DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 190 FL 022 987

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TITLE Children's Questions and Adults' Answers in Different Cultures: Research Report.
INSTITUTION San Diego State Univ., CA. June Burnett Inst.
PUB DATE 30 Sep 94
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Arabic; regiver Speech; *Cross Cultural Training; Cultural Differences; Ethnography; Foreign Countries; *Intercultural Communication; *Language Patterns; *Parent Background; *Parent Child Relationship; Persian; Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Chaldeans; Questions

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an exploratory study, using an ethnographic approach, of linguistically and ethnically diverse parents interacting with their children. Subjects included three Persian-speaking families, three Chaldeans, and three Euro-American families; children were aged 4-5 years. Goals were to understand cross cultural communication, examine how families can be connected to the educational process of their child, and provide teachers with an understanding of diverse patterns of communication and learning in the classroom. Specifically, child questions and parent responses from parent-child interactions were examined during a book reading activity within different cultural groups. The most striking finding was the large difference in the number of children's questions between the groups, but particularly between the Euro-American and Chaldean group. The patterns of children's questions were consistent across the three groups, yet the parents' responses showed no consistency across the groups. Valuable information was gathered, in particular, on ways to approach the Chaldean community, where it was found that reading is not a common practice for children because of language differences and book availabilities. Appendix A includes the coding matrix for questions and answers. (NAV)

Children's Questions and Adults' Answers in Different Cultures
Research Report

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September 30, 1994

I. Introduction of Project

This exploratory study used an ethnographic approach to a) document how linguistically and ethnically diverse parents interact with their children, b) identify cross cultural parent-child styles of interactions, c) understand cross cultural communication, d) examine how families can be connected to the educational process of their child, and e) to provide teachers with an understanding of diverse patterns of communication and learning in their classrooms.

The principal investigators of this study are Dr. Alberto M. Ochoa, Professor of Policy Studies in Language and Culture and Ms. Virginia-Shirin Sharifzadeh a teaching assistant in the Policy Studies Department and a candidate in the Joint doctoral program at SDSU Claremont Graduate School.

The study was conceptualized using the researchers experiences with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), a non-profit corporation initiated in 1987 in San Diego, PIQE trains ethnically diverse and low income parents to become collaborators with the school and to increase parental awareness and school connectedness. Based on PIQE's interest to study the importance of literacy and ways to support parent-child educational interactions, the study was encouraged and recommended for the researchers to undertake.

Specifically, the exploratory study examined parent-child interactions during a book reading activity within different cultural groups. In particular children's questions during the reading sessions and parents responses to these questions. A review of the research literature found a few studies that focused on the cross-cultural features of book reading at home. The

same is true about investigating children's questions and adult answers from a cross-cultural perspective. Both of these areas are seen as important in understanding communication styles of culturally diverse groups and enhancing the communication between the school and the home. Furthermore, the research found no study that addressed the multicultural perspective of children's questions. Thus, the researchers initiated the study to understand how different cultures deal with children's questions.

II. Purpose and Objective of Project

This research project was designed to understand the particular features of parent-child interaction during book reading activities across different cultural groups. Of particular interest is the children's questions during the reading sessions and parent's responses to these questions. The exploratory study was guided by two questions using an ethnographic research approach.

1. ***What differences, if any, are there among children's questioning patterns within different cultures?***
2. ***What are the differences in the response behaviors to children's questions, of the parents from different cultures?***

III. Research Methodology

Sample: Three Farsi (Persian) speaking families were selected for the field test portion of the study. An additional three Chaldeans and three Euro-American families were selected for the study. These families were selected from the El Cajon Valley Elementary School District while controlling for SES background, and age (4-5 years). A total of nine children and nine adults participated in the exploratory research study.

To identify Chaldean families, with the help of a Chaldean interpreter, a one page questionnaire in Arabic language was distributed during parent meeting sessions in two different clementary schools in El Cajon (Chaldeans use Arabic as their written language). Five families were selected and were subsequently approached to participate in the study. However, the task of approximating the ideal conditions of the study proved very hard as all these families matched most but not all the conditions of the study. The most difficult condition to meet in all three groups was the child's birth order. It was, therefore decided that this condition be waived for the sake of more important conditions like the child's age and the family's socio-economic status.

Three Chaldean families were called by the Chaldean interpreter who informed them about the study and asked them if they were willing to cooperate in the study. They all expressed willingness and the interpreter set up dates to meet with them in their homes. The researcher and the interpreter then visited these families at their homes. Each family was first asked to sign a letter of consent in Arabic which had information about the purpose and the nature of the study and what they were expected to do. This followed by verbal explanation of the kit of materials to be used through the interpreter, how to use the picture books, and a demonstration of how to work the tape recorder. They were also told not to do the task if the child was very tired or sick, and not to do all the books at one time but to present two or three books during a day period.

Families had the chance to ask questions or raise concerns about the study. Some of the questions asked by all the families related to how to go about in sharing the books with their other children; should they tell stories, or let the child interpret the story; the order in

which the books were to be used. One father wished that video tapes be used instead of books. They wanted to know if there was not a hidden agenda behind the study or if they were indirectly taking a test. They were reassured that there was not going to be any public disclosure of their names and that this was not a test. They were asked to communicate with their children in their home language, to make the interaction with their children a comfortable process, and to relax and enjoy the stories offered in the books. All families were given one week to share all the six books with the designated child and to tape the dialogues.

The Anglo American families were selected from the preschool program of one elementary school in Cajon Valley School District. The selection was performed by the preschool teacher who helped screen the families. A list of qualified families were made and the three families in the study agreed to participate. A one-hour meeting was arranged with all three mothers in the preschool area. After reading and signing the consent letter, the researcher explained the design of the study, the instruction to use the kit and the timeline. One mother in this group showed surprise to see the wordless picture books; she, however, showed enthusiasm to participate in the study.

Context: The selected families reside in the school community of El Cajon Valley Elementary School District. This community is a predominantly low to middle class. The large majority of the low income community are ethnically diverse, predominantly Latino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic Chaldeans, and other ethnic groups. These families are not connected with their child's education and culturally perceive this domain as the school's responsibility. The middle class community consists of predominantly Euro-American

families. This school community has been experiencing a growth of about 5% per year of linguistically diverse families since 1987 (CSDE R-30, 1992). The majority of ethnically diverse students in this school-community are underachieving and have limited instructional services that are cognitively demanding.

Materials: Exploratory research was conducted to find sources of children stories that had a global theme and were generalizable to many cultures. Meetings with Dr. Hale, from the Stone Library for children at the Claremont Graduate School, a specialist in children's literature, led to the identification of six wordless illustrated--story picture books--that would elicit parent-child interactions, questioning and parental responses. These picture books were used in the initial field test, with three Farsi speaking Iranian families, to determine relevancy and cultural bias. The field testing of wordless picture books proved relevant and culturally generalizable.

Each book represented an easy to follow story through illustration. All the stories had animal characters and none had any apparent ethnic bias. The use of wordless picture books eliminated the need to translate a text into another language and made it possible for all the families to use the same books. These books were: 1) "Jungle Walk", the story of a boy whose dream takes him and his cat into a tropical jungle 2) "Breakfast Time", the story of a parent and a child going through the morning ritual of getting up, having breakfast and getting ready, 3) "Frog Where are You?", the story of a little boy who loses his frog and together with his dog begins an adventuresome search, 4) "Deep in the Forest", the story of a little bear who enters the house of humans in the middle of the forest and disrupts everything, 5) "Follow Me", the story of an adventurous baby sealion and his mother who keeps an eye

on him, and 6) "The Other Bone", the story of a greedy dog. All the books had colorful illustrations except the "Other Bone" which was illustrated in black and white.

Small cassette players were used to record the parent-child dialogues during the sessions. Using the books and the tape recorders, three identical kits were prepared with each containing six books, a small tape recorder and a new cassette tape, set and ready for recording, and a blank index card for comments.

Procedure: Bilingual liaison from the El Cajon Valley Elementary School District assisted in the initial identification of Chaldeans and Euro-American families using a sociocultural profile of selected families. Six selected families were guided/trained in the procedures of using wordless illustrated story books to their children. They were coached on the best time to read to their children, to read the books during a two to three day period, with regards to selecting a comfortable setting, to read to the child when s/he was in good health, and on how to use the tape.

Families were provided with pre-selected picture books that have a global and cross-cultural theme and a tape recorder. Families were asked to read to their children at specified days and time, with the activity being documented using the tape recorder. Tapes were then collected and transcribed. A coding matrix was developed using the field test with three families and used to code parent-child interactions.

Field test. During the months of November and December 1993, three Iranian, Farsi-speaking families volunteered to participate in the field test--using story picture books and tape recorder. Tape recorder was used instead of video-tape as per families preference and because of its non-intrusive quality and cultural ramifications. The tape recordings were

collected, transcribed, and a coding rubric developed to code the parent-child interactions. This phase of the study presented many challenging issues to the researchers for undertaking the study. These included the identification of families willing to participate, finding children of the targeted age, level of SES of the families, the mechanics of recording a quality intervention, and addressing cross-cultural concerns as to what was expected of the participating families.

Data collection. Each of the three field test and six study parent-child interactions were tape recorded, while attempting to control for the most appropriate time, contextual setting, health of parent and child, interest of child in engaging in story, and level of participating comfort. At least three interactions one per day, were documented per family and lasting approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Tapes were first transcribed in the primary language of the families and translated to English by native speakers of the languages. Each transcript was then analyzed using a coding matrix.

Coding Matrix. A coding matrix was developed using categories suggested in the research literature and the findings of the field test with three Iranian selected families. Four major categories were identified to represent the children's questions. Each category was operationalized through the identification of sub-categories. These categories are: ***Textual*** (sub categories: descriptive labeling, prediction inference,); ***Extra-textual*** (sub categories: general inquiry, request situational); ***Open-ended*** (sub categories: Why and how), ***Close ended*** (sub categories: Yes/no, what, where/when, who/whose). Finally, an analysis was done to determine how many questions could be categorized as ***Persistent questions*** (repeated or series of questions to arrive at one answer). For the parental/adult responses four categories

were used to analyze their interaction with the children. These categories are: ***counter questions, simple response, elaborate response, no response, and strategic use.*** The pattern of responses for both child and parent are presented under Section V "Research Findings" of the report. Appendix A provides a sample of the above stated categories and parent-child dialogue that were used to code the interactions in the book sharing activities.

Analysis of data. The data was first transcribed and then coded for each parent-child. The data was then analyzed for patterns of interactions and adult questioning styles; charts developed and interpreted for the initial findings of the exploratory research, and a framework for further research developed.

IV. Methodological Limitations

A number of methodological limitations were found to delimit the quality of data collected. ***First*** to document the interactions between the participating parent and child, the design called for the use of video recording. Video-taping of sessions between parent-child was rejected by families due to cultural beliefs and the perceived ed intrusiveness of recording the interactions. ***Secondly***, children books with a global theme were to be used and translated to the targeted languages. These books were found to hinder culture free expression and when translating from one language to another the meaning of the story had many interpretations. Wordless story books were selected to allow for free flow communication, interaction, and dialogue between parent and child. wordless picture story books were selected to allow for free flow communication, interaction, and dialogue between parent and child. ***Thirdly***, the selected families were not closely connected to the school of their children and were very apprehensive of the research design due to lack of understanding

of American schools, their suspicion of why such project is important to the school, and the concern for what was to be recorded and described in the research. ***Fourth***, the participating Farsi and Chaldeans families did not have access to existing story books in their primary language, while the Euro-American families did have access to story books in English. ***Fifth***, the study size is too small to make any generalizations about the selected cultural groups. ***Sixth***, the birth order of the child in the selected families was not consistent across the nine families documented.

V. Research Findings

Child interaction categories. To answer the first question, "what differences, if any, are there among children's questioning patterns within different cultures", it was necessary to develop a coding matrix which could adequately represent differences in children's questions both qualitatively and quantitatively. Similarly, it was necessary to find categories which would adequately represent the characteristics of adults' responses.

To this end, a system of open coding was used; open coding is the process of breaking down the transcript, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), categories arise when concepts which seem to pertain to a similar phenomenon are grouped together under a higher order; thus, a category is a more abstract version of a concept. Categories have characteristics or attributes called properties.

All transcripts were read at least four times for patterns, possible categories and properties of categories. The first data to be recorded was the number of children's questions. Because children's inquiries were expressed in different forms, it had to be determined what

could be counted as a question.

It was decided that any of four conditions yielded a non-genuine question. These conditions are: answering in a questioning tone, repeating the adult's question, verifying the adult's question, and child verifying his/her own questions were not counted as "genuine questions". A genuine question was defined as: A question originated and asked by the child genuinely seeking information and one that could not be necessarily predicted by the adult.

It then became necessary to arrive at the characteristics of the questions which could subsequently help in the cross cultural comparison. This was done through the process of open coding. Through many readings of the transcripts it was determined that the children's questions could fall into a number of categories each of which had a number of properties. For example, all the children's questions could fall into one of two categories of Textual or Extra-textual.

Children's questions were coded as textual when they were directly related to the text at hand. In these instances the question was asked for a description or labeling of scenes, objects, or characters, hence the property (Descriptive labeling), or asked for a prediction or interpretation of the events of the scenes (Prediction Inference). A descriptive labeling question was therefore any question posed by the child about the pictures including names of objects, characters, actions that appeared to be taking place or had already taken place in the previous pages. A prediction/inference question was defined as any question posed by the child which called for a prediction of events or an interpretation of a situation.

It was determined that the children's questions could also be categorized as Extra

textual. Two types of questions fell under this category, General Inquiry, and Request/Situational questions. A child's question could be counted as general inquiry if it went beyond the scope of the text and asked for a general information. Other children's questions categorized as extra-textual were in the form of requests or questions which were unrelated to the pictures but arose from the situation of sharing the books.

Children's questions were also categorized as close or open ended. While definition of close or open ended question vary, "Why" and "How" questions are unanimously regarded as open ended questions and generally , though not always, reflect a higher level of curiosity on the part of the asker (Tizard et al, 1983). Why and How questions therefore, formed the category of open ended questions. Alternatively, questions that called for short answers or a Yes/No answer were categorized as category of close ended questions. These often began with What, Where, When, Who, Whose as well as the enabling questions (can, could) and those questions beginning with the verb "to be". Included in this category were also questions that were posed in the form of statements with a questioning tone.

The last category in children's questions which evolved from the open coding was the category of persistent questions, or series of related questions. This occurred when the children kept asking the same question until they received a response or asked a series of related questions aimed at seeking an explanation.

Parent interaction categories. To answer the second research question, "What are the differences in the response behaviors to children's questions of the parents from different cultures", following an analysis of children's questions, a series of categories were established for the patterns of adult responses. A response was defined as any adult utterance

attempting to answer or acknowledge the child's question. Some of the patterns and categories for adults' responses emerged already as children's questions were being analyzed. From the first reading of the transcripts, it was clear that individual adults had very different styles as they shared the books with the children. Individual adults differed in the amount of adult talk, type of response to children's inquiries, the amount of space they gave to children's reflections or expressions, and whether or not they used the texts to promote a certain agenda. As transcripts were read and re-read, a number of patterns stood out and were used to characterize the nature of adults' responses to children's question.

Four major categories emerged as characteristics of adults' responses to children's questions. These were Counter Question, Simple Response, Elaborate Response, and No Response. A counter question was a form of adult's response to the child's question in which the adult either returned the same question to the child, or posed a new question to the child in order to help him/her answer his/her own question.

A Simple Response was a short response. Any response in the form of "fewer than two sentences" was considered a simple response. Short utterances such as "yes/no", "uhum" "ha, ha, ha", "I don't know",or a combination of these was categorized as a simple response. The length of the sentences, however, was not a factor. As it turned out, some sentences were as short as four words and others as long as two full lines. A response of "I don't know" was a simple response only if it was not followed by "What do you think?" or otherwise an elaborate explanation.

Adult's responses which went beyond two sentences were placed under the category of Elaborate Response. The category of No Response emerged to account for situations when

the adult respondent ignored the question by changing the subject, or chose not to give a response by using phrases such as "never mind" or "forget about it".

As mentioned earlier, the adult's role in these intimate book sharing episodes could be viewed from different perspectives. One interesting piece of information gathered from these data was the use of the stories to promote a certain value. This was particularly true of the Iranian group of mothers. They frequently used the themes of the stories to promote parental control, discipline, morality, manners, loyalty to the family or home and even the concepts of beauty and happiness. This was less frequent among Anglo or Chaldean samples. In the Anglo sample, however, the stories were more frequently used to enhance the general knowledge of the child while the Chaldean group uttered more words of praise. It also appeared that both Iranian and Chaldean groups used more endearing terms in talking to their children than the Anglo group. These four features of parental communication were organized under the category of Strategic Use.

Value was defined as any attempt on the part of the adult to judge a situation as bad or good, to use the text to make a point regarding discipline, morality etc., or to make a certain conclusion that might transfer to the real life situation.

General Knowledge was defined as any time the adult used the stories to give a general information regarding the objects, characters.

Finally the use of endearing terms during adult-child communication was recorded each time the adult used such terms as "dear" "my dear" "sweetheart" etc., to address the child.

Discussion of Reseach Findings. There were no premises, assumptions, or

predictions in this exploratory research. The investigators went into the field with a few questions and came back with many more. The initial questions prior to this exploratory research were two:

1. What differences, if any, are there among children's questioning patterns within different cultures?

2. What are the differences in the response behaviors to children's questions, of the parents from different cultures?

Perhaps the first and most important point to be made is that none of the results of this small sample warrants any generalization for a cross cultural comparison at this point. The two cultural groups that were being compared were the Euro-American group and the Chaldean group. However, the results also include the Farsi speaking (Iranian) families. Although the Farsi speaking families did not represent the working class, their inclusion proved to be important for arriving at the categories and adding to the information base which may be useful for follow-up research in this area.

Five tables summarize the results of the exploratory research. ***Table 1*** presents background and data of the sample. The Euro-American and Farsi families had lived in the U.S. for more than 5 years, while the Chaldean families about one year. The Euro-American and Chaldean families were representative of working class background, while the Farsi, middle class background. With the exception of one family, all eight families had no more than two children. The birth order of the children who participated was varied and ranged from first to sixth. Four of the children were 4 years old, three 5 years old, and two 6 years old. Table 1 illustrates that for the exploratory study, the generalizability of the data

is highly limited. The findings thus only serve to formulate a coding rubric of parent-child oral interactions when using wordless story books.

Table 1. Background information.

Name	Lang.	Age	Birth order	#siblings	SES	Gender	Years in U.S.
Jessica	Eng.	4	2nd	1	WC	F	5+
Reed	Eng.	4	3rd	2	WC	M	5+
Violet	Eng.	4	1st	0	WC	F	5+
Noora	Chald.	5	2nd	1	MC	F	1
Salam	Chald.	6	6th	5	WC	M	1
Sabah	Chald.	6	3rd	2	WC	F	1
Omid	Farsi	4	1st	1	MC	M	5+
Roujan	Farsi	5	2nd	1	MC	M	5+
Payam	Farsi	5	1st	1	MC	M	5+

Table 2 Presents the frequency and categories of children questions for the three cultural groups (nine families). The frequency of responses by cultural group varies highly, with the Euro-American group having the highest count of parent-child interactions with 103 questions, the Farsi group asked 66 and the Chaldean group only 6. In all three groups, a great majority of children's questions were textual i.e., directly related to the illustrations and the stories (English 78%, Chaldean 66%, Farsi, 78%), and were of the category of close ended questions. Only 6% of the questions in the English group and 3% in the Farsi group were open ended i.e., began with "why" and "how". None of the six Chaldean questions were in this category. Finally, persistent questions (repeated series of questions to arrive at

one answer) appeared in the Euro-American group 11 times and in the Farsi group only one time.

Table 2. Children's question categories across the three language groups.

Lang.	Total # Questions	Textual	Extra-textual	Closed ended	Open ended	Persis-tent Q
English	103	76	27	97	6	11
Chald.	6	4	2	6	0	0
Farsi	66	48	18	61	5	1

Table 3 offers further analysis of the subcategories or properties of the above mentioned categories. Of the two categories of Textual and extra-textual, in all three groups the largest portion of the children's questions were of the Descriptive/Labeling type i.e., questions about the pictures including names of objects, characters, actions that appeared to be taking place or had already taken place in the previous pages. Except for the Farsi group, the General Inquiry was the second most frequent type of questions. For the Farsi group, this was prediction/inference.

Of the two categories of Open and Close-ended questions, questions requiring a yes/no type of answer were most frequent among the English and Chaldean language groups. A majority of questions in the Farsi group began with "What", and there was a higher percentage of "Where/when " questions among the Chaldean group. Finally there were a few open ended questions beginning with "How" and "Why"in the English and Farsi groups.

Table 3. Categories of questions and Frequency Distributions

CATEGORY	Sub-category	English	Chaldean	Farsi
TOTAL # QUESTIONS		103	6	66
TEXTUAL	Descriptive/ Labeling	%59	%50	%38
	Prediction/ Inference	%14	%17	%35
EXTRA-TEXTUAL	General Inquiry	%20	%33	%17
	Request/ Situational	%6	0	%11
CLOSE-ENDED	Yes/No	%50	%50	%38
	What	%38	%33	%47
	Where/When	%3	%17	%7
	Who/Whose	%1	0	0
OPEN-ENDED	How	%1	0	0
	Why	%5	0	%6

Table 4 presents the adults' responses to the children's questions. Mothers in all three groups most frequently offered a simple response to their children's questions characterized by one and sometimes two sentences. Elaborate response which was characterized by longer, more elaborate explanations were the highest among the English language group. Finally, proportional to the number of children's questions, Chaldean

mothers had the highest rate of "No Response".

Table 4. Adult response categories across cultures.

Variable	English	Chaldean	Farsi
# Questions	103	6	66
Counter Question	%10	0	%14
Simple Response	%51	%50	%64
Elaborate Response	%16	0	%9
No Response	%12	%50	%11

Table 5 presents the patterns which were most predominant in the interaction of mothers with their children. As can be seen, Euro-American mothers used the circumstances of reading the books and the illustrations to expand the child's general knowledge. Comments regarding values were most common among the Farsi group, and the Chaldean adults used more words of praise. Finally, addressing the child in an endearing language appeared in both the Farsi and the Chaldean group but not in the Euro-American group.

Table 5. Adult's Patterns of Interaction with Child in the Strategic Use of the Books.

Variable	English	Chaldean	Farsi
Values	7	1	56
General knowledge	30	0	16
Praise	4	9	0
Endearing	0	5	9
Total	41	15	81

VI. Implications of Findings

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VI. Implications of Findings

The most striking finding, albeit limited to this small sample, was the large difference in the number of children's questions between the groups but particularly between the Euro-American and the Chaldean group. It is possible that the older age range of the Chaldean children (5-6) precluded the kind of curiosity and questioning behavior that appear in the younger children (4-5). The question that remains to be answered is whether or not the pattern of the results would appear in a larger sample with the more appropriate age group, and whether cultural factors influence such patterns. Issues such as giving time and space for imagination or treating the task as a fun activity rather than a duty to be fulfilled may also influence the child's number of questions.

The patterns of children's questions were, however, more consistent across the three groups. Children asked more textual and more close-ended questions. Here, again, the Euro-American children asked more persistent questions than the two other groups. Once again, a larger sample could determine if this is a more general pattern, and if so, what cultural, linguistic, or social factors contributed to it.

Unlike children's questions, the patterns of adults' responses were not very consistent across the three groups. The proportionately higher level of "No response" in the Chaldean group, "elaborate response" in the Euro-American group and "simple response" in the Farsi group needs to be checked within a larger sample. The same is true for different frequencies of "value" "general knowledge", "endearing" and "praise" comments. It should be noted that often one mother contributed the mos. to one of the above categories, so within their respective language group, the categories of value, general knowledge, and praise are skewed.

VII. Recommendations

This study warrants additional research before concrete patterns can be found. Nevertheless, the process used has informed the researchers about how to better approach the process of examining parent-child interactions in order to understand the cross-cultural significance of questioning patterns and behaviors. Should any number of the features found in the exploratory research prove to be a consistent pattern within a given cultural group, it then become important to understand the underlying socio-cultural factors contributing to it and how it is viewed from the perspective of the adults from that culture; this can be obtained from a follow up interview with the parent. For example, it is interesting to know to what extent parents are aware of a particular cultural pattern and what purpose they think it might serve. Such information can then be put into use for creating a balanced pattern of dialogue and interaction between parents and children. Moreover, teachers' understanding of these intricate aspects of parent-child communication can help them to direct their teaching towards areas most needed in the child's life.

Development. In this study, the task of approximating the ideal conditions of the study proved very hard as the families matched some but not all the conditions of the study. To guarantee consistency of conditions among participants, in the follow up research, a broader initial pool of possible participants need to be in place to fall back on in the event the targeted families change their minds or deliver ineffective data, as was the case with two Chaldean families.

Also, to facilitate the process of transcription, more clear and audible tapes need to be taken. This may require an additional microphone attached to the tape recorder and placed

on the collar of the speakers. The follow-up research will benefit from including the information on adults' probing patterns as well. This will help understand the entire dynamics of adult-child communication. Finally, a follow-up interview with the parents will give more in-depht insight into culturally-embedded behavior while performing the research task.

Community education. Looking at a small unit of parent-child behavior across cultures, as is the case with this research, may offer, in the long run, valuable information on how the intricate patterns of cultural beliefs and child rearing habits of people from different cultures is at work in the process of the child's cognitive and emotional development. This information will be useful in many areas of education, psychology, and child development. Schools in communities of diverse student population can use this knowledge to better communicate with parents, to develop more appropriate curricula, and to learn what other cultures can offer to the process of education.

From this small research, valuable information was gathered on the ways to approach the Chaldean community and was communicated to the district office in El Cajon. It appears that reading for children is not a common practice among this group. In the process of this research, most Chaldean parents expressed willingness to read to their children and extolled on the virtues of reading but complained that they had no access to books in their native language and they could not read to their children in English. Within the last year, Cajon Valley School District has established a resource center; books, including story books in Arabic, are being compiled for the use of parents. Within project ACE (Arabic Chaldean Education), extensive parent education programs are being carried out which will benefit from the information collected by this study. If better communication with children through

reading and other activities is a necessity in this modern society, then studies such as this can contribute to the empowerment of parents and schools in achieving this goal.

Future research. The current study will be followed up using other sources in order to better understand the patterns of parent-child communication within different cultural groups. Two more cultural groups, Latinos and Vietnamese will be included in the study. In addition, each group will have at least six families. Conditions will be more tightly controlled using the experiences gathered from this study. The future research will also have a follow-up interview with the parents immediately after the study.

VIII. Significance of Minigrant Funds

The researchers believe that this was the beginning of a long term and very valuable research project that can lend information on a variety of important aspects of parent-child communication, interaction, dialogue within different cultures. The findings of this paper, thought in no way conclusive, are interesting enough to warrant more and larger studies involving more families and more cultural groups. Without the June Burnett Institute and the Minigrant, this study would not have been initiated and carried out the way it did. The researchers are grateful for this opportunity.

IX. Relationship between Minigrant and Additional Funding.

Through this exploratory study the researchers have a more concrete understanding of what they need to control in order to undertake a more comprehensive research study. The findings of the initial research will serve as the framework for seeking state, federal and private funding. The U.S. Office of Education has been contacted as well as the California Early Childhood Education Office in preparing proposals for follow-up funding.

APPENDIX A
Coding Matrix: Types of Questions and Types of Answers

Children's Questions

Examples of non- genuine questions:

The child answers in a questioning tone:

Mother: What is in his hand?
Child: Ding Dong?
Mother: Yes, a bell

The child repeats adult's question:

Mother: What kind of bear is that?
Child: What kind?
Mother: Mischievous bear isn't it?

The child uses a questioning tone to clarify the adult's question:

Mother: Kitty sees the bunny rabbit, ha? What do you think he's going to do?
Child: Kitty?
Mother: Tell me a story about this kitty and the bunny rabbit.

The child repeats his/her own question in order to clarify it for the adult:

Child: Baby. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Is that the baby's? What is that one?
Mother: That's a chair.
Child: No, this one?
Mother: That's baby's chair.

Examples of genuine questions:

Example1:

Mother: You are supposed to tell me what's happening. What's happening? This book looks a lot like Goldilocks and three bears, ha?
Child: Is Goldilocks going to come in?
Mother: I don't know, what happens?, ha!
Child: ... Ah, doesn't it look like Beauty and the Beast?
Mother: Hum.

Example 2:

Mother: That is a day in the life of...
Child: Monkey! It is a crocodile. What is that?
Mother: a pelican.
Child: Pelican. Mom, can those bite?
Mother: They eat fish, anything will bite you if they are like, if they are threatened or something. They try to bite you to protect themselves. Do you think you can [?] in the jungle?

Example 3:

Mother: How many crabs! One, two, three.
Child: How, what they got to do now?
Mother: I don't know. What do you think they want to do?

Examples of Descriptive labeling:

Question about an object:

Child: Ring the bell try to wake her up. What's that? He is yawning, she is yawning. What's that?
Mother: Never mind. He is giving the piggy back ride?
Child: Ya.

Question about an ongoing act:

Mother: Is that the same doggie?
Child: Ya. What is he catching?
Mother: That looks like...
Child: A bone!

Question about a character:

Mother: And there is the baby seal with all the little seals.
Child: Where is him?
Mother: He is back on with his friends.
Child: Right here?
Mother: Mama is back here. They couldn't fit all the seals on the same page. There, there is the mama seal. Shall we pick another book?

Question about a past event:

Mother: Really? O.K. This is this girl's cat. She is sitting in the bed and reading a book before sleeping.
Child: Did she read her book?

Mother: Now she is turning off her light to go to bed. Oh what did the cat see through the windows?

Child: What is it called?

Examples of Prediction/Inference:

Anticipatory question:

Child: Mom? What does this seal want to do?

Mother: What do you think all these crabs want to do?

Child: Fight.

Question calling for interpretation:

Mother: He says, "wake up". Oh his father is standing there, he woke up. Look, and now, like you Payam, what did he do? What did the mousy do? The mousy has gone on his daddy's back. Oh, they arrived at the table, they want to have breakfast. He wants to have cereals.

Child: Why is he mad now mommy?

Mother: He is not mad. Do you think he is mad?

Child: Yes.

Examples of General Inquiry:

Child's question goes beyond the text (Extra-textual)

Child: Ya. Um, mommy, can we eat crabs?

Mother: Ya.

Child: If we cook them?

Mother: Ya.

Child: Oh.

Mother: We boil them, and then you break the shell open and then you eat them.

Child: Oh.

Child's question goes beyond the text (Extra-textual)

Child: Crabs are all gone in the water. Crabs go in the water?

Mother: Ya, they live in the waters.

Child: Oh.

Mother: Ya.

Child: Seals don't?

Mother: They can live, they can swim and everything in the

Examples of Request/situational:

Child asking to eat something (request):

Child:	OK, now. Oh, can I have Hershey kisses?
Mother:	Hershey kisses?
Child:	Yea, I don't have to taste them to know.

Child asking about the tape recorder (situational):

Child:	What's this for? (referring to the tape recorder).
Mother:	We're doing an experiment and they want to hear you t· ll me a story.

Examples of Persistent questions:

Child asking a series of questions to one answer:

Child:	Oh, and then he, you know, goes out the [?] and then he [?] and then, and, and then he [?] the groundhog [?]. The elk, the elk. Is that what Santa Claus has? The elk, the elk?
Mother:	Reindeer, uhhuh.
Child:	Some people call them deer and some people call them reindeers, huh?
Mother:	Yeah, I guess so.
Child:	But we call them deer, huh?
Mother:	Uhuh.
Child:	And some people call them reindeers. Does Santa call them reindeers?
Mother:	Uhuh.
Child:	Santa Clause call them reindeers?
Mother:	Uhuh, I guess.
Child:	And then we call them...
Mother:	Deer. What's going on here?

Child repeating his question:

Mother:	What is he doing?
Child:	He is saying oh, oh. What is the gorilla doing mom?
Mother:	Oh, oh.
Child:	What is the gorilla doing mom?

Adults' Responses

Examples of Counter question:

Mother using "What do you think":

Child: What did the owl do?
Mother: What do you think?
Child: I don't know.

Mother forming a new question to help child arrive at an answer:

Mother: Look he's dropped the bone in the water!
Child: What happened to it?
Mother: What happens when you drop things in the water?
Child: I don't know.

Examples of a Simple response:

Mother offering a one sentence response:

Mother: These are otters.
Child: Those are?
Mother: Ya, Otters are beavers.

Mother's brief Yes/no response:

Child: He had to go back to tell them that?
Mother: Ya.

Example of an Elaborate response:

Mother responding in more than two sentences:

Child: What does it mean "go to work"?
Mother: It means going to work, like Daddy who goes to work in the mornings and works in the shop, this Mr. bear also looks like is a roommate of this one and he says get up and go to work.

Example of No response:

Mother ignoring child's last question by changing the subject.

Child: The crabs are not there anymore?

Mother: No, crabs went inside the water.
Child: Now they will die?
Mother: Die? No mommy, the crabs must live in the water.
Child: Why?
Mother: Wow, this is the end.

Examples of Value comments:

Mother enhancing parental control:

Mother: The boy is looking at the tiger and saying wow! Where did all these elephants come from? Look how big they are! Look, they are very big. This elephant. But this baby is small. He is holding his nose, is holding his mommy's hand. He will not go alone anywhere either. He will always go with her mommy.

Mother judging the boy's behavior:

Mother: But the little boy was a bad boy that morning. he kept saying: "No, no, I don't want it, What is it?

Mother promoting family bonds:

Mother: They are eating flower seeds. But it seems they are happy birds. Look! This is the mommy, this the daddy, and who is this?
Child: Is a child.

Examples of General knowledge:

Example1:

Mother: Do horses have stripes?
Child: No.
Mother: No, only zebras have stripes.

Example2:

Mother: Do you know what these are?
Child: They are seals.
Mother: Seals? I think they are sea otters. See, they got soft fur in their nuzzle?

Example of a Praise comment:

Example of a Praise comment:

Mother:	What color is the crab?
Child:	Red.
Mother:	Good job.