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MEXICAN AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE FAMILIES' ELABORATIONS DURING TWO STORYTELLING ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

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There is important variation in how elaborative parents from different cultural backgrounds are with their children during narratives (Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006; Schick & Melzi, 2010). The present study built on this work by examining whether mothers from three cultural communities varied in the content of their elaborations when in two storytelling contexts: parents sharing their own personal experiences, and narratives elicited using a wordless book, *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney, 2009). Sixty families: 40 US parents of Mexican descent from two schooling levels, and 20 European Heritage parents shared narratives about the parent and a wordless book at home. Parents' academic elaborations (print knowledge, labeling, generics, and physical causality) and life lesson elaborations (causal motivation, causal motivation implicit, personal connection, and *consejos*) were coded. In the personal storytelling context, European heritage mothers shared more personal connections than Mexican Heritage mothers from both groups. In the wordless book context, Mexican Heritage mothers in the basic schooling group shared more causal motivation talk than European Heritage mothers and Mexican Heritage mothers from the higher schooling group, whereas European Heritage mothers shared more print knowledge talk than the other two groups of Mexican mothers. This study advances practical understandings of how the content of elaborations children are exposed to at

home varies across contexts in these communities.

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Mexican and European Heritage Families' Elaborations During Two Storytelling Activities

> You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view…until you climb into his skin and walk around in it (Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*).

The everyday narratives children are exposed to vary in length and focus, partly due to socialization goals and values of the community (Ochs & Capps, 2001). In some cultural communities, parents share narratives about lessons learned: by themselves, by ancestors, in legends, or in stories about monsters (Basso, 1996; De Leon, 2009; Matthews, 1992). In other cultural communities, parents focus on explicitly teaching their children lessons learned for school-based success (Heath, 1983; Rogoff, 2003). Though there is a great deal of diversity and variation in parents' narrative goals and focus, much of developmental research on narrative has examined the specific amounts of elaborative talk (i.e., the number of open-ended questions and evaluations) families use in a few limited contexts: joint reminiscing about children's past experiences, and while reading wordless books (see Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006 for a review). This work has found that more elaborative talk is related to children's better literacy related outcomes (Fivush et al., 2006). Other work has been interpreted as showing that middle-class European-heritage standards in "quantity" of talk at home is related to school-based success for all children arguing that children from non-dominant and low-income communities have a deficit based on hearing less talk from parents at home (Hart & Risley, 1995).

The extensive focus on amount of talk in limited contexts is missing the important nuances found when examining talk during narratives that are relevant to the community under study (Reese, Hayne, & McDonald., 2008). Recently, there has been a call for research on the "positive development of children from non-dominant communities" (Cabrera, 2013, p. 1) and a great deal of work has focused on countering deficit arguments against non-dominant groups (Callanan & Waxman, 2003; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Cho & Miller, 2004; Medin, Bennis, & Chandler, 2010; Michaels, 2005; Solis & Callanan, 2016).

The present study contributes to this work by examining whether there is cultural variation in mothers' overall narrative talk, and investigating differences in what they choose to elaborate on during two storytelling activities that are intended to be culturally relevant to Mexican-heritage families: a) a wordless book with a moral, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and b) a narrative of personal experience about the mother. I examine the talk of mothers from three cultural communities: Mexican-heritage mothers who have basic formal schooling (11 years or less), European-heritage mothers with extensive formal schooling experience (12 or more years), and Mexican-heritage mothers with extensive formal schooling experience (12 or more years). This work is an important contribution to sociocultural and social justice oriented research that seeks to understand how literacy practices vary across and within communities (Heath, 1983; Michaels, 2005; Miller & Sperry, 2012).

To begin, I briefly review literature examining language use within the home across communities to provide context for the study. Then, I review research on the

study of cultural variation in book reading and narratives of personal experience to provide background for examining academic elaborations and life lesson elaborations. Finally, I briefly review research on Mexican-heritage families in the United States to describe how schooling relates to experiences with a variety of cultural practices in the communities in this study. I will then present hypotheses and predictions.

Parents' Talk in Children's Home Environments

It has been argued that the amount of talk parents use with their children at home is the most important measure of school-related success; it is correlated with a variety of positive children's outcomes. For example, an often-cited study found correlations between the amount of talk parents from four socio-economic backgrounds provided to their children and children's word production (Hart & Risley, 1995). Specifically, Hart and Risley (1995) found a 500-word difference between talk spoken to 36-month old children of parents on welfare compared with 36-month-old children whose families were in upper-SES families, and argued that the "magnitude" in cumulative experience that happens within these first three years eventually leads to a "30 million word gap". Other studies have found differences in conversations related to socio-economic status; finding that children from lower income communities have fewer vocabulary learning opportunities in their home environments (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder, 2013; Hoff, 2003).

It is important to note that in Hart and Risley's (1995) work, this experience with more words did not correlate with children's greater reading, writing, or spelling in third grade. However, it did lead to a variety of follow-up studies finding

correlations between income and various academic measures, as well as several initiatives focused on increasing words spoken by parents, including a University of Chicago group that aims to address the gap – http://tmw.org. While many researchers and policy makers have accepted this concern that low income children may not hear as many words spoken to them, others are critical of Hart and Risley's findings, arguing that the study has theoretical weaknesses, methodological issues, and negative social implications (Blum & Riley, 2014; Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009; Miller & Sperry, 2012). For instance, Johnson (2015) argues that there is not enough evidence that the word exposure in the first three years is a deficit that negatively impacts children's outcomes. Methodologically, there are ethnographic studies that adhere to *language socialization* principles which point out the role of the researcher, the importance of "kinship" or creating bonds when working with groups who have less power in society (i.e. minority and immigrant groups), and the potential impact of presence of higher status researchers on observations of words spoken at home (Delgado Gaitan, 1995; Heath, 1983; Miller & Sperry, 2012). As Moreno (1990) argues, word gap findings may be related to the discomfort of working class families in research settings: "One might also expect working-class mothers and mothers on federal aid to be somewhat uncomfortable and overly concerned that their child 'behave' and not embarrass them in front of the 'doctors'" (p. 399). Hart and Risley (1995) rarely addressed how they themselves became variables when visiting lower income families, and how this may relate to language use and behavior, perhaps skewing or misrepresenting natural language use in the home environment.

Though correlational findings can be compelling, word gap research does not address how differences in language production at home may relate to specific academic outcomes, like narrative skills. If we are truly interested in how language use is related to school-based success then we must examine language use related to specific school-related activities. There are many links between parents' narratives to children and the development of children's narrative skills (Fivush et al.,2006). Thus, this seems a fruitful area to examine.

Like word gap research, there is some evidence of cultural variation related to how parents from different cultural groups value different types of narratives and how that relates to amount of talk (Miller, Cho, Bracey, 2005; Reese et al., 2008). For instance, Reese et al. (2008) found that maternal reminiscing style (i.e., being highly elaborative or less elaborative) varied within the same group across story-types. Specifically, Maori mothers were found to be in the low elaborative group when discussing child-centered narratives about daily events and in the high elaborative group when discussing their children's birth story. In the Maori community birth stories are shared with children from a young age and are intimately connected to the stories of their ancestors. These findings suggest that parents may be most elaborative (i.e., say more) when discussing a topic that relates to their own cultural values, and indicate that cross-cultural research should also include data on diverse types of narratives.

In sum, there are many concerns about the emphasis that has been given to the amount of talk children are exposed to at home. Examining talk during narratives at

home may provide more useful information about how parents' use of language across contexts relates to children's narrative skills. It may be that if content of talk within narratives is examined we would find that children are receiving information related to specific and important children's outcomes. Thus, I compared total amount of narrative talk across these three groups during two storytelling contexts.

Book Reading and Reminiscing About the Past in Latino and European-heritage Families

> Thanks to my mother, I was raised to have a morbid imagination…Little Debbie's mom down the block might say, 'Honey, look both ways before crossing the street.' My mother's version: 'You don't look, you get smash flat like sand dab.' (Sand dabs were the cheap fish we bought live in the market, distinguished in my mind by their two eyes affixed on one side of their woebegone cartoon faces.) (Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*)

Narratives during parents' book reading and reminiscing about the past have been examined in experimental work and in ethnographic work (see Fivush et al., 2006; Schick & Melzi, 2010 for reviews). Experimental work has focused on how the amount of specific types of talk varies across groups and families, whereas ethnographic work has described in more detail how particular parents engage in these practices with their children (e.g., Haden & Hoffman, 2013; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1996; McCabe, Bailey, Melzi, 2008; Zaman & Fivush, 2011). Researchers from both literatures have argued that the amount of talk and content of talk across cultural groups may vary, partly due to socialization goals and values (Miller et al., 2005; Schick & Melzi, 2010; Sparks, 2008; Wang & Fivush, 2005). While some researchers are currently examining the 'quality' of the words parents are saying to young children (Hirsh-Pasek, Adamson, Bakeman, Owen,

Golinkoff, Pace, Yust, & Suma, 2015), there is still a bias about what counts as 'complex' language that seems to favor highly educated groups. Thus, there is a need go beyond amount of talk and focus more deeply on content.

I focus on examining mothers' elaborations about life lessons and academic lessons within these two storytelling contexts. To justify this focus, I will review book-reading studies which use European-heritage middle class standards to encourage the use of academic elaborations for parents of non-dominant groups (Whitehurst, Falco, Fischel, Debaryshe, Valdez-Menchaca, & Caulfield, 1988). I will then examine research examining narratives of personal experience, focusing on narratives told within Mexican-heritage families. This work has described narratives that focus on larger lessons for children (e.g., Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Valdes, 1996).

Book Reading

Differences have been observed among the literacy practices of diverse families. Book-reading has been shown to be a rich context for examining children's language learning, school readiness, and early literacy (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Reese, Leyva, Sparks, & Grolnick, 2010; Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008). Cultural differences in parents' beliefs about book reading have been found to relate to developmental differences in when and how children are read to and how they are read to (Evans, Reynolds, Shaw, & Pursoo, 2011; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Reese and Gallimore, 2000; Raikes et al., 2006). Raikes et al. (2006) found that low-income Hispanic mothers read less often to their children than low-income European Heritage mothers. Relatedly, Evans et al. (2011) found that lower-income parents were less

likely to define new words for their children during book-reading than their middle-class counterparts. Other work has shown that low-income Latino parents are also less likely to talk responsively and tell stories to their young children than European American parents (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Nord, Lennon, Liu & Chandler, 1999).

Given these findings it is not surprising that many policy makers encourage lower-income parents to read to their children from birth. This work focuses on teaching lower-income parents *how to* read to their children, often encouraging them to provide academic elaborations when reading to their children (e.g., Whitehurst et al., 1988; Mol et al., 2008). For instance, dialogic reading is an interactive reading intervention that encourages parents to ask questions on each page, label objects, and focus on talk about specific forms of print awareness (Whitehurst et al., 1988). The goal of this intervention is 1) to increase the child's vocabulary and 2) scaffold the child into becoming a storyteller in later development (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Mol et al., 2008).

Interventions that teach lower-income parents dialogic reading have had mixed results. For instance, Mol et al. (2008) found the intervention to be effective with younger (2 – 3-year-old) low-income children not older lower-income (4 – 5 year-old) children (Mol et al., 2008). Some researchers have provided evidence that training parents to be more elaborative during personal storytelling about the child contributes to better literacy outcomes for lower-income children than training parents' dialogic reading strategies during book-reading (Reese, Leyva, Sparks,

Grolnick, 2010; Reese & Newcombe, 2007; Reese, Sparks, & Grolnick, 2010; Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010). However, Delgado-Gaitan (2001) describes the confusion interventions may cause some lower-income parents. Specifically, she discusses how lower-income Mexican heritage parents trained to read to children using a specific series of questions became confused and discouraged while engaging in this activity with their children.

Similarly, other sociocultural researchers have argued against such interventions and suggested that families from non-dominant communities bring different literacy experiences to the school environment (Burger & Miller, 1999; Heath, 1983; Miller et al., 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Miller & Sperry, 2012). This work has focused on uncovering strength-based, culturally grounded practices (e.g., McWayne & Melzi, 2014) that have been largely ignored, arguing that home practices need to be understood before we intervene in the lives of families (Lee, 2007; Michaels, 2005; Miller et al., 2005).

Reminiscing About the Past

A body of research in the sociocultural tradition has demonstrated that middle-class European American families vary in the amount that they elaborate about the past when reminiscing with their child (Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1993; Reese & Fivush, 1993). Specifically, a highly elaborative maternal reminiscing style (i.e., mothers who provide *wh*- open-ended questions and evaluations during narratives) is related to children's better memories of the past, literacy outcomes, and identity development as compared with a low elaborative style (Fivush et al., 2006;

Schick & Melzi, 2010). Interestingly, researchers have also found that elaborativeness is an individual characteristic that is unrelated to education level within European American middle class families (Fivush et al., 2006). This work has focused on either how mothers elaborate during child-centered narratives (i.e., their maternal reminiscing style described above) (Reese et al, 1993; Reese & Fivush, 1993) or the role they take while they are elaborating during book-reading and reminiscing activities (i.e., whether they co-construct narratives with children or not) (Leyva & Smith, 2016; Melzi, 2000, Melzi et al, 2011). However, it has done little to uncover variation in the content of elaborations during these narratives.

Recent work has interpreted variation in the role mothers take (i.e., their maternal participation style) as reflecting the socialization goals of the group under study and being related to how mother elaborate during narratives (Melzi & Caspe, 2005). For instance, Melzi et al. (2011) examined how Peruvian and European-American mothers and their children discussed 6 recent events where the mother was not present, and read a wordless book. After examining conversations across contexts, Melzi et al. (2011) found that European American mothers co-constructed narratives in both contexts whereas Peruvian mothers shifted: becoming *elicitors* who asked their children questions to elicit the narrative in the reminiscing task, and *tellers* who narrated alone in the wordless book reading task. Interestingly, the authors concluded that these differences are related to socialization goals, arguing that Peruvian parents asked more questions from children about other family members during narratives where the mothers was not present, perhaps because they value interpersonal

relationships and their own child's experience of the event while European American mothers are focused on scaffolding the experience by co-constructing the narrative even when they were not present.

More evidence that Latino parents may vary their role in narrative with their children was found in a recent study by Melzi (2000). She examined Central American mothers' and European American mothers' scaffolding of narratives about 1) events where the mother was present, and 2) events where the mother was absent. Mothers in both groups were equally elaborative, however during narratives where the mother was not present, Central American mothers focused more on the social and conversational aspects of the stories by asking for reported speech (e.g., "What did your aunt say?") while European American mothers focused more on the event itself by asking close-ended questions, (e.g., "Did you go to the zoo with daddy yesterday?"). Thus, these researchers have suggested that Latino mothers focused more on interpersonal relationships and interpersonal skill development when sharing narratives with their children (Melzi, 2000; Melzi et al., 2011).

Ethnographic studies have been able to capture the interplay between familial ties and spontaneous elaborations during narratives told within lower-income Mexican-heritage families in the United States. It is these methods that have highlighted how narrative talk within Mexican-heritage families often expresses the experiences of others, and is argued to be motivated by socialization goals related to *familism* and morality (Barajas, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Eisenberg, 1986; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Mathews, 1992; Valdes, 1996). In particular, these studies

have identified “life lessons” as a ubiquitous part of the lives of Mexican-heritage families (Barajas, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Eisenberg, 1986; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Valdes, 1996).

Life lesson elaborations rely on using the speaker’s own life experiences as an example of what *not* to do, “Do you really want to end up with lung problems, like cancer, because of the certain things at my job as opposed to this other person’s job? . . . who’s going to live longer?” (Knight, Norton, Bentley, & Dixon, 1994, p. 115-116). Delgado Gaitan (1994) found that Mexican parents in a low-income family in the United States shared many *consejos* (a type of life lesson elaboration) with their young children. A *consejo* can be both a short piece of general advice within a narrative or implied advice embedded within a larger complex narrative. This advice can be directly or indirectly related to the listener’s current experience. Interestingly, there is some evidence that use of *consejos* in school-related domains may be more likely among Mexican parents with less formal schooling than those with more formal schooling (Auerbach, 2007; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017). These narrative conversations are a part of everyday life for Mexican-heritage children that has not been represented in mainstream research.

Summary

In sum, intervention work encourages all parents to provide academic elaborations to children based on European-heritage middle class parents’ talk during book reading (Lareau, 1989; Mol et al., 2008). These elaborations are related to increasing children’s knowledge about school related domains (e.g., labeling, and

print knowledge) (Evans et al., 2011) and have been observed across contexts in European American middle-class families (Heath, 1983; Rogoff, 2003). Yet, interventions that have trained families to elaborate in this way have not always had the desired outcomes (see Mol et al., 2008, for a meta-analysis).

Conversely, there is some evidence that narratives about the parent's own experience may be particularly culturally relevant for Mexican parents with less formal schooling (Azmitia, Cooper, Garcia, & Dunbar 1996 Auerbach, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017; Valdes, 1996). These parents may believe it is important to provide their children with life lessons across contexts (e.g., connecting the personal narrative to their child's experience and providing *consejos*) (Barajas, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Eisenberg, 1986; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Valdes, 1996.) Thus, it is important to examine both life lesson elaborations and academic lesson elaborations within these contexts across European-heritage families with extensive formal schooling and Mexican-heritage families with less formal schooling experience.

Mexican-heritage Families in the United States

> "I learned very quickly that when you emigrate, you lose the crutches that have been your support; you must begin from zero, because the past is erased with a single stroke and no one cares where you're from or what you did before." (Isabel Allende, *Paula*).

Mexican families within the United States are a cultural community on the rise. One in four Americans under 18 years old is Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Among these Latino children and young adults, the census shows that Mexican-heritage individuals are the fastest growing Latino group within the United States

(Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). However, these families are facing extreme challenges (Villanueva, 1996). Indeed, U.S. Latino children have achievement gaps in literacy compared to their European heritage counterparts that start in kindergarten and persist into high school (Schhneider, Martinez, & Owens, 2006).

Who are these families? It is troubling that there are so many school-aged Mexican-heritage children in our schools, and yet we know so little about their school-related practices at home, and even less about variation within this group. Indeed, a great deal of work focuses on changing the practices of Latino families to more closely resemble European American practices before entering the school system, without first examining strengths within individual Latino sub-groups.

Within-group variation is particularly important in examinations of Mexican-heritage families. Two-thirds of U.S. Mexican immigrant mothers have not completed college (Crosnoe & Kalil, 2010); these mothers have much in common with other working-class families, however they also experience their own set of challenges associated with being immigrants. Crosnoe and Kalil (2010) argue, "Compared with their low-SES native-born peers, they have more language difficulties and less (if any) experience in the U.S. educational system themselves" (p. 977). This makes families within this group especially vulnerable to being exposed to interventions that may change cultural practices.

Rogoff and colleagues have done considerable work examining how parental schooling experience in Mexican-heritage families relates to the extent to which children learn by observing and pitching in (Correa-Chavez, Rogoff, & Mejia-Arauz,

2005; Lopez, Correa-Chavez, Rogoff, & Gutierrez, 2010; Silva, Correa- Chavez, & Rogoff, 2010). This work has found that as parental experience with Western schooling increases, the practices within the community change, and that these changes relate to children's learning (Rogoff, 2003). One robust finding in this work has been that children whose parents have more schooling are less likely to learn by simply observing others engage in an activity (Correa-Chavez et al., 2005; Lopez et al., 2010; Silva et al., 2010). For example, Silva et al. (2010) investigated cultural differences in children's attention to third party interactions and found that Mexican sibling pairs whose mothers had an average of 6 years of schooling learned from third party interactions more often than Mexican sibling pairs whose mothers had an average of 12 years of schooling. These authors argue that this is evidence that children who grow up in a culture that actively engages in multi-generation communal events may attend more to non-addressed activities, even when they are not expected to do so. These children, then, may be at an advantage in observational learning compared to children from other cultural backgrounds.

These findings have been extended in a number of ways, finding that experience with parental schooling experience is related to differences in several cultural practices and attitudes: taking initiative (Coppens & Alcala, 2015), considerateness (Ruvalcaba, Rogoff, López, Correa-Chávez, & Gutierrez, 2015) and collaboration (Lopez, Rogoff, Najafi, & Mejia-Arauz, 2012). Thus, there is growing evidence that examining variation in Mexican-heritage families related to schooling

experience is especially important when investigating differences in cultural practices and children's learning.

If we are to understand children's literacy experiences using a strengths-based culturally grounded framework it is important to examine families within familiar activities and develop coding schemes that capture the types of language that have been observed previously in ethnographic studies. An important question following from these findings asks what Mexican-heritage children are learning from the content of their parents' narratives. If children are learning through third-party attention and cultural events, it seems likely that there as are yet many unexplored contexts of study. How may everyday narratives about personal experiences differ between Mexican-heritage families in the United States?

Perhaps the sharing of life lessons changes as parents gain more experience with Western schooling practices. If experience with schooling relates to changes in the above-mentioned practices, then it follows that the valuing of narratives of personal experience may also change. Do Mexican-heritage parents look for opportunities to share life lessons in a variety of contexts and in the experiences of imaginary characters? Further, how do European-heritage parents engage with these narratives? Are they more likely to focus on aspects of conversation related to teaching their preschool children about academic knowledge? There is some evidence that European-American parents often focus on preparing their preschool children for school by teaching them about school-related topics (Heath,1983; Rogoff, 2003). For example, Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, and Mosier (1993) found that middle-class US

mothers (as well as middle-class mothers from Turkey) were more likely to engage their children in vocabulary "lessons" than were mothers from a Mayan or East Indian village. These lessons included testing children's knowledge of labels using "known-answer questions" such as "Where's your nose? and What's this called?" While parents' talk about life lessons and academic lessons have been investigated in separate studies, there is a need for comparison of these two types of talk across contexts and across communities of parents.

The Current Study

The purpose of this study is to examine whether mothers from three cultural communities vary in their overall narrative talk and in their elaborations when in two storytelling contexts: sharing their own personal experiences, and telling a narrative elicited using a wordless book, *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney, 2009). As stated above, many studies of parent-child story-telling often focus on examining child-centered narratives. Because ethnographic work has shown parents' personal experience narratives to be particularly meaningful to Mexican-heritage families, especially those with basic schooling, the proposed study seeks to examine first how mothers construct narratives across two contexts. Specifically, my first research question asks (1) Are there differences across the three communities (Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling, Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling, and European-heritage mothers with higher schooling) in the amount of narrative talk parents provide during a story about personal experience and when reading a wordless book? While Hart and Risley's (1995) research would predict a

difference based on parents' schooling, critiques of their research would suggest that there may not be a clear difference in amount of talk. I expected that the culturally relevant nature of these narratives would translate to no difference across these groups in amount of narrative talk (Hypothesis 1).

Next, I investigate (2) Are there differences between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European-heritage mothers with higher schooling in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that they provide during a wordless book? and (3) Are there differences between these two groups in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations they provide during a narrative of their own personal experience? Research eliciting maternal narratives often uses the book *Frog, where are you* (1969), a book about a boy searching for a frog. I chose the wordless book *The Lion and the Mouse* (2009) because the main characters encounter challenges and thus the book provides opportunities for mothers to impart life lessons. By life lesson elaborations, I mean talk focused on increasing children's understanding of challenging life experiences. Research examining personal stories has provided many examples of life lesson elaborations being shared within the context of narratives surrounding challenging experiences in the homes of Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group (Barajas, 2010; Eisenberg, 1986; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a; Valdez, 1996). I hypothesized that Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling would provide more of each type of life lesson elaboration and more life lesson elaborations overall than European-heritage mothers in both the wordless book context (Hypothesis 2) and the personal storytelling context

(Hypothesis 3). Conversely, I hypothesized that European-heritage mothers would provide more of each type of academic lesson and academic lessons overall than Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling across contexts (Hypothesis 4 & Hypothesis 5). There is some evidence that middle class European American mothers use everyday activities as opportunities to provide academic elaborations to their young children (Heath, 1983; Lareau, 2003; Rogoff, 2003, 2011). I explore how these two types of lessons vary in the two types of stories across these groups of mothers.

Finally, I engaged in more exploratory investigation of the narrative elaborations used by mothers in the "middle group" – Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling, asking: (4) Are there differences across all three communities in the life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that parents provide during a wordless book? (5) Are there differences across these three communities in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that parents provide during a narrative of personal experience about the mother? Research by Rogoff (2011) suggests that as experience with schooling increases cultural practices may shift, however it is not always clear which practices will change. Will Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling interact with their children more like the European-heritage mothers with higher schooling or more like the Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling? Based on findings by Rogoff (2011) it is unclear whether this group will resemble the European-heritage or Mexican-heritage basic schooling group. Thus, this analysis does not have specific predictions and is more exploratory in nature.

Method

Participants and Their Communities

Sixty mothers and their 4-year old children (mean age = 4.42) participated in this study. Twenty mothers were of European-heritage and had completed high school, 20 mothers were of Mexican-heritage and had completed high school, and 20 mothers were of Mexican-heritage and had less than 12 years of experience with formal schooling. Families lived in the Santa Cruz county area of central California (see Table 1 for demographic information by cultural group). Three families in the Mexican-heritage basic schooling group and 1 European-heritage family did not participate in the wordless book activity. Two families in the Mexican-heritage basic schooling group and 1 Mexican-heritage family in the higher schooling group did not participate in the personal storytelling activity. Consequently, sample size varies by analysis. In three families (1 European Heritage, 1 Mexican heritage with basic schooling and 1 Mexican-heritage with higher schooling), the father participated with the mother and child. The children were all four years old with no difference in the mean age of four-year-olds in the Mexican-heritage basic schooling group (M =4.45, SD =.33), Mexican-heritage higher schooling group (M = 4.38, SD =.2), and European-heritage higher schooling group (M = 4.42, SD =.29), F (2, 57) = .24, p =.78. There were equal number of boys and girls in each cultural group.

In order to better describe these groups, a set of analyses examined differences in maternal schooling and children per household across the cultural groups (see Table 1). A one-way ANOVA on maternal schooling revealed a significant difference in schooling across these groups, F (2, 57) = 41.26 p =.0001, η_p^2=.59 (see Table 1 for

means and standard deviations). Post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD, $p < .001$) found that European-heritage mothers had more years of schooling than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group. Similarly, Mexican heritage mothers in the higher schooling group had more years of schooling than Mexican mothers in the basic schooling group. There were no differences in years of schooling between Mexican-heritage mothers in the higher schooling group and European-heritage mothers.

A one-way ANOVA also revealed significant differences in the number of children in each household (see Table 1 for means and standard deviations), F (2, 57) = 8.85 p =.0001 η_p^2=.23. Post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD, $p < .001$) found that Mexican-heritage basic schooling mothers had more children than either Mexican-heritage mothers in the higher schooling group or European Heritage mothers. Other analyses revealed no effects or interactions involving gender or birth order; subsequent analysis was collapsed across these factors.

European American mothers. Mothers in this group had completed at least 15 years of schooling with a range of 15-24 grades of school and an average of 16.05 years of schooling. One mother completed her schooling in Germany. The European American mothers had also taken a variety of parenting classes. There were 6 mothers who described taking positive parenting classes. All children were born in the United States. The average number of children per family was 1.35 with a range of 1 to 2 children per family. Two families lived on family property with extended family members nearby. Fifteen children were enrolled in preschool.

Maternal occupations included: 1 substitute teacher, 1 half-time union representative, 1 graphic artist, 1 writer, 1 education researcher, 1 graduate student, 2 project managers, 1 home school teacher, 1 housekeeper, 1 hairstylist, 1 county clerk, and 8 homemakers. English was the primary language for 18 families. One family spoke German and English at home while another spoke Spanish and English at home.

Finally, parents were asked to report their annual family income; parents were asked to choose one of six annual incomes: 1) over 100,000 (N= 5; 29%), 2) 75,000-100,000 (N = 5; 29%), 3) 50,000-75,000 (N = 7; 41%), 4) 30,000-50,000 (N = 0), 5) 15,000-30,000 (N=0), and 6) less than 15,000 (N=0). Three parents did not respond to this question. Thus, most participants came from upper- to middle-class households.

Mexican-heritage Mothers. Mothers were placed in groups based on experience with formal schooling. In this case basic schooling included mothers with 11 years of formal schooling or less, and extensive (or higher) schooling experience included those with 12 or more years of schooling.

Mexican-heritage mothers with more than 12 years of formal schooling. Mothers in this group had at least 13 years of schooling and averaged 15.95 years of schooling. Five mothers completed their secondary schooling in Mexico. Twelve mothers in this group took parenting courses.

Ten mothers were born in Mexico: 2 in Jalisco, 2 in Morelia, 2 in Michoacán, 2 in Mexico City., 1 in Veracruz, 1 in Tijuana. The remaining 10 were born in the United States: 4 in San Diego, 3 in Oakland, 3 in Los Angeles. The average number

of children was 2.60 with a range of 2-4 children. 2 children were born in Mexico City.

Maternal occupations included: 4 housekeepers, 2 daycare workers, 1 dishwasher, 1 tattoo artist, 1 photographer, 1 DMV technician, 1 librarian, 1 refinery worker, 2 restaurant workers, 1 field worker, 1 fisher woman and 4 homemakers. Spanish and English were spoken in 15 homes while English was the sole language in 5 homes.

Finally, parents were asked to choose one of six annual incomes: 1) over 100,000 (N= 0), 2) 75,000-100,000 (N = 3; 17%), 3) 50,000-75,000 (N = 3; 17%), 4) 30,000-50,000 (N = 10, 55%), 5) 15,000-30,000 (N=2, 11%), and 6) less than 15,000 (N=0). Two parents did not respond to this question. Thus, most participants came from middle- or lower-middle-class households.

Mexican-heritage mothers with less than 12 years of formal schooling. Mothers averaged 8.66 years of schooling with a range of 0 to 12 years of formal schooling. Four mothers completed their schooling in Mexico. Eight mothers in this group took parenting courses as a requirement to enroll their children in preschool.

Fifteen mothers were born in Mexico: 7 in Oaxaca, 2 in Colima, 3 in Jalisco, 2 in Michoacán. The remaining 5 were born in the United States: 3 in Oakland, 2 in Los Angeles. The average number of children was 3.2 with a range of 2-5 children. Three participants were single mothers who lived with extended family. All children were born in the United States.

Maternal occupations included: 8 housekeepers, 4 field workers, 4 restaurant workers, and 4 homemakers. Spanish and English were spoken in 12 homes while Spanish was the sole language in 8 homes. Four families spoke Mixtec as well as Spanish with their children.

Finally, parents were asked to choose one of six annual incomes: 1) over 100,000 (N= 0), 2) 75,000-100,000 (N = 0), 3) 50,000-75,000 (N = 2; 13%), 4) 30,000-50,000 (N = 12, 80%), 5) 15,000-30,000 (N=1, 6%), and 6) less than 15,000 (N=0). Five parents did not respond to this question. Thus, most participants in this group were from lower-middle class or working class backgrounds.

Procedure

Two bilingual researchers visited families at home, explaining to mothers that they were studying how children learn from the stories they hear at home. Families were asked to participate in two video-taped storytelling activities: the telling of a parents' personal experience and creating a narrative using a wordless book. For the parents' personal experience story, each mother was asked to share an event with her child that had happened to her (see Appendix B for the full prompt). Parents sometimes asked if their child could be included in the narrative and were told that they could if the narrative revolved around the mother's own experience.

For the wordless book sharing, mothers were asked to share with their children the wordless book, *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney, 2009) Mothers were instructed to use the pictures to create the narrative (see Appendix B for the full prompt). The order of these activities was counterbalanced by cultural group and

gender. Children were later asked to retell the wordless book to a research assistant while mothers were interviewed about storytelling practices and given a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix A). Tapes were transcribed and coded in the language spoken by family.

Coding

After videos were transcribed we identified three sections of *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney, 2009) that could be described as including a lesson. Research assistants watched videos and kept track of when parents turned the page. Three sections of the story were bracketed and then coded into the coding categories found below: Section 1: Pages 7-16 (The Lion captures the Mouse), Section 2: Pages 22-33 (The Mouse saves the Lion), and Section 3: Pages 35-to end of book (Ending where animals go back to their respective families). All transcripts were bracketed in the language spoken by a native bilingual speaker of English and Spanish. Bracketing showed 80% agreement overall.

Using transcripts and video, each utterance that was related to narrating the story was identified. The remaining (elaborative) utterances were then coded as either being related to Academic Lessons, Life Lessons, or Miscellaneous. Life Lesson and Academic Lesson elaboration coding categories were then inductively created and further operationalized into the categories below.

All transcripts were coded in the language spoken by a native bilingual speaker of English and Spanish. Two coders established inter-rater reliability on twenty percent of the transcripts. Coding showed 85% agreement overall and a Cohen's

kappa of .83, which falls within "excellent" levels (Fleiss, 1981). Anything not falling into the categories described was coded as a Miscellaneous utterance.

Mothers' Narrative Talk. Before coding elaborations, we first had to identify utterances where the parent was telling the story. These consisted of description of events, objects, characters' dialogue, and actions that constituted building the plot. These utterances were coded as Narrative Talk. For example, "And then the mouse nibbled through the rope." "Look at that owl chasing the mouse." "One time I was riding my bike to school."

Academic Lesson Elaborations. Any elaborative utterances that provided information about academic lessons to the primary child during the two storytelling contexts was identified and coded. Four types of elaborations were coded and comprise the main analysis: print knowledge, labeling and defining, generic statements, and physical causality.

Print Knowledge. This code was only relevant during the wordless book context. It included any elaborative utterance related to the conventions for reading and print awareness (i.e., alphabet, punctuation, phonemes, and symbols). This included stating the title and author before reading, telling the child to turn the page, or how to hold the book. For example, "What is this letter?" "Let's see what this book is about?".

Labeling and Defining. This type of utterance was coded across both contexts and included talk related to labeling and definitions of concepts. For example, "Do you know what blood is?" "That's a lion." "What's that called?"

Generic Statements. This type of utterance was coded across both contexts and included any utterance that went beyond the story and made general or universal claims about the world using plural nouns (either about a group of animals or people). For example, “Lions live in zoos.” or “Mice have very sharp teeth.” “Dogs love to chase people on bikes.” “Babies get hungry a lot.”

Physical Causality. This type of utterance was coded across both contexts and included utterances related to causes, reasons, or consequences for events and actions in the story that had physical causes (not intentional causes). For example, “The lion can get out because the mouse chewed the rope.” “He put his paw down so the mouse ran.” “Someone’s skateboard came flying by and knocked me over.”

Life Lesson Elaborations. Parents’ elaborations about larger life lessons spoken to the primary child during the two storytelling contexts were identified and codes were inductively created. Four types of elaborations were coded and comprise the main analysis: causal motivation, causal motivation-implicit, personal connection, and *consejo.*

***Causal Motivation*.** Coded across contexts this code was used for any utterance where the parent was making non-obvious causal links between *the motivations* of characters and their actions in the story, or asking the child to do so explicitly. For example, “The lion was mad at the mouse for being on his back” “The mouse is scared because the lion might eat him.” or “I was afraid to go near the water because I thought I’d fall in.”

Causal Motivation-Implicit. This category was used for any utterance where the parent was making non-obvious causal links between motivations and actions, but there was an implicit motivation or internal state underlying the action that was not stated explicitly. For example, "He's hiding really quietly, so the owl doesn't hear him." Or "I had be careful cause he could have seen me."

Personal Connection. This category was coded for any utterance that connected what was happening in the story to the child's recent or habitual behavior, likes, or dislikes, or that asked the child directly about their relevant behavior or preferences. For example, "You also fell when you were riding the bike." or "Remember that time we saw a lion?"

Consejo. Any utterance that gave an interpretation or the meaning of the story that included an explicit lesson (e.g., you shouldn't do x) or an implicit lesson or moral (She did x and that is why y happened to her, or I did x and this is what I learned). Also included were questions that asked the child for a lesson. For example, "If you do something nice for somebody they will do something nice for you." Or "If you don't brush your teeth they will fall out!"

Results

I first present differences in mothers' overall narrative talk across storytelling contexts. Next, I discuss differences in mothers' life lesson and academic elaborations in the wordless book context. Finally, I present differences in mothers' life lesson and academic elaborations in the personal experience stories. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations of all elaboration types.

Mothers' Narrative Talk

To answer research question 1 (Are there differences across the three communities in the amount of narrative talk parents provide during a story about personal experience and when reading a wordless book?) the first set of analyses examined total number of maternal narrative talk utterances, those utterances where mothers were just telling the plot of the story. A 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage) x 2 (story type: Mothers' personal experience, wordless book) mixed ANOVA was conducted on the mean number of utterances of narrative talk mothers used. Results revealed a main effect of story type, F (1, 50) = 26.11, p =.0001, η_p^2=.34. When constructing a narrative with their children, mothers provided more narrative utterances during the wordless book activity (M=85.38, SD = 5.0) than during the personal experience story (M=50.41, SD = 5.02).

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, there was no main effect of cultural group, and no significant interaction between story type and cultural group. Mothers in all three cultural groups provided similar amounts of narrative talk in the two storytelling activities. Thus, despite previous work that might predict differences in overall talk across these groups (Hart & Risley, 1995), this finding shows that mothers in the three groups provided similar amounts of narrative talk in these contexts.

Mothers' Elaborations in Wordless Book Reading

Planned comparisons between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European-heritage mothers. To answer research question 2 (Are

there differences between Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group and European-heritage mothers in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that they provide during a wordless book?) I first conducted planned comparisons on each individual type of life lesson (causal motivation, causal motivation implicit, personal experience, and *consejo*) and academic lesson (print knowledge, labeling, generics, physical causality) elaboration, comparing Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group and European-heritage mothers.

Planned comparisons of life lesson elaborations. During mothers' wordless book narratives, I predicted that Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling would provide more life lesson elaborations (causal motivation, causal motivation implicit, personal experience, and *consejo* utterances) than European-heritage mothers (Hypothesis 2). A series of one way planned comparison *t*-tests on each life lesson elaboration type compared the two groups. As predicted, Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling did provide more causal motivation elaborations (M=16.5, SD=9.99) than European-heritage mothers (M=8.6, SD=5.53) in the wordless book reading, (95% CI, 2.24 to 13.53), t (24.34) = 2.88, p = .008, d= 0.97. However, there were no differences between the two groups in causal motivation implicit, personal connections or *consejo* elaborations in this context.

Planned comparisons of academic lesson elaborations. I predicted that European-heritage mothers would provide more academic lesson elaborations (print knowledge, labeling, generics, and physical causality) than Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling in the wordless book context (Hypothesis 4). A series of *t*-tests

found that, as predicted, European-heritage mothers provided more print knowledge elaborations (*M*=15.15, *SD*=8.8) than did Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling in the wordless book narratives (*M*=4.41, *SD*=3.55*)*, (95% CI, 6.20 to 15.28), *t (*24.22) = 4.88, *p* = .001, *d*= 1.55. There were no significant differences between these two groups in labeling, generics, or physical causality elaborations.

Exploratory analyses across three cultural groups. I ran exploratory analyses to answer research question 4 (Are there differences across these three communities in the life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that parents provide during a wordless book?). I compared mothers' wordless book elaborations across the three groups and did not advance an *a priori* hypothesis. Analyses were conducted first on life lesson elaborations and then on academic lesson elaborations across the three groups. Next I explored overall differences between academic and life lesson elaborations.

Exploratory analyses of life lesson elaborations. A mixed 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage) x 4 (life lesson elaboration type: causal motivation, causal motivation implicit, personal connection, *consejo*) ANOVA on mean number of mothers' life lesson elaborations was conducted. Due to list wise exclusion, families without complete life lesson elaboration data were excluded from these analyses.

There was no main effect of cultural group on life lesson elaborations. However, there was a significant main effect of life lesson elaboration type, *F* (1.9, 98.3) = 50.86, p =<.0001, η_p^2=.4. Post-hoc tests using Tukey HSD *p* <.05, revealed

that causal motivation elaborations (*M*= 10.7, *SD*=8.0) were more common than causal motivation-implicit (*M*= 6.3, *SD*=4.0), *consejo* (*M*=2.50, *SD*=3.29), and personal connections (*M*=1.29, *SD*=1.87). Most importantly for the research questions, there was a significant interaction between cultural group and life lesson elaboration type, F (3.71, 98.3) = 5.46 p =.001, η_p^2=.17 (see table 2 for means and standard deviations). As predicted, post-hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD, p <.05) revealed that Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group provided more causal motivation elaborations (*M*= 15.72, *SD*=10.20) than either European-heritage mothers (*M*=8.58, *SD*=5.53), or Mexican-heritage mothers in the higher schooling group (*M*=8.16, *SD*=5.6). Contrary to predictions, European-heritage mothers provided more causal motivation-implicit utterances (*M*=7.63, *SD*=4.89) than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group (*M*=4.88, *SD*=2.63). There was also a marginally significant trend for European-heritage mothers to provide more personal connections in this context (*M*=1.84, *SD*=2.16) than Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling (*M*=1.22, *SD*=2.26), p =.08, and Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling experience (*M*=0.8, *SD*=.85), p =.08.

Exploratory analyses of academic lesson elaborations. To examine differences in academic lesson elaborations in mothers' wordless book narratives, another mixed 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage) x 4 (academic lesson elaboration type: print knowledge, labeling, generics, physical causality) ANOVA on the mean number of mothers' academic lesson elaborations was conducted. There was no main effect of

cultural group, but there was a main effect of academic lesson elaboration type, F (1.70, 85.11) = 38.93, p =.001, η_p^2=.43. Post hoc tests (Tukey HSD, p .001) revealed that labeling elaborations (M=13.57, SD=13.19) were more common that print knowledge (M=9.53, SD=7.61, generics (M=3.34, SD=4.21), and physical causality (M=1.15, SD=1.59).

Related to the hypotheses, there was a significant interaction between cultural group and academic lesson elaboration type, F (3.4, 85.19) = 6.38, p =.001, η_p^2=.20. In line with predictions, post hoc tests (Tukey HSD, p <.05) revealed that European-heritage mothers were more likely to provide print knowledge elaborations (M=15.16, SD=8.82) than either Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling (M=5.33, SD=4.09) or Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling (M=7.21, SD=4.75). In contrast to predictions, however, in these analyses after listwise exclusion, Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling experience were more likely to use labeling utterances (M=20.53, SD=17.44) than European-heritage mothers (M=11.26, SD=7.22). Interestingly, Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling experience also provided more labeling elaborations (M=20.53, SD=17.44) than Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling experience (M=10.37, SD=12.53).

Differences between academic and life lesson elaborations. To examine overall differences in total academic lesson versus life lesson elaborations by cultural group in the wordless book context, a mixed 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage) x 2 (elaboration type: life lesson, academic lesson) ANOVA on the mean number of

mothers' elaborations during the wordless book was conducted. There was no main effect of cultural group, and no significant interaction between cultural group and elaboration type. However, there was a main effect of elaboration type, F (2, 53) =6.16, p=.001, η_p^2=.10. Post hoc tests (Tukey HSD, p <.05) showed that overall, mothers gave more academic lesson elaborations (M=26.80, SD=18.50) than life lesson elaborations (M=20.82, SD=9.85) in the wordless book context.

Mothers' Elaborations in Personal Experience Stories

Planned comparisons between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European-heritage mothers. To answer research question 3 (Are there differences between Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group and European-heritage mothers in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that they provide during a personal experience story?) I conducted planned comparisons on each individual type of life lesson and academic lesson elaboration utterance comparing Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group and European-heritage mothers. See Table 3 for means and standard deviations of all elaboration types.

Planned comparisons of Life Lesson elaborations. During mothers' personal experience narratives, I predicted that Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group would provide more life lesson elaborations (causal motivation, causal motivation implicit, personal experience, and *consejo* utterances) (Hypothesis 3). A series of one-way planned comparison *t*-tests on each life lesson elaboration type compared the two groups. Contrary to my prediction, these analyses revealed

that European-heritage mothers provided more personal connections (*M*=16.95, *SD*=17.57), to their children than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group (*M*=6.05, *SD*=5.97), (95% CI, 2.73 to 20.27), *t (*36) = 2.66, *p* = .01, *d*= 0.93. There were no other statistically significant differences between these two groups in other types of life lesson elaborations in the personal experience story context.

Planned comparisons of Academic Lesson elaborations. I predicted that European-heritage mothers would provide more academic lesson elaborations (print knowledge, labeling, generics, and physical causality) than Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling in the personal experience story context (Hypothesis 4). A series of *t*-tests found that European-heritage mothers provided more generic elaboration (*M*=3.30, *SD*=5.06), to their children than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group (*M*=.16, *SD*=.50), (95% CI, .77 to 5.51), *t (*36) = 2.68, *p* = .01, *d*=. There were no significant differences in print knowledge, labeling or physical causality elaborations in these two groups in the personal experience stories.

Exploratory analyses across three cultural groups. The previous analysis examined differences between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European Heritage mothers. To answer research question 5 (Are there differences across these three communities in life lesson and academic lesson elaborations that parents provide during a narrative of personal experience about the mother?), these analyses examined differences in life lesson elaborations and academic lesson elaborations across the three groups in the personal experience story context and did not advance an *a priori* hypothesis. I also explored overall differences between

academic and life lesson elaborations in this context. Due to list wise exclusion, families without complete life lesson elaboration data were excluded from these analyses.

Exploratory analyses of Life Lesson elaborations. To examine life lesson elaborations in mothers' personal experience narratives, a mixed 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage higher schooling) x 4 (life lesson elaboration type: causal motivation, causal motivation-implicit, personal connection, consejo) on the mean number of mothers' life lesson elaborations was conducted.

There was a main effect of life lesson elaboration type, F (1.35, 71.79) = 21.63, p =.000, η_p^2=.29. Post-hoc tests using Tukey HSD p <.05, revealed that personal connection utterances occurred more often (M=10.42, SD=12.27), than causal motivation (M=1.63, SD=1.78), causal motivation implicit (M=1.26, SD= 2.46), and *consejo* (M=2.64, SD= 6.08) utterances. There was also a main effect of cultural group, F (2, 53) = 4.13, p =.022, η_p^2=.13, showing that, surprisingly, European-heritage mothers provided more life lesson elaborations than mothers in the two Mexican-heritage groups. Most important to the research questions, there was a significant interaction between cultural group and life lesson elaboration type, F (2.70, 71.79) = 4.48, p =.000, η_p^2=.15. Contrary to predictions, and related to the above finding, post-hoc analyses (Tukey HSD p <.05), indicate that European-heritage mothers provided more personal connection elaborations (M=16.95, SD=17.57), than did Mexican-heritage mothers in the higher schooling group

(*M*=7.77, *SD*=5.90), or Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group (*M*=6.05, *SD*=5.97). There were no other significant differences.

Exploratory analyses of Academic Lesson elaborations. I examined academic lesson elaboration in mothers' personal experience narratives across these cultural groups in a mixed 3 (cultural Group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage higher schooling) x 4 (academic lesson elaboration type: labeling, generics, physical causality) ANOVA on mean number of academic lesson elaborations. A main effect of academic lesson elaboration was revealed, F (2, 70.6) = 24.51, p =<.001, η_p^2=.31, with post hoc analyses (Tukey, p = <.05) showing that labeling elaborations (*M*=7.00, *SD*=6.50), were more common than generics (*M*=1.28, *SD*=1.90), or physical causality utterances (*M*=1.33, *SD*=2.20). Contrary to predictions, there was no interaction between cultural group and academic lesson elaboration type F (2.67, 70.66) = 1.69, η_p^2 =.15. There was also no main effect of cultural group, F (2, 53) = 1.59, η_p^2=.21. Thus, there were no differences in academic lesson elaborations regardless of cultural group in this personal experience story context.

Differences between academic and life lesson elaborations. To examine differences in total academic lesson versus life lesson elaborations by cultural group, a mixed 3 (cultural group: Mexican-heritage basic schooling, Mexican-heritage higher schooling, European-heritage) x 2 (Elaboration Type: life lesson, academic lesson) ANOVA on the mean number of mothers' elaborations during the personal storytelling context was conducted. There was a significant main effect of elaboration

type, F (1, 54) =100.46, p=.001 η_p^2 =.65. Post-hoc tests using Tukey HSD p <.05 revealed that more life lesson elaborations (M=30.71, SD=23.84) than academic lesson elaborations (M=8.82, SD=8.30 were used overall during the personal storytelling context. There was no main effect of cultural group. However, there was a significant interaction between cultural group and elaboration type, F (2, 54) =450.02, p=.042 η_p^2 =.11. Contrary to predictions, however, post hoc tests (Tukey <.05) revealed that European-heritage mothers provided more life lesson elaborations (M=39.4, SD=28.2) than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group in this context (M=24.1, SD=21.0). This is likely a result accounted for by the difference in personal connection elaborations discussed earlier.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand whether and how mothers' narrative talk and elaborations about life lessons and academic lessons varied across three cultural groups and two storytelling contexts. Researchers have found that a disconnect between home and school environments often contributes to Latino children's poorer average school outcomes (Delgado-Gaitan 1992; Valdes, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999; Villanueva, 1996). I sought to contribute to social justice research by amplifying the voices of Mexican-heritage parents who are often portrayed in the media as not doing enough to foster their children's school-related success. Understanding *what* parents elaborate about during narratives may help educators explore ways that children's experiences at home may be leveraged in their school environments (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). I summarize the findings by storytelling

context and offer interpretations of their meanings and limitations at the close of each section.

Mothers' Narrative Talk

The first goal of this study was to examine narrative talk across three cultural groups. As predicted, but contrary to public discourse regarding word gaps, mothers across these three communities did not differ in their narrative talk across the story contexts (Hypothesis 1). This shows that parents were providing similar amounts of narrative content in the three coded sections of the *The Lion and The Mouse (2009)* and during narratives about themselves. This finding contradicts research that has found variation in language related to differences in SES and schooling (Fernald et al., 2013; Hart & Risley, 1995). Reese et al., (2008) found that mothers were most likely to speak more and elaborate when the narrative reflected their cultural values. Thus, the current finding also suggests that mothers across these groups may have found these narratives to be similarly culturally relevant and described the narratives in similar ways. This finding also connects with other recent findings questioning the evidence for deficit approaches regarding parents' language to children (see Sperry, Sperry, & Miller, 2017).

Mothers' Elaborations in Wordless Book Reading

Planned comparisons between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European-heritage mothers. I investigated individual life lesson and academic lesson elaborations in the wordless book context comparing Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group and European-heritage mothers with

extensive schooling. In my examination of life lesson elaborations, as hypothesized, Mexican-heritage basic schooling mothers elaborated more often about causal motivations behind actions in the story than did European-heritage mothers with their 4-year old children (Hypothesis 2). Because causal motivation talk provides children with explicit internal thoughts or desires as reasons for action, these utterances focus children toward understanding people's (and perhaps their own) internal motivations. These results are consistent with findings that show that Mexican-heritage children whose parents have less experience with formal schooling often link their own reasoning about challenging experiences to the current daily challenges or situations that their children are experiencing (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994b; Valdes, 1996). Indeed, within the wordless book context we coded pages where families explicitly discussed how thoughts related to actions in challenging situations.

The finding that Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group talked about causal motivations more often than European-heritage in these situations may also have some implications for children's developing understanding of causal links between people's internal states and their observable actions. There is evidence that parents' use of causality within challenging narratives helps children make meaning out of them. For instance, Sales, Fivush, & Peterson (2008) found that parents who focused on the causal aspects of negative events had children with greater recall than those who did not. Interestingly, the authors argued that negative events may indeed serve a didactic function, with parents wanting to teach children how to learn from them. Further, parents' talk about causality has been correlated to children's use of

causality within their own narratives about negative events (Fivush et al., 2008; Sales et al., 2003).

In my examination of academic lessons in this context, as hypothesized (Hypothesis 4) European-heritage mothers talked more about print knowledge and used more generic elaborations with their 4-year old children than Mexican-heritage basic schooling mothers. This finding replicates previous studies that have found that European heritage mothers provide more academic elaborations than other cultural communities (Rogoff et al., 1993). For instance, Lareau (2003) reported that middle-class parents were more likely to provide speech related to school-based knowledge and activities than working-class and poor parents. Generic statements communicate general knowledge facts about the world that may be relevant to school learning, and print-related talk clearly connects to early literacy activities.

Exploratory analyses across the three cultural groups. My examination of life lesson elaborations across all three groups was exploratory. Related to previous analyses, I found that Mexican heritage mothers in the basic schooling group provided more causal motivation utterances than European-heritage mothers and Mexican heritage mothers with higher schooling. It is interesting that Mexican-heritage mothers with more schooling experience differed from Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group in this type of talk. It could be that, like European-heritage mothers (Rogoff, 2011), Mexican-heritage mothers with more schooling may feel less comfortable discussing the causal motivations for negative events.

Contrary to predictions, I found that European-heritage mothers provided more causal motivation-implicit utterances than Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group while reading. This shows that European heritage mothers were mentioning possible causal links between actions and their motivations, but making the causal links less explicit. European-heritage parents may assume their children do not need to be explicitly told the meaning behind the actions in the book. Alternatively, and related to other research on parents' talk about unpleasant topics (Rosengren, Miller, Gutierrez, Chow, Schein,., & Anderson, 2014) European-heritage parents may avoid talk about negative events, and therefore may not want to explicitly explain why challenging things are happening in the book. For example, they may not want to explain to their children that the Lion has captured the mouse because he wants to eat it.

There is interesting evidence of cultural differences in parents' talk about negative or unpleasant events and children's understanding of these negative topics (Rosengren et al., 2014). For example, death is a difficult though universal event, interpreted by some communities as more negative, or less appropriate for children, than others. Rosengren et al. (2014) examined children's understanding of death among 27 5-year-old Mexican American children in Chicago. Children were shown a book about a character named Terry and how he would feel after the death of a relative, pet, and plant. Interestingly, 74% of Mexican American children in this study suggested that Terry's parents should tell her about the death. Conversely, 50% of European American children did not respond or answered 'I don't know'. Mexican

American children gave "straight forward descriptions" of death, and according to the authors, two children mentioned causality (e.g., if a knife or a bullet enters she will die), whereas none of the European American were able to relate causality within this topic.

Related to previous analyses, in my examination of academic elaborations, I found that European-heritage mothers provided more print knowledge elaborations than the other two groups of Mexican-heritage mothers. However, surprisingly in these analyses, I found that Mexican-heritage mothers in the basic schooling group provided more labeling elaborations than Mexican-heritage mothers with higher schooling experience and European-heritage mothers. This finding is a particularly important because it counters deficit arguments that continue to suggest that parents from non-dominant groups need intervention and should be taught *how to* read to their children (Evans et al, 2011). Conversely, it may point to these parents participating in interventions that explicitly showed them how to engage in dialogic reading with their children (Whitehurst et al.,1988).

Mothers' Elaborations in Personal Experience Stories

Planned comparisons between Mexican-heritage mothers with basic schooling and European-heritage mothers. I also investigated life lesson elaborations and academic lesson elaborations in the personal experience stories. In my examination of individual life lesson elaborations between these groups, I found that, contrary to my hypothesis (Hypothesis 3), European-heritage mothers shared more personal connections than both Mexican-heritage groups. While this finding

was unexpected, it is in fact consistent with recent work showing that a group of middle-class, mostly European-heritage parents often linked museum experiences to their child's specific personal experiences (see Callanan, Castaneda, Luce, & Martin, 2017). Personal connections were coded in this study when mothers connected the narrative to children's preferences and behaviors. European heritage middle-class mothers may be more elaborative in this child-centered way than those from other cultural communities. Thus, it may be that European-heritage parents used this context as an opportunity to connect narratives about themselves directly to their children. In retrospect, personal connections talk may be less representative of the type of life lesson talk that has been reported in ethnographic studies of Mexican-heritage families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994a). Indeed, some researchers argue that these types of narratives may be most related to European heritage middle-class families' specific individualistic values and focus on their children's self esteem (Wang & Fivush, 2005).

In future work, perhaps distinguishing between personal connections related to behaviors versus preferences will illuminate possible cultural differences in types of personal connections used across these groups of parents. It could be that if we had separated utterances by children's preferences (e.g., "you like ice-cream don't you?") versus utterances that connected children's behaviors with their parents' experiences or situations (e.g., "you also fell off the bike") we may have found a different pattern of results. Future coding will distinguish between these types of utterances to better

understand which personal connections are the types of life lesson that are common in Mexican-heritage mothers' talk and in European-heritage mothers' talk.

In my examination of academic lesson elaborations, contrary to my hypothesis (Hypothesis 5), I did not find differences between these cultural groups in academic elaborations during parents' personal experience stories. It could be that this context was novel for many parents and perhaps these data do not represent their daily experiences with this type of narrative. For example, when asked to discuss a personal experience with their children some mothers expressed surprise. Indeed, many European American mothers mentioned that they had not introduced narratives about themselves to their children yet. On the other hand, it may be that personal experience stories are not a typical setting for discussing academic lessons in either group of parents.

Exploratory analyses across the three cultural groups. Again, in exploratory analyses across the three groups of parents, I found that European-heritage mother provided more personal connections than the two groups of Mexican-heritage mothers. However, there were no other differences in life lesson elaborations, and mothers from the three communities provided similar amounts of academic elaborations in the context of personal stories.

Limitations and Future Directions

Given the vast amount of ethnographic work on *consejos* it is surprising that there were no differences across these groups in the frequency of *consejos*. It could be that *consejos* were difficult to capture in the two narrative settings I examined. Most

research examining parents' narratives to children (e.g., Fivush et al., 2006) asks parents to share several narratives to get a better understanding of how parents structure narratives in their everyday lives. Thus, one limitation of this study is that we only asked parents to share one narrative of personal experience. It may also be that *consejos* should be coded in different ways to better capture cultural variation. For instance, future coding will explore depth of meaning in *consejos* to determine whether parents vary in the specific content of the advice, as well in the seriousness of consequences that may result from children's actions. For example, it is possible that *consejos* may vary a great deal in their vividness, and also in the impact they have on children. For instance saying, "If you do something nice for somebody they will do something nice for you" may be experienced by children as qualitatively different from "If you don't brush your teeth they will fall out!"

Understanding how parents discuss different topics across communities and whether those translate into social-cognitive skills for children is a critical step in countering deficit arguments against non-dominant groups (e.g., Callanan & Waxman, 2003). For instance, if children are reflecting back important values within their own narratives these data may provide evidence that Mexican-heritage parents' focus on causal motivation may lead to children's learning about how to cope with negative emotions and events. This type of learning is a critical skill and crucial to children's well-being.

At the moment current research seems to argue that parents should focus on academic lessons with their young children, however the findings of this study

support an argument that a focus on children's well-being more broadly may be more important than a focus on academic lessons within these particular contexts and for children from marginalized communities. Indeed, there is evidence that discussion of negative emotions may help children cope with difficult experiences of their own and understand emotion causes (Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002), a crucial skill for children within our current social and political climate. Balancing academic lessons with life lessons may be most beneficial for children from all communities. Understanding more about the strengths that diverse children gain in their home environments is an important first step toward that goal.

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Table 1: *Participants' Demographic and Income by Cultural Group*

	European Heritage	Mexican Heritage	
	High Schooling	High Schooling	Basic Schooling
	(n=20) *M (SD)*	*(n*=20) *M (SD)*	*(n*=20) *M (SD)*
Children			
Age in Months	4.45 (.33)	4.38 (.29)	4.42 (.29)
Mothers			
Formal Schooling (Yrs.)	16.05 (2.52)	15.95 (1.87)	8.55 (3.13)**
Home			
Number of Children	1.35 (.48)	2.60 (.68)	3.2 (1.10)**
Family	(*n=17*)	(*n=16*)	(*n=15*)
Income ($)			
Over 100,000	29%		
99,999 – 75,000	29%	17%	
74,999-50,000	41%	55%	13%
49,999-30,000		17%	80%
29,999-15,000			6%
Less than 14,999			

$p < .01$

Table 2*: Comparisons of Life Lesson and Academic Lesson Elaborations by Participants' Cultural Group during Wordless Book Reading*

	Overall	European Heritage	Mexican Heritage Higher	Mexican Heritage Basic
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*
Academic				
Print Knowledge	9.53 (7.61)	15.16 (8.82)	7.21 (4.75	5.33 (4.09)
Labeling & Defining	13.57 (13.19)	11.26 (7.22)	10.37 (12.53)	20.53 (17.44)
Generics	3.34 (4.21)	3.05 (2.93)	2.68 (4.73)	4.53 (4.86)
Physical Causality	1.15 (1.59)	.90 (1.67	1.21 (1.84)	1.40 (1.12)
Life Lesson				
Causal Motivation	10.73 (8.05)	8.58 (5.53)	8.16 (5.6)	15.72 (10.20)
Causal M-Implicit	6.30 (4.00)	7.63 (4.89)	6.32 (3.80)	4.88 (2.63)
Personal Connection	1.29 (1.87)	1.84 (2.16)	0.79 (.85)	1.22 (2.26)
Consejo	2.50 (3.29)	1.63 (1.83)	3.10 (4.04)	2.78 (3.57)

Table 3*: Comparisons of Life Lesson and Academic Lesson Elaborations by Participants' Cultural Group during Parents' Experience Storytelling*

	Overall	European Heritage	Mexican Heritage Basic	Mexican Heritage Higher
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*
Academic				
Labeling	6.27 (6.80)	6.15 (6.67)	4.29 (5.86)	7.00 (6.50)
Generics	1.61 (3.41)	3.30 (5.07)	0.16 (0.50)	1.28 (1.90)
Physical Causality	0.95 (1.60)	0.45 (0.69)	1.10 (1.52)	1.33 (2.20)
Life Lesson				
Causal Motivation	1.63 (1.78)	1.10 (1.62	1.84 (1.70)	2.0 (2.0)
Causal Motivation-Implicit	1.26 (2.46)	1.80 (3.74)	1.00 (1.29)	0.94 (1.43)
Personal Connection	10.42 (12.27)	16.95(17.57)	6.05 (5.97)	7.77 (5.90)
Consejo	2.64 (6.08)	2.65 (6.70)	4.10 (7.67)	1.11 (2.08)

Appendix A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your child's birth date _____

2. What is your child's gender? Male □ Female □

3. What are the birthdates and genders of your other children (if any)

4. Who do you(the parent) live with? □ Mother □ Father □ Aunt □ Stepmother □ Stepfather □ Uncle □ Sister □ Brother □ Cousin □ Stepsister □ Stepbrother □ Grandmother □ Grandfather □ Guardian □ Other:_____

5. Do you have a partner? No □ Yes □

In our study we would like to include families from different economic, religious, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. If it's OK with you, we would like to know

6.Were you born in the U.S.? No□ Yes□ a. If no, where were you born? (Give the country and city)

b. Was it an urban or rural area? Urban/City □ Rural/Country□

7. Was your partner born in the U.S.? No□ Yes □ a. If no, where was he/she born? (Give the country and city) _____

b. Was it an urban or rural area? Urban/City □ Rural/Country □

8. Was your child born in the U.S.? No□ Yes □ a. If no, where were they born? (Give the state and country)

b. Was this an urban or rural area? Urban/City □ Rural/Country □ c. How old were they when you came to the U.S.? _____

d. How long has your child been in the U.S.? ____ years _____ months

9. How would you describe your family's ethnic background?

_____

10. How would you describe your family's religious affiliation?

_____

11. What is your current marital status?

(Circle one) 1. Married 2. Separated 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Never married

12. Do you have a job right now?

No□ Yes □ a. If yes, what is your job? _____

13. Does your partner have a job right now?

No□ Yes □ a. If yes, what is his/her job? _____

14. How many years of schooling did you and your partner complete?

You: _____

Partner: _____

15. Is your child currently enrolled in preschool? _____

16. Have your or your partner taken any parenting classes?

_____

17. What is your approximate family income?

Appendix B
Experimenter Script

Parent-Child Wordless Book Task:
Script ENGLISH: "Hi my name is [researcher name]. We are interested in how children learn through stories and books with their parents. We'd like you to read this book together there is no time limit, and no right way to share this book. We simply ask you to use the pictures within it as a guide for the story. After you share this book, I will ask you a few questions and [insert RA name] will show your child another book and ask them a few questions. Thanks so much."

Script SPANISH: "Hola, me llamo [nombre de investigador]. Estamos interesados en cómo los niños aprenden a través de historias y libros con sus padres. Queremos que usted comparta este libro con su hijo(a). No hay límite de tiempo y no hay una manera correcta de compartir el libro. Sólo le pedimos usar las ilustraciones del libro como una guía para contar la historia. Después de compartir el libro yo le haré unas preguntas sobre los tipos de historias compartidas en su hogar y [[insert RA name] le mostrare a su hijo(a) otro libro y le hare algunas preguntas. Muchas gracias. "

Personal Experience Storytelling Task:
Script ENGLISH: "Thanks so much. Now we are interested in the types of stories you share with your child about things that have happened to you. Typically these are the types of stories you share about events that have happened during the day or in your past. Sometimes these are stories that children overhear their parents telling other adults. Please share one of these stories to your child, and we will be back when you're done.

Script SPANISH: "Muchas gracias. Ahora estamos interesadas en las clase de historias que comparte usted con su hijo(a) sobre las cosas que le han pasado a usted. Usualmente estas historias son de cosas que pasan durante su día o algo de su pasado. A veces son historias que los niños oyen por casualidad cuando los adultos están hablando. Por favor comparta una de estas historias con su hijo(a) y nosotros regresaremos cuando termine.

Appendix C
Interview Questions

English:

1. In some families sharing stories is something they do a lot and in some families not so much. Can you tell me about the kinds of stories you tell your child?
2. If parents do not bring it up, they will be asked "do you share stories from your childhood" "do you share stories about things that happen to you?" "do your ever make up stories for your child" What are some examples?
3. Are there some topics that you feel are inappropriate for children?
4. Did your family or people in your community tell stories when you were growing up? How often did they tell stories?
5. When telling a story do you encourage questions or do you want them to listen quietly? [If answer is quietly] Why? [If answer is questions] Do you prefer being asked questions before, during, or after sharing the story? Do you think question asking is important during story time?
6. Would you say you share stories with your child mainly when reading to them?
7. Does your family share stories with each other? Where? What kinds of stories?
8. When telling your child a story do you have a goal in mind? [if answer is yes] can you tell me about your goals?
9. Who else in your family shares stories with your child?

10. Who is the best storyteller in your family?
11. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you think is important for us to know about the stories told within your home and child's experiences with stories?

Spanish:

1. Unas familias comparten historias frecuentemente y en otras no tanto. Me podría decir algunas historias que le cuentan a sus hijos?
2. Si los padres no tocan el tema: les preguntaríamos, "¿Comparte usted historias de su infancia con su(s) hijo(s)?" "Comparte historias de lo que le ha pasado a usted" "Inventa historias para su hijo(a)?" Me puede decir unas historias como ejemplo.
3. Hay algunos temas que considere inapropiado para los niños?
4. Su familia o personas de su comunidad contaban historias cuando era usted niño? ¿Con qué frecuencia?
5. Cuando le cuenta un historia a su hijo(a) fomenta que su hijo(a) haga preguntas o prefiere que solo escuche? (Si, respuesta es solo escuche) Por que? (Si, la respuesta es preguntas)Prefiere las preguntas antes, durante o después del cuento? Piensa usted que es impórtante que su hijo(a) haga preguntas cuando le cuenta historias?
6. ¿Diría usted que cuando comparte historias con su hijo(a) es solamente cuando le lee un libro?
7. ¿Comparte su familia historia entre ustedes mismos?

8. ¿Cuándo usted comparte historias con su hijo(a) tiene un objetivó en contrale esa historia?
9. ¿Quién más en su familia comparte historias con su hijo(a)?
10. ¿Quién cuenta las mejores historias en su familia?
11. ¿Hay algo que no le he preguntado sobre las historias que compartes con su hijo(a) o de la experiencia de su hijo(a) que usted piensa que es importante para nuestro proyecto?