during students' ESL instructional period. ELLs' oral language production including vocabulary and listening comprehension increased in the treatment group in both languages in accordance with research findings. Given the importance of the role that oral language, especially the role that listening comprehension plays in reading achievement, early childhood bilingual teachers could use structured story reading to increase vocabulary, story comprehension, as well as reading motivation, thereby maximising learning in native language and ESL. Additionally, the use of story grammar as an assessment tool to monitor not only oral language growth, cognitive skills and listening comprehension in ELL students' primary language and ESL concurrency could assist teachers in lesson planning, adjustments (as in instructional grouping) and/or modification of lesson plans. Equally important, bilingual and ESL teachers and ELLs could benefit from structured story reading training, and ELLs could benefit from a story retelling component in their curriculum such as structured story reading intervention with story retelling and higher order thinking as was provided in STELLA. To address ELLs' oral language proficiency needs, story retelling should encompass structured, planned teacher–student interactions using research-based instructional activities such as those found in STELLA.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

There are several limitations of our study. First, to comply with the state law, in the larger study, the initial random assignment to treatment (STELLA) and control conditions was achieved at the school level, not at the individual student level. However, in this current study initial equivalence was established between the two randomly selected groups and therefore, internal validity was ensured. Second, because the purpose of this current study was to identify the effect of STELLA compared with story reading as would be typically implemented in the district, we did not provide scripts to the control teachers, nor were we able to control the strategies used during the lesson in the control condition; therefore, teacher effect was not accounted for in these classrooms. Finally, generalisability cannot be made beyond the school and student characteristics of this study. Despite these potential limitations, with a paucity of research in story retelling with second language learners and with no studies published on a particular intervention that purposefully combines story retelling with higher order thinking skills, we consider the study to be worthy to advance the discussion surrounding this topic.

Although it would be informative to compare students' retellings by different levels of general cognitive ability and by gender, this type of comparison was beyond the scope of our study. Future research is recommended to address cognitive levels (high, average and low) and gender differences using structured story reading with story retelling and higher order thinking as a treatment for ELL students in a bilingual setting and/or an English immersion setting. Another consideration should be to expose ELLs to structured story

reading in English and Spanish in order to study the specific effects of language transfer and oral and written literacy skills in both languages in relation to such an intervention.

Proficiency in the English language plays a critical role in academic success for ELLs to reduce the achievement gap with their native English peers. To assist ELLS in developing oral language proficiency, including listening comprehension in L2, educators should consider story retelling, as noted in STELLA, for early childhood bilingual classrooms. Although we cannot generalise our findings to all ELLs, the findings in this study suggest the importance of quality-structured instruction to promote vocabulary and listening comprehension skills among these ELLs.

We conclude that it is feasible that structured story reading activities, embedded with explicit vocabulary instruction and with teacher modelling on how to think utilising organisational tools, ESL strategies and strategies for cognitive literacy, such as story grammar, as evidenced in STELLA, are valuable for improving oral language proficiency for Spanish-speaking ELLs. Additionally, such an intervention is conducive specifically to improving vocabulary and listening comprehension in not only the native language, but also in the second language.

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Appendix A: Higher order listening comprehension questions

Levelled questions about text and illustration are identified for every storybook page. Providing emphasis on the relationship between text and illustration in storybooks, the illustration complements the text or vice versa, text complements illustration.

Examples:

'Let's pretend you are one of the groundhogs; what questions would you ask about the fuzz thing?'

'How would you feel if you were having fun and someone talked to you in that way?'

'Could you come up with a new way of using the fuzz?'

Revisiting Vocabulary:

'You already learned what the word, *swoop*, means; so, what do you think happened in this picture?'

Story Circle: To Review the story

The Great Fuzz Frenzy story circle example:

(a) Why was Big Bark considered to be the meanest dog in town?
(b) What was the big frenzy all about?
(c) What do you think went through Big Bark's head when he was swooped?
(d) If you were the author, how would you have ended the story?
(e) What did you like best about the story?

Appendix B: Vocabulary instruction

(Show the vocabulary card for **ridiculous**.)

- Who can read what the card says? Wait for students to read the word.
- All together, **ridiculous**.

(Read the sentence on the back of the card.)

- Who can tell me what **ridiculous** means? Wait 5 sec. for students to respond. If after 5 seconds students do not answer continue with the lesson.
- Ridiculous means silly, absurd.
- Model the answer using the following stem '**Something ridiculous is _____.**' – found on the back of the card. Wait for students to respond with their own sentences using the stem. Students should answer in a complete sentence. If students do not answer in a complete sentence, you need to model for them and ask them to repeat after you.
- Let's practise the word ridiculous. When I say '**Something ridiculous I can do is _____.**', I could say, '**Something ridiculous I could do is ...** to dress like a groundhog to come to school.'
- Your turn, '**Something ridiculous I can do is _____.**' Wait for 2 to 3 students to respond. Students should answer in a complete sentence.

Appendix C: ESL strategies used in STELLA

Graphic organisers

- Purpose: (a) to enhance story comprehension by activating prior knowledge, (b) to assist in the organisation of thoughts and prior knowledge
- Selection: dependent upon the story and objectives for the lesson

Types: (a) topic web, (b) what I know and what I learned chart, (c) story mapping, (d) sequence chart and (e) Venn Diagram

Repetition

- Reread story reading
- Revisiting vocabulary introduced in previous stories
- Retelling
- Cloze sentences

Guided Practice

- Choral reading
- Story circle time
- Story grammar practice

Preview/Review

- Short preview of the lesson in students' native language (Spanish)

Interactive Read Aloud

- Using expression, different characters voices, use of gestures, prediction

Word Wall

- Picture/word story vocabulary card placed on a visible area

L2 clarified by L1

- Second language clarified by L1 if needed for comprehension

Academic Scaffolding

- Storybook connection to science concepts through graphic organisers, preview/review or explicit vocabulary instruction of science terms

Appendix D: Script to elicit retellings

Say to STUDENT 'You already heard the story, *The Great Fuzz Frenzy*. Now, I want you to tell the story back to me. I will be recording your story, *The Great Fuzz Frenzy*. Make sure you tell them everything you know about the story, *The Great Fuzz Frenzy*, from the start of the story till the end. In your retelling, I want you to include the place or time of

the story, the characters, the problems, and solution. Do you think you can do that?' (Wait for student to respond.)

'Tell me when you are ready to start. Great! Let's begin.' (Turn on the tape recorder) 'Now!'

☐ Set the timer and recorder as soon as the child is ready to retell.
☐ If the student makes a full stop ask the child 'Is that all, do you have anything else to tell or share?' If the child says 'no' then continue.

Record the start time and ending time.

- What was the setting of the story?
- Who was the main character?
- Any other character(s) were in the story?
- What was the problem in the story?
- How was it solved?

Appendix E: Story grammar rubric

Appendix A1. Story grammar rubric.

Indicator	0	1	2	3
Setting When & Where	Unable to identify the setting	Partial mention When or Where, that is in the hole	Moderate description More than partial but not full description	Both When and Where Revised retell for time
Characters	Unable to recall any character at all	Mention one character If only one character in the story give three points	Mention two characters in the story then give three points	Mention more than two (if applicable) Main & secondary characters
Event/plot	Unable to state any event of the story Revise retell	One or two events Revise retell	Beginning, middle and end of the story and supporting events not in sequence Revise retell	Beginning, middle and end of the story and supporting events in sequence Revise retell
Problem	Unable to identify the problem in the story	(1.5) Partial mention of the problem	Identifies the problem	
Solution	Unable to state the resolution	(1.5) Partial stating of the resolution	Provides the solution to the problem in full detail	

Note: Revise retell for time = to look for any indication that student incorporated temporal information in the retelling.

Appendix F: Examples of students' personal retellings

English – Treatment Group Student Retelling Example

'The story begins when the, the big, mom mother diplodocus lay an egg, and the little egg hatched. Then the little diplodocus (umm), when out of the egg and blink his eyes because it was, it was sunny outside, it was sunny. Then he stretch his neck to, to search

for his mother, and, and the mother was in somewhere to get the, some leaves and, some leaves and she was showing the child how to do stuff. Then, she was, they were hungry again and they went to other tree. That place had a lot of tree and she, and the mother diplodocus couldn't swing her neck because there was a lot of trees, so she stood up on her back legs and threw the tree down. And they ate the leaves of the tree. Then they, then they, then they went to a place and the mother, the mother . . . and the mother, and the mother nuzzle his, her baby. They were getting hungry and thirsty, then they went to a lake, and, and the little diplodocus stood on the, on the hill and the mother tasted the water. Then the baby came down and drink some water, and (ummp) some peddles jump. (umm) under the elephant [diplodocus] toes and they saw diplo . . . a, another dinosaur that wanted to eat them, and it went down to get them and they jump down into the lake, and they jumped into the lake and swing. But then the baby got tired, and they swing with his tail, and the other edge of the lake was getting, (ummmmm) and they were getting (ummm) closer to the other edge of the lake and they soon were going to be safe.'

Spanish – Treatment Group Student Retelling Example
'Primero, primero un dinosaurio nació de un huevo y cerro y abrió sus ojos por que el sol estaba bien fuerte. Luego, . . . luego él empezó a buscar a su mamá, y la mamá estaba buscando por la comida, luego encontró unas hojas arriba del árbol, y meció su cuello para agarrar las hojas. Luego se, el niño vio a la mamá para ver como lo hacía, luego comieron hojas, ramas que estaban en el suelo y . . . y luego les, y luego el niño ya estaba cansado y la mamá lo acaricio.. y ya tenía, y ya iban a tener más hambre y ya tenían sed y luego, y luego la mamá se fue por el bosque y encontró un lago de, un lago con agua. Y . . . ella se fue para abajo a probarla y el bebe se quedo en la tierra. Luego, luego . . . luego el bebe se bajó y luego sintió que, como que alguien venia y vieron que era otro dinosaurio y, y se fue para abajo a comérselos y ellos se fueron, se brincaron el agua para, para salvarse y el otro lado del lago se estaba haciendo más cerquita.'

English – Comparison Group Student Retelling Example
'First the baby wake up and he was looking for his mom on all sides and he and the mom was getting getting leaves to get get the baby food then there was a tree there was a tree like they were separate and get she she cut the leaves split it then she then the two was on the other street she she she stands and she hit the tree with both feets then she was sitting and the baby get asleep then she and the and then she was sitting there then the baby wake up and she was drinking water then the allosaurus came and scared them and the the dinosaur baby and dinosaur mom go out to swim and they were swimming and the mom get tired of walking and the allosaurus can't swim that's why she didn't go with them and then they go on the other side and they were hungry and then they start again.'

Spanish – Comparison Group Student Retelling Example
'En el principio los dinosaurios, el dinosaurito bebé se iba a levantar y el sol le pegaba mucho los ojos y salió del huevo y luego se fue a buscar a su mamá y estaba buscando viendo para un lado y viendo para el otro y su mamá estaba agarrando ramas y desliéndolas (oliéndolas) para, con la, hojas para que el bebé viniera a comer y luego de eso cuando estaban los, los árboles muy cultos, ella se paraba de dos patas y con sus patas destilaba el árbol y allí empezaban a comer y luego que ya el bebé se iba a dormir otra vez y la mamá iba a comer las ramas del árbol tirado luego fueron a tomar agua y vino un dinosaurio Rex y se los se los quería comer. Luego los dinosaurios, el bebé y la mamá,

fueron a salvo y luego se habían cansado y al final cuando ya habían llegado y se fueron al otro lado y como, como estaban amplias hojas empezaban otra vez a comer.'

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