ABSTRACT

Pursuing Higher Education: A Case Study of Successful Language Learners
in U.S. Public Schools

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Students experiencing language differences in U.S. public schools face significant

challenges to their college matriculation. These students must acquire an additional

language while also learning the academic content required within their course work.

Further, language learners also must navigate the differing and complex worlds of their

home communities and the school community – each with its own set of linguistic

patterns and cultural traditions. The purpose of this narrative, multiple case study was to

provide insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of three immigrant language

learners and provide factors of their successful college matriculation and how they

navigated their disparate linguistic worlds. Participants for this study were purposefully

selected with a criterion of having entered the U.S. between the ages of ten and twelve,

having attended the same middle and high school, and having experienced success. For

the purposes of this study, success is defined as high school graduation and college

matriculation. In order to better understand the experiences of the participants and the

complex factors of success, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the

participants and their parents. Additionally, a former teacher was also interviewed as a means of triangulating the data. Thematic coding, analytic induction, and pattern matching were used to analyze the data collected from interviews. The data was analyzed based on the sociolinguistic turn in literacy and linguistics (Bloome & Green, 2015; Freire, 1983, Gee, 2015).

Results from this study revealed three major themes in relation to college matriculation. Positive adult influences, overcoming linguistic barriers, and the ability to develop dual identities all emerged as significant findings from the data. Positive adult influences, both parents and teachers, had the most significant impact according to the participants. Additionally, the ability to overcome linguistic barriers, often with the support of the others, and the participants' ability to navigate their two worlds and develop dual identities also contributed to their success as defined by this study. The researcher provided implications and recommendations based on the results of this study for teachers, campus administrators, and even district leadership. Finally, possible future areas of research are discussed by the researcher.

Pursuing Higher Education: A Case Study of Successful Language Learners
in U.S. Public Schools

by

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A Dissertation

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DEDICATION

To all the educators doing their best to support their students every day.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As the increasingly connected world, made smaller through new technological

innovations of the twentieth and twenty-first century, draws people into a global

community (Luke, 2003), interactions between native languages and national origins are

more pronounced. New identities are being formed through these intersecting movements

of people, immigration, and asylum. These migrations have led to increasing

multilingualism across societies (Norton & De Costa, 2018). For example, in Texas, one

in every six public school students is considered a language learner, or about 800,000

students (House Bill No. 3, 2010). Modern geopolitical events such as war, genocide,

famine, and extreme poverty have ushered in a period of mass migration, especially for

families seeking refuge from untenable situations in their home countries.

Thus, as humane and welcoming nations open their doors to people in need,

students across the globe require support and instruction in the acquisition of a non-native

language and culture in order to thrive in their new classrooms. Until most recently

(Aguilar, 2020), the U.S., and the state of Texas specifically, has welcomed immigrants

and refugees as valued members in the grand experiment of democracy (Postman, 1995).

Unfortunately, in the current political environment, the current Texas governor has opted

to no longer participate in the refugee resettlement program (Aguilar, 2020) as allowed

by order of the President of the United States. While this executive order is currently

working its way through the legal system (Aguilar, 2020b) many welcoming

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organizations such as the Catholic Church in Texas (Aguilar, 2020c), have criticized the governor's decision. Many, including the researcher, hope that the Texas will once again open its doors to initial refugee resettlement and commit to responsible care for those individuals and families that find themselves in dangerous and untenable situations.

In decades past, English Language Learners (ELL) were often taught exclusively in English. The teaching of English was once considered a skills-based endeavor only. Reading and writing are skills to be acquired, vocabulary memorized, and speech patterns learned. This idea of language acquisition is often reproduced in the media and believed by many as the only means of acquiring a language. Unfortunately, in an English-only learning environment, students' home cultures and language are undervalued and often replaced with the dominate culture. Their own funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) are ignored; thus, these students are even more disadvantaged because their already acquired literacies (literacy of their home language and culture) remain inactivated in their educational setting. However, research in academia over the past thirty years disputes this belief (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2002; Beeman & Urow, 2013; Goldenberg, 2008). James Paul Gee (2015), helped to illuminate the theory of multiple literacies through his research within the emerging field of New Literacies Studies. The New Literacies Studies took flight after the social turn (Gee, 2015) in literacy and linguistics instruction; thus, launching an expanded understanding of literacy. This theory situated all acts of communication within the social aspect; thus, learning a new language requires special attention paid to the sociocultural aspects of the language and the people.

While the number of ELL students, and their limited academic success when compared to native English speakers (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2019d) is well documented, data surrounding the lived experiences and the sociolinguistic factors of success remains limited. This study sought to add to the body of research concerning the sociolinguistic experiences of immigrant students, the factors of success, and their perspectives on navigating their disparate linguistic worlds. Success, for the purposes of this study, is defined as on-time graduation from high school, and college matriculation. Thus, this study seeks to counter the current model of instruction that results in the previously mentioned high drop-out rate for language learners by better understanding the experiences of students who not only graduated from U.S. public schools, but also enrolled in an institute of higher education.

Problem Statement

Language minority students' overall struggles in the academic setting are evident (TEA, 2019d), yet studies revealing why some of these students achieve success in public school environments remains lacking. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly one quarter (12.4 million) of the nation's 53.9 million school children speak a language other than English. In Texas, the percentage of students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) climbs to a staggering 18.9 (TEA, 2019d, p. 22).

In an effort to meet the needs of these English Language Learners, many school districts currently function under the Bilingual Exemption policy afforded by 29 Tex. Edu. Code 89, 2020. In summary, this provision allows districts to forgo a structured bilingual or dual language program due to a hardship in recruiting bilingual teachers. Many districts across the state struggle to attract highly-qualified bilingual certified

professional educators. However, these districts must comply with legal precedent first issued in *Lau v. Nichol* (1974) requiring schools to provide linguistic services to students whose home language is not English. Additionally, the requirement for purposeful and planned language programs was refined by *United States v. Texas* (1971). This case also included a provision suggesting, though not mandating, that Texas English-speaking students also learn the Spanish language as part of their standard curriculum. However, due to another Texas case argued in the U.S. Supreme court, *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriquez* (1973), public education, it was ruled, is not a constitutional right; thus, bilingual education is not a constitutional right.

In the absence of a federal mandate for bilingual education, states have been allowed to create their own policies and procedures for ensuring that ELL students receive the best education possible. Thus, Texas mandates school districts that have twenty or more students with the same home language within a given grade level receive bilingual support. However, this mandate is less a mandate than a suggestion due to the easily attainable exemption afforded to districts that are incapable of hiring the required bilingual personnel (TEA, 2019b). This exemption is meant to alleviate the sometimes impossible task of hiring bilingual educators who do not exist. The overall supply of bilingual educators remains far fewer than those actually needed. Additionally, smaller groupings of language communities may make it difficult for districts to find appropriately accredited language teachers. Recent immigrants, refugees, and migrants have made this exemption necessary - especially for many recent immigrants coming from Africa, the Middle East, and South East Asia (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2019). As these populations are relatively new to the U.S., the pool of available, certified, bilingual

teachers remains critically low. Unfortunately, most certified bilingual teachers are second-generation immigrants who have the benefit of learning English while young, while the first generation immigrants often struggle to learn their new language much like their children.

Although the bilingual exemption is meant to help school districts, it may also, inadvertently, harm immigrant students and communities. Use of the exemption allows districts to forgo the often costly acquisition of bilingual teachers in favor of the more cost-effective model of hiring ESL certified teachers to work with language learners. The bilingual exemption may provide a certain degree of practicality for the district; however, this waiver policy also fails to implement the best practices of a two-way dual language model – the type of language model exemplified by the ruling, and suggestions, of *United States v. Texas* (1971). In spite of the exemption policy, research and best practices advocate for a two-way dual language model as the most effective bilingual program for both ELL students and even their native speaking peers (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Garcia, 2009b; Goldenberg, 2008; Kennedy & Medina, 2017). Unfortunately, most ELL students do not have the benefit of dual language programs available to them.

As a result of policies, limited resources, and antiquated views on linguistic development, the ELL population of students consistently underperforms their native English speaking peers in assessment performance (TEA, 2019d) and they dropout at a rate of more than twice the state average (TEA, 2019d). Thus, the data demonstrates that Texas public schools are failing to meet the unique challenges of educating English language learners. Furthermore, as the battle for control of school policy swings again towards favoring state authority rather than federal oversight (Desimone et al., 2019), the

implications for generalizable research abound. Nowhere is this failure more evident than in the area of literacy and language (TEA, 2019d). However, not all ELL students underperform. Many ELL students outperform their peers – even those peers whose native language happens to be English.

This study aimed to counter deficit thinking with regards to ELL students by examining the experiences and perspectives of former ELL students who routinely out performed their native English-speaking peers' academic endeavors while also acquiring English. Bloome and Green (2015) reminded educators that deficit-oriented assumptions of literacy are founded on the denial of cultural histories and identities.

This study informs the field of education, particularly in regard to literacy and language development when working with English learners. The study allowed for students', parents', and even former teachers' own words to describe the experiences of the students in the Texas public school system. Adding relevance to the body of literature, the study examined the narratives of three participants who arrived in the U.S. as middle school students (between the ages of ten and twelve). As age of entry into the school system has a significant effect on the language development, cultural navigation, and future employment stability (Wilkerson, 2005; Bates et al., 2003; Pujol et al., 2006), this study intended to illuminate the particular experiences of refugee students who came to the U.S. in early adolescence. The study should help to inform teaching practices to better improve the learning experience and literacy development of English language learners.

The Case for Human Narrative

The current standardized curriculum of modern public schools holds the teacher / student relationship as nearly synonymous with that of a technician working with a machine (Handsfield & Jimenez, 2009). The teacher inputs the required programing, and the child replicates the actions they were programed to perform. Unfortunately, this mechanized input-output method disregards the human element.

Paulo Freire illuminated the importance of embracing humanity and the cultures and lives of those who are oppressed. Freire advocated for a teaching method know as dialogical, not as a manipulation to help students learn their facts better; rather, he advocated for dialogue as a source of "becoming human beings" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 4). He claimed that conversations allow us to know that which we really do know, focusing on metacognition. He stated that the dialogical method helps students to humanize the content and to place their learning within themselves. Freire's dialogical method also emphasized the humanity of the educator. He stated that the educator in this method of instruction needs not deny their own knowledge and personage, but is capable of growth as well as the student. The method invites students to "exercise their own powers of reconstruction" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 4). Thus, allowing every lesson the potential to be something different than the same lesson conducted with another group of students. Therein lies the true nature of the critical curriculum – it allows for the human story told from the point of view of those who experience it. Thus, the instance for narrative studies of the lived experiences of individuals allows researchers to study the particularities of the human experience to better inform the body of literature for a given context.

The narrative story values the human and the individual (Wells, 2011). Although statistical data does have an important place in education, if educational policy continues to over-value the impersonal, statistical assessment of student performance measures used to construct students merely capable of machine skills, but without creativity, insight, expression, agency, and a consciousness of humanity, then the vast untold stories of humanity may be forever forgotten. The oppressed may remain oppressed by both those in power, and by the construct of a society that does not value the person, and instead values only the specific skill of production. From Freire's (1983) standpoint, one's understanding of literacies must leave the cold, sterile framework of reading and writing in the isolated academic environment of schools, and transcend into the multilayered and spectacular composition of the whole human being. Thus, the narratives of all human beings must be accounted for.

Research Questions

In an effort to better understand the linguistic experiences of English Language Learners and the particular phenomenon they encountered when acquiring a new language, this qualitative study utilizes a narrative case study approach to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as "high school graduation and college matriculation"?

    a. How did they overcome the linguistic barriers?

    b. What additional sociocultural factors contributed to their overall success?

RQ2: In what ways did home-life culture and perspectives influence language development?

a. What were their parents' perspective on maintaining their native language(s)?

b. How did the immigrant students navigate between their two linguistic worlds?

Rationale and Significance

Creswell and Poth (2018) reminded us that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for exploration into the social and human problems that may be difficult to ascertain through quantitative analysis. Therefore, in order to collect the most appropriate data to answer the above research questions, a case study approach seemed most relevant. A case study is bounded by time and place (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and a case study can explore complex phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This study was bounded by the time and place for the experiences of the former refugees and their descriptions of the complex issue of linguistic development and academic success. The study will shed light on a particular phenomenon that is both unique to their experiences, yet also widespread across the United States as many immigrants, refugees, and language minority students.

Important studies have been conducted in close relation to the areas of immigration, refugees, language acquisition, and culture, and have added to the body of knowledge concerning these topics. For example, Wagner's (2013) dissertation centered on supporting refugee children in the school system, and Smith's (2014) dissertation thoroughly examined perceptions of success for language learners in South Texas. Additionally, Wilkerson's (2005) study of the educational experiences of refugees in Canada even included the perceptive of refugees and their parents collected through hundreds of surveys. However, less research has been done that centers principally on the

sociolinguistic turn (Bloome & Green, 2015) in language development from the perspective of ELL students themselves. Thus, this study adds to the body of literature through the unique experiences richly described by the participants' narratives.

Although no qualitative research is without its unique particularities surrounding the time, place, and participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this study does have a great deal of generalizability to the greater population of ELLs due to the triangulation of the data and the descriptive account of the participants' experiences. The participants' experiences will shed light on common sociolinguistic factors that influenced their successful language acquisition, and factors that were barriers to their language development, that are common amongst a multitude of language learners and immigrant students. These factors may be analyzed to determine how schools' policies and procedures, and school personnel's approaches to language learners, may better provide for conditions that allow for factors of success while also reducing factors that limit academic success for ELLs.

Key Terms

The following terms are essential components related to language learners, linguistic development, immigration, and sociocultural development.

Embody - Focuses on the physical experience when interacting with a given mode. Meaning making is based on the physical experience, spaces, and social practices. Multimodalities can incorporate movement, but also interaction with text through gaze, gesture, and posture (Finnegan, 2002; Kendon, 2004).

Emergent Bilingual – Emergent Bilingual is a term coined by Garcia (2009b) that better reflects the benefits of bilingualism. Most other terms used by educators and policy

makers refer to deficit thinking model when describing those students who are not Native English speakers. Instead, the term 'emergent bilingual' better represents the heteroglossic nature of language learners. While emergent bilingual is a better representation of the experience of students whose home language is not English, this study uses a variety of terms due to the nature of the current educational terminology and not as a means of devaluing bilingualism.

English Learner (EL) – Similar in context to the definition of a language learners, but specifically used within the school settings in the United States. The term can trace its lineage from the previously used, and still somewhat common, terms "English as a second language" learner and "English language learner".

English Language Learner (ELL) – Near identical meaning to that of "English Learner", more often used in research and in institutionalized settings. Along with "language learner", this is one of the preferred terms for the purposes of this study due to the nature of the particularities surrounding the linguistic development of the participants within the Texas public school setting and the common use of the term within the school setting.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – Former term for "English Learner". However, this term has fallen from favor due to the assumption that English is only the second language learned. The term presupposes the monolinguistic nature of English-speaking Americans upon the often multilingual immigrants learning a new language. However, the term still enjoys widespread use across research and institutions of public education.

Funds of Knowledge – Refers to the collected and developed knowledge base of an individual developed through their cultural and lived experiences. Moll (et al., 1992) described funds of knowledge as have essential functionality for an individual within their cultural context and these deposits of knowledge also contribute to the well-being of the individual when interacting in social situations.

Habitus – Bourdieu's (1991) influential concept refers to the manifestation of cultural capital developed through life experiences and social interactions.

Immigrant – Although this term often carries a significant political context, for the purposes of this study, "immigrant" refers to any person who relocates from one nation to another regardless of the reason. Within this study, immigrants are typically described as having moved to the United states as this study takes place within the U.S.; however, the research does acknowledge the vast and varied destinations of immigrants across the globe. The term immigrants will be inclusive of the terms "migrant", "asylee", and even "refugee" throughout the study.

L1 – This appreciation for first language or native language(s) is used as a common term amongst linguists and in language learner literature.

L2 – This appreciation for second language(s) or another name for the unspecified language being learner. It is used in similar fashion to "L1".

Language Learner – Refers to one who learning a language other than their native language. In most research, and for the purposes of this study, the term typically refers to those who are learning the dominant language of a community. Although there are many terms describing individuals who are learning languages, this is one of the preferred terms for the purposes of this study.

Language Minority – For the purposes of this study, language minority communities may be described as those communities whose native or chosen language is not the official national or state language. Since this study takes place in Texas, the official language of the government, and therefore the school community, is English. Thus, individuals and communities whose native or chosen language is not English may be considered as a language minority community.

Modes – Resources that provide meaning making as visual, auditory, and special especially with regard to literacy development. Additionally, these resources have a meaningful effect on the text (Rowsell & Walsh, 2011).

Multimodality – Communication is about more than just language and printed text. A multiplicity of modes contributes to the meaning making and communication, and it represented the all communication resources available to people – visual, physical, written, 3 dimensional, digital, and others. Additionally, multimodality includes the social, cultural, and historical aspects of communication and language in combination with meaning making (Jewitt, 2009; Norris, 2004; O'Halloran & Smith, 2011).

Multiple Literacies - reflects the cultural, social, and linguistic understandings held by an individual, institution, or society and is purposely plural in order to denote the multiplicity of the word literacy. It should be viewed, "… as essentially social and situated in the interactions among people" (Bloome & Green, 2015). To put it another way, Paulo Friere said, "Reading the world always precedes reading the word" (1983, p. 13).

Native Language(s) – refers to the language acquired in childhood and the language(s) that most closely align the immediate culture and community of one's original linguistic development.

Success – For the purposes of this study, success is defined as college matriculation. The participants in the study graduated from high school and were college-bound. This definition of success lies in direct correlation to the data that demonstrates the failure of schools to adequately meet the needs of language learners to the same extend as other populations (TEA, 2019d).

Refugee - A refugee is defined by U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (2020) 101(a)(42) as, "Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Semiotics– The idea that meaning is not fixed, but changes over time through interconnected texts. Meaning making occurs through the epistemological history of the mode; thus, the processes transform the meanings (Stein, 2008).

Sociolinguistic Turn – Refers to the growing body of knowledge that views language and literacy as a social act situated among people and their interactions with each other (Bloome & Green, 2015). The "turn" makes note of the move away from skills-based only approach to reading and writing as the sum totality of encompassing literacy. Instead, modern research indicates that literacy is so intricately interwoven

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within social practice and events that it cannot be separated. Thus, culture, language, time and place, identity, and power all influence our understanding of literacy.

Limitations and Delimitations

While this study provided a rich descriptive analysis of the participants' experiences, it does have several limitations and delimitations. One limitation of this study was the number of participants. Qualitative research often results in fewer participants as it seeks to better understand the complex social phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, this study was unable to capture the lived experiences of all language learners in Texas, or even all language learners who are also immigrants and refugees. This issue was addressed by the triangulation of the data through three interview sources, and the participants' approval of the accuracy of the data and findings.

A second limitation to the study was the power imbalance due to the professional relationship between the researcher and the participants, their parents, and the teacher. The researcher served as the ESL teacher for the students while they were in middle school, and later, was the assistant principal at the participants' high school. The researcher maintained a mentor / mentee rapport with the participants while they were in high school; thus, the participants' responses may have been influenced by the perceived power dynamic that often exists between students and educators. Additionally, the researcher was also well known to the participants' parents and had previous interactions with the parents while communicating about their children from the researcher's position as a teacher and school administrator. Finally, the teacher was also known to the researcher prior to the study as the researcher was the teacher's supervisor. However, at the time of the study, the researcher was no longer affiliated with the school district; thus,

mitigating some of the perceived power imbalances in the relationships with the participants, their parents, and the teacher.

A final limitation includes the language barrier – particular when interviewing the participants' parents. While the range of English fluency among the parents ranged from very little, to near fluent, the researcher is not fluent in the home languages of the participants or their parents. Therefore, the entire interview was conducted in English. As a result, some responses were concise. However, in response to this limitation, the researcher employed hermeneutic analysis of the interview. Additionally, the interview and interviewee frequently asked for clarification of questions and responses in an effort to better overcome the language barrier. Additionally, as the review of literature will demonstrate, language and culture are inseparable, and as a result, Malachi and his parents often supplied shorter, more precise answers as a reflection of their cultural heritage and influence of their home language.

The delimitations of the study helped to define the scope of the study and restricted the participants to individuals who were considered refugees according to the U.S. Immigrations and Nationality Act (2000) The participants were also former students of the same public middle and high school in Texas. A second delimitation was the requirement that the participants' already knew the researcher and the researcher's familiarity with the experiences of the participants. This rapport allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with the participants to better understand their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, these delimitations were necessary for congruency with the study's theoretical framework. The limited participant pool allowed for a more

focused study that provided extended narratives of the lived experiences of the purposefully-selected participants.

Summary

Due to the current geopolitical events across the globe, human migration has become more pronounced and resulted in greater interaction across multiple cultures. This migration has led many young people to enter U.S. public schools as English Language Learners. However, the current learning environment, instructional methods, and policies for language learners has not led to equal results on assessments and graduation rates as compared with their native English speaking peers. Research demonstrates that language learning is not a fixed skills asset to acquire, but is instead a multiple and complex issue of identity and culture; thus, this study aims to illuminate the field of linguistic acquisition in the public school setting through the sociocultural framework.

Using a narrative approach this study shed light on the perspectives of three language learners themselves and determine some of the factors and limitations of their language acquisition. Additionally, the perspectives of their parents and teacher were also collected as a means of triangulating the data. A multiple case study approach was used to explore and better understand the complex phenomenon (Yin, 2014) experienced by the participants.

A review of the literature in Chapter Two follows the historical lineage of language learning in the United States. The review establishes the change in understanding of language development (Bloome & Green, 2015). The research demonstrated that an understanding of skills-based literacy was too limited to properly

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understand the multiple and varied complexities of literacy (Gee, 1999). The review follows identity research through three phases of understanding; then, moves to analyze the research on language and its association with power context and the idea of "otherness". Finally, linguistic development within the school setting is explored until the case for further research is made.

In the third chapter, the particularities and rationale for the design methodology of the study are detailed. The study explored the perspectives of three language learners who came to the U.S. as refugees and who entered as middle school students in a Texas public school. A narrative, multiple case study approach was used as this approach allowed for rich, descriptive stories from the subjects themselves. The qualitative design allowed for the exploration of a complex phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) not easily measured through quantitative data analysis. The study adds to the body of literature surrounding the sociolinguistic turn (Bloome & Green, 2015), and the data was triangulated through the added perspectives of the participants' parents and former teacher.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This review of literature seeks to explore the history of language learning in the

U.S. from its foundations as English-only, assimilation-based (Park, 1928) instruction,

towards the modern understanding of linguistic development and the associated

complexities for the personage of the language learner. In more recent research, the

concepts of multiple literacies championed by Freire (1984) and Gee (1999) help to

inform the sociocultural turn in linguistic instruction and language learning (Bloome &

Green, 2015). Thus, this review traces the research of identity through three phases of

understanding: social identity, cultural identity, and linguistic identity, and their

corresponding implications for language learners. Then, the influence of language on

power structures and agency is presented, followed by an exploration of the feeling of

"otherness" experienced by many immigrants. Finally, language learning in schools as

analyzed through the current research and policy with a focus on immigrants and

appropriate curriculum and instruction.

Literacy vs Literacies

When one considers the word "literacy" the term typically conjures images of an

individual employed in the act of reading and /or writing. Although reading and writing

are indeed basic acts of communication, they are often taught as skills disassociated from

community and social implications (Rumelhart, 1980). These basic skills were the

foundational understanding of our conceptualization of literacy for many years; however,

in the past several decades, we have begun to define literacy as more than just the ability to read and write. Instead, the term "literacy" has become "literacies;" thus, the plural form of the term implies there exists more than one type of literacy. This plurality allows for an extending of the understanding of what it means to be literate. Further, the acquisition of a language and what it means to be fluent, or literate, in that language requires an understanding of literacy that extends beyond learning the vocabulary and structure of a language. As the review will demonstrate, language learning is inherently a social activity (Bloome and Green, 2015) and must be understood within the context of human interactions and culture.

In the 1980's, the concepts of the New Literacy Studies came into fruition from a multitude of social sciences (Delpit, 1995; Gee, 2015). They viewed literacy as more than mere skills to be obtained, but as an inherently sociocultural phenomenon. Gee and New London Group (1996) began to understand literacy through the lens of one's social environment and cultural background. Gee (2015) argued for the idea that literacy cannot be separated from the context in which it lies. Literacy is intimately intertwined with the interactions of a society and culture. Therefore, literacy should no longer be described as a silent activity perpetuated within the singular mind of the individual practicing a particular literacy skill - such as reading a text or writing – separated from societal interaction. Rather, literacy must be understood as an experience and interaction between the individual and his or her community. Literacy involves culture, semiotics, language, power, society, and more.

Further, "… it was argued, literacy should be studied in an integrated way in its full range of contexts and practices, not just cognitive, but social, cultural, historical, and

institutional, as well" (Gee, 2015, p. 35). Here, Gee illustrated the idea that literacy interacts with society and structures in a complex and multi-faceted manner. Literacy is intimately intertwined with the interactions of a society and culture, and "… Situated Cognition Studies and the New Literacy Studies (NLS) pointed not to the 'private mind' but to the world of experience – and that experience is almost always shared in social and cultural groups – as the core of human learning, thinking, problem solving, and literacy" (Gee, 2015, p. 38). Therefore, as important as reading and writing literacy are, the term "literacies" encompasses far more of the overall human condition.

Additionally, in the ever-increasingly connected world, literacy extends to the global community. As people groups from differencing communities interact with each other, the idea of a global community is rooted in a conversation about ethics (Luke, 2003). The ethics of globalization and the "shrinking" of the world through technological advances requires a better understanding, literacy even, of multiple cultures and ways of thinking. International literacy must be incorporated as one of many "literacies" in order to better facilitate and benefit our increasingly cosmopolitan world. This international literacy incorporates the elements of language and culture through a multiple and varied view of literacy.

Thus, modern research leads us to an understanding of literacies that contradict the singular academic literacy understanding common in school systems across the globe. Instead, literacies are far more complex, and even the school system itself becomes a form of literacy. For example, Anne Haas Dyson (2008), described in vivid detail the boundaries presented by the assumption that literacy was limited to only reading and writing skills. She investigated the boundaries experienced in the school setting by first

graders through their writing activities. The act of writing was not the only lesson presented by the teacher, knowingly or unknowingly, the teacher also presented the students with the literacy of the school culture and her own. Dyson stated, "any official school activity is a kind of 'event' – a situated enactment of a cultural 'practice', itself steeped in cultural and ideological meaning" (Dyson, 2008, p. 122).

Thus, as the teacher instructs the students in "literacy"- reading and writing skills, she is also instructing them in another literacy – the literacy of the public school institution. This institution contains its own set of complex cultural norms that children may or may not be familiar with. Children with upbringings that deviate from the 'mainstream' culture may, in fact, be somewhat illiterate. Even if they possess the ability to read and write, their illiteracy manifests as ignorance of the institutionalized culture.

Dyson (2008) stated, "Children's understandings of these complexities inform their sense of what to do – or how to maneuver – to be a competent participant in the official school world" (p. 122). Hence, students are learning a cultural understanding at school – one that may be substantially different from their own cultural funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Literacies and culture are so spectacularly intertwined, as to be inseparable from each other. In fact, one could suggest that all literacy is cultural. As Paulo Freire said, "Reading is not exhausted merely by decoding the written word or written language, but rather anticipated by and extending into knowledge of the world" (Freire, 1983, p. 1).

Similarly, a recent study with preservice math teachers found that the multimodal approach to math literacy added to the development of math concepts for students. While the study concentrated on preservice teachers' integration of literature into math lessons,

the study's use of children's literature as a means of bringing in real-world examples, highlights a bridging of the gap between the children's worlds and the conceptual elements of the math lesson (Rogers et al., 2015). As introduced in this article, and explained further in the sections below, the concept of double consciousness as a means of spanning two inhabited worlds plays an important role in the literacy and linguistic development for immigrant youth as the navigate the complex worlds of their home and their school community (DeBois, 1903; Scott & King, 2014; Weisman, 2001). Each world the student inhabits has a profound effect upon the identity development of the language minority individual.

Identity

For many years, the concept of assimilation dominated research on immigrant identity and interaction within the dominant culture. Many believed that assimilation was the goal of language instruction and identity development for immigrants. Ideologues suggested that the development of a healthy identity for non-dominate groups depended upon their ability to assimilate to the dominate culture (Park, 1928) as opposed to maintaining their own cultural identities. Some ideologies even determined that subordinate groups retained a culture with inherent deficiency (Bernstein, 1970); thus, assuming that the dominate culture and language were, in fact, superior while ignoring the possible contributions of migrating communities upon their new societies (Park, 1928).

These early theories on immigration, assimilation, and sociolinguistic development lie in stark contrast to the pioneering work of W.E.B. DuBois (1903) who developed the idea of "double consciousness" for non-dominate groups operating in the

two worlds of their own community and that of the dominate group. Even now, marginalized communities face a U.S. society that pressures minority groups to assimilate into the dominant culture (Scott & King, 2014; Weisman, 2001). Although often referenced as integration, the goal for minority group assimilation remains a disputed issue within governmental policy and instructional goals. However, the research, as outlined in this review, will display the unequivocal benefit of minority groups maintaining their home culture while also learning the language and culture of the dominant community. Language development incorporates a myriad of complex and interesting components (Bloome & Green, 2015), not the least of which include the language learners' identities.

Social Identity

The intersection between language and culture can be understood thorough the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1991) of an individual. One's native language is so thoroughly rooted within their neural pathways as to be almost tangible according to Bourdieu (1991). A person thinks, processes information, and reflects all within the confines of language. "Habitus guides individuals to act, speak and think, in ways that are linked to and reflect the social structure, and that to them seem natural" (Handsfield & Jimenez, 2009, p. 157). Hence, language plays an almost outsized role in an individual's literacies both academically and otherwise because language is inseparable from the person's identity. Even in a multilingual environment, a person's native language, or the language they utilize for a given line of required cognition, influences the person's parameters of thought. Agar (1994) stated:

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Language, in all its varieties, in all the ways it appears in everyday life, builds a world of meanings. When you run into different meanings, when you become aware of your own work to build a bridge to the others, 'culture' is what you're up to. Language fills the spaces between us with sound; culture forges the human connection through them. Culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture. (p. 28)

Language, then is a social act, eliciting social consequences, within social systems (Bloome & Green, 2015; Burke, 2013; Case, 2004; Pierce, 1995). When language literacy is viewed as a social act, it consists of discourses (Gee 1999), and these discourses may be described as socially recognizable means of communication, including gestures, semiotics, and meaning-making. Regardless of whether the communication is conducted with speech, writing, or even symbolic, language impacts the society in a reciprocal relationship. In fact, Burke (2013) conducted a study of language learner's interaction with society through their online identities. She found that even within the online social space, language emphatically influences identity and community.

The construct of language impacts the construct of society. Language, then, is also history. The history of a society works upon a language and culture to fold layer upon layer of situated meanings (Bloome & Green, 2015). As languages change and restructure, some words lose meaning while others gain new meanings, so too does the culture of the society change. Sometimes slow and gradual, sometimes stark and stilted through cataclysm or social reform, but these cultural changes are uniquely tied to language.

Dyson's (2008) study of the experiences of first grade students in the public school setting and their interaction with the teacher's own identity and cultural norms reminds us of the complex issue of language and identity in the school setting. Additionally, as students learn the expected actions, the accepted patterns of speech, and

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the cultural norms of the hidden curriculum, they may even begin to establish a constructed world for their school environment (Zacher, 2009).

Within the context of the institutionalized school environment, children create imagined worlds where they identify in a manner that is separate from other life contexts (Holland et al., 1998). Students may become caught up in these figured worlds created by the school environment and even enact their own agency upon their created worlds (Holland et al., 1998, p. 49). Students exercise their agency and identities as an interaction between the power conceptualization of the classroom (Scott & King, 2014). The idea of power imbalances exists amongst even their peers, yet also exists as situated by the classroom teacher (Hatt, 2012, p. 444). Yet, students' own stories, interests, and cultures play an enormous role in the interaction between educator and student and the resulting identities developed through this interaction. The curriculum should, in fact, act as a set of mirrors reflecting to the student the experiences of others and of themselves (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 1999, p. 237). Unfortunately, all too often, the mirrors are replaced with the narrower overt curriculum that only displays a singular lens of the world.

The student does not come into the classroom as a blank slate, molded completely by, or in absence of, the educational institution. Instead, students make sense of the school culture through the lens of their own cultural experiences. Freire substantiated much of his framework of literacy and identity as a responsive, actionable undertaking based on a child's connection to the wider world of time and space within the sphere of their particular reality (Freire, 1983). Freire noted that if curriculum were to have any

meaning to the student, it must be constructed within the context and sociocultural understandings already present in the student's world (Freire, 1983).

A child's identity is heavily influenced by the often unseen curriculum of the school. Hinders and Thornton (2017) argued that a student learns just as much from their school experiences as they do from the formal curriculum. Hence, the hidden curriculum equals, if not surpasses, the impact on students and their identities as the overt curriculum. Although the overt curriculum often receives the majority of attention from the public and politicians, it remains only a part of the overall school experience of a child. Thus, the importance of understanding literacy as a multifaceted and complex idea. Furthermore, the identity of the ELL student must also be considered within the context of linguistic development. Children experiencing a new culture and language must navigate the additional complexities of their multiple worlds – home, school, and community, while also developing their own sense of self within these worlds (Mercer, 2011). ELL students' sense of self may be largely impacted by the social linguistic communities they inhabit at any given time.

These communities incorporate the larger social structures of the society and the power dynamics of the dominate culture. Language learners sense of identity is influenced heavily by their access and denial of certain social networks (Pierce, 1995). In Pierce's study of four Canadian immigrant women, she found that self-identification with a group impacted the language attitudes of the participants and their acquisition of the dominate language in their new homes. Social identity; however, is far from static. Language learners' sense of identity and biculturalism (Weisman, 2001) may present in new areas due to increased competency in the language they are learning. Language

learners find that their sphere of influence increases as they acquire the dominate language of their new communities, while maintaining their sense of self within their native language community.

Cultural Identity

In Zarcher's (2009) study, she described a case study of Christina who, despite being White, identifies as Latina across multiple spaces including her school and her community. Christina adopted the culture of her friends and of the surrounding neighborhoods in order to preserve her own social hierarchy within her sphere of influence and as a means of relating to her closest friends. In McIntosh's (1988) essay, she described how her work in feminism led to the realization, and subsequent investigation, of her previously unnoticed societal privilege based on her White race. McIntosh (1988) explored the many circumstances and instances where she believed her race impacted her in a positive manner, but that she had previously been unaware of. She called these instances her "invisible backpack" as she used the metaphor to describe how she always carries White privilege with her, even when it is unseen.

Additionally, in McDermott and Varenne's (1995) well-crafted article, they related the social construct of differences, both physical and mental/emotion, as disability. They made the claim that our typical concept of disability has more to do with our cultural lens of expectation, rather than shared understanding. They argued that due to society being so constructed as to benefit the majority, those who are different are considered to have a disability. This argument is well illustrated through Wells' (1998) thought-provoking short story.

Unless we are removed from our own culture, we often find it difficult to appreciate the full extent of influence culture has on our lives. For example, when the main character in the short story by Wells finds himself suddenly in a city inhabited by only blind people, he understands their blindness, or disability, as their defining quality. However, it is not long before he is forced to reorganize his own thinking and reflect on his sightedness. Due to the design construct of the city – being made for and inhabited by only blind individuals, the main character must confront how his perceived advantage has now become a disability due to the new culture he finds himself in. Of course, this is the author's intended purpose of the story. However, it must be acknowledged that the man was able to learn, even if begrudgingly, to view the impact of culture on the learner. In this case, the blind architects, city planners, and inhabitants had built a culturally relevant civilization based on their shared experience, and the sighted man as outsider, was seen as physically and mentally disabled due to his sightedness. Although not empirical research, the potential impact of this piece of communication upon society offers a profound understanding of deficit thinking.

In contrast to the surface level study by Pretelt (2016), that indicated bilingual students do not adopt a foreign cultural identity from the mere study of identity in a bilingual class, the concept of identity in the context of culture develops from an understanding that delves much deeper into the nuances of school culture, community, and sociolinguistics of the student's native language.

Linguistic Identity

Communities tend to exert pressure on individuals with regard to language, and the more close-knit the community the more pressure seems to be exerted. However, as community and context evolve, so too does the language behavior of individuals, especially those within the bilingual or multilingual community (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007). In fact, Lei Wei (1994) found that the social network of an individual had greater impact on the language choice than even gender or age. Thus, the interaction between people impacts their language identity, and as language is communication and always changing, so too does the identity of language learners across multiple contexts. This interaction allows a multilingual individual to negotiate social interactions across multiple group identities. Furthermore, language use and identity also exists within a market structure whereby the speaker gauges the social capital for the symbolic value of the language against the culture and values of the group. Thus, the individual identity is a choice, but is also restricted by the linguistic capital of the community (Bourdieu, 1991).

Linguistic identity begins with an understanding of language socialization – a research field pioneered by Ochs and Schieffelin (2008). Children are socialized towards a cultural identity through the use of language and to the language itself (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008). The researchers engaged in a study of Somoan and Kaluli (Ochs, 1982; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984) caregivers and the unique linguistic scaffolding processes they employed with young children. They found that communicating with young children inherently included socialization into the culture and beliefs of the local linguistic community. Language socialization requires a competency with the skills and knowledge of the communication and expressive acts, but the use and understanding of

the language require far more than just the linguistic knowledge and skills. Instead, the child is ingratiated into a sense of community and identity within a group of those who share a common language(s). Within the native language(s) acquisition are the competencies of expected manners of participation that reflect the linguistic communities' values, beliefs, and behaviors. As language socialization develops, so too does the native speakers sociolinguistic sense of self.

Additionally, sociolinguistic communication requires the use of socially appropriate verbal and nonverbal expression to create meaning within a particular context (Schiffrin et al., 2003). This context includes the space and social community of the linguistic expression and may; therefore, interact with identity depending on context, environment, and community. Peele-Eady's (2011) study of African American membership identity within the context of the church found that the children of the church community were socialized towards membership within the community based on explicit instruction, stewardship, and fellowship. The children then internalized their membership and exercised their identification within this community group as part of their own identity. The study demonstrates the implications for adults' roles in situating children in particular communicative practices. Research further reveals that individuals from non-dominant cultures experience a break in their cultural and linguistic norms within the space and community of the public school environment (Agar, 1994; Bloome and Green, 2015; Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 2008; Gee, 2015; Peele-Eady, 2011) Language learners often draw upon their funds of knowledge to help them navigate their new surroundings while also considering their own identity within the school and home environments.

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In narrowing this view to the more specific population of immigrant children and youth who are also language learners, it remains important to note the influence of family and parents upon the language identity of the child. The language of the home, and the value placed on native language versus the language of their new home impacts the identity development of the child – hence the concept of double consciousness explored earlier. Lanza and Svendsen (2007) noticed a pattern of language use in their study of five immigrant families in Norway. The families all spoke a variety of languages within the home, but a common element was the use of the native language(s) between adults and the Norwegian, or English, spoken between the children. In fact, there existed a complex dual language communication where many adults spoke to the children in their native language, but the children responded in the language of their new home – Norwegian. However, the families did express a desire for their children to also retain their native language so they may continue to communicate with their families.

Further, Lanza and Svendsen (2007) noted the impact of religion upon the language retention value of their participants. The participants also saw religion as an essential community link that bound them together within their native language community. Thus, the role of religion and the link to linguistic and cultural identity cannot be ignored. This study demonstrated the complex relationship and attitudes in concert with immigrants' interactions between learning a new language of the larger community and the retention of their home language. In fact, this study illustrated the need for further inquiry into the attitudes and influence of immigrant parents over the linguistic development of their children.

Language and Power

From a global perspective on languages and power, it has become obvious that the English language, though itself varied, has attained the unofficial status of the global language (Canagarajah, 2013). This perceived dominance of English remains a heritage of the most recent instance of colonialism upon the Earth. Although the universality of English across the globe has many benefits, it is important to note the significant role that colonialism played in the destruction of lives and cultures across the planet. A thorough investigation into colonialism lies outside the scope of this review; however, the vestiges of English as a global language remain relevant. Further destruction of cultures and identities by the dominance of English may be reduced in the future through an understanding of the English language as that of an international language (Canagarajah, 2013; Krulatz, et al., 2018). When understood from this perspective, teachers of English language learners may build upon the funds of knowledge and identities of ELL's in such a manner as to promote the language acquisition as an understanding and elaborate network of communication between diverse peoples (Krulatz, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a suspension of the notion of categorization of peoples should also play an important role in reducing the suppressive power of a dominant language. Instead, "Through classroom practices that foster self-awareness and identity investment, and promote acceptance and understanding of community members who may be originally perceived as 'other', language teachers can promote a multilingual orientation and cultural citizenship at school and in the community (Krulatz et al., 2018, p. 555). In order to better understand the power dynamic of language and identity, a review of linguistics and literacy is necessary.

Halliday (1978) supported the concept of viewing language as far more than merely a linguistic system. Although languages may have a unique set of phonemes, morphemes, syntax, and structure, they are enriched by the cultures they represent – and create. In fact, it is through linguistic meaning-making that humans are capable of understanding within their culture. This idea of linguistic meaning-making as an essential component of literacy and identity was evidenced by the 2017 study of the Miqqut project.

This project utilized Inuit language and literacy to develop traditional skills with indigenous women, and the researchers found that their identity and sense of community grew stronger throughout the project (Tulloch et al., 2017). Thus, the development of language, especially for L1, requires an understanding of the cultural world, or reality, that the language is situated within (Freire, 1983; Weisman, 2001). Thus, one's native language(s) encodes cultural reality and identity. Brunn (1994) noted that the ability to speak a native language also ingratiated the individual towards the culture of the linguistic community. Therefore, the difficulty of pure assimilation into a dominate group requires the letting go of one's native culture and identity. Power is exerted from the dominant group in a manner, whether purposeful or not, that extinguishes an immigrants' native identity due to the institutionalized power structures of the dominant group (Miller, 2003). Without conscious effort to acknowledge and participate in the value of minority languages, dominant societies often pressure immigrants to assimilate. This pressure to assimilate causes the immigrants to become divided within their own identities rather than becoming bicultural (Weismann, 2001).

Crucial to the understanding of sociolinguistic development for immigrant students lies in a recognition of the power relationships between the dominate culture and the non-dominate communities. The dominate group seeks to maintain their power and influence through the suppression of minority culture and language. Rather than seeking the value and worth of non-dominate sociolinguistic practices, the dominant societal group defends their hegemony through the control of institutions and language use (McLaren, 1998). The role of language in cultural dominance is so closely linked to power and oppression, that dominant groups often seek to stifle all non-dominate language practices. Yosso (2005) furthered this notion of a critical power imbalance as linked to dominate culture and language. Yosso (2005) framed the cultural and epistemological debate in the United States through the framework of critical race theory noting that those born into the dominate culture receive a privileged place due to their cultural knowledge, or cultural wealth. Those that are born into non-dominant communities, such as minority cultures and immigrant communities, have a knowledge base that is not as valued as that of the dominate culture. While minority communities have no less depth in their cultural knowledge, the knowledge itself is what is devalued. Thus, Yosso (2005) illustrated the reality of dominate language and cultural oppression as minority communities lack the accepted cultural and societal capital required for equal outcomes as that of those born into the cultural wealth of the dominant community.

This oppression of language is evidenced by centuries of colonialism, most recently those of European heritage, that established the colonial conquerors language as the superior tongue, while suppressing the languages of the non-dominant groups (De Kock et al., 2018). This suppression is especially evident within the institutes of public

education. Even in the modern United States educational system, languages other than English may be taught as an aside, or elective course, and they are devalued in relation to the dominant language that exerts itself in the grading and assessment procedures (Scott &Venegas, 2017). The priority given to Standard Written English (SWE) is evident throughout the curriculum. Even educators have been found to accept the given standards, such as those found in the Common Core curriculum, as useful even if imperfect (Desimone et al., 2019). Thus, the replication of the linguistic and cultural hegemony often remains unchallenged. This cultural and linguistic hegemony also disenfranchises language minority communities from interacting with the educational system due to the perceived power dynamic of the institutionalized educational system (Campano et al., 2015).

Not only does the dominate culture suppress linguistic minorities, but individuals whose native language and culture are not a part of the institutions of the society in which they live may risk losing their sense of community when adopting the language of the dominant culture. Using social narratives to analyze the processes of self-creation for South African students, De Kock et al. (2018), found that individual and collective identities may be constructed through the meaning-making processes of students as they consider their place in the particular space of institutionalized public schools. Indeed, the students' linguistic heritage was often viewed as the focal point for identity creation and this aspect was heavily influenced by the normalities of the school environment. Further, they found that schools either legitimized or delegitimized particular aspects of the learners' identities through the replication of the ruling culture (De Kocket al., 2018).

The Other

"In the global competition among languages, after all, English appears to be winning handily" (Ricento et al., 2006, p. 99). Although English's place as the unofficial global language may be rooted in the tortured legacy of colonialism, its preeminence as internationally accepted linguistic currency continues to thrive. The United States' role in this linguistic hegemony, though less overt than the past centuries of British colonialism, continues to reinforce English through the power exerted by the U.S. in the global marketplace and in pop culture status (Harper, 2011). However, due to the widespread acceptance of English for international business, academics and research, and media, all those whose native language is not English could be considered as something "other" or outside the accepted norm.

Ricento (2007) illustrated the point that colonial language heritage is difficult to posit as good or bad based on the language alone. He offers the example of the African National Congress in South Africa that used English to successfully fight back against apartheid. Additionally, Harper (2011) noted the tendency of widespread English usage as helpful for global interaction while also acknowledging fears that English dominance will eliminate linguistic and cultural diversity. Ricento (2007) also remarked that language as used in a socially communicative context and within local and global communities carries with it a system of power that cannot be ignored. Thus on a global stage, English has become the language of power and influence, and because language is unequivocally imbedded in culture, so too, it the culture of English speakers granted a privileged status.

Within the United States itself, the leading English language culture, the dominance of English, and its corresponding culture are even more apparent to those of a minority language heritage (Delpit, 1995). Thus, the non-English speaking immigrant child's sense of self is greatly influenced by the sense that their cultural values and language heritages are not valued to the same degree as those whose native language is aligned with the dominant culture. This lack of alignment causes the child to feel out of place within the strict order of the educational setting that prizes English as the language of value due to the preference for English in almost all assessments and classwork (TEA, 2019c). Although in Texas, the state education agency allows for assessment and bilingual instruction for students in grades Kindergarten through 5th, even the bilingual assessment is available in Spanish only (TEA, 2019b); therefore, excluding other minority language speakers from enjoying even that measure of inclusivity.

The feeling of "otherness" (Krulatz, et al., 2018) exists in more areas of life for the immigrant child than just within the school context. Their feelings of being something other also may extend into their own home and interactions with their older native language community. Due to their near daily exposure and direct support in language acquisition through the school environment, immigrant children often acquire the dominant language sooner than adults (Szente et al., 2006). This can cause a strain in the parent-child relationship as expressed in the inability of language minority parents to assist their children in homework and their lack of involvement within the school due to the language barrier (Boehnlein et al., 1995; McBrien, 2005).

Additionally, children may even take-on a role-reversal for the parents by translating for them and helping their parents navigate the language and culture of their

new home (Hyuck & Fields, 1981). This language separation can spur the child's identity as someone unique, but also other. They may feel they exist outside their native language community, and outside the community of their school peers. While research in this field is still immerging, the purpose of this dissertation it to identify factors that influenced language development from a sociocultural perspective, including identity and parent perspective. Thus, this study seeks to further the field through the narratives of ELL students whose experiences may speak to the identity development when faced with the feeling of being "other".

Linguistic Development for Language Learners in the School Setting

As previously noted, the shift in understanding literacy as literacies is essential when teaching language learners. Learning a new language incorporates far more than just a different way of saying the same words, but is so laced with meaning and culture that learning a new language is learning a new way of thinking. While linguistic skills development cannot be overlooked as an essential component of linguistic development, even in skills-based research highlighting language development techniques, the need for a new way of processing language is evident. Dracos and Henry (2018) conducted an extensive study of task-essential training for L2 language development for Spanish language learners. While the emphasis of the study found that task-essential training positively impacted language learners' attention to morphological cues, it also highlights the need for L2 learners to understand the linguistic structures and ways of meaning-making within the second language itself. Each language being a reflection of the culture, and the reverse also being true, this understanding demonstrates how complex the issue of language instruction is.

Language learning requires the immigrant student to engage in the semiotics of the new language and transmediate through their prior understanding based on their native language(s) and cultural context (Siegel, 2006). People utilize a combination of modes – text, visual, and auditory to both develop their intended messages, while also seeking to convey the message to their intended audience. In fact, semiotics may be defined as, "an interdisciplinary field of studies that examines how meaning is made through signs of all kinds – pictures, gestures, music – not just words" (Siegel, 2006, p. 65) Thus, an individual will employ semiotics socially as a resource to convey, interpret, and create meaning. Bakhtin's (1981) theory of discourse states that each written utterance is actually reflective of other texts already encountered by a person. This theory adds a significantly social element to the understanding of literacy and language instructional practices. It further demonstrates that the social component is at the heart of literacy and linguistic understanding (Ranker, 2008).

In fact, research indicates that bilingual individuals' use of two languages in social situations is a means of establishing identities within the sociocultural context of the linguistic cultures for both languages (Heller, 1995). Additionally, the relationship between linguistic instruction and student identity remains firmly linked. A student's native language and cultural heritage should be considered as relevant and beneficial to the instructional practices of the classroom environment. Thus, instruction should be viewed as an affirming investment into the identities of students (Cummins et al., 2005). A recent study (Kachorsky et al., 2017) looking at the semiotic resources employed by children when reading picture books emphasized the importance of relating instruction to the background and cultures of El students. The study found that one of the impactful

semiotic resources employed by the children in their literacy development was their link between their own funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and the visual cues presented by the pictures books. Thus, the researchers found that there was significant interaction between the modes of the picture book, and also that of the inhabited worlds of the students themselves.

The New London Group (1996), mentioned throughout the research in multimodalities and multiple literacies states that "all meaning making is social, semiotic, and textual" (Anderson, 2013, p. 278). The Systemic Functional Literacies (SFL) framework as described by Anderson (2013), draws primarily from Halliday's (1978) approach. SFL is therefore in the field of linguistics and is primarily concerned with how language is used. SFL looks at the functions of languages and what language accomplishes through social communication. Much of the research reviewed in SFL analyzes the learning outcomes and meaning functions associated with children's interaction with multimodal texts and products while emphasizing the need for multimodal instruction for language learners so as to include social interaction for language development.

Early and Marshall (2008), conducted a study with high school ELL students using multimodal techniques to further engage their communication activates. They compared their product results with those of the native English speaking peers based upon a predetermined rubric. The study found that when student essays were graded according to a predetermined assessment scale, the ELL population's grades fell into line with the native speakers in regard to the scores they received on the assessment rubric. Little difference was found between the average scores of native speakers and that of the

EL students' scores. Thus, the researcher made the argument that multimodal interaction, L1 use, and collaboration encourage English language development and comprehension.

Bilingual Literacy

Moving further towards implications for education, an investigation of literacy and linguistics would be incomplete without a review of bilingual literacy. As discussed previously, language and culture remain so sufficiently linked, it would be foolish to separate the two when developing bilingual learning environments. For example, in the United States there exists a growing popularity of dual language education programs that focus on establishing the academic literacy skills of reading and writing within the child's native language prior to transitioning the child to academic literacy in the second language (Lindholm-Leary, 2012).

This purposeful development of academic literacy within the native language allows the child to focus on the required reading and writing literacy skills without also needing to navigate the cultural literacies contained within the linguistics of their secondary language. Flores (2020), mentioned the architecture of language, maintaining that standard academic language is in reality a manner of manipulating language for a specified purpose. By framing academic language within the structure of language architecture, educators are able to build upon students' current knowledge. Students' already understand how language is manipulated to fit a specified purpose; thus, an educator may build upon already established language use when manipulating the language for academic purposes.

Attempting to force the child to learn academic literacy skills exclusively in a secondary language necessitates a multifaceted cognitive endeavor upon the learner. The

child must learn not only the academic literacy, but also the cultural and linguistic subtleties of the secondary language simultaneously. Instead, dual language programs relying on native language literacy have proven to be more successful in developing both academic literacy and secondary language literacy (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Additionally, these programs also help children develop bilingualism at greater rates than those students in non-native monolinguistic settings, even if they maintain their native language dominance within social circumstances (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). However, when children are exposed to two languages their development of both languages is slower than the development of language in a monolinguistic environment (Hoff, 2014). Therefore, it is not uncommon for bilingual children to lag behind their monolinguistic peers when looking at each language separately.

However, these bilingual children are not delayed in overall language acquisition, as they are developing two languages simultaneously; thus, bilingual children's overall vocabulary exceeds that of their monolinguistic peers (Hoff, 2014). Further, bilingual children may lag behind their monolinguistic peers initially, but bilingual students actually outperform their monolinguistic peers in the long run (Lindholm-Leary, 2018). Researchers focusing on bilingual Spanish students found that bilingual students who were literate in reading and speaking in both languages achieved higher academic achievement than either their monolinguistic English language peers and their monolinguistic Spanish language peers Lindholm-Leary, 2018.

Although a significant amount of research has been conducted within the United States educational system specializing in languages that deviate from the mainstream culture, the practice of developing bilingualism through native language literacy and

funds of knowledge is not unique to the American public school system. An example of language development on an international level is exemplified by a study of English-taught degree programs in the Netherlands (Kotake, 2016). Here, the researcher utilized the term "internationalization" in a similar manner to the previously mentioned term "international literacy" (Luke, 2003).

Kotake (2016) conducted a qualitative research analysis of the growing importance of internationalization in the higher education setting. Kotate (2016) specifically desired to observe the impact of English-taught degree programs at institutions of higher education from nations with languages other than English. Thus, this study brought about several interesting outcomes in relation to internationalization and bilingualism.

Kotake (2016) found that the culture of the constituent society, the Dutch, contained a pre-established favorable disposition towards international literacy. One of the studies' subjects stated, "We are used to looking abroad and speaking foreign languages. This is part of our culture" (Kotake, 2016, p. 219). Thus, the perceived benefit of international literacy already exists within the culture being studied, so the linguistic acquisition of a foreign language was perceived as enhancing the culture, instead of grating against it. Among the perceived benefits of the dual language programs at the university level was the idea of better employment opportunities both domestically and internationally (Kotake, 2016). Additionally, the global literacy rates were increased due to the English language programs because international students become more attracted to these programs. Although outside the scope of this study, there is evidence within the findings that support the multiple literacies theory previously discussed in this review.

A member of the university faculty articulates a concern with the English program because the university seems to only desire a switch in languages, or a verbatim translation of the content from Dutch to English. The professor laments this limited view of internationalization stating:

> I think it's better to make a more interesting focused English-taught program that is really of interest to the foreign students instead of doing everything in English . . . the only thing we do is we are going to teach it in English, . . . That's not enough. Then you are not making an interesting educational program for foreign students. Then you have to do specific things. (Kotake, 2016, p. 221)

Here the same frustration emerges with a language program that attempts to isolate linguistics from literacy. In the dual language programs of the U. S. public school system and in the English program of this European university, the importance of a global literacy approach – one that incorporates both linguistics and culture – remains vital to the success of the program.

Age and Language Development

Additionally, neurological studies examining the language centers of the human brain have suggested that human language development reaches its peak between the ages of two and four, and through the myelination process, the language acquisition center of the brain becomes less active as children mature (Bates et al., 2003; Pujol et al., 2006). This indicates that language learners who do not begin the acquisition of a new language very early in life, will require a greater emphasis on the sociocultural aspects of language because they have already acquired the literacy of their culture and social setting (Freire, 1983).

However, this theory receives push back from other researchers due to the limited and one-dimensional view of language acquisition. Instead, age as a factor in language acquisition may also be the product of a variety of developmental outcomes such as linguistic dominance, heterogeneity of attainment, cognitive styles, and perhaps even plasticity (Birdsong, 2018). Further, age and language acquisition may also be influenced by the degree of literacy already obtained in a prior language and even the environment in which the new language is acquired. In fact, a study of L2 students of various ages demonstrated that there was a significant degree of variation in the individual rates of linguistic acquisition, and that some acquired different linguistic domains sooner and later than others (Paradis, 2011) Some of the variations also included environment and context.

Children born in the U.S., but whose parents speak a language other than English, and even those children who immigrate to the United States within their first couple of years often have greater exposure to the majority language than those children who immigrate later in life. These children who are exposed to both their minority language and the majority language early in life are undergoing bilingual language acquisition as they are exposed to both languages simultaneously in their development. These simultaneous bilinguals (Hoff, 2014) are often classified as English Learners by the school due to their home language; however, their level of exposure and fluency differ significantly from those who learn English later in life - after having fully developed their native language. Thus, older language learners, or sequential bilinguals (Hoff, 2014), already demonstrate literacy in their native language. Sequential bilinguals are often considered to be those who begin learning their new language after reaching their teens,

but the cut off is arbitrary, and having already developed literacy of their first language. Additionally, some children fall somewhere in between the simultaneous bilingual and the sequential bilingual. These children have developed some literacy in their native language, but are also still acquiring literacy in their home language. The age of acquisition may help explain why some children do not achieve the same degree of proficiency in their second language as they do their native language (Gass et al, 2013).

Further, Gass et al. (2013) describes the complex and daunting task of the language learner as they begin to understand the language system and literacy of their second language. Language learners must understand the rules of the new language system and establish the common patterns of the language structure. Often times these structures and rules differ significantly from the language learner's native language. As a result, many new language learners enter a silent period (Hoff, 2014) in their initial experience with a new language environment. However, language learners leave this initial silent period and begin using the new language, though not without significant miscues. This second stage is considered to be a period of interlanguage (Hoff, 2014).

Gass et al. (2013) takes this notion of language systems a step further by explaining the nonverbal elements of language acquisition. Much of language is culture and because the two are so intertwined, the language learner must also understand the nonverbal nuances of the second language as they acquire literacy.

Lantolf and Poehner (2014) demonstrated a sociocultural understanding of aptitude related language development. They noted that instruction "must be contingent upon learner needs" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014, pg. 159) and viewed through Vygotsky's (1978) theory of proximal development. Thus, they reflected upon the ability of the

learner as the most important component of language instruction. Language learners who have previously developed literacy in their native language and culture, are able to learn and build upon their pre-established literacy base in order to acquire a new language. Then, educators may push language learners just past their ability to develop learners while also determining where their language abilities have not yet fully emerged. Lantolf and Poehner (2014) reflected on a study with adult English language learners attempting to understand sarcasm in their new language. These adult learners able to build upon their already existing understanding of sarcasm, and transfer that knowledge to their new language. Whereas a younger child may need to learn what sarcasm is prior to understanding it in either their native language or their L2 language. This situation illustrates the need to develop language using existing cultural and social knowledge from a students' L1 language, rather than attempting to force language learners to acquire the new language in absence of any prior literacy development and sociocultural understanding.

Wilkerson's (2002) study also supported the notion that the age at which the immigrant child enters school has a profound impact on their future career stability due, in part, to their ability to integrate into the dominant culture and language. However, younger students are also more likely to come into conflict with their dual world identity through their integration into the dominant society - sometimes at the expense of retaining their native cultural community and identity (Harper, 2011).

Curriculum and Instruction

This review of literature would remain incomplete without a brief analysis of recent research into the impact of curriculum choices and instructional practices and how

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they interact with sociolinguistics for language learners. The case for the agency of the language learner themselves lies in contrast to the once prolific stance that language education should be conducted in such a manner as to erase the heritage language and replace that language, and consequentially the corresponding cultures, with the new language. However, a basic understanding of how differencing cultures are and are not connected (Delpit, 1995) and how these connections may be articulated within the classroom allow for a better understanding of language learning that no longer has deficit thinking as the foundation.

Data-driven assessments and accountability measures also hamper the agency of the English learner by reproducing systemic inequalities (Nichols & Campano, 2017) through individualized, yet rigid interpretations. Instead, an understanding that humans and their activities of communication do not exist in isolation, but inhabit multilayered systems of influence connecting people, culture, and institutions (Nichols & Campano, 2017) better articulates the complex understanding of linguistic development needed to address the sociolinguistic realities of teaching language learners. Furthermore, due to the "embodied" nature of literacy (Leander & Boldt, 2013), the institution of the space and place of the public school also factors into considerations of linguistic development.

Creswell (2014, p. 18) defined place as "a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places we see different things. We see attachments and connections between people and place". Although, Leander and Boldt (2013) took issue with the New London Group's (1996) conceptualization of multiliteracies as disciplined and patterned, their study of the literacy experiences of a child made thoughtful note of the space and place of the child's

literacy experiences. Although this review relies heavily on Gee (2015) and his work with the New London Group (1996), Leander and Boldt's (2013) reading of the text does merit investigation into the implications of space and place for linguistic acquisition. Further, a student's placement within their community also adds to the implications of the study. As previously discussed, a student's sense of identity and their juxtaposition within their differing linguistic communities, or "worlds", also informs their linguistic development. Minority communities develop agency when incorporated within the dialogue about the programming (Campano et al., 2020) for their children. Thus, incorporating the views, opinions, and funds of knowledge from these communities helps language learners as they navigate the space and place of the school itself.

Norway, like the United States and many western European nations, has recently seen an increase in the migration of individuals and families from non-European nations. These immigrant youths are then enrolled in schools and must acquire a new language and interact with all the sociolinguistic factors involved in the process of linguistic development. In a curriculum development project based in public schools in Norway (Krulatz et al., 2018), collected data from teacher workshops, academic performance assessments, and interviews with educators. They sought to increase the awareness of, and tolerance for, cultural and linguistic diversity for educators. In conjunction with site-based educators, researchers developed curriculum that engaged multilingual literacy, student identity, and positive views of home language maintenance.

While they concluded that they had indeed raised awareness of linguistic diversity amongst students and teachers, they found that their project did not seem to have much impact on maintaining the students' valuation of their native language (Krulatz et al.,

2018). Their study highlighted the degree of difficulty in determining student and teacher affirmation of home language and how that may take place in the classroom. Indeed, this study illustrated where the research needs to continue in order to address the instructional practices and student perspectives of their own sociolinguistic development. Hence, this review of literature builds the case for further research into the sociolinguistic experiences of immigrants in the public school setting.

Summary

In this chapter, the historical change in thinking about literacy as a one-dimensional concept was detailed as it evolved towards a view of multiple literacies (Gee, 2015). This more complex view of literacies also helped bring about our understanding of the shift in language acquisition that follows a sociocultural conceptualization (Bloome & Green, 2015). This sociocultural shift necessitates the need for understanding how language and culture intersect with identity. Thus, the review analyzed social identity, cultural identity, and language identity within the context of immigrant language learners. These explorations of identity situate language as an inseparably social act and that identity is developed through socialization and linguistic communities. The review then illustrates the significant power of dominant languages over minority languages and people groups, and how this power often remains unchecked throughout society without conscious effort to change. The review then moved to the narrower investigation of literature surrounding linguistic instruction within the school setting. Of particular interest was the current instructional and policy approaches to ELL and bilingual students. These approaches demonstrated the need for further research from

the perspective of the language learners themselves and the factors that led to their language acquisition.

In the next chapter, the design and methodology is presented for a study of immigrant perspectives on the factors they experienced while acquiring a new language. In particular, the study investigated the experiences of three language learners who entered the United States as middle school students and began the process of acquiring English. A narrative, multiple case study approach provided thorough descriptions of the students' perspectives of their experiences and articulated the factors that helped their language acquisition while also exploring their experiences navigating their two linguistic worlds. The study also gathered information on the perspectives of the participants' parents and teachers to triangulate the data. This qualitative approach allowed for the exploration of the complex phenomenon experienced by the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the issue of language acquisition from the perspective of the language learners and their parents and teachers. This study utilized a narrative approach to examine the perspectives and experiences of three language learners who acquired English as public school students. These participants acquired the English language and were able to successfully navigate the corresponding sociocultural elements of their new linguistic environment; thus their perspectives and experiences add to the body of literature surrounding the sociocultural turn (Bloome and Green, 2015) in language acquisition. This study was designed to address the factors that contributed to language development and to better understand the influence of the home language and community upon linguistic development and identity. The following sections entail the methodology that was utilized for the design, rationale, and data collection and analysis of the study.

Research Questions

In an effort to better understand the linguistic experiences of English Language learners and the particular phenomenon they encountered when acquiring a new language, this qualitative study utilized a narrative case study approach to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as "high school graduation and college matriculation"?

a. How did they overcome the linguistic barriers?

b. What additional sociocultural factors contributed to their overall success?

RQ2: In what ways did home-life culture and perspectives influence language development?

a. What were their parents' perspective on maintaining their native language(s)?

b. How did the immigrant students navigate between their two linguistic worlds?

Design and Rationale

The researcher utilized a narrative, multiple case study approach that consisted of the unique perspectives of three individual language learners who were successful in public schools. Their success is measured by their admission and study at an institute of high education, or college matriculation. This qualitative case study sought to identify some sociolinguistic factors that led to participants' success as language learners and how they overcame linguistic barriers. The study also explored these emergent bilinguals as they navigated their disparate linguistic worlds and expands on their experiences as they developed dual identities through bilingualism and biculturalism.

The qualitative approach allowed for the participants' own perspectives and even the perspectives of their parents and teacher. Additionally, qualitative research allows the researcher to describe issues and experiences within a population that are not easily measured (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While TEA (2019d) reports on the statistics of ELL students and their academic success, measured by TEA's assessments, quantitative analysis may fall short of understanding the uniqueness of and subtly of sociocultural

linguistic development. Rather, a narrative approach allows for rich, descriptive analysis

of qualitative data to inform "real-life groups in real-world settings" (Hirokawa et al.,

2000, p. 574). Further, the use of qualitative study design allows for the gathering of

holistic (Yin, 2014) data to better inform this complex issue.

Case study was the most appropriate approach for this study because "case study

is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its

activities within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Further articulated by

Merriam (1998), the case study approach allows for a situated understanding of the

unique situation of the case in its real-world environment (Yin, 2014). Due to the nature

of this study and the analysis of the factors that lead to linguistic development through a

sociocultural framework, a multiple case study design allows for an in-depth approach to

understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018) the particular phenomenon experienced by each

of the three participants in the study. Zainal (2007) stated, "…the detailed qualitative

accounts produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in the real-

life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations" (p. 4).

This study also employed narrative design within the case study structure in an

effort to provide "rich insight into the lived experience" (Carless & Douglas, 2017, p.

307). Further, narrative inquiry allows for human dimensions of experience over time and

takes account of the cultural context of the experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Bruner (1986) noted that narratives acknowledge the complexity and ambiguity of

humans lives and help us construct meaning from the knowledge contained within the

narrative. Multiple overlappings of understanding combine within the personal account of

an individual to provide information on their perspectives and experiences across time and within the context of the given space of the narrative events.

Narrative inquiry considers both personal and social conditions as pertinent to the inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). Thus, as this study sought to better understand the linguistic development of language learners, and knowing that language is an inherently social undertaking (Bloome & Green, 2015), narrative inquiry provided the best avenue of data collection and analysis for the study. In a study based on language within sociocultural contexts, Freeman's (2007) remarks on "narrative as the native language" of perspective in communication with others, rings authentic. Wells (2011) noted that the definition of narrative inquiry remains varied, yet all versions include the story of an individual from their own perspective as an essential element. This study hoped to capture the stories of language learners and their perspectives on learning the English language. Additionally, this study sought to inform the sociocultural factors that led to linguistic development for the participants.

Data Collection

The research model for this case study included multiple researcher-developed semi-structured interviews with participants, their parents, and their former teacher. As qualitative research validity relies on redundancy, multiple sources of data are essential (Yin, 2014). For this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with participants about their experiences and with their parents and former teacher to further inform the factors of their success and their experience navigating their different linguistic worlds. Thus, triangulation of the data through multiple interview sources provided validity for the study (Creswell, 2014). According to Yin (2014), interviews

allow data collection from the perspective of the participants themselves. Each interview was untimed and was semi-structured in such a manner as to allow the participants to fully detail their experiences in a highly descriptive manner. The goal of these interviews was to capture a complete picture of the factors that contributed to participants' linguistic acquisition and the influences of their native language and culture upon their language development.

The researcher recorded the participants' responses through both written researcher notes and audio recording, with the permission of each interviewee, in order to best record all data presented to the researcher by the participants. This method allowed the participants to enter into conversation with the researcher; thus, allowing for further questions and input from the participants. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the data from the audio sessions for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques used in this study were designed to form a thorough interpretation of the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018) for the particular phenomenon experienced by the participants. The goal of qualitative research is to describe lived experiences within social context (Elliot et al. 1999), and in qualitative data analysis the researcher is pursuing understanding rather than merely reporting (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). Thus, data analysis results in the synthesis of concepts and ideas presented by the data. These concepts and ideas provide a better understanding in relation to the study's guiding questions.

Due to the language barrier, particularly with participants' parents, the researcher employed a hermeneutic approach to the narration of the data in Chapter Four. When

conducting interviews, there is more data being conveyed that just the words themselves, especially for semi-structured and unstructured interviews. (Goffman, 1954; Knapik, 2006; Shotter, 2005) Thus, the researcher sought to also include the non-verbal elements conveyed within the interviews – interactions, inflection, hesitations, and even gestures. This process led to significant researcher descriptions of each of the interview questions and responses in Chapter Four as a supplement to the participant quotes also included in Chapter Four.

Relying on the theoretical propositions of the sociolinguistic framework governing this study, the researcher utilized a thematic coding process to organize and reduce the data into themes. Thematic coding is a form of qualitative data analysis often used in narrative studies that links common ideas and codes into categories, or themes. Creswell and Poth (2018), stated, "Thus, the qualitative data analysis may be a description of both the story and the themes that emerge from it" (p. 72). Yin (2014) recommended "playing with the data" in qualitative research to establish patterns and insights. Therefore, a thematic coding process was utilized by the researcher to discover emerging codes, categories, and themes for each of the participant cases. Rather than using computer-assisted tools that may mismanage the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018) due to the linguistic-centric data collected, the researcher created a complex coding matrix searching for patterns in the data for each of the individual cases. The researcher then used pattern matching and cross case analysis to further reduce the data and interpret the data for emerging themes.

Theoretical Propositions

Based on the designed nature of this study formed from the theoretical framework of linguistic development as a social act (Bloome & Green, 2015; Freire, 1983; Gee, 2015), the researcher employed theoretical propositions as a data analysis strategy. Yin (2018) recommended reliance on theoretical propositions as these propositions, "would have shaped your data collection plan, and therefore would have yielded analytic priorities" (p. 168). This study used an *a priori* theoretical framework based on the social turn (Bloome & Green, 2015) in language development research and understanding. This framework informed and contributed to the design of the study and the development of the semi-structured interview questions. Data collected were analyzed in accordance with the sociocultural understanding of language development that incorporates place (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), community (Campano, et al, 2020; Freire, 1983) and culture (Agar, 1994; Bloome and Greene, 2015; Delpit, 1995) as important aspects that are often overlooked in traditional language programs implemented within a school setting.

The framework situates language and literacy as more than mere reading and writing skills, but instead, it incorporates an understanding of the world (Friere, 1983) and the literacy of that world (Gee, 2015). Thus, language learners must not only learn a new set of language skills, but they must also do so within the sociocultural communities of their new home. Further, the framework stipulates that literacy and language is also tied to identity (Dyson, 2008; Zacher, 2009). Language learners must navigate the dual language communities of their home and that of their school community DeBois, 1903; Weisman, 2001; Scott & King, 2014). Therefore, the research questions were developed

in response to this framework and the data analysis was informed by these theoretical propositions.

Pattern Matching

Yin (2014) stated, "For case study analysis, one of the most desirable techniques is to use a pattern-matching logic" (p. 175). Pattern matching seeks out finding from the case study and how they match to a previous predicted pattern (Yin, 2014). Thus, in this study, pattern matching was used to further reduce the data into themes based on the study's previously described framework. The researcher evaluated the data through a coding processes that identified codes for each case, and across cases that aligned with the common themes found in the literature.

Additionally, pattern matching can also provide greater internal validity for the study as the process looks for rival explanations that may provide alternative explanations for the codes. However, when matched across the case study and with the predicted outcomes based on the available literature, the threat to validity is reduced. For this study, pattern matching was achieved by using the theoretical propositions established through the review of literature and comparing those common propositions with the empirical data derived from the study.

Cross Case Analysis

Cross case analysis occurs after coding process as a second level approach and reveals the common themes that emerged across the cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This type of data analysis assembles the codes and categories derived from the multiple cases into more clear and understandable themes. Thus, cross-case analysis further reduces the

data for the formation of overarching themes. Since the researcher conducted interviews with participants, parents, and a teacher, cross case analysis was necessary as a means of categorizing the codes across all seven interviews and establishing the resulting themes. The major themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis are presented in Chapter Four of this study.

Validity and Reliability

This study increased its validity through triangulation of the data using multiple sources of evidence (Merriam, 1998). Interview data was collected from participants, participants' parents, and the participants' former teacher due to Creswell and Poth's (2018) suggestion of using multiple people as sources to triangulate the data. Additionally, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for better descriptive accounts and interviews with participants. Additionally, in an effort to further support the internal validity of the research, participants were provided a report of their case study for their review. Yin (2014) recomended corroborating findings and evidence with participants themeselves in a descriptive case study analysis.

Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed an alternate criteria for assessing qualitative research based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as opposed to the traditional quantitative criteria of internal validity, external validity, relaibility, and objectivity. Following in the alternate criteria, this study established creditible results based on the perspective of the participants through their descriptions of their experiences. This descriptive data was collected through the semi-structured interviews. Additonally, as the participants themeslves are the only ones who may

legitimately judge the results (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), the participants were given access to the conclusion for their review.

The study also sought to enhance transferability by providing rich, thorough descriptions of the data collected from the participants, their parents, and their teachers. Due to this particular phenomenological nature of the study, replicability lies outside the scope of the research. Instead, the study accounted for the ever-changing context in which the study occured and further research on this topic would also need to account for changes in the approach given the setting of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Finally, the study included a data audit searching for collection and analysis procedures for potential bias on the part of the researcher in an effort to provide confirmability. Confirmability was also accounted for through the multiple semi-structured interviews from the participants, their parents, and their teachers to triangulate the data from more than one source.

Data collected in the form of interviews, audio recordings, and scripted notes was analyzed with regard to the framework described below that views linguistic acquisition from a sociocultural perspective (Bloom & Green, 2015). The study is presented as a unique example of a particular phenomenon experienced by a group of refugee students enrolled in Texas public schools. Common themes across all participants were further coded to disaggregate the data for interpretations that seek to answer the studies research questions. These interpretations were categorized into themes and described accordingly.

Risks and Benefits

Due to the voluntary nature of the case study, and the investigation's exclusive work with adults, the overall risk to the participants was low. Any names of students or

others that may have been collected through the interview process was changed to protect their identity and the participants' names were changed to allow for participant anonymity. Consent for participation was sought for all participants and participants were requested to review the data and analysis for accuracy and to determine their level of comfort with the information shared. Participants had the authority to remove any portion of the data and analysis that they believe posed a risk to themselves or their families.

The benefits of the study to the participants was largely based on their data as a contribution to the field of knowledge concerning the factors that helped, and hindered, their linguistic acquisition However, there exists no tangible rewards or benefits to participants of the study.

Participants

This study utilized purposeful sampling to ensure that robust, information rich perspectives were fully examined from an intentionally informative group of participants (Creswell, 2014). Creswell stated, "it is the purposeful sample that will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination. (p. 148). For the purposes of this study, the multiple cases were composed of three English learners who were also former Texas public school students. Each of the students immigrated to the United States with their families under refugee status. These students are known to the researcher as they were former students of the researcher; thus, the researcher was familiar with the participants' stories and was aware of their potential to inform our understanding of sociocultural language acquisition. Thus, the participants were chosen due to their relevant experiences in language acquisition.

The participants were recruited through personal contact with the researcher (phone conversation). All three participants, their families, and the teacher happily agreed to be interviewed for the study. They each gave specific verbal consent to participate in the interviews and for their interviews to be included as part of this study. The researcher reached out to the participants and their parents through a telephone call prior to beginning the study, and the teacher was initially contacted through e-mail. The teacher also gave verbal consent prior to the interview. The participants were provided the opportunity to review the data, results, and their profiles to further validate the data. Participants declined to make changes and each stated their consent for the information presented within this study.

Participants arrived in the U.S. as refugees and entered U.S. public schools while in middle school. The participants' native language(s) was not English; thus, these students were classified as ESL (ELL) students according to Texas policy on language learners (TEA, 2019a). This study required that participants meet the study's definition of academic "success". Therefore, all three participants graduated high school and are currently attending, or have recently graduated from, a college or university. The participants attend(ed) the following universities: The University of Texas, Texas A&M University, and Texas Tech University. The scope of this study does not impose risk upon participants. The participants have volunteered to be a part of the study and had final determination on what they chose to share with the researcher. Additionally, participants' parents and former teachers provided additional information from their respective perspectives further informing the narratives of the participants themselves.

The participants' parents and former teachers were also be interviewed with semi-structured questions allowing for rich conversation and data collection.

All three participants entered the U.S. as refugees between the ages of ten and twelve. A refugee is defined by U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (2020) 101(a) as,

> Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. (42)

Two of the participants were refugees of the Iraq war (2003-2011), both were born in Baghdad. Amir lived in Baghdad until 2003, when his family fled to Amman, Jordan leaving behind the dangerous ramifications of the U.S. led war. They lived in Jordan for five years before their refugee status was approved by the U.S. asylum and refugee office and they arrived in a medium-sized city in Texas in the fall of 2010. Nazim lived in Baghdad until his family was granted refugee status in the Spring of 2009 when they, also, moved to the same Texas city to escape the ravages of war and the ensuing safety concerns the newly formed government was ill-equipped to solve. Malachi lived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for about five years (due to unofficial record-keeping, the actual dates are unknown) before fleeing to Rwanda until 2009. Malachi then moved to a large city in Texas, before quickly relocating to the same medium-sized city in Texas a few months later. All three participants eventually enrolled in the same suburban middle school between 6th and 7th grade, then continued their educational careers at the suburban high school. All three graduated from the same high school, and currently attend or have graduated from universities across the state. Table 3.1 displays the demographic data for the three participants of this study.

Table 3.1

Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Country of Origin	Native Language	Age of Arrival in U.S.	Current Educational Pursuit
Amir	Iraq	Arabic	11	Biology; Texas A&M University (graduated)
Nazim	Iraq	Arabic	10	Software Design; Texas Tech University
Malachi	The Congo	Kinyarwanda	12	Civil Engineering, University of Texas

Theoretical Framework

Although the term "success" may afford a multitude of definitions, for the purposes of this study, academic "success" was defined as having graduated from high school on time (within four years), and acceptance to a university. High school graduation rates for ELL students remain about half of that for their native-language peers (TEA, 2019d). Thus, successful ELL students are those who overcome the odds to graduate on time and even more so, have the linguistic resources, academic aptitude, and cultural competence to be accepted to a university. Students who attend a university are in a better position to generate upward social and economic mobility for themselves (Chetty et al., 2017, p.1). Therefore, as a measure of academic success, university acceptance remains crucial.

This study analyzed data collected from participant interviews in an attempt to better understand the factors that led to their academic success and their experiences as they navigated their differing linguistic worlds. The framework for this study was based on several factors that influence immigrant students' experiences in U.S. public schools.

The framework was developed predominately based on Bloome and Green's (2015) work on social turns in literacy and linguistics. The framework was established upon their work as it views linguistics and language acquisition as culturally based. Thus, within the school system there is much more going on than the skills-based elements of language development. There is also the literacy of the culture, the school, and the new language itself. The questions posed attempted to answer what factors contributed to success and hindered success, but will not be limited to specific instructional techniques. Bloome and Green (2015, p. 20) noted,

> Rather than viewing language as an idealized and abstract system or as a set of cognitive and psycholinguistic processes located in the mind of the individual, language is viewed as essentially social and situated within the interactions among people; that is, as more so a set of contextualized social practices and social events than a thing in-and-of-itself.

Bloome and Green situated language development within the context of social situations and social spaces; thus, linguistic acquisition is embedded in interaction and place – also referred to as geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Furthermore, the organization of the social world is accomplished through, and produced by, language. Thus, the acquisition of language must be understood through the sociocultural lens. Utilizing this lens, this study incorporated the experiences of the participants and the general interactions with their linguistic worlds from their unique perspectives.

Additionally, the framework included the work of James Paul Gee (2015). He noted that the concepts of the New Literacy Studies came into fruition from a multitude of social sciences. He stated, "The NLS argued that literacy was something that people did in the world and in society … It saw literacy as a sociocultural phenomenon, rather than a mental phenomenon" (Gee, 2015, p. 35). Further, "… it was argued, literacy should be studied in an integrated way in its full range of contexts and practices, not just cognitive, but social, cultural, historical, and institutional, as well" (Gee, 2015, p. 35). Here, Gee illustrated the idea that literacy is intimately intertwined with the interactions of a society and culture. Thus, in an echo of Freire (1983), Gee and the NLS examined how literacy is far more than reading and writing skills. This theory informs the immigrant student experience because these students must learn and adapt to their new 'world' in order to achieve both the linguistic and cultural understanding of their current environment.

Summary

In chapter one, the researcher explored the changing world culture impacted by technological innovation and political actions that resulted in mass migration. Unfortunately, in the U.S., immigrants and language learners entering U.S. public schools have not achieved parity with their native language peers in graduation rates nor in academic achievement based on standardized assessments (TEA, 2019d). Thus, these issues have created the need for a better understanding of the sociolinguistic concerns facing immigrants and language learners as they navigate their new linguistic worlds. Therefore, this study hoped to further the field of knowledge through a narrative study

that described the factors of success and approaches to dual identity from the perspectives of language learners themselves.

Chapter Two provided an in depth look at the historical lineage of language learning approaches and ideas in the United States. The review then focused on the sociocultural turn in our understanding of literacy and language learning. The mere skills-based approach to language learning was deemed insufficient as a result of research, and a more comprehensive understanding of literacy as it relates to community, culture, and identity was explored. Therefore, the review then provided an analysis of identity research based on three phases of understanding, and the review explored the research on power and "otherness". The review concluded with a section on linguistic development within the school setting.

This qualitative study consisted of individual three cases of language learners who acquired English while attending Texas public schools. This narrative study allowed the researcher to collect the rich and descriptive experiences of the participants, their parents, and their teachers all from their unique perspectives. The study sought to answer the research questions pertaining to the sociolinguistic factors that influenced the participants' language acquisitions and the influence of their parents on native language and identity development. Additionally, the study sought to describe the dual identities developed by the participants as the navigated their respective linguistic worlds. As this is a real-world and complex phenomenon experienced by the participants, a qualitative case study was the best means of investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014).

The study utilized a framework of sociocultural understanding as previously introduced through the work of Gee (2015) and Bloome and Green (2015). The framework situated language learning through the lens of social interaction and a culture, and described the data collected through this lens. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews allowing for conversation and in-depth description from the participants. The validity was bolstered through the triangulation of the interview process and the review of the analysis by the participants themselves. Thus this study sought to add to the body of literature in a meaningful and appropriate manner as it investigated the sociocultural experiences of language learners in U.S. public schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Utilizing a narrative, multiple case study approach, this study explored the linguistic experiences of English Language learners and the particular phenomenon they encountered when acquiring a new language. In-depth semi-structured interviews with participants, their parents, and a teacher were conducted to assist the researcher in answering the following research questions:

RQ1: What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as "high school graduation and college matriculation"?

    a. How did they overcome the linguistic barriers?

    b. What additional sociocultural factors contributed to their overall success?

RQ2: In what ways did home-life culture and perspectives influence language development?

    a. What were their parents' perspective on maintaining their native language(s)?

    b. How did the immigrant students navigate between their two linguistic worlds?

The theoretical framework for this study, as described in Chapter Three, was developed predominately based on Bloome and Green's (2015) work on social turns in literacy and linguistics. The framework views linguistics and language acquisition as

culturally based. Thus, within the school system, there is much more going on than the skills-based elements of language development.

This chapter is organized according to narrative design and will begin with a brief overview of the participants and their parents. The study is organized thematically, then further organized by the interview questions as they pertain to the given theme. As this study consists of a multiple case approach, the experiences and narratives of the participants will be detailed separately within the context of the interview question. This organizational tactic highlights themes that emerged from the data while also maintaining the narrative flow of the participants' voices. These narrative themes capture the experience of immigrants learning English and experiencing the culture, community, and academic environment of a particular United States public school system. Following the participant profiles, the researcher addresses the research questions and discuss the major themes expressed in the data.

Participant Profiles

This narrative case study includes three researcher-selected participants who were immigrants to the U.S. as adolescents and who were also English language learners. The participants were already known to the researcher prior to this study as the participants were former students of the researcher. The researcher was their ESL teacher in middle school and later, the assistant principal at the participants' high school. The participants were chosen due to their relevant language and cultural experiences and due to their high school and college matriculation. Table 3.1, presented in Chapter Three of this study, provided an overview of the participants.

As the study focused on more than just the reading and writing aspects of language development and instead included a more holistic approach in understanding linguistic development in combination with culture and community, the study also included the parents of the participants as vital sources of data to inform the study and triangulate the data. Therefore, Table 4.1 provides a brief synopsis of the parents and family of the participants.

Table 4.1

Participants' Families

Participant (pseudonym)	Participant's Families	Self-described Religious / Cultural Affiliation	English Language ability prior to immigration	Primary Reason for immigrating to the U.S.
Amir	Father, mother, and younger sibling	Muslim / Arabic	None	Safety due to war
Nazim	Father, mother, and younger sibling	Mendai / Middle Eastern	None	Safety due to religious persecution
Malachi	Father, mother, two older siblings and younger sibling	Evangelical Christian / Banyamulenge	None	Safety due to racial genocide

This study included three primary participants – Amir, Nazim, and Malachi (all names are pseudonyms). While these three participants had a shared experience together in middle and high school in the United States, their respective journeys to the U.S. were very much unique. Thus a picture into each participant's past, sheds light onto their experience and the cultural frame of reference through which they view that experience.

The participants often spoke of their past and how their experience as refugees shaped their future and their interactions with the world. This narrative study begins with a synopsis of each participants' journey to the U.S. before moving on to their experiences in the school system and navigating the different cultural experiences in the U.S.

Profile of Amir

Amir was born in Baghdad, Iraq in the Spring of 1998. His mother worked as a physics teacher, after having attended university in Iraq, and his father was an engineer. Just a few years after Amir was born, the United States-led coalition forces invaded Iraq. Amir's family lived in Baghdad through much of the war, but as the Iraqi capital continued to descend into chaos and disorder, his family decided it was time to flee. In fact, during the course of the semi-structured interview, Amir recounted aspects of the war in Iraq (which is referred to as the American War by people living in Iraq at the time). He recounted,

> Yes, I remember, like, the sounds of the helicopters. I have actually ridden in a tank. It was pretty cool, an American citizen called me over and placed me in the tank ... But yes, the sound of the helicopters, the bombs, I saw people, I remember people dying, it was pretty bad.

Amir describes the situation as dire, and that the prospects for his future were dim. His mother also recounted this dire view towards the future prospects of Iraqi youth in her interview. She stated that one of the primary reasons they fled their home country was due to a lack of opportunity for her children.

Therefore, Amir and his family fled to Jordan in 2003. Amir was only seven years old at the time. Amir remembers Jordan fondly. He recounted the relative safety and freedom they enjoyed while living there. Amir recalled, "But after it, I went to Jordan

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2003-2010. Jordan was really nice, safe, a lot of freedom, no wars, nothing." He even attended school and was the top student in his class. His parents noted that Jordan was indeed safe; however, they had significant difficulty acquiring jobs because they were considered foreigners. They mentioned, "First of all we decided to move, because when you graduate from Jordan they gonnna treat you like, not like the original Jordanian people when you need a job or anything like that." Then, in 2009, while still residing in Jordan, Amir's family applied for asylum in the United States. In 2010, that application was granted approval, and his family immigrated to the United States under refugee status (see Chapter One).

Amir entered the U.S. as a seventh-grader at a suburban middle school in a Texas public school. Amir was a proud and eager student, always seeking to please his teachers. He had a sense of a competitive nature with his peers – non-native and native English speakers alike. He proudly showed his Jordanian report card on his first day of school, proclaiming his marks as the highest in his class. Amir was also an extremely dedicated student who was willing to put in extra time after school, so he would receive individual attention from his teachers.

Amir and his family moved away from their original home to be closer to newly arrived family members in another part of Texas, but they returned to the same city and school system as before about six months later. They stated that they moved back because they were unhappy with the schools in their new city. In high school, Amir was exited from the ESL program according to TELPAS regulations, and he enrolled in several AP and Dual-credit courses, especially in math and science. Amir graduated from high school with multiple scholarships to attend college, but he struggled with

standardized entrance exams and went to a community college for his first two semesters of higher education. He then transferred to Texas A&M University in College Station where he pursued Biology as a major with the intent to continue his education in the medical field as a dentist or pharmacist. As of the writing of this study, Amir had graduated from A&M University and has applied for pharmacy school.

Amir seemed to enjoy the interview process and was delighted to talk about school and reflect on his experiences. Amir's perspective balanced gratitude to those who helped in his educational journey – particularly his parents and specific educators, with a sense of intrinsic motivation based partially on his competitive nature. Amir repeatedly acknowledged his reverence for his father and stated that he saw his father as a role model on more than one occasion. He often provided detailed responses that occasionally required refining questions from the researcher. Amir was conscientious of the interview questions and would routinely circle back to the question to make sure he stayed on topic, or ask the researcher if he had answered the question sufficiently.

Profile of Nazim

Nazim was born in Baghdad, Iraq in the Fall of 1997. Although Nazim and his family lived in the same city as Amir, his experiences in that city were indeed different. Nazim and his family are members of the Mendai religion, and as a result of their non-Muslim faith, they were often targets of religious persecution. Nazim shared the two main reasons his family left Iraq,

> Two reasons – one is war, and one is religion. Because I lived in an Islamic country and I wasn't Muslim, so that kind of caused a lot of interfere, cause they wanted us to act their way, and we had our own way, so yeah, war and then religion.

Nazim further expanded on his religion and the persecution his religious community

faced. He explained,

> So my religion is kind of hard to explain, we believe in John the Baptist. We have
> you know… we don't believe where you have to dress up from top to bottom
> where you can't show any skin … You know it's, there's a huge interference
> where we want to do our own thing, but we always got threatened. Where if you
> do this you will die, or we will kick you out or whatever it is from there. School
> was pretty hard over in Iraq, just because two percent of the people is Mendai.
> The rest is all Islamic, in other words, and none of them was accepting others just
> because of the way their family taught them as kids, in other words.

Nazim's father was a soldier for many years, and he aided the coalition forces for

a period of time. Nazim's father and mother struggled to find work and often received

threats from their neighbors because of their religion. Nazim's father mentioned how

before the Iraq war (American war as its referred to in Iraq), the laws were poorly

enforced, and people were more willing to persecute due to religion than they were

before the war began. Thus, the war caused many safety concerns for Nazim and his

family. Prior to the war, Nazim's father was able to work as a jeweler and his mother was

employed as a shop keeper. Nazim described the war as,

> War is when the United States started entering Iraq and that's when interference
> started to happen. Some Iraqis didn't like that so they started fighting, but I don't
> know what specifically happened during that time. But it was whenever the
> United States started entering and trying to calm stuff down – which didn't
> happen.

Later, Nazim's family applied for asylum to the United States, and as a result of

his father's aid to the coalition forces, their application was expedited. They too were

settled in the same suburban area of Texas as Amir's family. Nazim's family initially

lived in a small apartment complex provided by the local refugee resettlement agency.

Nazim was the first of the study's three participants to arrive in the U.S, and he was also

the only participant to begin his schooling prior to middle school. Nazim started school in

the second semester of his fifth-grade year. Nazim and his family also regularly attended ESL classes at a community church. Nazim's parents strongly desired to learn English and to create a new life in the United States. However, they did maintain the use of the Arabic language with their children.

Nazim was the most social of the three participants and never struggled to make friends both within the small immigrant community and with Native-English speakers. Nazim, even recounts his own penchant for socializing, stating "…I was always socializing with people." Nazim has a gift for story-telling and enjoys the company of others. While not as competitive as the other two participants in the study, he also enjoyed pleasing his teachers. Nazim describes himself as "not the school-type", but he has continued his education partly as a desire to prove himself and out of respect to his parents - who worked so hard to provide for him and his younger brother. Nazim attended a community college before transferring to a four-year university. Nazim is now studying software design and cybersecurity at Texas Tech University.

Nazim also seemed to enjoy the interview and often engaged in significant conversation. His interview provided the most overall data, and he also engaged in a more conversational tone asking follow up questions himself. Nazim's perspective often centered on interactions between himself and others in his community both at home and at school; however, he also made a note of his self-reliance several times throughout the interview process. Of the three participants, Nazim placed the least overall value on education, but he did acknowledge that he saw education as important to his future and his parents.

Profile of Malachi

Malachi was born in the spring of 1997 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His family is part of the highly persecuted Banyamulenge tribe. When Malachi was around four or five years old, his tribe experienced racial genocide because another Congolese community believed the Banyamulenge were "foreigners" and did not belong in the Congo. Thankfully, Malachi and his family were able to escape the genocide with their lives. They fled to neighboring Burundi and lived in a refugee camp for several years, experiencing much hardship and hostility, and another massacre within the refugee camp. Malachi described his reasons for leaving Africa as,

> There was, okay so we moved from Congo because of tribal war. They wanted my tribe to leave the country. And they closed, I don't know who was running it, I don't know if it was the government, but its majority of the people and the army. They wanted my people to move out … So we moved to Burundi in 2004, but this issue started a long time … I guess they, I think they said we are not Congolese. That we are migrants or something like that … So we moved to Burundi in 2004, around March, and while living in Burundi [city name] in August, 13th 2004, a massacre took place, I'm not exactly sure who organized the attack and stuff like that. There is some conspiracy. So after the attack we moved to the capital city to see if we can be any safer. We lived there for 5 years before we moved to the U.S.

However, Malachi's family and much of their remaining tribe members were granted asylum by the U.S. refugee agency. Malachi's family was relocated to a large city in Texas, and Malachi started school at the end of his sixth-grade year. Malachi's family did not stay in the large Texas city for long, but instead moved to the same suburban area in Texas as the other participants in the study. Additionally, remaining members of the Malachi's tribe, and a neighboring tribe, congregated in the same area. Malachi's father returned to his role as a tribal leader, and church elder, but was unable to work. His mother began work as a laborer with a large organization. Malachi began his first full year in the U.S. school system as a 6th grader.

Malachi is an extremely dedicated student with sincere drive and determination. He frequently stayed after school to get help on his work, and still did hours of homework every night. In fact, he would work himself so hard at school and after, that we would come home so exhausted that he would sleep for two or three hours. He would then wake up and eat before continuing to study for another couple hours before finally falling asleep well after midnight. Malachi says that he actually still follows this routine in college. Malachi's efforts were not without result, as he finished in the top two percent of his high school class of almost five hundred students. He was also heavily involved in his church as a musician, often dedicating all day on Sunday to worship and rehearsal in addition to his regular studies. Malachi is currently studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Texas. He plans to use this degree as a means of building critical infrastructure in his home country - the Congo. Malachi remarked,

> Well, it's what my country needs right now. Cause I was thinking about Mechanical Engineering, but my country is not at that level of technology wise. They need more of construction such as roads, buildings, the basic infrastructures before they go to high technology stuff. And also growing up in the environment I grew up in, you know, seeing families and as refugees and buildings made of mud and stuff. It gave me a sense of, I just want to have an orphanage or somewhere that I work and help people by building buildings for them so that way they can be on a safer place.

Malachi was the least talkative of the three participants, and in a similar fashion, his parents were the least talkative of the parents interviewed. Malachi's answers were often highly specific, but lacking in detail. He tended to stay on topic for the questions and not delineate from the question's topic unless prompted by the researcher to expand on an idea or concept mentioned in the response. Malachi and Amir were similar in their multiple responses of gratitude toward those who had supported them in their educational pursuits.

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It should be noted that when quoting the participants or their parents directly, the researcher did not revise their grammar or vocabulary. Quotes are recorded directly from the interviews as they were spoken by the participants and recorded by the researcher. As the participants and their parents are not native English speakers, and due to the conversational approach to the interview, some of the quotes may not reflect precise adherence to the grammatical structures of English. However, in an effort to ensure authenticity, the quotes have been added in their original form. Occasional clarifications are provided when relevant.

Presentation of Data

The following sections outline the data collected from the participant interviews through a narrative style, and they are organized according to research question. Within each section, the data is categorized by major themes and as these themes relate to the research question. Due to the nature of the study and the multiple interviews conducted, participant, parent, and teacher interview responses are included as subsections within the themes. This organizational tactic allowed for better narrative flow of the participants' stories, while maintaining an organizational structure that focused on the themes that emerged from the interview data.

While some major themes contained sub-themes, the data was not organized by sub-theme due to the expansive nature of the participant interview responses. Instead, the sub-themes are addressed throughout the questions, and they are summarized in the final section of each theme. Participants engaged in conversational responses to the questions resulting in answers that flowed through several themes; thus, the data is presented by major theme, then by question to fully capture the participants' stories. Table 4.2, below,

displays the research questions and their corresponding themes. Analysis of the data

revealed eight major themes, with one theme repeated. As outlined in Table 4.2, not all

research questions elicited multiple themes, and one theme – parental influence, was

evident in two research questions.

Table 4.2

Major Themes

Research Question:	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
RQ1: What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as "high school graduation and college matriculation"?	Educator Impact	Parental Influence	Intrinsic Motivation
RQ1a: How did they overcome the linguistic barriers?	Academic and Linguistic Supports		
RQ1b: What additional sociocultural factors contributed to their overall success?	Interaction with English Speaking Peers		
RQ2: In what ways did home-life culture and perspectives influence language development?	Parental Influence		
RQ2a: What were their parents' perspectives on maintaining their native language(s)?	Insistence on Native Language		
RQ2b: How did the immigrant students navigate between their two linguistic worlds?	Developing Cultural Navigation	Dual Identity	

Research Question One: Factors that Contributed to Academic Success

The primary question for this study revolves around the factors that contributed to the participants' success when defined as "high school and college matriculation". The following section provides the data collected in reference to this question. Throughout the coding and analysis of the data, several major themes became evident regarding the primary research question. Due to the nature of the semi-structured interviews, the participants were able to share as much, or as little, as they desired. These questions often led to the participants sharing many important details and often mentioning similar themes throughout the interview. Additionally, participants' answers often meandered across several themes while answering a specific question, and participants often expanded upon their answers through stories, memories, and direct and indirect answers to the questions. This approach provided for rich, descriptive data that informed the primary and sub-questions for the study.

The coding process revealed three recurrent themes related to the primary research question involving factors of success from the perspectives of the participants, their parents, and their teacher. These themes were:

1.) Educator impact - teachers and educational staff made a significant mark on the participants' success and language acquisition,

2.) Parental influence - the guidance of the participants' parents as a supportive and motivational force.

3.) Intrinsic motivation – participants' own self-direction and belief in their ability to overcome their challenges.

Table 4.3 (below) provides a snapshot of the recurrent themes concerning Research Question 1. These themes were often expressed across multiple questions. Likewise, single questions often elicited multiple themes due to the semi-structured nature of the interview process. Table 4.3 displays the themes in relation to the questions asked and which participants addressed the theme for a given question.

Table 4.3.

RQ1 Instances

Participants		Educator Impact	Intrinsic Motivation	Parental influence
"What factors contributed to your entrance into college?" (IQ6g)	Amir	X		X
	Nazim	X	X	
	Malachi	X		
"What factors led to your success in U.S. Public Schools?" (IQ10)	Amir	X	X	
	Nazim	X	X	X
	Malachi	X		X
"What interventions did you find most helpful?" (IQ11a)	Amir	X		
	Nazim	X		
	Malachi	X		
"How well did your education in U.S. public schools prepare your for college?" (IQ9)	Amir	X		
	Nazim	X		
	Malachi			
Parents				
What factors do you think led to your child's success in school?" (PQ7)	Amir	X		X
	Nazim	X	X	X
	Malachi	X	X	

Theme One: Educator Impact

The first, and most pronounced of the major themes discovered within this data set relates to educator impact. The participants consistently reflected on their teachers and other educators who supported them and helped them in their educational journey and linguistic development. Additionally, the parent interviews also highlighted this recurrent theme. Based on the data, "educator impact" may be defined as any support provided by, or relationship with, an educator that participants noted as being helpful to them in their eventual high school graduation and subsequent entrance into higher education – the measure of success as outlined in this study.

The data in this first theme included both educator motivation and emotional support provided to participants, and educator assistance with academic and linguistic development. However, it should be noted that the academic development that participants received from their educators does not equate to specific interventions and accommodations for linguistic support received by the participants. For example, the data indicated that participants often noted that their teachers were willing to stay after school and provide one-on-one support to them; however, participants indicated that this was a different type of support than a standard linguistic accommodation such as having an assessment read aloud to them.

This distinction remains acute, but necessary for the study. Participants often received help due to their linguistic needs, but the participants considered their academic assistance with teachers to be separate from their linguistic accommodations. Of the questions relating more specifically to factors contributing to participant success, the most commonly stated factor was linked to educators and the impact they had on the

participants both academically, and even more so through encouragement and motivation. See Table 4.3 for sample questions.

In these questions, the help that participants received from teachers was almost unanimously noted as an important factor. Thus the major theme of educator impact was the most pronounced of all the themes throughout the entire data set. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the participants often mentioned their teachers as important factors in their success, even on questions that were not directly related to success. In fact, when asked, "What interventions did you find least helpful?" Amir answered with a brief disdain for reading aloud, but then transitioned, unprompted, into a longer explanation of how helpful his teachers were. While he did indeed answer the questions directly, the semi-structured nature allowed him to develop his thoughts relating to educator impact. He specifically noted that his teachers made him feel like "everyone else" in the class.

Although mentioned several times throughout the participant data set, there were four main questions that garnered the most evidence of the impact of educator support as a factor in the participants' high school and college matriculation (see Table 4.3). The following subsections articulate the participants' answers to these questions with respect to the theme of educator impact. The sections are organized by question and then further subdivided by each participant's answer.

Factors that Contributed to College Matriculation (IQ6g).

Participants were asked to share factors that contributed to their entrance into college. Participants enthusiastically described the help they received from their teachers when answering this question. As this question is considered one of the important

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measures of success as defined by this study, the question helped the researcher obtain

the participants' views on contributing factors in their entrance into a college or

university. The participants made a note of specific teachers who helped them in their

middle and high school careers. These teachers often left an endearing impression upon

the participants. While participants did include other factors in their answers, educators

were the most commonly mentioned factor. Furthermore, participants devoted more time

to describing the help they received from educators than they did on any other factor;

thus, highlighting the importance of educator support from the participants' perspective.

Amir's Response to Factors of College Matriculation. Amir consistently noted

that he received a significant amount of help from his teachers. He stated that going back

as far as middle school, he remembered how his teachers cared about him and tried to

treat him as well as any other student. Amir mentioned on more than one occasion that

being treated in a similar manner to his Native-English speaking peers was important to

him. However, his teachers were willing to stay after school and work with him one-on-

one and help him with both his academic core knowledge and skills and also with

linguistic development. Amir specifically mentions several teachers, including his ESL

teacher (the researcher), several math teachers, and a science teacher. He was able to

recall these teachers by name, and he spoke about their care and concern for him. For

example, Amir stated,

> I'm going to focus, I'm going to do middle school, high school, then college, well
> I'm in college now. So middle school, [the researcher] he taught me English, so
> that was the foundation of my education. I knew what to do, where to start. I
> remember I spent a lot of time in the after school program. I remember [teacher's
> name] Algebra 1 teacher. I did AP with her. So all of that prepared me, so mostly
> classes like that AP, prepares a students for college. Then to high school – great

teachers. Teachers that knew education was important. That's why they are teachers. So really, teachers make foundation for students.

Nazim's Response to Factors of College Matriculation. Nazim was more reserved in his answer than Amir. Nazim also mentioned other factors that influenced his entrance into college at a higher rate than the other participants, but he too, included his teachers as an important factor. Nazim recalled his middle school experience most vividly and described how his middle school teacher helped motivate and encourage him to do his best. As previously noted, the researcher was the ESL teacher for the participants and also their high school assistant principal. Thus, when Nazim speaks about the long-time influence of the researcher he refers to both the ESL classes and the continued relationship he had in high school as a mentor. Nazim states, "You (the researcher) for example. When I was around you for the longest time ever. When I was around you back in middle school and high school – I would say that's one of the things." Nazim did not include academics in his answer to this question. Instead, he reflected on his own self-motivation and outside influences such as his teachers and peers. This indicates that to Nazim, these factors surpassed academic assistance in their importance for his success.

Malachi's Response to Factors of College Matriculation. Malachi also mentioned teachers as important factors leading to his entrance into college. In fact, teacher impact was the only factor he chose to expound upon. Malachi expressed sincere gratitude towards his teachers as they supported him academically, and some even became mentors to him. He recalled, specifically, a teacher and pastor with whom he still enjoys a mentor relationship as a significant influence and source of motivation. Malachi shared,

> I would say mostly the encouragement of teachers, you know like you, yourself, and Pastor [pastor's name] and like the support … It's the sense of caring, and mentorship advice, giving me advices, such as let's say for example: the benefits of going to an expensive school versus going to a community college … Just those little advices that I never had, that my parents cannot tell me because they never had an education here. Those helped me and gave me more information so that way I don't struggle too much in school.

This individual provided Malachi with advice and encouragement and helped Malachi develop a sense of confidence in himself. Malachi also mentions other teachers by name in a similar manner to the other two participants. These teachers had a significant and positive impact on Malachi's entrance into college, according to him. In reference to the support he received from his educators, he said,

> It just motivated me and kept pushing me to do better, and see that I have support behind me. People that believed in me. It gave me as sense., it gave me confidence that I can do it. And little by little it was happening.

Public School Success (IQ10)

Participants were asked about the factors that led to their success in U.S. public schools. While this particular question garnered significant and wide-ranging responses from participants, there was an underlying theme across all three participants that one of the main factors in their success was the inspiration and encouragement they received from their teachers and other educators. Additionally, participants reflected on the significant time and energy that teachers devoted to helping them academically, especially after school in one-on-one settings or in the ESL classroom itself. While there were other factors noted throughout the participants' responses, as noted in Table 4.3, educator impact was one of only three factors to show repeated mention in all three participants' answers. Additionally, when this question was posed to parents, they also

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independently corroborated their child's answers by mentioning the impact of educators for the success of their children.

Amir's Response to Public School Success. Although Amir was the most outspoken about the help he received from his teachers throughout the interview process, on this particular question, he did not devote much time or explanation. That is not to say he wanted to belittle their impact, but he had already mentioned several times before in other questions, more detailed accounts of the help and encouragement he received from his teachers. Instead, in answer to this question, Amir quickly summed up the impact of his teachers by saying, "Number one is teachers. They taught me." He then recalls a particular strategy, explained in detail later in this chapter, that he thought was beneficial before again reaffirming his rankings as to the factors that were most impactful. He said, "So yes, number one thing was that (referring to teachers helping him), second thing is friends. … Teachers and then friends."

Nazim's Response to Public School Success. Nazim also indicates the importance of the encouragement and support he received from teachers in answer to this question. True to his loquacious nature, Nazim mentioned several factors that were helpful in rapid order: personal mindset, parents, teachers, and peers. He then peppered his answer with short anecdotes and explanations for each of the factors he identified. Nazim recounted his experiences in ESL class as particularly important, but not necessarily just for the development of language, but also as a safe place to receive encouragement and help from a trusted teacher. He stated, "I mean ESL, going back to that. It was the biggest thing, and having you (referencing the researcher as his former ESL teacher)".

Additionally, Nazim recounted the struggles he had upon entering high school and being

dismissed from the ESL class, yet still needing help. He said,

> Yes, because I wasn't qualified for ESL, so I didn't have an ESL class, and I
> didn't have someone specific to go to when I needed help so I just went to [the
> researcher]. Cause you know we went through ESL for the longest time ever, and
> then they just decided to drop me out of the program. Just like that. And there was
> no test or nothing like that, so I'm like oh well, [the researcher] is my old ESL
> teacher and he's still there.

Malachi's Response to Public School Success. Malachi devotes the vast majority

of his answer to the mentor/mentee relationship he enjoyed with two particular educators.

In a similar manner to the other two participants, Malachi mentions the impact of the

former ESL teacher and assistant principal as crucial to his success. He reiterates this

point by saying, "You're (the researcher) the number one who helped me reach my goal

where I am in succeeding." Malachi also mentions how the support was not merely

academic support, but also encouragement. He stated,

> Well, for example, advices, helping out with homework, encouragement, and
> telling me that I'm smart even though I don't believe in myself. Willing to stay
> after school to help me with things that I don't understand. It pushes me, it gave
> me, it created a, it made it easier for me to learn and understand faster. If I would
> have done it by myself I would have been discouraged. School wouldn't have
> been as fun as it was. So, that experience led me to succeed. It made me to love
> school and, and led me to my success, I guess.

However, the researcher was not the only educator to provide guidance to Malachi. He

also mentions again the part-time teacher who also worked as a pastor. He maintained an

excellent relationship with this experienced educator and community leader.

> The first thing that I would say that led me to my success is the people around me,
> the people who encouraged me. Like you [the researcher], Mr. [pastor' name],
> and other persons and professors, or teachers in high school that helped me.

Malachi mentions this individual several times throughout the interview process and always from a place of encouragement, motivation, and advice. He does not mention the educator's class even once throughout the interview but instead reiterates the emotional support he received from him.

Helpful Interventions (IQ11a)

The question about interventions also led to a significant amount of data spread across multiple themes, but a recurring theme across all participants was the one-on-one support they received from their teachers. This one-on-one support was specifically mentioned by the participants as exceedingly helpful in their academic and linguistic development. Participants were again able to name specific teachers and classes they remember staying after school with and gathering the support they needed. Interestingly, two of the three participants also mentioned how the teachers did not treat them any differently than other students in the class and how much they appreciated that approach. The teachers would treat them the same as Native English speakers during class but would offer them help after school in a one-on-one manner. This data and other data relating to cultural issues will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Thus, educators helped the participants to feel accepted within the classroom environment as they were often the only language learners in the otherwise predominantly homogenous school population. Meanwhile, the after school support also allowed the participants to receive the support they needed. While the above question specifically asks about academic interventions, participants differentiated their answers between linguistic accommodations and interventions, and specific assistance provided

by educators. The accommodation and interventions were also a major theme established through the data analysis and is detailed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Amir's Response to Helpful Interventions. As this question was more about interventions than direct teacher support, Amir's answer to the question was focused on those interventions. However, he began his response to the question by mentioning, again, that he benefitted from the one-on-one time he received from his teachers after school, and noted how much he appreciated their willingness to do so.

Nazim's Response to Helpful Interventions. Nazim also answered this question with a focus on interventions, but he expanded on teacher impact throughout his response. Nazim specifically mentioned his relationship with his former ESL teacher, and current assistant principal at the time. He stated that he was able to receive tutoring and support from this educator whenever he needed it and that this was an important factor in his success. Similar to Amir, Nazim also mentioned the one-on-one support he received from teachers as important. He even goes so far as to say he would not have passed without their individual attention. He said,

> …they (his teachers) either sat me down and explained what was going on, I'm really trying to think real hard right now, cause there's no way I would have passed, you know in the beginning, those classes without getting help. Yeah I would say that.

Malachi's Response to Helpful Interventions. Malachi was able to remember several specific teachers and classes where he was able to stay after school and receive tutoring and one-on-one support from his teachers. He stated,

> And also, staying after school, in middle school, I stayed afterschool. Whether it's in Math, or getting help in English, that, that really helped me learn. Let's see,

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what else? In High school, I remember staying in Geography so I could get help
in Geography.

In much the same manner as the other participants, Malachi differentiates the linguistic

interventions he received from the sacrifices his teachers made to help him after school.

In answering the questions, he also listed the interventions and accommodations he felt

were helpful, but these were separate talking points from the specific teacher assistance

he received.

College Preparation (IQ9)

While the three previous questions garnered far more data specific to educator

impact, it is worth noting that in answering the question relating to college preparation,

two of the three participants specifically mentioned their teachers as impactful in their

preparation for college. The question itself was not specifically designed as a measure of

teacher impact, and most of the data received from participant answers focused more on

the academic structure of public schools and their pre-requisites for college entrance.

Two of the participants also included educator impact as an important element in their

answer. However, both mentions of educator impact were brief. Amir noted that he had

"good" teachers, and Nazim again reflected on his former ESL teacher. Nazim said, "I'd

say teachers, ESL of course, again … But preparing me for English, ESL would be one of

the biggest parts that I would have had. Teachers, friends, and just learning English in

general."

Parents' Perspective on Factors of Success (PQ7)

When asked about their child's success in school, each of the participants'

parents also provided valuable data in answering the primary research question.

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Continuing in the theme of educator impact, all three parent interviews included educator impact as both a motivating factor in their child's success, and they mentioned the academic help their child received from the educators. In a dissimilar manner to the participants themselves, the parents made no distinction between academic interventions and teacher academic support. In fact, none of the parents mentioned any linguistic interventions or accommodations throughout the duration of the interviews, and may not have been aware of the linguistic accommodations their child received. In following the same structure as the participant data presentation, this section is organized by parent response.

Amir's Parents' Response to Factors of Success. Amir's parents, echoing their son's tendency to prioritize responses, remarked that educator impact was second to parental influence. Although prioritized as second, they spent more time talking about educator impact than they did parental influence. They mentioned the researcher specifically as an important factor in their child's success both for the motivation he provided and for academic development. They specifically mention the researcher as helping their son navigate the educational world – a world that they did not inhabit, and little knew. Amir's mother said,

> The second most important thing for him is [the researcher]. So you know [the researcher] you are a very important person to us. To our family. You led him to choose the right thing especially like, you know we don't know what he's supposed to take, like subjects or anything in high school, you led him to do that.

Although Amir's mother was a teacher in Iraq, and eventually became a substitute teacher while Amir was in high school, she often acknowledged that the language barrier and differences in the education systems of Iraq and the U.S. were obstacles to her

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involvement in her son's educational journey. In response to a different question, but

highlighting the differences in school, she remarked,

> We don't have like a complete idea about the school, but we know it's good. But we came here, we surprised. We had a big surprise. You know, we didn't know it looked like this. It's really good for everything.

Thus, the impact of an educator who knew the system and supported her son was well

noted in her response.

Nazim's Parents' Response to Factors of Success. Nazim's parents also

mentioned educator impact as secondary to parental influence, but unlike Amir's parents,

they spent the majority of their response reflecting on how parental influence contributed

to their son's success. They only very briefly mentioned the impact of educators, stating,

"Because they (his teachers) are pushing him." Nazim's parents desired to convey that

Nazim's teachers pushed him to do his best and did not let him settle for mediocrity.

Nazim's parents do; however, mention educator impact throughout their responses to

other questions. They often thanked the researcher throughout the interview process for

the influence he had as an educator. Although they did spend much time specifically on

educator impact, they often responded in a manner consistent with educator impact as an

important factor in their son's college matriculation.

Malachi's Parents' Response to Factors of Success. Malachi's parents indicated

that, amongst several factors, educator impact was indeed a factor, although they chose

not to expand on this point. Instead, they listed the factors in no particular order as was

their typical response to most of the questions. Malachi's parents noted that Malachi

loved school and that teachers were a part of the reason for that love of learning.

However, they also explained that was just born that way, "born loving school". Thus, Malachi's parents did indeed note educator impact, but they spent little time discussing it.

Teacher's Perspective on Educator Impact.

While the teacher interview never specifically made mention of educator impact, as the teacher chose to concentrate on academic interventions and classroom nuances of instruction, she did indeed make remarks that were consistent with the definition of educator impact according to this study. The teacher indicated on several occasions that she was proud of the participants for choosing to come after school and receive tutoring and one-on-one support. Although she did not think of this as educator impact so much as the students themselves being highly motivated, it should be noted that from the participants' perspective, the after school assistance, with one mentioning the educator by name, as having an impact on their success because of the educator's willingness to stay after school and help.

Summary of Evidence for Theme 1

The participants' responses, along with the responses of their parents and their educator, suggest that educators' impact on the participants was a contributing factor in their success as students and language learners as defined by this study. The participants provided several examples of educator impact across the two components identified through the data: educator motivation and emotional support provided to participants, and educator assistance with academic development. Across four main questions from the participants and one question from the parent interview, along with other responses

scattered across other questions, educator impact was viewed as an important factor in success from the perspective of the participants and their parents.

The first component of educator impact, identified as motivation and emotional support provided by educators to the participants, was repeatedly mentioned throughout the interview process. The participants noted the positive impact that developed from the mentor relationship between educational staff and how this relationship helped the participants to feel inspired and driven to succeed. Again, Malachi stated,

> Well, for example – advices, helping out with homework, encouragement, and telling me that I'm smart even though I don't believe it myself…If I would have done it by myself, I would have been discouraged, school would not have been as fun as it was. So, that experience led me to succeed. It made me to love school and, and led me to my success.

Malachi's words reflect the motivational piece of educator impact and how that component of support helped him be successful and to enjoy school. The other two participants mirrored this sentiment in their responses as well. Furthermore, the participants' parents also stated the importance of educators and how these educators contributed to the motivation of their child and how the teachers' encouragement helped their child through hard times in school.

Additionally, participants also noted on several occasions that another aspect of educator impact was the willingness of the educator to provide one-on-one help – often after school. The participants were able to recall the names of teachers and other educators that helped them. They separated this type of help from more systemic linguistic accommodations they received. The academic assistance was perceived as the teacher's willingness to sacrifice time for the sake of helping the participants. While the

educator herself did not indicate that the one-on-one assistance for the participants was worth mentioning as anything exceptional.

While educator impact was almost a universal response among questions relating more directly to factors of success, other significant themes emerged from the data analysis. The next section details the second theme: Intrinsic Motivation. Table 4.3 lists questions that support this theme and its recurrence throughout the interview process.

Theme Two: Intrinsic Motivation

While not as pronounced as the first theme corresponding to Research Question One, all three participants included this theme within their responses. Several questions that elicited data supporting this theme are in Table 4.3. However, due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, participants did mention this theme in other questions as well. Although their responses in other questions were often not as significant as the responses found in the questions marked in Table 4.3. These responses are presented in the sections below. Also supporting this theme were the parent and teacher interview responses. These parent and teacher responses are also presented in the sections below.

For the purposes of this study, and based upon the data collected, intrinsic motivation may be defined as the participants' own desire to perform well in school based upon their unique internal motivation. Participants recalled that they were motivated by personal love of learning, their sense of competition, and even motivation for a better future. While participants may have had multiple motivations, the motivations within this theme were all of a personal nature and without immediate external reward.

Additionally, these motivations exist outside of the motivations derived from parental influence and educator impact. Malachi summarized intrinsic motivation well

when he said, "I like to improve and I've always wanted to learn. I'm a curious person pretty much. A life without education would be boring – not worth living I guess." Although mentioned several times throughout the participant data set, there were two main questions that garnered the most evidence of intrinsic motivation from the perspective of the participant and an additional question from the perspectives of the parents and educator.

The following subsection articulates the responses to these questions with respect to the theme of intrinsic motivation. In the interest of maintaining a similar structure, the following section is organized by question, but not subdivided by participant as many responses did not include data from all three participants.

Public School Success (IQ10)

As mentioned in other sections, this particular question evoked rich, descriptive answers from the participants, and these answers crossed into several themes. Two of the participant responses touched on the theme of intrinsic motivation. Nazim and Amir both mentioned, among several other factors, their own personal motivation as a determining factor in their success as language learners in U.S. public schools. They also mentioned the struggles they endured while pursuing their education, but according to Amir, his intrinsic motivation superseded the struggles. He said, "I never gave up … whenever I started to make bad grade. But up until this day I never give up."

Nazim also sought to express the importance of his own personal motivation when he answered the question by explaining that his "mindset" was a factor in his success. Nazim's comment about his mindset, which he later credited to both his upbringing and his own motivation, appeared in other responses as well. Mindset was

often included in descriptions of determination and motivation. Mindset appears again in the next set of responses related to intrinsic motivation as well. Nazim mentions mindset as a factor that contributed to his entrance into college and in the following section as well.

Motivation for Higher Education (IQ6f)

This particular question included the same two themes for all three participants: parental influence and intrinsic motivation. As parental influence was previously discussed in the prior sections, this section will focus on participant responses that relate to intrinsic motivation. Amir and Nazim were both relatively brief in their explanations of self-motivation.

Amir's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Amir even remarked that it was a hard question to answer before then speaking about his motivation to get good grades and even his competitive nature. He said, "… I never knew why grades were important [to me]. In class I liked to compete with others." Even though he was a language learner, Amir still desired to compete with his peers whether they were Native English speakers or not. After briefly reflecting on his own intrinsic motivation, Amir spent the majority of his response on the influence of his parents.

Nazim's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Nazim structured his response similarly, except that he began his response with an explanation of parental influence before briefly commenting on his own intrinsic motivation. Nazim again mentions his "mindset" as a determining factor, although he does admit that he viewed school as a "backup" should his bodybuilding career not come to fruition.

Malachi's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Malachi differed from his peers in his response to this question. He took the time to explain his intrinsic motivation and natural curiosity for learning. He did briefly mention his parents as influential early in his life, but then stated that he "pushed" himself as he got older. His response also included the previously included quote from Malachi describing his love of learning. He even goes so far as to say life would not be worth living without education. The participants themselves were not the only ones to include intrinsic motivation in their interviews. In the sections below, both parent responses and the teacher response relating to the participants' intrinsic motivation are presented.

Parents' Perspective on Factors of Success (PQ7)

This particular question invoked lengthier responses than most other questions posed to the parents; thus, their responses, much like their children's response to similar questions, also spanned multiple themes. For the proposes of intrinsic motivation, two of the three participants' parents included their child's motivation as a factor of success.

Malachi's Parents' Response to Factors of Success. Malachi's parents, usually the least loquacious of the parents, were more detailed in their explanation of their son's intrinsic motivation. They stated, "… and the child's own discipline to be responsible, managing his time, doing his homework, and loving school helped him mostly to succeed in school." Mirroring Malachi's own self-assessment of his love of learning, Malachi's parents also noted that he was self-motivated to manage his time, and complete his homework.

Nazim's Parents' Response to Factors of Success. Nazim's parents also

mentioned their child's intrinsic motivation as a contributing factor in his success in

school. They commented that he was self-motivated to study even without help from his

parents. They expressed a desire to help him, but also knew they were not able to do so

due to the language barrier. Therefore, much of the learning was up to Nazim to take care

of on his own. Nazim's parents did not elaborate much on his intrinsic motivation, but

they did include it as a part of their response in this question and even mentioned it again

when speaking about his desire to work with computers as a child. Finally, the teacher

interview also included comments about the participant's own intrinsic motivation as

described in the subsection below.

Teacher's Perspective on Intrinsic Motivation

Ms. Homes mentioned the participants' motivation numerous times and through

various descriptors. In four of the seven questions pertaining to her experiences as a

teacher, Ms. Homes mentioned intrinsic motivation in some manner four times. For

example, she stated that, "… the boys (the participants) were so motivated," and

elsewhere she commented, "They were highly motivated." She also mentions that the

participants were highly motivated to attend college, that they were willing to attend

tutorials, and that they wanted help with writing preparation for college. She said, "[The

participants] knew they wanted to go to college and wanted to prepare themselves for

college writing."

While Ms. Homes does not stipulate the direct cause of the participants'

motivation – she does not state whether they were intrinsically motivated or motivated

due to another source, her descriptions of the participant's motivations align with the

intrinsic motivation described by the participants and their parents. Thus, the teacher's responses warrant inclusion in this theme when examined next to the full body of evidence from the studies numerous interviews.

Summary of Evidence for Theme Two

Intrinsic motivation, while not as robustly described as previously presented factors, was mentioned across all of the study's interview subjects. The participants, the parents, and the educator all included this theme in their responses within a variety of interview questions. Therefore, intrinsic motivation was included as a factor of success in college matriculation due to the broad-based acknowledgement from the perspectives of all interview subjects. Additionally, intrinsic motivation was also partnered with overcoming linguistic challenges in several responses. For example, Amir recalled that he initially received "bad" grades, but in the next breath, he affirmed, "… but up until this day, I never give up." Additionally, Ms. Holmes mentions how motivated the participants were while also recalling the various interventions and supports she provided them to support their language development. Thus, she too, coupled intrinsic motivation with linguistic struggles.

The interviews demonstrated that the participants had a desire to perform well in the school setting for their own unique personal reasons. Malachi expressed that he loved learning and that life would be too boring to live if not for learning. Amir mentioned his competitive nature and his desire for a promising future. Nazim indicated that his mindset was different from others and that he had an internal focus on education because his mindset gave value to education and hard work. In fact, in a monologue about his college success, Nazim states, "I worked my butt off for my GPA at [community college] to be

accepted to Tech with no problem." While it may be argued that the reward for his hard work was acceptance to the university, it also highlights an example of the "mindset" that Nazim referred to throughout the interview responses. Thus, an analysis of this study would be incomplete without the inclusion of intrinsic motivation as a perceived factor of college matriculation.

The next section will detail the third theme: Parental Influence. Table 4.3 lists indirect questions that support the themes; however, in the interview process, the researcher asked a direct question about parental support. Thus, this question will also be examined in this section, even though it was not included in Table 4.3.

Theme Three: Parental Influence

The second major theme revealed from the interview data corresponds to the parents' influence in the education of their child. The participants repeatedly mentioned their parents as inspiration and motivation for their educational pursuits. Additionally, the parent interviews also highlighted this recurrent theme. Based on the data from this study, "Parental Influence" may be defined as parents' motivation, inspiration, and encouragement of their child to perform well in school and to make education a priority. It should also be noted that parental influence, for the purposes of this study, did not include direct communication between the educators and the parents. Neither participants, their parents, nor the educator mentioned any communication between parents and the school personnel as a component of parental influence. The data in this theme may consisted of two main components: parents as inspiration, support, and motivation, and parental involvement and encouragement.

Participants often mentioned their parents' sacrifice as an inspirational force for their desire to pursue higher education. For example, Amir said,

> I would say again – my dad – number one thing … I would see my dad work twelve hour shifts whenever we came in and we didn't have, I mean we lived, but we didn't have enough. I would see him have struggles in life. He worked at Sam's club in the receiving section during the night, so he struggled with the language and everything. But yes, I would see my dad as a role model. He did everything for me.

The above quote illustrates the nature of the inspiration that all three participants noted in their responses. Participants perceived their parents' sacrifices and hard work in their new countries as a motivational cause that helped the participants continue to strive for their best in pursuit of their educational goals. The second component of parental influence may be described as the more direct support provided by the parents to help their child become successful in school. These items range from strict limits on media and free time to verbal encouragement and support when the participants were feeling overwhelmed. Amir, again illustrates this component well when he asserted,

> Yes, so the motivation is really the number one thing. They encouraged me every day, saying you can do this … Like, "don't give up, you got this. Remember you got 99's in Jordan, it's just the language, its easy, you got this." So, yeah in like a year, not even, I would say in 8th grade I got home pretty good grades, so the encouragement, the motivation.'

Although the language and cultural barrier interfered with the parent's ability to be directly involved with the academic portion of education, participants were still encouraged through their parents' emphasis on the importance of school and the motivational support they provided. While this theme was not as pronounced as the teacher impact theme in those questions that most closely related to factors of success, it was evidenced throughout the interview in these questions and others. Additionally, the

interview included a question directly relating to parental influence for both the participant and parent interviews.

This specific question elicited numerous responses and information about parental influence, but was not included in Table 4.3 because of its narrower focus on language development. However, due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, this question also elicited responses from the participants that fall into the theme of parental influence. The following subsection describes the participants' answers to these questions with regard to the theme of parental influence. The section is organized by question and then further subdivided by participants' answers; however, not every question contains a section for each participant as some participant responses did not include elements of the theme.

Motivation for Higher Education (IQ6f)

As the measure of success for this study includes college matriculation, it was important to understand participants' desire to attend to college. The term "college" in this instance refers to higher education of any kind and is not restricted to community colleges, but is inclusive of universities. However, college is used colloquially as a term referring to higher education, and was therefore used throughout the interview process. As a result, the theme of parental influence was widely expressed across all participants' responses to this question. Participants indicated that their parents were the primary reason for their desire to go to college, followed by intrinsic motivation. Participants' responses included both components of the parental influence theme throughout their responses to the question.

Amir's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Expressing his admiration

for his father – something Amir did throughout the interview, Amir explains that his

father worked extremely hard all his life, especially once coming to the U.S. He

explained that his father had difficulty learning English because he needed to work.

Therefore, his father encouraged Amir to study English and to learn the language so that

he could have an "easier" life.

Amir noted that his mother does hold a college degree from Iraq, but that his

father never did, and as a result of his lack of college, his father needed to work

especially hard to provide for the family. Amir disclosed,

> At the end, I saw that my dad, his whole life he worked. But my dad does not
> have an education like a Bachelors, my mom does, but my dad doesn't. So during
> that time I knew that education, my dad like sacrificed, well not sacrificed, but he
> had trouble throughout his life. And so, he kept telling me that education is
> important, that it will make your life easier. So yeah, that's why I think education
> is important.

Not only did Amir's father specifically tell him that education was important, but Amir

used his father's hard work as a motivating force to finish high school and continue on to

college.

Nazim's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Nazim spoke at length

about the influence of his parents on his decision to attend college. Although he

expressed that college was more of a "Plan B" for his life, he does mention that college

may provide him with the ability to increase his earnings over his lifetime. His parents

also instilled this belief in the higher earning potential of college graduates versus those

who did not attend college. In a very mature monologue, Nazim emphasized that money

is not all there is to life and that instead it is what one does with that money that truly

matters, he also acknowledged that money was necessary and that poverty made life more difficult. In response to his parents' influence he said,

> What made me decide to go to college is my parents. I feel like that's what pushed me to go to college because they have a mindset to where if you don't go to a college you're not going to be making much money. And you know we talk about how money doesn't bring happiness and all, but it really it comes down to what you do with money that will, you know, make you happy or not, because if you don't have money you're not going to be able to afford anything and you're not going to be a happy person versus having money and being able to afford certain things but, I'd say my parents one hundred percent.

Nazim's parents influenced his linguistic development as well by insisting that bilingualism would also be a future benefit to Nazim in the workforce.

Malachi's Response to Motivation for Higher Education. Differing from his peers substantially, though also keeping in line with his typically shorter responses, Malachi speaks only briefly about his parents as a reason for his desire to go to college. Instead, Malachi explains how his own motivation was the determining factor. However, he does mention his parents twice in his response, saying that his parents "pushed" him to do well in school. He does however place a qualifier on that statement by saying that their influence was more poignant when he was young. While he chose not to expand on the answer he does recount later that his parents encouraged him and helped instill in him the importance of education and learning English.

Parental Influence on Language Development (IQ20)

The original purpose of this this interview question was to elicit responses from participants about their language development in English and also open the door for a conversation about their native language development – whether they were encouraged, and how they may have been encouraged, to maintain their first language(s). However, as

the participants answered the question, they also included significant response time to the influence their parents had in their overall academic success and eventual college matriculation. Therefore, the thematic coding process determined that these portions of the participants' response aligned with the parental influence theme. Amir devoted the most time to expressing the influence of his parents in his education, while the other two participants also mentioned it, but spoke at greater length about the specifics of language development.

Amir's Response to Parental Influence on Language Development. Before speaking specifically about language development, Amir begins his response to this question with a direct acknowledgement of the motivation his parents' provided him. He mentions his frustrations early on in U.S. schools and how he felt defeated. His grades in Jordan put him at the top of the class, but in the U.S. he was struggling just to pass. He said,

> I remember whenever I came back from after school I would cry, I was getting "C's" in the classes and my [sibling] would get "D's" … So my mom she would spend a lot of time like not only doing the material with me, but the encouragement.

However, he commented that his mother routinely encouraged him and supported him. She told him it was more about the language and that he could do it. Amir's experience represents the second component of parental influence in that his mother provided direct encouragement. Although Amir often mentions his father as inspiration, he explains that his mother provided overt encouragement.

Amir also mentions, in a different response, how his family shared their evening meals together. During this time, each member of the family would take a moment to

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describe their day, and all other members would listen carefully to the person speaking. He recalls this as a time of encouragement, and it helped him feel as though his education mattered because his family would listen carefully to his recalling of the day's events. He mentioned that his parents would often offer encouragement to him, and his younger sibling, at dinner time. Thus, from Amir's perspective, his response illustrates another example of parental influence as an important factor in his success.

Nazim's Response to Parental Influence on Language Development. Nazim's response to this particular question relates mostly to language development and his interactions with his mother, in particular, as he sought to teach her the little bits of English as he learned them. The language development will be discussed at length in a later section of this chapter. However, within his response to the question, he also speaks to the encouragement and high expectations his mother had for him in school. He says,

> My mom was the one who pushed me toward the language but it wasn't more of a choice like it was a must, like I had to. They didn't push me toward learning English, I had, *had* to learn English because if I didn't, I couldn't you talk to you right now and do all that. But I would say my mom pushed me toward it a little bit.

Nazim's response echoes his other descriptions of his parents' high expectations and how much they insisted that he do his best. Their paternal influence was overt in their expectations for their son.

Malachi's Response to Parental Influence on Language Development. Malachi's response to the question was, again, unique among the participants. He explained that his parents did not, in fact, encourage him to learn English specifically. Rather, they encouraged him to do well in school. He remarked,

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They didn't encourage me to learn English. They encouraged me to go to school and be motivated. They showed me how important school is. I would say because of that I had to keep myself motivated with English to succeed in school.

Malachi's response reiterates the influence his parents had on his academic success, and even language development, though in a more indirect manner. Malachi's parent's struggled with learning English and understanding the U.S. school system and structure. However, they did value education in general, and Malachi's perception of his parents' influence is well illustrated through this particular question and response.

Public School Success (IQ10)

As previously discussed, this particular question garnered significant data across multiple themes for the participants. For the theme of parental influence, two participants registered answers that included the parents as a significant factor that led to their success. Uncharacteristically, Amir excluded his parents from this question, although he did indeed speak to parental influence in several other questions and attributed more information about parental influence than did the other two participants. Nazim and Malachi did directly attribute their success, at least in part, to the influence of their parents. Nazim even explained his perspective on parental influence adamantly and forcefully in his response. Their responses reveal information about both of the identified components of parental influence.

Nazim's Response to Public School Success. Attributing his success to mindset, Nazim explained that he developed his particular mindset as a result his upbringing. He said, "

I would say mindset, first of all. It comes down to parents and how you were raised, and how you were treated. If I told my mom I wasn't going to go to school

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… she was going to whoop me, she's not just going to slap my hands and say go to the corner you're done.

Nazim chose to use more forceful remarks, and even hyperbole, to express just how influential his parents were in their desire for him to give his best effort at school. Although his parents may not have been able to delve into the specifics of his academic coursework, they did instill in Nazim a sense of just how important education was. In response to a hypothetical situation Nazim set up as a means of conveying his mother's attitude toward school, Nazim relayed what he believed his mother would have said if he had suggested to her that he decided not go to school. He declared, "She would have said, 'No you're getting your ass up and going to school." In the next sentence, Nazim refocuses his attention on his perspective, and again reiterates that, "… its parents and the way you were raised, and it's the support that is there for you." He again references his parents another couple of times throughout the entire length of his response – further establishing the significance of their influence.

Malachi's Response to Public School Success. Malachi's response differed from Nazim's significantly due to the far less overt nature of his parental influence. While, according to Nazim, his mother may have been dogmatic, Malachi's parents' created an environment that allowed him to focus on education. Malachi stated,

> Family also has a big part in my success because the support around me. I don't have to work. I don't have to think too much about bills or anything. So that also helped because it helps me focus more on education instead of life outside of education. That helped me a lot.

In earlier responses, Malachi reiterated that he is self-motivated to learn and do well in school, but could not have succeeded without the help of his teachers. Thus, when he begins speaking about his parents' role, he emphasizes that they worked and provided for

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him so that he could focus on school rather than helping to provide financial support for his family. Thus, Malachi's response falls into the first component of parental influence, while Nazim's lands in the more overt, second component.

Parents' Perspectives on Factors of Success (PQ7)

This question, posed to the parents, had a similar response as the corresponding question for participants. The parents conversed about several items and across multiple themes. In their responses to this question, two of the three parent interviews included commentary on their own parenting styles, and how their parenting helped their children become successful; thus, they also perceived parental influence as important factors of high school and college matriculation. Amir's mother goes so far as to state that she and her husband did not act like "mom and dad" to their children; rather, that she treated their children as almost equals, or "friends."

Nazim's parents mentioned a similar response to Nazim himself. They stated that they pushed him, but also provided support. However, his mother noted that they could not help him with his homework as it was, of course, in English. Instead they encouraged him and let him know how important education was. In answering this question, Nazim's mother reiterated,

> Because we are different, our kids differently, our kids stay with us, they must have our permission, they have to go to college. Education is important. I did not help him, but he did study, … but [Nazim], no we did not understand the English for [Nazim].

Again, even in the parent responses, the two components of the parental influence theme are articulated. Amir's parents commented on the first component and influenced their child through a less direct, and more support-laden approach. Nazim's parents also

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encouraged their son, but they were more overt in their approach according to both the participant and the parent's narratives.

Summary of Evidence for Theme Three

The findings collected from participant and parent interviews suggests that parental influence was a significant factor in participant success, as defined by this study, from the perspectives of the participants and their parents. The parental influence theme included three main questions from the participants and one question from the parent interview, along with other responses and conversations. The interviews provided several examples of parental influence and these examples correlated to the two identified components of this particular theme: parents as inspiration, support, and motivation, and parental involvement and encouragement.

When participants reflected on their time in U.S. public schools, they often mentioned parental influence in the form of inspiration, support, and motivation. Often parents were the inspiration for their hard work in preparation for a better life. Amir, for example, mentioned how hard he saw his father working, and the many sacrifices he made for his family. Amir used this example as an inspirational force to succeed. Amir desires to acquire a profession that will provide more monetary comfort and less stress for himself, and to repay his father.

Parents also provided support for their children by providing an environment that allowed the participants to study and focus on school without the need to financially support their families. Malachi reflected on how hard his mother worked in manual labor positions to help provide for her family. Additionally, parents motivated their child through instilling in them the importance of schooling. In Nazim's recollection, he

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reflects on how much his parents focused on the importance of school, even though they were unable to help him directly with any homework due to the language barrier.

Parental influence also extended to their involvement in their child's lives. Parents set strict rules and structures for their children. Amir noted the dinner table discussion his family had every night. This was a time for he and his sister to share their daily school experiences. Homework time was also an important component of each participant's after school hours. Further, parents provided encouragement for their children. Each participant recalled how difficult the transition to the U.S. was for them. They each mentioned a time when they felt like giving up, but their parents were there to encourage them and help them through it. For example, Amir's mother reminded her son of how he once made the highest marks in his class, and insisted that he was still that same very capable student – only the new language was holding him back. Thus, parental influence emerged as a significant theme in the data analysis for Research Question One.

Summary of Results for Research Question One

The responses recorded throughout the interviews for this study indicated three major themes in relation to Research Question One: "What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as 'high school graduation and college matriculation'?" These themes were identified as educator impact, intrinsic motivation, and parental influence. Based on the perspectives of the participants, their parents, and their former teacher, these three themes were contributing factors for the participants' success in U.S. public schools. Of the three themes, the most pronounced was educator impact. The participants provided substantial data pertaining to the impact that educators

had on their matriculation. While participants devoted more time to parental influence, intrinsic motivation was mentioned was mentioned more often and across all interviews.

Educator influence was divided into two major components: educator motivation and emotional support provided to participants, and educator assistance with academic development. The first component was mentioned throughout the interview process and was indicative of the positive mentor relationship between educators and the participants. The second component was especially helpful to the participants as they worked to not only master the subject-area material, but also develop their linguistic aptitude in English. Participants particularly mentioned the benefit of one-on-one instruction with their teachers after school.

The next theme that emerged from the analysis of the responses in relation to the primary research question was the participants' intrinsic motivation. The participants, their parents, and even the educator included this theme in their responses to the interview questions. While the participants' all included intrinsic motivation as a factor, they differed in their particular motivations – Amir described his competitive nature, Nazim mentioned his mindset on several occasions, and Malachi explained his love of learning.

This theme also included more conversation about specific challenges the participants faced as immigrants and language learners. Additionally, the parent interviews also mentioned the language barrier as a significant issue. However, this study used purposeful sampling to identify the participants for this study due, in part, to their college matriculation in spite of their initial lack of English fluency. Thus, the sub-question, "How did they overcome linguistic barriers?" was also explored.

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Parental influence was another important theme with two identified components: parents as inspiration, support, and motivation, and parental involvement and encouragement. In response to their parents' sacrifice, hard work, and struggles in a new country, participants found inspiration to perform well in school. This inspiration derived from their parents was frequently seen throughout the interview responses for all three participants. For the second component, parents noted that they were involved in their child's academic life as much as possible given the language barrier and that they pushed their child to do his best in school even if they were unable to be directly involved in their academics. The following section presents the data gather in relation to Research Question 1a, and is also organized first by theme, then by question.

Research Question 1a: Linguistic Barriers

According to the participants and their families, none of the participants were fluent in English upon their arrival in the U.S. Amir explained his language education prior to arriving in the U.S. as, "English – the alphabet didn't help me that much, so I couldn't read English when I came." Amir and his parents noted that he had learned the English alphabet in his school in Jordan, but that the alphabet was the extent of his English proficiency upon arrival in the States.

All three participants noted that they learned English after arriving in the U.S., and after having learned at least one prior language (see Appendix 2). An individual's first learned language is often referred to as their 'Native Language"; however, in this study, evidence from Malachi's interview indicates that his first language was not the language he was most comfortable using while growing up and with his identified

cultural community. Additionally, two of the participants listed English as the language they prefer to speak as adults (see Appendix 2). Malachi indicated that English would be his second preferred language after Kinyamulenge – which may be considered his "Native Language".

Theme One: Academic and Linguistic Supports

Due to their immigration to a country with a dominate language that was different than their previously acquired languages, linguistic barriers existed for the participants and their parents. This barrier became evident as they tried to cope with their new school communities, peers, and, of course, academic learning. From the responses of the participants, their parents, and their former teacher, the most striking linguistic barriers for these participants manifested within the school environment itself.

Participants chose to concentrate their conversation on linguistic barriers primarily with regard to the school setting. Malachi told a brief story about his frustration level with English when he first arrived in the U.S.,

> I remember when I moved to [city in Texas] in 2009, I think it was. So we moved in June. I started school in August, but in the summer when – so a year after. So, I remember one day sitting down on my bed, trying to recall. "Do I know any words in English?" And nothing came out. It was very frustrating. I started telling myself I would never learn the language. It's not working.

Other participants noted similar struggles with linguistic barriers. All three participants lamented the anxiety of having to read aloud in a class full of their native-language peers, but Nazim captured the sentiment well when he exclaimed, "Reading out of a book out loud, that was – holy moly – that was the worst." Another example was articulated by Amir in response to the difficulty of reading in an English-only environment. Amir complained,

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Reading books, I hated … Just because it took me a long time to read and comprehend what happened. For most people they read and know, "Oh that's what happened," but for me no, I had to go translate things into Arabic, read the Arabic word then go, "Oh, that's what happened."

As already noted in the section on factors of success, intrinsic motivation may also have contributed to the participants' ability to overcome linguistic barriers. As this is a sub-question of Research Question 1, the two factors are not necessarily unrelated. However, this section will focus on the academic and linguistic supports provided within the educational setting as the amount of data supporting these accommodations was quite robust.

Accommodations

Academic and linguistic supports such as accommodations for lesson activities and assessments were helpful to participants as they navigated the English-only environment of the U.S. school system while also trying to learn their academic material. One of the unique components of this study is that the participants are former EL students and their perspective on their linguistic accommodations allows for a first-hand view from the actual recipient of the accommodations rather than only a top-down perspective coming from the educator. The educator's perspective is, of course, included and adds to the triangulation of the data because both perspectives are represented. Thus, the participants reflected on their linguistic interventions and how these interventions supported their academic and language development; however, their responses were not always in alignment with current ELL practices. Nazim painted his perception of his early adjustment to language development when he explained,

I would say, first of all when I moved here to the United States, the only thing they focused on was trying to get me to speak English – especially at the very

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beginning. That's why, you know, I started speaking English very fluently, but I struggled with my reading and writing because that's not something that we focused on until middle school.

When describing some of the difficulties with learning and adjusting to an English-only environment, participants named several educational practices that were barriers to their learning such as: vocabulary and terms, cursive handwriting, the speed of Native-English speaking teachers and peers, homework, and even taking foreign language classes (ie., Spanish) while still trying to learn English. The participants and their teacher mentioned that the campus they attended had very few EL students overall, and even fewer that spoke the same language. Ms. Homes explained,

> Here at [high school], the majority of the students are not minority, but the campus is more diverse than what most people think. We have Hispanic cultures, but the minorities have come from other countries too, like in the Middle East.

Thus, the participants did not have much, if any, real opportunity for bilingual development within the school system – this bilingualism came from their parents, and will be discussed later in this chapter. Therefore, it should be noted that the interventions and accommodations they received were within an English-only environment. Nazim did mention an Arabic dictionary, but he told an interesting story about how the dictionary was actually an older version of Arabic that was not used by his language community. Nazim recounts,

> … but that was a struggle because that Arabic dictionary was old Arabic, it wasn't like - cause there are some many ways of Arabic, and they didn't know. And we kept trying to tell them that we're not understanding what they're saying. That was back in [elementary school], what they were saying, but they didn't believe us, in other words. I guess. And they didn't know that there was old, old Arabic, and the new Arabic - which we knew. And they brought an interpreter and she read the dictionary and she said, "Yeah that's old Arabic and they don't know that language." Because she could speak to us and she could speak the old and the new. I think that was – that communication was a struggle too.

Participants responses to this theme revolved around three questions in particular. However, as with other themes, the participants also included some conversations about linguistic barriers and supports in other questions as well. The following section is organized by question and further divided by individual participant response, as appropriate. Additionally, parent and educator interviews are also included as they, too, revealed important data about linguistic barriers.

Helpful Interventions (IQ11a)

This interview question related directly toward the interventions and academic supports that the participants received while in school. Additionally, much of the conversation included academic supports as a response to linguistic barriers from the participants themselves. Participants noted that reading and writing in English were particularly difficult when answering this question. The main barrier was that they were often the only EL student in their class, and so the teacher sometimes would not slow down for them. They felt like they missed some of the material because the teacher was speaking so quickly and they were trying to process the new information and the new language at the same time. However, none of the participants demonstrated any misgivings toward their teachers or peers, but instead they sought out assistance when needed.

Amir's Response to Helpful Interventions. Amir mentions that his teachers would try to speak slower for him – especially when working one-on-one with him. Additionally, he noted that they used hand gestures and visuals often to help him better understand the concepts being taught in spike of the language barrier. In fact, Amir was

able to identify one teacher in particular, though he did forget the teacher's name, that made a special consideration for him by using plenty of visuals to help him understand the science concepts presented in class. Amir recalled,

> They would speak slower when I went in and asked, and hand motions. So that was good … Yeah and make pictures, in science he would show me pictures, I forgot his name, but he would show me diagrams with numbers; rather, more numbers than words, because he knew that numbers were the same. Numbers are the same in Arabic as English. So yes, visual things.

Nazim's Response to Helpful Interventions. In answering this question, Nazim first mentions receiving help from his ESL teacher when taking assessments. He acknowledged that having the assessment read to him, though still read in English, was helpful. On some assessments he even received vocabulary support for words he was unfamiliar with. He then mentions that in high school he was treated like every other student – referencing the lack of linguistic support he received compared to what he received in middle school. He mentions this once more in his response to this question and again twice more in other questions as well. However, he then returns to his explanation of the accommodations he received on assessments and says that the tests he took were often easier than the ones his Native-English speaking peers received. Finally, he stated that he also had teachers sit with him and explain "what was going on" in classes when he did not understand.

Malachi's Response to Helpful Interventions. In a similar manner as Nazim, Malachi also explained how he received support on his assessments from an educator. Malachi recalls,

> And also … like with exam, if we could take exam in your office so you can read it to guys. That was very useful also. Because, let's say, if that wouldn't have

happened, maybe we would struggle on exams, and may be would… if we fail, especially [Amir] and I, we would feel horrible about ourselves. We wouldn't be as motivated as we are right now. I would say.

Oral administration of an assessment is a common linguistic accommodation for language learners and all three participants mentioned this technique at least once in their interview responses. Additionally, Malachi also specifically mentioned how difficult writing in English was for him. While not an accommodation, the writing practice he completed in his ESL class was helpful for his language development. He mentions how the topics were easier and the pace was slower, which helped him to learn to write better in English.

Success in Public Schools (IQ10)

All three participants at least mention some of the linguistic accommodations they received from within the school setting; however, none of them linger on this point for long. Instead, when answering this question, they preferred to talk about the influences in their lives from others – teachers, parents, and peers. The more technical linguistic interventions were less memorable to the participants as they preferred to spend their time telling stories about how others impacted their success. Amir mentions the ESL writing that Nazim and Malachi mentioned in the previous question. His perspective of the writing support mirrored that of his peers in that he viewed it as helpful in preparing him to write in English for his other classes. Nazim again notes how helpful it was for him to be able to take his assessments or other difficult assignments with his ESL teacher to help him. Finally, Malachi briefly suggests that the one-on-one support he received from teachers was important, but he concentrated his response on the gratitude he felt for

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those who helped him rather than focusing on the more technical aspects of how they helped him.

College Preparation (IQ9)

In a similar manner to the questions above, participant responses to this question were brief in relation to linguistic support and overcoming barriers, but two of the three participants did make mention of how difficult the language was, and some of the ways they overcame that barrier.

Amir's Response to College Preparation. Amir concentrates his response on his perceived difficulty or ease with certain specific classes. He noted that math was not so difficult but his English Language Arts class was a struggle. "In English; however, between English in high school and English in college. It was pretty hard. I had to keep asking for the writing center to reread my essays" When speaking about English, he also makes note of the help he received from his ESL teacher, especially with regard to writing support.

Nazim's Response to College Preparation. Nazim took a more critical stance insisting that his public school support was not that beneficial to him in college. He believes that his early educational experiences were too easy and that the teachers made things too comfortable for he and his EL peers. He mentions that in his elementary school the teachers wanted him to learn to speak English as their sole priority, but he then felt that he had missed out on some of the more important aspects of language acquisition such as reading and writing. Therefore, to overcome this linguistic deficit, he spent more time with his ESL teacher in middle and high school for language support. It should be

noted that Nazim's primary critique of the school system was not based on linguistic development, but he instead focused on how difficult college was. He felt he was less prepared for the rigors of college level work than he expected.

Teacher's Perspective on Overcoming the Language Barrier

Ms. Homes' interview provided significant insight into her perception of the language barrier and how she helped the participants to overcome this barrier. She stated, "[Participant], for example, was very bright, but the language was a barrier." Additionally, she remarked that accommodating for their language differences could be challenging for her as an educator. She stated that when she was working with the participants she would, "… push them to their abilities, but not overwhelm them. Hard to accommodate without finding a whole other text for them to read." Furthermore, Ms. Homes later linked language and culture seamlessly in her responses about providing interventions. Speaking about her attempts to build upon her students' background knowledge, she said they could find common ground when talking about food, but that it was, "difficult to make that connection" in any other meaningful way. She was able to connect more with Malachi as he, "wrote about becoming a missionary" and she and the other students in the class were better able to relate to this desire due to the common religion amongst the majority of the students on that particular campus.

However, the language barrier was not insurmountable for the participants, and they often overcame these challenges. Ms. Homes, as previously noted in another section, mentions that the participants were very highly motivated. Additionally, she spoke in some detail about the interventions and accommodations she provided to help the participants achieve academic success in spite of their language differences. Some of the

interventions and accommodations she mentioned include: extra tutorial times, lots of questions and answers, YouTube videos to offer visual supports, modified vocabulary, simplified assignments or readings, and collaboration with Native-English speaking peers. Many of these accommodations and interventions were also mentioned by the participants themselves, though often in less specific terminology.

The participants mentioned tutorials many times, as well as collaboration with peers, and questions and answers. However, the participants included the questions and answers as part of their one-on-one support. Also of note, participants mentioned that they received simplified assignments – typically referring to these assignments as "easier" assignments than what their Native-English speaking peers received. However, they also mentioned vocabulary as a linguistic barrier, but Ms. Homes noted that they received simplified vocabulary as part of their accommodations. Another struggle for the participants was writing in English, and Ms. Homes also addressed this issue. She stated, "I remember going through their writing and going through it sentence by sentence, and looking at the sentence structure."

Summary of Results for Research Question 1a

Participants noted significant linguistic barriers that they overcame, and they prioritized these barriers within the school setting. Some of the linguistic barriers to their academic success mentioned by the participants included the speed of the classroom, vocabulary, and reading aloud in class. Thus, the dominate theme to emerge from the data was accommodations and interventions received within the school setting. These accommodations and interventions helped to answer Research Question 1a: "How did they overcome linguistic barriers?" Participants remarked that several interventions were

helpful, but that the one-on-one support they received from their teachers, writing help, and the assessment support they received were some of the most significant. Additionally, the educator's responses also aligned with the participant responses within this theme. The educator also noted several linguistic barriers – all of which fell within the school academic setting. In a similar manner to the participants, she too mentioned such accommodations as one-on-one support, simplification of assignments and assessments, and writing support.

Research Question 1b: Sociocultural Factors

The social component of literacy and linguistic understanding cannot be understated. As one might expect, the responses to the interview questions also included elements tied to sociocultural factors that contributed to the participants' college matriculation. The vast majority of the data presented thus far centers on the academic world of the participants and their navigation through this academic world as English Learners. However, participants spoke at length about the social component of linguistic development within their responses. Most of the conversation on social language development also fell under the sphere of the institutionalized school setting, but not strictly within the academic settings. The following section presents the data from the participants' responses as it correlates to their sociocultural factors of success through their interaction with peers.

When asked about social and academic language, two of the three participants stated that they felt they developed academic language before developing social language. Amir and Malachi both responded with academic language, or the language used in formal school settings, as the part of English that they acquired first. They believe

that this was the case because they were so intently focused on academics and less

focused on socializing with their peers. Amir explained,

> Whenever when I came in … do you remember whenever I came in and I showed
> you my report cards, and you thought it was, like many people thought it was, not
> real I would say, not bad, but … you know I cared about my grades, so that was
> my top priority in middle school was to do well on grades wise, and then social
> wise. Academic, I started getting good grades, so yeah I would say academic first.
> Should I go into more why? It's just because grades were my first priority.

Malachi responded similarly,

> Academic language. Cause I was more focused with education more than social. I
> think it's because I like school I guess. I was trying to keep up with my
> classmates, you know. That school is some sort of competition-ish. If you do bad,
> you look bad in society and you feel bad about yourself. So I try to focus on what
> would give me good grades and stuff. And not interact too much in social life,
> except, you know, playing soccer and stuff.

Only Nazim stated that he developed social language first. He claimed that he developed

social language out of necessity because when he first arrived in the U.S. he was the only

one at his school that spoke Arabic. He explained that if he wanted friends, he had to

speak to them in English,

> I would say social. Cause I was always socializing with people and with my
> teachers … so it was always English that I spoke around them, and then other
> friends. You know that I knew, it was always English, so I would say social first
> before anything else.

Theme One: Interactions with Peers

The major theme that emerged through the data analysis in relation to

sociocultural factors of success was interaction with Native-English speaking peers. This

interaction with peers included both language use and cultural understanding.

Interestingly, Malachi did not mention friends or peers throughout this entire interview.

He chose to focus in on other factors of success described in the preceding sections of

this study. All three participants did recall both language and culture as important aspects in their sociocultural development as described in detail in the section on Research Question 2b. However, it was their interactions and collaboration with their peers within the academic setting that Amir and Nazim attributed as a factor in their success.

Success in Public Schools (IQ10)

Unlike most other themes, participants did not expand on this theme across the interview questions. Instead, they primarily focused on interaction with peers in their response to the question asking about factors of success. Therefore, this section is organized only contains one main interview question, and the following is organized by participant response.

    Amir's Response in Relation to Theme One. Amir grants greater detail about his friends and peers in his description of the factors that led to his success in U.S. public schools than he did all other factors. Although, he does rank peer interaction as second to teacher impact in his response. He mentions both the academic and social settings as important. In the academic setting, Amir remembers working in collaborative groups with Native-English speaking peers, and notes that this practice was helpful in his language acquisition. He said,

> Yeah, hallways, and classes. There's interactions like group projects, group assignments, yeah I would speak with friends. Like we had a lot of, in Middle school we had a lot of group projects, so that was a good boost for my English language.

However, Amir devoted more time to explain that it was his interactions with friends in the unstructured environments that had the greater impact.

Amir mentioned that shortly after his arrival in the U.S., he had few friends other than Nazim – who also spoke Arabic However it was not long until he made friends with "Americans", or his Native English-speaking peers. He recalled, "No, at the beginning it was difficult…I would say the first month was just me and [Nazim]. We spoke Arabic, but the second month, no, I had some friends that were American." Also of note was Amir's acknowledgement of the time and place of his interactions with his peers. While he does mention group projects, he devoted more time to speaking about his interactions with peers in less structured environments within the school setting. He spoke about meeting friends in the cafeteria during lunch, speaking with his peers in the hallways between classes, and making friends through soccer practice after school. Amir stated that he tried to copy his peers' language use. He explained,

> It was the structure of English. I tried to copy them, so I tried to get their accents in the beginning. It was difficult. I tried to copy them – like the words that they said and the vocab they were using."

Thus, from Amir's perspective, the nonacademic sociocultural interactions with his peers played a significant role in his success because he was able to practice and learn English through his interactions with peers.

Nazim's Response in Relation to Theme One. Nazim mentions the word "friends" more than any other participant, but rarely expanded on it. He often included friends when listing quick answers to a posed question, but would explain other listed items in detail without coming back to friends with detail. The only response that elicited more explanation was the question about factors of success. Nazim contributes some of his success to the friendships he made, but unlike Amir, who explained peer interaction as a form of language development explicitly, Nazim explains that good friends led him to

value school. While not speaking directly about language or cultural influence, Nazim's explanation of adopting the values of his peers illustrates the sociocultural component of his success. As Nazim made friends and interacted with his peers, he began to place value in his life similar to the values of his peer group. This concept is expanded upon in greater detail in the section on navigating linguistic worlds.

Summary of Results for Research Question 1b

Although participants did not provide nearly as much information in their responses as they related to sociocultural factors of success when compared to their other factors of success, two of the participants did include their interactions with peers as important in their school success. Amir gave the more detailed and specific account of peer interactions. Nazim, on the other hand, spoke more about the influence of his peers through their interactions. Both participants mention non-structured interactions as having the greater impact than structured academic collaboration with their peers. Sociocultural interactions became more evident when the participants spoke about navigating their two linguistic worlds as described in the last section of Chapter Four. However, from the perspective of two of the participants, interactions with Native English speaking peers did indeed contribute to their success in school.

Research Question Two: Home-Life Culture

An emphasis on the importance of the family unit was evident throughout the participant responses. Parents' responses also reflected this sentiment. Thus, the home life culture's impact on language development was evident within the data set. The two sub-questions stemming from this topic contain specific and in-depth data analysis as it

relates to home culture, language development, and how the participants navigated their two linguistic worlds. All three participants maintained that their parents insisted on them using and maintaining their native languages, and as a result, their native cultures as well. Additionally, when asked what language they use in the home currently, all three participants said they used their native language. Nazim's mother even mentioned that she still texts her son in Arabic. This commitment to bilingualism from the parents is explored in more detail in the section on Research Question 2a. Meanwhile, the impact and discussion from participants as they developed biculturalism is explored in the last section of this chapter.

Theme One: Parental Influence

Thus, the only major theme to stem from this question specifically was parental influence. Parental influence was also a major theme, and more evident, in research question 1. Additionally, for this question, the two sub questions generated far greater, and more specific, data. As a result, the descriptions and themes in the sub questions also relate to RQ2.

When describing their typical day as a public school student, Amir and Nazim both recalled their family dinners. Each family sat together, as their parents' schedules allowed, and they would enjoy the meal together in conversation – in their native language. Amir painted a picture of a systematic conversation that allowed everyone in the family to share about their day, uninterrupted. He clarified,

> I would go back (home) and eat first. Eat with my family. Tell them my day, how my day was – of course in Arabic… everybody would tell their day… Everybody paid attention whenever I spoke, even my [sibling]. Even though [my sibling] was the youngest, we gave [sibling] all our attention."

Amir's explanation of his home life illustrates the importance of family on the lives of all the participants. All three participants insisted that their family played an important role in their success – as detailed in the section on Research Question 1.

Research Question 2a: Maintaining Native Language

All three sets of parents emphasized that they desired for their child to keep using their native language. Parents shared that they viewed language as an important component of their child's native culture, and they feared that if they lost their ability to communicate in their native language, their child would also lose their native culture. Amir's parents described their take on language and culture when they stated,

> Yeah, you know, we keep him to Arabic. You know, so don't forget his culture. That is different from some cultures for us. It's really important for us to keep him to remember that. I think he's old enough to remember any of the cultures we have now.

Amir's parents used the word "Arabic" as a descriptor for both the Arabic language and their Arabic culture, and his mother ends the statement with a victorious comment that her son has, indeed, remembered his Arabic language and culture.

Theme One: Insistence on Native Language

Thus, the primary theme stemming from the parents' perspective was their insistence on using their native language in the home as a means of fostering their native culture with their child. Even the participants themselves shared the same sentiment from their parents. However, neither the parents nor the participants showed antipathy towards English. Parents desired for their children to become bilingual – something the school environment could not provide. In the following section, the perspectives of the parents - based on both their own responses and the responses of their children, are presented in

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relation to the theme. In the following section, the perspectives of the parents - based on both their own responses and the responses of their children, are presented in relation to the theme.

Parent Responses to Native Language Retention

The following section is organized by parent response to the interview question about native language retention. Parents were asked directly to describe their perspectives on whether or not their child should maintain their native language, or just focus on learning English only. Parents were then asked to explain their rationale accordingly.

Amir's Parents' Response to Native Language. Amir's parents' were the most vocal in their desire for their children – Amir and his younger sibling, to enter adulthood with fluency in two languages. They expressed that they believed bilingualism would help their children in the workforce and make their working lives easier. Amir's mother explained, "Yeah, probably that's (bilingualism) going to help him when he graduates and get a job. Probably have two languages that's will support him more than just one language." Amir's parents also mentioned culture as well, and they sought to include culture and language with their children in the home environment. Amir's parents insisted that he speak Arabic while at home so that he would keep a part of his native culture even while encouraging him to learn English.

Nazim's Parents' Response to Native Language. Nazim's parents also encouraged their two children to speak Arabic at home. Nazim's mother explained, "I tell him to speak Arabic at home. I did not want him to [speak English at home] so he would learn

Arabic and not forget. He can still read and write Arabic." Nazim's mother also recounts

the danger of not practicing a language, when she describes the primary language of her

religion, "My family is learning Aramaic, because John the Baptist (Mendai religion).

We did not use the language. We learned Arabic, so now we forgot the language, and it is

difficult." She expresses the loss of the language, and does not want to repeat this loss

now that they live in a new community with a different language.

Malachi's Parents' Response to Native Language. Though not as detailed in their

response, Malachi's family also encouraged their son to speak in Kinyamulenge at home,

but they were not as insistent as Nazim's parents. Instead they merely encouraged

Kinyamulenge over English, but they did not insist upon it. It should be noted that

Kinyamulenge was not the first language Malachi learned, but was the chosen language

of the family after relocating to the United States. They, too, noted that they feared their

son would lose ties to his native culture if he lost his native language. The participants

corroborate their parents' perspectives, as they too, mentioned that their parents wanted

them to speak their native languages at home.

Participant Responses to Native Language

The participants also commented on how they perceived their parents' response to

language and culture. All three noted that their parents' seemed to desire for them to

maintain their home language and culture; thus, contributing to their bilingualism.

However, Malachi's response noted that his parents were not overt in their approach to

his language development.

Amir's Response to Native Language. Amir's response to his parent's desire for

him to maintain his Arabic culture and language mirrored that of his parents' response,

although Amir delves into far greater detail. Amir first acknowledged that English is the

"language of the world" and as such, his parents encouraged him to learn English. He

also maintained that his parents did not pressure him, but provided encouragement. Then,

he explains that at home, especially around the family dinner table, his parents

encouraged his use of Arabic. Amir told a story of a time when he mistakenly used an

English phrase when speaking to his sibling, and he recalled how his father gently

reminded him to speak in Arabic at home. He recalled,

> Yes, so in middle school and high school, remember when I would come back
> from [inaudible] we all had lunch together, altogether, and we would only speak
> Arabic together. It wasn't a rule or anything. My dad never mentioned it, my
> mom never mentioned, but it just happened. We did it once, we spoke English – it
> was a new word that I learned … it was, my tongue twisted and went to English. I
> was speaking with my sister. And my Dad said, nicely, not like, 'Don't speak
> English,' nicely saying, 'Hey I want to know too.'

Amir, also noted that his parents wanted him to use Arabic so that he would not

lose his Arabic culture. He said, "… they mentioned it once or twice that you should use

Arabic at the house, so as not to forget culture and our Arabic language. And now we are,

we are bilingual – my [sibling] and I are bilingual."

Nazim's Response to Native Language. Nazim also perceived his parents request

that he speak Arabic as a means of maintaining his culture. Interestingly, Nazim also

included the story about his religious language and how his family had lost that language.

He reflected on that as a reason why his parents insisted that he keep speaking Arabic in

the home. However, in contrast to Amir, Nazim also included as story about how he

would teach his parents English when he got home from school. Nazim recalled that his

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parents would ask him what English words he learned in school and have him teach these words to them. Outside of these informal English lessons, Arabic was understood to be the language of the home.

Malachi's Response to Native Language. Malachi is the only participant whose response differs from his parents' response. As this is a study based on the perception of the participants and their experiences, Malachi's' perception is his view, and is not necessarily in conflict with his parents' response. Malachi responded by saying that his parents did not specifically encourage him to learn English. Instead, they encouraged him to do well in school; thus, he needed to learn English. As far as his native language goes, Malachi did not comment on his native language use at home, other than to say that he used Kinyamulenge at home most of the time. Malachi is also the only participant to state that he would rather speak his native language over English as an adult.

Summary of Results for Research Question 2a.

The interview data collected from the participants and their parents reflects a commitment to native language and culture. All three sets of parents stated that they encouraged, or even insisted, their children use their native language in the home. The parents wanted their children to keep using their language so that their children could become bilingual and increase their potential as working adults. Additionally, parents wanted their children to maintain their native culture, and they viewed language use as a path toward this goal. In the participant interviews, they too, emphasized language use as a means of maintaining their native culture and they agreed with their parents' view that bilingualism and biculturalism was to be valued.

Research Question 2b: Navigating Linguistic Worlds

While two of the participants in this study did indeed speak the same native language – Arabic, they were often the only two Arabic speakers in the school or at least in their grade level. Amir recounts, "… at the beginning it was just difficult. But later yes, I would say the first month was just me and [Nazim]. We spoke Arabic." Malachi, too, was often the only student from his language community enrolled in his school. Though there were a couple of other students from the Congo during the same time that Malachi was in school, his language community was unique to his tribe and few others.

Thus, the participants were often linguistically isolated as their language was considered as something other. The participants often recollected struggles in navigating between the two linguistic worlds. As language and culture are inseparable, the participants noted that they not only tried to learn the language through speaking, reading, writing, and listening, but they also tried to develop a literacy in their new culture. Malachi gives a fascinating commentary on language and cultural navigation from his perspective as an English learner,

> I guess so first I would say the, I mean, it's a new language completely, but except the alphabet which were the same thing. But the culture behind it. Because most of the time to learn a language you have to blend in with the culture – ish. And once you blend in with the culture the more it's easier to learn English. Since you thinks in the same way that English speakers view it, which makes it easier. So I would say that the culture affected part of me learning English. Shifting from my native languages and coming to a new place, trying to keep up with the culture and stuff was a difficult part.

Thus, there were two main themes derived from the participant responses to Research Question 2b. The first theme resulted in a separation of their native cultures from the new culture they experienced in the U.S. public school system. The participants;

therefore, acquired a cultural and linguistic literacy from their new world that they used to not only survive, but thrive, in the English-only community. Amir captured this struggle well when he spoke about writing across the two languages,

> Because I would write the same way in Arabic - the same like tone in Arabic. Not necessarily right, but I think it's right whenever I reread it. But an English speaker, and first-language English speaker, whenever they read this, thinks it's not that great. Ideas pretty good, but the grammar is pretty bad, not the spelling, but the wording. Sometimes it's just flipping the sentence back, would sound better. And that's I think that's the thing in Arabic. The way we write, its different than the way in English.

Amir explained his navigating the tones captured in writing, and the struggles inherent in the act of writing, between capturing the correct tone in English. He understands that the tone in English is different than it would be in Arabic, but as he mentioned, it something that he struggled to overcome. Thus the first theme relates to developing a cultural and linguistic literacy.

The second theme centers on the participants' dual identities. As previously discussed in the prior section, the participants were encouraged by their parents to maintain their native language, and consequently, their native culture as well. Thus, as the participants grew fluent in the English language, they also grew fluent in the English-only American culture. The participants developed a bicultural and bilingualism as a result of their experience.

The responses presented in this research question spanned several questions and were scattered throughout the entire interview process. One interview question in particular asked about cultural struggles, while the remainder of the participants' responses sprung organically from the semi-structured nature of the interview process. As a result, the data is organized into two sections based on theme rather than by question.

The first section illustrates the differences experienced by the participants between their two linguistic worlds, while including a subsection that explains how they navigated these differences. The second section describes the participants' development of dual identities to cope with the disparate worlds they inhabited.

Theme One: Navigating Culture and Developing Linguistic Literacy

The first theme begins with an explanation of the differences in the two worlds the participants encountered. The participants often mentioned the differences between the cultures they experienced at home and at school as being far more pronounced in their first few years of their experiences in the U.S. Amir and Nazim both noted that language differences separated them from their peers early on. Amir noted, "So in middle school, yes. Cause I didn't have a lot of American friends, so they would differ me from others." Nazim responded, "But not knowing English. Everybody spoke to me like I didn't understand English, if you know what I mean. Just not knowing English, I was treated differently." In an effort to fully illustrate their different linguistic worlds, Amir told two relevant stories about the differences in his native culture and language and that of the U.S. English culture and language. He explained,

> So, in the Middle East it's more strict. Its girls schools and boys schools. So when I attended middle school it was 'What? Its boys and girls! What?' Whenever we played PE you would see girls playing with us. So that was a cultural difference. It made me shy in the beginning, cause I didn't know what to say or what to do or how to treat girls.

Amir told another interesting story about the relationship differences between boys in his native culture versus the U.S. public school culture,

> Over there (Middle East) … the way how we treat others, so like for example, we like kiss boys on the cheeks. Or like whenever we dance, like 'Depka', you hold other boys' hands and kick. I don't know if you have seen the dance on YouTube,

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but anyways, the difference of the way of treating boys here and there that was a different culture. So everybody was like asking am I gay, and I was like, 'No I'm not.'

The connotation of the question asked by his peers, illustrates the linguistic and cultural differences that Amir, and his ELL peers, had to navigate as they learned the literacy of their new culture. Amir tells another story about soccer. He played soccer with his friends in the Middle East, but in the U.S. he had not heard the term "soccer".

I remember when, like, there was a guy … He's now married, but he, what did he say? He said, "Do you want to go play soccer? So I went, I went to Google it, well not Google, but to the dictionary and looked it up. And was like oh "soccer", is a sport – in my country we never used "soccer". So yes, for example soccer, I went back and looked it up in the dictionary and knew what soccer is. So the next time I start saying "soccer" instead of "football.

These examples highlight the differences in the linguistic worlds experienced by the participants in this study. Malachi and Nazim also shared brief stories about the challenges of making friends and learning the language at the same time. Nazim reflects on his early focus on learning to speak English as beneficial for his cultural navigation as he was able to speak in English quickly, and make "American" friends early on.

Cultural Navigation

Although Amir remarked that making friends in middle school was difficult due to the language barrier, he did follow that exclamation with, "In high school, no. I started speaking with others, and in college now they can't even tell that I'm from a different country." Amir's comment illustrates his aptitude in linguistic and cultural understanding as he progressed from middle school, to high school, and even into college. Amir further expanded on this idea when he explained the difference between being home and speaking Arabic versus speaking English at school. The other participants mention a

similar trajectory in their stories about adjusting to American culture and learning English.

One of the ways that the participants learned to navigate the often disparate worlds was to seek out commonality between the two. Malachi may have had the best opportunity in seeking common ground between his Kinyamulenge language background and that of the new English background. One of the many significant influences on language and culture remains religion, and Malachi's religion aligned with the vast majority of his U.S. school community. Malachi's father was, and still is, a Christian pastor and Malachi commented that he even attended church at the same building as many of the other students at his school. Although he did attend a non-English service.

Additionally, Malachi remembers "copying" his peers in order to learn their language and behaviors. As stated earlier, Malachi understood the cohesion between language and culture. Therefore, he began to learn the culture as an overt act and means of acquiring the language. Amir and Nazim also learned the culture, but they were less specific in their explanations and did not tie language and culture as explicitly as did Malachi. Additionally, all three participants played soccer in their former schools, and all three were able to carry over their love for soccer in their U.S. schools. Though soccer was deemed less important than academics, the participants did mention playing soccer for the school, and how that helped them socialize with their peers.

Also of note, Amir and Nazim both specifically mentioned that people did not treat them different because of their race, while Malachi made no mention of race in any of his responses. Nazim stated, "I never had issues with anyone treating me different because of, you know, my race, or I was born in the Middle East or whatever." Amir, also

specifically mentioned that race was not an issue for him. Thus, when navigating their linguistic worlds, participants discounted race as a barrier. Instead, they consistently recalled that they were able to make friends with "Americans" – as the participants referred to their English-speaking peers. Nazim highlighted the importance of choosing the "right" friends. He made note of having chosen bad friends and being negatively influenced by them, but later choosing better friends that helped him seek out better grades and future opportunities for himself.

Parents' Perspectives on Cultural Navigation

In the parent interviews, Amir's and Nazim's parents expressed a desire for their child to maintain their home language, as previously discussed in the previous section on Research Question 2a. Additionally, all three parent interviews mentioned a desire for their children to speak their native-language in the home, even at the expense of the parents' own English language development. Parents believed that maintaining the language would also help their child to maintain their cultural heritage. When asked if they encouraged their child's use of their native language and why, Malachi's parents responded briefly, but adamantly with, "Yes, so he could keep our culture in him." Although brief, their statement highlights the perceived symbiotic relationship between language and culture. Nazim also highlighted his parents' fears about the loss of language and culture when he again described his religion's language. He laments that his religious community has lost their old language,

> I don't know if you know this or not, but the, my religion Mendai, actually has its own language. I forget the name of it but it's similar to Arabic. But it's got like different letters, but like it's cool. But it didn't go with us. My mom - I don't know if she still has it, but my mom used to have, like you know the Bible like for Baptism, we used to have our own small Bible, in other words, that was written in

our old, old language. But that kind of washed itself out because of the Islamic religion, in other words. And Arabic was forced down there (in Iraq).

Theme Two: Dual Identities

The second theme evidenced in the participants' responses related to navigating their two linguistic worlds was their development of two identities - one for each of their dominant language communities. While the participants did not use the term dual identity, their descriptions of how they interacted within their language communities expressed this view. For example, Malachi explains how he feels when speaking to other language learners,

> When I'm communicating with people from other country, I treat them like we are on the same path, on the same roads. We own the struggle of where we came from. English is not our first language, it's something that we shared - the same difficulties, and shared the same struggle… But when speaking to people, you know, from other countries, like an image of them with the same struggle that I'm facing. They are facing them, so it would be normal for them.

Malachi identifies with the community of English Language Learners through their similar struggle, but he also identifies as an "American". When using the term "American" the participants always used it in the context of English speakers.

When asked which cultures they currently identify with, all three expressed that they had at least a moderate identification with being "American" (see Appendix 2). In fact, Amir gave equals rankings to his identity as "Middle Eastern" and "American", and Malachi actually ranked his identification as "American" higher than his identification as "Banyamulenge". Only Nazim ranked "American" below his first language culture. Nazim ranked "Middle Eastern" three points higher than "American" on a ten-point scale. When asked whether he feels different when speaking to Native-English speakers, Amir responded, "In the beginning, yes, because in the beginning it was a struggle of me

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copying, but later no. Like right now, no. Like I don't think of them like what do they think of me. I'm like them." Amir's response is representative of all three participants' explanations of how they identified with their two linguistic communities early on, and how that identity developed through the years.

Summary of Results for Research Question 2b

In the first theme – developing linguistic and cultural navigation, participants perceived their cultural navigation and development as an integral component of their linguistic development, and they used that literacy to navigate between their native-language culture and their English-only school culture. Although the participants made mention of several differences between their native cultures and their new "American" culture, they were also able to navigate both worlds once they developed a literacy in their new culture. Amir's stories about the confusion over the sport of soccer, and his discomfort with girls being in the same physical education class as him highlight some of the perceived differences encountered by the participants.

Although the participants often recollected struggles in navigating between the two linguistic worlds, Malachi explained how he learned the culture of his new environment in an effort to also learn the language and survive. Amir and Nazim echoed Malachi's more direct analysis of their two worlds through stories and examples that they remembered.

In the second theme – dual identities, all three participants noted that they identified nearly equally as "Americans" as they do with their native culture; thus, demonstrating that they had indeed developed multiple identities for their respective

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language communities. The participants established a sense of not only bilingualism in their responses, but also biculturalism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the data analysis and the resulting findings were presented. In the tradition of a narrative study, the data was presented through the perspectives of the participants – sharing their stories, opinions, and experiences. The data collected through semi-structured interviews allowed for rich, descriptive conversations to inform the research questions. Data was analyzed through a thematic coding process and cross-case analysis based on the responses of the participants, their parents, and their teacher. The data was organized according to the major themes identified based on the study's theoretical framework and in reference to each of the research questions.

This study was designed to examine the sociolinguistic factors that contributed to the success, as defined as college matriculation, for three immigrant language learners. The research questions sought to also better understand the dual identities inhabited by the participants as they navigated between their home and native culture communities and the English only community of the U.S. public school system. Thus, the purpose of this narrative, multiple case study was to describe the experiences of the three participants from their own words and perspectives. Additionally, the data was triangulated by also collecting interview data from the participants' parents and a former teacher.

The data provided by the participants, their parents, and their teacher provided for rich descriptive accounts of their experiences, and allowed the researcher to analyze the data through a robust coding process that resulted in three major findings. The study found that positive adult influences made a profound impact on the participants' eventual

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college matriculation, participants were able to overcome linguistic barriers through a variety of measures, and the participants were able to develop a sense of dual identities that contributed to their bilingualism and biculturalism.

In Chapter Five, a thorough discussion of the findings is presented, and a discussion of the implications of the findings and resulting recommendations for teachers, campus administrators, and even district leadership is also discussed. These implications and recommendations advocate for actionable response to the study's findings from each of the educators' positions of influence. Then, the researcher provided implications for future research in an effort to provide additional opportunities for researchers to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding the lived experiences of language learners. Finally, Chapter Five ends with concluding remarks for the study and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Implications

Language minority students' college matriculation falls well below that of their

native language peers in Texas schools (TEA, 2019d). Additionally, EL student

performance on state assessments underperforms their native language peers (TEA,

2019d), while the EL drop-out rate far exceeds that of their peers (TEA, 2019d).

However, not all EL students underperform their Native-English speaking peers. This

study sought to counter deficit thinking concerning EL students through careful analysis

of three successful EL students from their own perspectives and experiences. Their

perspective was combined with the views of their parents and one of their teachers in an

effort to triangulate the data. In this narrative case study, the researcher investigated the

factors of success and linguistic development of three former EL students who are

currently, or have completed, studying at an institute of higher education. The purpose of

the study was to share the narratives of these successful language learners to identify their

factors of success and to share their experiences as language minority students in the U.S.

public school system.

The participants in this study were purposefully selected based on their shared

experiences at the same school campuses, and due to their successful college

matriculation. The researcher interviewed the participants using a semi-structured

interview protocol that allowed for significant data collection and rich, descriptive stories

from the participants. Additionally, the same semi-structured protocol was employed to

interview the participants' parents and their teacher, though different questions were used. Results from the interviews and their analysis are presented in Chapter Four of this study. Chapter Five includes a discussion of significant findings from the study, coupled with a connection to the established framework presented in Chapters 1-3. Furthermore, Chapter Five also offers implications and recommendations for educators and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Findings

Through a descriptive narrative approach, this study sought to better understand the linguistic experiences and factors of success for three particular immigrant language learners. Additionally, the study explored the particular phenomenon these participants encountered while acquiring a new language and interacting with a new linguistic community and the corresponding culture. The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants, their parents, and a former teacher in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What factors contributed to immigrant students' academic success as defined as "high school graduation and college matriculation"?

    a.   How did they overcome the linguistic barriers?

    b.   What additional sociocultural factors contributed to their overall success?

RQ2: In what ways did home-life culture and perspectives influence language development?

    a.   What were their parents' perspective on maintaining their native language(s)?

b. How did the immigrant students navigate between their two linguistic worlds?

The coding analysis of the data resulted in several significant findings pertaining to the factors of success, defined as college matriculation, and the experiences and perspectives of these language learners as they navigated their new linguistic environments.

- Finding One: Positive Adult Influences - Adults, both teachers and parents, registered as the most essential factor of success for the participants in this study.

- Finding Two: Overcoming Linguistic Barriers - Intrinsic motivation, sociocultural interactions, and linguistic supports helped participants overcame linguistic barriers through a variety of means.

- Finding Three: Dual Identities - Participants developed a sense of bilingualism and biculturalism through their commitment to their native language and culture and through their embrace of English and cultural navigation.

Finding One: Positive Adult Influences

The impact of adults on the participants' success and eventual college matriculation cannot be understated - as evidenced throughout the data. Participants routinely commented on both the impact that their teachers made and the influence of their parents. Teachers showed a willingness to support these language learners, both academically and emotionally. Students spoke at far greater length about the emotional and motivational impact that educators had on their success. Educators were able to

develop positive and meaningful relationships with the participants in a manner that granted agency and humanity to the participants. Even the participants' parents mentioned the positive impact of their child's teachers on several occasions, as they displayed gratitude towards these individuals who meant so much to their children.

Data-driven standardized assessments and accountability measures hamper the agency of English Learners by reproducing systemic inequalities (Nichols & Campano, 2017), and the participants of this study noted how difficult standardized assessments were for them. The typical college entrance exams, such as the S.A.T. and the A.C.T., were especially difficult according to the participants. However, in opposition to the lack of agency offered to students through the English-dominant nature of standardized assessments, teachers gave participants a sense of worthiness and agency. Immigrant and English Language Learners often must navigate a feeling of otherness (Krulatz et al., 2018), and teachers who develop meaningful relationships with their EL students draw them into a sense of togetherness and support. This push against the feeling of "other" was articulated through the participant interviews as they told about the interest that educators took in their native cultures and their personhood in general.

Participants noted the sacrifices that teachers made, such as staying after school to help, not only elicited a sense of gratitude from them but also allowed participants to interact with a Native English speaker in a safe and supportive environment. This interaction was of paramount importance for learning the language and the unspoken cultural expectations. Participants learned the language through social interaction with their teachers in a safe environment, echoing the importance of the social nature of linguistic acquisition articulated by the study's framework and based on the work of

Bloom and Greene (2015). Teachers ensured that language acquisition was not limited to reading and writing skills but instead encompassed the more extensive understanding of literacy as described by Freire (1983). The power imbalance between teachers and students (Hatt, 2012) begins to dissolve somewhat when the teacher provides emotional and motivational support to students because they speak to the humanity of the child. Thus, positive adults used their power and influence to help language minority students, rather than perpetuating a system of marginalization.

The other significantly influential adult relationship for the participants was the relationship they had with their parents. Second only to teacher impact in the amount of time allotted by participants in this study, parental influence was viewed as inspiration and support for their success. Krulatz et al. (2018) explained how the feeling of "otherness" can extend into immigrant language learner's homes as the youth are able to learn the new language much faster than the adults. This language disparity may cause the youth to lose their native language and their means of communicating and connecting with their family. However, in this study, the disconnect between the children and the parents was not observed.

Participants noted that their parents insisted they use their native language within the home. As a result, participants never lost their ability to communicate with their parents, nor did they lose their identification with their native culture. This insistence from their families to retain their native language grants validity to Gracia's (2009b) insistence on referring to language learners as emergent bilinguals. Although the school did not contribute much to the development of these participants' bilingualism, the view of these students as emergent bilinguals may have altered the singularity of the school's

view of language acquisition. Further, all three participants mentioned their religion as a component of their cultural identities. Lanza and Svendsen (2007) noted the impact of religion on language retention in their study. This study aligns with their study in that religion was tied to language. The linguistic tie to religion was especially important for Nazim, whose family lamented the loss of their traditional religious language and were trying to relearn it. That loss of language, tied to their religion, was a motivator for them to continue the use of Arabic within their home. They feared losing even more of their culture if English supplanted Arabic as the only language for their children.

Finding Two: Overcoming Linguistic Barriers

Participants noted several linguistic barriers, as detailed in Chapter Four, and as they spoke about how they overcame these daunting language and cultural experiences, they mentioned three primary means of support: intrinsic motivation, sociocultural interactions, and classroom linguistic interventions. Intrinsic motivation was described as "mindset" from one of the participants, and he attributed this mindset, as least in part, to his upbringing. The other participants also noted that their personal motivations played a role in their success at school. Participants noted that they refused to quit, even when they were feeling overwhelmed, and even that their competitive nature played a role in their desire to excel. These intrinsic motivations may be attributed to their familial value systems and result from the internalization of the values represented within their family culture.

However, more notably, participants linked their new cultural experiences with their ability to overcome the linguistic barriers they encountered. From the responses of the participants, their parents, and their former teacher, the most significant linguistic

barriers for the participants fell within the walls of the school itself. Interestingly, the classroom linguistic interventions that the participants remembered as most helpful were also those interventions that required social interaction with peers or a trusted adult.

In further agreement with the study's framework that posits sociocultural interaction as foundational to literacy development (Bloome and Green, 2015; Dyson, 2008; Gee, 2015; Ranker, 2008), two of the three participants, and their teacher, explained the importance of interaction with their peers. The teacher mentioned how she tried to allow for additional collaboration with her classes that had EL's because they seemed to benefit so much, and enjoy the interaction. Additionally, the participants themselves noted how they were able to develop language and even cultural understanding as a result of interacting with their peers. The participants also included the unstructured times as integral. Malachi even explains how he would watch other students and try to learn their culture because to know the culture is to know the language. This concept aligns with the study by Hinders and Thornton (2017) that suggests students learn just as much from their school experiences as they do from the formal curriculum. As an example of Freire's (1983) conclusion about literacy, the participants were extending their knowledge into their new world rather than just learning the academic skills of literacy as they interacted with their peers.

Finding Three: Dual Identities

Participants in the study noted that they felt isolated from their peers at times because they were often the only language minority students in a classroom. Thus, the participants' language separated them from their English speaking peers and made them to feel as though they were something "other." While the participants did not display

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animosity towards their peers, they did expand on their need to cultivate dual identities to survive within their two linguistic worlds. Due to the participants' continued use of their native language at home, they were able to maintain their linguistic ties to their native culture and family. Again, reinforcing the notion that participants were emergent bilinguals (Garcia, 2009b) early in their educational careers, and have now become fully bilingual.

However, they also existed within an English-only institutional school environment that did little to foster their native language or culture, outside of relationships they formed with dedicated teachers. Thus, the participants developed a cultural navigation for their new environment and even developed a sense of identity as members of their new language community in order to develop the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) required to excel within the dominant English Language community. Two of the participants rated their identity with their native culture and as "American" near equally. The other participant also identified as "American", but to a lesser extent than he identified as Arabic. This dual sense of identity developed by the participants demonstrates their development as bilingual and bicultural individuals.

These findings offer a similar example to Dyson's (2008) study that demonstrated how a child's understanding of the complexities of culture helped them to maneuver within the academic setting. As the participants grew in their understanding of the language and cultural norms of their new environment, they were better able to navigate within that community. Also, as they developed literacy of the complexities of the English-only school system, they were better able to identify with that community. Further, Delpit (1995) highlights the dominance of official institutionalized English as a

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marginalizing force working against language minority students. In response to the dominance of English, the participants of this study noted that their home languages were not valued by the school system. Although they did note that several specific teachers showed an interest in their native cultures, this was not representative of the school system as a whole. Instead, their parents cultivated a sense of value in bilingualism. Thus, the participants in this study developed dual identities that they described as separate, but not altogether disconnected. Their description of their dual identities aligns well with the concept of double consciousness first established by DuBois (1903). The participants, though not explicitly using the terminology, evidenced their sense of double consciousness as the described how they navigated the disparate worlds of their home and school communities (Scott and King, 2014; Weismann, 2001). Participants, and their parents, notably viewed their sense of bilingual and biculturalism as a benefit. Participants were able to add their English language community literacy to their native language literacy, rather than replacing one for the other.

Summary of Findings

The study's findings articulated the need for educators to understand the significant role they play in the potential success of their English Language Learners within the school environment. The positive relationships that educators develop with their language learners not only supports them academically, but also grants agency to the learner. Furthermore, the power dynamic that exists between the teacher and student is mitigated somewhat when the teacher supports the humanity of the child through encouragement and motivation. Participants in this study spent more time describing the emotional support of their teacher than they did on any other component discussed within

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this study. Participants also noted the support they received from their parents as well. It was from their parents that the participants learned to value bilingualism and biculturalism. However, as described in the following section for the implications of the study, this sense of biculturalism should also be encouraged within the school system.

Further, the sociocultural interactions of language learners are also supported by teachers within the classroom. As teachers allow language learners more authentic opportunities to collaborate with their English-speaking peers, they enable the EL students to develop cultural and linguistic literacy. Findings also demonstrate the importance of sociocultural opportunities that exist within the school physically, but outside of the structured times.

Finally, the findings also demonstrated the concept of dual identities and double consciousness developed. These concepts were exampled as the participants navigated their two complex linguistic worlds. Participants were able to maintain their native language and identity through their parental guidance, and also construct an identity for their new language community. Rather than assimilating into the English-only community of their school, the participants maintained dual identities that included their native culture. Further, the participants and their parents perceived their dual identities as a benefit rather than a deficit.

Implications and Recommendations for Educators

The findings from this study resulted in several important implications for educators. As these findings narrate student perspective, educators have the opportunity to grow in their understanding of experiences of their immigrant students and language learners. Thus, this perspective illuminates the student perspective that often gets

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overlooked in the multifaceted and complex public school system. The opportunity for

student voice and the resulting findings has the potential to significantly impact

educators, and consequently, improve the educational experience for language learners.

The implications derived from this study span the entire educational system from teachers

in their classrooms, to campus administrators making decision about their campus, and

even implications for district leadership. As the experiences of the individual student are

heavily impacted by the decisions made from all levels of the educational system, each

group of educators could benefit from the findings of this study. The next section in this

study outlines the implications as they apply to each group of educators and the

recommendations for these groups. These implications and subsequent recommendations

are then described in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

Overview of Implications

Teachers play a crucial role in pushing back against a deficit model of thinking

especially in reference to their ELL students. As this study indicated, teachers play the

most crucial role in the factors of success for language learners. English Language

Learners need to develop positive and meaningful relationships with their teachers.

Teachers should provide more than just academic support. Teachers should seek to also

provide emotional encouragement and motivation. Language learners require linguistic

accommodations that support language and academic development, and they particularly

benefit from one-on-one support. Further, classrooms should offer peer interactions and

collaboration opportunities for language minority students to engage with their English

speaking peers, and teachers should seek to foster bilingualism and biculturalism with

their language minority students.

For campus administrators, the prospect of better understanding the perspectives and experiences of their ELL students provides the opportunity for better informed campus procedures for the overall learning environment. Campus leadership should establish a campus culture and climate that welcomes all learners, languages, cultures, and individuals and celebrates these differing funds of knowledge as vital components of the learning environment. Campus administrators can foster authentic sociocultural interactions by allowing and encouraging all students to interact in unstructured environments and extracurricular activities on campus. Additionally, teachers need to be provided with meaningful professional learning opportunities to better support language learners in the general education classroom and to build global and cultural competency for themselves and their students.

The implications for school district leadership lie in the potential for better informed decision-making. As district leadership decisions often affect students through policy and resource allocation, it is imperative that these leaders entertain the perspective of the students' themselves. District leaders should seek to provide bilingual educational opportunities and encourage native language retention for all language minority students. Also, families experiencing linguistic barriers to education need support in navigating the complicated U.S. educational system. These implications for educators are described in detail in the following sections. Additionally, recommendations to address the implications are also included in each section.

Implications for Teachers

All three participants and their parents resolutely insisted that their teachers made a profound impact on the participants' success in the school setting. Participants recalled

that their teachers provided them with academic and linguistic support that aided in the development of their new language and also helped them acquire the subject matter content. Furthermore, and even more pronounced from the perspective of the participants, was the emotional and motivational support they received from their teachers. Time and again, participants recalled feeling overwhelmed and discouraged with the monumental task of learning a new language, culture, and academic content. Nevertheless, their teachers provided them with the encouragement and motivation to push forward. Although participants mentioned their own intrinsic motivation and even their mindset, much of this mindset can be viewed as internalizing the growth mindset approach as encouraged by teachers.

Additionally, the participants noted that the linguistic accommodations and interventions they received helped them significantly. Participants particularly noted one-on-one support, but also mentioned reading assistance on assessments, vocabulary support, and collaboration with their peers. Additionally, participants lamented that some common educational practices, such as reading aloud or cursive handwriting, did not help or may have even interfered with their language and academic development.

Peer interactions, both structured and unstructured, ranked second in their importance as factors of success from the participants' perspective. Only the support they received from their teachers ranked higher. Participants noted that authentic opportunities to use their new language skills in a low-risk environment were particularly helpful. Additionally, participants learned to mimic accents and patterns of speech through sociocultural interactions. These peer interactions also teemed with opportunities to develop cultural understanding.

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Finally, participants shared their struggles with the language and cultural barriers associated with their new environment, and how important it was for them to maintain their native language and culture. Unfortunately, in their experience, the participants noted that their native culture and language were not supported in their school environment and would have been lost if not for their parents' insistence on speaking their native languages at home. One participant even went so far as to say, "I mean when I started elementary school… the whole focus was to kill that Arabic and learn English." Participants noted that navigating their two linguistic worlds was difficult and that developing literacy in their new language community was essential, while also desiring to retain their native language and cultural sense of identity. Participants noted that they currently feel as though they belong almost equally to their two primary language communities as a result of their parents' insistence on maintaining their native language.

Recommendations for Teachers. It remains imperative that teachers seek to develop meaningful relationships with their English Language Learners. When teachers are willing to engage in authentic and meaningful conversations with English Language Learners, it offers them a safe place to practice their developing language skills, and they receive the added benefit of social interaction. Additionally, the participants in this study reinforced the importance of the encouragement they received from trusted adults. While it does take additional time to develop relationships and to grant one-on-one support to students, these relationships offer a sense of worthiness to language minority students who often feel that their native culture – thus, their identity, is not valued within the larger educational system.

The investment in relationships with these students will pay significant dividends throughout the year and even beyond. The participants in this study noted time and again the overwhelmingly significant role of educators; additionally, the participants also noted their intrinsic motivation. However, this motivation may be more linked to the culture and supports surrounding them within their sphere of socialization. As the participants were encouraged to succeed by influential adults in their lives, they internalized this sentiment and it became a part of their identity. Educators encouraged participants to develop a growth mindset that encouraged them to enjoy learning and achieve their best. Thus, educators have a spectacular potential to impact students, even those whose parents are not as encouraging as the participants in this study. Teachers who invest in their students will be able to impact their students own internal motivations.

Teachers also have the opportunity to allow for student agency by showing English Learners that their language and culture matter. Teachers should take the time to inquire about the cultures and traditions of their minority students. Teachers may even benefit from conducting some research of their own to better understand the backgrounds and culture of their EL students. Rather than discounting the cultures of minority students, teachers can build upon their funds of knowledge and incorporate their culture and experiences within their learning activities.

Linguistic interventions such as oral assessments, clarification of vocabulary, and even appropriately modified learning activities are essential components in a linguistically diverse classroom. However, this study, and the research framework informing this study, emphasize the importance of social interactions for language and literacy development. Teachers have the opportunity to support authentic sociocultural

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interactions between their EL students and their Native English peers through collaborative activities within the classroom. Language learning encompasses much more than the literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. While these linguistic literacy skills are important, they ignore the social component of language development that stems from authentic social interactions. Not only do these collaborative activities allow EL students to develop language skills and cultural navigation, but they may also benefit the global competence of their Native-English peers (Luke, 2003).

Furthermore, teachers should seek to foster bilingualism and biculturalism with their English Language Learners. The participants in this study were forced to develop their native language identities away from the school setting, and they may have lost their identification with their native culture had their parents not been so insistent that they maintain their native language use within the home. However, teachers have the opportunity, and responsibility, to encourage their English Language Leaners to develop fluency in English while also maintaining the use of their native language. As educators seek to better serve language learners, the move away from terms such as "language Learner" and towards the term "emergent bilingual" (Garcia, 2009b) could help educators focus on the benefits of bilingualism, rather than starting from a deficit model. While the terminology may be slow to change – even within this study, the researcher chose to still use current terms that agree with what is being used by educators and policy makers, the heteroglossic understanding that comes with the term "emergent bilingual" could help educators utilize students' native languages as a positive and meaningful base of knowledge with which to develop literacy.

Teachers are often the most significant influence in a child's life - second only to their parents. As a result, educators should seek to encourage language minority students to use their native language often and allow them opportunities to share their cultural heritage and traditions with their classmates. Rather than viewing English Learners as having a deficit, teachers should celebrate the rich funds of knowledge that these students bring to the classroom, and utilize those funds of knowledge to accelerate learning.

Implications for Campus Administration

As this study focuses significant attention on the role of culture and language in regard to the learning environment – so too does the culture and community of the school campus matter for language minority students. As campus leaders, principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches play an outsized role in establishing the school culture and climate. This study illustrates that English Language Learners consider their relationships with positive teachers and educators as the single most crucial factor in their success.

Additionally, the teachers sacrificed their time after school by investing in the participants of this study. The participants viewed this sacrifice as a significant contribution to their success. However, when participants reflected on this time, it was the relational piece that impacted them the most. Therefore, the time after school was not as impactful as the relationship itself. Therefor EL students' success is not dependent on the availability of teachers and their afterschool duties. Teachers need not stay after school to positively impact EL students, because the relationships that they cultivate are far more essential.

Participants also commented on how they often felt that their culture and language were not valued within the school system and that they would not have maintained their native language and culture without their parents' influence. The school campus must create a campus-level culture that also values the languages and cultures of minority students, and also celebrates these differing funds of knowledge as a vital piece in the overall learning environment. Rather than suppressing or even just ignoring the cultures and languages of minority students, campuses should encourage these students just as the parents in this study encouraged their children to continue to use their native languages and maintain their native cultural identities.

This study demonstrated how vital peer interaction was for language learners as they developed literacy in their new language and culture. Thus, campus leaders have a responsibility to EL students to allow and encourage authentic sociocultural interactions through structured social opportunities, unstructured social opportunities, and extracurricular activities. The campus may have little control over the lack of peer interactivity outside of the campus, but within the walls of the school, these social interactions should be encouraged. The data analysis from this study, and several other studies, such as Bloome and Green's (2015) work, expound on how intertwined literacy and social interactions are. Participants in the study ranked social interactions as their second most influential factor of success.

Additionally, many of the items listed in the implications and recommendations for teachers may require additional training and professional development for educators. As English Language Learners require peer interaction with their Native English speaking peers, EL students should not be resigned to an isolated ESL-type of class for

extended periods of their school day. Rather, it is important that language learners are allowed to also attend general education classes for significant portions time. As a result, this recommendation will also impact all teachers. Thus, all teachers on a campus need the professional resources and skills to not only accommodate for the linguistic needs of language learners, but also provide these students with peer interaction opportunities and emotional support as needed.

Recommendations for Campus Administrators. Many campuses attempt to engage with their minority cultures through international celebration events – often featuring food from the represented communities. These events are by no means without merit, but they are also minimally engaging for language and cultural minorities. Thus, in an effort to build upon the funds of knowledge from their minority students, campuses must go beyond the occasional "international night" and work to include culturally relevant lessons into the curricular framework of the campus. Campus leadership should provide teachers with ample opportunity and resources to incorporate culturally relevant literature and activities within their classrooms. Further, campus leadership should model these practices within their staff collaborative activities, and encourage school-wide respect of minority cultures and languages.

In response to the implications for teachers, campus leadership share responsibility in the endeavor to support language learners in the general education classroom. This support will require meaningful professional development opportunities for all teachers and staff. Appropriate resource allocation towards these professional development opportunities is a must for any campus seeking to improve the educational experience of their language learners. These professional developments should focus on

what the teachers may be able to do within the classroom and school day. Although some teachers are willing and able to stay after school, as was the case for the teacher in this study, many others are not. Additionally, many language minority students are also unable to stay after school for one-on-one time with their teachers. Therefore, professional developments should emphasize the importance of building a relational culture within the classroom context that supports English Learners.

Further, the nuances of language development and the progression of learning a new language remains a complex process often involving many aspects such as: code-switching, a silent period, and even nonverbal understanding. Teachers would benefit from professional developments that emphasize how languages are acquired, and how language acquisition may manifest within the classroom setting. Further, educators would benefit from trainings that help them support language acquisition for beginning learners all the way towards the more advance language learners. These learning opportunities will help educators as they navigate the complexities of supporting language learners of all abilities within their classroom. In combination with professional development, campus leadership should also encourage peer interactions among students within and outside of the classroom.

Understandably, all school district and campus budgets are tight, and there exists an ever-increasing demand upon teachers and staff. However, these demands must not be an excuse for limiting the peer interaction opportunities afforded to language minority students. Language learners in particular, would benefit from reduced class sizes that allow their teachers to work with them one-on-one and provide increased peer collaborative activities. Additionally, campuses must evaluate the non-structured times

within the campus. Times such as passing periods, lunch, before and after school non-instructional times provide language learners the opportunity to converse with their Native English speaking peers in an authentic manner. The research encourages campuses to allow for these times and to be careful not to limit social interaction between students during these periods of the day.

Further, campus leadership is encouraged to offer multiple extracurricular opportunities for EL and native language students to engage in less structured activities. As an example, the participants in this study all mentioned their after school soccer team as a crucial component to their sociocultural interactions with peers. Lastly, campus leadership should also allow language minority students to use their native language during these unstructured times, and not reprimand students for not using English at all times. Accepting a plethora of languages to exist on campus allows for a campus environment that validates minority languages and encourages bilingualism.

Implications for School District Leadership

While the implications for educators on the campus are significant, this study also sheds light on systemic implications for educational institutions as a whole. Not every decision concerning language learners can be made at the campus level; thus, district leaders have an essential role in helping English Language Learners. One of the most decisive indictments of the school system from the participant interviews was the perception that the school system devalued bilingualism. One of the unique and important qualities of this study is that it involved language minority students that are under-represented even within minority language programs. In Texas, bilingual programs are overwhelmingly supportive of Spanish (TEA, 2019b); however, few bilingual programs

exist for speakers of other languages. As a result, bilingualism in languages other than English and Spanish would appear to be discouraged.

Additionally, the participants and their parents consistently displayed gratitude to the teachers for helping the participants as they navigated the complex academic environment of the U.S. school system. The parents of the participants indicated that they placed a high value on education – even mentioning the school system as a reason for immigrating to the U.S.; however, they also mentioned that they were unable to help their children with college applications, course selections, or even extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, the language barrier for the parents was significant, and it kept them at a distance from the educational system. The lack of partnership with language minority families and communities also sends the message that these communities are not valued.

Recommendations for School District Leadership. School districts have the ability to shift their rigid perception of language instruction away from an English-only environment and move towards increased support for bilingualism. In doing so, districts would provide language minority students with greater agency while also utilizing their funds of knowledge that stem from their native cultures and languages. Thus, districts would benefit from adopting a more encompassing terminology for language learners such as "emergent bilinguals." The terminology used within the education system for language learners has evolved through multiple iterations throughout the past decade, with EL currently being the leading term; however, even this term highlights the negative rather than building upon benefits of bilingualism.

While finding the personnel needed to incorporate even a one-way bilingual program for every language minority community may be impossible, it is possible to

better recruit and retain minority language educators through increased incentives and through a commitment to training and better educational opportunities that cultivate minority language teachers.

Additionally, many high schools in Texas only offer a few second language options for students – most of which are rooted in European languages. The school that the participants attended, for example, only offered four languages at the time of their attendance – German, Spanish, French, and Latin. At one point, EL students were even enrolled in these other language courses as a requirement for graduation. One participant in particular, noted his frustration with trying to learn yet another language when he was already fluent in Arabic. The requirement was lifted; however, when EL students were allowed to receive credit by exam for their native language. Thus, as a small step in the right direction, districts should begin recruiting language minority teachers from major immigrant communities to teach alternate language options for students. These options would add value to the language minority students and their cultures, and provide students with additional language options to meet the requirements of graduation.

Further, school districts need to provide opportunities for language minority parents to connect with the school system. The parents in this study lamented their inability to fully understand the educational system due to the language and cultural barrier. These parents understood the importance of education, and the educational systems of their previous countries, of course, but they lost their cultural capital when moving to their new home in the United States. School districts should include parent information seminars and literature facilitated by competent translators at a minimum. As a means of further reaching out to these communities, school districts would be wise to

offer parents and adult family members opportunities to learn English outside of the regular school hours. These opportunities would allow parents to learn English, as all three parents in this study expressed a desire to do so, and provide opportunities to engage with the community in a meaningful manner.

Implications for Further Research

While this study provided significant data and implications for the field, it also brought about exciting opportunities for further research within the sphere of language learners and dual identity development. Due to the nature of this qualitative narrative study, it was unable to capture the lived experiences of a large majority of immigrant students in Texas; however, this limitation also provided in-depth description and analysis. The study also sheds light on possible additional studies that will add to the body of knowledge for language learners and their experiences. Some suggestions for future research include are proposed below.

This study focused its attention on immigrant language learners and their experiences within the predominately English-only school environment. However, another study of similar design could seek to better understand the perspectives on language learners enrolled in different school environments - such as those enrolled in dual language or bilingual programs. Often times in programs such as these the minority language is spoken by a far greater percentage of the school and local community. Thus, EL students' perspectives in these programs may provide additional understanding of the EL experience for many Texas children due to the large number of bilingual programs across the state.

A similar case study approach conducted with native English speaking participants enrolled in dual language programs could also add to the body of knowledge surrounding language development and sociocultural context. A study conducted with dual language students study would further inform dual identities and shed light on the power dynamic of the majority population when introduced to minority languages and cultures. Additionally, as dual language programs are growing in popularity throughout the state, it is important to better understand these programs from the students' perspective.

Another possible qualitative case study could include bilingual language minority students who participated in a structured bilingual program in U.S. public schools. In contrast to the experiences of the participants in this study who experienced linguistic isolation due to a lack of other students in their language community, a study consisting of bilingual students that explores their perceptions of dual identities could add to our understanding of language development and especially inform the research on dual identities. As bilingual students often have a school community that consists of both their native language community and a school community that functions in the English-only climate of the public school system, bilingual students' development of dual identities may provide beneficial insight.

Finally, a fourth proposal for further study could be a case study similar to this study that includes female participants and participants from other areas of the U.S. However, the research questions could remain the same. While this study provided significant findings and implications, the study was limited to three male participants. Although participants of this study were purposefully selected, the participants were not

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selected based on gender. It was by chance that all three happened to be male. Therefore, a study that also included female voice would be beneficial. The participants were; however, selected based on location – participants all attended the same middle and high school. Due to the large number of immigrants and language learners across the United States, studies conducted in other areas would provide further insight as well.

Conclusion

In Chapter One, this study brought to light the dire situation facing many language learners in Texas public schools. Unfortunately, TEA (2019d) data shows that language minority students do not perform as well on standardized assessments as their native English speaking peers. Additionally, English Language Learners also drop out of high school at a far greater rate than their native English peers. This study sought to better understand the perspectives and experiences of three English Language Learners who not only graduated from a public school on time, but who also achieved college matriculation. Additionally, this study sought to counter deficit thinking with regard to ELL students through careful analysis of the participants' experiences.

The historical lineage and current research surrounding language learning in the United States is described in Chapter Two of this study. The review emphasized the sociolinguistic turn in language development and literacy and the impact this conceptualization has had on language learners. Additionally, the review explores identity development through three phases of understanding; then analyzes language development in relation to power dynamics. The review ends with an examination of the

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literature surrounding linguistic development specifically within the school setting; thus, presenting the case for additional research opportunities.

In the third chapter, the researcher presented the design and rationale of this study and need for a study to examine the perspectives of successful language learners. The participants of this study were known to the researcher and were purposefully selected due to the success they experienced in school and their status as former refugees and language learners. This narrative study sought to understand the factors of their success and how participants navigated their two linguistic worlds. The study participants provided rich and descriptive accounts of their educational experiences and their perspectives on why they were able to achieve success as measured by college matriculation. Additionally, the study incorporated the perceptions of the participants' parents and even their teacher to ensure triangulation of the data.

In Chapter Four, the data was organized and presented based on thematic analysis. Several relevant themes emerged from the participant narratives, and these themes highlight important implications for educators of all levels. Participants described the spectacular influence and crucial support they received from their teachers and other educators. Participants attributed their success in school to the linguistic, academic, and especially the emotional support they received from their teachers. Additionally, the study demonstrated the experiences of participants as they navigated their two linguistic worlds and developed dual identities. Participants' parents also noted their experiences and perceptions for maintaining their native language and culture with their children.

Finally, the last chapter of this study presented significant findings from the data analysis and the implications these findings have for educators. The study found that

educators had a profound impact on the success of their ELL students. Additionally, although language barriers exist for English Language Learners, these barriers were overcome by the participants. Further, participants also developed a sense of dual identities when navigating their two linguistic worlds. The researcher also included recommendations for educators based on the study's findings. Educators of all levels who desire to support their language minority students should seek to incorporate their students' funds of knowledge, while also providing them with the emotional and motivational support needed to assist them in their journey from emergent bilinguals towards fully bilingual. A better understanding of the lived experiences of language learners may finally provide educators with the understanding they need to fully vanquish deficit thinking in relation to language development, and instead harness the literacy inherent in all languages and cultures for their benefit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Participant Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

1. What country or countries did you live in before coming to the U.S.?

2. Why did your family choose to immigrate to the U.S.?

3. What language(s) does your family use at home?

4. What language did you use in school prior to coming to the U.S.?

5. Did you study English before coming to the U.S.? If so how often and in what context?

6. Where do you attend currently attend college?

    a. What is your major?

    b. Why did you choose this major?

    c. When do you expect to graduate?

    d. Will you pursue graduate school?

    e. What are your career interests? Why?

    f. What made you decide to go to college?

    g. What factors contributed to your entrance into college?

    h. What was difficult about getting into college?

7. Describe your personal journey from refugee to U.S. citizen.

Experiences

8. How well did your education outside of the U.S. prepare you for education within the U.S.?

9. How well did your education in U.S. public schools prepare you for college?

10. What factors led to your success in U.S. public schools?

11. What was difficult about acquiring English?

    a. What interventions did you find most helpful?

    b. What interventions did you find least helpful?

12. Which classes were particularly difficult and why?

13. Do you feel you developed social language first or academic?

14. Describe a time when you struggled with learning English.

15. Describe a time when you struggled with American culture.

16. What was the most stressful part of school? Why?

17. Describe a typical day as a middle schooler.

18. Describe a typical day as a high schooler

19. Describe a particular moment or memory that stands out to you.

20. How did your parents encourage your language development?

    a. Do you use the same language at home as you do with your friends?

    b. How is your sense of identity different when communicating with your native-language community versus communicating with your English community?

21. What linguistic issues do you still struggle with?

22. What are were/are some of your goals for your education?

APPENDIX B

Parent Interview Protocol

Demographics

1. Why did you choose to leave your home country and come to the U.S.?

2. What factors contributed to this decision?

3. What concerned you most about the move?

4. Were you fluent in English prior to arriving in the U.S.?

5. Do you regret your decision to come to the U.S.? Why or why not?

Experiences

6. What were your thoughts on U.S. schools prior to arriving in the U.S.?

7. What factors do you think led to your child's success in school?

8. Did you encourage your child to practice English at home? Why or why not?

9. Did you encourage your child's continued use of their native language? Why or why not?

10. What were/are your goals for your child's education?

APPENDIX C

Teacher Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

1. What subject(s) do you teach?

2. How many years have you been teaching?

3. Are you ESL or bilingual certified?

4. Do you speak any languages other than English?

5. What experiences do you have working with minority cultures and languages?

Experiences

6. What were some of the challenges associated with teaching ELL students?

7. What instructional approaches did you enact to meet the unique needs of language learners.

8. How did you encourage language development from the students?

9. Was there a particular memory that stands out as an example of the unique experience of teaching language learners?

10. Did you build upon the funds of knowledge and cultural heritage of immigrant students to when planning for instruction?

11. What interventions did you use to engage ELL students?

    a. What interventions did you find most helpful?

    b. What interventions did you find least helpful?

12. What were the instructional goals you set for your ELL students?

APPENDIX D

Table D.1

Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q)

Question	Amir	Nazim	Malachi
(1) Please list all the languages you know in order of dominance			
	1. English 2. Arabic	1. English 2. Arabic	1. Kinyamulenge 2. English 3. Swahili 4. French
(2) Please list all the languages you know in order of acquisition			
	1. Arabic 2. English	1. Arabic 2. English	1. Swahili 2. French 3. Kinyamulenge 4. English
(3) Please list what percentage of time you are currently and on average exposed to each language	English 60% Arabic 40%	English 95% Arabic 5%	English 60% Kinyamulenge 30% Swahili 8% French 2%
(4) When choosing to read a text available in all of your languages, in what percentage of cases would you choose to read it in each of your languages?	English 100% Arabic 0%	English 100% Arabic 0%	English 100% Kinyamulenge 0% Swahili 0% French 0%

(Continued)

Question	Amir	Nazim	Malachi
(5) When choosing a language to speak with a person who is equally fluent in all your languages, what percentage of time would you choose to speak each language?	English 100% Arabic 0%	English 50% Arabic 50%	English 10% Kinyamulenge 90% Swahili 0% French 0%
(6) Please name the cultures with which you identify. On a scale from zero to ten, please rate the extent to which you identify with each culture. 1 = very low identification; 5 = moderate identification; 10 = complete identification	Middle Eastern - 5 American 5	Middle Eastern - 8 American 5 Mandai 5	Christian 10 American 8 Banyamulenge 7
(7) How many years of formal education do you have?	16	16	17
(8). Date of immigration to the USA, if applicable.	2010	2008	2009
(1) Age when you:			
(a) began acquiring English	11	9	11
(b) became fluent in English	16	12	Still Learning
(c) began reading in English	12	9	12
(d) became fluent in reading English	13	13	15
(2a) Please list the number of years and months you spent in each lanuage environment			
(a) a country where English is spoken	11	13	11
(b) a family where English is spoken	11	6	0
(c) a school and/or working environment where English is spoken	11	13	11

(Continued)

Question	Amir	Nazim	Malachi
(3) On a scale from zero to ten, please select your level of proficiency in speaking, understanding, and reading English			
(a) Speaking	9 - Excellent	9 - Excellent	7 - Good
(b) Understanding spoken language	9 - Excellent	9 - Excellent	8 - Very Good
(c) Reading	9 - Excellent	7 - Good	7 - Good
(4) On a scale from zero to ten, please select how much the following factors contributed to you learning English (1= minimal contributor; 5 = moderate contributor; 10 = most important contributor)			
(a) Interacting with friends	10	7	10
(b) Interacting with family	5	0	2
(c) Reading	8	5	9
(d) Language tapes/self instruction	4	5	5
(e) Watching TV	8	6	7
(f) Listening to the radio	8	6	5
(5) Please rate the extent to which you are currently exposed to English in the following contexts (1 = almost never; 5 = half of the time; 10 = always):			
(a) Interacting with friends	8	10	9
(b) Interacting with family	8	3	4
(c) Reading	9	10	8
(d) Language tapes/self instruction	1	0	0
(e) Watching TV	8	10	8
(f) Listening to the radio	9	10	7

(Continued)

Question	Amir	Nazim	Malachi
(6) In your perception, how much of a foreign accent do you have in English?	2 - Very Light	3 - Light	5 - moderate
(7) Please rate how frequently others identify you as a non-native speaker based on your accent in English (1 = almost never; 5 = half of the time; 10 = always).	2	1	4

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