Diversity in Early Childhood

Dr Yvette Slaughter
Dr Renata Aliani
Dr Anne Keary*
Dr Gary Bonar*

*Monash University

VicTESOL Symposium 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

1

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

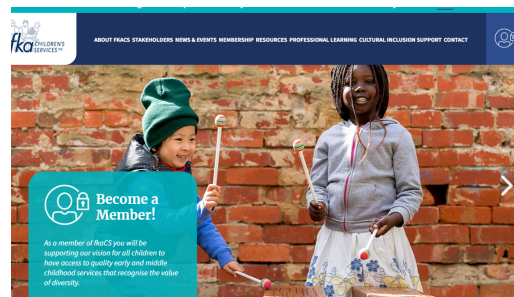## 2020/2021 VicTESOL research grant

https://victesol.vic.edu.au/index.php/victesol-research-grant-2022/

- Yvette Slaughter and Renata Aliani – The University of Melbourne
- Gary Bonar and Anne Keary – Monash University
- fka Children's Services https://fka.org.au/

Welcome to VicTESOL

ABOUT FKACS STAKEHOLDERS NEWS & EVENTS MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CULTURAL INCLUSION SUPPORT CONTACT

Become a Member!

As a member of fkaCS you will be supporting our vision for all children to have access to quality early and middle childhood services that recognise the value of diversity.

2

2

Overview

Australian Early Development Census
Language diversity and the AEDC

25.3 per cent of all Australian children speak languages other than English at home with over 300 different languages spoken.

3

3

Supporting children's multilingual development is vital

Providing children with nurturing, and culturally and linguistically sustaining education programs encourages young children to communicate their experiences, thoughts and discoveries in many ways, and to 'perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism'

(Paris, 2012, p. 93; Cun, 2021; Mitchell & Bateman, 2018; Morrison et al., 2019; Panagiotopoulou et al., 2020)

Source: unsplash: https://images.unsplash.com/photo-1613794713137-a78aba4be84a?ixlib=rb-1.2.1&ixid=MnwxMjA3fDB8MHxzZWFyY2h8MTN8fGtpZHMlMjBwbGF5aW5nfGVufDB8fDB8fA%3D%3D&auto=format&fit=crop&w=500&q=60

4

4

A translanguaging stance

- Which privileges a view of language and communication as a complex interplay of speakers' cultural, linguistic, and semiotic meaning-making resources
- Which rejects deficit views of emerging bilingualism or multilingualism among children which focus on what children 'lack' or their linguistic deficits in the majority language

Source: unsplash: https://images.unsplash.com/photo-1583468982228-19f19164aee2?ixlib=rb-1.2.1&ixid=MnwxMjA3fDB8MHxwaG90by1wYWdlfHx8fGVufDB8fHx8&auto=format&fit=crop&w=1011&q=80

5

5

A translanguaging stance:

This framing of language and communication, a translanguaging frame, underpins significant shifts in language learning research and pedagogy in recent decades, and recognises 'the complexity of individual linguistic and cultural knowledge, and the potential for researchers, educators, language communities and educational stakeholders to challenge prevailing educational practices' (D'warte & Slaughter, 2021, p. 6).

Source: unsplash: https://images.unsplash.com/photo-1583468982228-19f19164aee2?ixlib=rb-1.2.1&ixid=MnwxMjA3fDB8MHxwaG90by1wYWdlfHx8fGVufDB8fHx8&auto=format&fit=crop&w=1011&q=80

6

6

Small range of research

"[T]he legacy of a monolingual orientation and dominance of English as the prevailing language of education remains deeply ingrained and predominates in policy discourse and across educational curriculum and assessment" (Cohrssen et al., 2021, p. 20; see also Cross et al., 2022; Schalley et al., 2015).

US - Sung & Akhtar (2017)

Australian context - Cabezas and Rouse (2014), Jenkins et al. (2019), Dobinson & Buchori (2016), Sinclair (2019)

7

7

Small range of research

US - Sung & Akhtar (2017)

Group 1 – focused more on shifting their practices in response to the needs of individual children

Group 2 - focused more broadly on "helping children develop general values of tolerance and open-mindedness" (Sung & Akhtar, 2017, p. 168).

→ A danger of privileging the transmission of knowledge without connecting this to the lived experiences of students, potentially perpetuating linguistic and cultural subjugation

8

8

Small range of research

Australian context - Cabezas and Rouse (2014), Jenkins et al., (2019), Dobinson & Buchori (2016)

- Theoretical understanding of SLA and bilingual language development was low
- Educators held more negative than positive beliefs in relation to bilingualism
- limited understanding of appropriate pedagogical approaches to support SLA

9

9

Small range of research

Australian context - Sinclair (2019)

Discrepancies in the positioning of families and communities by educators.

- Viewpoint 1 - cultural competence as a long-term journey to be undertaken with Aboriginal families and communities, with participants viewing collaboration as key to educators and communities building cultural capital together
- Viewpoint 2 - cultural competency as a long-term process of development but participants did not seek to engage collaboratively with local communities

10

10

Research question

This research explores the professional knowledge base and professional learning (PL) needs of EC educators and asks:
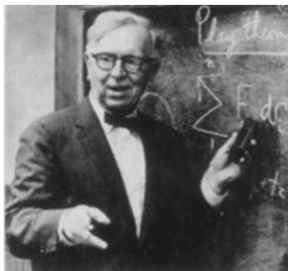
- *What are EC educators' beliefs in relation to children's diverse linguistic repertoires?*
- *What strategies do they use to support linguistically diverse children?*

11

11

Q methodology | What

William Stephenson (1902-1989), PhD in physics (1926) and psychology (1929)
Assistant to Charles Spearman and Sir Cyril Burt

Q Methodology is an inherently mixed-methods research approach used to study people's 'subjectivity' -- or 'first-person' viewpoints.
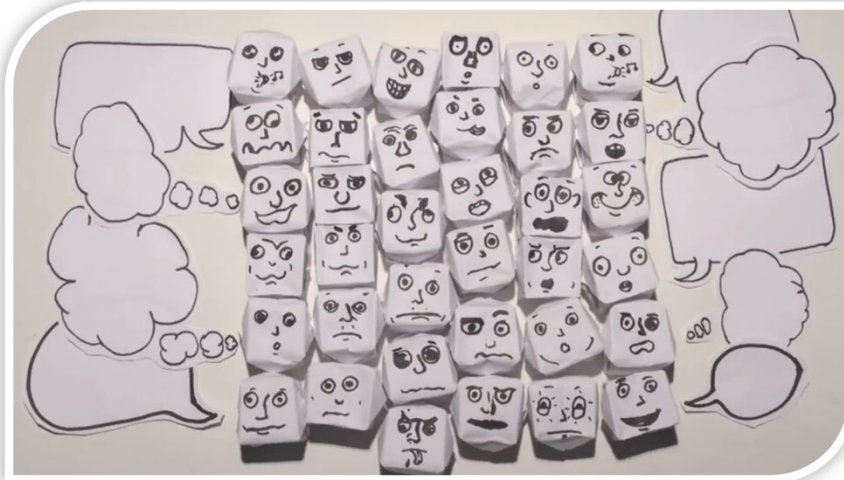
The goal is to uncover different patterns of thought, rather than their numerical distribution in the population of interest. The primary objective is to identify a typology, not to test the typology's proportional distribution within the larger population (Brown 1993).

12

12

Exploring perspectives (subjectivities)

Images used with permission from Tim Deignan. Full video available here: https://youtu.be/ZoXwsi2GLOc

13

13
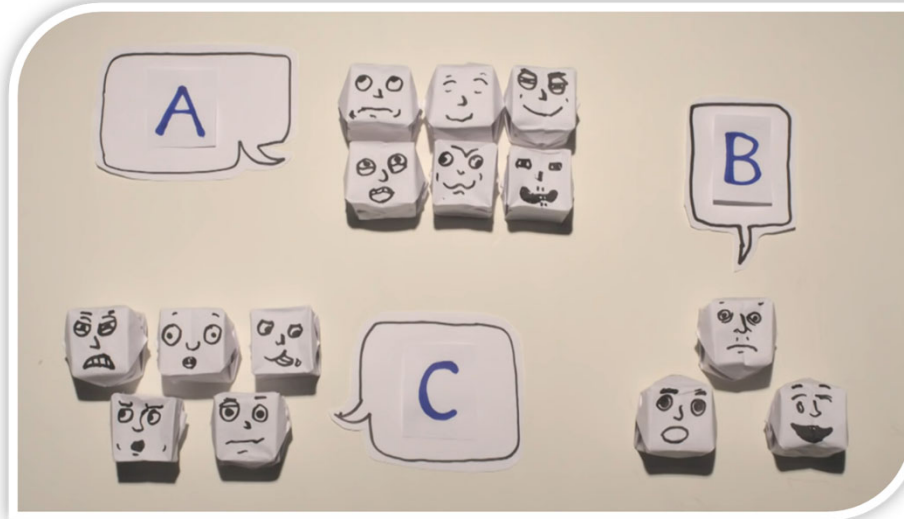
Exploring perspectives (subjectivities)

14

14

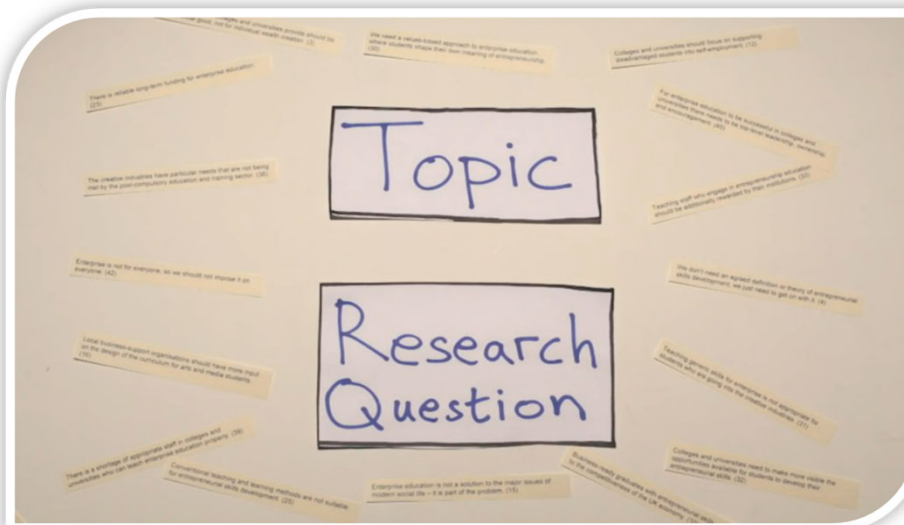# Exploring perspectives (subjectivities)
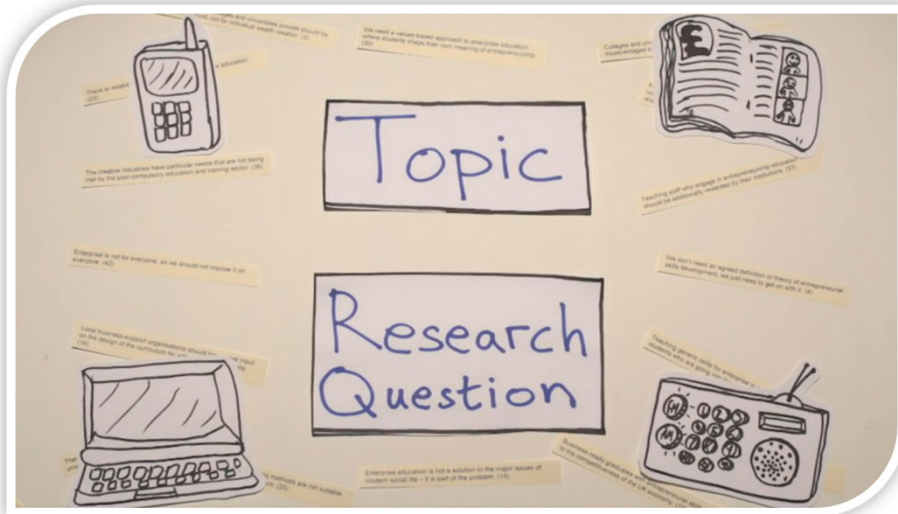

15

15

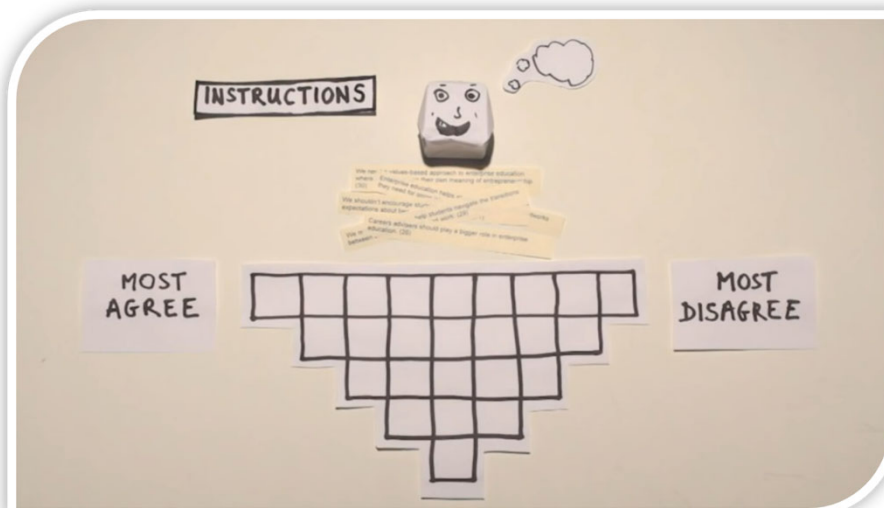# Exploratory Research

16

16

From concourse to Q sample

17

17

Q sorting procedure

18

18

Two stages of Q sorting
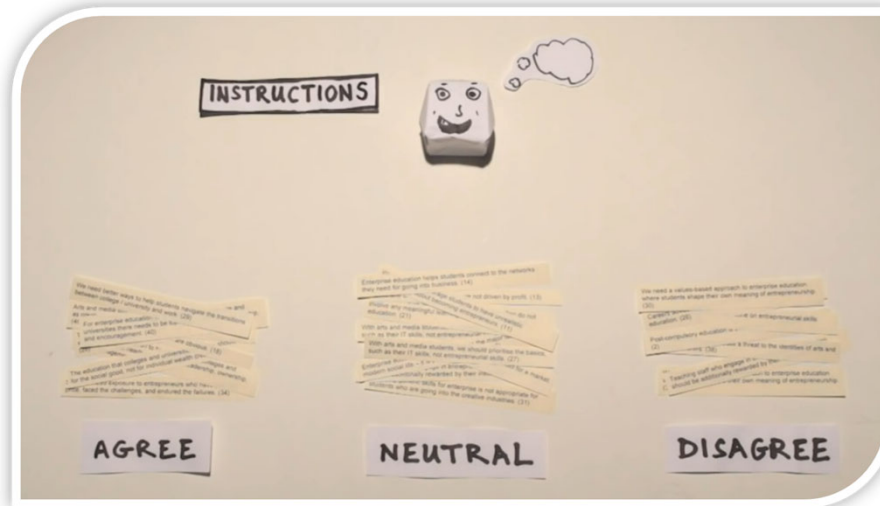
Completed Q sort grid
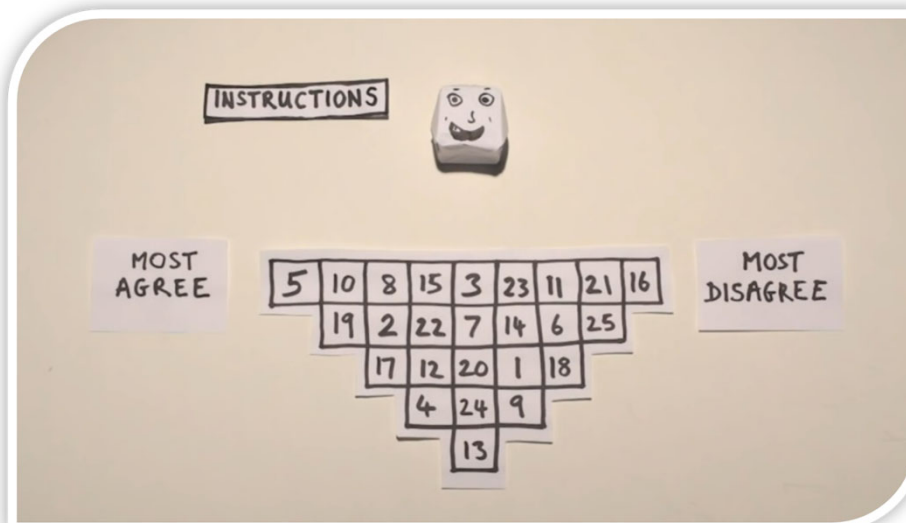
Factor analysis of Q sorts
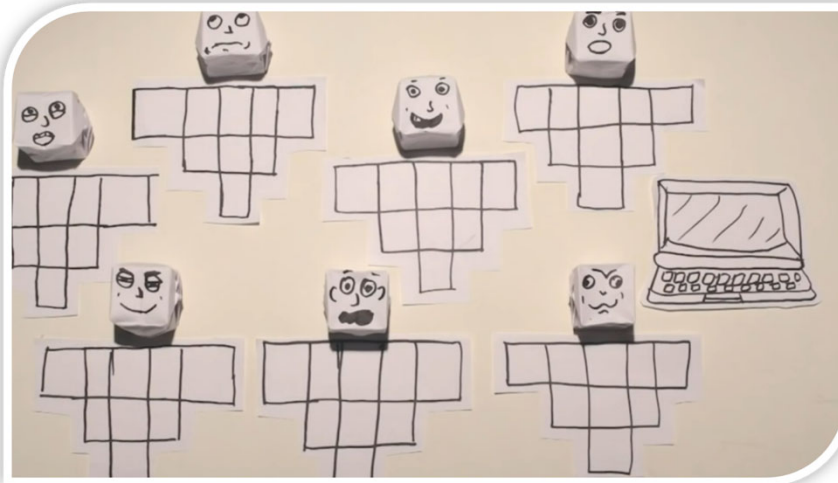
21

21

Analysing factors with insights from interviews
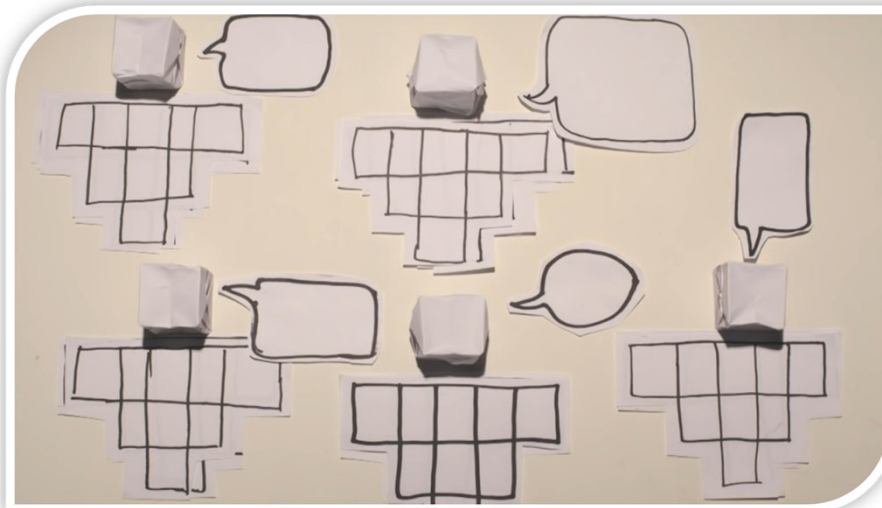
22

22

Doing Q studies with children

Figure 1. Factor 1 with factor scores and placement of cards in original grid.
Note: Numbers are scaled up in this illustration.

Størksen, I., Thorsen, A. A., Øverland, K., & Brown, S. R. (2012). Experiences of daycare children of divorce. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(7), 807–825. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2011.585238

23

23

Q methodology | How

Stages of a Q study

1. Concourse
2. Q sample
3. P-set
4. Q sort
5. Analysis
6. Interpretation

Introduction to Q video
https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoXwsi2GLOc

In our research

- "Ready-made" Policies, pedagogic text & literature (#194)
- 34 statements
- 20 EC educators
- Online Q sorting (*Qsortware*, Pruneddu, 2016)
- Factor analysis (*KADE*, Banasick, 2016)
- Descriptions of shared viewpoints

24

24

Q sorting activity

To what extent does each statement reflect your beliefs about cultural and linguistic diversity?

←Most unlike my beliefs			Most like my beliefs→	
-2	-1	0	1	2

Statements

1) English should be the only language of instruction in EC settings in Australia.

2) If a child does not speak English, I cannot do much to help them learn.

3) All EC educators should receive professional learning on how to best meet the needs of English as an additional language learners.

4) Having children from different language backgrounds in an EC setting often leads to miscommunications between educators and children.

5) I support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's learning and use the cultural tools of the community.

6) At home, parents should avoid speaking other languages to help their children learn English faster.

7) In an EC setting, learning English should be the priority.

8) Children's use of their home language in the EC setting can help them learn English.

9) Languages and cultures are inextricably linked to children's identity.

25

25

Q sorting & post sort questions

To what extent does each statement reflect your beliefs about cultural and linguistic diversity?

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4

1. Why have you chosen the statements you have placed at the plus end of the grid (most <u>like</u> your beliefs)?

2. Why have you chosen the statements you have placed at the minus end of the grid (most <u>unlike</u> your beliefs)?

3. Select 1 or 2 statements from the middle/neutral column. Why did you place them under 'zero'?

4. Where statements that you thought were of particular interest or particularly difficult to place? Which ones? Why?

5. Are there any statements or beliefs you believe are missing from this list?

6. How are these beliefs reflected in your practice? Can you give us some examples of strategies, activities, practices, etc.?

26

26

13

Interpretation | Viewpoint 1 - Children's cultural and linguistic resources as an asset

There are two distinct features of this viewpoint. First, the viewpoint is child centred.

The second notable feature of this viewpoint is strong belief in languages and cultures as central to identity, and as an asset for learning and development.

27

27

Interpretation | Viewpoint 1 - Children's cultural and linguistic resources as an asset

…as long as the child is at the centre of every decision that's being made, everything else falls into place. And I guess that is the essence of my belief, in that as long as a child is intrinsically valued and supported for who they are and who they can be and they are held at the centre of every decision that's being made, not a benchmark, not a   timeframe, not a routine, nothing. As long as we just hold them at the centre, then it happens. **P4**

28

28

Interpretation | Viewpoint 2 - Professional development and cultural competency

There are also two distinct features of this viewpoint. First, the viewpoint is focused on awareness of cultural differences and the educator's role in valuing and supporting different ways of knowing and being.

The second feature is the positioning of professional learning as key to learning how to best meet the needs of English as an Additional Language learners. (e.g., the benefits of bilingualism, cultural competency)

29

29

Interpretation | Viewpoint 2 - Professional development and cultural competency

Because I think without a sense of belonging, children won't learn...they won't have that agency to try new things, make friendships, and explore the world around them...So, if we have settings and practices that have a limited understanding of children's culture, language, background, their whole family context, then we're only capturing part of what that child is about (P13)

30

30

Interpretation | Viewpoint 3 – Multilingualism as an asset

So my strong belief is that I may not speak the same language, but if I love my career in teaching, as an educator, I will try to find a way to build up the relationship between me and the students. So, might not be language. I probably will sing a song, or playing games. And them in this way, we build up our trusted relationship between us, and then the next step we probably find a language we both speak.

31

31

Pedagogical practices

- Engaging with families and communities
- Using EC staff as translators
- Learning greetings in other languages
- Celebrating cultural events
- Cooking food
- Learning basic phrases around drinking water, going to the toilet, etc.
- Bilingual books, different scripts
- Parents read bilingual books

32

32

Limited consideration of linguistic scaffolding

Educators did not consider the role of their linguistic practices is supporting English language development

33

33

Guiding concepts to support language development

1. Children learn what they hear most (repetition)

2. Children learn words and phrases for things and events that interest them

3. Interactive and responsive contexts promote language learning

4. Children learn words and phrases best in meaningful contexts

5. Children need rich input

6. Vocabulary and grammatical development support each other

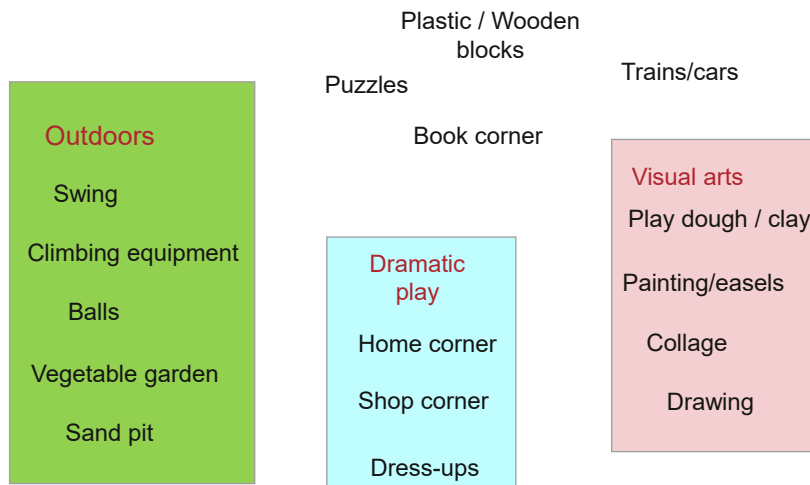7. Language and culture are interconnected, and need to be understood in relation to each other

Reference: (adapted from Konishi et al, 2014)

34

34

Typical Play Contexts in ECE Settings

Plastic / Wooden blocks

Puzzles

Trains/cars

Book corner

Outdoors

Swing

Climbing equipment

Balls

Vegetable garden

Sand pit

Dramatic play

Home corner

Shop corner

Dress-ups

Visual arts

Play dough / clay

Painting/easels

Collage

Drawing

Planning for language learning in the EC environment

Let's think about what this could look like in the second language

- What are some of the key phrases, concepts and ideas that are in the discourse of children that you could focus on?

- What would this be like in the second language? Practice examples.

- What changes do you need to make for the language to be more accessible to children?

Typical Play Contexts in ECE Settings

Outdoors

Climbing equipment

You are going up/ down/, under/ across…
My turn, again

Plastic / Wooden Blocks

Small, big, tall, higher, **counting**

Dramatic play

Shop corner
**I want ...
I like...
Please / Thank you
Hello / goodbye**

Food items: **names, colours, counting**

Visual arts

Colours, shapes, tools,

Do you want to paint/draw/ cut/paste

This is wet/dry/soft/hard/gooey

37