Bilingual Literacy of an Indonesian Third Grader in Transnational Context

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Abstract

Bilingual literacy practices within the power hegemony of English-only classroom are increasingly being challenged in this century. However, there remains a dearth of research on Indonesian children navigating their language and literacy learning in transnational contexts. This article examines evidences of an Indonesian – U.S. transnational third grader honing her literacy skills in the new social and schooling system. Using a case method with interviews and observations, the focal participant's reading and writing ability was documented. Findings show that the focal participant had demonstrated emergent awareness and knowledge of English language as she engaged in print-based activities and conversations about prints. Through translanguaging, the focal participant was able to tap into a variety of linguistic and communicative resources to make sense of texts. Implications from this study highlight meaningful learning experiences for transnational students' literacy development and how literacy learning in such contexts can be reconceptualized.

Keywords: literacy, bilingual, transnational context, Indonesian student

1. Introduction

Indonesian government sends a great number of scholars to study in the United States for a graduate degree. This opportunity allows them to bring their family across the country, which then shapes a new language and literacy learning of their children. The children's ability to communicate, to read and write in a new language other than their home language determines their social and educational trajectory in the new place (Huerta & Perez, 2015; Potts & Moran, 2013; Owodally, 2011).

This study describes the literacy ability of an Indonesian family, who arrived in the United States experiencing transition into the new learning environment. In particular, this study describes the reading and writing development of the focal child in the context of biliteracy. The father was a doctoral student majoring reading and literacy, and the mother held a bachelor-degree in accounting. This family has two children who had to navigate new lives, including new language, culture, and schooling system. The focal participant in this study was a third grader female whose first language is Indonesian language and is actively learning English as a second- or additional-language. She already acquired basic English language since she was in Indonesia as a first grader but was minimal. She also had learnt to read and write in Indonesian language well. Therefore, her experiences in navigating both the English and literacy in the U.S. then provides uniqueness that intertwined with her heritage language and culture.

The focal participant is characterized as a bilingual in this study, which means an individual who speaks two or more languages that she might be fluent in one language and less fluent in another (Baker, 2011; Collett, 2018). The central interest of this study is her language and literacy development in which the use of English as a second language is primarily rooted for her academic success in the U.S.'s school (Cummins, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Literacy development here is technically defined as children's ability to read and write in English, including oral language (August et al., 2009). Since bilinguals bring a distinct set of knowledge to attend to literacy learning, their experience in learning the language, reading, and writing should be taken into account. Current scholarship shows that children activities around text across two languages and nations are embedded in a complex and shifting terrain of ideologies, norms, individual experiences, and attitudes (Collett, 2018; Pietikainen & Pitkanen-Huhta,

2013).

Few studies have examined children' experiences in a transnational context, particularly their processes of developing literacy in a new language that emerge and unfold through everyday lives. To provide some perspective, Gort (2006) investigated the writing processes of eight emergent bilingual children as they composed stories in two languages in a Writing Workshop (WW) context. The research was situated in two first-grade classrooms in a Spanish/English Two-Way Bilingual Education program in the north-eastern USA. Cross-case analyses, from six months of observation data, revealed similarities and differences in students' cross-linguistic skills, as well as patterns of transfer in composing written text. However, changes over time of these children's writing development were still unclear.

Reyes and Azuara (2008) argue that "although children exposed to a writing system develop print knowledge, the age at which they become aware of this knowledge and the processes of development vary" (p. 375). The context or environment in which children are part of also influences their learning and development (Dworin, 2006; Nguyen, 2017). Additionally, less research is found focusing on Indonesian contexts and their potential home literacy practices, particularly studies that examine children' experience living in transnational context. Zen (2017) maintain that only four studies found in her review about research on bilingualism in Indonesia, and all of them provide insights on the interaction of two languages within Indonesian culture and learning environment.

The present study reported the experiences of an Indonesian third grader transitioning into a new learning environment in the United States and her literacy development in English. This study, therefore, is theoretically significant to inform and extend the notion of literacy development in two languages (Brooks, 2016; Garcia, 2009; Gort, 2006; Hoffman, 1991; Zepeda, 1995) and the discussion of bilingual emergent literacy (Bialystok & Herman, 1999; Collett, 2018; Reyes & Hernandez, 2006; Torribio, 2001), which are attached to the context of Indonesian family in the U.S.

1.3 Understanding Bilingualism

Bilinguals is technically defined as individuals who use a home language alongside with one or more other languages in which their level of proficiency in one language might be stronger than the other (Garcia, 2009; Reyes, 2012). Bilinguals are often characterized by their speech features. Hoffman (1991) mentions that bilinguals usually have foreign accent in their speech, incorporate words or expressions from the other language, and sudden switch from one code to the other which may occur more than once within the same utterance. In addition, Baker (2011) argues that since language is not static, a person's use of two languages often raises questions about where, when, and with whom. It means that in profiling language use of bilinguals, the context or domain, content, and style of the language should be carefully examined because two languages are changing and evolving over time and space.

There is considerable consensus in research that bilingualism benefits children whose native language is other than English to learn the English and literacy (Garcia, 2009). In school setting for example, bilingual program has gained more recognition in which wide opportunities to use first language are emphasized to facilitate learning the English. As a case in point, The National Literacy Panel's report (August et al, 2006) underlined that bilingual instructed in their first language and simultaneously in English (bilingual instruction) relatively performed better on measures of English reading proficiency than those instructed in English-only programs. This statement echoes that instructional program for bilinguals might work best when they provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in their first language. It was consistent with the preceding review by Slavin and Cheung (2005) that although there were far too few high-quality studies found among the 13 studies focusing on elementary reading for Spanish-dominant students, nine favored bilingual approaches on English reading measures, and four found no differences, with a median effect size of 0.45. Indeed, as Goldenberg (2011) has pointed out, "bilingual's learning to read in English probably need additional supports to make instruction more productive for them" (p. 699), which might include instruction in their first language.

1.4 Understanding Emergent Literacy

The term of emergent literacy appeared in response to different conceptual understanding of what literacy and reading are and how children are viewed in their ability to read and write at early ages. Before it was introduced, reading readiness perspective has greater influences on the field of education that a child should attain certain stages of maturation to be able to read and write or to get formal instruction of reading. If a child is not yet "ready" to read (immature), then formal instruction should be postponed. According to Teale and Sulzby (1986), reading readiness perspective views children's development as it is controlled by "the mental processes necessary for reading" (p. ix).

Departing from the above assumption of development, Teale and Sulzby (1986) further pointed out five

characteristics of reading readiness paradigm as follows: (1) children should master basic skills of reading before getting formal instruction (pre-reading), (2) the instruction should only focus on reading not writing, (3) the instruction more focuses on formal reading than functional reading, (4) the formal instruction neglects other aspects of development that a child might have been acquired before beginning formal instruction, and (5) children should pass stages of readiness and reading skills that should be monitored by periodic testing. Through these characteristics of reading readiness, the reading program in schools then "generally includes activities to develop auditory discrimination and auditory memory; visual discrimination and visual memory; letter names and sounds; and word recognition as well as more general skills" (p. xiii).

In her pioneer research, "the reading behavior of five-year-old children", Clay (1967) argued that children development in learning is no longer relevant to the structured developmental stages as proposed by preceding experts on reading readiness. The social context of children, culture, and individual difference also affect greatly how children progress in learning. Clay challenged the hypothesis that children "grow first, read later", and she proposed the idea of "natural way to learn". A notion in which a child is an active agent and language user, and that environment or adults may affect children to develop from what they have already known. She underlined that "children came to school with very different behavior repertoires and individually different strengths and weaknesses" (p. 24).

Based on her research, Clay (1967) suggests that children should not be avoided with contact with printed language just because they are considered intelligently immature. It can avoid them to learn visual perception of print, the directional constraints on movement, the special types of sentences used in books, and the synchronized matching of spoken word units with written word units. This notion is therefore challenged reading readiness perspective on reading instruction that regardless the stages of maturity, a child can progress in reading through proper instruction and improve visual sensitivity to letter and word forms, appropriate directional movements, self-correction, and synchronized matching of spoken word units with written word units. It also puts development in another perspective that "…progress must be dependent on the strengths and weakness of individual children who differ markedly in prior achievements and growth rates" (p. 20).

Being informed by Clay's research (1967) and other literatures, Teale and Sulzby (1969) coined the term "emergent literacy" as an alternative to reading readiness paradigm. They mentioned some characteristics of emergent literacy, such as (1) children literacy development may begin before they receive any formal instructions, (2) literacy development includes reading and writing (oral and written language) that are interrelated rather than sequential, (3) literacy develops in real life settings and is functional that should not be separated from formal instruction, (4) the critical cognitive work in literacy development begins from birth to six age, (5) written language is learnt through active engagement with environment and adults in particular social context, and (6) children can pass through certain stages in a variety of ways at different ages. Emergent literacy, as such, views reading and writing as developmental process of becoming a reader and a writer, rather than stasis. In another word, reading and writing development comes from within the child and from the the social context.

2. Method

This study focused on observing and understanding the reading and writing development of an Indonesian bilingual living in the U.S. A case study was employed as the research method to arrive at a comprehensive description and understanding of the participants. Stake (2000) confirmed that case study emphasizes the lived experiences of the participants in constructing knowledge about the cases, which is in line with the constructivist paradigm.

2.1 Participants and Setting

One Indonesian family participated in this study. They arrived in the United States in 2015 following their father who was pursuing his doctoral degree in reading and literacy program. In particular, the focal participant named pseudonym as Sarah is a female student. She was a third grader experiencing the new schooling system in the U.S. Her brother was a preschooler who was also new with the language and learning environment. According to the father, the focal participant had received formal English lessons at school back in Indonesia, but her proficiency to either communicate or read and write in English was still limited.

The father recognized that sometimes there were code-switches at home between Indonesian language and English. These code-switching practices were apparent when the focal participant speaks either to her parents or to her younger brother. She also often imitates certain English words, chunks, or phrases that are sometimes inappropriate to the context of when the conversation takes place. Concerning reading and writing ability, the father said that the focal participant still needs translation for some words. However, the father was not able to evaluate her current

reading level at the time this study was conducted. There was limited information about it from her teacher too. The only source for her to learn English at home was her father.

The focal participant's experiences in learning and developing English literacy was the focus of this study. Her reading and writing ability were documented for six weeks of observation. The analysis discovers her growing understanding about the English and literacy, which explains emergent literacy paradigm for bilinguals.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Informal interviews were conducted with the father and partial 30 minutes of shared reading and writing activities with the focal participant, which involved observation for six weeks. Her record of oral language using was collected by using Clay et al., (2007) instrument, and Clay's (1975; 2005) reading and writing assessment for identifying her level of literacy skills.

Clay et al's (2007) record of oral language is a standardized procedure to measure proficiency of a child in oral language. It contains of three parts of Level Sentences. The researchers read each sentence aloud and asked the focal participant to repeat it. Her response was scored as correct only if the sentence has been repeated exactly as presented. Each correct sentence is scored one point. As suggested by Clay et al, the procedures began with Level 2. If the focal participant is successful at repeating all the sentences at Level 2, she can be credited with passing all Level 1 sentences. However, if she is struggling with Level 2, then she should be given all Level 1 sentences. Each level contains of two parts with seven sentences each. A total score for each level is 14 and a grand total of 42 for all levels (Look at Figure 1 for illustration). The oral language ability was also documented by asking the focal participant to read a familiar book followed by some questions. She was asked to respond to the questions verbally as well as to retell the story in her own words.
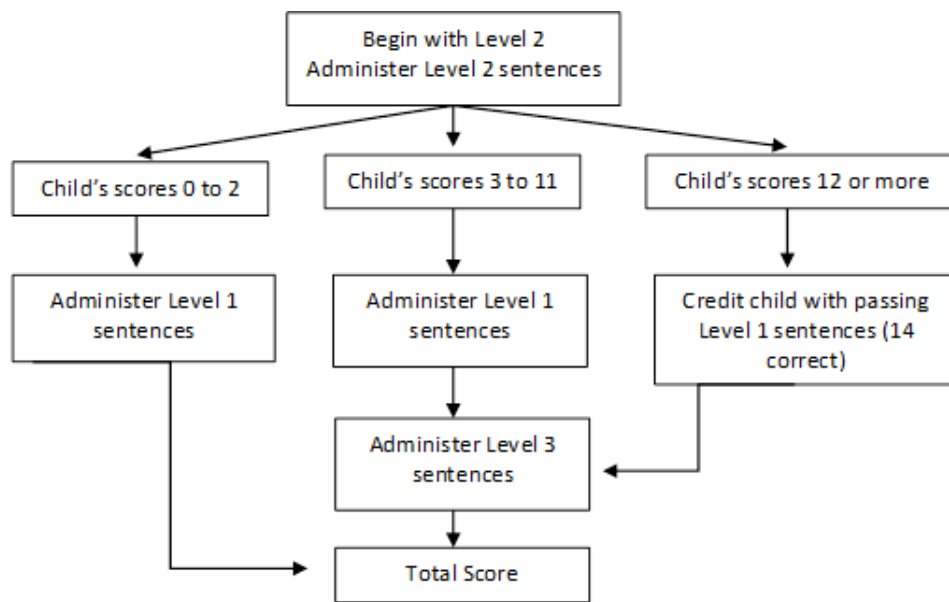

Figure 1. Record of oral language's procedure by Clay et al (2007)

Additionally, observation was conducted to closely examine the reading and writing behaviors of the focal participant which might not be obvious from the standardized tests. The observation was crucial as Lyon and MacQuarrie (2014) suggests that gathering data from children needs narrative strategy in which they can elaborate more about their experiences and add to the richness of the data. Clay et al's (2007) notion of reading and writing observation was adopted for six weeks which was divided into three cycles of shared-reading and writing activities. There were three meetings for each cycle and 30 minutes long for each session, so it adds up to a total of nine meetings of observation.

Both the interviews and observations were conducted bilingually in Indonesian language and in English to avoid language barrier. All the sessions were videotaped, and then transcribed verbatim. Transcripts with parts of Indonesian language were translated into English. However, the Indonesian language version was maintained in the presentation of the data to show context of code switching. The data were analyzed descriptively.

3. Results and Discussion

This study examines an Indonesian third grader in navigating her literacy and language learning in the U.S. Her reading and writing ability were the focus of this study. Having analyzed the data descriptively, in the following, the results of the study were presented by describing the focal participant's literacy and language ability and followed by some theoretical discussion underlying those findings.

At the time this research was conducted, the focal participant and her family had been six months living in the U.S. She has attended a public elementary school near the area where they reside. To give us backgrounds about her current reading and writing ability, her father was interviewed and some literacy tests were conducted. Based on an interview with her father, the focal participant was basically still struggling with her English. She was crying in her first day at school, in which the reason of crying was more than just a feeling of anxiety and discomfort as many students may experience in their first day of school. Her father confirmed that it was because she was not able to perform and understand the English language which was the primary language use in the school environment. Her father also explained that when he assisted her daughter to read at home, she still needed some translations of the English words and had difficulty to answer comprehension questions following the text. These findings were noted as initial data to understand the focal participant's feeling.

3.1 Oral Langauge of the Focal Participant

Furthermore, oral language ability of the focal participant was tested by following the procedures of Clay et al (2007), which primarily involves one on one observation of a child's behavior in reading and writing. The procedure began with Level 2 Sentences and she was scored 14, which means excellent with no deviation from the original sentence found in the text. She could repeat correctly all the sentences. Since she achieved excellent score on a Level 2, the procedure continued on a Level 3 sentences. She was scored 10 as some words were omitted. Look at the level 3 sentences below. The words in the brackets were some words/parts missed by the focal participant while reading.

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1. The girl saw who her mother … the cakes …

   (was   giving)

   (to)

2. My mother usually put … the cat … at night.

   (s)   (out of

   the house)

3. There goes the fireman who put … the fire in … building.

   (out)

Figure 2. Evidence of oral language ability in level 3 sentences

We continued to investigate the oral language of the focal participant by asking her to read a book entitled "What Next, Baby Bear!" by Murphy (1983). The selection of this book was based on her preference as she had read this book with his father. This activity was videotaped. The findings showed that the reading ability of the focal participant through a rereading familiar book was at the following description (as cited in Clay, 2005, p. 49).

"The processing shifts to more effective fluent reading of increasingly difficult texts. Several strategic activities are used on known words and phrases. If any information source appears to dominate (meaning, or structure or print-sound relationships) this may signal that one type of information is being used rather than in combination with other types".

At this point, the focal participant can read the text very fluently and made no mistakes on word pronunciation. She was asked several questions in English about the characters in the story and some features appeared in the story. She can answer to the questions in English by giving closed-ended responses, and the answers were all correct. When she was asked to retell the story in English, she remained silent. To avoid her being stressful during this reading session, the language of instruction was switched into Indonesian language; and she can retell the whole storyline using Indonesian language. It was concluded that the focal participant could understand the reading in her first language but was struggling in retelling the story in English verbally.

The focal participant's hesitation in using English might be affected by multiple factors, such as emotional or psychological influence. She might be shy and uncomfortable being with strangers. The use of her home language

might make her feel safer and more confident which also signals her willingness to get involved in the conversation. This finding further indicates the practice of translanguaging (Hornberger & Link, 2012) which is often found in the context of bilingual students (Huang et al, 2021). Translanguaging is diverse language practices and registers of speech in which bilingual students regularly rely on to make sense of their everyday and complex world (Moses et al., 2021).

Research continue to show that as bilinguals progress in the English language learning with gradual increase of oral language competence, the use of home language will decrease (Huang et al, 2020; Miller et al., 2006). However, adequate supports are needed for this to happen, especially by providing literacy-rich environment that allows bi/multilingual practices. In a translingual literacy study, Stewart et al., (2021) reported that bi/multilingual students' oral language other than English can be used as a tool to engage with reading and writing activities in English. The teacher participants in their study adopted translingual approach to disciplinary reading and writing in which the students were allowed to speak other languages other than English. The students spoke in their home language for the purposes of internalizing complex ideas, making plans for a final product, confirming meaning, and engaging more fully in discussion.

Consistent with that statement, the focal participant in this study had adequate home literacy environment with supportive parents, access to books and library use, as well as diverse language practices, which might be crucial for oral language growth in English. Similar statement is supported by Yeomans-Maldonado and Mesa (2021) who mention that home literacy environment in particular has significant contribution to vocabulary skills of Spanish-English bilingual students which then are essential for other language outcomes.

3.2 Reading Ability of the Focal Participant

The observation of the focal participant's reading ability was conducted in three cycles of three meetings each. The first cycle was conducted to read and reread a book entitled "What next, baby bear!" By Jill Murphy. Two meetings were spent to reread this book and the third meeting was used to retell the story through writing. In the first two meetings, the book was reread and talked. The focal participant was asked some parts of the book, and she responded the questions in Indonesian language. Look at the following transcript of conversation between the focal participant and the first author. The words in italic are the focal participant's response in Indonesian language and the translation is in the bracket.

Firman	:	So how does the baby bear go to the moon?
Sarah	:	Rocket
Firman	:	Where does he find the rocket?
Sarah	:	*di lemari bawah tangga* [in the closet under the stairs]
Firman	:	Is it the real rocket?
Sarah	:	*Bukan, roket dari kardus* [nope, it made of a cardboard]
Firman	:	Can you answer me by using English?
Sarah	:	[in silent and smiling]
Firman	:	Alright, whenever you are ready to answer me in English, please do so, okay?
Sarah	:	[nodding]

From the conversation above, the focal participant basically understood the questions very well, but she was unable or was shy to use her English. At this point, she was encouraged to use her English and to be comfortable enough to use whatever language she wants. The initiation of using English should come from her own. Meaning of the texts were negotiated as the focal participant engaged with the texts regardless of her competence in either language, which is significant for her understanding and language learning, as has been reported in other similar study (Maseko & Mkhize, 2019). There was linguistic flexibility in this context (Garcia & Li, 2014) that positioned the focal participant as a language knower who may use diverse linguistic features in either language to demonstrate her ability.

Therefore, in the second meeting, the focal participant was directly asked to reread the same book, and stopped in a couple pages, and she was asked to make prediction of what might happen next before she turned to the next page. The second meeting was different from the first one. She used her English to respond to the questions. Study the following transcript of the reading. The words in the bracket show the context and the words in italic are the responses of the text.

Sarah	:	[Reading the book] He found a space helmet on the drainboard in the kitchen… [talking to herself] *oh… this is the drainboard.*
Firman	:	*Yes, that's a drainboard*
Sarah	:	[Reading the book] He packed his teddy bear and some food for the journey, and took off up the chimney.
Firman	:	*Louder please!*
Sarah	:	[Reading the book] Whoosh! Out into the night. [asking Firman] *How could it flash fire?*
Firman	:	*That's the chimney. The bear flies with fire just like a rocket.*
Sarah	:	[talking to Firman] *and the cat is like "aargh!"*
Firman	:	[smiling] *the cat looked surprised huh?*
Sarah	:	*Yes!*

The focal participant's response to the text (e.g., *how could it flash fire? And the cat is like aargh!*) while reading the story showed that she comprehended the plot of the story better than the first time reading the story. Her response also showed better attachment and autonomy to the reading. In addition, the above transcript also showed how her reading behavior different from the previous meeting, from just reading the book and answering questions in Indonesian language, into a more confident and independent reading in English. In this second meeting, the focal participant made progress in her oral language and comprehension. An explanation of progress in the second meeting might have been affected by the focal participant's progress in the school where English was the only language of instruction. Garcia (2009) argue that to the extent of translanguaging perspective, when bilinguals are taught in English-only classroom, they may immediately have access to meaning-making strategies in either language. Thus, in the third meeting, the focal participant was asked to look at only the pictures of the book, followed by independent writing of the story in her own words.

The observations of reading ability were continued to the second cycle. The focal participant was asked to read "Who sank the boat?" by Pamela Allen. Sequence of the activity was repeated as the first three meetings where the book was read and reread, and then she wrote the story in the third meeting. More prompts were used to scaffold the focal participant's understanding of the story starting from the introduction of the book. The finding showed that in this process the focal participant oriented herself to the introduction of the book, but with greater contribution. The interaction indicates more about what the she was bringing to this story. Look at the following transcript when the first author introduced the new book. The words in the bracket are the context and the words in italic are responses in Indonesian language followed by the translation in the bracket.

Firman	:	Do you want to read this book or this one?
Sarah	:	This [pointing "Who sank the boat]
Firman	:	Okay, do you know what is that in the cover of the book?
Sarah	:	*Sapi?* [a cow]
Firman	:	Yes, what is the other one?
Sarah	:	I don't know
Firman	:	Alright, what do you see in the first page?
Sarah	:	A cow, a donkey, a sheep, a pig, a mouse. Oh, so it's a donkey!
Firman	:	Yes, exactly! That's a donkey, good!
Sarah	:	*Mereka mau naik boat kecil. Emang muat? Sapi dan keledainya kan gemuk* [They want to go boating. How is that possible? The cow and the donkey are so fat]
Firman	:	Maybe, why don't you read the story, and we will soon know.

When reading this book, there were some words that the focal participant did not know how to read them and did not know the meaning such as, "tilted', "stepped", and "yelled". To overcome this problem, she reread the words a couple of times independently without prompts from us. She knew that the way she was reading those words did not sound right. She made self-correction during the reading (look at the transcript below). This self-correction is important within the zone of proximal development as it can lead to her self-regulation. Lyons (2003, p. 70) defined self-regulation as "the child's capacity to plan, guide, and monitor his behavior from within – his flexibility – according to changing circumstances.

Text	:	Was it the cow who almost fell in, when she <u>tilted</u> the boat and made such a din?
Sarah	:	Was it the cow who almost fell in, when she <u>titled</u> the boat and made such a din?
Sarah	:	<u>Titled</u> [rereading]
Sarah	:	<u>Titled</u> [rereading]
Sarah	:	<u>Tilted</u> [self-correct]
Text	:	Was it the donkey who balanced her weight? Who <u>yelled</u>, 'I'll get in at the bow before it's too late.'
Sarah	:	Was it the donkey who balanced her weight? Who <u>yell</u>, 'I'll get in at the bow before it's too late.'
Sarah	:	<u>Who yell</u> [rereading]
Sarah	:	<u>Who yelled</u> [self-correct]

However, the focal participant still needed help for the meaning of the words. Direct Indonesian translation of the word was not given. She was asked to look at the pictures: "does the word related to the picture? Can you guess what it means?". Once she correctly guessed the meaning, positive feedback was provided by reinforcing her that she had made great progress. In addition, the focal participant in this context had difficulty in pronouncing "tilted, "yelled", and "stepped" because she had not acquired the concept of suffix -ed in English spelling system. This finding also explains critical reading process where "the child monitors, searches, discovers, cross-checks, repeats to confirm, and self-corrects….that helps to reveal what is challenging the learner's processing system" (Clay, 2005, p. 49).

To this end, the finding was consistent with the previous that the focal participant made substantial progress after as many as six meetings of observations. The observation was continued to the last cycle of three meetings. She decided to read a book that she loaned from the city library. She was allowed to read this book as suggested by the literature that reading the one that she was interested in might improve her motivation. She chose a book entitled "The nuts; sing and dance in your polka-dot pants" by Eric Litwin. Since this was a new book that she had not read yet, we started by getting to know the context of the book first. This book contained a song and was available on YouTube, so we decided to watch the song online before reading the story. Her reading was surprisingly 100% accurate, as she made no mistake in pronouncing every word and sentence. Even, she can sing the song in the book because she had listened the song prior to the reading. This finding concludes that her reading level at this point was at level three, which means that:

"Longer and more advanced texts are read faster with increasing independence and in a phrased and fluent way. The reader slows up to analyze what is new or not yet under control. Sub-systems support each other and meet challenges in alternative ways. Words and part-word processing is embedded in text reading on the run" (Clay, 2005, p. 49).

Similar findings were reported by Yang, Kiramba, and Wessels (2021) examining reading practices of Mandarin-speaking Chinese American family. They found that the family involved in translanguaging practices during reading. It acted as a bridge to meaning making and served as a window to mental imagery that allowed participants to refine their reading comprehension. Furthermore, the practice of translanguaging by bilinguals should be understood not only of what they can do with the languages, but also what and how they do with literacies. Translanguaging framework within bilingual literacy can be used to strengthen students' understanding of text, generate their diverse texts, and develop their sense of confidence in performing literacy (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019).

3.3 Writing Ability of the Focal Participant

Beside reading and oral language in English, writing ability of the focal participant was also documented. First, writing assignments given by her teacher were collected at school and were analyzed using a rating technique by Clay (1982), which mainly focuses on linguistic features, message quality, and directional principles. The sample writing is seen in Figure 3 below.
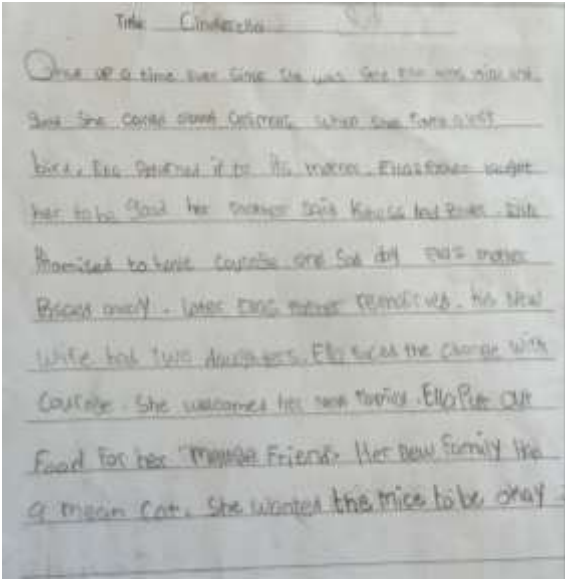
	Transcription
	Title: Cinderella Once up a time Ever Since She was little Ella was kind and good She cared about animals when she found a lost bird, Ella returned it to its mother. Ella's father taught her to be good her mother said kindness had power. Ella Promised to have courage. one sad day Ella's mother Passed away. Later Ellas father remarried. His new wife had two daughters. Ella faced the change with courage. she welcomed her new family. Ella put out food for her mouse friends. Her new family had a mean cat. She wanted the mice to be okay.

Figure 3. Transcript of the focal participant's sample writing from school

From Figure 3 above, it can be concluded that the focal participant wrote a paragraph. Although she made some mistakes, she had achieved better linguistic organization. Some mistakes that she made were at word level or word groups (i.e. *Once up a time, Ever since, kidness, mause*) and punctuation (i.e. comma, pull stop, capital letter). However, the message quality of the writing showed attempts to record own ideas were mostly independent. She told us that she had heard the story from her teacher before writing it into paragraph. She also said that she was familiar enough with the story of Cinderella in her first language even since she was in Indonesia.

Another aspect found in this sample writing was the directional principles in which the focal participant had correct directional pattern and spaces between words. However, she still needed more practices and scaffoldings to have a polished writing. She needed more inputs of acquisition for developing her oral language. She also needed more reading practices to express comprehension in English and needed more writing practices in order to have satisfactory writing.

Additionally, data derived from the observation of the focal participant's writing ability which was conducted in the third meeting of each cycle. Some of her mistakes was noticed revolving around punctuation and spelling (look at Figure 4 below). She missed one or two letters in a word and forgot to put full stop or comma between the sentences. This process was not interrupted. The focal participant was asked to finish writing and when she was finished, she was instructed to revisit her writing and checked if there was something wrong, was that all correct, was the words correct in every line. However, she was unable to identify the errors she made.
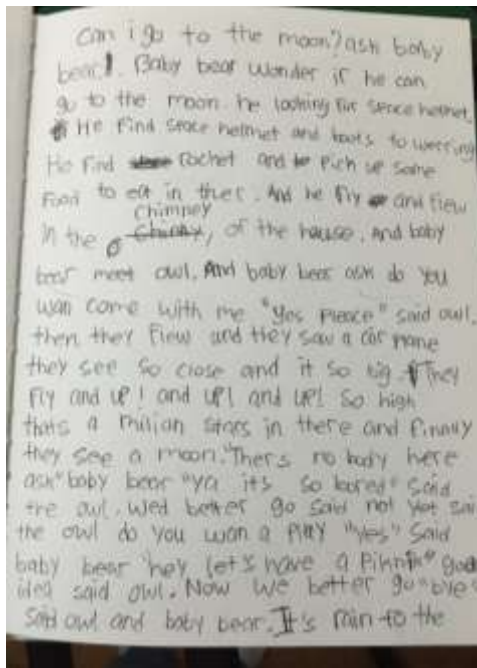
Figure 4. Sample of writing in the third meeting of observation (Cycle 1)

Based on those findings, in the cycle two of writing activity, the focal participant was reminded that before she started writing, she needed to pay attention on where to put full stop or comma and on spelling of every word. The prompt in the beginning of writing allowed her to anticipate errors that she might make during writing.

Afterwards, the focal participant was asked to look at the pictures before began writing. In the first two sentences she seemed confused with the part of speech between the word "song" and "sing". She wrote: One day Hazel **song** Polkadot-Pants "Polkadot-pants 2x sing your polkdot-pants" (Figure 5). She was asked to reread her sentence and gave some prompts: "does it sound right? How is the song? Which one is the song? Who sings the song?". For a clearer illustration of the context, look at the transcript of a conversation below. The words in the bracket are the context and the words in italic are responses in Indonesian language.

|		
Firman	:	Look at your first sentence.
Sarah	:	Why?
Firman	:	Does it sound right?
Sarah	:	[in silent]
Firman	:	Can you read it for me?
Sarah	:	[reading her writing] One day Hazel **song** Polkadot-Pants "Polkadot-pants Polkadot-pants sing your polkadot pants".
Firman	:	Take a look at it carefully, does it sound right?
Sarah	:	[in silent]
Firman	:	Who sings the song?
Sarah	:	Hazel
Firman	:	Can you point the word "Hazel"? and read the sentence carefully?
Sarah	:	Here [pointing to the word "Hazel" and reread the writing] One day Hazel **song**… oh ya, not song but sing. Yes, I thought I wrote sing. *Aku tadi mau nulis sing, eh gak taunya malah song* [I was about to write sing, but song it is].
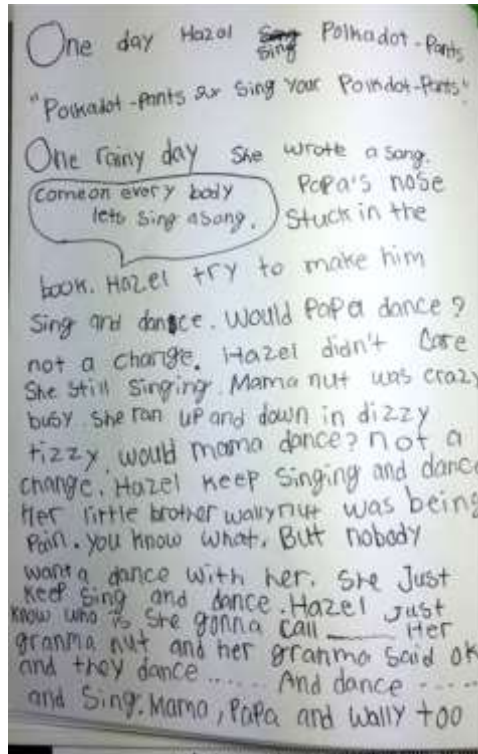
Figure 5. Sample of writing in the cycle 2 of observation

Unlike the reading process, there was not evidence of translanguaging in the focal participant's written language. The only translanguaging practice was shown when sheused her oral language. It indicates that the focal participant has demonstrated good English orthography and writing convention which might be due to the fact that English and Indonesian language are close in those aspects. Williams and Lowrence-Fauhalber (2018) in their review of bilingual children's writing argue that bilinguals may distinguish the orthographies and writing conventions of their languages, and it might be easier for them to do so if the languages have similar orthographic system (i.e., Spanish & English).

Furthermore, the writing of the focal partitipant in English also showed her emerging awareness of the writing system which might derived from her prior engagement with print-based activities and participate in conversation about prints in English (Gillanders & Soltero-Gonzalez, 2019). This awareness and knowledge about the English writing system can grow over time as she receives more exposure to prints and appropriate instructions. Consistent with that statement, Celinska (2015) suggests that teachers need to create classrooms that engage students with diverse individual and cultural identities because those can be repertoires that bridge language learning and school competencies essential for bilinguals.

4. Conclusion

This study described the reading and writing ability of an Indonesian third grader bilingual who was transitioning into the fabric of U.S. educational system. The focal participant, named in this study as Sarah and her family came to the U.S following his father who was pursuing his doctoral degree. Since reading and writing are strongly associated with oral language proficiency, record of oral language of the focal participant was collected. Observations of her reading and writing ability were also conducted through nine meetings of shared-reading and writing activities. Additionally, interviews with the father were carried out to better understand the social context of reading and writing practices at home and school.

The findings showed that there were evidences of emergent awareness and knowledge of English language by means of awareness and knowledge of the focal participant's Indonesian language. There were evidences of translanguaging in our data which were primarily utilized by the focal participant as strategies to access her understanding of texts and as attempts to keep conversations rolling. Therefore, it is pivotal both socially and educationally for bilingual children to have an opportunity to use their home language for learning when their mother tongue is not English.

Working with a child who learns English as a second or additional language might have difficulty with first language interference. Providing the child more exposures and chances to acquire and use the second language can solve this

problem. Teacher needs to give some prompts or scaffolding to lead the students to the outcome of learning. Initiative to problem solved, attachment, challenge, and autonomy of the student should also be central to the learning process.

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