Exploring Punjabi-Speaking Children’s Translanguaging Practices in Early Childhood Classrooms in British Columbia

Dr. Angelpreet Singh
Faculty of Education
University of Western Ontario
November 25, 2020
## Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Field and Division</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Languages, Cultures and Literacies</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>Language, Culture and Teaching</td>
<td>York University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Primary and Junior Divisions (K-6)</td>
<td>York University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ryerson University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Punjabi Families in Canada
Master’s Research Study

**Purpose:** The aim of this study was to examine the home literacy practices of four Punjabi families (two first generation and two second generation) with young children in Toronto, Ontario.

**Method:** Data for the study were collected through observing, participating, and recording in the families’ homes during a four-week period.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that the families engaged their children in a wide variety of literacy practices (for example, singing Punjabi songs, watching Bollywood movies, reading religious texts, and so on) in the home environment.
First Generation Families’
Home Literacy Practices

ELEVEN
TWELVE
THIRTEEN
FOURTEEN
FIFTEEN
SIXTEEN
SEVENTEEN
EIGHTEEN
NINETEEN

LION
ELEPHANT
DOG
CAT
MOUSE
FOX
GOAT
FROG
HOURS
TIGER

FIFTEEN
SIXTEEN
SEVENTEEN
EIGHTEEN
NINETEEN

LION
ELEPHANT
DOG
CAT
MOUSE
FOX
GOAT
FROG
HOURS
Second Generation Families’
Home Literacy Practices
Pilot Study
Simon Fraser University

Purpose: Document how Punjabi-speaking families take up bilingual resources from an early learning program within their sociocultural lives outside the program.

Participants: Two ECE practitioners (one monolingual in English and one bilingual in English and Punjabi) and first generation Punjabi families and their children in two early learning programs.

Method: In addition to interviews, weekly classroom observations were also conducted in the early learning programs.
**Pizza pizzazz!**

**Let’s play and talk together**

- Play “pizza delivery” with your child. Let your child lead the pretend play.
- Choose who will order the pizza and who will deliver the pizza. Talk about what kind of pizza you want to eat and who will be making it.
- Pretend to eat pizza together. Sit down and enjoy a conversation while you eat.

**A good read-together book**

*Pizza at Sally’s* by Monica Wellington

**Hints for success**

- Get down to your child’s level when you pretend together. Sit down so you can have a conversation eye-to-eye.
- Help your child lead the pretend play by asking questions that encourage imagination, e.g. “What kind of car does the delivery person drive?”
- Add some props, e.g. a menu for take-out pizza and a telephone to order the pizza.

**Ways to say it**

I like mushrooms on my pizza. What do you like on your pizza?

Let’s play pizza delivery! Who will order the pizza and who will deliver it?

---

**Pizza पीज़ा!**

**माफ़ी मिलकर चाकूट दे भंडारें बसीटे**

- आपके पक्षे के लिए “पिज्जा विक्रेता” बनें। आपके पक्षे के लिए पिज्जा विक्रेता नाम के लिए सफलता हासिल करने के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।
- *दिनांकों* से पिज्जा बनाना दिखाया। आपके पक्षे के लिए अभ्यास के लिए वक्ता के लिए विक्रेता के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।
- आपके पक्षे के लिए रेस्तरां के पिज्जा विक्रेता नाम के लिए सफलता हासिल करने के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।

**हिंदी वेबसाइट पर मदद की लाइन**

*Pizza at Sally’s* by Monica Wellington

**मदद की लाइन**

- वेबसाइट पर रेस्तरां के पिज्जा विक्रेता नाम के लिए सफलता हासिल करने के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।
- आपके पक्षे के लिए *दिनांकों* से पिज्जा बनाना दिखाया। आपके पक्षे के लिए अभ्यास के लिए वक्ता के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।
- *दिनांकों* से पिज्जा बनाना दिखाया। आपके पक्षे के लिए अभ्यास के लिए वक्ता के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।

**मेनु**

- अपने बच्चे के लिए *दिनांकों* से पिज्जा बनाना दिखाया। आपके पक्षे के लिए अभ्यास के लिए वक्ता के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।
- आपके पक्षे के लिए *दिनांकों* से पिज्जा बनाना दिखाया। आपके पक्षे के लिए अभ्यास के लिए वक्ता के लिए यह उपलब्ध है।

---

This activity is good for developing imagination, learning about where food comes from and practising meal-time conversation. Pizza is a healthy meal because it includes all food groups. Children are more likely to try fruits and vegetables if they have a chance to learn about them in a fun way.
Key Findings

Findings: The study was helpful in revealing complexities in implementing some of the bilingual resources in the early learning programs. For example, Punjabi families preferred more traditional, skill-based approaches to teaching and learning.

The findings illuminated the important role of ECE practitioners in either modifying their instructional practices to be more aligned with those of the families or in providing explicit instruction to families, particularly families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who may not be familiar with play-based approaches to teaching and learning.
Purpose: The aim of this study was to examine the language practices of three emergent bilingual children from Punjabi-speaking homes as they transitioned from preschool to elementary school.

Theoretical Frameworks: In order to analyze the focal children’s language practices, I used sociocultural theory, translanguaging theory, and play theory, and research from previous literacy studies.
Research Questions

1. What are the language practices of young Punjabi-speaking children in early years classrooms (preschool and Kindergarten)?

2. How do Punjabi-speaking children use features of their language repertoires to participate in literacy activities within these classroom settings?

3. What instructional strategies might be appropriate to support Punjabi-speaking children’s bilingual competencies during the early years of schooling?
## Nordin Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Elementary Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Elementary Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Students’ Home Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>2011/12 %</th>
<th>2012/13 %</th>
<th>2013/2014 %</th>
<th>2014/15 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formal Teaching and Learning
Informal Teaching and Learning
Dual Language Books
Key Finding

The focal children were expanding (through social interactions with their grandparents, parents, siblings, teachers, and peers) their own unitary language system by incorporating language features that are said to belong to “named” languages (in this case, Punjabi and English) to communicate in social situations.
Kindergarten Classroom

Daily Living Centre

Unit Blocks Centre

Translanguaing Space (Li Wei, 2011)
Space of deployment of features without adherence to named languages (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015)
Translanguaging Practices

Amnit: Main tuhade nal khedana chudai ho. [I want to play with you.]

Harveen: Okay. We’re playing mommy and daddy.

Lilly: Amnit could be the daddy!

Harveen: Okay. He gonna be the ... (x3). Nahin, tusi gaddi chalao. [No, you drive the car.]

Lilly: You said it in Punjabi!

Harveen: Pretend you’re the driver. Tusi gaddi chalao. [You drive the car.]

Okay?

Amnit: Okay.
Recommendations

• Combine the practice of using translanguaging, translating, and translation technology with small groups of children (García & Kleyn, 2016)

• Promote peer teaching across children of various language groups (Cummins, 2007)

• Invite children to draw pictures to show their understanding of new vocabulary words that are connected to a thematic unit (Silverman & Hartranft, 2015)

• Provide opportunities for children to engage in dramatic and sociodramatic play involving two or more children (Portiwr & Peterson, 2017)
Recommendations (cont’d)

• Involve teachers in the development of school-based language education policies (May, 1994)

• Plan language awareness activities that enable teaching about language diversity in the community (Armand & Dagenais, 2005)

• Teach content through the minority language (for example, Punjabi) to increase its status in the school (Egaña, Cenoz & Gorter, 2015)

• Document students’ development across both languages in order to better understand their language needs in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Bauer & Gort, 2012)
Recommendations (cont’d)

• Teacher education programs should develop course content based on recent theoretical concepts of translanguaging and translanguaging space (García & Kleyn, 2016)

• University researchers and educators could share their research data (for example, audio or video recordings of emergent bilingual’s language practices) with teacher candidates

• Ongoing professional development where teachers develop expertise in effectively teaching for transfer across languages

• Researchers and teachers need to engage in collaborative action research projects
Future Research

• Develop action research projects focusing on translanguaging pedagogy (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017)
  – Translanguaging stance in English-medium classrooms
  – Translanguaging design in instruction
  – Translanguaging shifts in instruction

• Document emergent bilinguals’ language practices in early childhood settings, given the length of time it takes to develop academic language proficiency
Thank you!

Dr. Angelpreet Singh

asing762@uwo.ca