A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE *PRELAS 2000 ENGLISH* AND THE *PRE-IPT-ORAL ENGLISH, SECOND EDITION* FOR USE WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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ABSTRACT

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The comparative usefulness of two commonly used preschool tests of English language proficiency, the Pre-IPT-Oral English, Second Edition (PreIPT-2) and the preLAS 2000 English (preLAS-2), were investigated. The tests were analyzed according to the qualitative features and abilities measured by each, the ability of each test to distinguish between native and non-native English speakers, the comparison of test scores and teacher ratings of language proficiency, the tests' concurrent validity, and the sensitivity of each test to language growth over time. The results indicated that both tests had adequate qualitative features with the exception of an inadequate sample size for four-year-old children on the preLAS-2. Both tests have similar qualitative features and were able to adequately discriminate between native and non-native English speakers. The

participants' preLAS-2 proficiency level scores were significantly lower than those of both the PreIPT-2 and the teacher rating scale. Both tests were useful in measuring growth in language skills over time. The results indicate that the PreIPT-2 is generally an adequate measure of the oral language proficiency of preschoolers, but the preLAS-2 may underestimate young children's overall language skills.

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Chapter I

Introduction

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000), approximately 10 million American children between the ages of 5 and 17 years speak a language other than English in the home. Although census data on language dominance is not collected for children under the age of 5 years, it can be estimated that approximately 2 1/2 million preschoolers between the ages of 3 and 5 years speak a language other than English in the home. Many of these preschool children are introduced to the English language for the first time as they enter the educational system. For these young English language learners, it is legally and morally imperative that they receive appropriate services to ensure an equal educational opportunity. If these students are not accurately identified as students with limited English proficiency and provided with appropriate services, they may be left behind by our educational system.

Legally, requirements exist for both the equal education of English language learners and the determination of which children are not proficient in the English language. Opportunities for equal education are guaranteed to English language learners under federal laws and are supported by case law. Three federal laws mandate services for non-native speakers. The broadest of these is the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (1868), which guarantees all people equal protection under the laws of the United States. More specifically related to language proficiency is Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act was designed to prevent discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. It mandates that no person be discriminated against or denied the benefits of any program or activity that is federally funded, including public education. Most specific to school-age English language learners is the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974, which mandates that equal educational opportunity be granted despite language

barriers. Case law also supports the provision of equal opportunities to students who are not proficient in English (Lau v. Nichols, 1974).

In order to provide an equal educational opportunity to children who are not proficient in English, they must be accurately identified. The Lau Remedies (1975), although never published officially in the Federal Register, were guidelines created by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) which required school districts not in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to develop a plan including the method by which the district would determine the students' primary or home language. As part of this plan, the OCR said the district must assess student's English language and place them in one of five categories based on their ability to speak English. The impact of the Lau Remedies is still visible in the score level categories provided by current tests of English language proficiency and in the procedures and methods school districts use to determine the English language proficiency of their students.

Although the OCR guidelines did not mandate the use of standardized English language proficiency tests, they are the most common method of language proficiency determination for school age children (Hopstock, Bucaro, Dleischman, Zehler, & Eu, 1993). According to a survey by Hopstock et al. (1993), this method, sometimes in combination with other methods, was used to determine language proficiency by 83% of school districts with limited English proficient (LEP) students who participated in the survey. Additionally, 64% of school districts reported using English proficiency tests to determine the need for special instructional services and 74% used them for reclassification of LEP status (Hopstock et al., 1993).

Since proficiency tests are readily used for educational decision making, they must present evidence of usefulness for their intended purposes and with regard to a variety of important characteristics. Zehler, Hopstock, Fleishchman, and Greniuk (1994), listed the use of English

language proficiency assessments as very important for purposes including: (a) limited English proficiency identification, (b) placement in appropriate services, (c) determining a student's language-specific skills and weaknesses; (d) reviewing educational services placement, and (e) reviewing LEP status for exit determinations from special programming. They also rated the following characteristics as moderately or very important for all testing purposes: (a) the testing of all modalities of proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing); (b) the assessment of specific language skills and weaknesses; (c) the testing of academic language proficiency versus basic interpersonal language skills; (d) documented reliability and validity; (e) the availability of alternate forms for multiple testing; (f) limited testing and training time requirements; and (g) quick feedback of test results. Standardized English language proficiency tests should be selected according to their usefulness for the intended purposes and because they meet at least minimum standards for important test characteristics.

Currently, there are many standardized English language proficiency tests for school age children from which to choose. The first such tests were developed in the 1970s and included the IDEA Proficiency Test (Ballard, Tighe, & Dalton, 1979) and the Language Assessment Scales (De Avila & Duncan, 1978). Ulibarri, Spencer, and Rivas (1981) studied these tests and two other tests of oral language proficiency and found that the results of the four varied widely as to the numbers of students categorized as non, limited, or fluent English speakers. Over ten years later, elementary school versions of the six most frequently used English language proficiency tests, including the IDEA Proficiency Test-I (Ballard, Tighe, & Dalton, 1991) and the Language Assessment Scales 1C (De Avila & Duncan, 1990) were again reviewed for test content and technical qualities (Zehler et al., 1994). As before, the tests reviewed showed great variability in the areas of (a) item content

and structure, (b) test administration procedures, (c) theoretical bases, and (d) validity and reliability.

Reviewers and others involved in the development of language proficiency tests have identified several potential reasons for difficulties in developing psychometrically and theoretically sound language proficiency measures, including: (a) cultural differences in interpersonal communication norms and the comprehensibility of tests (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 1999; Cheng, 1987); (b) a lack of clear and consistent definitions between legislation and science for the process of identifying, placing, treating, and reassigning LEP students; (c) a lack of psychometrically and linguistically appropriate assessment tools (De Avila, 1990); and (d) problems with test content, construction, development, and the range of test scores (O'Malley, 1989). Thus, as school age language proficiency measures evolve, continued research is needed to establish the usefulness for the purposes of LEP decision-making.

The use of language proficiency measures with preschool age children is even more confounded due to the young age and widely varying experiences of preschool age children. Specifically, young children may: (a) lack understanding and concern for performing well on tests, (b) grow and change rapidly, (c) be easily distracted, (d) feel uncomfortable with unfamiliar adults or in unfamiliar places, and (e) have poor test taking skills (Hills, 1999; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1987). In addition, most tests for young children tend to have poor reliability and validity relative to school age versions (NAEYC, 1987).

Statement of Problem

Developing tests of language proficiency for preschool children is clearly a difficult undertaking. Despite the inherent difficulties, tests of English language proficiency for

preschoolers were developed approximately ten years after school age tests became available. Updated versions of these tests include the Preschool IDEA Proficiency Tests- Oral English, Second Edition (PreIPT-2; Dalton & Barrett, 1999a) and the Preschool Language Assessment Scales 2000 English (preLAS-2; Duncan & De Avila, 2000). Although the developers of the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2 provide evidence of reliability and validity in their technical manuals (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b; De Avila & Duncan, 2000), very few research articles have been published assessing the psychometric properties of either test. In addition, there is limited data for both tests concerning their psychometric properties with children in the younger age ranges. Finally, further research is needed to provide support for the purported uses of each test. For the PreIPT-2 (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b), these uses include designating language proficiency levels, aiding in educational placement decisions, providing data for redesignation decisions, and measuring progress in oral language development. For the preLAS-2 (Duncan & De Avila, 2000), these uses are aiding in appropriate educational placement decisions and measuring the developing language of native English speakers.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the current study are to examine the usefulness of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 as measures of language proficiency for preschool age children and to provide information concerning their concurrent validity. These goals were approached in a number of ways. First, the qualitative features and the abilities measured by each of the tests were examined and compared. These comparisons are reported in the literature review. Next, the performance of English speaking children in Head Start was compared to the performance of children in preschool ESL programs in order to determine the tests' ability to discriminate groups of native and non-native speakers. Teacher ratings of proficiency levels were also compared to the test results to

examine the similarities between children's performances on the tests and teachers' observations of children's language skills in the classroom. The proficiency levels and scores were then compared across both tests for all children. Finally, the tests' usefulness for detecting language growth over time was explored.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed.

1. How does the performance of children in Head Start compare to that of children in the preschool ESL programs? This question addresses the tests' overall difficulty for young children and ability to differentiate between the language abilities of young native English speakers as compared to children whose families speak a different language in the home. Head Start children were expected to score significantly better than their peers in the ESL programs since most were raised in homes where English was the primary language spoken.

2. How do teacher ratings of specific language abilities and overall English language proficiency compare to the results of the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2? This question was proposed to determine how similar children's test scores were to teacher observations of their functional language skills in the classroom. Teacher ratings of language skills and overall proficiency were expected to closely correspond to the proficiency levels obtained on both tests.

3. How do the overall proficiency scores and levels provided by the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 compare for the same children? This question explores the concurrent validity of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 in regards to both native English speakers and English language learners. It was expected that there would not be a significant difference in proficiency scores or levels between the tests.

4. How well do the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 measure language growth over time? This question explores the tests' sensitivity to language growth over time for children in ESL programming. It was expected that, if growth in language skills was informally observed by teachers in the classroom, then the test scores of the children would also significantly improve between the first and second data collection periods.

Null Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is not a statistically significant difference between the scores and proficiency levels obtained by children in Head Start and ESL programming on the PreIPT-2 or the preLAS-2.

Ho_2: There is not a statistically significant difference between teacher ratings of participants' English language proficiency and the proficiency levels obtained by the PreIPT-2 or the preLAS-2.

Ho_3: There is not a statistically significant difference between the proficiency scores obtained by children on the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2.

Ho_4: There is not a statistically significant difference within the preLAS-2 scores or the PreIPT-2 scores for ESL participants between two testing sessions conducted approximately five months apart.

Benefits of the Study

A high percentage of school districts with LEP students use standardized assessments of English language proficiency in English to determine whether a student is limited English proficient, to determine the need for special instructional services, and for reclassification (Hopstock et al., 1993). This study provides additional data to help schools determine which tests of English Language Proficiency to use with preschool age children who may be limited English proficient and in need of special instructional services. The results may also help schools to determine the usefulness of the tests for measuring progress in English language skills. Finally, the

results will add to the research literature on English language proficiency assessments for preschool age children.

Chapter II

Literature Review

In order to understand what aspects of an English language proficiency test are necessary to produce reliable and valid scores for preschoolers, it is necessary to have a foundational knowledge of the issues related to the assessment of language proficiency as well as to the assessment of preschoolers in general and preschoolers who are second language learners in particular. This literature review explores those issues as they relate to the present study. First, typical language development is described, followed by a review of the research on second language acquisition. Next, the literature review considers the difficulties and debates surrounding what English language proficiency is and how it is assessed. The next section discusses issues related to the assessment of the preschool population, particularly preschoolers who are second language learners. A final section provides an overview of the existing literature on and review of the two English language proficiency assessments used in this study, the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2.

Language Development

In the late 1950s, the scientific study of language acquisition began with Chomsky's review of *Skinner's Verbal Behavior* (Chomsky, 1959). In this foundational article, Chomsky argued that language acquisition did not follow the standard behavioral theories of the time, which contended that all behavior is learned, but rather that language acquisition depends on innate, species-specific modules that are distinct from general intelligence. Since the publication of this article, the study of language acquisition and development has been one of the most controversial topics in cognitive psychology (Pinker, 1995).

Language theories have generally centered around two principles as the main influences of language development: *nativism* (nature) and *empiricism* (nurture). Nativist theories propose that

humans possess innate abilities as part of their genetic makeup. The nativist view of language acquisition is that humans are born with a built in device that predisposes children to acquire language. Nativists note that environmental stimuli are important for language acquisition, but are not sufficient for the learning of language. According to the nativist view, children acquire language rapidly, effortlessly, and without direct instruction (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b).

Empiricist theories propose that all knowledge is gained through experience, specifically our interactions with the environment through reasoning and the senses. The empiricist view of language acquisition is that environmental factors play a greater role in language development than any innate abilities or predispositions. Empiricist theories of second language acquisition focus on the impact of the new culture on language learning.

Typical Language Development in Monolingual Children

For the purposes of the present study, the basics of first language development as it relates to second language learning and preschool age children is summarized. The basics of first language development are important to understand because preschoolers who are learning a second language may follow a similar developmental progression to younger first language learners. Understanding typical language development and skills in preschool age children is important in determining what is developmentally appropriate to expect from preschoolers.

One of the first steps in typical language development is the infant beginning to make utterances that resemble the sounds and speech patterns of the language to which they are exposed as sounds not heard in the native language become less prominent (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). As children grow to around one year of age, they use their first real words, which are often simple context bound responses to stimuli (Anisfeld, 1984). These context bound responses may be

produced easily in a given setting, but the child may not be able to apply the appropriate word in a new situation (Anisfeld, 1984).

Around the beginning of the second year, children are typically using nouns to label objects, people, or events (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Verbs are incorporated into speech as cognition and familiarity with the environment expand (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). Initially, children produce new words at a slow rate. Once they have reached a productive vocabulary of 10 words, however, they often show a *vocabulary spurt* and begin to add words to their productive vocabulary at a faster rate (Barrett, 1985).

Another advancement, occurring approximately one or two months after the vocabulary spurt, is the generation of simple sentences, which often consist of two words (Anisfeld, 1984; Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). These simple sentences contain mainly the essential content words necessary to convey meaning (usually verbs and nouns) and often omit function words such as articles, prepositions, pronouns, and auxiliary verbs (Berk, 2000). Productive syntax also emerges with the use of simple sentences (Anisfeld, 1984). Contextual word use remains common at this stage. For example, children may use the same word to identify something or someone under different conditions, to label objects linked to an important person in their lives, or to express needs. Children at this stage tend to use over-standardized verb forms and to omit or misuse inflectional endings and tenses in their speech (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b).

Around the age of three, children are able to communicate more effectively with an expanded vocabulary that includes the use of adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and verbal expressions. Children at this stage may have a command of basic conversational skills and an understanding of the function of words in referring to things and actions (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). However, language development, particularly vocabulary growth and conversational skills, is still occurring

(Glover & Bruning, 1987). While language use at this stage remains primitive and may contain errors, continued practice and experimentation with language leads to further development. Social interaction with more skilled language users allows children to acquire new vocabulary words during natural situations such as riding, eating, and playing (Beals & Tabors, 1995). During these activities, children construct hypotheses when they hear new verbal strings and test these hypotheses by further observation or by experimenting with creating new sentences. Through feedback and continued exposure, children revise and confirm their hypotheses (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995).

During the preschool years, children extend their oral language development through tasks such as rhyming and identifying initial sounds in words (Tabors, 1997). Around the age of four years, children acquire approximately 6 to 10 new words per day, improve their understanding of the meanings of words they already know, and continue to acquire more complicated forms of grammar (Tabors, 1997). Preschool age children are also learning to construct discourse, or how sentences are put together for different communicative purposes. Thus, children at this age are developing the ability to explain, argue, and tell stories (Tabors, 1997). By entry into elementary school, children's oral language skills resemble that of adults in basic syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Shaffer, 1999). However, their language and vocabulary development will continue through adolescence and adulthood (Tabors, 1997).

Second Language Acquisition in Young Children

Much of the information describing typical language acquisition also applies to learning a second language. However, the learning of a second language in young childhood adds additional complicating factors that can impact language development. Among these are situational factors that affect input or exposure to each language (Ellis, 1985; McLaughlin, Blanchard, & Osanai,

1995). Situational factors that may impact an individual child's second language development include the ages and times of year in which the child is exposed to different languages, exposure to each language via media such as television and radio, and the languages used in the community and at school (McLaughlin et. al., 1995). Other complicating factors include the child's linguistic output or opportunities to practice and speak each language, learner differences that may affect the child's willingness to learn the new language, and learner processes which impact the ease with which the child learns the new language (Ellis, 1985; McLaughlin et. al., 1995). The interplay of these factors differs for each child and may have a great influence on any individual child's second language development. Therefore, second language acquisition is not a uniform and predictable phenomenon. Despite this, some aspects of second language acquisition are relatively stable and therefore generalizable to at least some, if not all, second language learners (Ellis, 1985).

Simultaneous and sequential bilingualism. Exposure to language during the beginning stages of language acquisition can occur in many different ways. For example, a child may be exposed to both languages from birth, be exposed to only one language until entry into school, or experience any range of intermediate exposure, including code-switching where two languages are intermixed in normal adult speech (McLaughlin et al., 1995). Therefore, a distinction in types of second language acquisition in young children has become generally accepted in the literature to differentiate children who were exposed to two languages simultaneously from those who progressed to productive stages of language development in a first language before a second language was introduced. Second language learning is referred to as *simultaneous bilingualism* if the child was introduced to the second language before the age of three and *sequential bilingualism* if the second language was introduced after the age of three (McLaughlin, 1984).

McLaughlin et al. (1995) proposed a typology for combining the functions of sequential or simultaneous bilingualism with the amount of exposure and opportunity for experience in each language. They compare the amount of prior experience and exposure to the new language with subsequent opportunity and motivation to hear and use the new language to categorize four types of bilingualism. Type one, *simultaneous bilingualism*, represents children who had equal or nearly equal development and opportunity in both languages from before age three. Type two, *receptive bilingualism*, represents children who have had high exposure to a second language throughout their lives but have had few opportunities or reasons to speak the second language. These children include those who hear a second language in the media or community but speak the native language at home. Typically, children in the receptive bilingualism category will make rapid progress in English once they enter school due to developed skills in the comprehension of the second language.

Type three, *rapid sequential bilingualism*, represents children who are learning English as a second language after the age of three and who have had little exposure to English before entering early childhood education programs. These children are likely to use English as much as they can and are therefore likely to learn English more rapidly than type four children. Type four children, with the label *slow sequential bilingualism*, are learning English after the age of three and have little opportunity and motivation to use both languages.

Second language acquisition in simultaneous language learners. Children acquiring two languages simultaneously meet language development milestones at approximately the same ages as monolingual speakers of those languages, although the milestones may be met in either language or both (Fierro-Cobas & Chan, 2001). Thus, normally developing children should have acquired approximately 50 words by the age of 18 months. However, these word totals may be a

combination of the two languages. Two word combinations should be used by the age of two years, although the words combined may not always be in the same language. Simultaneous bilinguals' stages of development in each language also follow the same general pattern as their monolingual peers; however, the development in the two languages can be unequal with one language or the other being stronger from time to time depending on the amounts of input and opportunities to use each language (Goodz, 1994). Goodz explored this issue and found no simple relationship between the child's proficiency in each language and the amount of input in that language.

In addition, while the stages of language development for simultaneous language learners are generally similar, the effects of language interaction can make the stages more complicated than those experienced by children learning only one language. According to Fierro-Cobas and Chan (2001), there are two stages involved in simultaneous language development, the first of which involves an undifferentiated *single language* system comprised of elements from both languages. During this first stage, children progress in both languages through the use of single words, increased vocabulary, two word combinations, and eventually, the use of verb tenses. Children may use both languages in a single sentence or use word stems in one language with prefixes and suffixes in the other language (Fierro-Cobas & Chan, 2001). During the second stage, children begin to differentiate between the two language systems and use each as a separate system for distinct purposes. They may use one language or the other with certain people, in certain situations, or with persons of different age groups (Fierro-Cobas & Chan, 2001). Eventually, the ability to code-switch, or speak in different languages for different purposes, develops.

Second language acquisition in sequential language learners. Sequential language learners can draw on the experiences and knowledge they have developed in their first language for use in

second language acquisition (Fierro-Cobas & Chan, 2001). Thus, the stages of language progression are somewhat different for sequential language learners. Tabors and Snow (1994) proposed that young sequential language learners progress through four different stages in second language acquisition. These stages are (a) home language use, (b) the nonverbal period, (c) telegraphic and formulaic speech, and (d) productive language use. Although these four stages are discrete, they overlap and show flexibility. A child may begin to use a number of skills from the next stage, yet continue to primarily use the techniques of the prior stage. Additionally, progression through the stages varies greatly depending on a number of factors, including individual differences of the children themselves (Tabors & Snow, 1994).

During the first stage of home language use, children attempt to use their native language but eventually become frustrated with trying to make others understand. Persistence with attempting to communicate with others in the native language differs in duration depending on the child and the situation (Tabors & Snow, 1994). A study by Saville-Troike (1987) showed that children between 3 and 7 years of age continued to speak their native language in the second language setting for longer periods of time than other age groups. Often, these children spoke with English speakers in the native language as if they were understood, and English speakers often replied in English as if they too could be understood. This form of communication appeared to be generally effective in play, especially when objects and context allowed for the meaning to be inferred, but was not successful overall (Saville-Troike, 1987). The older children in the study more quickly realized that speaking in the native language was not an effective means of communication and discontinued its use (Saville-Troike, 1987).

The second stage is the nonverbal period, in which second language learners abandon the attempt to communicate in their native language with people who do not understand them (Tabors

& Snow, 1994). In a classroom where no one else speaks their language, they will not speak at all (Tabors, 1997). This period can range from a brief phase or can last for up to a year, with case studies indicating that younger children remain silent for longer periods of time than older children (Tabors, 1997). Although children do not speak during this stage, they will communicate nonverbally to have their needs met, to accomplish tasks, or to respond to requests. Tabors (1997) reports that the most common uses of nonverbal communication by preschool children in the nonverbal stage are to gain attention, make a request, protest, or joke. The use of nonverbal communication by these children often allows them to successfully participate in the classroom despite not speaking. Tabors (1997) notes that nonverbal communication is an appropriate early strategy that most young second language learners are able to use when necessary. However, the behavior is limited in its effectiveness since nonverbal cues may not be seen or understood. In addition, children in Tabors' study who continued to use this strategy over time were treated as if they were much younger or were ignored by the English speaking children.

Although speech is not used to communicate during the nonverbal period, young second language learners at this stage are beginning to actively learn the code of the new language through quiet rehearsal, repetition, and playing with the sounds of the new language (Saville-Troike, 1987). This learning consists of the two strategies of *spectating* and *rehearsing* (Tabors, 1997). Spectating involves active observations of the target language by second language learners when they are in close proximity to English speakers. According to Tabors (1997), spectating occurred most frequently in nursery school classrooms when second language learners were engaged in play with English speakers or when there were large group activities that involved the whole class. Spectating differs from simple observation in its increased intensity and focus.

Rehearsing refers to non-communicative verbalizations made by second language learners who appear to be practicing English (Tabors, 1997). These verbalizations are often made with such extremely low volume that they cannot be heard even by the children around the speaker (Saville-Troike, 1988). According to Saville-Troike (1988), these verbalizations by young second language learners often involve repetition, with younger children usually repeating only the end of an utterance and older children sometimes repeating longer phrases. Additionally, she reports that rehearsing allowed the children to privately practice vocabulary words by connecting objects, actions, or situations in the environment with the proper English word. Rehearsing also served to give children an opportunity to include English in their speech with the native language as if explaining the meanings to themselves. At other times, children seemed to be experimenting with sounds or trying out new word combinations. This experimentation sometimes included utterances made with the sounds and intonation of the second language, but consisting of nonsense words (Tabors, 1997). Other observers have reported similar non-word utterances made with the sounds of the second language (Saville-Troike, 1988). In addition to sound experimentation, Tabors (1997) suggests that these nonsense utterances are sometimes used by young second language learners to communicate beyond their vocabulary level with the use of the sounds and the knowledge of intonation that they have already acquired.

Stage three, telegraphic and formulaic speech, occurs when the child decides to begin speaking the second language. This speech is characteristically telegraphic in that it often consists of a few content words as an entire utterance and omits words not necessary for basic communication. Such telegraphic speech may be seen in the context of the child asking the name for an object and then repeating the label. Thus, telegraphic speech serves to aid in vocabulary

development through active learning of vocabulary for nouns. Telegraphic speech also includes counting, naming the ABCs, and color identification (Tabors & Snow, 1994).

Formulaic speech involves the use of formulas or unanalyzed chunks of words that the child repeats from what they have heard. These phrases are typically used in the same situations in which the child has seen others use them (Tabors & Snow, 1994). Wong Fillmore (1976) has shown that children often use these prefabricated chunks long before they have an understanding of their meaning. Formulaic speech aids children in interactions with others and allows them to communicate their ideas with a minimum of language. Tabors (1997) reports that formulaic phrases such as *lookit this, hey, uh-oh, okay, yes, no, hi, bye-bye, excuse me,* and *I don't know* were most typically used by second language learners who were early in the process of language acquisition. Wong Fillmore (1979) found that first and second grade children were able to use longer formulaic speech phrases that they found most useful in everyday situations, such as *Hey, what's going on here?, You wanna play?,* and *What did you say?*. Second language learners were generally quick to learn at least a few telegraphic and formulaic phrases in the preschool classroom and were usually successful in determining the correct situations for using the words or phrases (Tabors, 1997).

The fourth stage is productive language use that goes beyond the use of telegraphic utterances and memorized word chunks to the building of individual sentences. These sentences may be based upon the formulaic or telegraphic words and phrases the child has already learned but allow the child to expand their linguistic repertoire by beginning to make and try out their assumptions about how the language is constructed. During this process, children must analyze the language used around them and use what they have already learned about the language to construct their own utterances. Typically, the first uses of productive language are based on phrases learned

in the formulaic stage and involve pivot words and changeable open words. For example, a child may have learned the phrase *I want one* and then create phrases such as *I want toy* or *I need one*. The use of pivot and open words also occurs with first language learners during the telegraphic stage at around two years of age. Mistakes are likely to be made, but eventually children begin to show an understanding of the syntactic system of the language and apply syntactic rules to control their use of the language (Tabors & Snow, 1994).

Other Factors in Second Language Learning

When using tests of English language proficiency, it is important to consider the research related to unexpected or unusual circumstances that may occur when children are learning two languages. Knowledge of this enables test users to better understand the unique language abilities of a particular child. Some factors to consider that may impact a child's performance on tests of language proficiency include language mixing and code switching, the relationship between cognition and bilingualism, and the phenomena of first language attrition.

Language mixing and code-switching. Often teachers who work with bilingual children become concerned that children are confusing their two languages because they incorporate single lexical items from one language into the other, known as *language mixing*, or because they switch languages for an entire phrases or sentence, known as *code-switching*. Most observers of children learning two languages simultaneously have noted the mixing of languages at a lexical level (McLaughlin, 1995). Goodz (1994) studied this topic and found that mixing increased somewhat during early childhood with a peak in mixing at approximately 30 months followed by a gradual decline.

In many communities, language mixing and code switching occur in the language of adult bilinguals and are used for specific communication needs. This mixed communication may be the

norm of the community and a preferential speaking pattern due to its greater semantic power and its importance in signifying ingroup membership. Young bilingual speakers from communities where code switching and language mixing are the norm many in fact be practicing the sophisticated language patterns of their communities rather than showing confusion between the two languages.

Cognition and bilingualism. Since the first half of the twentieth century, researchers have been discussing the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development and cognitive functioning. Initially, researchers suggested that bilingualism had a negative impact on cognitive functioning (Darcy, 1953; Jensen, 1962; Peal & Lambert, 1962) and may also have a negative impact on the performance of academic tasks (Darcy, 1946). However, subsequent research criticized these studies for poor methodology, lack of control variables, and instrumentation bias (Commins & Miramontes, 1989; Cummins, 1978, 1989; Peal & Lambert, 1962).

While second language learners may pass through stages where they show varying levels of proficiency in either language, which may make them appear to be behind their peers intellectually, more recent research has shown cognitive benefits to bilingualism. These benefits are particularly evident in people who have achieved balanced bilingualism and have high, relatively equal levels of competence in two languages. Research on balanced bilinguals has shown numerous cognitive, metacognitive, metalinguistic, and sociolinguistic advantages including (a) increased awareness of and control over language, (b) greater cognitive flexibility, (c) improved analogical reasoning and classification skills, and (d) a greater understanding of the syntactic, symbolic, and arbitrary features of language (Bain, 1996; Bialystok, 1988, 1991; Diaz, 1985; Galambos & Hakuta, 1988; Hakuta, 1987; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Kessler & Quinn, 1980). Metalinguistic and metacognitive

benefits have been shown in bilingual children as early as the preschool years (Bain & Yu, 1980; Campbell & Sais, 1995; Diaz, Padilla, & Weathersby, 1991).

First language attrition. There exists a conflict between the commonly held American belief that new Americans should learn and speak only English and the beliefs of many immigrant peoples that it is important to preserve the native language and culture (Hinton, 1999). Although many immigrant parents would like their children to become fluent in both English and their native language, children often decline in fluency in their first language as English improves (Hinton, 1999). In addition to parents, educators have also identified the acquisition of full proficiency in English with a loss of the native language and associated cultural identity as a central concern (Genesee, 1994; Kagan & Garcia, 1991). Debate exists as to which types of programs work with certain types of bilingual children to facilitate English language acquisition while maintaining the native language (August & Hakuta, 1997; Garcia, McLaughlin, Spodek, & Saracho, 1995; Hakuta & Gould, 1987). Specifically, there is question as to whether early childhood programs for second language learners harm the development and maintenance of the native language and possibly language competence in general (Wong Fillmore, 1991). In addition, performance on tests of language proficiency may be misleading due to native language attrition, especially if the child is weak in both languages when tested (McLaughlin, 1995).

In the National Association for Bilingual Education's "No Cost" study, Wong Fillmore (1991) found that native language proficiency often declines when English becomes predominant. This study found that second language learners attending bilingual or monolingual preschool programs rapidly experience proficiency loss in their native language. These losses in native language proficiency reportedly result in disruptions in parent-child communication and family relationships and set the child on a high-risk developmental course. However, Rodriguez, Diaz, Duran, and Espinosa (1995) note that the "No Cost" study involved critical methodological and

conceptual flaws due to (a) it's reliance on retrospective parental report measures of the children's language use and proficiency, (b) a lack of details about the child's preschool program including duration of attendance, languages used, and type of program; (c) the use of a nonrepresentative, convenience sample of acquaintances of the interviewers, and (d) lack of appropriate control groups.

Following this study, other researchers noted the necessity of obtaining independent objective measures of components related to the language loss including (a) language use or choice, (b) language proficiency, and (c) language attitude (Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1992, 1994; Hakuta, Pease-Alvarez, Kuwahara, Silva, Whitenack, & Winsler, 1995). Studies by Faulstich Orellans, (1994), Hakuta and Pease-Alvarez (1992), Hakuta et al, (1995); and Pease-Alvarez, Hakuta, Kuwahara, Rodriguez, Silva, Whitenack, and Winsler (1992) found shifts in the choice of language used but no significant losses in proficiency when measured objectively with child language assessment methods. Further research with Spanish speaking 3 to 4 year old children enrolled in high quality bilingual preschool programs showed significant gains in both Spanish and English over the course of a year (Winsler, Diaz, Espinosa, & Rodriguez, 1999). These gains increased with a second year in the bilingual preschool program. However, the data concerning the amount of proficiency loss when children choose to speak the second language and the impact of early schooling on the development and maintenance of the first language remains unclear for children in programs other than bilingual education and who speak languages other than Spanish (Winsler et al., 1999).

Issues in Proficiency Test Development and the Assessment of English Language Proficiency

While there are a number of issues related to second language learning that must be kept in mind when using tests of English language proficiency, there are other issues concerning

program planning, test content, test development, and test interpretation that have a more direct impact on the use of English proficiency tests (De Avila, 1990; O'Malley, 1989). For example, appropriate test content, including what types of language abilities should be measured and what item types should be used, has been debated in the literature. In addition, a lack of clear and consistent definitions between legislative mandates, educational practice, and research science regarding identification and intervention decision-making makes the development of useful language proficiency measures quite difficult (De Avila, 1990). Finally, although tests of English language proficiency, like all educational or psychological tests, should be developed according to acceptable measurement standards and should consider cultural and linguistic implications, significant problems with the reliability and validity of language proficiency measures have been noted (O'Malley, 1989). The various issues impacting the development and use of language proficiency tests are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills vs. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. When determining the appropriateness of an English proficiency test, test selectors should consider the content of language skills that the test measures, both socially and academically. This distinction must be made because second language learners often appear proficient in the English language in social contexts yet perform poorly in academic content areas. This phenomenon was first noted by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) who proposed a distinction between academic proficiency and surface fluency. Donaldson (1978) furthered the discussion by suggesting a distinction between language that is *context reduced* and language that is *context embedded*.

Cummins (1984) explored the issue in greater detail and proposed that two sets of skills define language proficiency, *basic interpersonal communication skills* (BICS) and *cognitive*

academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS is described as context embedded speech that relies on external interpersonal cues and takes place between individuals in everyday communication. CALP is described as context-reduced communication that requires the communicator to rely on internal knowledge rather than situational cues to respond appropriately. Thus, communication in the settings of daily life reflects BICS, and context reduced, academic tasks require CALP.

Cummins (1984) argued that most language proficiency measures of the time tested little more than BICS and therefore students were often exited from language programming before they were able to complete academic tasks in the second language. According to De Avila (1990), tests at that time were not constructed from a BICS and CALP framework although many claimed to measure BICS and CALP. Currently, some assessment tools make a distinction between test items that represent BICS and CALP; however, they provide little advice or explanation about how these distinctions may be used, or validation for the distinction.

Discrete-point vs. integrative approaches. The type of test approach used is another important consideration in selecting proficiency tests for use with second language learners. In general, there are two types of proficiency tests: discrete-point tests and integrative approaches. However, Davies (as cited in De Avila & Duncan, 2000) suggests that it is unlikely that any language test could be entirely discrete-point or integrative in nature. Each type of item format has benefits and drawbacks for assessing the English oral language proficiency of children. Discrete-point tests assess isolated skills, aspects of skills, or discrete elements of language rather than assessing language as a whole (Oller, 1983). Due to their specificity and relative ease of use in psychometric analysis, discrete-point tests that have been validated with an appropriate norm group more easily discriminate between children who are and are not proficient than

integrative type tests do. Another advantage of discrete-point tests is their greater inter-rater reliability and ease and objectivity in scoring. However, these tests are criticized for measuring discrete skills in isolation of a natural setting or real world language environment (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b) and for ignoring the complex communicative repertoire of the individual child, which is necessary for effective communication (Trueba, 1987).

Integrative or holistic approaches, on the other hand, allow children to demonstrate their oral language skills in a variety of contexts that may have greater meaning and value to the child (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). These contexts may include tasks such as describing pictures, telling or retelling stories, answering open-ended questions, role-playing, and asking questions. Disadvantages of holistic or integrative approaches include the need for extensively trained examiners who are native speakers of the target language. These examiners must be familiar enough with the scoring of the test that they are able to quickly and accurately assess the child's observed language skills. In addition, this approach is subject to greater difficulty with maintaining acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, consistency, and accuracy (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b).

Psychometric standards. All educational tests, including language proficiency tests, should be developed according to established standards including the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA et al., 1999) in order to ensure that they are reliable and valid for their intended purpose. They must also demonstrate cultural fairness and, when the tests are used with young children, developmental appropriateness (NAEYC, 1987). Unfortunately, psychometric comparisons of formal measures of oral language proficiency have been almost impossible due to great diversity between the tests' purposes, content, methods, and standardization. A review of tests available in 1976 indicated that: different tests often measured

different aspects of language; the tests were inconsistent in the way they were developed, validated, normed, or used; few tests were based on clear theory regarding either purpose or method; and many tests were based on problematic definitions or theories that rendered them virtually useless (De Avila & Duncan, 1976). Little improvement was evidenced a decade later as O'Malley (1989) noted similar problems with formal tests of English language proficiency. Currently, many of these difficulties persist (De Avila, 1990), and research has shown that many tests of oral language proficiency do not meet even the minimum standards for reliability and validity (Fulcher, 1987; Upshur & Turner, 1995).

Cultural considerations. Cultural differences may impact how a child approaches the testing process and therefore how they perform on a given test instrument. Differences in the interpersonal communication norms of a culture may also prohibit a child from demonstrating his or her language skills to the best of their ability (Cheng, 1987). According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA et al., 1999, p. 96-97), "Linguistic behavior that may appear eccentric or be judged to be less appropriate in one culture may be seen as more appropriate in another culture and may need to be taken into account during the testing process." For example, children from some cultures may be reluctant to establish rapport with unknown adults or may be trained to speak to adults only in response to specific questions. Thus, in a testing situation such children may respond to an adult who is probing for elaborate speech with only short phrases or by shrugging their shoulders (AERA, et al., 1999).

Other cultural differences that may impact test performance include returning eye contact with authority figures, asking questions, volunteering information, or giving opinions. Such sociocultural-linguistic features should be identified and considered in the assessment process (Cheng, 1987), as should the reality that cultural differences exist between bilingual and

monolingual children (McLaughlin, 1995). Children's individual levels of acculturation to the dominant culture should also be considered when determining the value of any given assessment (Geisinger & Carlson, 1992). Cheng (1987) suggests utilizing a functional-ecological approach to promote understanding of cultural differences and experiences and how these may impact the child's language usage. If cultural differences are ignored, children may not have equal opportunity to demonstrate their true language competencies.

Culturally unfair test items may also occur due to incomprehensible input despite a child's understanding of the language used. Items or directions in an assessment session may be incomprehensible to a child if the child's culture prohibits him or her from having an understanding of the question or its expected answer. Examples provided by Cheng (1987) include a Cambodian child who was asked, "Which room do you sleep in?" with the expected answer being "the bedroom." However, the child responded "everywhere" due to cultural differences in sleeping arrangements. Another example from Cheng (1987) involved a Chinese girl who was asked to point to the object she would use to eat with. She seemed puzzled and finally pointed to pencils since they resemble chopsticks. Despite understanding the language used in these questions, the children were unable to respond correctly due to cultural differences that resulted in incomprehensible input and prohibited the child from demonstrating his or her language skills (Cheng, 1987).

Definitional problems. Although federal law has provided some guidelines for determining whether a student is limited English proficient (Improving America's Schools Act, 1994), most states do not have a common operational definition for limited English proficiency (Rivera, 1995). Contributing to the definitional problems is a lack of a fully operationalized scientific understanding of second language learning (De Avila, 1990) and debate among academicians

and practitioners about the nature, elements, and definition of language proficiency (Oller & Damico, 1991). The lack of a clear definition has resulted in school districts relying on lay theories of language acquisition to aid LEP determination policy and decisions and to permit the inappropriate determination of language proficiency through achievement testing or tests of oral language proficiency only (De Avila, 1990). As previously discussed, this is problematic since children may exhibit fluent oral English on oral proficiency tests yet be unable to acquire content area knowledge that is presented in English.

Preschool Assessment Issues

In many ways, the assessment of young children is a unique process. Not only do preschoolers tend to lack understanding and concern for performing well on tests, they also grow and change rapidly, can be easily distracted by assessment procedures, and may be uncomfortable with unfamiliar adults or in unfamiliar places (Hills, 1999; NAEYC, 1987). In addition, tests for young children have generally shown poor reliability and validity, with the least reliable and valid results occurring at the youngest age ranges (NAEYC, 1987). The NAEYC (1987) has stated that standardized tests should only be used for preschool age children when the testing will clearly provide information to improve outcomes for children. Guidelines provided by the NAEYC (1987), call for (a) the use of reliable and valid tools; (b) basing important decisions on more than one test alone; (c) the use of critically evaluated, carefully selected tests only for their intended purposes; (d) accurate and cautious reporting of test scores to parents, school personnel, and the media; (e) test administration by knowledgeable and qualified individuals; and (f) sensitivity to and recognition of individual diversity which may affect assessment results.

While tests for second language learners in general must meet many standards to be linguistically appropriate, tests for preschoolers who are second language learners must also be

developmentally appropriate and conform to the standards outlined above. As such, they must differ substantially from tests for bilingual school age children to account for developmental differences in response styles, item presentation, and test behavior rather than simply being downward extensions of tests developed for older children. It becomes clear then that the assessment of young children who do not speak English is particularly difficult since it combines two populations that require special assessment considerations. Some argue that standardized tests should not be used at all with preschool children who are second language learners (McLaughlin, 1995).

McLaughlin (1995) proposed four guidelines specific to the assessment of preschool children who are second language learners. According to these guidelines, the assessment of young bilingual children must (a) be developmentally and culturally appropriate; (b) consider the child's bilingual linguistic background when determining oral language proficiency; (c) allow the child to demonstrate their own unique skills, which may not be possible with standardized measures; and (d) involve a number of people including the children themselves as well as each child's parents, family, teachers, and staff. Measures for preschool children must also (a) utilize appropriate and understandable language, (b) contain verbal concepts which children at that specific age have typically acquired, and (c) be able to maintain the child's interest (McLaughlin, 1995). When assessing bilingual children, developmentally appropriate measures must also take the unique and varied stages of bilingual language acquisition and the varied types of simultaneous and successive bilingual development into account (McLaughlin, 1995). These aspects of the assessment process are necessary in order to obtain an accurate description of the entire context of the child's development and learning.

Previous Research with the PreLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2

A review of the literature identified only five published studies examining the use of the PreIPT or preLAS with young children (Amado, 1998; Gonzalez ,1994; MacSwan, Rolstad, & Glass, 2002; Schrank, Fletcher, & Alvarado, 1996; Wong Fillmore, 1998). These studies and their implications are reviewed here. Four of them included only school age children. The remaining study reviewed data from the Technical Manual and the Examiner's Manual of the PreIPT-Spanish (Williams & Dalton, 1989), but included no new research participants. Further, two of the studies examined the Spanish versions of the PreIPT and the preLAS for use with Spanish speaking students. Therefore, the current research has limited generalizability to understanding the use of the tests with children younger than kindergarten and children who speak languages other than Spanish.

PreLAS-2. After one year of instruction in a sheltered language program,Wong Fillmore (1998) reassessed the language proficiency of kindergarten children who had initially scored at the lowest level of the preLAS. Both the preLAS-2 and the original forms of the preLAS were used. At the end of the school year, approximately one third of these children remained at the lowest level of language proficiency. Approximately another third of the children showed English language proficiency at level 2, the second lowest level on the preLAS, and the remaining third of the children obtained scores at level 3. Overall, 93.31% of the children who began the year as non-English speakers again scored in the non-English speaking or limited English speaking range at the lowest three levels of proficiency at the end of the school year.

Another study examined the original preLAS in terms of Cummin's BICS/CALP distinction with 77 bilingual kindergarten students (Schrank, et al., 1996). The Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery—Revised (WLPB-R; Woodcock, 1991) was also included in the analysis. In

addition, teachers completed a rating scale that was used by the researchers as evidence of CALP. The study found that the preLAS and the WLPB-R showed strong concurrent validity overall for the kindergarten students. However, the WLPB-R showed a stronger correlation with the teacher rating scales of language proficiency than did the preLAS. The researchers also examined the correlations among the subtests of the preLAS to determine if the subtests were measuring similar or dissimilar aspects of oral language proficiency. At the subtest level, correlations among preLAS subtests ranged from .55 to .93 with a median correlation of .75. When the preLAS subtests were compared to the WLPB-R, the correlations ranged from .90 to .36. This suggests that some of the subtests of the preLAS and the WLPB-R measure similar skills, while others are unique to the domains of each test.

A study by MacSwan et al. (2002) examined the scores of approximately 39,000 native Spanish speaking children who completed the preLAS Espanol (De Avila & Duncan, 1986). The results indicated that approximately one third of the native Spanish speakers in the study were identified as non-Spanish proficient or limited Spanish proficient on the preLAS Espanol. In addition, the researchers suggested that certain parts of the test had subjective scoring procedures, adding to errors in measurement. Theoretical difficulties and problems with construct validity were also determined.

PreIPT-2. Gonzalez (1994) studied the language and cognitive development of 30 Hispanic kindergartners who were learning English. The PreIPT (Ballard et al., 1979) was used to estimate language proficiency along with teacher and parent rating scales of language proficiency. The results showed that although the PreIPT rated 43.3% of the children as Limited English Proficient, the teachers' ratings were at this level for only 3.3% of the children and the parents rated only 10.3% of the children at this level. On verbal and nonverbal classification tasks, the researchers

found that the children always performed at or above age appropriate levels, suggesting that the PreIPT underrepresented the children's language proficiency.

Amado (1998) reviewed the PreIPT-Spanish (Williams & Dalton, 1989) and determined that while the test demonstrated adequate reliability, evidence for validity was weak. Problems with standardization of the test were indicated and included norming samples of inadequate size, particularly in the three to four and a half year age ranges. This study was limited in that no new data was collected.

Review of Qualitative Features and Abilities Measured by the PreIPT-2 and the PreLAS-2.

Given that there are few published reviews of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2, this section aims to provide an objective review of the qualitative and psychometric features and abilities measured by each test. The review considers past criticisms of language proficiency tests and incorporates observations made during data collected for the present study.

Qualitative features. Both tests are constructed of colorful, high quality materials that appear to attract the attention of the preschool age children. Each test begins with receptive language tasks and progresses to items requiring oral responses from the child. Items are presented in a game-like format. Both tests take approximately 15-20 minutes to administer. Despite these similarities, several differences in the qualitative features of each test exist. One of the greatest dissimilarities is the difference in the ages at which the two tests can be given. The PreIPT-2 was standardized for children ages 3 to 5 years and the preLAS-2 for children ages 4 to 6 years. Thus, the preLAS-2 is less useful for early intervention programs that serve 3-year-old children. The preLAS-2 does allow for communication with the child in his/her first language to facilitate rapport and insure motivation for participation.

The preLAS-2 contains five subtests. The first four preLAS-2 subtests contain 10 items each. An audiocassette with test directions is provided for standardizing test administration. However, we found that the directions on the tape did not match directions given on the test record, making administration confusing for both the tester and the participant. Consequently, the audiocassette was not used in this study. The fifth preLAS-2 subtest asks the child to use cue cards to re-tell two orally presented stories (Duncan & De Avila, 2000). Test observations suggest that many participants had difficulty understanding what was desired from them for this task. Scoring of the preLAS-2 requires additional time as raw scores must be added and weighted to determine an overall score. Further, the fifth subtest requires the examiner to tape record, replay, and then rate the child's oral response using a six point scoring rubric. Greater familiarity with the rubric did facilitate quicker scoring.

The PreIPT-2 is comprised of four levels of difficulty. Each level contains 10 items. The test employs a graduated scoring procedure in which children attempt items at the lowest level of difficulty first. Cut off values determine whether the child should be administered subsequent levels of greater difficulty. This procedure often resulted in brief assessment times (5-10 minutes) for participants who demonstrated limited English skills. In addition, scoring of the PreIPT-2 occurs during administration and does not require additional time (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). Thus, completion of the PreIPT-2 to determine English language proficiency levels for children with limited English skills was found quite efficient.

Both tests provide proficiency scores on an ordinal scale of five increments. The preLAS-2 scores range from 1-5 and the PreIPT-2 scores range from A to E. The tests also provide designations as Non English Speaker (NES), Limited English Speaker (LES), and Fluent English Speaker (FES) based on the child's overall proficiency score. However, these designations are not

consistent across tests' proficiency levels as illustrated in Table 2.1. The Pre-IPT-2 also provides a norm-referenced percentile score.

Table 2.1

NES, LES, and FES Designations as Defined by Test

Proficiency Level	PreIPT-2 Designation		
PreLAS-2/PreIPT-2	3-4 year olds	5 year olds	PreLAS-2 Designation
1/A	NES	NES	NES
2/B	LES	NES	NES
3/C	LES	LES	LES
4/D	FES	LES	FES
5/E	FES	FES	FES

Note: NES= Non-English Speaking, LES= Limited English Speaking, FES= Fluent English Speaking.

Standardization samples. Both tests were recently standardized with samples of adequate size (i.e., $N \geq 800$) and representation with regard to geographic region and gender. Approximately one fourth of the preLAS-2 standardization sample spoke English as a first language (26.06%); whereas approximately half of the PreIPT-2 sample spoke English as a first language (50.3%). Further, the preLAS-2 sample included a disproportionate number of children five years old or older (90.88%) relative to younger children, and nearly 90% were in kindergarten or first grade. The PreIPT-2 sample represented all age ranges adequately; though, nearly half of the sample (47%) was five years of age or older. Unlike the preLAS-2, the PreIPT-2 sample did include children whose primary language is Hmong (4.7%) and who were receiving ESL services.

Reliability. Reliability indices reflect the extent to which test scores are free from measurement error. Thus, the degree of confidence a user can place in scores from a particular assessment tool is directly related to that tool's reliability. If a test is to be used for educational

decision-making, it should demonstrate reliability coefficients of .90 or higher (Flanagan, Mascolo, & Genshaft, 2000). The PreIPT-2 demonstrates excellent internal consistency at the overall test score level. The preLAS-2 technical manual (De Avila & Duncan, 2000) does not provide an internal consistency estimate at the overall test level; however, estimates at the subtest level range from .85 to .91, which is considered acceptable. The test-retest coefficients for preLAS-2 subtests were also adequate (most in the .90 range); however, similar coefficients for the PreIPT-2 were substantially lower (r = .77).

Validity. The validation of an assessment tool is best understood as a process where various pieces of validity information accumulate over time. The cumulative information then provides a basis for determining whether the tool is appropriately measuring the skill or domain it intends to measure. Both the PreIPT-2 and preLAS-2 technical manuals provide only initial data in the determination of whether the tests adequately measure the construct of English language proficiency. Neither technical manual reported the relationship of the identified test to other tests of language proficiency, which would provide the best assessment of how well the tests assess language proficiency.

Item development for both tests is well explained. The developers appropriately utilized expert consensus on content decisions, a review of language development literature, and pilot studies to examine the difficulty level of items and select final items. The PreIPT-2 appeared to better address criterion-related validity and construct validity. Reported relationships between PreIPT-2 test scores and teacher ratings of language proficiency were reasonably strong (*r* = .62 and .67). Correlations between PreIPT-2 scores and teacher ratings of general ability as well as child age were in the expected direction given the relationship between language development and overall ability and age (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b).

The preLAS-2 manual (De Avila & Duncan, 2000) only reported criterion-related validity findings for the comparison of alternate forms of the preLAS-2 subtests. These findings suggested strong consistency across abilities measured by both versions of the test. The preLAS-2 manual (De Avila & Duncan, 2000) also provided an analysis of how well the test correctly classified various groups of children. The total test scores and proficiency levels were found to clearly distinguish children of English only backgrounds from those whose first language was not English. Although these findings are positive, additional validity information for the preLAS-2 in particular is needed.

Abilities measured. Both tests purport to have items that measure receptive and expressive language abilities. However, the preLAS-2 provides separate subtest scores in these areas with one subtest that measures only receptive language, two subtests that measure expressive language alone, and two subtests that require both receptive and expressive language. The preLAS-2's division into subtests that measure receptive language, expressive language, or both allows for easy differentiation between students' receptive and expressive language skills and can be very useful for students assessed during the silent period who are nevertheless understanding some English. Each level of the PreIPT-2 has items that require both receptive and expressive language. PreIPT-2 scoring does not allow for differentiation of receptive versus expressive abilities, which makes children's performance in these two areas more difficult to interpret. However, individual item analysis is possible.

Item types. Both the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2 have items that require discrete-point and integrative scoring. The PreIPT-2 builds integrative type items into each level of the test; whereas, the preLAS-2 requires discrete-point responses in all subtests except *Let's Tell Stories*. The

preLAS-2 requires discrete-point scoring on approximately 60% of the possible weighted score; whereas, approximately 72.5% of items on the PreIPT-2 require discrete-point responses.

BICS vs. CALP. An analysis of individual items on both tests revealed that the two tests are similar in terms of the percentage of items measuring BICS and CALP. The PreIPT-2 manual provides a BICS/CALP distinction for each item and suggests that approximately 65% of the items on the PreIPT-2 are based on context bound or social language (BICS). No such information is provided for the preLAS-2; however, estimation by the primary examiner suggests that approximately 54% of the weighted score of the preLAS-2 is based on BICS items[1].

Critical Analysis of Literature and Research

Second language development in young children is a complex topic that is best understood in the context of a wide range of related subjects including first language development, theories of second language acquisition, cultural and environmental factors related to language learning, the nuances of languages, and the development of specific types of language abilities. A basic knowledge of these topics is important in understanding how proficiency in a second language develops in young children. This knowledge also aids in examining and understanding the content and structure of tests that aim to measure English language proficiency in young children.

While there has been a plethora of research related to second language development and the assessment of English language proficiency in school age children and adults, there has been less research concerning the unique features of second language development and assessment for preschool age children. The literature that has been published on second language learning in young children tends to be based on observations rather than research. This provides a strong theoretical basis from which to continue research on second language development in young children and on the usefulness of tests of English language proficiency for young children.

However, more research is needed to determine the usefulness of standardized English proficiency tests with preschool second language learners, particularly research that links theory to applied measurement and decision making in education.

Rationale for the Present Study

This literature review explored the literature on topics related to understanding and assessing second language development in preschool age children. Despite much research on these topics, questions remain about the most appropriate ways to assess the English language proficiency of preschool age children. A critical analysis of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 indicates that each test has strengths and weaknesses with regard to qualitative features and psychometric properties. However, little research has been initiated to examine the validity, reliability, and usefulness of these tests for their intended purposes. The research that is available has primarily included children of kindergarten age and older and children whose first language is Spanish. The present study attempts to further determine the usefulness the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 for preschoolers. This will in turn aid in the ongoing determination of how to best assess the language proficiency of young second language learners and how to use the information provided by the tests for educational decision making.

Chapter III

Methodology

Two waves of data collection were completed during the 2001-2002 school year. Data collection followed specific procedures as approved by the Human Subjects Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. This section describes those procedures, as well descriptions of the English language proficiency tests used in the study and the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Participants

Fifty children between the ages of three to five years (M = 4 years, 7 months) participated in the study. Twenty-seven of these children attended half-day preschool ESL programs in elementary schools in a midwestern city. Twenty-three children attended half-day Head Start programs at the same elementary schools. All participants' parents provided written informed consent for their child to participate.

The mean age of the children in ESL programs was four years, eight months, and the mean age of children in the Head Start programs was four years, six months. Of the ESL sample, 33% were female and 67% were male. Of the Head Start sample, 48% were female and 52% male. Ninety-six percent of the ESL sample was of Asian or Pacific Island decent and 4% of Hispanic decent. Of the Head Start sample, 87% were Caucasian, 4% were of Asian/Pacific Island decent, and 9% were of "other" decent. According to questionnaires completed by parents, 74% of the ESL sample spoke Hmong in the home, 4% spoke English, and 19% spoke a mixture of both Hmong and English in the home. Of the Head Start sample, 65% spoke English in the home, 4% spoke Hmong in the home, and 4% spoke another language in the home. Parents of children in the Head Start program had lived in the United States for an average of 27 years; whereas, parents of

children in the ESL program had lived in the United States for an average of 15 1/2 years. All of the participants had lived in the United States their entire lives. Additional demographic characteristics for the sample are provided in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1

Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Total Sample (N=50)	ESL Sample (n=27)	Head Start Sample (n=23)
Gender			
Female	40%	33%	48%
Male	60%	67%	52%
Race			
Asian/Pacific Islander	54%	96%	4%
Caucasian	40%	0%	87%
Other	6%	4%	9%
Language Used at Home*			
Hmong	42%	74%	4%
English	32%	4%	65%
Other	2%	0%	4%
Both Hmong and English	10%	19%	0%
Mean Age (Standard Deviation)	55 mos. (6 mos.)	56 months (6 mos.)	54 months (6 mos.)
Mean Years in U.S.	4 years	4 years	4 years

Note. Missing data existed for seven participants for "language used at home."

Table 3.2

Parent Demographics

Characteristic	Total Sample (N=50)	ESL Sample (n=27)	Head Start Sample (n=23)
Mother's Education Level*			
Less than high school	30%	52%	4%
High school graduate or GED	16%	11%	22%
Some college/technical school	30%	22%	29%
Associates degree	6%	4%	9%
Bachelor's degree	2%	4%	0%
Master's degree or Ph.D.	2%	4%	0%
Father's Education Level*			
Less than high school	16%	22%	9%
High school graduate or GED	30%	26%	35%
Some college/technical school	22%	26%	17%
Associate's degree	6%	0%	0%
Bachelor's degree	6%	7%	4%
Master's degree or Ph.D.	2%	7%	4%
Mother's mean years in U.S.	20 years	16 years	26 years
Father's mean years in U.S.	20 years	15 years	29 years

Note. Missing data existed for seven participants for "mother's education level" and for 10 participants for "father's education level."

Instruments

Preschool IDEA Proficiency Tests- Oral English, Second Edition (PreIPT-2; Dalton & Barrett, 1999a, 1999b). The PreIPT-2 is an individually administered test designed to assist in the designation of three, four, and five year-olds as non-English speakers (NES), limited English speakers (LES), or fluent English speakers (FES; Dalton & Barrett, 1999b). According to the authors, it can be used to determine appropriate educational program placement, to assist in redesignation decisions after extended instructional periods, and to assess progress in English oral language development. One overall score (A through E) is determined by how far the child progresses on increasingly difficult test items. At different ages, the levels correspond to designations of NES, LES, and FES (see Appendix A).

The PreIPT-2 samples English language proficiency in the domains of comprehension, verbal expression morphology and phonology, syntax, and vocabulary. Test items are presented in the format of a story line with a picture board. Children are to respond to various questions and prompts related to the story line (i.e. identify clothing, animals, foods, state his/her name, explain past events from his/her own life).

The domains of vocabulary, comprehension, grammar/syntax, and verbal expression are incorporated into different items of the instrument with vocabulary and comprehension being implicit to each test item. Grammar/syntax data is derived through the verbal interaction between the child and the examiner by the examiner observing for the correct use and arrangement of adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Verbal expression is assessed with each item that requires an oral response from the child. On this type of item, the examiner listens to the child's responses for appropriate use of morphology and control of the phonological structures of language.

Preschool Language Assessment Scales 2000 English (preLAS-2; De Avila & Duncan, 2000). The preLAS-2 is also an individually administered test designed for use in placement decisions for second language learners between the ages of four and six years old. According to the authors, it can also be used in the assessment of language skills of young first language learners. The preLAS-2 provides separate, weighted scores for each of five subtests in the Oral Language Component which combine to provide overall score designations of proficiency levels between 1 and 5 (see Appendix B). These proficiency levels correspond to designations of non-English speaker, limited English speaker, and fluent English speaker. A separate Pre-Literacy Component, which may be administered to five and six year olds, provides scores from 1 to 3 that correspond to designations of low, mid-level, or high pre-literacy development.

Children are presented with oral and visual stimuli and are asked to respond to questions or complete tasks. Responses are assessed according to specific criteria utilizing either discrete-point or holistic scoring. In discrete-point scoring, the child must provide a correct answer to a question with a limited range of correct answers. In holistic scoring, the child's entire response is considered and the correctness of the response is determined by comparison to sample responses of children the same age. The subtests of the Oral Language Component may be administered in any order. Translation of the instructions for each subtest into the child's native language is permitted by the test developers, but not required. Appendix C provides descriptions of the preLAS-2 subtests.

Teacher Rating Scale. A teacher rating scale (see Appendix D) was developed by the investigators to elicit teachers' ratings of each child's proficiency level according to the Language Proficiency criteria of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Wisconsin DPI; see Appendix E). The state criteria were modified slightly to include skill descriptions appropriate for preschool age children. The Teacher Rating Scale also included questions concerning how long the child had

been in the ESL or Head Start program, other programs in which the child participates, and the teacher's designation of each child as non-English speaking (NES), limited English speaking (LES), or fluent English speaking (FES).

Procedures

Participation selection and informed consent. Information about the study, informed consent forms, and demographics forms were sent home with all students in each of seven ESL and Head Start classrooms at two elementary schools (see Appendix F). Hmong translations were also sent with each child in the ESL classrooms and with children in Head Start who had parents or guardians who spoke Hmong (see Appendix G). Parents and guardians who did not grant or deny consent within approximately two weeks were sent a cover letter, stating that they would be telephoned at home to receive further information about the study, and sent a brief consent form (see Appendix H and I). Again, these documents were provided in the preferred language of the parent or guardian.

Individuals bilingual in Hmong and English were trained to provide informed consent information to parents. They utilized a phone call guide (see Appendix J) to contact and discuss the study with parents. Parents or guardians who agreed to allow their child to participate after the phone contact were asked to sign the informed consent document and return it to their child's school. They were also given the option to complete the demographics form over the telephone. Although parents may have given oral consent during these telephone calls, the only children who participated in the study were those for whom a written informed consent form was received.

Winter data collection. Data were collected over a two month period at the end of the fall semester. Examiners were graduate students in school psychology who had been trained in the administration of each test and in the assessment of young children. In order to build rapport with

the participants, examiners participated in the classrooms for approximately an hour before beginning testing. To further guarantee rapport building with the children, bilingual aides were available to translate the instructions for the preLAS-2 and provide support as needed.

All children were tested in a quiet area near their classroom. The preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 were administered in a counter balanced manner to control for practice effects across tests. In all cases, children were administered both proficiency instruments within a two week period and teachers completed the Teacher Rating Scale within this time span. All test data were reviewed and scored by the primary investigator. Individual testing times ranged from approximately 10 minutes to 40 minutes. Each child received a small toy for participating.

Spring data collection. Twenty-seven children from the preschool ESL classrooms participated in a second round of data collection at the end of the spring semester. Twenty-six children completed both the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2. Due to attendance issues and time constraints, one child completed only the PreIPT-2. Testing was conducted by the primary investigator in a fashion similar to the winter data collection.

Data analysis. Data analyses for the present study included descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by participants in the ESL and Head Start samples and of teacher ratings. T-tests were used to analyze group differences in overall raw score totals. However, nonparametric statistics including the Mann-Whitney test for independent samples and the Wilcoxin Signed Ranks test for paired samples were used for comparisons involving each test's overall proficiency scores. This occurred for three main reasons. First, it has been argued (De Avila, 1990) that language proficiency scores are best treated as ordinal data, as the interval between each proficiency level cannot be assumed to be equal. Second, the current sample violated several assumptions (e.g., non-normal distribution, heterogeneity of variance), which can impact the

robustness of parametric statistics employed for this type of hypothesis testing. Finally, the sample sizes for group level (ESL vs. Head Start) comparisons were less than optimal. See Nowacyzk (1988) for a discussion.

Chapter IV

Results

Overview

This study explored the appropriateness of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 for young children by examining their use with Hmong–American preschoolers in an ESL preschool program and with preschoolers in a Head Start program in a midwestern school district. Data was collected for participants in both the Head Start and ESL programs approximately five months into the school year (winter data collection). Additional data was collected for the students in the ESL program approximately nine months into the school year (spring data collection).

Table 4.1 provides information on the overall performance of both samples on each of the measures administered.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics Across Tests by Group

	Total Sample (N = 50)	Head Start (n = 23)	ESL (n = 27)
PreLAS Proficiency Level			
Median	1	3	1
Skewness	.82	-.22	2.08
Mean	1.98	2.78	1.30
Standard Deviation	1.25	1.31	.67
PreIPT-2 Proficiency Level			
Median	3	4	2
Skewness	.16	-.36	.17
Mean	2.96	3.57	2.44
Standard Deviation	1.18	1.16	.93
PreLAS Total Raw Score			
Mean	28.68	35.74	22.67
Standard Deviation	14.00	11.04	13.60
PreIPT-2 Total Raw Score			
Mean	16.70	21.70	12.44
Standard Deviation	10.48	11.00	7.99

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is not a statistically significant difference between the scores and proficiency levels obtained by children in Head Start and ESL programming on the PreIPT-2 or the preLAS-2.

The frequencies presented in Tables 4.2 to 4.6 indicate that a greater percentage of children participating in Head Start programming achieved higher proficiency level scores, proficiency level designations, raw score totals, and a higher percentage of individual items answered correctly on both tests than did children participating in ESL programming. A comparison for both tests indicated that the preLAS-2 ($z = -4.2$, $p < .01$) and the PreIPT-2 ($z = -3.3$, $p < .01$) generated significantly higher proficiency level scores and raw score totals ($t = -3.4$, $df = 39.5$, $p < .01$ for PreIPT-2; $t = -3.7$, $df = 47.9$, $p < .01$ for preLAS-2) for children participating in Head Start classrooms than in ESL classrooms. The teacher ratings of language proficiency based on DPI criteria were also significantly higher for children participating in Head Start than ESL programs ($z = -4.1$, $p < .01$). Thus, both tests demonstrate discriminant validity across groups, and this was consistent with teacher observations of children's language skills in the classroom.

Table 4.2

Frequency of Proficiency Levels Across Tests by Group

	PreLAS-2 Proficiency Level					PreIPT-2 Proficiency Level				
Classroom	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Head Start (n=23)	26.1	13.0	21.7	34.8	4.3	4.3	13.0	30.4	26.1	26.1
ESL (n=27)	81.5	7.4	11.1			14.8	40.7	29.6	14.8	

Table 4.3

Frequency of NES/LES/FES Designations Across Tests by Group

	PreLAS-2 Designation			PreIPT-2 Designation		
Classroom	NES	LES	FES	NES	LES	FES
Head Start (n=22)	22.7	36.4	40.9	4.5	50.0	45.5
ESL (n=27)	77.8	22.2	0.0	14.8	81.5	3.7

Table 4.4

Raw Score Totals Across Tests by Group

	PreIPT-2			PreLAS-2		
Program Type	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range
Head Start (n=23)	21.7	11.0	2-36	35.7	11.0	11-47
ESL (n=27)	12.9	7.4	3-26	22.7	13.6	0-43

Note. Total possible raw score points on preLAS-2 = 50, on PreIPT-2 = 40

Table 4.5

Raw Score Totals for Level/Subtest Across Tests by Group

	Head Start			ESL			
Test/Level or Subtest	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	t (*df*)
PreLAS/Simon Says	8.6	2.3	23	5.2	3.5	27	-4.1 (45.7)*
PreLAS/Art Show	9.0	1.8	23	7.0	3.4	27	-2.7 (41.1)*
PreLAS/Say What Your Hear	7.2	3.6	23	5.5	3.0	23	-1.7 (42.6)
PreLAS/The Human Body	7.2	2.6	23	5.3	3.1	23	-2.2 (42.7)*
PreLAS/Let's Tell Stories	3.7	3.5	23	1.5	1.6	23	-2.6(44.0)*
PreIPT/Level B	8.7	2.1	23	7.9	2.1	27	-1.2 (47.1)
PreIPT/Level C	8.0	1.6	19	6.7	2.6	15	-1.6 (21.6)
PreIPT/Level D	8.3	1.0	12	3.7	2.3	8	-5.2 (8.7)*
PreIPT/Level E	5.3	1.2	9	1.0	--	1	--

Note. Mean scores represent the sum of raw scores contributing to each subtest or level. Each preLAS-2 subtest and PreIPT Level is comprised of ten items. The preLAS-2 *Let's Tell Stories* subtest is comprised of two items each of which can earn a score ranging between one and five.

* $p < .05$

Ho_2: There is not a statistically significant difference between teacher ratings of participants' English Language proficiency and proficiency levels obtained by the PreIPT-2 or the preLAS-2.

Teacher ratings of language proficiency were received for 37 of the 50 children. Sixty-eight percent of these children were receiving ESL services and 32% participated in the Head Start program. Frequencies of correspondence between ratings are summarized in Table 4.6. Ratings correlated .58 with the preLAS-2 and .66 with the PreIPT-2, which suggests a slightly stronger association between teacher observations of oral language proficiency in the classroom and test

scores from the PreIPT-2. Similarly, the preLAS-2 resulted in proficiency scores that were significantly lower than the teacher ratings of language proficiency levels based on DPI criteria ($z = 4.5$, $p < .01$), while the PreIPT-2 did not ($z = -.6$, $p > .05$). Overall, the null hypothesis is rejected for the preLAS-2, but cannot be rejected for the PreIPT-2.

Table 4.6

Agreement Between Teacher Ratings and Test Proficiency Levels (N=37)

	Language Proficiency Level										
Teacher	PreLAS-2					PreIPT-2					
Rating	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
1	8					4	4				8
	21.6%					10.8%	10.8%				21.6%
2	6	2					5	2	1		8
	16.2%	5.4%					13.5%	5.4%	2.7%		21.6%
3	7					1	2	3	1		7
	18.9%					2.7%	5.4%	8.1%	2.7%		18.9%
4	4		6	1			2	3	5	1	11
	10.8%		16.2%	2.7%			2.7%	8.1%	13.5%	2.7%	27.0%
5				1						1	1
				2.7%						2.7%	2.7%
6			1	1						2	2
			2.7%	2.7%						5.4%	5.4%

Ho_3: There is not a statistically significant difference between the proficiency scores obtained by children on the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2.

One goal of this project was to evaluate the degree of similarity across test results for the present sample. Table 4.7 shows the degree of agreement in proficiency level results for each test across the entire preschool sample. The correlation between the preLAS-2 and PreIPT-2 was .63, which is only moderate in size. The median proficiency level scores for the preLAS-2 and PreIPT-2 were one and three, respectively. A test for significant differences in proficiency level scores generated by each measure was significant ($z = -4.9$, $p < .01$). Table 4.8 shows the lack of consistency across scores obtained by children on the two language proficiency tests. Half of the children (52%) scored one level higher and 26% of the sample scored two to three levels higher on the PreIPT-2 than they scored on the preLAS-2. Further, within group analyses indicated significantly different proficiency level scores for the preLAS-2 and PreIPT-2 ($z = -4.3$, $p < .01$ for ESL sample; $z = -2.7$, $p < .05$ for Head Start sample).

Table 4.7

Frequency of Proficiency Level Agreement Across Tests

	PreLAS-2 Proficiency Level					
PreIPT-2 Proficiency Level	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
1	5					5
	10%					10%
2	14					14
	28%					28%
3	8	2	1	3	1	15
	16%	4%	2%	6%	2%	30%
4	1	2	6	1		10
	2%	4%	12%	2%		20%
5		1	1	4		6
		2%	2%	8%		12%
Totals	28	5	8	8	1	
	56%	10%	16%	16%	5%	

Table 4.8

Frequency of Differences Between PreIPT-2 and PreLAS-2 Proficiency Levels

Difference Score	N	Frequency
-2	1	2.0%
-1	3	6.0%
0	7	14.0%
1	26	52.0%
2	11	22.0%
3	2	4.0%

Note. The difference score was calculated by subtracting the preLAS-2 proficiency level from the PreIPT-2 proficiency level.

Ho_4: There is not a statistically significant difference within the preLAS-2 scores or the PreIPT-2 scores of ESL participants between two testing sessions conducted approximately five months apart.

A final question addressed by the current study pertained to the usefulness of each test in measuring changes in language proficiency over time. Although neither tests' technical manual reports on the use of the tests over time, this area was examined to determine the tests' sensitivity to language growth in preschool age children. Twenty-five children in preschool ESL programs completed the preLAS-2 and PreIPT-2 during a second administration in May 2002. This was, on average, five months after the first administration of both tests. A summary of the sample's performance on both tests during the second administration is provided in Table 4.9. Difference scores between the first and second administration are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9

Frequency of Proficiency Levels for First and Second Administration

First Administration	Second Administration Proficiency Level									
	PreLAS-2 (n=24)					PreIPT-2 (n=25)				
Proficiency Level	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	15	2	1	1		2	2			
	62.5%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%		8.0%	8.0%			
2			2			1	2	7		1
			8.3%			4.0%	8.0%	28.0%		4.0%
3				2	1		1	3	2	
				8.3%	4.2%		4.0%	12.0%	8.0%	
4									3	1
									12.0%	4.0%
5										

Table 4.10

Difference Between First and Second Administration

	PreLAS-2		PreIPT-2	
Difference Score	n	Frequency	n	Frequency
-1			2	8.0%
0	15	62.5%	10	40.0%
1	6	25.0%	12	48.0%
2	2	8.3%		
3	1	4.2%	1	4.0%

Note. The difference scores were calculated by subtracting the second administration proficiency score from the first.

The null hypothesis was rejected because both tests showed significant increases in proficiency level scores. The ESL sample demonstrated a significant increase in proficiency level scores on both the preLAS-2 ($z = -2.75$, $p < .01$) and PreIPT-2 ($z = -2.83$, $p < .01$) between the first and second administrations. Approximately 52% of participants demonstrated gains of at least one level of proficiency on the PreIPT-2 from the first to the second administration; whereas, 37.5% of participants demonstrated similar gains on the preLAS-2.

Chapter V

Discussion

The preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 are two commonly used tests of English Language Proficiency for preschool age children. However, few studies in the research literature have examined the validity of the tests for use with preschool age children. This study examined the use of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 with children four to five years of age. Participants were enrolled in either Head Start or ESL programs at the time of the study. The differences across groups within the overall sample were examined on several levels. This allowed for a determination of the discriminant power of each of the tests. That is, children receiving ESL programming were expected to demonstrate lower language proficiency levels on each test than children not receiving such programming. In addition, by comparing scores across children in ESL programs versus those in another at-risk program, the influences of other variables (e.g., parent education level, parental income levels, children's experience in a school setting, children's instruction in pre-academic skills) on test scores were controlled for to a greater extent. Third, the comparison across groups allows for an analysis of the tests' functioning for children with typical English language development versus the performance of those children for whom English was not their first language. The following discussion addresses findings for each research question.

Research Question 1

How did the performance of children in Head Start compare to that of children in the preschool ESL program?

The present study found that the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2 both adequately discriminate between children receiving ESL programming versus those in Head Start programs. An examination of the demographics for each sample indicates that, as expected, those children

receiving ESL support were also from families where English was less likely to be the language spoken in the home. Therefore, the findings are also consistent with those reported in the technical manual for the preLAS-2, where children from homes where only English was spoken in the home also scored significantly higher than those children where English was not spoken in the home (De Avila & Duncan, 2000). This study extends these findings to a specific sample of Hmong speaking children. The PreIPT-2 manual did not explore the relationship of test scores to language spoken at home.

Research Question 2

How do teacher ratings of English language proficiency compare to the results of the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2?

The teacher ratings were not significantly discrepant from the scores obtained by children on the PreIPT-2. However, there was a significant discrepancy between the results of the teacher rating scales and the preLAS-2, with the preLAS-2 resulting in proficiency scores that were significantly lower than teacher ratings. Further analysis revealed that the differences across proficiency level scores in the entire sample did appear to be due to within group effects. Correlational analyses also suggested higher agreement between the PreIPT-2 and teacher ratings than was evident for the preLAS-2 and teacher ratings. This suggests a stronger association between teacher observations of oral language proficiency in the classroom and test scores from the PreIPT-2 than from the preLAS-2. This brings into question the accuracy of the preLAS-2 in determining language proficiency for preschool age children.

Because the teacher rating scale utilized was designed exclusively for this study, its reliability and validity has not been established. Nevertheless, teachers' ratings are commonly used in establishing criterion related validity for language proficiency tests. The technical manual for the

PreIPT-2 (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b), reported informal teacher predictions of proficiency levels and NES/LES/FES designations to provide evidence of criterion related validity. The results from the present study were similar to those reported in the PreIPT-2 manual.

Research Question 3

How do the overall proficiency scores and levels provided by the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 compare for the same children?

The preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 are both designed for use in placement decisions and educational planning of preschool age children who may not be proficient in the English language. If a test is to be used for decisions as important as program eligibility, its imperative that it shows evidence that it measures what it is intended to measure or, in other words, that it shows evidence of validity. One way to demonstrate validity is by showing a relationship between the test to other tests that purport to measure the same thing.The present study sought to determine the concurrent validity of the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 for preschool age children. The correlation between the two tests was .63, which is moderate in size. Typically correlations at at least the .80 level or higher are desirable when tests are thought to measure similar abilities (Flanagan et al., 2000). While range restriction within the ESL sample may have negatively effected the size of relationship between both tests, additional analyses of the data suggests that the two tests appear to be measuring language proficiency differently.

For example, within the entire sample of participants, only 14% of the children obtained the same language proficiency score across both measures completed. This difference was significant and suggested that the preLAS-2 generated significantly lower proficiency level scores than the PreIPT-2. Lack of agreement appeared to be greatest for those children scoring at the lowest proficiency level on the preLAS-2. Fifty-six percent of the sample obtained a proficiency level

score of one on the preLAS-2; however, 90% of the same sample obtained a score of two or higher on the PreIPT-2. An extraneous variable which may have affected these results is a possible practice effect on the PreIPT-2 for the ESL participants. All participants in the ESL program were assessed with the PreIPT-2 by their classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year, which was approximately four months before the winter data collection began. While it is believed that sufficient time had elapsed between test administrations to eliminate any practice effects, participants in the ESL program may have been more familiar with this test and therefore earned higher scores. The time of year that the data was collected may also have impacted participants' levels of concentration and motivation on the tests.

Analysis of the overall performance of the Head Start group alone also helps to explain the differences in findings across the two tests. Scores earned by Head Start participants were not similar at the lowest proficiency levels. According to the preIPT-2, 5% of Head Start participants earned designations of NES; whereas 23% of Head Start participants earned designations of NES on the preLAS-2. Although the tests differ in their use of proficiency levels to determine NES, LES, or FES designations, the high percentage of children who earned the NES designation in the Head Start sample seems improbable even for an at-risk population that may demonstrate potential language delays. When combined, the above findings all suggest poor concurrent validity across the two tests. While the two tests purport to measure similar constructs, children in the present study earned different language proficiency scores depending on the test utilized. It appears that the preLAS-2 may be too difficult for four-year-old children, even those who are native English speakers. Similarly, other research on the English and Spanish versions of the preLAS and the preLAS-2 has suggested problems with test difficulty, especially for children who score at the lower proficiency levels (MacSwan et al., 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 1988).

An post hoc analysis of the percentage of children passing each test item across the two tests also suggests that the preLAS-2 is more difficult than the PreIPT-2 at the lowest levels for preschool aged children. Percentages of children passing each item were lower for both the Head Start and the ESL groups on the preLAS-2 as compared to the lowest levels of the PreIPT-2 (Levels A and B). When examined according to the raw score totals for each subtest or level, the children tended to earn lower raw scores on the *Say What You Hear, The Human Body,* and *Let's Tell Stories* subtests of the preLAS-2 than they did on the levels of the PreIPT-2.

An examination of the preLAS-2's development may account for the differences observed. While the test is designed for children 4 years of age and older, standardization data indicates that a limited number of children under the age of 60 months were included in the normative sample. Therefore, the normative data collected may not accurately represent typical language abilities of young second language learners. Another difference in the standardization samples which may have an impact on the validity of the norms for preschool age children is the number of participants in the normative sample that represented typical English language development. Since preschool age children's language abilities are still developing, even children who are raised in homes where English is the primary language spoken may have great variability in their oral language abilities. Including a representative number of children from homes where English is the primary language spoken in the standardization sample would allow for normal variability in overall language development to be more readily acknowledged. This could lead to more accurate language proficiency scores and level designations for younger children whose language skills are still developing within the normal range of language variation.

Although analysis in this area was not conducted, the designations made by the PreIPT-2 for native English speakers may also have value as a measure of first language development. Both the

PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2 technical manuals (Dalton & Barrett, 1999b; De Avila & Duncan, 2000) list the assessment of the developing English language abilities of first-language learners of English as a use. However, for preschool children, the preLAS-2 rated a much higher than expected percentage of these children as non-English speaking (22.7%) and therefore does not appear to have adequate sensitivity at the lower ends of language development to be useful in educational planning. The PreIPT-2, however, appeared to adequately distinguish between children with the least developed language abilities (4.5%) and those with limited but more developed language abilities (50%). Teachers could benefit from a quick and objective measure to aid them in deciding which children in their classrooms show the greatest language delays as opposed to those children with more adequate language skills who choose to not consistently display them in the school setting.

Research Question 4

How well do the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 measure language growth over time?

The ESL sample completed both tests for a second time at the end of the school year, which was approximately five months after the first administration. On the second administration, significant increases in proficiency levels were obtained on both tests. However, the PreIPT-2 showed a greater sensitivity to change as 52% of the sample earned scores at least one proficiency level higher on the second administration. Only 37.5% of the preLAS-2 sample demonstrated similar gains of at least one level. In comparison, a study by Wong Fillmore (1998) indicated that two thirds of kindergartners in a sheltered English program who scored at the lowest level of proficiency on the preLAS or preLAS-2 at the beginning of the year made gains of at least one proficiency level by the end of the school year. This appears somewhat discrepant from the current findings. While the discrepancy could be due to the increased time between test administrations,

the older age of the majority of the children, or the type of instructional programs in which the children participated in the Wong Fillmore study, it again suggests that the preLAS-2 may be less useful in the language proficiency assessment of younger children. Informal teacher interviews and classroom observations suggested that many of the children in the ESL classroom had made large gains in English language proficiency, such that the increases in scores on the PreIPT-2 appear to be a more accurate indication of the children's functional performance in the classroom.

Overall Conclusions

The preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2 were comparable in terms of qualitative features. Both tests are appealing to young children and were adequately developed in terms of recommended test development procedures. However, the standardization sample of the preLAS-2 included an inadequately small sample of children in the four-year old age range. A significant difference was found between the scores of participants on the preLAS-2 and the PreIPT-2, with the preLAS-2 providing significantly lower proficiency level scores and designations. Teacher ratings of language proficiency compared more closely to the results of the PreIPT-2 and were significantly higher than the scores derived from the preLAS-2. Both tests appeared to adequately measure language growth over time, but preLAS-2 scores remained lower than PreIPT-2 scores on the second administration. Overall, this study suggests that the preLAS-2 has limited usefulness as a measure of English language proficiency for use in important educational decisions concerning preschool age children.

Limitations

The research plan for this study called for more participants; however, language constraints and political concerns surrounding the ESL program prevented more parents from consenting to the study. The resulting sample size was smaller than desired and did not allow for more powerful

statistical analysis to be used in examining the findings. In addition, several characteristics of the sample hinder the generalizability of the findings. Most of the English language learners in the study spoke Hmong whereas a sample with greater language variability would have lent itself to findings that generalized to other language groups. The sample was also geographically isolated in one midwestern school district and in two elementary schools. Further research should extend the findings of this study with children who speak other languages and are from other geographic locales.

Additional limitations include the questionable reliability and validity of the Teacher Rating Scale, which was created for this study. Because the rating scale was not pilot tested, its reliability and validity as an indication of language proficiency has not been established. Previous research has suggested that teacher ratings of language proficiency are highly subjective and may be influenced by factors such as the teacher's language background and attitudes toward language minority students (De Avila, 1984). As stated in the literature review, such informal measures may also be inaccurate due to responder bias if responders feel the test results could affect their employment status (De Avila, 1990).

As previously discussed, another issue involved the timing of the data collection. Data collection, for the most part, was conducted in the weeks preceding winter break and the end of the school year. This could have impacted participants' levels of motivation and concentration. In addition, the timing of the winter data collection after the start of the school year meant that participants in the ESL programs had been previously assessed by their classroom teacher with the PreIPT-2. Since the classroom administration of the PreIPT-2 was conducted at the beginning of the school year, it is felt that adequate time elapsed between the administrations to eliminate any practice effects. Additionally, testing observations suggest that participants in the ESL program,

especially those at the lower levels of proficiency, did not experience practice effects that resulted in inflated scores on the PreIPT-2. This is due in part to the progressive nature of the questions on the PreIPT-2, whereby participants are not exposed to higher test items once they reach a ceiling on the test and did not seem to recognize many test items. In addition, because the test items are presented in English, receptive language skills that are difficult, if not impossible, to imitate due to practice effects are required.

Implications for Future Research

This study prompts a number of research questions concerning the use of English language proficiency tests with preschoolers. As previously mentioned, other studies could explore the generalizability of the current findings with larger samples of children from other language backgrounds and in other geographic areas. This would produce further evidence for or against the use of these tests with preschool populations.

As discussed in the literature review, there is a lack of agreement about the nature of language proficiency and, therefore, what is most appropriate and important to test when assessing a student's proficiency. Many suggestions from the relevant literature are not yet being carried out in practice and have not yet undergone subjective analysis. Issues such as appropriate test content, including item type, discrete-point verses holistic response type, and the measurement of BICS and CALP, require further discussion and study. Of particular importance is the need to study tests or testing methods that claim to include content of a certain type in order to determine if theory has been effectively translated into practice.

Issues related to the assessment of preschoolers and English language learners are still unresolved in the literature. As the current study suggests, too often tests for preschoolers or second language learners do not have adequate statistical properties to justify their use for program

placement decisions. Alternative assessment methods may provide a solution to the difficulties with standardized assessment with these two populations, but must also undergo thorough critical analysis and research. With the current emphasis on alternative assessment techniques such as instructionally embedded assessment, portfolio assessment, narrative reporting, observations, interviews, and play based assessments, research should continue to be conducted to establish the usefulness and efficiency of these methods. These alternative assessment techniques should be analyzed in terms of how they compare with teacher ratings of language proficiency and with standardized measures. The usefulness and efficiency of these alternative assessment measures should be considered as an alternative or supplement to standardized measures of language proficiency. The use of portfolio assessment techniques for language proficiency evaluation has already received support from a number of researchers (McLaughlin, 1995; Meisels, 1991; Navarrete, Wilde, Nelson, & Hargett, 1990; Valdez Pierce & O'Malley, 1992).

Many standardized measures of language proficiency that are currently in use also lack research support. Future research is needed to examine the concurrent validity of both the PreIPT-2 and the preLAS-2 with other tests of English language proficiency for preschoolers. Very little research has been done in this area despite the need for determining the language proficiency and learning needs of young children who may benefit from early intervention. Longitudinal research comparing the results of preschool language proficiency tests to the results gained when the child is old enough to take the school age forms of the tests would also be beneficial. Would tests for preschoolers and tests for school age children produce the same proficiency levels and designations on the day before and after a child's fifth or sixth birthday?

The ability of standardized tests to measure language growth over time is a final area in need of future exploration. This study has suggested that the PreIPT-2 may be useful in measuring

language growth over relatively short periods of time for preschool children. Future research is needed to further examine the sensitivity of tests of language proficiency at measuring language growth over longer lengths of time. Findings concerning the ability of the tests to measure language growth over time would aid teachers and schools in determining program effectiveness and the usefulness of different programs and instructional strategies.

Continued research and discussion about the nature and assessment of language proficiency will enable America's schools to develop and improve their offerings to the steadily increasing number of second language learners and bilingual students. The examination of language proficiency issues with regard to young children will aid in ensuring that all children are able to receive equal opportunities for education. Early intervention services in particular may enable our youngest children to achieve academic success throughout their educational careers. The first step in this intervention process is having assessment tools that are appropriately developed and researched.

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Endnotes

[1]These distinctions and a study by Schrank, Fletcher, and Alvarado (1996), which examined the original preLAS in terms of BICS and CALP, aided in the determination of items on the preLAS-2 as BICS or CALP. In general, items on the preLAS-2 that included common social question or pictures that provided context cues were recorded as BICS. Items that involved spatial relationships, repetition without context cues, or included abilities necessary for school success were recorded as CALP. The *Say What You Hear* subtest, which involves repeating a sentence word for word, was considered an aspect of CALP because the sentences lacked a contextual basis. The *Let's Tell Stories* subtest, which requires retelling a sequential story aided by pictures, was included as half BICS and half CALP because it requires the sequential recalling and retelling of a story but allows context cues in the form of pictures.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Cover Letter, Informed Consent Form,

and Demographics Form - English

September 29, 2001

Dear Parent,

We will be studying the usefulness of two English language screening measures in identifying children for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The Eau Claire School District and the University of Wisconsin-Stout support the project. Findings will be used to help the school district make decisions about the ESL program.

We are asking for your child's participation in the study. This involves allowing him or her to complete two English language proficiency screening tasks while at school. Graduate students from the School Psychology Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout will complete all screenings. Screenings will occur at your child's school and will take about 40 minutes. Some children will be asked to participate again in the spring. You will be notified ahead of time if your child is asked to participate again.

Parents who allow their child to participate are assured that information will be kept private. Names of children participating will not be publicized. Children who complete the study will receive a treat for their participation. You may also receive a brief written summary of your child's results if requested.

If you allow your child to participate, please sign and return the attached "Informed Consent Form" to your child's teacher. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the project coordinator, Jennifer Siders at 233-0860.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Siders, Project Coordinator
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Rick Savolainen, Director of Auxiliary Programs
Eau Claire Area School District

Mary Beth Tusing, Research Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Stout

ESL Teacher
Eau Claire Area School District

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PURPOSE: This project will examine the usefulness of two English language proficiency tests in determining English as a Second Language (ESL) program eligibility. Approximately 70 children in the school's ESL and Head Start programs will participate.

PROCEDURE: Graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Stout will administer the tests to children. Children will be tested while at school. Testing will take about 40 minutes. A teacher's aid familiar to your child will be present during testing. Some children will be tested again in the spring with parent permission. You will receive a letter before testing if your child will be tested in the spring. If other aspects of the project change, you will be notified with a letter before the changes occur.

RISKS: There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. There will be no costs to you.

BENEFITS: You will receive feedback about your child's performance. Findings from the study will be used to help the Eau Claire Area School District make decisions about the ESL program, including how to identify children eligible for the program. Teachers may use children's scores for classroom planning. The study will also add to the knowledge of children's language development.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information will be kept confidential. Children's names will not be used on testing records. Instead, all records with information about children will be identified with a code number. Each child's performance will only be shared with his/her teacher and parents. Information about the group's performance will be published in a report to the school district and may be published in a professional journal. No reports will identify children's names.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. Refusal to allow your child to participate will not hurt your child in any way. You or your child may discontinue participation at any time. If your child appears uncomfortable, testing will be stopped. To withdraw participation, notify your child's teacher or the researchers noted below.

CONTACT PEOPLE: Your child's teacher will have more information about this project. You may also contact the project coordinators with questions.
Jennifer Siders, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-233-0860)
Mary Beth Tusing, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-232-2657)
If you have questions about your or your child's rights as a research participate, or if you feel you or your child have been injured, you may contact Dr. Ted Knous at 715-232-1126 at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Please sign below if you would like your child to participate. Return the bottom of this form to your child's teacher. This top is for you to keep.
✂----------

I give permission for my child _____ to participate.
child's name

_____ _____
Parent Signature **Date**

Please complete this form and return it to your child's teacher.

Child's Name: **_____**

Child's Birthday: **_____ Month _____Day _____ Year**

Sex: **_____ Male _____ Female**

Race:
_____ Caucasian
_____ African American
_____ Asian/Pacific Islander
_____ Other (specify _____)

How long has your *child* ***lived in the United States?***

_____ Years

How long has your child's *parents/guardians* ***lived in the United States?***

Mother: **_____ Years**
Father: **_____ Years**

What language does your family use *the most* ***at home?***
_____ Hmong
_____ English
_____ Other (specify _____)

What is your child's *mother's education****?***
_____ less than high school
_____ high school graduate or GED
_____ some college/technical school
_____ associate's degree
_____ bachelor's degree
_____ master's degree or Ph.D.

What is your child's *father's education****?***
_____ less than high school
_____ high school graduate or GED
_____ some college/technical school
_____ associate's degree
_____ bachelor's degree
_____ master's degree or Ph.D.

List the ages of the other children living in your home.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Cover Letter, Informed Consent Form,

and Demographics Form – Hmong

10 Hli tim 5, 2001

Nyobzoo Tsoom Niamtxiv,

Peb yuav siv ob yam kev sojntuam uas tsimnyog los tshawb nrhiav txog cov menyuam uas ntxim yuav tau txais kev kawm nyob rau hauv phab Lus Aaskiv ua Lus Hom Ob – *English as a Second Languag program*. Tsev Kawmntawv Cheebtsam Zos Dejntshiab thiab lub Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-*Stout* los kuj nrog txhawb rau qhov kev sojntsuam no. Qhov kev nrhiav tau zaum no yog yuav siv los pab cheebtsam tsev kawmntawv – *school district* txiavtxim siab saib yuav ua licas thiaj li yuav pab tau tej menyuam uas tuncua lus Aaskiv kom zoo tshaj qub tuaj.

Peb yuav nug nej cov menyuam kom lawv pab nrog koomtes zaum no. Qhov no yuav txuamyuaj rau ob qhov tshawbfawb txog kev paub lus Aaskiv lub sijhawm lawv tuaj nyob rau hauv tsev kawmntawv. Cov tub kawmntawv qibsiab fab Pabcuam Neeg – *Psychology* ntawm lub Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-*Stout* yuav ua kom tiav qhov kev tshawbfawb no. Qhov kev tshawbfawb yuav muaj nyob rau hauv koj tus menyuam lub tsev kawmntawv thiab nws yuav siv sijhawm li 40 feeb los ua. Muaj ib txhia yuav raug thov kom ho koomtes dua ntxiv nyob rau thaum lub caij nploojntoos hlav. Peb yuav qhia kom nej paub uantej yog tias peb yuav thov kom lawv koomtes dua.

Tsoom niamtxiv uas tso rau nej tej menyuam koomtes, kom nej ruajsiab tias peb yuav ceev tej no cia tsis pub leejtwg paub. Cov menyuam uas koomtes tej npe los peb yuav tsis muab qhia rau neeg paub. Txhua tus menyuam uas ua tiav qhov kev tshawbfawb zaum no yuav tau txais ib qho dejsiab rau lawv txoj kev koomtes. Yog koj xav paub txog koj tus menyuam qhov uas nws teb tau no ho sau ntawv tuaj hais rau peb.

Yogtias koj kam koj tus menyuam koomtes, thov pab suam koj lub npe rau daim ntawv Inform Consent Form" thiab xa tuaj rau nws tus xibhwb. Yog koj tseem tshuav lwm lo nug ntxiv losyog txhawjxeeb, thov hu rau tus saibxyuas zaj no, *Jennifer Siders* tau rau 715-233-0860.

Pheejxeeb,

Jennifer Siders, Tus Siab
Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-Stout

Rick Savolainen, Director of Auxiliary Programs
Tsev Kawmntawv Cheebtsam zos Dejntshiab

Mary Beth Tusing, Tuavxa
Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-Stout

ESL Teacher
Tsev Kawmntawv Cheebtsam zos Dejntshiab

TSO CAI KOOMTES RAU KEV TSHAWBFAWB

LUB NTSIAB: Qhov kev npaj no yog tsim los sojntsuam txog ob txoj kev paub lus Aaskiv thiab los kho saib tsimnyog leejtwg yuav tau txais Kev Pabcuam Lus Aaskiv Hom Lus Ob – English as a Second Language program. Kwvlam li 70 leej menyuam ntawm cov ESL thiab cov Pib Kawmntawv – Head Start programs yuav raug koomtes.

KABKE: Cov tub kawmntawv ntawm lub Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-Stout yuav uas cov saib qhov kev sim no rau cov menyuam. Lawv yuav raug sim nyob rau tom tsev kawmntawv. Kev sim yuav siv sijhawm li ntawm 40 feeb. Ib tug pab tus xibhwb uas nej cov menyuam twb swm lawd yuav nrog lawv nyob lub sijhawm sim no. Muaj ib txhia yuav raug sim dua ntxiv nyob rau thaum caij nploojntoos hlav yog niamtxiv tsocai. Yog tias ho muaj kev hloov licas, peb yuav qhia rau nej paub uantej yuav hloov.

PHEEJ HMOO: Tsis tau muaj dua ib qhov dabtsi tsis zoo txog txoj kev kawm no. Nej yuav tsis raug them nqi dabtsi.

QABHAU: Koj yuav tau txais koj tus menyuam tej kev nws ua tau nyob rau hauv kev tshawbfawb zaum no. Yam uas peb nrhiav tau zaum no yuav raug siv los pabcuam Tsev Kawmntawv Cheebtsam Zos Dejntshiab-Eau Claire Area School District txiavtximsiab txog phab ESL, nrog rau kev tshawb saib tus menyuam twg tsimnyog yuav tau txais txoj kev pabcuam no. Tejzaum cov xibhwb yuav tau siv lawv tej sibtw-scores tau ntawd los ua qhov npaj rau nws chav qhia. Kev kawm zaum no kuj yuav pab qhia tau tias lawv ho txawjntse txog tej lus lawm ntau pestsawg.

QHIA TSIS TAU: Txhua yam kev tshawb tau yuav ceev cia tsis pub qhia leejtwg. Lawv tej npe los yeej tsis tso rau hauv tej ntawv sim. Tsis yog li ntawd xwb, tagnrho tej ntaubntawv ceev tseg yuav raug hloov ua ib tug leb-c*ode number* lawm xwb. Txhua tus menyuam txoj kev ua tau mas tsuas yog nws tus xibhwb losyog niamtxiv thiajli paub wb. Kev nrhiav tau ntawm pab pawg no yuav raug tshabxo rau cheebtsam tsev kawmntawv thiab tejzaum yuav nthuav tawm nyob rau hauv ib qho *professional journal*. Txawm li ntawd los yuav tsis qhia txog leejtwg tus menyuam npe rau.

TUAJYEEM KOOMTES: Kev koomtes ntawm koj tus menyuam rau qhov kev tshawbfawb no yog losntawm kev tuajyeem xwb. Tsis tsocai rau koj tus menyuam koomtes los yuav tsis ua rau nws tuncua dabtsi. Koj losyog koj tus menyuam yuav tsotseg thaumtwg los yeej tau. Yog pom tau tias koj tus menyuam tsis khabseeb lawm, peb yuav nres tsis sim ntxiv lawm. Yog yuav tsis koomtes, qhia rau koj tus menyuam tus xibhwb losyog cov tub tshawbfawb uas muaj npe teev rau nram no.

COV NEEG NEJ NUG TAU: Nej tus menyuam tus xibhwb yuav paub zoo txog zaj no. Koj los yeej hu tau rau cov saib qhov kev tshawbfawb zaum no yog koj muaj lus nug.

Jennifer Siders, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-233-0860)
Mary Beth Tusing, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-232-2657)

Yog tias nej ho muaj lusnug txog nej thiab nej txojcai txog kev txuamyuaj rau kev sojntsuam losyog tshawbfawb, losyog tias koj lossis koj tus menyuam ho raug mob, koj hu tau rau Research Services uas yog (715-232-1226 ntawm Lub Tsev Kawmntawv Qibsiab-Stout.

Thov pab suamnpe rau togtw nram no yog tias koj kam tsocai rau koj tus menyuam koomtes. Xa togtw no rov tuaj rau koj tus menyuam tus xibhwb. Tog saum no yog koj tug rau koj khaws cia.

- -

(txiav ntawm no thiab xa tog no rov tuaj)

Kuv tsocai rau kuv tus menyuam _____ nrog koomtes.
(menyuam npe)

_____ _____
(Niamtxiv Suamnpe) (Hnub)

Thov pab teb daim ntawv no thiab xa rov tuaj rau koj tus menyuam tus xibhwb.

1. Menyuam lub npe _____

2. Menyuam lub hnubnyoog _____

3. _____ Tub
   _____ Ntxhais

4. Haiv
_____ Tawvdawb
_____ Asflivkas Asmesliskas
_____ Esxias/Pasxisfiv Aisliasnrawm
_____ Lwm haiv (Qhia kom meej _____)

5. Koj **tus menyuam** nyob tebchaws Asmesliskas no tau ntev licas lawm?

   _____ xyoo/s

6. Koj tus menyuam **niamtxiv/tus saibxyuas** nyob tebchaws Asmesliskas no tau ntev licas lawm?

   Niam _____ xyoo/s
   Txiv _____ xyoo/s

7. Nyob rau hauv vaj hauv tsev nej siv haiv neeg twg cov lus **heev tshaj**?

8. Koj tus menyuam **leejniam kev txawjntse** ne?
   _____ Qis dua high school
   _____ Tiav high school losyog tau GED
   _____ Kawm mentsis kauslej lossis thevnivkaum
   _____ Tiav Associate
   _____ Tiav Bachelor
   _____ Tiav Master losyog Ph.D.

9. Koj tus menyuam **leejtxiv kev txawjntse** ne?
   _____ Qis dua high school
   _____ Tiav high school losyog tau GED
   _____ Kawm mentsis kauslej lossis thevnivkaum
   _____ Tiav Associate
   _____ Tiav Bachelor
   _____ Tiav Master losyog Ph.D.

9. Teev cov menyuam nrog koj nyob tej hnubnyoog.

   1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
   5. _____ 6. _____

Appendix C

Brief Informed Consent - English

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study. You will receive a phone call in the next few days from a bilingual student who will explain the study to you and answer any questions you may have. If you decided to allow your child to participate after the phone call, please sign the form below and return it to your child's teacher.

Before you agree, the researchers must tell you many things about the research project. These are given below.

- They must tell you about the purpose, procedure and duration of the research.
- They must also tell you about how many people will be in the study.
- They must tell you about any foreseeable discomforts, risks, or costs to you.
- They must tell you about the possibility with which these risks or discomforts may happen.
- They must tell you about the benefits of your child's participation in the research.
- They must tell you how information regarding your family and child will remain private.
- They must tell you how your child can stop participating in the project after it has started.
- They must tell you what will happen if you decide for your child to stop participating.
- They must tell you how you will be given new information that may affect your willingness to allow your child to participate.

If you agree to allow your child to participate, you must be given a signed copy of this document and a written summary of the research.

You may contact **Jennifer Siders at 715-233-0860** or **Mary Beth Tusing at 715-232-2657** any time you have questions about the project.

You may contact Dr. Ted Knous at 715-232-1126 if you have questions about your or your child's rights as a research participant, or what to do if you feel you have been injured.

Your child's participation in this research is voluntary, and you will not be penalized or lose benefits if you refuse to allow your child to participate or decide to stop.

Signing this document means that the research project, including the above information, has been described to you orally and that you voluntarily agree to allow your child to participate.

_____ _____

signature of parent date

_____ _____

signature of witness date

Appendix D

Brief Informed Consent – Hmong

TSO CAI KOOMTES RAU KEV TSHAWBFAWB

Uantej koj yuav lees, cov tub tshawfawb yuavtsum tau qhia ntau yam rau koj paub txog qhov kev tshawbfawb thiab nws muaj rawsli nram no.

- Lawv yuavtsum qhia lub homphiaj, kabke, thiab lub sijhawm ntawm qhov kev tshawbfawb no rau koj.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia tias muaj pestsawg leej yuav koomtes rau qhov kev kawm no.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia uantej rau koj tias puas muaj tej yam tsis khabseeb ua, pheejhmoo, losyog raug them nqi.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj tias, yog muaj tej yam yuav tau pheejhmoo lossis tsis khabseeb no no yuav muaj dabtsi tshwmsim.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj txog yam zoo uas yuav tswmsim nyob rau qhov kev koomtes thiab tshawbfawb no.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj paub txog nej tsevneeg thiab koj tus menyuam tias tej luag nrhiav tau no yuav tsis pub rau leejtwg paub.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj tias txawmyog nej tus menyuam uas twb pib lawm los, yog nws xav tso tseg thaumtwg los tau.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj paub tias yuav muaj dabtsi tshwmsim yog koj txiavtximsiab kom koj tus menyuam tsotseg tsis koomtes lawm.
- Lawv yuavtsum qhia rau koj paub tias lawv yuav muaj xov tshiab qhia rau nej paub txog tej yam yuav muaj los cuamtshuam rau qhov tsis kheev koj tus menyuam nrog koomtes.

Yog tias koj kheev koj tus menyuam nrog koomtes, koj yuavtsum tau suamnpe rau daim ntawv no thiab daim uas sau qhia txog qhov kev tshawbfawb no.

Yog koj muaj lusnug txog yam peb yuav tshawbfawb no thov hu rau **Jennifer Siders**
715-233-0860 losyog Mary Beth Tusing 715-232-2657 thaumtwg los tau.

Yog tias koj ho muaj lus nug txog koj lospuas koj tus menyuam txojcai txog kev txuamyuaj rau kev sojntsuam losyog tshawbfawb, losyog tias koj ho yuav ua licas yog tias koj raug mob; koj hu tau rau Dr. Ted Knous 715-232-1126.

Koj tus menyuam txoj kev koomtes zaum no yog losntawm kev tuajyeem xwb, thiab koj yuav tsis raug rau txim dabtsi lossis poob ibyam dabtsi, yog tias koj ho tsis kam tso koj tus menyuam koomtes lossis cheem tsis pub nws ua.

Suamnpe rau daim ntawv no txhais tau tias qhov peb yuav tshawbfawb, thiab nrog rau tej lus saum no, peb tau muab qhia rau koj thiab koj txaus siab yuav tso koj tus menyuam koomtes.

_____ _____
niamtxiv suamnpe hnub

_____ _____
tus ua povthawj npe hnub

Appendix E

Telephone Call Guide

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Explanation of the study
- ✓ Ask for consent
- ✓ Demographics form
- ✓ Tell parent we will be sending home a paper to sign and return
- ✓ Thanks!

Sample introduction: Hi! My name is _____ and I'm a student at UW-Eau Claire. I'm calling about a research project at your child's school. The project looks at the usefulness of two measures of English language ability and could help schools all over to decide which test they should use or if they should use either one. Children in the study leave the classroom for about 30 minutes with an examiner from UW-Stout and a bilingual aide and go to another room in the school. The child takes two tests that are set up like games and then gets a toy and goes back to the classroom. So far, most kids that have participated have had fun. Do you have any questions?

➔If parent agrees that their child can participate: "Great. We'll be sending home a form that we need you to sign. Also, I need to ask you a few questions for the study." Get demographic info. Thank parent.

Study information:

> **PURPOSE:** This project will examine the usefulness of two English language proficiency tests in determining English as a Second Language (ESL) program eligibility. Approximately 60 children in the school's ESL and Head Start programs will participate.
>
> **PROCEDURE:** Graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Stout will administer the tests to children. Children will be tested while at school. Testing will take about 40 minutes. A teacher's aid familiar to your child will be present during testing. Some children will be tested again in the spring with parent permission. You will receive a letter before testing if your child will be tested in the spring. If other aspects of the project change, you will be notified with a letter before the changes occur.

RISKS: There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. There will be no costs to you.

BENEFITS: You will receive feedback about your child's performance. Findings from the study will be used to help the Eau Claire Area School District make decisions about the ESL program, including how to identify children eligible for the program. Teachers may use children's scores for classroom planning. The study will also add to the knowledge of children's language development.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information will be kept confidential. Children's names will not be used on testing records. Instead, all records with information about children will be identified with a code number. Each child's performance will only be shared with his/her teacher and parents. Information about the group's performance will be published in a report to the school district and may be published in a professional journal. No reports will identify children's names.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. Refusal to allow your child to participate will not hurt your child in any way. You or your child may discontinue participation at any time. If your child appears uncomfortable, testing will be stopped. To withdraw participation, notify your child's teacher or the researchers noted below.

CONTACT PEOPLE: Your child's teacher will have more information about this project. You may also contact the project coordinators with questions.

Jennifer Siders, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-233-0860)
Mary Beth Tusing, University of Wisconsin-Stout (715-232-2657)

If you have questions about your or your child's rights as a research participate, or if you feel you or your child have been injured, you may contact Dr. Ted Knous at 715-232-1126 at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Appendix F

PreIPT-2 Designations

Table F1

NES/LES/FES Designations Based on PreIPT-2 Score Levels

	Score Levels				
Age	A	B	C	D	E
3 and 4 year olds	NES	LES	LES	FES	FES
5 year olds	NES	NES	LES	LES	FES

Note: NES = non-English speaking, LES = limited English speaking, and FES = fluent English speaking.

Appendix G

PreLAS-2 Designations

Table G1

PreLAS-2 Proficiency Levels by Age and Total Score

Total Score (4-year-olds)	Total Score (5- and 6- year olds)	Proficiency Level	Interpretation of Numerical Levels
		Oral Language Component	
0-56	0-61	1	Non-English Speaker (NES)
57-66	62-71	2	Limited English Speaker (LES)
67-76	72-81	3	Limited English Speaker (LES)
77-86	82-91	4	Fluent English Speaker (FES)
87-100	92-100	5	Fluent English Speaker (FES)
		Pre-Literacy Component	
N/A	0-59	1	Low
N/A	60-79	2	Mid-level
N/A	80-100	3	High

Appendix H

Description of PreLAS-2 Subtests

Table H1

PreLAS-2 Subtest Descriptions

Subtest name	Description
Simon Says	A receptive language task of ability to comprehend and follow oral directions. This test requires total physical responses from the child. The subtest gives directives in simple sentences with vocabulary words that refer to parts of the body and to items commonly encountered in household environments.
Art Show	An expressive language task that uses graphic stimuli to elicit labels for concrete nouns without inflectional markers. Three items on this subtest also require the child to state the function or purpose of the stimuli.
Say What You Hear	A sentence imitation task that assesses receptive and expressive language ability. To succeed on this task, children are required to repeat sentences with the correct morphological and syntactical features including grammatical forms such as negatives, imperatives, and use of plurals, possessives, past tense, comparatives adjectives, auxiliary verbs, contractions, reflexive pronouns, and third person singular.
The Human Body	An expressive vocabulary task similar to *Art Show* in that it utilizes graphic stimuli to elicit labels for concrete nouns. All items on *The Human Body* are parts of the body. Lexical items tested in both *Art Show* and *The Human Body* include concrete nouns, single word responses,

	words without inflection markers, words commonly used in household environments, words commonly acquired by native English speakers by age four to six, and items that can be scored with allowances for regional and dialectical variations.
Let's Tell Stories	Assesses both receptive and expressive language and is considered by the test makers to be an integrative rather than discrete approach to language testing. In this task, the child listens to a story of approximately 75 words while looking at four pictures that correspond to the story. They are then asked to retell the story in their own words. This is repeated with a second story and the scores are combined. Three stories are available to choose from to account for cultural and regional differences and preferences. This subtest requires holistic scoring by a trained scorer.
Pre-Literacy	Administered only to five and six year olds, success on this task requires expressive and receptive language skills. Children are to follow the path of a game board consisting of questions in the categories of letter recognition, number recognition and concepts, color recognition, shapes and space, reading, and writing.

Appendix I

Teacher Rating Scale

Student Name: _____ ***School:*** _____

Number of Weeks in Program: _____ weeks

Other Programs in Which the Student Participates:
_____ Head Start
_____ Early Childhood Special Education
_____ Birth to Three Program

Please check one of the following based on your classroom observations of the student.
_____ Non-English Speaking (NES)
_____ Limited English Speaking (LES)
_____ Fluent English Speaking (FES)

Please check one of the following based on your classroom observations of the student.
_____ LEVEL 1 – BEGINNING/PREPRODUCTION
- child does not understand, speak, read, or write English with any degree of fluency,
- child may know a few words or expressions in English

_____ LEVEL 2 – BEGINNING/PRODUCTION
- child understands simple sentences in English
- child speaks only isolated words
- if age appropriate, child is at an emergent level of reading and writing in English

_____ LEVEL 3 – INTERMEDIATE
- child understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty
- with effort and assistance the child can carry on a conversation in English, understand parts of lessons, and follow simple directions
- child makes noticeable errors in grammar
- if age appropriate, child is at a beginning level or reading and writing in English and needs assistance in content areas to achieve at an appropriate level for his/her age and grade

_____ LEVEL 4 – ADVANCED INTERMEDIATE
- child understands and speaks conversational English without difficult
- child understands and speaks academic English with some difficulty
- if age appropriate, child is at an intermediate level of reading and writing in English

_____ LEVEL 5 – ADVANCED

- child understands and speaks conversational and academic English well
- if age appropriate, child needs assistance in reading and writing in content areas to achieve at an appropriate level for his/her age and grade level

_____ LEVEL 6 – FULL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

- as age appropriate, child understands, speaks, reads, and writes English
- child possesses thinking and reasoning skills to succeed in academic classes at or above his/her grade and age level

Based on your observations of the child in the classroom on a daily basis, please check skills below that the child consistently demonstrates in English using the following code:

0= does not consistently perform in English
1= performs consistently in English
N= no opportunity (please use this category only if the child has no opportunity to perform the skill; if there has been reasonable opportunity and you have not observed the child performing the skill, please record a 0)

_____state his/her name
_____state his/her age
_____state his/her gender
_____identify family members
_____identify body parts
_____answer yes/no questions appropriately
_____demonstrate an understanding of basic spatial relationships
_____demonstrate an understanding of basic number concepts (1, 2, & 3)
_____identify basic colors
_____identify basic foods
_____demonstrate knowledge of spatial relationships
_____form plurals of singular nouns
_____predict future actions
_____use the present progressive verb tense
_____express personal preference
_____give a logical response to a simple question
_____describe feelings
_____express himself or herself using the present, present progressive, and past tenses
_____use adjective comparatives: big/bigger
_____express logical thought
_____demonstrate use of descriptive adjectives of size
_____follow a three-stage command in sequence
_____recall and retell major facts of a simple story
_____use possessive pronouns: his/her
_____demonstrate adjective superlatives
_____express cause and effect relationships

Appendix J

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Proficiency Level Designations

These descriptions of the English language proficiency classifications are designed to augment the definitions given in Chapter PI 13, Wisconsin Administrative Code. English language proficiency classifications must be determined by DPI approved instruments and rubrics.

Use the number codes 1-7 to indicate "English proficiency" status as follows:

1. *Beginning/Preproduction:*
   The student does not understand or speak English with the exception of a few isolated words or expressions.

2. *Beginning/Production:*
   The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty. The student understands parts of lessons and simple directions. The student is at a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English, significantly below grade level.

3. *Intermediate:*
   The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty. The student is post-emergent, developing reading comprehension and writing skills in English. The student's English literacy skills allow the student to demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance.

4. *Advanced Intermediate:*
   The student understands and speaks conversational English without apparent difficulty, but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy. The student continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance.

5. *Advanced:*
   The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English well. The student is near proficient in reading, writing, and content area skills needed to meet grade level expectations. The student requires occasional support.

6. *Formerly LEP/Now Fully English Proficient:*
   The student was formerly limited-English proficient and is now fully English proficient. The student understands, speaks, reads, and writes English, and possesses thinking and reasoning skills to succeed in academic classes at or above the student's age or grade level.

7. *Fully English Proficient:*
   The student was never classified as limited-English proficient and does not fit the definition of a limited English proficient student outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Title IX sec. 9101(25)(A)-(D)