In Janet Maybin & Joan Swann (eds). 2006. *The art of English: everyday creativity.* Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 195-203.
[Pre-print version. References should be to printed text.]

Reading C

Sociodramatic play in a multilingual society

Anthea Fraser Gupta, School of English, University of Leeds

Introduction: bilingual children and code-switching

Children grow up bilingual if they live in families where two or more languages are regularly used. Some bilingual children are the children of mixed marriages: these children may be isolated from other similar bilinguals. But most bilingual children grow up in communities where others share their bilingualism: these children hear the adults in their community moving from one language to another, depending on the circumstances of discourse. All bilingual children need to learn when it is appropriate to use the languages they know. And in most bilingual communities there will be occasions where one language is appropriate, occasions when another is appropriate, and occasions when it is appropriate to mix the languages in the same utterance.

As a greater volume of work has been done on bilingual children, and especially as we begin to have more studies of children growing up in long-term bilingual societies, it has become apparent that children learn the skills of code-separation early and easily. It used to be said that bilingual children separated their codes by the age of 2 years. Reich (1986, p.208) reports that most research suggested that the age at which the languages were separated was between three and five years. This age would now, twenty years later, be considered far too late. Research on younger children suggests that codes are separated from the start (Genesee 1989). Even style-switching within a language has been identified in children as young as a year (Ainsworth-Vaughn 1990) and has often been clearly attested in children from three to five years old (e.g. Youssef 1991, Gupta 1994). Children make distinctions between people socially in all sorts of ways, and one of those ways is by speaking differently to them. Code-selection is part of the earliest experience of a child.

'Code' is often used as a general term for language or language variety (accent, dialect, register).

Bilingual children do their best to use the languages that they know and that they believe their interlocutors to be able to use. This is seen very simply in the bilingual child's choice of code, which may be very sophisticated, showing a sensitivity to a range of social markers. They will, to the best of their ability, avoid words they know to be in the language their interlocutor does not know. They also sometimes talk about what they are doing. It has been suggested (there is a full discussion in Bialystock 2001:Chapter 5) that bilingual children have a higher level of metalinguistic awareness than monolingual children. This is a possibility, and it is certainly the case that we find it easier to identify the metalinguistic skills of bilingual children, because the differences between languages are large, socially important, and are labelled. In a situation when moving from one language to another is a central part of daily life, and something that is often talked about by adults, very young children (certainly by the age of 3) can identify languages by name, and can talk about what they do: we can easily recognise this labelling as a demonstration of metalinguistic skill.

'Metalinguistic' refers to talk about language.

But in the data I discuss here, the children do not overtly talk about language: rather their behaviour demonstrates their knowledge about language.

Metalinguistic awareness can be manifested in sociodramatic play. This type of play is itself metalinguistic. When children role-play they adopt dramatic characters, and use dress, language, and gesture - the full repertoire of the actor - to enact imaginary scenes based on their own experience. Although the code-switching can be identified most dramatically in bilingual children, where codes are maximally differentiated, similar behaviour can be identified in the more subtle stylistic variation of monolingual children.

Sunitha and Meera: their community

In remarkable data collected by one of my former graduate students at the National University of Singapore, Radha Ravindran, two kindergarten children (aged 4 and 6 years) in play at home pretend to be at school. The recordings were made in Singapore in 1992.

Language in Singapore

Singapore is a city state of great linguistic and ethnic diversity. Because of its urbanisation, the different ethno-linguistic groups are in close contact. There has long been a complex system of lingua francas, and widespread learning of multiple languages. In recent years, the linguistic situation has become somewhat simpler, especially since education through the medium of English became the norm (from the mid-twentieth century, for more detail see Gupta 1994). However, the majority of children still grow up bilingual, and monolinguals of any age are extremely rare. Since 1987 all education in Singapore has been through the medium of English, with children also studying a language officially congruent with their 'race' (formally allocated at birth based on paternal ancestry). Singapore has four official languages (English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil): the other language studied at school is nearly always required to be one of the remaining official languages. This 'second language' is often referred to in official literature as 'the mother tongue': this expression refers to the official language associated with the child's 'race', and not necessarily to the language(s) actually spoken from infancy. Children typically attend nursery school and kindergarten from the age of three, following a relatively formal syllabus, and primary school begins at age six (for full up-to-date information about Singapore's education system, see the *Ministry of Education* website).

These two girls are native speakers of Malayalam, a Dravidian language originating in India, which is very much a minority language in Singapore, and which is not supported in the school system (the context of the Indian community in Singapore is discussed by PuruShotam 1998). Malayalam is being deliberately maintained in this family. Although all family members are fluent in English, Radha (the mother of one of the children) claims that the children spoke only a little English until they went to nursery school (age 3), because of a family policy of maintenance of Malayalam. The children attended an English-medium kindergarten where the pupils were fairly evenly divided between 'Malays' and 'Chinese' (each girl was the only 'Indian' child in her class). This relatively equal distribution of Malay and Chinese children allowed the informal learning of Malay to be supported, as well as the formal and informal learning of English, and, as we shall see, at least some formulaic learning of Mandarin.

Malay, which is an Austronesian language originating in South-east Asia and which is one of the official languages of Singapore, is not related to Malayalam; the similarity of name is fortuitous.

English is important in Singapore as an official language. It is also one of the most common native languages of Singaporeans, and is in widespread use as an

everyday language and as a lingua franca. I have analysed Singapore English as being 'diglossic' (using the definition of Ferguson 1959, for example, Gupta 1994). In diglossia a language has two codes which are grammatically distinct, one of which (called the High or H code) is used in formal circumstances, and in education, and the other of which (called the Low or L code) is used in speaking with children, and in informal circumstances. In Singapore the H code is Standard English and the L code is a variety commonly known as Singlish (called 'Singapore Colloquial English' by me and by most other scholars). The diglossia of Singapore English is not perfect, mostly because Standard English can be used even in informal circumstances, but most Singaporeans do move between Standard English and Singlish depending on the context of use. The teachers in kindergartens can be expected to use Standard English in clearly pedagogic contexts, and are supposed to use it all the time. However, they are members of their own community, and are prone to use Singlish to children, and in moments of emotional engagement (Gupta 1994:159ff).

Sunitha and Meera: their drama

The short extracts (Texts A and B [below]) reveal much about the sociolinguistic structure of Singapore that readers not familiar with Singapore or Malaysia will not immediately understand. The children use different codes to animate the characters in their dramatic performance, reflecting the language patterns of the classroom in a number of respects. Sunitha, when playing the role of teacher (throughout Text A, and Text B lines 6, 8), speaks only in English, in line with her own experience of her pre-primary education: she even makes an effort at using Standard English in the imitations of the teacher. When they pretend to be Malay girls in the class (in Text B, lines 1, 2, 3) they speak Malay. When they address the teacher, or play at teacher-child interaction, the imagined Malay children speak English (Text B, line 5, 7, 9). At the end of the imagined school day they sing a 'goodbye song' in Mandarin (Text A, lines 19ff), which is part of the ritual of the kindergarten day in many Singaporean kindergartens. And the girls never speak Malayalam in this imagined school context.

Text A

[In this extract, Sunitha, age 6, takes the role of the teacher, while the younger, Meera, age 4, takes the role of a well-behaved pupil, but one who echoes everything the teacher says.]

Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Line up, everybody line up.	1
Meera *[chanting]*	Line up, line up. In a straight line.	2
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Line up, line up. In a straight line.	3
Meera	Straight line. I straight.	4
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Girls, where are your lines?	5
Meera	Girls, where are your lines?	6
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Eh, why you rub the blackboard?	7
Meera	Girls, where are your lines?	8
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Some of your friends haven't finished, you know.	9

	Why you go and rub the blackboard?	10
	[pretends to punish the disobedient child]	
	Go and stand there, cannot go home. Stand there.	11
Meera	Put your legs like this.	12
	Stand there.	13
	Boys, where are your lines, and girls, where are your lines?	14
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Boys stand here, girls, here.	15
Meera *[as self?]*	Ow, my neck pain.	16
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	OK. Sing your goodbye song	17
Meera	Goodbye to you, goodbye to you. Goodbye to teacher. Goodbye to friends.	18
	[*sings, in Mandarin*]Laoshi zaijian [*teacher see-again*, xiao pengyou wan-an. *little friend good-evening]* ['Goodbye teacher, good evening little friends']	19
Sunitha	[*sings*] Laoshi zaijian, xiao pengyou wan an.	20
Meera	[*sings*] Laoshi zaijian, xiao pengyou wan an.	21
Both	[*sings*] Laoshi zaijian, xiao pengyou wan an.	22

Sunitha is at an age where she is unlikely to have mastered Standard English, but where, based on my earlier research, she is likely to show the beginnings of differentiation between the H and L codes. Indeed, Text A shows that Sunitha in the role of teacher has a strong focus on H (Standard English). When she is acting as the teacher, Sunitha uses 6 of the grammatical features that I found useful as markers of Standard English:

- 4 plural morphemes: *line**s*** (5), *friend**s*** (9), *boy**s***, *girl**s*** (15);
- one past participle morpheme: *finish**ed*** (9);
- and a perfective verb phrase: ***have(n't) finished*** (9).

These are compulsory in Standard English, but in Singlish, inflectional morphology is optional, and the base form of verbs and nouns can be used, without marking for tense, number or concord. Complex verb phrases of more than one word (as in the third example above) are also Standard English grammar. As teacher, Sunitha used only one of the forms that I found useful as markers of Singlish:

- a non-imperative verb without a subject: ***cannot go*** *home* (11).

A morpheme is considered the minimal unit of grammatical analysis, drawn on in the study of morphology or word structure. The word *lines* consists of two morphemes, *line* and *–s*, a plural marker; *finished* also consists of two morphemes, *finish* and *–ed*, a marker of the past participle.

Strikingly, there are no pragmatic particles. Speakers of Singapore English are very aware of the pragmatic particles (*ah* and *lah* are the most common) as markers of Singlish. Sunitha doesn't use them, but she does use a Standard English discourse marker which means much the same as *lah* ('you know' in line 9). Line 9 is heavily Standard English: a Singlish translation could be something like 'Other people not finish lah' (as well as a number of other possibilities).

A pragmatic particle is a small word, usually at the end of a sentence, which indicates something about the attitude of the speaker to what they are saying. The pragmatic particles of Singlish have been borrowed from varieties of Chinese.

In Text A the younger sister, Meera, also uses 8 plural nouns, most of them repetitions of Sunitha's utterances. When she is pretending to be a pupil, she uses only one of the diagnostic features of Singlish:

- BE-deletion: *I straight* (4)

Incidentally, the girls do both use other grammatical structures that identify them as speaking Singlish, but these are features which I did not find useful in my quantification of the codes:

- uninflected verb form where Standard English would be inflected: *pain* (16). Note that in Singlish *pain* is a verb: the subject of the verb is *my neck* (as in 'my neck hurts' in Standard English). This seems to be an aside in Meera's own persona: the fact that it is in English might indicate that English is coming into increasing use as a domestic language for these children.
- the use of *why*-interrogatives with subject-verb word order: *why you rub...*, *why you go and rub...* (7, 10).

In these extracts there are 4 *why*-interrogatives of the same structure, all of them functioning as rebukes from enacted teacher to enacted child. It is possible that Sunitha has not mastered the Standard English equivalent (something like 'Why did you clear the blackboard?'), but it is also possible that these interrogatives used as rebukes are simply more likely to be in Singlish than in Standard English, due to the raising of emotional level implied in a rebuke.

Text B

[In this section, the girls take in the roles of good pupils, first talking among themselves in Malay (in the role of Malay girls), with many nouns of English origin reflecting cultural elements associated with education. They then approach the teacher, whose role is then adopted by the older girl. 'Noriana' is a name associated with a Malay girl.]

Sunitha *[as pupil]*	Noriana jahat. Bilang teacher.	1
	[naughty tell]	
	['Noriana is being naughty. Let's tell the teacher']	
Meera *[as pupil]*	[*not relevant to topic*]	
	Ini radio apa?	2
	[This what]	
	['What radio is this?']	
Sunitha *[as pupil]*	Noriana tak colour pencil. Kita bilang teacher eh.	3
	[*NEG We tell]*	
	['Noriana hasn't got her colour pencils. We'll tell the teacher, shall we?']	
	[pretending to address teacher] Teacher, Noriana don't	4

	have colour pencils.	
Meera *[as pupil]*	*[pretending to address teacher]* Teacher, Noriana lost the colour pencil	5
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Why you never bring anything to school ah?	6
Meera *[as pupil]*	Teacher, I and she share.	7
Sunitha *[as teacher]*	Why you never bring anything to school? Must have everything, you know.	8
Meera *[as pupil]*	She lost his colour pencil, she share with his sister, but she lost the colour pencil.	9

Text B is more complex. At the beginning (lines 1-3) both girls are enacting Malay pupils, speaking in Malay with some inserted English nouns. Much of the Malay the girls hear from the Malay-speaking children in their class will include English loanwords in this way, with some of the words (such as *pencil,* with the Malay spelling *pensel*) being indigenised loanwords in Malay, and others (such as *teacher*) being English words often used in informal Malay mixed with English. In lines 6 and 8 Sunitha takes on the role of the teacher, while Meera maintains her role of the good pupil in which role she seems to use the past tense, *lost*, 3 times (5, 9): though this is a verb that may be more common in the past tense and the adjectival form ('It's lost') than in the present tense, and may be the only form Meera knows.

The Malay is simple, using vocabulary that is very much school-based. When Sunitha becomes the teacher (line 6), she switches to English, the official language of the classroom. But this time she does not use a variety of English which is focused on Standard English (there are none of the Standard English identifiers here). She uses two features that I argued characterised Singlish:

- one of the characteristic pragmatic particles: *ah* (6);
- a non-imperative verb without a subject: *must have (*8).

This teacher is very cross with the imagined Noriana, and apparently is expressing her anger in Singlish, in line with the patterned switching between Standard English and Singlish that kindergarten teachers in Singapore make (Gupta 1994:159ff). Sunitha's use of Singlish is realistic, in that in pedagogical situations teachers sustain Standard English, while in disciplinary ones they are more likely to use Singlish. All of her utterances are well-formed Singlish, of a sort that could have been produced by adults. In both these extracts we see how the way in which discipline is maintained in a kindergarten is salient for children, and a focus of language learning (Gupta 1994:159ff, Thompson 1999:175).

These two girls were able to take the daily routines of the school day and embed them into dramas which incorporate the language shift that is part of their experience. They select Malay or English according to the character portrayed, add some routine Mandarin, and even vary their English in a realistic way. Their enactment shows that they have learned a great deal about how the languages of their repertoire function in the wider society, and they are able to exploit that knowledge in dramatic play, extending their imaginations and their social and linguistic skills.

References

AINSWORTH-VAUGHN, N. (1990) 'The acquisition of sociolinguistic norms: style-switching in very early directives', *Language Sciences*, **12**(1), pp. 22-38.

BIALYSTOCK, E. (2001) *Bilingualism in development: language, literacy and cognition,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

FERGUSON, C. (1959) 'Diglossia', *Word* 15, pp. 325-40. [Also repr. in LI WEI (ed.) 2000. *The bilingualism reader*, London/New York, Routledge.]

GENESEE, F. (1989) 'Early bilingual development: one language or two?', J*ournal of. Child Language*, **16**, pp. 161-179. [Also repr. in LI WEI (ed.) (2000) *The bilingualism reader*, London/New York, Routledge.]

GUPTA, A.F. (1994) *The Step-Tongue: Children's English in Singapore*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

LEOW B. G. (2001) *Census of Population 2000: demographic characteristics*, Singapore, Singapore Department of Statistics.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION <www.moe.gov.sg/>

PURUSHOTAM, N. S. (1998) *Negotiating language, contructing race: Disciplining Differences in Singapor*e, Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter.

REICH, P.A. (1986) *Language Development*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall.

THOMPSON, L. (2000) *Young bilingual learners in nursery school*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

YOUSSEF, V. (1991) The acquisition of varilingual competence, *English World-wide*, **12**(1), pp. 87-102.

Reading D

Playground rhymes keep up with the times

Janice Ackerley

(Source: *Play and Folklore*, Issue 42, September 2002, pp. 4-8)

Iona and Peter Opie's research has shown us that children's nursery rhymes and playground rhymes has a firm grounding in history. Many of the rhymes currently heard in the New Zealand playground can be traced to origins in the United Kingdom, as far back as Elizabethan times. The skipping and clapping rhymes have origins in Black American culture.

As Course Director of the National Diploma of Children's Literature paper, 'Patterns of Language', I have the privilege of receiving and filing many examples of playground lore, collected by students of this course. Each year I receive hundreds of samples of playground rhymes and chants. On closer examination of these gems I have been interested to notice that a number of these rhymes have been adapted to fit in the world of hectic change. In a world of ever changing fashions in clothing, food, music, entertainment, technology and language, the rhymes of our playground have also been adapted to reflect the changing social trends and the consumerism that is part of today's society.

The rhymes of New Zealand school children deal frankly with social issues, including drugs, gangs and even the recent foot and mouth scare in the United Kingdom. There is a strong Maori – Pacific Island influence, and Aussie knocking is also featured. Our national anthem has many variations that reflect different aspects of our cultural identity. The influence of commercialism can be seen in the many rhymes including popular brand names and television programmes and movie stars.

One rhyme that was received from both ends of the country was a parody sung to the tune of 'Row, Row, Row your Boat':

The recent foot and mouth scare in Britain brought forth this version of the nursery rhyme, 'Mary had a Little Lamb':

> Roll, roll, roll your dope
> Scrunch it at the end,
> Spank it up
> And have a smoke
> And pass it to your friend
> Roll, roll, roll your dope
> Scrunch it at the end,
> Puff, puff
> That's enough
> Now pass it to your friend.

On the same theme and also parodied is the Maori song 'Po kare kare ana':

Po kare kare ana
I was smoking marijuana
I gave it to the teacher
She said, 'Come here!'
I said, 'No fear.
I'll be back next year
With a bottle of beer,
To rub in your hair.'

Gang warefare is featured in this rhyme sung to the theme of the television series 'Beverley Hillbillies':

There once was a man and his name was Tower.
He went down town to join Black Power.
There once was a man and his name was Bob.
He went down town to join Mongrel Mob.
Along came Tower with his 303
And he blew those boys right out of Beverley
(Hills – that is)

The recent foot and mouth scare in Britain brought forth this version of the nursery rhyme, 'Mary had a Little Lamb':

Mary had a little lamb,
Its feets were covered in blisters
Now its burning in the paddock
With all its brothers and sisters.

Playground rhymes with a specific New Zealand flavour can be seen to have a Maori – Pacific Island influence. The popular pastime of skipping has developed rhymes based on the Maori language:

Rahina, rahina, one, two, three,
Ratu,ratu, skip with me.
Rapa,rapa, turn around,
Rapere, rapere, touch the ground
Ramere, ramere, touch the sky
Rahoroi, the rope swings high
Ratapu, you're too slow,
End of the week, so out you go.

A rhyme touching on a more taboo subject of sexuality and body parts:

I am the ghost of a place named Venus,
Come near me and I'll bite your penis.
I am the ghost of Hone Heke
Come near me and I'll bite your teke.

Maori language is also included in parodies of traditional nursery rhymes:

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Hemi had a paru car,
Like a diamond in the sky,
Hemi lives in a pig sty.
Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Hemi had a paru car
(paru = dirty)

The coconut trees of the Pacific Islands are part of this counting out rhyme. In this ritual participants hold out a fist for the counter to tap as they rhyme is chanted. The person who receives the 'crack' is out, and the ritual continues:

Co – co – nut, co – co –nut, co – co – nut.
CRACK!

Mary, her lamb and her little 'bro' – a New Zealand slang term used by both Maori and Pakeha - feature in these variations:

Mary had a little bro
She took him to the fair.
She saw a lamb that she loved so
And swapped him then and there!

Mary had a little lamb,
She called it Little Bro
One day she took it skiing
And lost it in the snow.

Taunts against pakeha, and our sporting rivals, the Australians, are also prevalent in the playground:

Catch a little pakeha,
Put him in the pot,
Mix him up with puha,
And what have you got?
Puha and pakeha stew

God of Nations, in the scrum,
Kick the Aussies, in the bum.
If it hurts, serves them right.
Blow them up with dynamite.

I'm an Australian,
Born and bred,
Long in the legs,
And thick in the head.

Variations of our national anthem abound, with some creative examples shown here:

God of Nations, smell my feet,
In the local pub we meet,
Don't buy whisky, it's too dear,
Buy our local DB beer.

God of Nations, smell my feet,
In the bonds of Shortland Street.
Hear our voices, tweet, tweet, tweet.
God defend our toilet seat.

God of nations, in thy toes,
In the bonds of panty hose!

Playground rhymes are not spared the effects of ommercialism and media influence. Many of the trendy food brand names, such as McDonalds, Pepsi, Coke, Barbie and our own icons of Marmite and barbed wire fences are included in the folklore of New Zealand children. A 'step on a crack, marry a rat,' variation:

Step on white,
Marry Marmite,
Good night.'

As a challenge we find:

Wanna fight? – Marmite
If you wish. – Jellyfish
Bring it on – Tampon

Cows are in the meadow,
Sheep are in the corn.
Don't climb the barbed wire fence.
You'll get your knickers torn!

An action rhyme involving precise hand movements features the ever favourite takeaway brands:

McDonalds, McDonalds. (make a big M with hands)
Kentucky Fried Chicken (flap arms like a chicken)
And a Pizza Hut (form a ^ with arms)

Popular drink brands form part of a partisan school chant:

> Pepsi Cola, Coca Cola, Lion Brown
> We're gonna hypnotise, paralyse and knock them down.
> With a F-I-G-H-T
> We're gonna score S-C-O-R-E
> We're gonna fight, we're gonna score
> We're gonna win 'em all
> Goooooooo _____ (name of school)

And also as playground taunts:

> Boys are spastic, made out of plastic.
> Girls are sexy, made out of Pepsi.

> Girls are sexy, made out of Pepsi.
> Boys are rotten, made out of cotton.
> Girls go to the gym, to get more slim.
> Boys go to rugby, to get more ugly.

Elastics, the girls' playground game, also features these traditional food favourites, including pavlova:

Ice cream soda, pavlova
Coca Cola, my friend out.

Passion fruit and ice cream soda,
Yum, yum, yum, it's pavlova.

Fanta, Fanta, my friend Fanta.
Is the nicest of them all
My friend Fanta.

The television advertising has a feature in this parody of 'Jingle Bells':

> Jingle bells, jingle bells
> Santa Claus is dead.
> Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
> Shot him in the head.
> Barbie doll, Barbie doll,
> Tried to save his life.
> But a GI Joe from Mexico
> Stabbed her with a knife.

Television and movie stars, The Simpsons, Barney, Batman, Xena, Warrior Princess, Men in Black and the Spice Girls are included in recently collected rhymes:

> Bart versus Lisa,
> Who will win
> Their father's fat
> And their mother's thin.
> Their grandpa smells of whisky and gin.

A parody on the theme song of the beloved Barney, the purple dinosaur, shows no finer feelings for the sensitivities of the younger children:

> I hate you, you hate me,
> Let's get together and kill Barney.
> With a one punch, two punch, three punch, four
> No more purple dinosaur!

Batman and Robin have long been favourites, and I'm sure many are familiar with the problems Wonder Woman had with her bosom:

> Jingle Bells, Batman smells,
> Robin laid an egg.
> Oh what fun it is to see,
> The duo split today.
> HEY!

Our own super heroine, Xena the warrior princess, is featured in a hand clapping rhyme as a starter to the traditional game of paper, scissors, rock and stone:

> Xena (clap) Warrior (clap) Princess,
> Came here last year.
> Xena Warrior Princess
> Came here last year.
> Over, over, over.
> (This is followed by the game paper, scissors, rock)

Hand clapping rhymes feature variations on the 'double this, double that' rhyme:

Double, double, men, men.
Double, double, black, black.
Double men, Double black.
Double, double Men in Black.

Double, double spice, spice.
Double, double, girls, girls.
Double spice, double girls.
Double, double Spice Girls.

When considering this selection of 'playground rhymes that change with the times', I also became aware of the many different categories of rhymes that have been collected by students of the Patterns of Language course over the last few years. Many of these rhymes have changed very little over the passage of time and those that were favourites of parents and grandparents are still around today. Some of the other categories of playground rhymes include parodies of songs and nursery rhymes, insults and taunts, counting-out rhymes, tongue twisters, chants, nonsense rhymes, skipping, clapping and elastics rhymes, politically incorrect sexist and sexy rhymes and rhymes that are simply just for fun.

Despite concerns that the technological revolution is responsible for taking the play out of our children's lives, these collections show that the rhymes of the New Zealand playground are still alive and well.

References and Acknowledgements

OPIE, I. and OPIE, P. (1959) *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Christchurch College of Education. National Diploma of Children's Literature Folklore Collection. Collected by students of Patterns of Language CL713, 1994–2001.

Janice Ackerley teaches at Christchurch College of Education. This article was first published in New Zealand, in 'Talespinner' March 2002.