

LATIN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT IMMIGRANT NARRATIVES:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

By

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To my daughters: Sophia and Gabriella

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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This narrative inquiry explored the identities of three Latin American immigrant adolescents as learners in the United States. The purpose of this study was to understand immigrant adolescent identity transitions through their own narratives. The study sought to answer the overarching question: How do Latin immigrant adolescents see themselves within the socio-cultural context of northeast Florida in school and home life, and how do those identities contrast with school and home identities in their native countries? This study was conducted primarily in a middle school in North Florida, an area that is experiencing rapid growth in immigrant communities. The participants emigrated from Honduras, Colombia, and Cuba in the past year. They are English language learners and part of the ESOL student community. The researcher collected data by using the methods of group and individual interviews, and observations from November 2013 to May 2014. Guided by the works of Gee, (2001), Riessman (2008), Archakis and Tsakona, (2012), the researcher analyzed the youth narratives for content and form. Drawing on theory which stresses continual situated identity construction within social engagement in cultural, historical, and spatial terms (Gee, 2001; Vygotsky,

1978; Bakhtin, 1981; Crotty, 1988), and the awareness of others in the learning process, (Vygotsky, 1972, Donovan and Bransford 2005; Delpit, 1995), the researcher found that the focal students are positioned at the margins of the English speaking community and therefore see themselves as irrelevant in the school. The participants negotiated their identities by reconstructing community within their Latin American cultural geographies and national roots in and outside of school. In this way, spatialization was a prominent feature of their identity narratives. This study suggested the need for educators to view immigrant adolescents as having agency, in order to provide middle spaces between the opposing poles of desire and abjection in relationships between native and immigrant students in the school. Thus, this study calls for on-going inquiry into the changing lives of immigrant students as they encounter a shifting set of characters and settings in order to guide practices of school social climate and integration of students across cultural, and linguistic borders.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Immigration can be a dynamic building tool for nations and individuals. It may also mean unforeseen changes and transitions resulting in complex cultural encounters which affect individual identity development. The interaction of macro and micro forces of immigration has been a driving force in the ongoing identity construction of immigrant and host populations worldwide.

In the United States in particular, immigration has been a constant factor affecting American culture and society (Suarez-Orozco, 1998a). From the first modern wave of immigrants from England and Northern Europe, to the present fourth wave of immigrants mainly from American and Asian countries, the context of life in the United States is said to have changed considerably (Foner, N., 2003; Katz, M., M. Stern, 2006). However, structurally the United States continues to be identified as an Anglo-Protestant nation where English language, law and custom remain central to the national identity.

Recent immigrants arrive in the United States to normalized discourses of immigration. However, the conditions of recent migrations and the contexts of reception are different from previous waves of immigration. An exploration of new immigrants is valuable in order to begin to get a sense of the new young people in our communities who are attending school and will be confronting and adding to the complexity of our multicultural society.

Immigration to the United States has risen considerably in the past twenty years due to the repercussions of neo-liberal economic practices involved in globalization. Neo-liberalism is a term commonly used among Spanish speaking scholars. In Latin

America the neo-liberal economic model is associated with free trade agreements, deregulation and privatization. This model has led to rapid urbanization, urban inequality, unemployment, poverty, and crime, which in turn have caused migrations (Portes & Roberts, 2005). Corrupted neo-liberalism in Latin America created great wealth for those few profitably involved in the global economy which displaced the small farmer and indigenous populations (Zuniga & Hernandez-Leon, 2005). These farmers looked to the north for new places to escape crime and poverty. The population shift in Latin America significantly impacted the U.S. South which became a new destination for immigrants due to labor opportunities in its growing food and construction industries (Odem & Lacy, 2009).

In addition to farmers, the new immigrants also include educated populations. In most cases, they were part of the workforce whose services became obsolete in the neo-liberal or global economy (Tokman, 1982). These workers include laborers such as non-contractual wage earners, vendors, and unpaid family workers, but also elite workforce, such as university graduates and public sector employees (Portes & Hoffman, 2003). The new immigrants complicate the overall within group diversity of Latinos in the United States.

Immigration affects American culture and society as host and newcomer accommodate one another. Immigrant incorporation theories suggest that co-ethnic and societal contexts of reception are important in shaping the identities and integration experiences of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Portes & Zhou 1993, Suarez-Orozco, 1998a). Stepick & Stepick (2001) proposed that local relationships between established residents and immigrant newcomers are influenced by national and local

contexts and can affect the immigrant newcomer's feelings of belonging (2009). Some of the national and local contexts affecting the integration and reception of immigrants include preexisting ethnic and race relations, the labor market, government policies and the general changing nature of societies (Reitz, J. 2002). The complex societal factors mentioned converge in the public school which is a microcosm of society and reflects the characteristics of the community it serves. Therefore school is an important vantage point to observe community and analyze holistically the expanding discourse practices which inform how immigrant individuals are internalizing and reacting to their new complex contexts (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti 2005).

Literacy acts or performances are driven by socio-historical contexts. Through situated literacy practices researchers can note societal structures of reception and integration of immigrants and how immigrants interpret and express themselves within those structures. School literacy practices facilitate or restrict the acquisition of skills controlling individual participation and development 'to and through' literacy (Zentella, 2005). It follows that through literacy practices individuals begin to make sense of their new surroundings and acquire values and beliefs concerning how and why literacy is practiced, including who dialogues, when, where and to what extent (Gee, 1990). Furthermore, individual narratives provide a site of intimate expression about learning, participating, and self-conceptualizations across legitimizing forces of nature, institutions, discourse, and affinity groups. (Gee, 2000-2001).

Florida is a location of interest for this research as it consistently ranks among the top five states in the United States with immigrant populations and absolute immigrant growth in the last two decades (Terrazas, 2011). Florida has had more than a

100% increase in immigrant population, as noted in the 2010 Current Population Census (CPC) figures. In addition, the diversity of sending countries from Latin America to Florida has also increased the diversity of Hispanics in this State (Hirschman & Massey, 2008).

In North Florida, Latin American presence increased by over 90% from 1990 to 2000 (Suro, R. and Singer, A., 2002). This presence then doubled from the 2000 census to the 2010 census (PEW Hispanic Report, AC), indicating that North Florida has become a new Hispanic destination in the last twenty years. However, unlike South Florida, North Florida has not had experience dealing with the integration of large numbers of immigrants and must now begin to understand the new growing Hispanic population in order to address the needs of a changing community (Singer, 2004; Donato et al. 2007).

In this study I explored the personal meaning behind the statistics by illustrating the situated identities of adolescent immigrants through narratives. These narratives focus upon the transition of youth immigrants from childhood to adulthood in the midst of the multiplicity of new voices, languages, cultures, laws and institutions across multiple contexts and locations. The participants' interpretations and behaviors in the new surroundings will influence adaptation and opportunity to participate in further meaning making across the contexts they inhabit. School literacy practices will inhibit or expand immigrant youth's personal growth and shape their identities within their new social constellation.

The goal of this study is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex identities of Latino youth and the ways in which those school literacy practices influence

their self-positioning and planning for their future lives in the United States. To guide my study, I will triangulate the following theoretical social frameworks; new literacy studies, situated identity and narrative identity theory. These theories are frameworks of social practice useful for documenting and analyzing life experiences within a constructionist theory of knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

The application of new literacy studies is a situated literacy theory involving the exploration of literacy events and practices in context (Hamilton, 2000) within their spatial locations (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). A literacy event is an observable act involving literacy, while the literacy practice is the cultural force behind the event. The practice of literacy, or the motivation or lack thereof to read and to write are social relationships, attitudes, values, feelings and beliefs that bring about literacy acts (Hamilton, 1998) which display identity. Getting a sense of literacy events in socio-cultural contexts can serve to help understand the situated nature of identity. In other words, many fine details of context are involved in what meanings are constructed and identified as relevant.

Situated identity theory similarly addresses the socially situated literacy practices of individuals (Gee, 2001). From the time individuals and families decide to emigrate they begin to engage in new literacy events and practices. In doing so, they construct new knowledge and ways of beings in different situations. They must act to get information and gain some sense of the practice of migrating. Socially situated literacies and identities begin to shift across circumstances. Referring to identities as socially-situated highlights the idea that individuals perform somewhat differently as they move in and out of different social encounters (McCarthy & Moje, 2002) and confront new

practices and meanings which restructure their social contexts. As contexts change for immigrants and their families so do family activities, roles, relationships, and individual identities.

Narrative Identity theory assumes that individuals form an identity by internalizing life experiences and shaping them into an evolving story of the self (Bruner 2002, Labov, 1972). The story provides a sense of unity and purpose in life by integrating past, present and imagined future events within the characteristic elements of a story; characters, episodes, imagery, a setting, plots, and themes (McAdams, 2001). Through personal voices one can get an understanding of how immigrants interpret and express themselves within literacy contexts.

The immigration process affects individual stories within the family differently, causing personal change and change in the family structure (Rosenthal, Whittle, & Bell, 1989). For instance, often parents work long hours and children are left home alone (van den Hemel, 1996a, 1996b). This particularly affects the adolescent children who may be called upon to assume greater responsibilities at a time when adolescent identity is an important challenge (Douvan, 1992; Swanson, Spencer, & Petersen, 1998) even without the added stress of learning a new language, rules and acceptable customs outside the home culture, as is required of immigrants.

The generalized notion that children adapt easily to change is problematic for families and for schools (Igoa, 1995). This assumption particularly affects adolescent immigrants who have little time to learn the new language and to incorporate themselves into the new academic environment before facing the high stakes of standardized assessments. Immigrant adolescents must confront questions about their

present and future lives when they and their families have not yet figured out their new contexts. The assumption that young students will find their way is also problematic for educators whose education has not prepared them to work with students who have recently arrived and whose first language is not English and (Gibson, Gandara, & Koyama, 2004; Harper & De Jong, 2003).

Assuming that adolescents are malleable still leaves to question; what will they turn into? For these immigrants, adolescence and acculturation overlap (Pumariega, 1995). Adolescence is understood as a time of transformation. The Latin root of the word adolescence, “doler” signals that the process is painful. It is a time of doubt and of making choices as to how children “re-edit” the self across familiar contexts (Blos, 1966). The immigrant adolescent ecology is situated within a broad realm of uncertainties which are bound by economic, political, racial, historical and socio-cultural discourses and are complex, unfamiliar, and out of the control of the family unit.

Literacy, understood as social cultural ways of processing our environment, is a broad unit of analysis in educational research. Social-cultural literacies are daily practices which can enhance or diminish personal development by controlling access to participation in different contexts (Zentella, 2005, Fernand, 1994). Through situated literacy practices schools and communities can structure integration or segregation of immigrants. In turn, immigrant integration experiences contribute to the dynamics and character of the school community, regional and national contexts (Forner, N. 2003, Suarez-Orozco, 2005). In other words, the integration experience can have numerous reciprocal effects.

Statement of the Problem

We know from scholarship that immigrant students are overlooked and underserved in U.S. secondary schools (in Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Furthermore, there is among Latinos a new youth population that must be considered. They are the immigrant adolescents from countries which have experienced aftershocks of revolutions, as well as sudden economic changes due to changing global economies. These adolescents are forced to migrate to other countries in Latin America and Europe, but primarily to the United States. Here non-English speaking adolescents are expected to attend school and expeditiously learn English and new subject matter to comply with standardized academic assessments in English just as any other child who was born and raised here and whose first language and culture has prepared her for school literacies. They must comply with assessments crafted for native cultures. We also know, from national statistics, that this policy is problematic since many immigrant youth are not performing well in schools. This issue affects educational outcomes in Florida, particularly when considering the increase in the Latin American presence in the northern part of the state. According to the Florida Department of Education, over half of the English Language Learner population in Duval County is Hispanic. These students also comprise over half of the current 15% Hispanic status drop-out rate. Though the 15% dropout rate is an improvement from previous years for Hispanics, the rate is still significant (31%) among the foreign born, indicating that differences in immigrant status matter (Duval County Quick Facts, US Census, 2010).

For today's immigrants the consequences of dropping out of school are precarious. Until recently, dropping out of school resulted in a blue collar job to make a living and live reasonably well. The changing context of immigration, the job market and

the world economy prevent recent immigrants from full participation in a culture which is increasingly technological, multi-literate, and requires a high school diploma to compete for any type of employment and further education.

Latino adolescent voices especially those of new immigrants who are foreign born and do not yet speak English are not sufficiently represented in the current literacy literature. There is substantial research on Latino immigrant adolescents; however, much of the literature concentrates on health issues (Guarini, 2011; Updegraff, & Umana-Taylor, 2010) and substance abuse (Allen, et al. 2008), and/or Mexican populations (Leach & Bean, 2008). In addition, much of the research is quantitative in design (Bacio, Mays, & Lau, 2012) and does not address the lived experiences of recent adolescent immigrants qualitatively through their own stories.

The growth in immigrant populations is attributed to recent migrations from Central and South American, in particular from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, and from Cuba (Jones-Correa, 2007). The lack of their representation in identity studies is a void which compounds the lack of understanding of the complexities of all Hispanics/Latinos in the United States (Marrow, 2007). Research indicates that there is a lack of understanding and clarity about this community (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004), leading to normalized and generalized deficit attributions about Hispanics/Latinos (Suzrez-Orozco, 2003, Brisk, 2006, Fu & Graff, 2009).

There is a need to study adolescent immigrant literacy practices in identity terms. Lareau (1993) in studying the role of class in literacy and student identity emphasizes the need to explore “the juncture of biography, history and social structure” (Lareau 1993, p.182). There are studies explaining those issues separately. Those studies focus

on broad yet singular aspects of Latino adolescents, these include: ethnic and minority identity (Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales, & Bautista, 2005), addictive behaviors (Dishion, T., Nelson, S., & Kavanagh, K., 2003), and deficient educational outcomes (Brisk, 2006). These studies point to the complexity of this large group and the lack of recognition in identity terms of this large and increasing group of immigrant Americans.

Purpose of the Study

There is the need to learn who the new immigrants are and how we can recognize their ways of learning. The purpose of this narrative study is to understand the identities of three non- English speaking Latin immigrant youth who arrived in North Florida from Latin America within the last year. The research sought to add to the understanding of adolescent perspectives on immigrant ESOL education and resettlement in the United States by identifying themes in their constructions of knowledge. The goal is to add new and varied voices to the discussion of what it means to be a new Latin American immigrant adolescent in north Florida, USA.

My study focused on the personal stories of each adolescent in terms of their socio-cultural practices and their negotiation of identity as they transition to living in the United States. The study was guided by the overarching question: How do Latin immigrant adolescents see themselves within the socio-cultural context of the southern United States across school, home, and community, and how do they negotiate their identities in those contexts?

Narrative inquiry was chosen for the methodology of this study as it is a suitable approach for exploring what literacy does (Heath and Street, 2008) and how individuals make sense of their lives with the narratives available to them (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This approach facilitates the study of language and literacy in the daily lives of

individuals (Creswell, 2008). According to Carr, narrative also pertains to large scale human events and experiences (1986), such as, it could be argued, the uprooting and resettlement experiences of immigrant families.

Narrative inquiry is a means for exploration of personal stories as they are being internalized, “structured and re-structured” (Dyson & Genishi, 1994), “told and retold”, (Bruner, 1994). Therefore, narrative inquiry as a qualitative method of analysis addresses the continuous nature of experience and does not seek to provide conclusions of certainty (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Significance of the Study

In the current dynamic contexts of global economic transitions and family migrations, understanding immigrant youth identities are important issues for educators worldwide. The issue of Hispanic literacies is especially important to the United States as a nation since US Census projections state that by the year 2030 over half of school children will be Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 in Masten, Liebkind, and Hernandez, 2012 p.2).

Approaching adolescent Latino identities through their individual narratives will add to the knowledge base of the educational community from the personal perspective of the immigrants, who are the holders of that knowledge. This is particularly relevant to communities experiencing changing labor markets where immigrant laborers will add cultural and ethnic diversity to their populations. Those involved in immigrant literacy, such as the students and families themselves, ESOL educators, educators and researchers in general stand to benefit from relevant current data.

Latino narratives can help educators get to know their new students by shedding light on cultural artifacts and contextual configurations of meaning, since people use

artifacts and conceptualizations to manage their lives (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning about individual literacy practices also addresses issues of adolescents' self-perception within the different contexts, particularly as students in school where teachers and peers do not yet know how to recognize them. As summarized by Nieto (2000), "by listening to students, we can learn how they experience school, how social and educational structures affect their learning, and what we can do to provide high-quality education for them" (p.6). Providing high quality education for all students is a community investment in itself.

Definition of Terms

ACCULTURATION. Acculturation is a term used to explain what happens when a group or an individual comes into continuous contact with a different culture. Early conceptions defined acculturation as "cross-cultural imitation" (Powell, J, 1880). Later Thurnwald understood the concept as "a process of adaptation to new conditions of life" (1932 p.557).

ASSIMILATION. As a socio-cultural term, assimilation means incorporating new cultural norms at internal, thought and belief levels, as well as external material levels of knowledge.

CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE. The creation of new meaning and understanding in social interaction.

CONSTRUCTIONISM. This term includes the cultural, historical and critical aspects of social constructions of knowledge. Constructionism refers to the way knowledge is constructed among members of a discursive community, (Hruby, 2001, Crotty, 1998).

CULTURE. Culture refers to the many characteristics of a group of people, including attitudes, behaviors, customs and values that are transmitted from one generation to the next (Matsumoto, 2000). It includes both internal-abstract and external-concrete aspects of knowledge of particular groups.

DISCOURSE. Words grouped in statements which define and construct the objects of knowledge (Foucault in Joseph, 2004).

HISPANIC. A term used in the United States to refer to persons of Spanish-speaking origin or ancestry.

IDENTITY. Identity is associated with the distinctive characteristics of individuals and groups in thought and practice. The construct is considered a tool useful in understanding and comparing attributions made about the nature of things, individuals and groups. Identity as a social term is considered an improvisational social activity which can be observed through literacy events and practices (Bartlett, 2008).

LATIN AMERICA. A geographical denomination for countries in the American continent where a romance language is primarily spoken, usually Spanish, Portuguese or French.

LATIN AMERICAN. A term used to identify a person from Latin America.

LATINO. A term used in the United States to refer to people of Latin American origin or descent.

LITERACY. There is no definitive consensus on the meaning of literacy. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." Evolving definitions include a complex set of abilities to understand and use the symbol systems of a culture, such as media and electronic text, for personal and community development. The import of literacy therefore, is discerning meaning from the world around us.

MULTILINGUALISM. In the multiliteracies sense this term includes exposure to different standard languages and also to different social languages (dialects, registers, peer discourses, strands in popular culture, and specialist discourses of profession, technology and interest) highlighting that social languages can be more different to each other even within a language like global English (New London Group, 1996)

MULTILITERACIES. A term which includes the variability of meaning making in different cultural, social or domain-specific contexts, and the multiple ways in which written-linguistic modes of meaning interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial patterns of meaning (New London Group, 1996).

MULTIMODALITY. A term for the increasing convergence of visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes of meaning in the new communications environment (New London Group, 1996)

NEO-LIBERALISM. An economic and political term used to signify liberal globalization of markets.

PERSON. The identity projected to others vs. the self which is the identity one feels being (Besnier, 1991, 1995).

SELF. The identity one feels being vs. the identity one projects to others (Besnier, 1991, 1995)

STATUS DROPOUT RATES. The percentage of persons aged 16–24 who are out of school and who have not earned a high school diploma.

SUBJECT POSITION. The self as a product of the discourse and social context (in Joseph, 2004)

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter explores the relevant literature which assisted me in developing the theoretical lenses for this study. According to Creswell, in qualitative studies literature review plays a minor role. Furthermore, in narrative inquiry the goal is to “minimize the use of literature and focus on the experiences of individual(s)” (2008, p 516). Therefore, in order to gain a broad view of the experiences of immigrants I review the social and cultural practices underpinning personal narratives.

I start by reviewing the literature addressing definitions of social theory, as well as conceptualizations of literacy, identity and immigration. I also do a brief review of recent youth immigrant literacies and Latino/Hispanic identities. Finally, I provide a brief review of the historical landscape of the Latin American diaspora. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Theoretical Overview

Social Theory

Subscribing to Vygotsky’s (1978) and Besnier’s (2007) statements that local literacy practices are re-enactments of larger structures and social practices, I utilized several forms of social theory to guide my study. Social theory is a broad perspective that seeks to understand human interactions. It is subdivided by platforms on social issues. There are frameworks that seek to understand and explain society in broad terms. For instance some fundamental theories are conflict theory, which focuses on coercion and power in society, and symbolic interactionism, which relies on the

meanings and symbols people develop in the process of social interaction (Blumer, 1986).

The structures mentioned above are the foundation of other theories which narrow the scope on certain social issues, for instance, game theory and social learning theory. Social theory was fundamentally relevant to this study because it is the foundation of the socio-cultural and situated nature of learning and identity. The following are frameworks related to this study.

Critical and Post-Colonial Theories

There are social theory frameworks which, in addition to conceptualizing social issues, seek action and change. Theories such as critical theory and feminist theory seek to uncover assumptions about social life in order to improve the lives of individuals. Related Post-Colonial Theory explores the Eurocentric assumptions and power structures and how these structures and assumptions dominate politics of knowing. These theories, also called Deconstruction Theories, explore the extent to which domination is a part of discourse itself (Sharp, 2008).

Situated Literacy Theory

Following the critical approach, literacy studies has developed a theory of situated literacy which is a theory of literacy as a social practice. Following the conception that learning is a result of everyday practices and interaction, Barton and Hamilton (2000) outline an understanding of literacy as a social activity. This broad understanding of literacy considers different types of literacy structures used by institutions in culturally, historically and politically significant ways.

Situated Identity Theory

Situated identity is a theory associated with symbolic interactionism (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977). It proposes that situated identities must be established so that interaction may occur. According to Goffman, some kind of identity or attributions about an individual in a particular setting must be negotiated before there can be “expression” and interaction (1959). Therefore, situated identities are the attributions made about individuals in particular settings which can facilitate or obstruct interaction and expression (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977). It follows that situated identity is negotiated and performed within contexts with specific sources of power (Gee, 2000-2001; Lewis & Del Valle, 2009 p.307).

I will draw from mentioned social theories and subscribe to the notion that identity is an improvisational social activity which can be observed through literacy events and practices (Bartlett, 2008). The three frameworks introduced above provided a management system for observing the focal youth and interpreting their narratives.

Literacy Conceptualizations and Identity

The term literacy has conceptualizations oscillating from static views of literacy as product to fluid views of literacy as processes of learning. For much of its history being literate meant a familiarization with literature as a means of gaining knowledge or being ‘well educated’, (Moulton, 2004). In the scientific age beginning at the turn of the eighteenth century, the concept of literacy was aligned with genetic notions of cognitive abilities associated with skill in a writing system (Willis, 1994). In relatively recent times literacy scholars have turned to new social conceptualizations which include all social and cultural activity through language as a mean of making sense of ourselves and our surroundings. Therefore, a definition of literacy then includes acquiring knowledge

through human social-cultural relationships which may include reading and writing print (Heath, 2008; Purcell Gates, 1995; Hamilton, 2000; Ferdman , et al 1992)

Cultural-Literacy Challenge

Due to the vast human range of activities harnessed through language the term literacy has been hard to define succinctly. According to Heath (2008), literacy is an expression of culture. Heath states that language and literacy work go “hand in hand with cultural patterns” (2008, p.6). She also highlights the difficulty of understanding how culture mediates the language and interactions involved in ways of knowing. The cultural-literacy challenge has been explored in different ways at different times by academics in multiple disciplines (in Ferdman, 1994). Scholars generally agree on the interconnectedness of literacy and culture since literacy is the medium through which we interact with the human environment (Bartlett, 2008, Ferdman 1991).

The Autonomous Model

Literacy within an instrumental focus is understood as solely cognitive skills of reading and writing print. Alphabetic coding and decoding is a model which has been termed “autonomous” (Gee, 1996).

This model of literacy focuses on individual technical operations. The model is termed “autonomous” because being literate is considered independent of its social-cultural and historical context (Street 1995, Gee, 1995). In educational practice, the goals of the autonomous model of literacy are the acquisition of the standard official language and culture (New London Group 1996, Wink 2001). From this perspective the institution through its teachers controls what, how, when and to whom knowledge is distributed (Larson & Marsh, 2005) without consideration for the social and cultural issues of each particular student.

The Ideological Model

Contesting the autonomous model of literacy, Street proposed that literacy cannot be understood apart or autonomously from the social structures in which it is embedded; the processes by which reading and writing are learned are what construct the meaning of literacy for particular individuals (1984).

The ideological model situates literacy within everyday life. In this sense, literacy, like culture, is an active process of meaning making (Street, 1993). Therefore, literacy like culture and identity is tied to practice. Thus, the ideological conceptualization does not quantify literacy but instead it focuses on the specific practices and relationships within time and place and regards cultural and social relevance. This social understanding of literacy has complex identity and political implications for teaching and learning. Tensions between the autonomous and ideological models of language are associated with opposing theories of literacy based on the literacy thesis and post structural understanding of literacy.

The Great Divide and the Literacy Thesis

Influenced by dualistic scientific thought, The Great Divide Theories focus on cognitive differences among literate and non-literate societies. The theories propose that there is a difference between literacy and oracy and that literacy as reading and writing ability promotes cognitive development and even social economic growth (Collins and Blot 2005). Great Divide Theories were developed from the foundational work by Levi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* (1962) and Goody & Watt's *The Consequences of Literacy* (1963, in Reder & Davila, 2005). These theories, concerned with the individual, were primarily developed through the discipline of cognitive psychology (Scribner & Cole, 1978).

Development in cognition was labeled the “Literacy Thesis”. This thesis proposes that reading and writing promote abstract thinking and less dependency on concrete uses of language. As Davila points out, this interpretation of literacy is thought to be of great benefit to societies as it facilitates logical thinking. Consequently this frees individuals and societies from irrational modes of thought (2005).

Post-structural Views of Literacy

Poststructuralists such as Derrida and Foucault questioned the propositions of the literacy thesis (Collins & Blot, 2003). The poststructuralist movement reacted against limiting views of literacy much like system theorists reacted against reductionism in the natural sciences. Natural scientists such as Ludwig von Bertalanffy and M. Ross Ashby emphasized the interaction of real systems within their environment and the need to analyze them in context (Weinberg, 1975). Poststructuralists proposed the same for the social sciences. They proposed that language systems alone are not the only means to convey meaning (Rasch & Wolfe, 2000; Peters & Burbules, 2004). They suggested a look between the lines and at the margins of societies, that is, the “in-betweens” and the “marginalized”, to begin knowledge building (Derrida, 1966 in Purdue online). This approach to understanding meaning making turned to social conceptualizations of literacy with a critical approach. Several movements were produced as a result of looking at literacy meaning making tools. These movements all incorporate social frameworks in order to study all aspects of awareness and understanding (Gee, 1996).

New Literacy Studies

New Literacy Studies integrates the contexts of multiple disciplines: linguistics, anthropology, social, political, critical theory and education in order to approach

practical theoretical problems pertaining to literacy (Gee in Rogers, 2003, p. xi). In his paper entitled “*The New Literacy Studies and the ‘Social Turn’*”, Gee discusses many of the related social cultural theories and methods involved in new understandings of literacy. Gee references many well-known literacy scholars such as Barton, Hamilton, Street, and Heath, et al, for foundational examples of New Literacy Studies.

Within the New Literacy Studies perspective literacy is about knowledge as a means of enacting identity by knowing how to proceed in daily life. Furthermore, according to Street (2003) social literacies and the ways in which people address reading and writing are rooted in conceptions of knowledge and identity, which are also rooted in cultural world views (Street & Besnier, 1994).

Identity Conceptualizations

Literacy and identity are interdependent since being literate means engaging in unique activities that define persons as they negotiate their position in socially constructed environments.

Stemming from the Latin “idem” meaning “same” or “identical” the term identity has been used in scholarship to differentiate degrees of sameness and therefore distinctiveness among entities, (Gleason 1983). Like literacy, identity is a construct which has been interpreted as either individual and stable or social and dynamic.

Social Cultural Foundations

Vygotsky and Mead put forth social cultural perspectives, the first focusing on the process of intellectual development and the latter on the products of development. Vygotsky was focused on the subjective “I” processes and Mead on the objective “me” or the finished act, which can be reflected upon by the self, and can be observed by others. As Mead put it: “the subjective attitude which we instinctively take can be

presented only as something experienced – as we can be conscious of our acts only through the sensory processes set up after the act has begun” (1913, 374: transcribed by Andy Blunden, The Mead Project).

Although Vygotsky’s approach to human development is social, the individual mind is a central focus, and though he wrote little about identity itself, his concepts when associated with Mead’s social cultural theory, apply to the understanding of development of individual identities in society (Holland & Lachicotte, Jr., 2007). From their standpoint, socio-cultural approaches to human development emphasize the negotiation of knowledge based on social practice with language (Bird, 2005).

Psycho-Social Conceptualizations

Erik Erickson proposed his idea of eight stages of identity development. The fifth stage addresses adolescent identity confusion when questioning who they are and who they are becoming. Erickson considered both the intra and inter processes by locating identity “in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture” (Erickson, 1968, p.22), however, his emphasis was on the mental health of the individual and the struggle to find a stable location within a changing society. This is a psycho-social understanding of identity and the focus is individual adaptation and wellbeing (Holland 2007).

New Socio-cultural Studies of Identity

Poststructuralists view literacy acquisition as a process of identity reconstruction (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000; Collins & Blot, 2003; Gee, 1996, 2000; Street, 1984, 1993). Situated identity extends the frame to focus on the cultural processes that shape and reshape identities. A situated identity is considered a “person’s location in social life” and it is displayed through the interaction of both personal and social identities

(Hewitt, 1997, p.90). The enactment of a situated identity is driven by the perceived role requirements of the actors in a particular situation, otherwise known as the symbolic interaction, a theory proposed by George Herbert Mead (Blumer, 1969).

Like the stable self, described by Erickson, the social cultural frame of identity has roots in social psychology. As stated, Erickson addressed a stable identity while new social-cultural studies consider identity an improvisational social activity which can be observed through literacy events and practices (Barton & Hamilton; Bartlett, 2008). This implies that identity could be interpreted in social cultural active environments when individuals display, or in Hewitt's terms, "announce" the role they are enacting (1997).

Intersectionality: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and the Mainstream

Gender, race, and ethnicity are some of the intersecting ways in which identities are culturally narrated and subject to situated expectations of mainstream views (Brah and Phoenix (2004). Women's and men's life experiences differ according to ethnicity. Outside of their culture they may be recognized only in stereotypical ways. Lewis argues that power relations between audience and narrator within native dominant contexts position the immigrant as a threat to essential cultural understandings (2008).

Race, ethnicity and gender are significant social cultural components of identity. Traditional definitions of these constructs relate to biological and sociological factors. Race takes shape through a person's phenotype, such as skin and eye color, hair color and texture, etc. Ethnicity is ascribed through reference to ancestry, nationality, language, and culture. According to Hirschman, both terms are synonymous since they are categories based primarily on genealogy. Wade, however, claims that each of these

terms is read within the social context of Western historical practices, highlighting that the terms are not neutral or transparent (1997).

Examining race in historical context provides an understanding of how the term has changed over time. Race was not always a defining marker of identity. Banton argues that in Europe from the 16th to the 19th century the word race was used in Biblical terms to refer to “lineage” and the role of appearance was not a fundamental identifier (1987). However, at the end of the 19th century science took a turn towards eugenics attaching deadly social cultural dimensions to the term race.

Currently race and ethnicity are markers of contrast based on skin color (O’Hearn, 1998). In the United States mainstream identities are white and, according to Chavez and Guido-DiBrito, mainstream Americans manifest ethnic and racial identities through culture: behaviors, values, beliefs, and assumptions. They argue that for white identities, ethnicity is usually unconscious because social-cultural norms have been grounded on white racial and cultural frameworks. On the other hand, Latin Americans become increasingly conscious of their race upon arrival in the United States (1996).

Due their racial ambiguity, Latin Americans have been legally categorized as White, not White, and somewhat White depending on the political issue at hand (Lopez, 2007). Similarly, gender and ethnicity intersect with race and other social, cultural, and historical categories, creating multi-layered stories of self-definition which are not easily recognized by the mainstream (Rodrigues, 2000)

Language and Social-Cultural Identities

Individuals use language to perform the social roles or identities they enact as members of a social group. Displays of identity or “acts of identity”, can emphasize personal and social cultural aspects of the individual through language (LePage &

Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Individuals can express themselves explicitly to others through language and through cultural material markers such as food, dress etc., (West, 1992). Also, language plays a role in the interpretation, acceptance or rejection of the beliefs of others (Hewitt, 1997). Language, therefore, is an important element of the interpretation and expression of identity since it is through language that one can abstract and enact the distinctiveness of an identity (Campbell, 1997).

Agency and Structure

Identity, however, is also an agent of language and its transitions. Identity forms and molds language since it is central to how language operates, how it evolves, and how it is taught and how it is learned (Joseph, 2004). Accumulation of experiences and interpretations about ourselves and surroundings restructures identity, and in turn the new identities restructure language systems. Through abstraction or internalization of language systems in our social environments we develop the ability to use language systems in conceptual terms (Vygotsky, 1978) and to enact, or create meaning through different modalities such as speaking or the use of visual and graphic signs (Saussure in Lyons, 1981). Therefore, through language we internalize and create meaning.

Ethno-linguistic Identities and Education

Interpretations and manifestations of identity become more complex as they include wider social contexts which involve political, cultural, and ethnic aspects of the individuals and societies (Joseph, 2004). Studies reflecting social, ethnic, and linguistic differences in multicultural contexts note the way political and structural tensions use language to mark identity borders (Schmid, 2001). These studies reveal the tendency among students and educators to subscribe to dialect misconceptions such as English bias, language purity myths, literacy myths, and misconceptions regarding oral

performances (Kells, 2002; Velez-Rendon, 2010). Studies on language policy also mark divisions among languages of instruction and language programs such as English only, bilingual programs, dual immersion, and heritage language programs as ways to deal with the multiple national and cultural backgrounds currently represented by students in classrooms across the United States (Hornberger, Brisk 2005, 2006; Garcia, 2001; Zavala, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Morales, 2002; Stepick & Stepick, 2002; Valdés, 2000; Zentella, 2002). The way minority languages are negotiated at the socio-cultural and individual levels yield various degrees of ethnic viability and identity development at the macro and micro levels (Barrette, 2006).

Identity and English Language Learning

Norton and Toohey proposed that language learners in the process of learning a new symbolic system are also in the process of meaning making in identity terms (2011). As learners acquire a second language they also gain awareness of a developing a second language identity (Granger, 2004). In the case of immigrants learning English, studies reveal that identity is a struggle. Norton argues that a learner may be a highly motivated language learner, but she still may have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community, which may, for example, be racist, and/or nativist (Norton, 2000). Thus, while motivation is a positive aspect of language learning, it is primarily abstract and requires an appropriate socio-cultural environment for there to be personal investment (Norton & Gao, 2008). Norton also directed Anderson's term "imagined communities" (1991) to the language learning community. Norton argued that in many language classrooms, the targeted community may be a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships (2001). She also developed the idea of an imagined community which offers

possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Schools in structuring the language learning experiences of immigrant learners separate them from the mainstream. Districts often begin the process of identification by sending a language survey home with the student. The survey asks the parents or guardians about language practices at home. If a language other than English is spoken at home, the student may be identified as a language minority student and labeled in some way as deficient. Thus, students begin to construct their school identity based on labels such as, “limited”, “at risk”, and “disadvantaged” and their identities at school become labeled as ELL or ESOL (Brisk, 2006). Thus the school’s socio-cultural practices are internalized (Vygotsky, 1972) and performed accordingly (Hewitt, 1997).

Norton points out that for students to develop language learning and competent bilingual and biliterate identities they must be engaged in practice (1995). However, immigrants in schools are in many ways removed from participation in mainstream language environments (Urrieta, Quach, Lan Hue, 2000), but even when placed in mainstream environments status and power differences make interaction difficult (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Language Acquisition & Second Language Learning

Language acquisition as a central component of literacy and identity is the focus of early education. The National Center for Family Literacy reviewed the research and found that a young child’s ability to talk, listen and understand spoken and written words is related to later literacy achievement in reading, writing and spelling (NCFL, 2008). The importance of speaking the official language of instruction early in life underscores the time consuming and developmental nature of literacy and language learning. It also

highlights the language disadvantage non English speaking immigrant youth confront in the learning process and the academic race to perform at standard state mandated levels.

Second Language Learning in Adolescence

Although first and second language acquisition theories are related (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005) there are many differences between them. A major difference is that unless the second language is acquired in early childhood, second language acquisition is not part of the learner's primary cognitive development. The later second language acquisition begins, the more it is an intentional process guided by motivation. This is important to immigrant youth since they are beyond childhood and their motivation is dependent on social factors beyond the home which are many times beyond the learner's control. In schools, physical proximity of native speakers and second language learners do not necessarily imply interaction (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Stereotypes, status and power differences make it difficult for different cultural groups to affiliate (Sheets & Hollis, 1999) and therefore interact in the ways outlined in language acquisitions theories.

Unlike the acquisition of speech in the first language, learning to speak, read and write in a second language is a conscious and effortful process. For most children it is part of formal school education and it is subject to the notions of success and failure determined by an institution for every grade level. For immigrant students, the older they arrive in U.S. schools the greater the demands are on their English language proficiency (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003) and the less time they have to comply with school instituted demands on literacy.

Second Language Proficiency

What constitutes competence or proficiency in a second language is debatable (Hornberger, 2003). Traditionally second language acquisition research has focused on measuring individual linguistic competence (Block, 2007a). However, since it is impossible for educators to observe the internal processing of students' language acquisition, Norton proposed to set aside traditional views of language learning and instead to focus on the reciprocal effect of the social context on the learner during the language acquisition process (1995). She stated that:

Many have assumed that learners can be defined un-problematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual (p. 12).

Though first and second language learning theories are related the social cultural contexts are quite distinct.

Identity Work as Language Pedagogy

To confront the complexities in second language learning situations Cummins suggests a transformative approach to language pedagogy. The approach is based on critical thinking in order that students become conscious of their situation in society. The critical approach allows students to reflect on what they know thereby doing identity work which affords them agency in their own learning (2000). Research has proposed that non critical transmission based pedagogies fail to build on the preexisting knowledge of the language learner (Warschauer, Knobel, & Stone, 2004), thereby limiting the students' active control of their own learning (Cummins, et al, 2005).

As part of identity investment in language learning proposed by Norton (1995), Cummins supports bilingual programs that teach both the dominant language of a society and the native language of the individual which will facilitate literacy and academic success in the second language (2000). Though some scholars question the continued linguistic status quo of academic language in Cummins transformational pedagogy (Petrovic, John E.; Olmstead, Susan, 2001), many support bilingual and bicultural identity education as a means of biliteracy development (Norton, 1995, Brisk, 2006), acknowledgement of social capital (Moll 1992), and cultural history capital (Portes, 1995).

Bilingual Pedagogies

A working definition for bilingual education is academic instruction in two languages. However, it has been noted in scholarship that historically bilingual education emerged as an answer to profound educational, cultural and political injustices (Akkari, 1998). Distinctions are made between instruction that fosters bilingualism, and environments where there are bilingual students but bilingualism is not encouraged, such as the weak forms detailed in Baker's typology (2004) detailed below.

Skutnabb-Kangas (in Fishman, 1999) outlines the goals she considers to be strong measures in bilingual education:

1. High levels of multilingualism
2. A fair chance of achieving academically at school
3. Strong, positive multilingual and multicultural identity and positive attitudes toward self and others.

Skutnabb-Kangas outlines what are considered to be the ideal form of bilingualism. In most states bilingual education includes programs which are considered

to have transitional or maintenance goals of the first language while adding a second language.

Transitional and Maintenance

In the United States differences in the aims of education are significant and lead to distinctions among multilingual programs (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998).

Colin Baker has noted that bilingual education is a ‘simplistic label for a complex phenomenon’ (2006, p.213). In order to clarify the issue he notes two overarching aims of bilingual education; one is to transition students to monolingual education and the other is to maintain bilingual education. Baker clarifies that transitional bilingual education aims to assimilate the student into the dominant culture shifting the child away from the home minority language. Maintenance bilingual programs aim to affirm the students’ cultural identity at home. Otheguy and Otto (1980) posed an additional claim concerning the dual purpose of maintenance bilingual education; static maintenance and developmental maintenance; the latter form aims to develop both the first and second language skills while static maintenance, which affirms the first language, develops only the second language.

Maintenance bilingual studies show that bilingual language use is layered in social contexts. Romaine (1996) refers to two main situations, the home domain and the business or school domain. Fishman further layers the mentioned private and public contexts into 5 domains: family, friends, religion, employment, and education (cited in Romaine, 1996). Garcia and Diaz (1992) added the social interactive contexts framed by intimacy, informality, and formality. MacGregor-Mendoza added the dimensions of internal, emotional and purposeful language use in bilinguals (1999). These studies found similar bilingual language use in individuals from different ethno-linguistic

backgrounds. The second language is used mainly in the public domain of school and employment. In view of the findings mentioned, Hasson highlights the dependency on context for prompting the ways a second language is used in everyday life (2006).

These bilingual studies focused on immigrant literacy show not only similarities in the language use of different ethnic groups but also the importance of their whole language repertoire in performing their situated identities.

Summary

Early childhood education is invested in language learning since language is a fundamental aspect of literacy. A child's first language is the primary linguistic tool of functioning and learning. The performance of academic literacies for English language learning immigrant youth is compromised since they are only beginning to acquire the official language of instruction and social-cultural conventions. Expectations based on native proficiencies with the English language and culture place immigrant youth at a disadvantage which affects their academic performance and related identities.

Teaching and learning experienced by immigrant youth typically exclude the development of their first language, which is the language of literacy development (Cummins, 1991). Literacy scholars suggest intercultural educational approaches for immigrant youth (Fu, 2003, Moll, 1992; Delgado-Gaitán, 2004; Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991; Gibson, Gándara, & Koyama, 2004; Vásquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994). Strong maintenance models of bilingual, biliteracy, and multiliteracy education appear to offer a solution to the common problems of grade repetition, dropout and low educational attainment among indigenous children (Lambert, 1975; Cummins, 1989, 1991; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2003; Hornberger, 1989; Kangas, 1999; Baker, 2006; Norton 1995; Brisk, 2006, Black, 2005, 2009; Yi,

2008), in particular for those who are migrants in and out of their own land, a relatively recent issue that is resulting from European contact and colonization in Latin America (Portes, 1995; Cummings & Tamayo, 1994, et al).

Latino Youth Literacy and Identity Empirical Research

Adolescence is generally viewed as a time of transition between childhood and adulthood. The transition has a cultural purpose of preparing children for adult life (Larson and Wilson, 2004). For immigrant children this multifaceted progression is complicated further by the multiple voices around them. Adolescent immigrants of the 21st century routinely confront conflicting discourses of rapid cultural change while engaging in home discourses of revived cultural traditions (Hermann, 2011).

Within the context of diversity, Latin American immigrant youth share their uprooting, fragmented education, and the need to make sense of new surroundings in the midst of making sense of their emerging adulthood. In addition, foreign born immigrants are generally influenced by transnational discourses since they still maintain ties to their home country or other countries where they may have family, friends, and memory of lived experiences.

Youth who have connections in both their home country and host nation engage in literacy practices involving different languages, socio-cultural knowledge and the sensibilities of the different societies in which they engage (Skerret, 2012). They maintain social networks, economic and religious ties, as well as other interactions across multiple societal spaces (Hamann, Zúñiga, & Sánchez García, 2006). They stay in touch through new media (Davis, 2009) and expanding discourses in available spaces (Birr-Moje, 2009).

Birr Moje's study of Latino spaces found that through different literacy practices immigrant youth were able to access a variety of resources, both physical and virtual, which allowed them to assert fluid identities in multiple spaces while maintaining ethnic, community, and family affiliations (2004). Birr Moje's study highlights difficult but positive trajectories of Mexican and Caribbean Latinos who engaged in talk, walk, reading and writing, as well as artifact production used to deploy gendered, racial, ethnic, hybrid, and mainstream identities (2009), as well as "classed" and "religious" (2004, p. 18) discourses. Moje also found that out of school spaces are still largely untracked, or "distributed" (Foucault, 1980). Therefore Latino youth literacy contexts have limitations and demarcation in and out of school spaces.

Clustered within existing and developing ethnic communities of broad linguistic and cultural repertoires (Logan, Price and Singer, 2008; Martinez-Roldan & Franquiz, 2009), Latino youth are generally called to act within a linguistic "continuum" of many dialects of the Spanish and/or English language (Hornberger, 1989; Zentella 2005). Their lives are shaped within overlapping literacies and cultures, languages and identities (Martinez-Roldan & Franquiz, 2009). Access to linguistically and culturally rich spaces provides Latino youth with many out of school learning opportunities, yet their own "words and worlds" (Freire, 1970) are not generally of significance in places of assigned authority, such as schools (Orellana, 2006).

According to the literature, there is a growing number of transnational youth in the United States (Ball, Skerrett, & Martínez, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). This finding has prompted scholars to question the deficient institutionalized perspectives regarding language and

literacy capabilities of immigrant and transnational students, particularly those who are learning English and stay politically and culturally engaged in multiple contexts (Fu & Graff, 2009; Martínez-Roldán & Fránquiz, 2009). According to the literature, accepting and managing the wide range of immigrant youth literacies is a challenge in most native monolingual educational environments (Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986). Both immigrant student and mainstream teachers are stressed by the dissonant literacy relationship between the state mandated standard curricula and transnational youth multiliteracies (Diaz & Flores, 2001). Hamilton Boone finds that many teachers have a low threshold for tolerating multiple literacies particularly those they deem inappropriate based on academic perceptions of normalcy (2011). Youth on the other hand, suffer the stress of structural barriers and racism many encounter in schools (Orozco, 2007 C7), as they attempt to make sense of their unstable personal and familial realities (Rosenthal, Whittle, & Bell, 1989, van den Hemel, 1996a, 1996b), which often times pose greater responsibility upon children (Douvan, 1992, Swanson, Spencer, & Petersen, 1998).

New immigrants arriving in multi-ethnic communities extend their experiences beyond those of their teachers since they interact and acquire understandings from each other's transnational spaces. Several important studies have identified the rich language repertoires of immigrant, transnational, and multilingual youth and have shed light on how to utilize those resources for academic purposes (Canagarajah, 2006, 2009; Compton-Lilly, 2008; García Sánchez & Orellana, 2006; Martínez, 2010; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008; Sánchez, 2007a, 2007b). This body of research has noted the need in schools for developing intercultural understandings, skills, and dispositions to access transnational lifestyles. Educators should be aware of 'Englishes' to develop

assessment instruments which allow for creativity, performance, and social negotiation (Canagarajah, 2006, Gee, 2013).

The literature also includes successful models of instruction, such as the dual language model, which has a more holistic approach to literacy and requires commitment from families and schools (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2003). Also, there is the continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1989) which is a framework for conceptualizing the complex interrelationships between bilingualism, literacy, context, media, and content (Martinez-Roldan & Franquiz, 2009). Horner has stated that without careful consideration of appropriate pedagogy, the everyday lives of immigrant youth and teachers may not see enough value in each other's literacies to engage in mutual learning relationships (2010). As many scholars have recognized, failure to uphold the knowledge of cultures outside of mainstream limits the academic literacies of immigrant students (Fu, 2003, Moll, 1992; Delgado-Gaitán, 2004: Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991; Gibson, Gándara, & Koyama, 2004; Vásquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994).

A few scholars, drawing on theories of multiliteracies (e.g., New London Group, 1996), have identified digital literacies as a means by which immigrant youth learn English, develop their writing abilities, and enact transcultural and other social identities (Black, 2005, 2009; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; Yi, 2008). Black and Yi, in their respective studies, found that immigrant youth supported their English language learning through digital fan fiction. These youth interacted in their online community in multiple genres and social registers, and were able to enact author and analyst identities. Lam & Rosario-Ramos, found that digital medium enhances multilingualism's

potential for “bifocality” and divergent thinking, and provides a means to utilize language skills to engage in and compare multicultural perspectives critically (2009). In essence, participants, who included Latin American youth, were able to participate in transcultural meaning making practices.

New immigrant youth in general have many of the tools needed to interact in the global economy. Considering that Hispanic children will soon comprise over half of the children in public schools the economic and social future of the United States depends significantly on the success of immigrant youth and children (Hernandez, 2012) as they are part of the general youth of the nation.

Immigration

Global economic transitions such as colonization, industrialization and post industrialization have prompted large scale migrations throughout history. Immigration and emigration are terms used to consider the movement of people settling across native borders due to a range of reasons known as push pull factors (Lee, 1966). The factors for migrating can generally be condensed to the search for employment opportunities for a better standard of living. Immigration denotes the perspective of arrival and settlement in the destination country and emigration is the term used to locate migration from the point of departure. From either perspective one way to look at the phenomenon is said to be from an economic standpoint (Ranis & Fei, 1961). At the macro or micro level of analysis migrants seek to go to places where they can survive and be more productive (Borjas & Bronars, 1991).

Economic and Cultural Dimensions

From an economic perspective the costs of immigration are calculated against its benefits. Immigration has material and psychological costs and benefits. The gains and

losses involved in travel and sustenance while moving to find work and education are complex. Many of the outcomes of immigration are difficult to assess since they are intangible, such as the investments in learning and adaptation to new cultures and languages (Todaro & Maruszko, 1987).

Social Cultural Perspectives of Acculturation

Recent literature on acculturation highlights the multiple contexts and social cultural perspectives which factor into acculturation (Schvaneveldt & Behnke, in Ballard & Taylor, 2011). According to Padilla & Perez (2003), a current vision of acculturation involves complex social processes such as cognition, cultural competence, social identity, social dominance and stigma.

Reflecting a situated frame of acculturation the literature suggests a look at the dynamics between newcomers and their host culture. Studies propose that acculturating identities are not singular or static. Every wave of immigrants finds a more layered society with multiple cultural constructions. Marcelo M. Suarez Orozco (2005) reminds us to question whose culture should new immigrants acculturate into? Is it poor urban cultures or middle class mainstream cultures? Both cultures typically resent newcomers, claiming for themselves a higher status and holding a suspicious view of newcomers (Ewing, 2012). These questions have always been valid but they are particularly so in global multicultural societies.

Instrumental & Expressive Acculturation

Suarez-Orozco suggests that the analysis of acculturation benefits from two broad perspectives: instrumental acculturation and expressive acculturation. Instrumental acculturation looks at useful social and cognitive skills to thrive and participate in society. Expressive acculturation refers to worldviews, values and

sensibilities useful for personal development and interpersonal relations. Segmenting acculturation in this way incorporates an important distinction between concrete and abstract components of culture. When immigrants cite lack of education as a reason for emigrating they are referring to leaving the homeland in search of better instrumental skills. They generally do not mean giving up their expressive culture, the subjective process of communication which strengthens their families and provides cohesion (2005). This view of acculturation stresses the importance of considering the differential outcomes of individual assimilation behaviors, depending on social conditions, in a similar manner as Portes' segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Acculturation and Identity

Acculturation and identity are important issues for immigrant and host cultures (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Phinney, 2003). Following the instrumental and expressive lens of acculturation described by Suarez-Orozco (2005), identities can also vary independently at the micro and macro levels. New-immigrant identity can be thought of as the interaction of two distinct concepts: ethnic identity and national identity. Similar to Berry's work on acculturation (1990; 1997), the interaction of these concepts describes the process of retaining heritage, cultural identities and/or adapting to host national identity. These two distinct concepts of ethnicity and nationality can be perceived as culturally expressive and instrumentally valuable. Incorporating Orozco's (2005) perceptions yield a more nuanced understanding of Berry's four acculturation strategies - integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization (Berry, 1980; Liebkind, 2001).

As proposed by Berry, integrated identities perceive value in both retaining cultural heritage and adopting the national identity. In an assimilated identity an

individual relinquishes the heritage culture and adopts the national culture. A separated identity retains the heritage culture without incorporating any aspect of the national culture. A marginalized identity rejects both heritage and national identities. However, Berry uses a functionalist approach to acculturation (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder (2006)

A multi-layered look at acculturating identities considers development in changing environments and how the process affects social literacies, identities and pedagogies (Ferdman, 1992, Monzo & Rueda, 2009). This is a view of identity for which Vygotsky and Mead had set the theoretical foundation by analyzing individual imitation and internalization products and processes within societies (Lachiotta).

National and Transnational Identities

Nationality and ethnicity have political and social boundaries imposed through language and culture. Immigrants cross those demarcations. However, as pointed out by Joseph, 'nation' is an ambiguous term. Often it means a territorial demarcation and as an identity it is based on a politically labeled place of birth. However, a wider view of national identity can be extended to 'nation-state' and associated with civil identity. National identity therefore can have two dimensions, 1) an assigned dimension similar to the concept of ethnicity, which involves descent and 2) a voluntarist dimension as in civic identity in a nation of birth or adoption (Joseph, 2002).

Jones and Smith find that both constructs can coexist in the minds of individuals, as in transnational identities which do not adhere to singular loyalties but identify with multiple nation states in the political, cultural, social and economic realm. However, Boccagni cautions that transnationalism in the day to day interactions of migrants with their native counterparts is an understanding that needs to be developed (2012)

Agency and Structure

The social interactions involved in identity development and acculturation do not always benefit immigrant identities. Immigrants as newcomers have little influence or political power in social processes. They are often stigmatized according to the preconceptions of the dominant native cultures (Taft, 1977) which generally produce negative conceptions of immigrants (Padilla & Perez, 2003). In turn, negative stigmas affect individual cognition by influencing self-efficacy perceptions of the stigmatized (Schunk, 2007). As Bandura concluded some time ago, self-efficacy is positively related to cognitive development by affecting motivation to act, self-regulate learning and orientation of goals (1993). Lack of self-efficacy, therefore, would work adversely for individual literacy investments.

Education

Furthermore, immigrants are not always free to pursue their acculturation in ways they may prefer (Berry, 1997), since the reciprocal process is dependent on the structural demands of the social context (Lave, Murtaugh, de la Rocha, 1984). This reciprocal transformative process has concrete implications for agency in the learning process. Schools for instance control literacy and language, and the state controls curriculum and distribution of resources. For the immigrant, educated or not, the complex dynamic of acculturation affects the whole person including social resources and individual motivation and cognition. According to the literature, the social cultural way one learns affects not only what one learns but individual engagement and investment in learning and ultimately one's identity (*Orfield, Kuesera, Siegel-Hawley, 2012; Brisk, 2006*).

Locating the New Immigrant

The Latin American immigrant population in the United States has been growing steadily since the 1960s (US Census 2010). Today, the Latin American population in the United States exceeds 50 million, and is the second largest group in the United States (Martinez, Ariosto, 2011). In addition, Latinos are spreading to locations not customarily known for a Latino presence (Haman, Wortham & Murillo, 2002, Durand in Tienda).

As noted in chapter 1, recent immigrants from Latin American countries represent the fastest growing segment of the population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 in Masten, Liebkind, and Hernandez, 2012 p.2). They also represent the changing socioeconomic nature of Latin America. The new immigrants bring new literacies to the United States which are both valuable and challenging as the country positions itself in the new global economy.

In addition to Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, the new Latin immigrants include Central and South Americans. The new immigrants tend to be better educated than previous waves. In most cases, they were part of the workforce which suffered displacement in the capitalistic turn known as neo-liberalism or globalization (Tokman, 1982). These workers include informal laborers such as non-contractual wage earners, vendors, and unpaid family workers, but also come from the formal elite workforce, such as university graduates and public sector employees (Portes & Hoffman, 2003). The new immigrants add to overall group diversity within the Latino/Hispanic population, and citizens in general in the United States.

Locating the new immigrants within previous models of immigrant settlement is a challenge. Historically immigrants were concentrated in a few metropolitan areas, a

model of settlement well studied and termed “Spatial Assimilation Model” in the tradition of the Chicago School of urban sociology (Price and Singer). The traditional areas for Latin American immigrants - New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and Miami are known settlement areas for Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Cubans respectively (Bean and Tienda, 1987) but with new immigration these locations are becoming more diverse (Jones-Correa, 2007) with Central and South Americans, the “other Latinos” (Jones-Correa, 2007).

In addition new forms of settlement are now emerging. New immigrants are now dispersing to other areas primarily in the South and Central part of the country (Odem, 2009). These new settlement areas have been termed *New Hispanic Destinations* (Fisher & Tienda, 2006). The dispersal to non-traditional areas has been generated by high levels of immigration from Central and South America, as well as the continued presence of Mexican immigrants (Camarota, 2009, Logan, Stowell, and Oakley, 2002).

The increase in the presence of Latinos other than Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans has had an impact on conceptions of Hispanics. As is the case with all newcomers, upon arrival in new destinations, the new Latinos upset preexisting ethnic and race relations, the labor market, and the general nature of the community which in turn impacts immigrant integration (Stepick & Stepick, 2009, Reitz, 2002). Fisher and Tienda note that Hispanics in new locations may have affected both integration and segregation patterns.

Segregation and Ethno-Racial Divides

Rapid growth in the Hispanic foreign born population occurred within the context of population growth among African Americans (21%) in the new South which caused

changes in the ethnic and racial composition in U.S. public schools there (Fry, 2007). Generally, the literature concerning Black-Hispanic contact has found that there are serious tensions between these groups (Hochschild, 2007). Using economic interest and sociological models, Marrow found negative Black-Hispanic socioeconomic relations where African American population was a majority. The negative reports were cited most frequently within the context of low income housing, such as local trailer parks and in public middle schools (Marrow, 2008 p.228). In other more diverse contexts Marrow obtained reports that stated no significant issues between Black-Hispanic relations. Marrow's research findings depict a Black-Hispanic socioeconomic conflicts in rural areas where there are large populations of relatively disenfranchised African Americans who may feel threatened by the growing Hispanic presence.

Latin American immigrants in new gateway destinations are driving rural and small town growth (Kandel and Cromartie, 2004, Odem, 2009), but also ethno-racial divides (Orfield and Yun, 2012). With the greater and broader Hispanic presence in the country there are said to be rising levels of Hispanic segregation in residential spaces (Fisher and Tienda, 2006).

In the "New Hispanic Destinations" residential separation from whites and all other groups rose 10 percent (Frey, 2010; Lichter et al. (2007). This statistic shows a trend for residential clustering of foreign born Latin immigrants (Hall, 2011), a phenomenon which social science literature states is fueled by systematic exclusion causing the immigrant need of compatriot support and guidance (Turner et al, 2002).

New Immigrant Residential Clusters

According to Tienda and Fisher, segregated residence affects quality of life by controlling exposure to mainstream resources which affects immigrant socio-economic status and integration (2006). Economic literature suggests that there is a relationship between labor and residential clusters and the continuing problems of inequality defined by race and income (Orfield and Lee, 2005).

In addition, some researchers contend that immigrant clustering in the new gateway locations has had both positive and negative effects. These new patterns have changed immigrant settlement from “enclave” to “community” in the past twenty years (Logan, Price and Singer, 2008). The ethnic enclave is the traditional term for constrained residential space within an established port of entry such as New York City, Los Angeles, and Miami. The ethnic “community” may point to a new understanding of immigrant residence space where immigrants choose to gather even though they may have the means to live elsewhere (Price and Singer, 2008). These communities are often located in suburbs in the South East, called “New gateways”, “Edge gateways” or “New Hispanic Destinations”, when referring to Latin American immigrants. Geographer Wei Li has coined the term “ethnoburb” for these communities that tend to be wedged between city and suburb and black and white resident populations of the South. According to Yang Liu, whether the new ethnic communities promote upward or downward acculturations and socio economic mobility is still an open question (2011).

The spatial separation of immigrants is a multifaceted phenomenon, as are the immigrants themselves and the market forces which move them. This phenomenon is systematically linked to socio economic status which in turn is linked to present and historical market interests, such as preferential land use policies (Gotham, 2002).

Economic geographers piecing together the complex relationships between labor, the economy and people suggest that there is no single factor which can explain uneven development and change contextually over time (Gasmeier and Farrigan, 2007).

New Hispanic Destinations and Education

In general anthropological terms education has been defined as the teaching and learning of culture, (Middleton, 1970). However, public education as a system of assimilation to mainstream culture is a particularly difficult process for recent immigrants since they have little contact with mainstream environments. Latin American immigrants arrive in new Hispanic destinations where new patterns of segregation have been taking shape for the last two decades (Tarasawa, 2009). Latin immigrants attend schools of concentrated poverty which have little access to mainstream culture and resources (Orfield, Juesera, Siegel-Hawley, 2012) - E Pluribus. In addition, higher status Hispanics with more access to resources and education generally move from new destinations leaving the typical Latin immigrant without human capital to broker their education (Wortham, Murillo Jr., Hamann, 2002).

Latin American economic and cultural differences and educational disparities rooted in the colonial and postcolonial experience become salient in new spaces as families migrate and attempt to navigate new layers of differences and disparities in English language based institutions and cultures. In U.S. schools, Latin/Hispanic immigrant youth are at a new disadvantage due to standardized achievement measures (Vidal de Haymes & Kitty, 2007). Schvaneveldt and Behnke note that academic achievement and income disparities are often misunderstood as “unique” “deficit” characteristics of Hispanic families when in fact they are circumstances of historical

social marginalization (2012, p.167). Bhabha associates socio-cultural conditions directly with postcolonial conditions (2004).

Marginalization and a *Third Space*

Displaced Latin Americans as immigrants occupy ambivalent discourse spaces at the margins of different cultures. Drawing on Post-Structural/Deconstruction theories Bhabha claims that "cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation." He termed the ambiguous space where cultures meet a "Third Space". As a result of uncomfortable discourses of dissent, claims to the innate originality or purity of cultures become invalid, instead there is a realization that culture is not fixed and even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-narrated, and read under a different light.

Bhabha provides two overall interpretations of the third space: one, a place where the oppressed can plot their liberation; and two, a place where the oppressed and oppressor can come to understand each other even if such understandings are only momentary. In educational scholarship the latter third space is associated with the transformative power of multiliteracies (Skerret, 2010).

Summary

Political and socio-economic turns can have negative effects on individuals and societies which many times result in population shifts due to the need to search for better means of survival. In the past 30 years the United States has experienced a significant influx of immigrants mainly from Central and South America. Many of the new immigrants come with their families. They have to adapt to new residential, school, and work environments and cultures. Understanding the adaptation and resettlement processes of immigrants has been approached in scholarship through acculturations

theories. Recent literature highlights the multiple psycho-social and cultural domains of acculturation (Schavaneveldt, Behnke, 2011). The literature suggests situated frames of acculturation which include segmented acculturation (Portes and Zhou, 1993), and instrumental and expressive factors (Suarez-Orozco, 2005). The multilayered processes of immigrant acculturating identities affect and are affected by social literacies and pedagogies (Ferdman, 1992, Monzo & Rueda, 2009). A trajectory of colonial contact and postcolonial displacement marginalizes immigrants as newcomers but also provides new contact locations in 'third spaces' where cultures meet and can either oppress or liberate through dissident discourses or enunciations (Bhabha, 2004).

Shaping the Hispanic/Latino Identity

The history of Spanish speakers in North America predates the arrival of English speakers and the founding of the United States. In the 1500's Spanish-Europeans arrived in North America and imposed their culture on the indigenous peoples as they had in Mesoamerica and South America. In North America Spanish colonists proceeded to build cities in what is today the Southwest, Atlantic, and Gulf regions, as well as California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and other regions (Fox, 1996), see figure 2-1. In time, Anglo-Europeans arrived in America and also impacted the region with their cultures. By 1853 the Anglo-Protestant culture gained control and began to apply the negative stereotypes conceived in Europe for Spaniards to the Spanish speaking Catholics in America. The British immigrants, who had been at war with Spain from the time they were establishing their empires during the 16th and 17th centuries, labeled all Spanish speakers mongrels, greasers, immoral, and politically subversive (Maldonado, 2004; Gonzalez, 1999, Weber, 1982). According to Menchaca

(2001) those were the times and conditions which established lasting social and economic situations for Mexicans, and later for other Spanish speaking immigrants.

According to Americanist scholars, the legacy of colonialism lives on in the lives of Latinos today (Morales, 2013, Stavans, Portes and Rumbaut, 2002). Just as the Spaniard invaders imposed their language and Catholic faith on the indigenous people, Anglo-Europeans immigrants imposed English and Protestant ethics on the people of Spanish heritage living in North America. In order to implant Anglo-Protestant culture, Catholic education and Spanish language literacy were dismantled by establishing English as the funded language of instruction (Mandonado, 2004, p.60). English language thus became synonymous to education (Brisk, 2006) and a practice of what has been referred to as “identity foreclosure” (Berzonsky, 1991; Samaan, 2006) simply, putting a stop on personal growth. Spanish was viewed as an obstacle to education and eventually schools oriented those who spoke Spanish towards agriculture and other non-academic areas.

This educational scenario served both to fulfill the occupational needs of the community (Carter, 1970) and, according to Maldonado, to block the education of Latinos who until the present have had an average of 4 years fewer of schooling than Anglos (2004), and limited access to quality education and academic guidance (Tienda and Mitchell, 2006).

Hispanic identity in the United States is a complication of the ongoing struggle of the native peoples to understand modernistic Eurocentric literacies and their notions of progress and success. The federal term, “Hispanic” centers on the ethnicity borne of contact with the Iberians and their Black and Indigenous subjects. According to

Zalaguetta, Hispanic/Latino roots are multi-racial and include many European, Arabic/Jewish, and Asian bloodlines. The "Latino" label in the United States is generally interchangeable with the Hispanic label, but stems from the more general "Latin American" which categorizes the peoples of the many American countries under a more diverse foreign influence, the *Latinate*. The Latin term was created by the French to insert them as part of the American experience (Oboler, 1995).

The Latin Americans

European contact disturbed holistic ways of knowing developed by the native inhabitants of the land we now know as America (Martin/Wasserman, 2004). At the time of the conquest, pre Columbian people in the highlands of Mesoamerica and South America had become highly organized and skilled. They had constructed complex societies such as the Olmecs, Aztecs, and Mayans in Mesoamerica, and the Incas in South America (Restall, 2001), and the Caribs and Tainos in the Caribbean (Fagan, 1987). However, through land redistribution and labor reconstruction Spaniards and later other Europeans gained control of political, judicial, and administrative institutions in Latin America (Frankema, 2006).

The scholarship addressing this period generally concludes that the Spaniard *encomienda* labor system which displaced native "ejido" agriculture was equivalent to slavery (Rodriguez, J, 2007 Junius P. Rodriguez (2007). Later the "latifundio/hacienda" system established a definitive system of slave labor and landlords, and later a society of a small circle of land owning elite families and a large number of peasant workers (Fernandez-Armesto, 2003) which comprise present Latin American society. Native cultures became subordinate and have been in a process of acculturation and

resistance to European institutions and literacies ever since (Kowalski, 2009; Leibsohn, 1993).

Institutions such as Catholicism which encouraged subservience through teaching cultural values based on religion and spirituality such as *respeto*, *simpatia*, *marianismo*, and *machismo*. *Respeto* implies hierarchical relationships which set clear boundaries and knowing one's place in society (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). *Simpatia* (kindness), is another value which encourages non-confrontation and politeness even in the face of adversity or insult. Gender specific roles such as *marianismo* and *machismo* encourage women to use the Virgin Mary as a role model, and men to provide, protect and defend families (Morales, 1996). These values are maintained through adherence to *personalismo* which encourages the development of warm and friendly relationships, and *familismo*, a socializing system valuing close relationships, cohesiveness and cooperativeness with other family members and friends (Marin & Triandis, 1985).

The imposed colonial ways of life, labor systems, language and cosmology upset indigenous relationships with the land and with one another. The process of ongoing physical and abstract displacement among the peoples of the Americas have resulted in ongoing diasporas due to dictatorships, revolutions, massacres and genocides which are not widely reported internationally (Rosenberg, 1991).

Centuries after independence colonial land inequality is still evident in the disparate levels of income distribution in Latin America (World Bank 2004, Easterly 2002) and social instabilities which have caused massive Latin Americans migrations mainly to the United States (Pellegrino, 2000). Therefore, most educational practitioners will likely work with Latin immigrant youth who are from different countries of origin.

These youth are culturally and racially diverse but have experienced Spanish colonization.

Summary

In the United States new immigration trends have substantially increased the presence of the foreign born Latin Americans in traditional and new ethnic communities. If current trends continue, in the not too distant future 50% of American children will be children of foreign born immigrants and many will be from a diverse group of Spanish speakers (Urban Institute, 2006). Hispanic/Latino Americans as a group include people who are Mexican, Mexican American, Central and South American, Spanish Americans, Latin Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and many with Middle Eastern and Asian influences through their European roots, who already had mixed ancestries. Hispanic/Latinos, although they share many values and goals, are different in many aspects. In some ways, Hispanic/Latinos are a single cultural group with a fairly common history, language and culture, but in other ways they are a diverse population from distinct subcultures

This chapter provided a review of literature focused on a cultural-historical understanding of the experiences and social identities of Latino immigrants. The review is based on research which assumes that cultures, literacies and identities among ethnic minority children develop in response to complex contextual circumstances in their family histories, schools, and neighborhoods (Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006). Additionally, the review builds upon scholarship that places the development of immigrant youth in the context of migration, settlement, and transnationalism (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, Birr Moje 2009, Orozco, 2007 Hornberger, 1992), and multiliteracy perspectives which reject deficit models of literacy that presume mainstream family

values should be the basis for the development of foreign born minority adolescents. Instead, this review of literacy and identity research assumes that adaptive developmental pathways for the children of immigrants can best be understood as a function of individual identity development within family context, historical context of migration and context of resettlement which includes structures of acculturation and English language learning systems.



Figure 2-1. New Spain map (adapted from Watkins J. Colonial Mexico (2013) accessed Januray 2014. <http://james-a-watkins.hubpages.com/hub/Colonial-Mexico>)

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will begin with the epistemological and theoretical framework of the study. Then I discuss the research design which includes methodology, participant descriptions, setting, data collection methods and the analysis plan. Also, I comment on the trustworthiness of the study and provide my subjective statement. Finally, I provide my perspectives on the limitations of the study.

Epistemology and Theoretical Framework

Crotty defines epistemology as a theory of knowledge which describes what kind of knowledge is possible and valid within a theoretical perspective. The epistemologies he notes are objectivism and constructionism/subjectivism (1998, p.5). These epistemologies deal with broad spectrums of knowledge which include theoretical perspectives and methodologies appropriate for each one.

Objectivism and Subjectivism

Objectivism is a theory of knowledge used in the natural sciences which employs a positivist paradigm. The positivist approach to science relies on the senses to measure, predict and control phenomena. In the later part of the 20th century scholars in the social sciences expressed “uneasiness” with the application of positivist assumptions regarding social and educational research and they made a case for alternative epistemologies (Candy, 1989, p.2). The alternative epistemology is constructionism as proposed by Crotty, but it is also labeled and interpreted by other names, such as constructivism (Mertens, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

For the theoretical perspective of this study, I drew from the schema of epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods outlined by Crotty (1998, p. 4-5), as detailed below in Table 3.1.

Table 3-1. Theoretical framework of the study

Epistemology	Theoretical Perspective	Methodology	Methods
Constructivism/Constructionism	Interpretivism	Qualitative Narrative Inquiry	Group Episodic Narrative Interviews, Individual Interviews, Participant Observations

Qualitative Research

The focus of qualitative inquiry is to gain new understanding of the quality or essence of a phenomenon. Its theoretical roots are phenomenology and symbolic interactionism within a constructionist epistemology (Crotty, 1988). The goals of this type of qualitative research are describing, understanding, and explaining a phenomenon for the purpose of uncovering new data to generate new understanding for further exploration or testing (Tellis, 1997). The design of qualitative research is considered flexible since data collection and analysis are evolving. As data is collected it is also analyzed in order to generate new questions to include in studies in order to obtain expansive findings. Analysis is therefore inductive in this type of research and in order to obtain depth of analysis the sample size should be small and purposeful (Crotty, 1988; Merriam, 1988).

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

One of the ways the goals of qualitative research can be satisfied is through narrative inquiry since it involves constructing a story by describing, explaining, and understanding. This process leads to the construction of new understandings through consciousness-raising in the process of obtaining and analyzing data by the researcher and participants (Lather, 1988; Small, 1995). The process of narrative research is centered within social contexts that shape experience in time. Based on the two principles of experience, continuity and interaction (Dewey, 1938), Clandinin and Connelly developed a narrative thinking frame; a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space which involves interaction, continuity, and situation. They describe the three dimensions as follows: "our terms are personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation)" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000. p. 50).

Narrative inquiry requires listening to the story being told. This type of research aims to increase knowledge by recognizing "knowers" as those who lived the interactions in time and place (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007). As such, participants become co-researchers with the principle investigator through their involvement in facilitating data collection, analysis and study results (Brydon-Miller, 1997).

The Story

Narrative inquiry is centered on the personal story. This method can provide insights about what happened and is happening in the participants' lives from their own perspectives. Through narrative inquiry the participants tell their story of lived experiences. They, as tellers or narrators of their stories, give order to experience. They

give it 'narrative form' by positioning characters in relationships in time and space. By doing so, they position themselves with claims they hold to be true (Bamberg, 2003).

The personal story uncovers critical events within the contexts of meaning making which may not otherwise be captured, since it may not have occurred to the researcher to pose certain questions in an interview, or the researcher may not have had access to particular situations for observation. In the personal story, each individual account is an investment in which a person points to activity she or he deems relevant enough to shape into a story in order to mediate its expression. Through the story an individual develops a plot by chronicling background events leading to critical issues and how those issues developed and are perceived to affect the future. In so doing, the story may not relate the whole truth, but it tells personal assessments of transitions and how life proceeds over time (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Research corroborates that people internalize the world in general narrative and temporal terms (Bruner 1986; Carr 1986; Freeman 1998), and that there is more than one way to approach the issue of truth (Banathy, 1996; Merrill, 1996). Through narrative previous generations pass on ways of doing and seeing things to new generations. Throughout the course of development individuals edit and re-edit their personal stories as new events unfold in their lives within the larger socio-historical narrative, such as new experiences lived through immigration. Various narrative inquiry designs, such as autobiography, auto-ethnography, narrative interviews, documents of life, Latin American testimonios, among others (Creswell, 2008 p.514) can provide a platform for the voices of those who have not yet absorbed other people's language and ways (Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Adames, Keys, Garcia-Ramirez, & Paloma, 2011). In

addition, by giving witness to adolescent voices through testimonials, the storied lives of new immigrants can be analyzed and broadcasted beyond their segregated communities.

Latino immigrant adolescent voices/identities are in many ways removed from the mainstream. As noted previously, age, race/ethnicity, nationality, and colonial legacies of subjugation contribute to their isolation but also to their depth of experience. Using narrative approaches allows the complexity of marginal voices to be expressed. Also, they allow the researcher to listen attentively to how youth see others, and how they represent themselves in their worlds through their own words. Through analysis researchers are able to explore the worlds of others and to offer insights into their experiences and their identities (Anderson, 2006).

Operationalizing the study

To answer the research questions within the methodology detailed above, the study included four phases beginning in October, 2013 and concluding in May 2014. The first phase consisted in initial contact and securing participant informed consent to conduct the study. During the second phase I began data collection through group episodic interviews and observations, and did initial interpretation of data. In the third phase I began the individual interviews and continued analysis. During the fourth phase the participants and I worked on the co-construction of narratives and final member checking of stories.

Research Questions

The study sought to add to the knowledge base on recent Latin American immigrant youth by exploring the following question:

How do Latin immigrant adolescents see themselves within the socio-cultural context of northeast Florida in school and home life, and how do those identities contrast with school and home identities in their native countries?

The study focused on the negotiation of identity as the focal participants' transition to living in the United States and learning English.

Participant Selection

Qualitative researchers focus on samples and subjects (Hatch, 2002) that fit their study. Therefore, for the selection process I used criterion sampling. With this procedure I selected participants who fulfilled four important prerequisites for the study: 1) immigrant status 2) born in a Latin American country other than Mexico 3) migrated to the United States less than a year from the time the study was initiated and 4) from 12-19 years of age.

I focused on recent immigrants for two reasons. Firstly, because studies show that the longer immigrants are in the host environment the less positive they are about school and the more disengaged they become from academics (Suarez-Orozco, 2005). Secondly, recent immigrants are not yet recognized in non-urban destinations (Griffith, 2005).

I recruited participants from an ESOL class of 26 students in a school with a designated ESOL center. I wrote a letter in Spanish and English detailing the criterion for participation. In accordance with the criterion, five immigrant youth volunteered for the study. The five students were selected on the basis of meeting requirements of the study. However one of the students did not return a signed consent, and another withdrew from the study to return to his country of origin in Central America.

Description of Participants

The participants are all females currently in the 8th grade. Socorro is from Colombia, South America. She is 14 years old and arrived in Florida with her mother in 2013 in the middle of the 7th grade academic year. Eva is 14 years old. She is from Honduras and arrived in the United States in 2013 with her father and three brothers. She entered the 7th grade toward the end of the academic year and is now in the 8th grade. Jessica, also 14 years old, is from Cuba and she arrived with her mother in 2013 and started school at the beginning of the current academic year. Table 3.2 notes the information presented above.

Table 3-2. Participant description

Student Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Time of arrival	Length of time in the North Florida	Present grade
Socorro	Colombia	January, 2013	12 months	8 th
Eva	Honduras	April, 2013	9 months	8 th
Jessica	Cuba	June, 2013	6 months	8 th

Participants' Countries of Origin: Brief Background

Colombia

Colombia is located in northwestern South America with coastlines on the Caribbean and the North Pacific Ocean. Colombia has an emerging economy with an adult literacy rate of over 92% and free compulsory education for children ages 5 to 12. However, a long history of violence has profoundly impacted security in Colombia, particularly in rural areas (www.gov.uk/travel).

Colombia has been involved in savage civil wars such as *The War of the Thousand Days* from 1899-1902, and *La Violencia* from 1946-1958. According to

Charles Bergquist the underlying cause of violence in Colombia is the diverging economic interests within the upper class. Violence has led to the enlargement of both official armed forces and guerilla paramilitary forces. Conflicts between the two have caused ongoing violence, confusion, fragmentation and have caused loss of values among many Colombians (Guarnizo, Sanches, Roach, 1999).

Honduras

Honduras is the second largest country in Central America. It shares borders with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Although Honduras has not had the class struggles and civil wars of its bordering countries it has shared in their aftermath of violence.

Honduras was slow to modernize and therefore did not create individual wealth which would separate landowners from laborers, as is typical of its neighbors. Its relative lack of class struggle made Honduras a desirable location for immigrants from neighboring countries. Immigration to Honduras was complicated by U.S. deportation of Salvadoran refugees in the United States between the years 2000-2004. Many Salvadoran youth in Los Angeles were exposed to the Latino gang life there and the Salvadoran youth created a similar gang, the Mara Salvatruchas or M-13, which they then took back to El Salvador and Honduras (Reisman, 2006; Arana, 2005). Presently Honduras is considered a major drug route to the U.S.A. and is listed among the most dangerous countries in the world with a higher murder rate than Mexico. A 2011 report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also listed Honduras as the country with the highest homicide rate in the world. In that analysis, El Salvador came in second.

Cuba

Cuba is the largest Caribbean country by land area and the closest to the continental United States. Cuba's location in the Caribbean has been historically of great economic interest to world powers.

Following Cuban independence from Spain in 1898, the United States intervened militarily and economically in Cuba. Shortly after Castro's revolution in 1959 and the ensuing redistribution of wealth the US formally broke ties with Cuba.

After the revolution Cuba established free education at every level and its literacy rate is said to be 99.8%. School attendance is free and compulsory from ages six to fifteen, which is usually the age students finish basic secondary education. Several studies comparing Cuban language achievement test scores with other Latin American nations such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela, show Cuban students outperforming their counterparts in other Latin American countries (Lutjens, S., 1998; Gasperini, L., 2000). However, basic political and human freedom of expression are limited and many Cubans continue to seek basic human rights through emigration (Blackburn, J., 2013; Alberts, H., 2005)

Research Setting

Geographic location

The study took place in North Florida. In North Florida, Duval County's Westside and Southside areas have an increasing Latino population. Clay County public schools also have a growing Latino population. Clay County areas, for example Fleming Island, Lakeside, Keystone Heights, and Middleburg have schools with a growing number of Latino students. Latinos/Hispanics are the fastest growing population in the entire metro area (quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states).

Duval County houses an increasing number of Latino families due to a general increase of immigrants in the area. The City of Jacksonville reported an increase of 104% in the Hispanic population from 2000 to 2010 ([http://www.coj.net/esmivida/docs/hispanic-health-report-single-pages-small-\(2\).aspx](http://www.coj.net/esmivida/docs/hispanic-health-report-single-pages-small-(2).aspx)). As a resident of this area, I have participated in volunteer work with institutions serving immigrants and refugees. As a Spanish speaking immigrant and through my volunteer activities I noted and have access to the areas where immigrants tend to live and the schools the children attend. Thus I approached a middle school which contains an ESOL center to search for participants. I chose a school I am familiar with through my on and off volunteer work for the past ten years.

Space

To create a partnership between researcher and participants, a safe communicative space has to be established where the participants feel included and have a sense of individual power (Wicks & Reason, 2009).

In this study the participants' homes were not a viable option since they do not all live in the same vicinity. In addition, their parents work long hours, including weekends and night shifts. Thus I opted to observe the students in their school. Permission was granted by the school principal to use private spaces in peripheral areas outside the classrooms. The locations were in-between spaces where both personal and structural aspects of identity intertwine (Kalantzis & Cope, 2009, Fairclough, 2003). The study was conducted in the library and a small conference room in the school office. These locations became productive liberating spaces in between home and school, two spaces considered to be the most socializing institutions (Koutsogiannis & Adampa,

2012). In addition, to establish trust with the families, I visited them outside of school. I visited two participants' homes, and one family at their place of work. I also met with the participants' mothers at different times in the school office and in the parking lot.

The School

The school is located in a middle class neighborhood in between a high income area and low income areas. Most students come from surrounding low income areas and use the school for bus transportation. The school demographics are 54% black, 33% white, 9% Hispanic, and 4% are a mix of Asian, Native American, and multiracial students as reported by the Florida Department of Education.

The school has been a designated ESOL center for many years until the end of the 2013-1014 academic year when the school board decided to decentralize ESOL centers, preferring to have English language learners attend their neighborhood schools. During this current academic year the ESOL program has approximately 90 students, one ESOL teacher and one paraprofessional who speaks Spanish.

Methods

Several methods of data collection were utilized in the design:

1. Semi-Structured Group Episodic Interviews
2. Participant observations
3. Individual Interview as a means to co-construct the final narrative

The following is a rationale for the selected instrumentation. Choosing the methods to discover the experiences of immigrant youth with literacy requires an examination of the kind of instruments and procedures that may generate such knowledge. According to literature on interviewing adolescents, it is best to do group

interviews in order to minimize the power differential between interviewer and interviewee (Eder & Fingerson in Holstein & Gubrium, 2004) as well as to build on peer culture to generate rich data (Corsaro & Eder, 1995; Morgan, 1993), so I chose to do group interviews with the participants. To strengthen the analysis of the group interview data, I also conducted field observations as well as an individual interview with each participant.

Group Interviews

The principal form of collecting data was through semi-structured group interviews. There are two types of interviews generally used in narrative inquiry. One is the narrative interview and the other is the episodic interview. The narrative interview is generally biographical and requires little guidance from the interviewer (Flick, 2002). The episodic interview is semi-structured and through open ended questions guides the participants to describe experience in chronological order. I chose the episodic interview for this study to ensure a focused interview while allowing for a fairly open framework with in depth conversational communication. I developed an interview guide based on literacy practices and chronological order to keep the episodes consistent between participants and to facilitate the recounting of events and practices, see appendix A. Other questions were created during the interview to allow the participants to tell their stories in their own voices. In this manner I, the researcher, along with the participants had the flexibility to probe for details to discuss and relevant issues to clarify to stimulate freedom of expression (Kvale, 1996). I taped-recorded conversations and later transcribed them, generating 48 pages of transcripts.

Field Observations

In this study, field observations were gathered to facilitate the interview process, which was the primary mode of data collection. Field observations were conducted with three objectives in mind. Firstly, to establish visibility in the setting so that the participants would feel comfortable with my presence. Second to gain a better understanding of the setting, and lastly to observe and participate in the focal students' communicative norms and patterns within the social structure of the research setting. I took short notes and later expanded the notes.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews facilitated access individual attitudes, opinions, and contexts. I concluded the study with an individual interview with each participant, in a similar manner as Peggy Orenstein's study of 8th grade girls in school where she first conducted group interviews and then individual interviews (1994). The final interview allowed me to understand more fully the information gathered during group interviewing of the participants.

Data Sources

Table 3-3 notes the data entry, duration, frequency, and point of collection as well as the proposed aim of the data.

Procedure

The following is a summary of the four phases of the study.

Phase 1

During this phase IRB consent was secured, see Appendix B, and initial contact was made with participants at the school through personal introductions in late October, 2013. In this phase I gave a detailed explanation of the study to the participants verbally

and in writing. I provided the students with my telephone number and email contact information. I asked that they would share the information with their parents so that the parents could contact me with any questions. The parents contacted me and expressed their desire to participate in the study. I continued building rapport during October, 2013 through volunteer work at the school.

Phase 2

The second phase of the study began in November of 2013 once I had secured informed consent and had satisfied all requirements. I began the study with conversations in order to experience the group dynamics of the participants. One of the concerns is the time it takes to develop the art of listening (Maple & Edwards, 2009). In order to practice listening while withholding any biases from my own experience of immigration, I had lunch with the girls in the school cafeteria. In the cafeteria I surrendered the conversation to the girls and I practiced being quiet and listening. I remembered my first experience in a school cafeteria in the United States. It was in Washington Heights when I first arrived to New York City. I have a few clear memories of those days but I practiced bracketing those recollections in order not to disclose them and orient the conversation. Bracketing means acknowledging the memories but not allowing the assumptions attached to them to infiltrate the research. During the third week in November, after having lunch in the cafeteria and then a second time in the conference room I began to conduct group interviews with the focal students that week in the school library. I listened to their stories and collected field observations relevant to their ways of participation in school. That week beginning the 18th of November, I became familiar with participant discourses and practices in the school context, and in

the contexts embedded in their responses during group interviews. I started to write weekly data analysis memos, and reflected and generated some questions. I did some preliminary coding and began looking for key themes, events, or patterns that would guide my work. The following week I met with the girls only one day. We began to talk about their migration stories. Two of the girls were absent the following two days so I did not conduct interviews. That was Thanksgiving week so I had to postpone the interviews until the first week in December. The first week in December we concluded episode one and began episode two of their stories. During the second week of December we concluded episode two. During the following week not all of the participants were present so I postponed group interviewing and concentrated on participant observation.

Phase 3

Phase 3 began the second week of January, 2014 and concluded in February. During this phase I concluded episode three and four of the group interviews and continued participant observations.

Phase 4

During March, April, and May I continued to observe and listen to the participants while drafting and refining each of the participant's stories reflectively. I worked collaboratively with the participants for the purpose of co-constructing understandings of participation and identity development in and outside of school. In this phase, I conducted individual interviews with the participants in the school conference room. During this phase I was invited by the participants to go to the mall and to visit their homes. Also, we bid farewell to one of the participants who moved to New York. I

deepened my understanding of the focal participants' literacy practices and continued noting the social positioning of the participants in educational settings. In this phase, I continued refining themes, conducting data analysis and revising my writing.

Data Analysis

There are a variety of strategies researchers can use to analyze narratives. The different approaches are often tied to specific disciplinary research purposes (Reissman, in Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). My approach falls between an ethno-biographical approach for the landscape of the story, and discrete stories in response to episodes used to organize the narrative around characters, setting, and plot (Labov, 1972 in Archakis & Tsakona, 2012). My purpose was to gain some understanding of the possible realities of the new immigrant youth for educational research and practice.

I began analyzing data each day I collected data. I sat in the school office writing notes trying to be as objective as possible as I jotted down observations. I went home to read my notes and to listen to the recorded conversations. I then translated and transcribed the conversations. Later, as I read my notes, I began the process of coding. As I gathered more data, the process became more complex for me. Seeking direction, I reread Strauss and Corbin's coding process (1990) which divides coding into three phases and labels them open, axial, and selective. However, Strauss and Corbin have admitted that the lines between the three phases are somewhat artificial and that open, axial, and selective coding might even be done concurrently. Glaser (1992) makes a similar claim about his substantive comparative coding. Searching for more structure, I then turned to the use of the web application *Dedoose*. I spent several days viewing training videos and trying to learn the process of coding through this program. The program uses a hierarchy of codes termed parent, child, and grandchild codes. I

uploaded my data to Dedoose and proceeded to work on coding. This process took several months as I worked evenings analyzing data. In March of 2014 I lost all the data uploaded to the program. Fortunately, I had it in my PC as well as in Dropbox.

After this incident, I analyzed the data by using Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS). Data from field notes, interviews/conversations transcripts, story, and writing samples were coded for meaning and sorted into domains or categories as data became available. The intent was to generate questions and identify patterns and recurring themes in the data as the study transpired in order to co-create a narrative. As I proceeded to use Spradley's DRS (1979, 1980), I included four analytic processes: domain, taxonomic, componential, and thematic. Domain analysis, involves identifying the semantic relationships salient to the participants talk and activities. Having domains helped me look for connections, patterns, and themes within the domains as well as between the domains to then search for terms that fit the given semantic relationships. Then, I was able to better manage the accumulating data and continue the coding and then placing it into a taxonomy of relationships. This system of analysis provided me a structure for the examination of contrast. The analysis allowed me to arrive at tensions between individuals and the cultures within which they are acting. Coding narratives in this analytical way was a fruitful but arduous process.

I then turned to narrative coding. I used a classic model of analysis; the Labovian six part model as described and applied to narratives of identity in critical education by Archakis and Tsakona (2012):

1. Abstract – what is the story about
2. Orientation – who, when, where

3. Complicating Action – then what happened?
4. Evaluation – so what?
5. Result – what finally happened?
6. Coda – a closure to the narrative.

Since I used episodic interviews which had a temporal structure a priori, Labov's narrative coding model proved more amenable to holistic coding of the conversational narratives of this study. I proceeded to code the participants' conversational stories by highlighting narratives and free clauses of place, time, characters, problems, climactic events, solutions and resolutions (Labov, 1972). The events were then analyzed as critical or supporting in the literacy practices and identities of the individual participants. In order to derive recurrent themes, I first read the transcribed data sets thoroughly. As I did so, I highlighted texts in a different color for each participant, assigned labels and wrote comments. The second reading allowed me to refine the themes by testing them against the data and my Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) codes. Subsequently, I grouped themes into patterns from which I developed the core categories that underlie this narrative study, see Table 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6.

Collecting multiple data sources allowed for triangulation of sources as well as analysis methods, but it also tripled the time and complexity of analysis. As I report the findings in later chapters I am well aware of the narratives as I handled the data in multiple ways multiple times. I used participants' spoken words to highlight their voices, as well as my own voice to narrate the analysis of the findings of this study.

Trustworthiness of Study

Schensul and Lecompte (1999) proposed that qualitative researchers struggle with positivist criteria in order to demonstrate validity and reliability in their work. Qualitative methods do not have the same kind of control over practice that can be maintained in clinical studies. Therefore, trustworthiness in qualitative studies depends largely on honest relationships with informants, and multiple data collection methods and sources (Glesne, 1992). Denzin identified four basic types of triangulation (1978):

1. Data triangulation: involves time, space, and persons
2. Investigator triangulation: involves multiple researchers in an investigation
3. Theory triangulation: involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon
4. Methodological triangulation: involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents.

This study included:

1. Data triangulation involving weekly visits at different times and locations during a six month period. Also, there were three different participants.
2. Investigator triangulation: each participant co-constructed the narratives by listening to her recordings and reading through the transcripts. Member checking included heavy editing of the participant's stories as they decided to withhold sensitive information they had provided in during conversational narratives.
3. Theory triangulation involved socio-cultural literacy and situated identity theories.
4. Method triangulation involved multiple types of data: episodic group narrative interviews, observations, and individual interviews.

Furthermore, when researchers conduct within method triangulation they are said to be examining reliability of the method by checking for its internal consistency. The design of this study includes multiple observations, interviews and narratives.

Validity as defined by Shimahara (1988) is "the degree to which participant observation achieves what it purports to discover, i.e., the authentic representation of

what is happening in the social scene” (p.86). In addition, due to the intensely personal nature of qualitative research, Roger Sanjeck mentions the necessity of an explicit personal testimony from the researcher (2013). It is important for researchers to acknowledge and continually check their research procedures and biases.

According to Potter, when researchers conduct between method triangulation, such as is done in this study: observations, group interviews, and individual interviews, researchers examine validity (1996). In terms of validity, Lincoln and Guba have stated that in qualitative studies it is sufficient to establish validity, since there can be no validity without reliability (1985). Patton agrees with Lincoln and Guba by stating that reliability is a consequence of validity (2001).

Personal Testimony

I acknowledge my position as a Central American woman of working class roots. My first language is Spanish and I am an immigrant who arrived in New York City as a child to live with my father and extended family in Washington Heights. My home literacies then included socializing, transnational communications in Spanish through spoken and written texts, artifacts, jokes and storytelling but also a huge bilingual dictionary that took center stage in our small living room. My upbringing was bilingual and multicultural. I learned to enjoy playing with words of Spanish and of English, and also to enjoy and feel comfortable and secure in multicultural environments. Presently I am a language educator. I teach Spanish as a foreign language at the postsecondary level to undergraduate students. Many aspire to be educators.

As a mother of bilingual children I have experienced situations where my daughters might have been subject to the "at-risk" or deficit labeling that could have led

to consequences in their education. I believe that my epistemology has been impacted by my personal experiences. I have felt caught between models of language learning; a medical model of hiring services for improving the state of my English literacies, and an educational model, largely of psycho-cognitive orientation for academic requirements. In my professional life, I have trained myself to listen to my students, to see and encourage their strengths, and understand and respond to what they tell me their needs are while building upon what I perceive are their strengths. My hope is that they will evaluate my practices and take with them what has helped their development and apply it to their professional lives.

My personal experiences have developed my bilingual skills which I have enjoyed in multiple ways including teaching a second language, and language brokering. My competency as a language broker for immigrants has oriented me to listen to and watch immigrant children and families and to understand their misgivings about public education. Thus, I position myself as a parent, an English and Spanish language teacher and learner, and an academic. My history as an immigrant child, an immigrant adult, a teacher of English and Spanish as second languages, a parent, a doctoral student, and someone who is bilingual with a global perspective has influenced my ideological assumptions which include a belief in the need for greater access to global history and second language education for educators, as well as equitable education for all students of any origin, and a view of student literacies from multiliteracies perspectives. My socio-cultural history will certainly shape my observations, interpretations, and analyses. However, this study was centered on the participant's narratives and their collaborative efforts during each phase of data

collection, as I checked in to corroborate my interpretations and analysis, as well as reflections kept in a researcher's journal.

Every step of the inquiry I attempted to model myself after qualitative researchers. This is to observe, listen, reflect, analyze, question, and reflexively write about meaning making activities within theoretical and ideological commitments and personal interactions with participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Chapter Summary

This study was conducted with the assumption that identity is a sociocultural endeavor, and that society and culture affect identity construction. Thus a situational transition has an effect on identity since sociocultural studies of literacy have established that literacy practices and social identities develop through mutual interaction (Bartlett, 2007). I chose qualitative methodology to explore new immigrant youth identities in North Florida. The design of the study consists of using narrative inquiry for data collection and analysis. Narrative inquiry consists of constructing a story based on personal experience. The content of the story is situated in time and the context shaped from the experience of the individual.

This study included four phases to conduct episodic group and individual interviews, as well as participant observations. The three focal participants were selected using criterion sampling to fit my study of recent immigrant youth from Latin America. The participants are females of 14 years of age, one from Honduras, one from Colombia, and one from Cuba. Interviews and observations were conducted primarily at their middle school, but also outside of school on several occasions. Data analysis consisted of thematic coding and narrative analysis of the stories.

Table 3-3. Data collection

Entry	Duration/Frequency	Collection Month/#	Aim	Total hrs. Duration/participant
Group Interviews	60 minutes/12x	Nov. (3x)	Understand participants' prior experiences/changed perspectives,	12
Episodic Group Interviews		Dec.(3x) January(4x) Feb. (2x)		
Individual Interviews	60minutes/3x (1xParticipant)	April (3x)	Understand participants individual stories	3
Participant Observations	60 minutes/11x	Dec.-March (11x)	Understand participants' academic literacies through homework assignments	11
Participant Observations	6 hrs./1x	May (1x)	Observe participants outside of school (mall, homes, car)	6
Observation Co-Construction of Stories	60minutes/3x (1xParticipant)	May 1x ea.	Co-Construction of stories Member check	1
Field Observations Observation	30 minutes/10x	Nov. (3x) Dec. (3x)	Understand setting, Establish rapport	5
Total Interview Hours				15
Total Participant Observations				18
Total Field Observations				5
Total hours:				38

Table 3-4. Contrasting personal and sociocultural identities in the home and host contexts – Eva: polite, collaborative, and a networker

Context	Personal	Sociocultural		
		Family	School	ESOL
Home	Integrated, friendly, funny, competent	Integrated, baby girl, helper, daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin, adherent to home food, music, language, sports, marianist , personalist	Integrated, familismo, friendly, funny, collaborative, guided competence integrated, visible, friendly, neighbor	N/A
Host	Confused: liminal, friendly, incompetent, agent for self & family; resistor of ethnic labels, adherent to Honduran national identity, curious of different Latin American cultures	Less integrated, young adult, helper, sister, daughter, cousin, granddaughter	Liminal, segregated, incompetent, invisible, agent for visibility, agent for good grades, agent for affinity groups, translator, technology user, learner of different Spanish regionalisms	Integrated, visible, funny, helper, rejecting Hispanic identity label, learner of multiple cultures.

Table 3-5. Contrasting personal and sociocultural identities in the home and host contexts – Socorro: frustrated, confused, and literate and academically engaged

Context	Personal	Sociocultural		
		Family	School	ESOL
Home	Integrated, friendly, happy, competent, “recochera” (inciting disorder)	Integrated, granddaughter, cousin, neighbor, adherent to home food, music, language, outdoors	Integrated, familismo, friendly, funny, collaborative, visible, neighbor	N/A
Host	Confused: liminal, resistor of ethnic labels, trouble maker, Colombian identity, superior Spanish speaker (to other Latin American)	Confused, troublemaker, lonely, daughter, step-daughter, transnationally connected	Liminal, segregated, capable student, academically engaged, frustrated, invisible, agent for visibility, troublemaker, translator, technology user	Integrated, visible, funny, competent, rejecting Hispanic self-identity label, learner of English

Table 3-6. Contrasting personal and sociocultural identities in the home and host contexts – Jessica: confident, creative, compassionate, connected, and concerned

Context	Personal	Sociocultural		
		Family	School	ESOL
Home	Integrated, confident, friendly, happy, competent, compassionate	Integrated, youngest, daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin, friend, smart, adherent to home land, food, music, language, sports, personalist	Integrated, smart, familismo, friendly, funny, collaborative, visible, neighbor	N/A
Host	Integrated, confident, friendly, happy, competent, resistor of ethnic labels, adherent to Cuban identity, Jehovah's Witness, compassionate	Integrated, youngest, daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin, friend, smart, Cuban pride, smart, promoter of Cuban land, food, music, language, education	Segregated, competent, visible, resisting academic authority, playful with language, resists Hispanic label, respectful of Latin American cultures, translator for academic purposes, technology user	Integrated, leader, visible, funny, competent, learner of English, writer

CHAPTER 4 EVA – HARMONIZING HONDURAN

Introduction

Eva is a petite fourteen year old young lady from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. She arrived in North Florida one year ago with her family. Eva's family consists of her father and mother and two older brothers who are 18 and 23 years old. Eva is the youngest of the three siblings and the only girl. She has expressed feeling fortunate for the spot she enjoys within her family because, as she puts it: *they all take care of me*. Though Eva is facing vertiginous changes in her life as a result of immigration and adolescence, she holds on to family loyalty as she balances her native and immigrant identities.

In some ways Eva is similar to many American teenage girls. She wants to fit in but also to be recognized as an individual. As a young girl, she wants to do well at home and at school and to have friends. However, as an immigrant, she deals with being a foreigner and its repercussions, such as being misunderstood or simply ignored due to language and cultural barriers. Also, she deals with homesickness and the desire to return to a place where she was the norm and there was little ambiguity in navigating familiar social scenes. In her location in North Florida, Eva is balancing the transitions to adolescence and to a new culture with the desire to return to her childhood and home land, where her needs were routinely anticipated and met through a strong family system.

Beginning the Study

Eva began meeting with me when we formally started the study in November of 2013. The first day of the study, greetings were exchanged courteously and Eva did not seem intimidated by the process. In fact, she smiled and was quite talkative. When we

met in the central office of her middle school to begin the process, she was very businesslike and in control of clarifying the logistics. She was curious about issues of time and place and spoke freely in Spanish. Before sitting down, she courteously asked:

Eva: Señora, will we meet here every day, or where will we meet?

I: We will meet during lunch hour or sometimes during your elective period, so it will be in different locations. But, I will let you know each time, as soon as I know.

Eva: Oh good, we can meet every day because every day we have lunch. We can sit outside. I've seen students sitting outside with an adult. (G1:3-7)

From her smile and the energy in her voice, I interpreted that she had no apparent problem in expressing herself in Spanish. Also, she appeared assertive when suggesting the possibility of daily meetings and sitting outside for lunch.

When she settled down in a chair, I noticed that she was very well groomed. Her dark hair was neatly brushed up in a thick bun and set high on top of her head. Also, she was wearing a slight amount of make-up but no bright colors or excessive blush or lipstick. She appeared to be wearing the school uniform; however, when she sat down next to another participant, I noticed that Eva's pants were a very dark shade of hunter green, not black as required by the school. Also, she wore a light brown leather belt and a pink hoodie. It seemed that Eva negotiated complying with the school dress code and being a middle school youth by adding subtle personal touches to the mandated uniform. In this way, Eva displayed identity through fashion accessories, deviating only slightly from the institutional dress code.

From Eva's words and my observations during our initial meeting, I was left with the impression that Eva was an enthusiastic girl who wanted to express herself at

school but still needed an adult to support her. While expressive and enthusiastic, Eva exercised caution in the new environment.

Eva's Story

During the following meeting Eva carefully began to tell us more about herself. She told us about conditions she encountered in San Pedro Sula and about essential aspects of being from Honduras. She expressed awareness of being from a city notorious for its high crime rate. However, she only mentioned it as a short remark saying: *I know San Pedro is terrible; in my city there is a lot of crime (G1:28)*. Speaking in Spanish, as she did throughout the study, Eva chose the verb 'estar' for describing the negative aspects of San Pedro Sula. 'Estar' is the verb used to describe conditional states of being. For essential aspects of life in Honduras, she chose to talk about positive relationships with the people around her; she said, *in Honduras we are very friendly people, we are always saying funny things (G1:36)*. For this she used the verb 'ser', another Spanish 'to be', a verb used to describe identities considered to be essential or inherent to the subject. Therefore, from her choice of the verbs, I understood that Eva does not consider crime an essential part of her city but sees it as San Pedro's present condition.

Transitioning to the US: Balancing homesickness with optimism

As Eva transitions to life in Florida, she considers family, friendly people and celebrations to be the essence of being from Honduras and the sources of strength for her. However, those very aspects of Honduran identity are also the basis of her homesickness and the constant thought of return to her home country. During our first group interview Eva and I had a few minutes to speak alone while I accompanied Eva to the restroom. We left the library and walked to the bathroom through an outdoor

walkway. I walked with her because she would have needed a hall pass otherwise.

While we walked Eva turned her head to either side to look around; I asked:

I: are you looking for someone?

L: No (laughs), just looking around; oh, see that (pointing with her chin) is Mrs. A, she was the vice principal last year, but not this year. Now she just watches for kids who get in trouble. (G2:19-21)

We walked pass the lady she had singled out and they exchange friendly smiles and the lady said something to Eva which was inaudible to me. Eva replied in Spanish accented English; *no, no, I goin to da basroom.* (G2:22) Eva went to the bathroom and I waited for her outside. When she came out we made the trip back to the library and continued talking:

I: so did you like living in Honduras?

E: Yes, of course! (laughs)

I: what kind of things did you like to do there?

E: well, we saw each other almost every day, we celebrated holidays and birthdays.

I: Lots of holidays, right?

E: oh yes, but Christmas was special. For Christmas there was lots of food, and we had lots of fun and, there was music everywhere. Ah, and I love Holy week too. During Holy Week we go to the mountains to visit my grandmother and family in Comayagua. They are from my mother's side. You should go to Comayagua one Holy Week. I love it because everybody goes outside. (G2:25-34)

During our short walk, Eva's words repeated her previous comments which expressed how much she valued holidays and community life in Honduras.

Consistent with cultural conventions of community Eva expressed strong loyalty to family. Eva's family and close friends were her primary socializing agents in

Honduras. Eva particularly recalls her grandfather's companionship. According to Eva's words, he protected her and was a special person in her daily life. She told us:

My grandfather is short and skinny like me, but he is so strong. He always was worried about me. Most days my grandfather would drive me to and from school. After school he would take me to their house. My grandmother would have *unas fritas*, ready for us. Other cousins would come over for *fritas* too. Afterwards I would sleep with my baby cousin Maribel for a while, then get up and do my homework. (E1:25-30)

Socorro, the Colombian participant, wanted to know about the *fritas* (fries).

Socorro: What are *fritas*?

Eva: Fritas are made of grated corn, milk and sugar. They are delicious.

Socorro: Are they like *arepas*?

Eva: *Arepas*?

Socorro: You know, they are made of corn with cheese inside.

Eva: oh, those are for lunch, um with cabbage salad. (G3:15-19)

Jessica, the Cuban participant, added that she does not eat corn but liked eating fried *arbol pan* (tree bread/breadfruit). I observed the three participants' lively discussion of the names and types of food they fried and enjoyed eating in their respective home countries. Jessica raised her voice and laughed as she tried to describe the taste of breadfruit to Socorro and Eva. As the conversation deviated from Honduran food, Eva concluded: *I don't know what that is* (G3: 23) and returned to talking about Honduras.

As Eva mentioned, her grandparents were in charge of getting her to school, of providing nourishment, time to rest, and space to do homework and socialize with cousins. In the United States she does not have the support of grandparents as she did in Honduras. Here, Eva's family dynamics have changed. However, like many

newcomers to the United States, Eva expresses optimism about discovering and adapting to her new life situation, saying:

I like it here, everything is almost perfect. There is everything here and my mother can cook for us almost all the same food we had in Honduras. We go to the Latin store on Beach. We can even make tamales (G6:23-25)

Here, Eva and her family hold on to the food and traditions shared with family in Honduras as they encounter new traditions. They continue making the tamales her late paternal grandmother used to make, the ones they call *los navideños* or the Christmas ones [tamales]. Eva says:

The *navideños* are special, my grandmother always made them for the whole family. Luckily, here in Florida we can still make them. The truth is my family made some for Thanksgiving. We were not going to eat turkey (laughs). We did not feel like it. We don't have Thanksgiving in Honduras. We don't know about that. (G6:27-30)

According to Eva, her family has not yet developed any feelings or understanding about Thanksgiving and they do not have a palate for roasted turkey. Though turkey is part of the indigenous diet for many Hondurans, it is not typically roasted. Eva explained:

I think here they just like to put a big turkey on the table (laughs). We do not like that. Sometimes my mother makes turkey but with seeds and with a chili sauce and we eat it with watercress and radishes, on bread or tortillas. (G6:32-34)

I said, *that sounds delicious*. Then Eva added,

We don't eat that a lot. On Thanksgiving we made the Christmas tamales with my aunt. We all got together and made almost 100 tamales. We ate some for Thanksgiving and froze the rest for Christmas. (G6:37-39)

Luckily here we can do what we want; there is abundance here; anyway, no one cares I ate Christmas tamales in November. (G7:1-2)

Like most immigrants, Eva and her family have to adopt aspects of their new environments, however they keep their cultures alive at home. They do not expect that their Central American experience will have any relevance outside their home.

Naturally, as a recent arrival Eva relies on her previous 14 years of life experiences and the learned ways of relating to others. She continues to need Spanish to communicate and to search for support. In her stories of home Eva identifies herself and her family as Honduran. From her words, being Honduran involves socializing and interacting with family and close friends, sharing holidays, humor, and food in their homes. It also means protecting one another from the dangers of urban life in a country with high crime due mainly to gang activity. However, Eva does not elaborate about specific fears or crimes when talking about her life in Honduras.

Searching for security

Though Eva does not say specifics about crime, it was the main reason for migrating to Florida. Eva told us about a maternal uncle living in Florida who had encouraged her parents to leave Honduras. He had migrated due to the devastation of hurricane Mitch in 1998, before Eva was born. Eva said:

One of my uncles went to Miami after the big hurricane, that one. He goes back to Honduras every year and he always tried to convince my parents to move to Florida. I think my mother wanted to try it but my father always said no (G7:20-22)

The idea of coming to Florida was something that Eva's mother had cultivated, but her father resisted. When I asked Eva to tell me more about leaving Honduras, she said:

My father had promised my grandmother he would never leave Honduras. But after my grandmother died my father started thinking about coming because my brothers were getting older and you know, they wanted to go out more. And my aunt had left too. (E1:31-2:2)

Eva paused her story, but when prompted to talk about why the parents did not want the brothers to go out, Eva continued, I don't think crime was too bad; well our neighbors got burglarized twice and we were afraid we would be next, especially because of our small business. (E2:2-4) Earlier in conversation, Eva had told me about her father's small business which he conducted from home:

He fixes refrigerators and other things so people sometimes dropped off those things in our house for my father to fix. There was a room with refrigerators and fans and things like that. I think the Maras found out. And I don't know, but it is dangerous. (E1:17-19)

Saying *maras*, Eva was referring to the Mara Salvatrucha 13 or MS-13 gang, now a transnational organized crime group which originated in Los Angeles in the 1980s. When Eva mentioned the *maras* she offered no explanation, she just went on with her story.

Eventually Eva's family decided to leave Honduras and after several years the family was able to come to Florida. For Eva, family life began to change the year before departing Honduras:

My parents sold everything, even the house. Then we went to live with my grandfather again. They took me out of my school and put me in a bilingual school so I could learn English before coming here. I did not like the new school. They forced me to speak in English. They wanted me to just speak English but that was impossible for me. (E2:7-11)

When Eva talked about her first encounter with English language learning, she lost her composure and ended the conversation abruptly saying; *that, I did not like at all.* (E2:11) There was a desperate tone in Eva's voice. She also rolled her eyes emphasizing the discomfort with being asked to do something she could not do.

Experiencing the ways of second language instruction introduced her to frustrations with English even before leaving Honduras.

When Eva finally left Honduras it was both difficult and a welcome move from a space of anticipation to physically confronting the move. Eva put it this way; *I really wanted to come to the United States but saying goodbye to my grandfather was the hardest thing for me.* (E2: 13-14). For Eva migrating to the United States has had costs and benefits. Losing energy, Eva said in a low voice, *everything changed for all of us.* After a short pause, she quickly returns to an optimistic stance saying:

I am getting to know my mother's side of the family. I didn't know them very well before because they lived here; I am learning a little English with them. They speak English, Spanish, and Spanglish, but mostly a little bit of everything (E2:16-18)

As a result of immigration, Eva is expanding her cultural literacies, including language. At home and in school, she is beginning to understand what it means to be Latin American and an immigrant, not through the school curriculum but through contact with other Latin American immigrants, which include her family and fellow ESOL student. I noticed that Eva is beginning to incorporate other Spanish regionalisms into her Spanish lexicon. For instance, when one of the other participants calls her name during our conversations, Eva usually responds by saying; *mande*, which is the Spanish word for command. I asked Eva if that is the typical response in Honduras and she laughs, and says: *no, that is what Mexicans say, I learned that from the Mexicans in my ESOL class.* (G17:6) Other times she uses Caribbean Spanish, saying; "oye nena" (listen girl) to another participant; and, she plays with syntax and sometimes aspirates the final 's' of Spanish words, saying; *¿cómo tú está* instead of *¿cómo estás tú?* When I asked her about this way of speaking Spanish, she laughed and told me: *oh, I know that*

that is not correct, I just like the way Puerto Ricans talk, I like the way it sounds. (G17:8-9) From the people that speak to her in school, she is discovering different ways of speaking Spanish and is learning to modify her Honduran Spanish. Through immigration, Eva has gained social interaction with ESOL students from different countries of Latin America who expose her to new geographies, new jokes, new Spanish words and regionalisms she had not encountered in her sheltered Honduran environment.

However, there is also the loss of closeness with relatives as she had back in Honduras. Here Eva objects that while her relatives are very nice they have to work very hard. Eva emphasizes; *everybody here works too much, even my mother has to work too much.* (G17:11-12) Eva's words are signs that she is beginning to make sense of the social cultural changes affecting her new reality.

Eva is becoming cognizant of the differences of living in Florida from living in Honduras. Reflecting upon change, Eva confided; *my relationship with my mother is beginning to be different.* By the sad tone of her voice I interpreted that this was another guarded act in her narrative. I waited to hear more, but she became silent so I asked:

I: Why do you think things are changing?

Eva: My mother and I had a very close relationship in Honduras. Here, she works too much and we don't get a chance to talk like we used to. (G10:16-17)

Eva's eyes widened as if frightened by her own words, then she quickly continued:

But I still enjoy cleaning house with her on Saturdays and going grocery shopping together when we get a ride to the stores. (E3:14-17)

Eva did not add detail to her micro story of spending time with her mother while doing housework on Saturdays, but I understood that this is the only time they have together.

From conversations with Eva's mother I learned of the type of work the parents and older brother do. They work in the food industry of North Florida. Eva's parents work two jobs each and the older brother often works two shifts. The brother works packing frozen sushi on individual trays. Because he works in a freezer, he wears two pairs of pants and several layers of shirts, sweaters, and a heavy jacket. The parents work at a local restaurant from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon. Afterwards they work at a beverage plant where they do cleaning services from four in the afternoon until midnight.

Since the parents do not yet have a driver's license, they walk approximately two miles to their day job and depend on friends and co-workers to drive them to the food plant for their second job. The older brother drives so he picks up the parents at midnight at the end of their work day, then the breadwinners of the family sleep a few hours each night. Eva never mentioned the family work scenario to me, and her mother was not complaining when she told me about their long work days. She mentioned their schedule as an explanation for not being able to invite me to her home.

However, midway through the study Eva's family made time to invite me to have lunch at their house. When I arrived at the trailer park where they live, I had a hard time finding their lot. I was looking for a two digit numbered trailer and I saw only three digit numbers. I drove through a maze of trailers and as I moved along, I noticed that the trailers were in apparent good condition and the park was clean and had lots of trees

and a playground. There were no other landmarks so after driving around for a while I became disoriented and called Eva for directions to their lot. She asked where I was and then told me I was quite close to them. I could hear the parents in the background telling Eva to have me remain where I was and they would come to find me. Soon after, I spotted the family walking towards me. I noted that they looked happy. They were smiling and Eva waved and ran over to me. She got in my car and at that point the parents turned around and walked back. I had gotten quite close to their home and even though they explained to me how to get to their trailer, they chose to come out as a family to meet me.

When we entered the home the family proceeded to be good hosts. I was prompted to make myself comfortable and we talked about my drive across town. Then I was offered something to drink. I asked for water without ice. Upon my request, they looked at one another and I noticed slight smiles. Eva explained:

Our refrigerator broke down today and we put the drinks in the freezer so they would stay cold. We think that they might be a little bit frozen.
Is it alright for you to have regular water?
My parents thought that you would want a very cold drink.
They have seen that people here like very cold drinks with lots of ice.
(N47:31-36)

The family was displaying cultural sensitivity and the layers of interpretation at play when making sense of preferences even if we all speak the same language and fall within the Hispanic ethnic category assigned to us. Being a good host was a thoughtful but uncertain process for them.

After this, Eva volunteered to show me her room. The mother came along and stood in the hallway saying that the room was very small. It was indeed quite small and narrow. There was room to fit a twin bed along one of the walls. On the longest wall of

the room, stacked on one long shelf were Eva's books, along with some school work and materials. Pasted on the wall above the shelf were many letters and cards from family in Honduras. I stared at this wall trying to take in the many words, and images displayed there: postcards, photos, a poster of the grandparents labeled *Abuelitos* (grandparents), children's handwritten letters with pictures of rainbows and butterflies. The mother said apologetically that she tells Eva not to paste things on the wall. Eva interjected:

I like letters on the wall because I can read them every day. I miss my little cousins so much, I miss everyone there. I'm dying to go, maybe for a few days for Holy Week. But, I guess I will have to wait until the summer. (N47:39-41)

At home, Eva was vocal about how much she misses her relatives. Her *familismo*, or loyalty to family, extends across long distances mostly through the written word on paper, and by planning to physically visit extended family. Since Central America is part of the American continent and quite close to the Southeastern United States, traveling back and forth can be done with relative ease. For Central Americans in Florida, the proximity of their homeland allows them to maintain strong connection and contact with their relatives and their cultures.

Eva has already been back to Honduras once. When she completed the seventh grade she traveled to Honduras to spend summer vacation with her maternal relatives in Comayagua. This is an option Eva's parents prefer since Eva would have to stay home alone for most of the summer if she were to stay here. Eva explained:

My mother prefers that I go to Comayagua to be with my aunt and cousins since everyone here works and there is no one to be with me. So of course I went and I think I will go again this summer. (N47:43-46)

Eva did not elaborate on her trip to Honduras, but she showed me the Honduras soccer team shirts she bought while she was there. Eva returned to the United States in August and began getting reacquainted with English in the 8th grade.

Back in the United States, socializing is limited for Eva due to residential segregation. Though Eva's family feels less threatened in North Florida than in Honduras, their status has changed with migration and they must live in a low income high crime area of town. Also, every member of the family is busy working in some way to enjoy what is only the appearance of safety, though it is not clear to me whether they understand this. Since the adults have to work many hours, Eva and the middle son have to get by at school and home on their own. The family, in their present US social economic context, does not have the understanding or social capital to avoid dangerous situations as they seem to have done in Honduras. Eva told me:

My parents moved into the trailer park because it is close to where they work in the plant. We did not know I would have to go to school so far away. (N48:1-4)

Eva and the 18 year old brother spend much of their days traveling to and from school. They travel across town because their neighborhood schools referred them to schools with ESOL centers. For Eva, the bus ride takes approximately an hour and forty five minutes due to the many stops the bus makes on the long route between the trailer park and her middle school. Eva expressed her feelings about the bus ride:

I live very far away from here. I spend a long time on that bus, almost two hours. We go in and out of many different places that when I arrive at school I want to wash my face to wake up again. (G1:41-43)

The bus ride is tiring for Eva and it drains her energy even before arriving in school. When I asked Eva what her parents think about this long ride, she just smiled, shrugged her shoulders and said; *well, I have to come to school.* For Eva and her family

there seems to be no question that Eva must go to school and they know of no other way to get there. Living closer to the school is not an option since the adults must walk to work due to lack of public and private transportation.

Balancing School Challenges

In addition to the long distance from home, Eva faces other changes and tensions related to school. In a low achieving school which houses a majority black student population and an ESOL center for immigrant students, Eva faces tensions related to her ethnicity and her minority status. Reflecting on the difference in the school situation Eva stated:

In Honduras school was very different. I knew almost everyone at school. And my teachers were very nice and took time teaching us. They helped us understand. We had the same teacher for several grades. And I liked that there were all the grades there together. We had from pre-kindergarten to high school in my school and sometimes we did things together. I liked seeing all the little ones in school. (E3:21- 25)

Also, the school experience in Honduras included her relatives since someone accompanied her to school every day. Now she takes the school bus to school which Eva said; *is the worst thing about school*. The other participants nodded in agreement. Eva made a long pause in telling her story but another participant volunteered that Black girls bully Latin girls, on the bus especially. Eva added;

I come from far away and I am one of the first to get on the bus. When they, the African Americans, get on they make me sit on the floor and they yell at me and insult me. Here the black people hate us. My mom gives me money for lunch, in Honduras we never have free lunch, so my mother is not used to this and she gives me money to buy something. I buy some candy and the African Americans get mad and take the candy from me. It is okay, just the black people, they don't want us here. Please, let's finish this today [a worksheet]. (G2:4-12)

But then Eva adds:

I don't understand why they (African American girls) hate us so much. The insults are worse on the bus but they continue bothering us all through the day. We want to be friends but they just hate us. I never knew black people; I never knew they were like that. (E2.9-10)

She could not make sense of this situation except to say; *It is okay, just the black people, they don't want us here.* (E2:11) It was difficult for Eva to tell this story perhaps because she could not come up with a balancing argument since she has limited racial literacy. The perception that black people hate Latin immigrants, whether true or not, makes for a negative school experience for Eva.

Still, Eva looks for positive aspects of her school situation and finds comfort and cohesion among other immigrants and identifying herself as ESOL. She said; *even though school is not quite perfect, I like my ESOL classes, friends and teachers. In ESOL we can talk and relax.* (E: 5:3) Relaxing in ESOL class gives Eva a sense of security, however, she knows she is falling behind academically, saying: *it is hard for me since I don't know English* (E: 5:5). Though Eva's self-assessment, at least with regard to her current English literacy skills, seems to be correct she is adept at accessing school resources, like tracking her grades online and securing physical assistance from others.

Without English however, academic work is a challenge for Eva. During our time together she frequently interrupts to ask for help with her school assignments.

Sometimes the other participants provide a quick response, at other times they cannot help her or are unaware of the assignment. During those times they all turn to me wide-eyed for guidance. Eva's constant pleas for help serve to remind the others of

upcoming tests and assignments, and for me to observe the challenge of academic English for recent immigrants in middle school.

One such situation was a history project assignment which according to Eva would account for the history grade for the entire quarter. Eva interrupted the group interviews:

Could we talk about the history project? We need to do a good job because the teacher said it counts for everything this semester, but we don't know what we have to do. It is a big project we have to do it soon. (G11:13-15)

Following Eva's lead the others joined in asking for help for this project and other assignments in math, science, history, and creative writing. Often I had to set the interview aside to help the participants with school assignments. The history project was something that was a concern for all the participants. During several of our meetings they continued to plan the project:

E: can we do a poster?

I: Yes, I think that would qualify as an exhibit.

S: how about a documentary?

E & J: NO!!!

J: We don't have time and how are you going to do that?

E: a poster is good, we can cut pictures and write a little about the picture.

I: okay, I guess first we need to learn something about the "freedom riders"

S: oh, they were black people that could not sit on the bus.

E: okay, okay (in an impatient tone)

I: well, we don't have too much time right now. Do you have computers at home?

ALL: yes

I: maybe you can look for information on the freedom riders and try to get information as to the Who, what, when, where, how about them.

They just stared at me, so I went on to explain:

I: Look for who they were, what they did and what happened, when they did what, and how they did it, who else was involved and what else happened. (G11: 23-24)

The three participants nodded their heads in agreement, but they did not write anything down. This surprised me but then I remembered that during my own research process many helpful people would give me advice which confused me so much I did not know what to write down. We continued talking:

I: I can write you an email about this so you can do this at home.

ALL: they nod (but looked at each other not very convincingly).

E: or, we could meet at a library and look for a book about this.

I: The downtown library has children's books that explain things very well, maybe we can find something about this, or use their computer.

ALL: yes! (G24:44-45 & G25:1-26)

They liked this idea, but we never made it to the library because the girls and their parents could not agree on the logistics of the trip. However, from my observations, I experienced the participants' interest in working together and doing well in school. I listened to their cries for help. They wanted to work together but, group projects are problematic for students who live far from one another and who have different levels of English and other resources.

Eva's resources at home are her brothers and technology. The brother who attends high school helps her with homework and the brother who works supplies technology. Eva said: *My older brother bought a small laptop but it is the same as the big ones. He helped us skype and email our family and friends in Honduras.* (G: 2: 3-4) Eva uses the computer to communicate through email with friends here too since she has no means of transportation and lives far from her school ESOL friends. She uses the computer to do homework as well. She said:

I google everything. It translates the questions and most of the time I can find the answers on eHowenEspanol.com. It takes me and my brother a long time to do homework and most of the time I turn things in late, but teachers do not mind, they know I am ESOL. (G: 19: 24-27)

Eva is busy mediating the completion of assignments for grades but she hardly engages with the content of her education. When I asked her; who helps you?

Eva replied:

Mainly myself. I ask everybody I can; my brothers, my friends, the para, the counselor, the secretary, my friends, and you. (E5:8-10)

Eva seeks help to put together a product to hand in to her teachers in exchange of passing grades. She seems to have read the school system as an exchange of papers for points, but not necessarily for learning. She said; *sometimes I copy what is on the board and give it to them. Most times I don't know what I am copying but if I hand in something, I get some points.* (NE2:17)

Eva is moving words from one place to another but she is not understanding or learning from the words she transports, however she gets some desired points.

A Future without School

Eva guards her comments about school and teachers. When asked about school, she said: *school is hard, but it is okay, teachers are nice* (G19:22) School is okay for Eva, but her favorite day is Saturday, a day without school. Eva has perfect days on Saturdays, she said:

On Saturdays mi mother and I do housecleaning. We put music on, sing, sometimes we even dance. Afterwards we sit and talk of what happened the past week and what we plan on doing. (NE2. 31-34)

Therefore, for Eva a perfect day would be one where she stays home and talks, dances and sings with her mother even if it means housecleaning.

School does not feature in her vision of a perfect day in the short or long term. At the moment Eva's focus is to finish middle school and move on to high school but she is determined to end academic life there. Eva told the group; *I just hope I can pass the FCAT and go to high school.* (G19:24) When I asked if she thought about going to the University, she answered with certainty:

No! Not here. If I decide to go to the University I will go back to Honduras. But, I want to do something with hair and beauty. I think I can learn that at one of those institutes when I finish high school. I already know how to cut bangs and do some hairstyles. I learn by watching You-Tube videos on how to style hair and put on make-up. I love YouTube! (G23:12-16)

When Eva stated that she loves YouTube, the other participants said they frequent the site too, indicating that, like many young people, they have found a place to learn in virtual media. Still, family continues to influence Eva's thinking about her education and the future. When confirming possibilities for the future Eva tells me her parents want her to become a teacher: *my parents want me to become a teacher. But if I do that, I would have to go back to Honduras.* (NE2.43)

When pressed to supply a reason for the decision to bypass universities in the United States, Eva replied saying only; *well, one never knows* (NE2.44)

For now, Eva is concerned with the immediate future. She is looking forward to traveling to Honduras for Holy Week. This would mean missing school since Holy Week does not coincide with spring break this year. But, Eva is hopeful that she will be able to go if only for a few days. Arguing for her plan she says:

I don't worry about missing school. I can ask them (points to the co-participants) about the homework and do it there. I don't understand what they talk about in class here anyway. (G48:1-3)

Her words convey the tacit rationale that school for her has become irrelevant. Also, through technology she can absent herself from school to be present in more significant spaces.

Eva uses multiple literacies in her attempts to communicate and understand her surroundings. From her comment; *I can ask them about the homework*, said in a declarative tone. Eva understands ESOL class to be a place of peer support where she can rely on her ESOL mates. Also, from advice she offers to other ESOL students about submitting assignments: *give them [the teachers] something, anything but give it to them*, she seems to be reading the middle school as a place in charge of logistics and accountability, but quality might not be an issue. Eva is aware of her personal situation in school and points to the fact that she is falling behind academically. She said to Jessica; *you got here after I did and you know more English, you are more advanced*.

Eva identifies herself as a student who is falling behind despite her concern with presentation and preparation for school demands. She is always well groomed,

courteous and friendly. She is constantly checking assignment due dates and often checks electronic gradebook to track her grades. She invests in school materials such as colorful pens, markers, and folders so that she can convey that she cares about her school work; she said, *I want things to look nice*. Eva is aware that teachers need something to grade and she makes sure to hand in something nice.

She speaks in optimistic terms about her situation outside of school, she says;

There are many things I like about being here. We have a lot of food, and my brother already has a car. We can have many things here. (G3:4-5)

Eva is appreciative about what her host country has to offer her; abundance of food and material things. She is beginning to identify with consumerism. This is illustrated in her upcoming plans for her 'Quinceañera', the traditional rite of passage celebration for her fifteenth birthday. She wants it all;

For my quinceañera, I want a traditional mass with my family, a little party for close friends and family, and my own iPhone, and money to travel, maybe to Cuba with Jessica (giggles) (G39:11-12)

At this point in her identities as Honduran and an immigrant in the United States, Eva oscillates between optimism for her future in Florida and nostalgia of the past in Honduras. She longs to have it all, her country and culture of origin and the benefits of material goods she will have by living in the United States.

Chapter Summary

Eva is a reserved fourteen year old girl who does not divulge too many intimate details about her life in Honduras. However she tells of an immigrant experience of nostalgia for her life as a child in Honduras where her grandparents and extended family were central figures in her daily routines. As an immigrant adolescent, she has

youthful hopes for growing and becoming skilled, but is also contemplating returning to Honduras for higher education.

Her first year in North Florida has presented Eva with conflicting scenarios. Eva says everything is almost perfect in Florida but tells of stories daily challenges, such as transportation difficulties, unanticipated ethnic tensions, lack of the dominant language and academic understanding. She lives in an undefined space in North Florida and depends on other to guide her. In her search for assistance, she has gained awareness of cultural diversity and social capital. At home she finds strength and support in her family and culture. At school she relies on Spanish speakers as she networks to complete school assignments, to socialize, and to get by without knowing English.

Her first year in the United States has presented her with challenges and opportunities. Despite the realities of immigration, Eva is still optimistic about her future and is developing a system to manage resources in order to communicate without using English. The system allows her to combine tradition and technology to reach out to a transnational network of human capital. Though Eva continues to rely on family, friends, and her culture, she has gained awareness that she is her own best resource since assistance must be actively sought out and utilized. She is adding consuming and technological identities available to the American youth. Learning English is the biggest challenge for Eva. It remains to be seen what course her life will take as she enters high school without knowing the language and content of instruction.

CHAPTER 5 SOCORRO – CONFLICTED COLOMBIAN

Introduction

Socorro is 14 year old girl from Monteria, Colombia. She is an only child and lives with her mother and her step-father in North Florida. The context of Socorro's immigrant life is drastically different from her home country experiences. Until recently, Socorro had lived with her grandparents in Monteria, a city located in the north of Colombia with access to the Caribbean via the river Sinu. Accompanied by her mother, Socorro departed Colombia less than a year from the outset of this study. Her mother had lived in Miami for several years prior and had travelled back to Colombia to gather her child and bring her to Florida.

Socorro's family life has changed considerably in Florida. She lives with a new father figure and a mother who is recently married. Socorro is in the process of becoming familiar with her new home life, as well as with a new country, and a new school. She has expressed dislike of her present life situation, and a desire to return to living her life in Colombia. *I don't like this, I want to go back*, she said.

Socially uneasy but spatially grounded

On the day we began the study, Socorro arrived late and did not smile or talk much at first. Eva and Jessica, the other participants, were already in the school office where we had previously agreed to meet. When Socorro finally arrived she did not address anyone and hesitated even when I extended my arm to her as a greeting and invitation to enter the room. When I asked informally how she was doing, she answered in formal Spanish. She chose to use *Usted*, the formal Spanish form of 'you' to address me. This signaled an adherence to cultural conventions about maintaining a distance

and differentiating people based on age and authority or familiarity. After our brief greeting, she remained in the doorway, she stood straight and was somewhat short of breath. She seemed ill at ease.

As I attempted to give Socorro a moment to catch her breath, I took mental note of her physical appearance. I noted that she is the tallest of the participants. She was wearing black pants and a grey polo shirt, which is the school uniform. I also noticed her good posture and fit physical form. Her hair is dark and plentiful, she had it tied in a ponytail but from her bangs I could see that there is a slight wave to her hair. Her facial features are pronounced; an angular jaw line, a prominent nose and big black eyes framed by full dark eyebrows. Her skin is a darker shade of brown than the other girls. She is *morena*, a Spanish term stemming from the word *moros*, or moors used to describe someone with dark skin, hair, and eyes, more African-Mediterranean than Amerindian.

The two other participants, the counselor and I were looking at Socorro in silence. I was expecting an explanation for her late arrival but she did not offer one. She appeared upset. One of the participants, Eva, looked at her and asked where she had been. Socorro ignored the question. Eva and the other participant, Jessica, rolled their eyes and then turned and smiled at me. I later learned this type of uneasy social behavior is somewhat typical of Socorro.

Shortly after we moved to the media center as had been arranged previously. The counselor walked us there. The girls walked a few steps in front of us and I observed that Socorro led the way while occasionally looking back to engage in brief conversation and laughter with the other two participants. When we arrived and entered

the media center, I noted that Socorro knew her way around and looked comfortable there. She became cooperative. She answered my general questions about school and volunteered her class schedule and the names of several teachers. When Eva asked if there was a restroom in the media center, Socorro responded by saying: *yes, in the back but the ESE children are there so we can't go there now*. The participants did not question the 'ESE' label, they just turned to look to the back of the room and remained quiet and took no action. I interpreted that they had an understanding of the "ESE" label. However, Socorro had spotted these students in the back even before the question was posed. She repeated: *we can't go to that bathroom when the little children are there. (G1:18)* She used the Spanish term (*niñitos*) for little children, a term with the diminutive ending which also signals endearment. Socorro was adamant about observing the rule of not going in their space. There was a nurturing and law abiding side to her though initially she was seemingly disrespectful of punctuality.

From the initial informal meeting, I noted that Socorro was preoccupied with surveying the space about her more so than engaging in conversation. But, she was willing to respond clearly to questions which were directly addressed to her. Her lack of focus on the group could seem disrespectful; however, I was getting a sense that her focus was spread widely and therefore was not concentrated solely on the group. I was left with a complex first impression of Socorro. She was apprehensive but willing to cooperate.

The following day we met to begin the group interview in a small conference room the school secretary had reserved for us. This time Socorro arrived with the other participants and courtesy greetings went well. Compared to the other participants,

Socorro continued to be more reserved. Jessica and Eva spoke in Spanish and in loud voices to one another. They greeted me with a kiss and asked how I was doing. Very quickly the participants had carved out an intimate space in our institutional surroundings. Socorro, however, did not initiate conversation and continued to use the standard formal Spanish register when responding to questions, while the co-participants used informal Spanish.

I began the interview process by restating issues of confidentiality and the manner in which we would record the interviews. Immediately Socorro took issue and in a loud and nervous tone stated: *I don't want to be recorded!* From reflections of our previous meeting with Socorro, I had considered that many Latin Americans and Colombians in particular live in a state of alertness due to a history of living positioned between left wing insurgents and right-wing paramilitaries. Knowing this, I prepared to take notes but after some clarification Socorro agreed to be recorded on the condition that she would not have to hear her own voice, she said: *it's that I don't like to hear my voice.* (G1:12 & 17)

Socorro's interactions pointed to the complexities of immigrating during adolescence, a time of seeking individuation and confronting physical change and self-awareness. In Latin America transitioning out of childhood would typically take a slow course. In her immigrant context self-assertion is a cultural expectation which must be attended too quickly. And for Socorro, awareness of herself, especially of her own voice, seems to make her uncomfortable.

Facing the Caribbean Sea: Being “recochero”

Our first conversations were about her life in Colombia. Socorro and all of her immediate family are coastal people. She emphatically told the group: *we are all “¡costeños!”* (from the coast). Socorro comes from a city called Montería, meaning woods or hunting grounds. Located in the north of Colombia, Montería is the capital of Córdoba, a municipality in the Caribbean region. According to Socorro, life is fun-filled in Montería. She mentioned: *I always had lots of family and friends nearby. We were always out in the parks and ready to do something.*

Socorro spoke slowly about the parks and festivals in Colombia, but she didn’t look up at anyone. Sitting with legs spread apart and elbows upon her knees, she continued to talk: *the beaches and animals, the horses were beautiful. But the best are the people, we are “recocheros”.* With her words she conveyed her conception that nature in Montería is beautiful and people are fun or playful. When I asked to tell us more about the parks in Monteria, Socorro said:

You know, parks, where you can have fairs with folklore dancing, and sometimes livestock, and coffee festivals. The coffee park was my favorite. Sometimes we would go to other festivals in Sincelejo and Cartagena. (G3: 12-13)

Considering that Sincelejo is about a two hour drive from Montería, and Cartagena is still farther away, I asked who would go with her. Socorro replied: *everyone! In Colombia, people know how to have fun, we coastal people are recocheros (comedians/jesters).*

She repeated the term *recochero*, a term which was new to me. I asked Socorro for clarification and she said: *that word is for people who like to have fun.* Still unclear about the term, I asked for an example of a type of ‘recochero’ fun. Socorro responded

by shrugging her shoulders and laughing and in doing so she negotiated a non-response to my question. She continued to smile as if enjoying that neither I, nor the other two girls, knew about that term.

Since Socorro did not elaborate, I decided to contact Socorro's mother about this term. I had met Socorro's mother previous to beginning the study and she had been friendly and willing to talk to me. She had explained that she and her husband own a pizzeria, and they are busy working every day including Sundays. However, she was willing to see me at school if I had questions. I decided to ask her about the meaning of *recochero*. So, that day I waited in the school parking lot to try to speak with her about this term. I spotted her in the car pick-up line. From our brief exchange, while she slowly drove and I walked beside her car, I sensed that the term "recochero" was problematic. She told me, half smiling, that this kind of fun was reserved for carnival but that now kids like to be in carnival all year long. Socorro's mother provided a diffused explanation and waved good-bye as she drove away after Socorro got in the car.

Without more time for clarification from her, I turned to the Oxford dictionary online and found the following example for the noun *recocha*: "the kids run riot or create a commotion when the teacher leaves the classroom". It seems to me that 'recochero' is a description for a person who enjoys defying authority. Socorro repeatedly identified herself and the people of Montería with this term.

Socorro misses the way her life used to be, *I want to go back*, she said. From her words, she misses the festivals and the life outdoors in parks and beaches and a type of fun that was particular to her hometown where she lived with her grandparents.

Nostalgic about Colombia, Socorro questions her mother's judgment in moving to the United States. Socorro stated:

I don't know why my mother left Colombia or why they came to North Florida. It is so boring here. I just don't know why we are here, and my mother doesn't know either. (G9: 15-16)

Socorro has been placed in an unknown environment without guidance and where she cannot exercise any autonomy. This is a frustration encountered by youth whose desire and need for discovery is complicated by immigration (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006).

Socorro's mother questions her own decision to come to North Florida. During brief conversations in the school parking lot, Socorro's mother shared her frustrations. She said she left her native land searching for more structure and less complication in her life. Instead, she explained, leaving Colombia has added to the confusion, she said to me: *I don't know what to do*. She told me that the Colombians they have met here are not very friendly. She also said, *here there are many Puerto Ricans, they are nice but they are so different*. When I asked for an explanation, she illustrated; *well, the paraprofessional here for instance, I don't understand what she says*. From my short conversations with Socorro's mother I got the impression that she willingly left the *recochero* lifestyle of Monteria but in her present context she is dealing with the complexities of the Hispanic community in Florida, which is the only community with which she can communicate.

Facing north, and getting serious

Socorro claims that in Colombia she had not given much thought to what life would be like in the United States. Even though her mother told her there was a

possibility of leaving Monteria, Socorro said she never really thought her biological father would consent to her departure. She stated: *I thought my mother would come back, but I never thought my father would let me leave Colombia.* Then she added: *Well, my mother sent me pictures and I thought Miami looked nice.* From those images, she equated South Florida to all of Florida. From the photo images she saw Miami beaches and vegetation which, for Socorro, do not equate to those in North Florida.

Socorro explained:

This (North Florida) is not like Miami, here the trees look sick they are not very green, and the truth is there are hardly any palm trees, only those other skinny ones without leaves. (G10: 11-12)

Socorro noticed the physical geography, but she was not able or willing to articulate if she imagined how life would be. However, she did not think it would be better than in Colombia. Now, living in North Florida, she makes the following comparison between life experiences in the North of Colombia and life in North Florida. Her remarks go beyond the physical and approach the social-cultural aspects of the new context:

I did not think this would be better, and I was right.
Everything, everything, the people, and even the food here, how can I tell you, people are not neighbors?
They never greet you. No one knocks on your door so you can never knock on their doors and ask for a little cup of anything. (G9: 9-10)

When Socorro said this there were no giggles from the other participants.

Socorro seemed sad but serious and the other girls did not voice any disagreement. Socorro lacks the close community she had in Colombia that facilitated her way being in the world. Telling her story of immigration has made her conscious of her small town

and its traditional ways of communal living. She values that now and wants to return to her grandparents' way of life, *I want to go back*, Socorro said on several occasions.

Mother's Departure and Return

When Socorro told the story of how she arrived in North Florida, she started by telling us about her mother. Socorro's mother migrated to Florida four years ago.

Socorro explained:

My mother came to the United States when I was in the third grade. We lived with my grandparents, so I stayed with them there and my Mother came to Miami. My grandmother said she would not stay but She was wrong.

The other participants interrupted Socorro.

Jessica: (giggling) I cannot imagine you in the third grade.

Socorro: Why? (Socorro was emphatic when she asked for an explanation from Jessica).

Jessica: Calm down, girl. (*cálmate, chica*)

Eva: I can, I can imagine you in the third grade. I can imagine all of us. Because I have cousins in the third grade. (smiles) (G21: 21-22)

Eva's words seemed to appease the slightly uncomfortable situation and so I returned to Socorro. I asked her what had happened after her mother left. Socorro replied:

Well, my mother worked in Miami for a year, then my mother married a Colombian. He had been living here for thirteen years. She still went to visit me in Colombia, and she tried to bring me back with her, but she couldn't. (G21: 23-24)

Socorro then became silent.

After a while, Socorro shared that her biological father in Colombia did not grant permission for Socorro to leave the country with her mother. Socorro does not volunteer

much information about her father or about her mother's return trip to Miami. She only mentioned: *nothing changed that time.*

A few years later, Socorro's situation changed. Her mother returned to Colombia for several months and was able to arrange for Socorro's departure to Florida. Socorro said:

My mother would visit us in December every year. She would bring me clothes and Christmas gifts. Last year, I don't know what happened but she stayed longer and fixed things so I could come with her. I guess my father said it was okay. (NS 8: 9-10)

She narrated in an even tone, without gesturing or showing emotion.

Socorro and her mother flew to Florida together in late spring 2013. Now Socorro is experiencing a new way of life. Nothing prepared Socorro for the sudden disorientation and personal losses of migration. Socorro is critical of her new environment and used simile to express her views of her new home: *this is like a table, yes, there is nothing here. This is so boring*, she said when describing North Florida.

Socorro finds her new surroundings impersonal and uninviting. I noted that the co-participants did not debate her point. Socorro said:

Here I can't even run an errand for anyone. I can't go to the grocery store because there aren't any. I used to go to the grocery store every day and they already knew what I needed. Here, to go to the supermarket we have to get in the car and then we go and stay there for hours because my mother can't go back again.

This time Jessica agreed with Socorro.

Jessica: oh, I won't go to the supermarket, my mother knows that.

Socorro: oh yes, go tell my mother no, that won't work with her. (G23: 12-14)

Socorro's reply to Jessica indicated to me that Socorro's mother has unbending rules. Socorro is now adapting to a new life style and a new home structure. The playful

outdoor life of Monteria and the support of her grandparents and friends there are no longer present.

The Step-father

In addition to the novelty of daily life with her mother, Socorro now has to make sense of having a stepfather. Socorro rarely mentions her step-father but when she does she points to the differences between them:

Socorro: He is Colombian but not from the coast, he is from Bogotá, you know a “Rolo”, do you know what a Rolo is?

I: No, what does that mean?

Socorro: I don’t know what it means, that is just the name for people from Bogotá. They are not fun like us, the *costeños*, but they think they are better, I think. (G18: 2-24)

From her demeanor and her last remark, I interpreted that being *rolo* was conceived as problematic by Socorro.

Another issue relating to her step-father is language. He prefers English, but English is still a foreign language for Socorro. Spanish is the only language in which Socorro can express herself. Therefore, Socorro is without her native language for most of the day. In school she has little space to communicate in Spanish, and at home she is expected to speak English as well. Socorro told me:

My mother’s husband likes to speak English, he watches television programs in English. But, when I get home, I want to rest from English, but I can’t. English gives me a headache, so I put *Caracol* (Colombian Television) in my room. I put it low so he won’t hear it, but when he is not home my mother and I watch *Caracol* together. (NS: 8: 9-10)

Most days, English is a stressor for Socorro, both in her private and public life. Socorro’s step-father does not allow speaking Spanish at the pizzeria, fearful that it would be bad for business. Socorro mentioned:

He is very happy to have the business and the pizzeria is the reason we are in North Florida. This is the place where he can have his business. But, I know my mother prefers Miami because it is okay to speak Spanish there. (NS 10: 13-14)

Miami seems to represent a middle ground between life in North Florida and in life in Monteria for Socorro and her mother. However, the step-father does not like Miami; Socorro said: *My step-father said that if we move it will be to New York, not Miami.* When I asked Socorro how she felt about moving to New York she said: *I prefer to go back to Monteria, but I'll be happy if we can sell the pizzeria and move anywhere.* Socorro is clear about her present dislike for North Florida.

Being helpless and alienated at School

School is also a source of tension for Socorro. Coming in close contact with people who identify her as a foreigner and a non-English speaker contribute to her feelings of alienation and of nostalgia for her homeland. Socorro recalls that in Monteria, school was a part of the community and she could talk and be friendly to all the students. She explained: *in Colombia I could walk to my school and I knew the students of every grade. Here, I only know a few students in my ESOL class.* In addition, she is encountering the generalized school anxiety of standardized testing. She does not understand much English but she has internalized that the "FCAT" can have material consequences, she mentioned: *I won't be able to go to high school if I don't pass the FCAT.* Socorro says she hears that word in every class and that she may even have to go to Saturday school to prepare for the FCAT;

Teachers only say FCAT, FCAT, FCAT. I understood that already
But they want me to come even on Saturdays, and now I am going
To have to come on Saturdays too. Oh my God, what can I do? (NS8: 9-10)

Socorro has been told by teachers and students that the FCAT exam is very difficult. For Socorro, FCAT, like immigration are impositions which are contributing to shaping a helpless identity for Socorro though she is a capable student.

Socorro can read and write in English for instrumental purposes. I noticed this on several occasions. Once, when she showed the co-participants the table of contents in her science book. She pointed to the section indicating where to find a Spanish-English bilingual glossary. She told the girls: *this part helps me a lot when I do my homework.* Another time Socorro pulled out from her book bag a completed homework assignment on matter. The co-participants were impressed and Socorro said: *but, look, it is all here,* and she showed them a graphic organizer the teacher had handed out to the class. For longer assignments, such as a group history project assigned during the study, I observed her read online in Spanish and then translate her report into English by using an electronic translator. She also does some independent reading. When the group was deciding on a topic for the history project, Socorro suggested *Nelson Mandela*, because she said, *I just read about him, he died recently.* Socorro is interested in learning, though, she said: *when they ask me to write I usually don't do it because translating doesn't come out right and I get it wrong.* Socorro demonstrated that she is learning her way with English words and she already is quite literate in Spanish. Though she has the potential to succeed in school, she is aware she cannot simply do it by translating.

Socorro's mother noticed her daughter's escalating frustration. Since most days Socorro's mother picks her up after school, sometimes we exchange a quick greeting. On one occasion, Socorro's mother called me to tell me that she is concerned for her

daughter's mental health. Another time, she confided that Socorro is becoming progressively more frustrated and aggressive at school and at home. Her mother expressed that she does not know how to proceed. She wants her daughter here but is seriously considering letting Socorro return to Colombia. Socorro's mother has said that she is beginning to realize that having Socorro here does not mean they will be present in each other's lives since, as she said: *I have to work so much, I really don't know what happens in school.* Both Socorro and her mother are interested in education and both seem to be making progress; however, they are becoming impatient with being tongue tied and invisible in school. She is beginning to consider that Socorro will have a better chance at education in Colombia because she said; *she will be better supervised and assisted there.*

Socorro confirmed her mother's comments. She feels lost in school. Socorro said: *I do not like school here, I understand but only a little bit of what the teachers say.* In class she does not pay attention because, she says: English distresses me (*me agobia*) and gives me terrible headaches. She finds it best to just ignore English. Also the pace of the classwork annoys Socorro. Although she likes science and wants to learn, she is lost in the class because the teachers cover too much material too fast; she said: *one day we are talking about matter and the next of the moon.* Not knowing and not learning frustrates Socorro because she does express an interest in learning, particularly science.

When Socorro showed me her science book, I was observed the clear graphics and the bilingual Spanish/English glossary she pointed out. However, Socorro said she has no time to make sense of it and she cannot ask for clarification. Many times she

cannot finish assignments so she chooses to ignore everything. When I asked how she deals with academics, she shrugs her shoulders and nonchalantly says; *I do what I can and the rest I don't do.*

She mentions that most of her teachers do not mind when she does not pay attention or finish homework: *They allow me to walk into class late and to go to the bathroom as much as I want to*, she said. The other participants confirmed this and seem grateful that most teachers ignore them because; *we are ESOL*, so they don't *mind*, Jessica added. Teachers seem to negotiate their students' lack of English by allowing them to be absent from the classroom.

Being ESOL has become Socorro's school identity. Socially the ESOL label is both a cause of comfort and of distress. In ESOL class Socorro can speak Spanish with her Spanish speaking friends: *we can work in groups and help each other*, she said. Outside of the ESOL classroom Socorro said: *I don't speak with anyone, but the black girls, they push me and pull my hair if they hear me speak Spanish.*

The other participants confirm what Socorro says but add that she also retaliates by pushing back. They advise Socorro to stop going to the bathroom by herself and not to speak Spanish in front of African Americans. Each of the other participants has similar stories to tell on the subject of ethnic relations. Eva added; *I have learned not to speak Spanish around African American girls.* However, they do not have problems with the black boys. The participants say black boys are usually friendly and want to learn Spanish. The particular contexts of immigrant reception bear different effects on acculturation of immigrants. In this case, where the school population is over 50% black, Latin American girls who are friendly with African American boys have to confront ethnic

and gender issues which are new to them. Not knowing how to read these contexts, Socorro vows to continue to speak Spanish: *I have to speak Spanish because it is my language and the only language I know.*

Spanish language and Colombian culture is what Socorro knows and, for now, the knowledge she has to function in life. School life in Colombia did not prepare her for the hostile environment in her present middle school. In Colombia school was very different for Socorro. Socorro said: *School was like family, I could make plans and everyone would join.* On the subject of school Socorro added: *There, what is best are the people. In Monteria everyone knew me I couldn't be late or absent, or do anything wrong.*

In Montería Socorro could not have imagined what it would be like to be a stranger in school, nor what it can mean to be ESOL. In Socorro's new school there are wide distances between student and teacher. Enough space for Socorro to arrive to class while on suspension, and no one noticed. The way she is noticed is by creating a type of disruption, such as fighting with another student for choosing to speak Spanish; or when she asks school faculty and staff for money to buy cookies at lunch. School is not like family anymore and Socorro has yet to learn this lesson.

Socorro does not have siblings or extended family here to guide her and her parents through the new school system. Her only way of negotiating some stability in her life is to plan to return to Colombia at the end of the school year.

A Vision for the Future

In the midst of making sense of the present, it is difficult for Socorro to envision a distant future but she articulates that she craves a family of her own and peaceful days away from school. When I asked her to envision a perfect day her reply was telling of

her immediate condition. For Socorro a perfect day would remove certain aspects of her present situation. She said: *a perfect day for me would be, to not be sleepy, no school on A days, not to fall, not to forget things, and to not be scolded.* Her vision settles the transitions she is experiencing in her adolescent and immigrant situation.

She did not express a wish for things to be added to her life, instead she hopes for certain things to be taken away. Socorro mentioned her desire to be stable, rested, knowledgeable, and free to act without reprimand.

Socorro made no mention of the B school day and I asked why? She told me: *I like B days because I have my favorite classes that day; gym, ESOL, elective class, and Mrs. T.* When prompted to say more, Socorro added:

I like gym because I can go outside and move around.
ESOL on B days is just reading on our own so we (the Spanish speakers) talk in Spanish and relax. Elective class is when we speak to you.

Then I asked:

I: And, Mrs. T, what is special about her?

S: she speaks Spanish.

I: Is she Hispanic?

S: I don't know, but she can say 'hola' (hi) and 'hasta luego' (goodbye) and little words like 'bueno' (good). (G20: 17-18)

These few and isolated words in Spanish were enough for Socorro to say that Mrs. T. speaks Spanish. Those few words are enough to acknowledge Socorro's presence and her humanity and to make B day a good school day for Socorro. For next year, Socorro hopes to make it to high school. She mentioned a school in town but adds that she is not sure if she will be here. She is going to Colombia and isn't sure she will be back. Assuming she will be back, I tell her that the school she mentioned is

not an ESOL center. But she knew this already, and said: *I don't want to be ESOL anymore and my parents don't want ESOL for me either.*

I Why?

S: Because there are many Hispanics in ESL: and that brings problems.
(G20: 13-14)

Like her mother, Socorro is beginning to encounter the ambiguities that the label Hispanic engenders. When I asked her to clarify about the problems with the Hispanics, she said: *I don't know, I'm not sure, it just isn't good.* Making sense of the Hispanic and Latina/o labels is a complicated process for Socorro, as it is for most recent Latin American immigrants.

Imagining a future beyond next year, Socorro sees the possibility of entering the Navy. The other participants are quick to ask why; but Socorro cannot answer this and just shrugs and says: *well, it is only a possibility.* She said what she really wants to do is: *I want to get married and have children, healthy children of course.* Socorro identifies with being a young woman and the possibility of creating a family.

At this juncture, the University is something she is sure she wants to avoid. She said: *I will be happy to finish high school, but beyond that I do not think I can be locked up in a school anymore.* I ask if there is anything she wants to learn beyond high school. In reply she mentioned: *I would like to learn to play instruments, particularly drums and guitar. Also, I would like to learn French, and to drive, of course.* When she mentioned the desire to drive she said it with an enthusiastic smile. I was glad to see her smile since she rarely did so during our interviews. The idea of driving suites Socorro as perhaps she sees this as a source of increased freedom and independence, just as most suburban youngsters in the United States. At the end of our interview, Socorro

showed signs of beginning to identify with American teenage culture which sees driving as a rite of passage to young adulthood. During most of the study, Socorro repeatedly said: *I want to go back*, but six months later, at the end of the study, Socorro said: *maybe I'll stay*.

Chapter Summary

The myriad of changes brought about by immigration have caused Socorro to focus on her individual relationship to her new context. Her new context caused a shift to a rigid family structure, a segregated school climate, and a geographical and social landscape she does not appreciate. At the beginning of this study this relationship was entirely negative, but clearly defined. She had no doubt North Florida and her new family structure was the source of her frustration and that returning to Colombia was the only remedy. Initially Socorro appeared agitated, unfriendly, and uncomfortable. Though this state was difficult she had a very clear goal; leaving the space that made her angry and returning to the one that provided her comfort. However, as the study progressed her goal became less defined as she began to indulge in aspirations of power and mobility by considering joining the navy and driving a car. Though Socorro remains weary of her new surroundings her time spent in them have caused her to shift from an unwavering goal of 'going back,' to a more open ended 'maybe I'll stay,' despite feeling socially isolated.

CHAPTER 6
JESSICA –CONFIDENT CUBAN

Introduction

Jessica is a petite fourteen year old girl from Cuba. She is the youngest in her family. Her immediate family consists of a mother and father and two older brothers. One brother is currently in high school and the oldest finished high school in Cuba. The parents are in their mid-forties, according to Jessica. The family migrated to the United States in search of food, since as Jessica told: *we had to leave Cuba because in Cuba what we have is scarcity (salimos de Cuba porque en Cuba lo que hay es escasez)*. Throughout the study, Jessica spoke in Spanish since she can better express herself in her dominant language. English oral proficiency was limited to isolated words when we began the study.

From initial conversations with Jessica, I learned that her family left Cuba with the intention to settle in Miami; however, after a short period in South Florida they moved north looking for affordable living conditions and stable jobs. Family and friends informed Jessica's parents about the possibility of affordable housing and jobs in the food industry in North Florida. The family arrived in North Florida in August, 2013.

I met Jessica and her mother the first day of school. They walked into the school office looking for direction and information. I translated school information for them and facilitated a conversation between Jessica's mother and the school secretary. That first day the mother asked many questions and Jessica sat quietly, listened, and looked around. The school secretary who has been with the school for many years, hardly looked at Jessica and her mother. Since I was translating, she dealt directly with me. After settling questions of school transportation and lunch, Jessica's mother lingered in

the office. She and Jessica sat in chairs that line the wall across from the secretary's desk. I stood beside the secretary in case another ESOL student came in need of information. While I waited, I looked at the scene in front of me and noticed that Jessica and her mother were slow to say goodbye. It was reminiscent of a mother and child's first encounter with school, and indeed it was the first school experience in a new country and language, but any sense of welcome or acknowledgement for the new student was missing that day in the school.

A few months later, Jessica volunteered to do my study. The first day of the study she arrived promptly in the school office. She wore her school uniform without any distinctive accessories. Except for her long hair in a braid and pink lipstick she did not stand out from other students. She smiled and was eager to tell me that things were going well at home. After the brief exchange with me, she sat next to a co-participant and began a conversation with her in Spanish. She whispered, but I could hear Jessica's distinct Cuban Spanish accent. She sat facing her co-participant and would look up and smile at me from time to time. She seemed mindful of her surroundings and I thought she might have been apprehensive about the study, but later I learned from Jessica that she was very excited to be out of her elective class period since she said: *I do not like any of my classes here.*

Jessica's Story: Island Identity

After a few days of group interviews Jessica repeatedly referred to herself as Cuban. Jessica's sense making about her heritage and national identity is framed by the geography and history of Cuba, but also by the economy and scarcity of material goods in Cuba. She was born in what is now the province of Artemisa to parents who were born after the revolution of 1959 which established Fidel Castro's socialist government.

Jessica does not mention politics explicitly; instead, aspects of Cuba's island economy are encapsulated in her pronouncement of "scarcity".

Jessica's primary focus of Cuba is the physical landscape. She enthusiastically detailed just where her hometown is situated in Cuba:

Artemisa is a new province that used to be part of La Habana. It is in the Northeast of Cuba almost facing Miami. Since Cuba is a big island there is a lot of coast, naturally. There is the west, close to Miami and also, there is the east. The east is close to the Dominican Republic, and also there is the part of Cuba which faces Mexico. (NJ1.37-40).

Jessica spoke assertively as she presented the location of Artemisa. The co-participants listened attentively, and I noted that Jessica is schooled in Cuba's location in the Caribbean. Jessica's knowledge of geography reflects reports of Cuba's current middle school curriculum which balances arts and science, and includes an emphasis on geography (Gasperini, 2000).

Besides its location, Jessica describes the human capital of Artemisa. In her home town Jessica had time and opportunity to socialize; she would spend much of her time with relatives which included neighbors. She said:

In Artemisa life is fun and safe. It is a beautiful place to live, in Cuba. We would mainly walk and talk. People would just come by to visit me or I would visit them. Jessica said: in Cuba neighbors are family, and with them I could go out at any time. My mother didn't have to worry about crime like here or where they (the co-participants) are from.

Jessica pointed to the co-participants when she mentioned crime. I asked

Jessica:

I: Do you go out here?

J: Oh, no! Here I live in a dangerous neighborhood here, but we are going to move, hopefully soon. Well..., here, where would I go anyway? (G24: 9-12)

Jessica's stories of Cuba include moving about freely, and having places to go. Her favorite stopping place was her grandmother's house. She visited there daily during her outings about her neighborhood. Jessica said; *I would ride my bike all around and every day I could see my grandmother.* She did not say any more about her grandmother and when I asked what her grandmother means to her, Jessica answered: *todo! (everything!).* She seemed almost upset that I would ask. I do know better. Grandparents are highly important figures within the Latin form of the family construct. They are the wise ones, the ones who provide stories of the past but also, they are fun and typically look to the future to help improve the lives of their grandchildren (Strom, Buski, & Strom, 1997).

Besides the people, Jessica highlighted Cuba's many beautiful nature spots as if they were characters within her Cuban story. She mentioned and wrote about the sand, the clear water, and forests that she and others enjoyed. She wrote in English:

One of the main reasons why I want to go to Cuba is because of all the places. If you go there you're not going to be bored. The beaches are crystalline, the sky is reflected on it. The fine sands runs through my toes. We also have picnics on the parks, we climb the trees and take a lot of pictures. It's so beautiful. I love to go to the Eastern part of Cuba called Oriente. Everything is natural. There is a bounch of mountains and is so cool. We run between the forests and play hide and seek. The fruits and vegetables there are delicious because it doesn't have chemicals. (G22: 13-20)

When Jessica began to talk in Spanish about her writing, the co-participants interrupted her with their own stories of their homelands. For a while it seemed they were talking about the same place. I reminded myself that indeed they were all talking about the Caribbean.

- J: the water is crystalline, you can see your toes.
- S: Yes, I know, I love going to the beach in Barranquilla.
- E: ah, you should go to Trujillo or Roatan, the water is so transparent

Jessica quickly regained control of the conversation and added:

When we walk, many times groups of friends, we just decide to go to the beach and we go! We can go to swim and play anytime. But sometimes my family, we would go to Villa Clara Maria la Gorda. There we go to dive. (G23: 12-18)

Physical activity, the beach and marine life of the Caribbean featured prominently in Jessica's daily life in Cuba.

Due to immigration, Jessica now experiences Cuba from a wider Caribbean perspective and the Caribbean has become an important part of her identity. She mentioned: Puerto Rico is beautiful too, and we have many things in common. We lived there for a little while and we have the same food and we speak almost the same too. Jessica noticed cultural similarities between Puerto Rico and Cuba that were brought about by indigenous contact with immigrants of the Iberian Peninsula, Middle Eastern and North African regions (Lopez Morales, 2007). However, Jessica made one important distinction: "Puerto Rico is not a safe place to life". Jessica is aware of her Caribbean position and singled out Cuba as a safe space.

Jessica's reflections of a heritage which values the Caribbean landscape and human proximity and interaction include her school life. She mentioned that school days in Cuba were long but, she said:

I liked going to school there because all the people were my friends. We were in school most of the day but we had long breaks and time to play and eat outside and talk. And, we had real food there, like rice and pea soup. Always we got very hungry because we could smell the food in the kitchen. (G24: 8-9)

The salient aspect of school was the time they had to socialize and enjoy one another's company.

However, in relation to school Jessica also mentions aspects related to the Cuban economy. While school provided food, it was not enough to satisfy the hunger and desires of growing children:

The school gave us lunch and snacks like yogurt, fruit and bread but anything else we would have to buy. I don't like yogurt so much but I ate everything because there was not always enough food and sometimes I was hungry in school. (G25: 3-4)

Jessica tells the group that things in Cuba were fine, but, she also said: There is scarcity in Cuba, you know, but everything else is good. I lived better there, People were nice there (NJ 1.22-25).

Jessica expressed her regard for the Cuban ways with nature and one another. She values the Caribbean outdoors and the slow pace of Cuban life which allows for frequent human interaction, but acknowledges the lack of material things, including food, which are important to her family and the reason they had to leave their island.

The long way to North Florida

Cuba's economic decline and Havana's proximity to Florida makes migration a constant thought for many Cubans. Jessica shared that growing up, there was always talk about moving to Miami. However, *leaving Cuba is dangerous and expensive*, she said. It takes strategic planning and acting and many times failing attempts to leave, Jessica said:

My father tried a few times, and he was even in jail. It is difficult to actually do it, but my father did it but he did not want us to do it.

My parents finally decided to try again because there was not enough food in Cuba. Before, my father could always get food, but it got harder to buy good food.

When I asked Jessica, how her father was able to get good food for the family in Cuba, she said:

- J: oh, he had a small business.
- I: Can people have businesses in Cuba?
- J: sometimes, but sometimes you have to be careful.
- I: What kind of business did your father have?
- J: he sold car parts.
- I: Did he have to be careful?
- J: oh, yes, we had to be very careful.
- I: why?
- J: because Fidel sells car parts. (G25: 12-25)

Jessica laughed when she told us that Fidel sells car parts and turned to talk to Eva about a new boy from Honduras who had just joined their ESOL class. Before Jessica changed the subject, she said: *but we lived well in Cuba.*

After deciding to leave Cuba, Jessica's family had to plan the departure. There was pre-migration tension since the family had to negotiate an exit without the state's legal sanction. Jessica told us;

Getting to the United States was difficult, my mother cried, she did not want to do it. But my parents arranged everything. They had to pay a lot of money, but we did it. We went to a few islands first then to Puerto Rico and then left for Miami. The church helped us get to Miami and they still help us (NJ 1.24-27)

Jessica stopped her narrative for a minute and then added: *but we are not “gusanos”*. The Spanish word “gusano”, literally translates to worm or maggot in English. In Cuba the term is used as a label for defectors of Fidel’s regime. Jessica said her family are not “gusanos”, but they decided to leave Cuba due to “escasez” (scarcity) of food.

A support network: Jehovah’s Witnesses, Family and Cuban Friends

Leaving Cuba involved a network of support which included Jehovah’s Witnesses as prominent actors in Jessica’s immigrant narrative. With the help of a church, Jessica’s family left Cuba. Though Jessica said that her family knew little about church culture, they are now explicitly being taught how to be a Jehovah’s Witness and be a part of that church. One day while driving Jessica across town to meet with Eva, I asked Jessica about being a Jehovah’s Witness. She told me:

Being a Jehovah’s Witness means to live life the way Jesus did. That is why we don’t have blood transfusions. Jesus did not take blood from any other person or animal so people in my church, we do not either. (NJ 11: 2-3)

When I asked how she knew this, she answered: *We read the Bible so that we can go out and teach others*. Jessica spoke with assurance and referenced the Bible as the source of her knowledge. At church she is at the center of teaching and learning and the church facilitates her integration and membership. Jessica said: *I like going to church. When my father doesn’t want to go someone will come pick me up*. The support of the church is something that has remained constant for Jessica across the different geographies.

In the United States, the church is also a social destination and a reason for the family to leave their small trailer home on Sundays. Jessica said:

On Sundays we get up early and dress up, except my father.

He says he is too tired to get up. He is not sure he wants to have a religion, but he told me that if he had to pick one he would pick to be a Jehovah Witness. (NJ11: 16-17)

Jessica smiled as she conveyed her father's words about the church. Jessica is enthusiastic about her church and seemed content with the possibility that her father might one day join the rest of the family and become a Witness.

Most Sundays the family goes to the church's meeting place, and afterwards Jessica and her brother's venture into another side of American life, McDonalds. Jessica said: *I love the frappes there* but laughs when she tells us: *my grandfather is embarrassed to be seen at McDonalds. He jokes that he wants to stop going to church so we will stop going to McDonalds.* Jessica understands his comments as fear that the family is going to gain weight saying: *he is right, I've already gained weight.* Jessica seemed serious for a moment but then the other participants laughed and said they too are gaining weight. Jokingly, Jessica and Eva tried to squeeze a bit of fat from their slim midriffs. Then Jessica added:

My grandfather likes to bother us, but I know he is truly afraid of eating at McDonalds so he waits in the car when we go inside for the frappes. We cannot use the drive through since no one would understand our Cuban accents (laughs). (G15: 12-13)

I asked Jessica if she ever orders anything else from McDonalds, she answered: *No, we have good food at home.*

For Jessica, Sundays is a day of contact with other United States institutions besides school. In a given Sunday morning the church and the market invite the family to spend time with them. The young people in the family are willing to try new things while the grandfather provides a critical stance against consuming indiscriminately. Through jokes and his behavior the grandfather adds to the social cultural context of

learning critically in the new community. Sundays provide a complex of experiences for Jessica.

Jessica said she knew life would be very different in the United States but she had misguided expectations. She told the group:

I thought everything would be beautiful but my house and neighborhood in Cuba were nicer than where I live now. When relatives from Miami went to visit Cuba they took beautiful things for us. But, they did not tell us how they were living. (NJ 1-10).

When Jessica and her mother arrived in North Florida they cried. Jessica shared; *my mother cried and so I cried too.*

Jessica's mother misses their house in Cuba. Jessica said: *Now we live in a neighborhood that is unsafe. We cannot go out on walks or even sit out in the porch. In Cuba we could always do that.* Jessica is gaining awareness of personal safety issues outside of Cuba. Her words express an appreciation of time and space she might have taken for granted in Cuba, and which are luxuries for them here.

Being here and there: negating location

Jessica is negotiating ways of being here and there. Jessica said: *I am trying to get used to living in Florida, but I want to go back to visit Cuba as soon as I can get the money to go back.* Jessica is hopeful that she can go back this summer, but knows that it is unlikely since she does not have a passport yet. But she said: *I know there is a way of getting a passport, but not now because they closed the office.* I asked Jessica about that office and she said: *My mother knows; it is inside a bank around here but it is closed now.* Returning to Cuba is complicated, but Jessica continues to be hopeful that she will return to visit.

Socializing Cuban Style

Though Jessica is nostalgic, she still enjoys socializing and going to the movies. The family has Cuban friends who often invite them to their homes. Jessica told us: *We have friends with nice houses with pools. I have pictures, I'll show you.* Jessica quickly reached into her book bag and pulled out her iPhone. She brought up her facebook account and showed the group pictures she had posted. Jessica pointed to her family; her mother dancing with her oldest son, Jessica's brother. Also, she pointed at images of her father smiling at a large plate of *chicharrones*, (crisp fried pieces of pork), and of friends swimming in an in-ground pool, dancing, and eating; *they are all Cuban*, Jessica said smiling. There, Jessica reconnects with her geography despite remaining far away from the island.

Other times Jessica and her family enjoy movies; *when we can go to the movie theater we stay there all day watching one movie and then another and another*, Jessica said. Mostly, however, Jessica and her two older brothers watch movies at home:

We like to turn on the caption in English so that we can read what they say. We do this for a while and when we get tired of trying to read English, so we turn the caption to Spanish. (NJ4: 7-8)

Staying home to watch television is something new for Jessica. She would prefer to have fun the way she did in Cuba; *I prefer being outdoors with friends anytime and not being scared in my neighborhood.*

Migration for Jessica and her family has reunited them with the maternal grandfather and other family members and has fulfilled their desire for food and material things. However, they have given up things they had not anticipated losing. They did not anticipate losing time and freedom to move about, and to talk to people in the Spanish that they know and enjoy. The family is are now rethinking their move to North Florida

and considering going back to Miami since Cuba is not a possibility. Jessica is hopeful they will go to Miami soon, she said: *I love Miami because things are a little run down there, they even have potholes there* (laughs).

I'm an ESOL

Jessica's present school experience includes staying indoors, eating processed food, and maintaining silence for most of the day. Jessica expressed her views as follows:

Teachers talk too much and too fast. Also, there is no time to be outside even for a little while. We do not even get to sit outside for lunch or talk to our friends when we eat that same pizza every day in the cafeteria (NJ 1.17-19)

The outdoors, healthy food and time to enjoy them with friends was a part of Jessica's education in Cuba. As Jessica mentioned; *we had long breaks and time to play and eat outside and talk. And, we had real food there, like rice and pea soup.*

These are opposing ways of being in school when compared to Jessica's description of her new school experience.

Jessica's relationship with her ESOL friends is the only positive thing about her new school. She said;

ESOL students helped me a lot. They translated for me and the teachers and showed me around the school. I like ESOL class because we can sit with friends in the back and talk in Spanish. We bring food in our handbags and eat it during class. It is the only fun class. (NJ2: 2-3)

Jessica interprets that they can eat and have fun in ESOL because teachers do not understand them; teachers don't understand us, but they know we are ESOL and that we do not understand anything; they don't mind (NJ 3. 1-2).

Jessica is trying to understand the tacit texts from her teachers and school. She goes on to tell us that teachers in school think she is an advanced ESOL student because most of the time she can do some work. However, she does not believe that she is a good student. She explains;

I know I'm not a very good student since I don't pay attention. I do not listen to my math teacher because he confuses me. He is nice but he talks too much. I do well in math because I knew it from Cuba. In the other subjects I do so-so because I guess, but not in science. I need a lot of help with that. At home my two older brothers help me with science. Well, I guess I can be a good student with them (NJ 2.42 -48)

Jessica is confused by her academic situation. However, Jessica's preoccupation is with relationships in school. People made school in Cuba quite different from her present school experience. She said:

School work was easy for me because everything was in Spanish. There was English for one period every other day, but most of the time it was a free period since not much was done or expected in that class. Also, everyone was Cuban so it wasn't hard to get along. Here everyone is different and they don't like Spanish, especially the black people. They even get violent with us when they hear us speaking Spanish. NJ 1. 22-24)

Racial tensions is a theme across the three participants' stories. However, there is no indication that administrators or teachers address this issue as it presents itself in their immediate environment with the Latin American ESOL students.

Lack of integration in the school have prompted recent ESOL arrivals to stay together and watch out for one another. Jessica has a small group of ESOL friends at school and they have formed *una familia* (a family), she tells us: *I have a husband and several children, all from ESOL class*. Sometimes when we walk in the hallways we come upon a "family" member and Jessica quickly points them out to me, saying; *ese es mi hijo* (that is my son). In this constructed family, one of Jessica's assigned children is an Ethiopian boy in the seventh grade. Several times I observed Jessica hugs him

when she saw him leaving the cafeteria. Clearly Jessica has no issues with Africans. Cubans have a historical and present connection with Africans; it is the African American cultures and the other English influenced cultures in the school that she finds unapproachable. The ESOL family seems an innocent way of creating a space of inclusion similar to club membership for people who do not speak English and are only known in school as foreigners.

In Cuba Jessica was not a foreigner and she never mentioned a place she was uncomfortable. She is glad she still has many school friends in Cuba and can keep in touch through telephone calls. She recalls that her classmates were her friends and as friends they were always a source of fun and support. She smiled when she said: *I used to be the one to help others with schoolwork in Cuba.*

There was a sense of social cohesion in Cuba. The solidarity had no clear boundaries between school and the larger community. Jessica remembered the frequent outings with classmates and this brought back memories of sometimes being hungry and not having much to eat on those outings. Friends being hungry is my worst memory of Cuba. Food is important to us. For me, food at home has always been different than in school. My parents can always get good food for us. I like to eat a lot; here too. The difference is that here I can always carry a sandwich and potato chips in my purse.

In the short passage above, Jessica embarks many spaces and expresses a constant concern with the quantity and quality of food. The primordial need for food is a constant concern in Cuban spaces and Florida spaces as well as home spaces and the wider outside world as well as her own inside space. The central character is food which

is good and plentiful and hides inside the house. It seems that in Florida she can take food outdoors where in Cuba, she did not do so. So on outing, she would experience hunger and relate to the hunger experienced by her friends, which she said, “friends being hungry is my worst memory of Cuba”. The sense of community in Cuba did not allow Jessica to fully enjoy the good food her parents secured for the immediate family.

In her present situation at school there is little sense of community outside of the ESOL boundaries. Here she and the other ESOL students are on the sidelines of the school. Jessica is in a position of not understanding and not being understood or taken into account. She does not mention any added benefits stemming from her new school experience. At this point the school and Jessica have not made a significant connection.

Imagining a Future

At present, Jessica is hesitant to further her association with academic institutions and is seriously considering leaving school. She wants to be homeschooled because; *there are too many bad days in school*, she said, but did not want to elaborate. On the other hand, she has reasons for staying in school: *I know I will get bored all day in the house and I would miss my ESOL friends and they need me*, she commented.

However, the decision whether to stay or leave school is not hers alone. The family is concerned that if Jessica stays in ESOL classes she will be missing out on education. Jessica told the group: *my mother wants us to get a good education, and she thinks that if my brother and I stay in ESOL that won't happen*. The assessment comes from Jessica's comments about her ESOL class, and from Jessica's brother's comments about his ESOL class in the local high school. They both have conveyed the lack structure and lack of opportunity to learn English in their respective classes.

Jessica's mother's comments in relation to ESOL conveys the belief that there is a better chance for education outside of the ESOL environment. The family is researching the possibility of home school for the future of Jessica's education.

Meanwhile Jessica's visions of her near future do not include much more formal schooling. She states that a perfect day would be one where she can wake up naturally, eat, and have fun. Using the subjunctive mood, she stated her desire:

That I get up naturally without anyone waking me. Also, that there be everything to eat, to watch TV and to be with friends. That would be it for a perfect day. With good food and someone to make me laugh I am fine. (IJ.4).

Que me levante naturalmente sin que nada ni nadie me despierte. También, que haya de todo para comer, ver televisión y estar con amigos. Eso sería todo para un día perfecto. Con buena comida y alguien que me haga reír estoy bien. (IJ.4)

Food and electronics feature next to friends in her visions of the future.

Jessica is unsure what the next few years will bring but is beginning to see herself as a type of technician. She has mentioned: *I would like to learn about babies because she loves them*. She wants to learn something about pre and neonatal care so she can work with babies. She is not sure exactly what kind of a job that would be. She thinks it could be something like doing ultra sounds or weighing babies and taking care of them. She says, *probably that would mean being a nurse or assistant*. She also mentions: *I would like to learn about babies but not in the University. I do not want to go to the university*. (NJ). Based on her present experiences, Jessica is eager to finish her school experience.

Chapter Summary

Jessica, like the other participants, places her native culture in opposition to where she lives now. Every positive statement she puts forth about Cuba is used in a

comparative sense. Her heritage is better; the food though scarce was real and smelled good. People in Cuba were more visible and available to share life experiences and to have fun. Her Cuban identity kit was the same for both home and school

In her host country Jessica holds on to her Cuban identity. She enjoys learning and expressing herself in a friendly and humorous manner. Literacy is an integral part of her heritage which gives her confidence in her capacity to learn anywhere. Jessica is not intimidated by English, grades, or teachers. Despite institutional achievement scores, she is happily surprised at how much she has learned so far. She related that when she first arrived she could only point to food in the cafeteria, now when she orders she can say the words in English. She is visibly happily surprised by her progress.

I observed also her diligence in getting her assignments done. When we worked on a history project in the school library I noticed her ease with computers. She made no apology for using *Wikipedia en español* though she knows teachers do not approve of the Wikipedia site. Nevertheless, she decided that to get started on the project Wikipedia would do. When we did the Thomas Jefferson assignment, she was unaffected by her lack of knowledge about Jefferson. She said, I'll just write, "no se", (I don't know) and turned in the worksheet without letting her lack of Jefferson knowledge define her as deficient.

She is invested in what she likes to do. She likes to write and is confident in the performance of her skill. She told me that in Cuba there were no long instructions before writing which she encounters in school here. In Cuba the instructions were simply to write. Afterwards they would make sure there was an introduction and a conclusion.

This is what she continues to do here and from observation this is working for her in English as it did in Spanish.

In Cuba Jessica was a cubana (Cuban girl). When she left Cuba she took a tooth brush, a change of clothes and her Cuban identity. Her journey took her through Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Croix, Puerto Rico, and finally to Florida. However, her journey is not done. She is interested in visiting relatives back in Cuba, Spain, and Puerto Rico. In addition, as a result of the conversations during our study she has developed an interest in traveling to Honduras, Colombia, Costa Rica, and maybe even Vietnam; *esta cubana va a viajal* (this Cuban girl is going to travel), she said in her Cuban accent, then added jokingly that for now she can only go to Miami; *pero me encanta Miami* (but I love Miami). Jessica has visions for her future beyond her stated adolescent desire for sleeping in and watching television in the company of friends. Jessica in her adolescence has seen much more than most of her adult school teachers. Jessica is developing a cosmopolitan identity despite her island childhood.

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I restate the guiding research question and, based on the multiple social-constructivist lenses of New Literacy Studies detailed by Gee (2001), I discuss the findings regarding the focal Latin American youth narratives. The study sought to add to the knowledge base about recent immigrants in new gateway areas by exploring the following guiding question: How do Latin immigrant adolescents see themselves within the socio-cultural context of northeast Florida in school and home life, and how do those identities contrast with school and home identities in their native countries?

Therefore, with this study I set out to explore the identity transitions of three new immigrant youth in northeast Florida. I collected narratives of immigration from adolescent girls from Honduras, Cuba, and Colombia. Individually and in a group environment, I explored their individual experiences in their native lands as well as their shared experiences of transition to new rules and language in their new school and social environment in the United States. In addition to these group and individual interviews, I gained insight into their stories through participant observations in and after school, and through brief conversations with the participants' mothers.

I analyzed the data by combining Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) with Labov's (1972) orientation analysis of the story, noting free clauses of place, time, characters, problems, climactic events, solutions and resolutions. Several studies have found it useful to combine Spradley's DRS with another form of data analysis to identify the nature of individual beliefs within and between cultures (Lee, Nargund-Joshi, Dennis, 2011; Knuth, 2002). What emerged were the participants' distinct attitudes and approaches for deciphering and coping with the shared tension of

confronting change when leaving a familiar social life and facing an unknown environment where new cultural expectations and language are different and must be learned.

The participants' narratives indicate that upon departing their homeland, the focal students saw themselves as capable, socially engaged individuals. Their stories of the homeland include valuing daily personal relationships with family and friends of different ages. Upon arrival in the host country, though still optimistic their identities begin to destabilize as they start the process of critique and re-evaluation of the new context. My understanding of this process is based on personal development through social interaction, a process which follows the basic tenet of constructivism (Dewey, 1933/1998; Piaget (1972; Bruner 1990) with a focus on Vygotsky's understanding of development as historically shaped and culturally transmitted (1978). As the participants' social situation changed, new meanings have to be negotiated and internalized (Vygotsky, 1978).

The three participants repeatedly mentioned their individual negotiations at personal understandings of the new spaces they inhabit as immigrant students. Being situated in an unfamiliar space during adolescence, which is already a time of inner transformation and rapid physical change (Douvan, 1992; Swanson, Spenser, & Petersen, 1998), added to the coping challenges for the participants. However, they did not present themselves as victims, void of agency or skills. As I spoke with each girl, I discovered she arrived equipped with her individual, national, and cultural discourses which shaped the way she contrasted her home culture with the new cultures. Consistent with Toohey's work with English language learners (2000b), the focal

students have little power to resist imposed school identities such as ESOL, foreigner, and pan ethnic Hispanic, and deficient/problem Latina student; however, at this point they do not yield to those identities. Instead, they are beginning to adapt their national and cultural identities in order to network with other Spanish speakers demonstrating agency in creating co-ethnic reception environments during their initial year in north Florida. The focal students inhabit a discursive space between pre-existing notions of immigrants as problematic (Orozco, 2005; Brisk, 2006) and their own investments in maintaining their culture of personal relationships while beginning to entertain the incorporation of new identities to their being in order to function in an expanded social environment. This type of agency by immigrant adolescents has been described in the literature by Fu and Graff, (2009). Also, Kanno (2003) addresses the identity shifts of sojourner and minority students, highlighting the gradual transition from polarization to balance and development.

Following is a discussion of the major findings related to identity narration and construction, particularly within the context of the participants' school. The findings are grouped under two general headings: Individual Identities, and Shared Identity Constructions. The participants' personal stories add meaning to the general theoretical literature on the subject of new immigrant youth in new gateways within the socio-cultural discourse of educational research.

Individual Identities within Community

Each singular participant in her narrative crafted a "kind of person" who is trying to understand the vertiginous change in her present life. Using Gee's definition of identity as being "a certain kind of person" in a certain type of context and his

interpretive lens based on four power sources that shape identity: nature, institutions, discourse, and affinity groups, I arrived at a deeper understanding of the participants' identities. The sources of power described by Gee yield identities which are understood in four different ways: 1) as a natural state, 2) as an institutionally sanctioned position, 3) as an individual trait recognized in discourse; and, 4) as a shared practice. These four processes of identity coexist in a continuum collapsing into one another in unique ways (2001)

Drawing from social cultural theories of identity construction which frame identity in continual contextual terms (Vygotsky, 1978, Bakhtin, 1981, Crotty, 1998), and social-cultural interpretive tools (Gee, 2001), I understood the participants' immigrant identities as motions or multiple navigations between sources of power and cultural borders which rendered them visible in some contexts and invisible in others. They, like other immigrant youth, live on the margins of the host society and are "tracked" even when they seem to be ignored (Birr Moje, 2009). The participants in my study confront tensions involved in recognizing others and being recognized by others in personal identity terms as they encounter a diversity of cultures in north Florida. They deal with those tensions in their own particular ways.

Socorro

Socorro is an athletic girl who is disengaged in school though she is a capable student and likes to learn and be informed. She is frustrated with her marginal position and calls attention to herself by breaking school rules. Socorro attributes her identity to a natural state of being Colombian. With the Colombian-'costeña' identity there are other attributes Socorro bids as natural, such as being neighborly, witty, fun loving and 'recochera', or a trouble maker. However, in the school context Socorro displays a

recognized discourse identity by valuing propriety in the use of language. This discourse identity meshes with institutional and affinity identities which value a certain type of Spanish, such as speaking properly as prescribed by conservative society through schools and the Spanish Royal Academy (RAE). She also values British English as 'pure' and disdains American English, as well as any form of code switching between Spanish and English. Socorro is in a dissonant position of being guided by cultural structures of her home town and her grandparents' traditional ways which ground her, while simultaneously being rebellious and confronting the new conventions of her present home, and the institutionally authored 'Hispanic' and 'ESOL' identity labels in school.

Socorro is fashioning a personal discourse of rule breaker, which is a recognizable adolescent identity. She explicitly told me of times she has deliberately broken rules in school. She said she is frequently late or absent, she hides in the bathroom and has ignored suspension. She is conflicted since she is not yet in a position to recognize or negotiate an acceptable discourse at home or in school. Her adolescence and immigrant positions combined both remove her and attract her to institutional identities. As an adolescent she wants to act independently but still demands attention which I interpret as a call for support and guidance. She has yet to find affinity groups to orient her as she once had in her small town in Monteria, Colombia.

Eva

Eva's cultural legacy includes close ties with her colonial past. She uses the Catholic teachings of *personalismo* (Whetstone, 2002) in ways that reflect the need to network since she cannot be sure where assistance will be gained. Eva leaves herself

open to being noticed as a friendly person and a problem solver. She expresses herself through networking and managing her affairs and appearance through careful observation and imitation of what she considers to be polite socializing. Her combinations of literacy practices are easily recognized in school and at home since she carefully follows institutionally authored identities. Her discursive identity is that of a gracious law abiding immigrant girl who controls her assertiveness and transnational allegiances. She advances issues politely and places her country of origin in the background. She attributes her discursive identity as a way of being herself, or part of her natural state. However, using Gee's interpretative tools, I understand that she is a good reader of people and institutions and purposefully foregrounds the official literacies though she may have no personal affinity to them. She is grounded in her family. Her parents and her two older brothers work to make Eva's life as comfortable as possible. Eva draws confidence from her family and she is actively seeking affinity groups outside of school for herself and for her family.

Jessica

Jessica bids to be known as Cuban and smart. In school she leaves herself 'open' to be recognized in any sort of way; she did not express an interest in what teachers or the school institution think of her. Jessica is part of multiple affinity identities outside of school which support her development and give her confidence. Her voice is foremost new Cuban, religious, and digital. The new Cuban diaspora, the Jehovah's Witness church, and digital connectivity allow her to enact multiple positions through a discursive identity based on active expression through debating, explaining, suggesting, analyzing, contributing and politely controlling the conversation during group interviews. Also, she uses electronic media to make herself seen and heard in creative versions of

Spanish and of English using images, print, prose, and poetics on Facebook. She has a confident identity which she exemplifies as a natural way of being Cuban. She has posted on Facebook, “Soy cubana y soy perfecta, lo que es lo mismo” which means in English, “I am Cuban and I am perfect, which is the same thing”. Her creative literacy combinations are recognizable at home and in school, though not always appreciated in school.

Shared Identity Constructions

Each participant came from different areas in Latin America and painted a distinct picture of daily life there, but all included an emphasis on the value of quotidian life: friends, family, neighbors, and frequent outings. The main emergent theme across the narratives is that at this juncture, the participants continue to be energetic, capable and collaborative individuals. However, they all face the same general barriers to development; diminished social interaction and the present absence of integration in school. Each participant told of a longing for the community she had in her native country. Each is beginning to make sense of the labels ESOL and Hispanic as segregated problematic spaces. Though they expressed a problem with those labels, they value their Spanish heritage and ESOL immigrant community.

Native School Identities: Everyone knew us

In their recollections of school in their respective countries, the three participants emphasized personal relationships and community acceptance. As stated by Jessica: “I liked going to school there because all the people were my friends”. Eva remembered similar scenarios: “in Honduras school was very different. I knew almost everyone at school. And my teachers were very nice and took time teaching us”. Socorro expressed similar comments: “in Colombia I could walk to my school and I knew the students of

every grade. Here, I only know a few students in my ESOL class”. In their countries the participants expressed being an integral part of the school. They acknowledged and were acknowledged by the community.

The participants’ school integration in their respective countries of origin was facilitated by their collectivist culture and *personalismo* philosophy, but also by the fact that they were native and a part of the fabric of the social system. In their native environments they were capable students and collaborators in school. However, as immigrants they have changed locations and every time an individual experiences a transition, the potential for feeling marginalized arises. The larger the difference between their home identity and the new role, the more marginal the person may feel, especially if there are no clear norms for the new roles (Schlossberg, 1989).

Native Community vs. Immigrant Lack of Integration

Jessica, the participant from Cuba, stated: “I liked going to school there [Cuba] because all the people were my friends. We were in school most of the day but we had long breaks and time to play and eat outside and talk”. Socorro, the participant from Colombia, said: “I always had lots of family and friends nearby. We were always out in the parks and ready to do something”. Eva too highlighted the community of her native land when she said: “in Honduras we are very friendly people, we are always saying funny things”.

While the girls all described concrete aspects they miss from their homelands such as the land itself, food, and freedom to explore, what surfaces as the most impacting loss is the absence of a support community that can make daily life simultaneously enjoyable and a learning experience. Without a network of trusted adults and peers informing their behavior, development, and self-understanding, the girls find

themselves with little to no guidance on how to access and utilize new resources and potential learning opportunities. This is consistent with scholarship which stresses the importance of social engagement in the learning process, (Vygotsky, 1978; Donovan and Bransford, 2005; Delpit, 1995), stated in Latin American cultures as *personalismo* and *familismo*, or valuing and learning from personal human relationships (Desmond, & López, 2009; Zentella, 2005; Whetstone, 2002).

The participants' expressed comfort in community is an important aspect of their cultures which have regional differences, but are historically based on a collectivist orientation with strong family centered values. Some of the core values of the Hispanic/Latino culture identified in the literature, which I briefly described in chapter 2, include: *personalismo*, *simpatía*, and *familismo* (Zentella, 2005). These three related concepts value people and personal relationships over material things. These blended indigenous and Catholic worldviews have persisted throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods to the present. However, collectivist cultural traits are at odds with individualistic societies which base personal development on individual material productivity rather than human relationships (Cope, & Kalantzis, 1995; Santiago-Rivera et al, 2002).

The participants draw upon their legacy of personal relationships and working and learning in groups. Jessica's statement that she and others created an ESOL "family" in school points to the void of a community, but also to the agency of the students in constructing their own personal connections for support. As part of the constructed ESOL family, the participants deal with their outsider status together and

are beginning to construct insider ESOL identities, but negative understandings of their present school experiences outside of the ESOL peer group.

Host School Identity: We are ESOL, we don't matter

One attribution made by the participants about their place in school is the perception that their academic development does not matter. Jessica said: "Teachers know we are ESOL and that we do not understand anything; they don't mind" (NJ3, 1-2). Jessica's words were spoken within the context that teachers do not mind if the ESOL students sit in the back of the classroom, talk and eat, and in effect segregate from the rest of the group. Eva told a similar story: "most of the time I turn things in late, but teachers do not mind, they know I'm ESOL" (G.19.27). Socorro, too, spoke about not mattering and feeling invisible when she said: "They allow me to walk into class late and to go to the bathroom as much as I want to". The three participants perceive that most teachers 'don't mind' them because they are ESOL. The participants are internalizing that they do not matter when it comes to their presence and their capability to learn.

Therefore, being ESOL as a school identity also means to identify and be identified as foreign minority and non-English speaker, and therefore unable to learn. These identities signify being educated in a "context that may be racially and culturally dissonant" (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997, p. 114). While the participants in this study expressed being grateful that teachers ignore them and allow them to be simply ESOL in the back of the room, they do not yet understand the repercussions of being left alone so soon in their development. The lack of engagement in learning in middle school will foreclose their identity development and opportunity to arrive at balanced bilingual identities.

Socially the ESOL identity is both a cause of comfort and of distress for the participants. Marginalizing students, or allowing them to segregate themselves is a double edge sword for the participants. In ESOL class the participants can speak their native language and relate to their Spanish speaking friends. However, referring to occasions when they are outside of the ESOL 'family', Socorro said: "I don't speak with anyone, but the black girls, they push me and pull my hair if they hear me speak Spanish". Segregation in an ESOL family provides the participants a space of acceptance into a community that simultaneously provides comfort and support while also denying them access to the larger school community, and thereby denying all students access to one another and to social and academic growth. For ESOL students, lack of community also means lack of opportunity to learn academic English. According to Lemke, academic English cannot be learned without experiencing it across a range of social situations (2002), which the participants do not have at this time.

Indeed immigrants face challenges with formal education due in large measure to a change in dominant culture and language. From the time parents make the decision to migrate, young Latinos begin to disengage from school in their native land. And, when they arrive in the new context immigrant students face a number of challenges with language until 8-10 years later when optimally they are able to master a second language (Santiago-Rivera, Arrendondo, Gallardo-Cooper, 2000), and begin to get a sense of the dominant culture, which as stated by Cummins, is the agent that shapes curriculum (2000), and school culture (Brisk, 2006). For young immigrants who arrive to middle school, this time span covers the rest of secondary school years and has the potential to fossilize their student identities as limited depending on curriculum and

school culture. Acts of segregating immigrant students and assigning labels highlighting their limited English proficiency have the potential to generalize to limitations with language in general and ability for higher education since schools, as 'developmental contexts in adolescence', play an instrumental role in youth's intellectual and social development (Eccles & Roesser, 2011).

Marginality and Not Mattering

The participants are among the first non-traditional Latin American immigrant students in the school. They are not Mexican, not Puerto Rican, nor the anti-Castro Cuban established political views. The participants and their teachers have at present no clear knowledge of one another to help them connect identities and understand their pioneering roles in teaching and learning of Central, South American, and the new Cuban immigrant in north Florida.

According to the participants' narratives, teacher in their school know and do not mind that ESOL students are not learning. The focal students interpret the lack of attention to them as a reality that they do not matter. This perception is real for the participants and it has led them to segregate, but also to adhere to their home culture and be consumed by nostalgia. The focal students' narratives are reflections upon a place and time where they mattered. In their homelands, within the tradition of personalismo, being human was enough to matter and be included in daily activities. Typically Latin American people in communities such as schools find it a matter of everyday life to greet one another openly as an exercise in the daily acknowledgment of human life and relationships. In their present environment, the focal students are learning to distinguish their separate place where they can be themselves, however, they do not seem to be learning how to identify with other ways of being in community.

The Future: Declining Aspirations

The void in community also affects imagining possible future identities. The participants, like most people, make decisions based on present perceptions and knowledge. They base their future plans on what and who they know as adolescent newcomers to northeast Florida. In their narratives, they foresee themselves as cosmetologists, child care givers, or members of the military. Therefore, the participants do not see a place for themselves in formal education, which reveals an early uncomfortable position in U.S. education. For instance, Eva, the participant from Honduras mentioned that if she remains here she would pursue cosmetology but if she were to pursue a career in education she would return to Honduras. Declining academic aspirations have been associated with length of stay in the United States (Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Steinberg, 1996; Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). For the focal students this decline was expressed during their first year of immigration which needs further exploration, but could be associated with the heightened developmental vulnerability of adolescents (Eccles & Roeses, 2011). Combined immigrant and adolescent vulnerabilities could set middle school immigrants on the path to academic decline.

Planning for future transitions in the midst of present crossings to young adulthood in a foreign location, surrounded by an unfamiliar language, and without relevant adult guidance is a complicated process for the young participants. The adults in their lives expect achievement. The educational institution demands achievement through standardized testing. The participants' families also expect their daughters to adjust to school. However, while the families of these participants are emotionally available and concerned about their children, their time is consumed by multiple jobs to

make ends meet. The teachers in school also do not seem to be able to help the focal students, leaving them to fend for themselves when it comes to completing assignments, which is consistent with research stating that middle and high schools are ill equipped to address the needs of early adolescent newcomers, leaving them “overlooked and underserved” (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000).

These participants’ narratives add meaning to the general theoretical literature on the subject of the educational obstacles faced by new immigrants in new immigrant gateways. Their stories illustrate previous findings which state that new Latinos upset pre-existing ethnic notions and relationships which in turn complicate immigrant integration (Stepick & Stepick, 2009; Orfield & Lee, 2005).

Consistent with literature stating that schools and teachers are unprepared to meet the language and literacy needs of recently arrived adolescent English language learners (Espinoza-Herold, 2003, Harper and De Jong, 2009), the participants’ narratives suggest that teachers do not know how to approach non English speakers and lack a means of supporting their literacy and identity development. Consequently, the participants’ linguistic educational trajectory paradoxically starts with a silencing in school. This silent stage seems inevitable since the participants are instructed in English and they do not yet understand this language. Therefore, the focal students joined the many students who cannot speak in their own words in schools due to lack of proficiency in the designated language of instruction (Santa Ana, 2004). The focal participants relied on other English language learners to make sense of their new school and to obtain some direction in the use of available library resources to translate assignments and attempt to comply in some measure with school requirements. The

participants' linguistic identity duality began, therefore, with learning different Spanish regionalisms in the form of different Spanish accents, Spanish vocabulary, and multiple world cultures.

From a social-cultural perspective the participants are bridging their native identities to the U.S. multicultural landscape by learning about the many countries and different traditions of the vast Spanish speaking world in the Americas, as represented in their ESOL environment. Through interacting with Spanish speaking English language learners, the participants are developing a consciousness of themselves, of their language and about who they are becoming as segregated immigrant students. It remains to be seen how they will develop their identities in high school, and whether they will develop balanced bilingual/ bicultural identities.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I provide my conclusions and implications for practice and research concerning this study. The following conclusions are based on the findings and my understanding of the three participants' transitional experiences during their first year in the US. In my study I focused on recurring themes of identity construction adhering to the proposition that identity is a process of construction of meaning on the basis of cultural attributes (Castells, 1997), and that identity is related to acculturation among immigrants (Schwartz, 2006). Following these assumptions, my key conclusion relevant to the educational field is that the focal adolescents are traversing a highly complex socio-cultural context at a time of personal identity exploration without significant adult support. The participants have been raised in a face to face learning environment and are now immigrants not only to Florida but to the written and digital world. They are navigating their novel situation without the benefit of guidance from more knowledgeable adults, as neither the parents nor the students' teachers can identify with immigrant youth experiences. Alone in their present immigrant context, the students' search for personal and social identity development is burdensome and uncertain, making their future identities barely perceptible to them at this time.

The students are enrolled in a school not adequately prepared to recognize their composite newcomer identities. The school acknowledges the participants solely as non-English speakers and provides a space for them to interact among a multiplicity of non-English minority voices. However, within the scope of the focal student narratives there is no mention of a support system to bridge their integration with English speakers or with new school literacies. The lack of acknowledgement of the focal students'

personal and cultural identities obstructs their own integration and consequently complicates their identity development.

Aligning with immigration theory and social-cultural perspectives of Latino youth acculturation (Suarez-Orozco, 2005; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Mallard & Taylor, 2011), as well as identity empirical research (Hermann, 2011), the participants' narratives demonstrated conflicting discourses of rapid cultural change while adhering to traditional cultural values. The focal students related stories of family cohesion and upholding of collectivist cultural values. However while parents are a rich source of historical and cultural knowledge, they are not equipped with sufficient knowledge of the English language or of the US educational school system to assist their children achieve in school. Though the mothers of each of the three participants have made attempts to approach the school, they have been unable to establish open communication due to language and cultural barriers. Each set of parents provides encouragement, sustenance, shelter, and protection but they cannot provide guidance for their student's day to day social life in school as this is outside of their own repertoire of experiences.

In the narratives of their homelands, the focal students presented themselves as capable, confident, collaborative individuals; however they cannot relate those identities to most people in school due to lack of a shared language or shared space with the English speaking community. As Spanish speakers the focal students' lack the language to perform "acts of identity" (LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985) in English and they are mostly confined to silence in classrooms. Furthermore, identified in school as ESOL and positioned away from English speakers, the participants have little opportunity to authentically develop English since they lack social interaction to

communicate through cultural material markers such as food, dress, etc., (West, 1992). Instead, as new ESOL students, their identity development is situated within their core cultural heritage as they interact within the Spanish speaking world as represented in their ESOL class. Consequently, the lack of school social climate for interaction beyond their ESOL space affects the focal students' acculturation process limiting identity development within the minority immigrant community.

Acculturation as a Dialogical Process

The students' alienation is the central landscape of their dialogical narratives and their developing identities. Through their seclusion, the participants are now conscious of their otherness and of their limitations as they find themselves living between rather than within school cultures. Cross cultural psychologists have documented possible immigrant acculturation strategies. For instance, Berry proposed that immigrants typically follow one of four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation or marginalization (1980). These strategies presuppose a relationship between immigrant and a dominant culture. However like most immigrant students, the focal students arrived to the multicultural scene of the ESOL classroom which lacks significant contact with the mainstream school curriculum and culture.

The participants' position in school is complex for themselves as well as for their teachers. For the participants a multiplicity of minority cultures and possible selves have converged in their new school and community exposing them to multiple minority voices and minority ways of meaning making. Their ESOL class illustrates post-modernistic propositions that culture (Bhatia and Ram, 2001) and identity (Gergen, 1991) are constantly in flux and are difficult to define or isolate as simple constructions. The

newcomer situated identity viewed in dialogical terms requires a decentralized notion of concepts of culture and of self. Both concepts involve a multiplicity of dialogical relationships (Hermann, 2001, Cohen, 1995), which are difficult for both teachers and students to comprehend for any applied utility, however even within the complex cultural flux, the participants' demonstrate personal investment in the ongoing negotiation for locating their own educational situation.

Composite Identities and Symbolic Tools

Drawing on Herman's reference of Bakhtin's polyphonic novel to illustrate the concept of the composite dialogic self through narrative (2001), I noted the participants' activities and values, as well as the multiple voices detailed in their narratives. Though the participants reported typically speaking Spanish in the ESOL classroom and remaining silent in other classes, they demonstrated personal investment in acquiring instrumental school literacies. I observed their own use of physical and virtual translation tools such as dictionaries and electronic search engines to code and decode school documents and academic assignments. Also, they demonstrated personal and cultural development by reaching out to diaspora affinity identities outside of school through diaspora media which to varying degrees is bilingual. The diaspora media use they reported is accessible in physical and electronic form such as television, internet, and through the church. Electronic media is relevant in the participants' lives since it addresses the composite issues of immigrant families, including transnational connectivity, local markets, employment, religion, and culture as well as the need for English literacy. Through different media, the participants are crafting immigrant

identities “aca y alla” (here and there), and are transitioning from a face to face native interactional environment to an immigrant written and digital world.

Their narratives revealed multiple spatial and temporal mixes where many voices co-exist. For example, Jessica expressed herself as distinctly Cuban but is incorporating new and non-Cuban voices to her being. Identifying as a Jehovah’s Witness, she is acquiring new religious language and perspectives and is in the process of relating to U.S. southern culture. She expresses family and church values, and shows signs of disdain for school but continues to demonstrate native appreciation of education. Socorro’s migration included shifting both public and private positions upon arriving in Florida. Presently, she identifies primarily with her Colombian nationality and culture; however, she is gaining awareness of the multiplicity of ways of being Colombian and distinguishes herself as “costeña” or coastal. She is learning of the differences within Colombian culture through her new family landscape which includes a step-father who is Colombian but from the interior. Both her family and school life are unstable, making Socorro’s expressions of identity increasingly complex at the time of the study. Eva’s story also shows how she is crafting a composite identity by encountering and resisting problematic messages concerning Hispanic academic identity. She expresses herself in a positive manner. She is attentive to school rules and appears compliant with mainstream school values. Though at home she is a Honduran youth, eating Honduran food, listening to Honduran music, and socializing with other Central Americans, in school she tends to minimize displays of her Honduran culture. Instead she hides distinctive aspects of her home identity by appearing to be

submissive and unproblematic. Each participant's narrative is a mosaic of their identity transitions, piecing together aspects of their personal, social, and cultural identities.

Displaying Hybridized Identities

The three participants, Jessica, Socorro, and Eva, are beginning to display instances of hybridized identities in their own ways in certain spaces. The 'between and betwixt' position of a hybrid identity is said to have a double vantage point that in some cases arrives at understandings of different cultural, racial and other perspectives. In this 'double consciousness', articulated by W.E.B. DuBois, (Gibson, 1996)) the hybrid identity is announced. Jessica is unwavering of her Cuban identity while incorporating US religious practices of church attendance. Socorro articulates hybridity when narrating her traditional Colombian identity and articulating her rebellion against school rules in the new environment. On the other hand, Eva displays consciousness of her native and immigrant identities through her ability to conceal her national and cultural identity to appear mainstream in the school context. The three adolescent girls narrated hybrid identities through consciousness of being Latin Americans in the United States. Their identities are located here and there, and some locations in between. The additional in between location, a 'third space' as termed by Bhabha (1994), refers to a new position that is both a 'breaking and a merger of spaces', as proposed by the postcolonial scholar, Robert Young (1995), and to an act of resistance by refusing complete dissolution of the self (Ang, 2003).

Encountering Race & Ethnicity from a "Third Space"

During their first year in school, the participants gradually learn about their problematic location within the U.S. racialized binary social-cultural discourse. Wedged

between white mainstream and African American students at school, they experience being ignored by one group and being openly rejected and on occasion abused by the other. In response, they adhere to their home cultural values by forming a Latino school family. The focal students' enactment of their daily lives along a racial divide was reported as the most uncomfortable school position by the focal students. The three participants narrated experiences that, from one perspective, could be considered as being bullied by African Americans for being Latin. For instance, Eva experienced being forced to sit on the floor in the school bus. Socorro expressed that black girls pull her hair if they hear her speak Spanish. Jessica mentioned about black students, "they even get violent with us when they hear us speaking Spanish" (NJ 1:24). The participants experience the racial divide in school as violence against them; black students bully them and white students ignore them. In both instances the focal students experience the distress of being singled out for being who they are and speaking their native language. The troubling pattern of racial tensions between Latinos and African Americans has been reported in public schools of concentrated poverty in the American south, (Orfield, et al, 2012), a region experiencing significant racial shifts and greater levels of segregation than integration (Tarasawa, 2009).

The U.S. racial divide is a new conceptual space for the participants since there is no clear White/Black divide in Latin America and "mestizaje" or mixture is common (Rodriguez, 2000). Prevalent among the high and middle classes is the hegemonic adherence to the idea of "purity" of European ancestry regardless of skin color (Lugones, 1990). However, in other sectors people rarely claim a European identity, such as in indigenous sectors of Latin America, and in the coastal areas of Colombia,

Venezuela, Honduras and Panama (Arocha, 1998, De La Fuente 1998). Therefore, in a sense, Latin Americans have a history and acceptance of hybridization since converging cultures has been a part of their colonial and post-colonial heritage.

Finally, as I conducted this study, I became conscious that literacy as identity development is a journey without a clear path. There is no single theoretical framework that could account for the multiple ways in which individuals from different Latin American countries construct and talk about their identities. I realized too that in order for these newcomers to announce an academic identity they must situate them within institutional power sources of identity, and suppress internalized heritage voices, since those are not recognizable in the new context. This is difficult for these adolescents who are deciphering themselves in the midst of making sense of the structural power sources they must accommodate. Through the process of conducting this study I have found that attempting to balance cultural identity in a multicultural environment while balancing childhood and early adolescence is a site of struggle for the participants. Unguided in this arduous situation, the focal students experience confusion in terms of personal identity. Identity confusion can lead to material consequences such as dropping out of formal educational institutions and limiting future options of development. Powerless and unsupported in school, these students do not see a place for themselves in higher education.

Though the focal students come from countries which have experienced crime, violence, and food shortage, an uninviting and sometimes hostile school climate is something they had not experienced. At this time, the participants perceive the environment outside of school as a more promising and relevant space for them. In

their narratives the students expressed no reason to remain in school, though they expressed interest in learning and being productive and gainfully employed,

Significance

The study raises awareness of the rich personal literacies of new immigrant youth, but also of the unfortunate perception of nonexistence in school. Invisibility is an uncomfortable position of powerlessness. This study highlights the need to recognize the complex situations of new immigrant youth in order to guide them through liminal entry experiences and facilitate their social integration and relevance in educational settings. This need is urgent since during the first few months in school the focal students placed their futures outside of formal schooling through frequent absences and the stated lack of desire for higher education.

The focal immigrants, resettled in monolingual environments where the school discourse is traditionally invested in the Black-White American binary experience, perceive their stories are unvalued and unexplored. Furthermore, the participants expressed feeling uncomfortable singled out solely as ELLs and ESOLs, or even Hispanic. Although they recognize their Spaniard cultural roots, categorizing all Latin Americans together is, for them, a foreign concept which requires an explanation. Sharing aspects of the US cultural experience is time sensitive in middle school since there is little time to make meaningfully connections there before facing the transition to high school where the participants will turn 16 years old, the legal drop out age. These immigrant students are motivated to learn English in order to pass the FCAT and move on to high school. However, they, like many others described in previous research, find that the task of learning English and passing standardized tests, “on the naïve time-

frame set by policy makers is often quite insurmountable”(Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008), leading them to consider leaving school.

Increasing numbers of children and young adults find themselves in similar situations of symbolic interaction in multiple cultural worlds. This study spotlights three immigrant youth experiences with implications for a broad look at identity issues relevant beyond the Latin American context. Like other immigrants, the participants have been in motion as their families searched for a new place to settle. As they travelled, many images and sounds have intercepted their field of vision and action. They have seen, heard and done many more things in their short lives than many of their native counterparts and teachers who have not had the opportunity to travel or had exposure of foreign cultures. Without an explicit cultural and historical knowledge base of one another, people, like text, are undecipherable and the concept of identity becomes a way of measuring degrees of difference rather than degrees of sameness.

Limitations:

There were several limitations to this study. A feature of the study which was not discovered until the interviews took place was the lack of consistent school attendance by the participants. Their truancy delayed the group interviews and complicated the dynamics and continuity of the narratives. Also, the participants frequently interrupted one another’s narratives causing a re-directing of their stories. However, the interruptions were also revealing of what was occurring in school and in their present lives. Additionally, the focus of the methodology was to gather the students’ stories as told by the students themselves. Observations of students were limited to spaces where the stories were gathered, primarily in peripheral areas of the school, such as the library, a small conference room, and the cafeteria. The students were not observed

consistently in the classroom nor were they all observed in their homes and community. Observing them in different settings has the potential of uncovering other identities within their repertoire which could yield a richer understanding of the focal students. Finally, as a narrative inquiry, the study only claims to be a retelling of an unfolding story as perceived by the storytellers.

Implications for Practice

The participants' narratives show no evidence of social-cultural connections in school outside of their ESOL class. Lack of connection affects all students and individuals in school environments. This study therefore has implications for practice that include making social-cultural connections. In rapidly changing landscapes, pedagogy should be guided by immediate needs within the local community. In order to do so, teachers require a flexible and mindful teaching philosophy which is responsive to global and local social-cultural conditions. This study suggests implications for a practice philosophy which includes instructional principles which are mindful of immigrant students' languages and cultures as well as how their individual identities fit within the school's social climate. According to research literature, school climate impacts student learning, academic achievement, motivation, safety, absenteeism, group cohesion, stress, mutual trust, and feelings of connectedness and attachment to school (Eccles et al., 1993), all of which are relevant to this study. The existing school community requires an understanding of immigrant students in order to make sense of how the school landscape is changing. There is an association between new immigrants and the existing school community which requires addressing in identities in terms that are not only linguistic and academic, but also social cultural terms.

Additionally, since the focal immigrant students are required to take standardized testing as any other student who was raised in the school system, this study has implications for identifying individual language and academic needs of immigrant students, as well as for intense academic, language, and basic skills preparation through hybrid instruction programs and online tutoring in the immigrant's native language during the first year. New immigrants may need explicit instruction in the availability and use of educational resources since many immigrant students may be accustomed to different types of resources and forms of instruction.

There is also the implication for newcomer affinity communities in schools such as active welcome centers of city private and public sectors which respond to the need for information and connection and ease feelings of isolation and marginalization. By providing bridging programs in the school and community, both the school and the newcomer can learn of one another. There is also implications for these programs to be accessible face to face and linked to social media for accessibility.

In a global society it is important to build environments which respond to the immediate cultural needs of new immigrant adolescents to support their multiple transitions. Converging cultures can create a temporary disorientation for the student, teachers and the school staff. Therefore, development practices leading educators to partnerships with established immigrant communities that would facilitate communication between the school and the student immigrant community should be explored.

Finally the focal students, like many recently arrived Latino immigrants, have settled in the South. They find themselves in a long standing political situation where

race is understood in dichotomous terms of black and white (Rodriguez, 2000). They also find themselves within a complicated and uneven distribution of racialized groups in schools where Latinos and African Americans are increasingly in contact in predominantly minority schools (Orfield, Kucsera, Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Their situation has implications for instruction which addresses distributive justice, and provides opportunities for all cultural groups to interact, produce and learn in safe environments. Perhaps through partnerships with community and religious groups, Southern schools can learn about the identities of newly arrived immigrant adolescents, since these newcomers bring additional literacies (Hamilton Boone, 2011) and face educational challenges that are only recently known in new Southern immigrant gateways (<http://southernspaces.org/2009/new-patterns-segregation-latino-and-african-american-students-metro-atlanta-high-schools#sthash.LGz9jAuQ.dpuf>)

Implications for Research

This study revealed student identities that, though communal and collaborative, are beginning to transition to segregated ESOL spaces and to disassociate from formal education. Specifically, this study reveals implications for researching integration to the new school community. While this study and others (Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Brisk, 2006), allow educators an understanding of immigrant student's need for structural support in order to integrate in school, there is a need for continuing to research immigrants issues in broader school and community settings than those addressed by this study. Observing interactions between students, family, educators, school staff, and peers with a focus on the identities of all the actors can yield better understandings of the needs of new immigrant students.

The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature. One practical research recommendation is to narrow the focus of observation to school attendance and homework issues since the focal students reported missing school on days homework is due since many times they are unable to complete the assignments. Researching specific ways to approach homework assignments for English language learners has implications for school integration and family and home life observations. Results may lead practice in a more informed direction.

My general recommendation for further research is to explore ways to implement dynamic identity work as practice not only for students but also for educators and administrators as a means of integrating more and varied voices in immigrant educational issues. In light of rapidly changing global systems, continuous identity work is necessary to inform a broader and current understanding of ourselves in our changing shared environments.

Final Comments

Teachers and immigrant students in new reception areas are undergoing an unfamiliar acculturation process as they come in contact with new cultures in school. Without a common language and culture, nor significant preparation neither teachers nor immigrant students know how to establish relationships leaving middle and high schools ill equipped to address the needs of early adolescent newcomers, (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2001, Espinoza-Herold, 2003, Harper and De Jong, 2009). Furthermore, Latinos in new immigrant gateways upset pre-existing ethnic notions and relationships which in turn complicate their integration (Stepick & Stepick, 2009; Orfield & Lee, 2005).

Locating points of connectivity between cultures of natives and cultures of immigrants is the task at hand for educational researchers and practitioners, including those in conflict resolution, language policy, literacy and second language teaching and learning. Collaborative research and leadership for the purpose of improving educational outcomes, as well as building healthier youth self-images, and stronger bicultural identities (Wyatt, 2014; Zentella, 2005; Kanno, 2003) has the potential to dispel unfortunate perceptions that certain students do not matter in our public school.

APPENDIX

A - INTERVIEW GUIDE

Narrative Interview Template

Name: EVA L Date: Interview # 1-

Location: School: library & Conference Room Time:
Participant'

Guiding Questions

- Describe your family and where you are from (tell the story)

Notes:

___Heritage_____

___Migration: • Describe how you and your family came to the United States

___Education: Tell me about your education; schools you've been to:

___Future: How you would describe a perfect day? What are your hopes and dreams for next year and the future in general?

Sample of probing questions intersecting literacy & identity points:

- What are some things you do in this town (to learn)

- What are some things/people you know and like/dislike

APPENDIX B - IRB APPROVAL



PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
352-392-0433 (Phone)
352-392-9234 (Fax)
irb2@ufl.edu

November 19, 2013

TO: Eva L. Solano
1820 Shadowlawn Street
Jacksonville, FL 32205

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD; Chair *ISF*
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02

SUBJECT: Approval of Protocol #2013-U-1141

TITLE: Latino Immigrant Narratives: A Qualitative Study of Adolescent Literacies and Identities

SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants. Your protocol was approved as an expedited study under category 7: *Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.* Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from the parent or legal guardian of each participant. When it is feasible, you should obtain signatures from both parents. Enclosed is the dated, IRB-approved informed consent to be used when recruiting participants for the research.

It is essential that the parents/guardians of your minor participants sign a copy of your approved informed consent that bears the IRB approval stamp and expiration date.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, *including the need to increase the number of participants authorized*, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

This approval is valid through **September 30, 2014**. If you have not completed the study prior to this date, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. Additionally, should you complete the study on or before the expiration date, please submit the study closure report to our office. The form can be located at http://ib.ufl.edu/irb02/Continuing_Review.html. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl

Department of Gator Instruction
PO Box 12345
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32600-0000

Parental Consent

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at the University of Florida, conducting research on language comprehension skills of adolescent students under the supervision of Dr. Danling Fu. The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge about the experiences of new immigrant adolescents as they learn English as a second language and adapt to a new school and country. The results of the study may help teachers better the process of learning a second language and adaptation to a new environment by adolescent immigrants from Latin America. The knowledge gained will allow educators to design instructional practices accordingly. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit future students. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this research.

The participating children will be observed in their English Language Arts class at school. Their work in class will be observed to get information about their language knowledge and skills. Also, I will visit your home once a week for approximately 80 minutes. During my visits I will listen to your child tell me about her or his experiences learning. I will record the conversation but at the end of the study, the tape will be erased. Although the children will be asked to write their names on class work for matching purposes, their identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. We will replace their names with code numbers. Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect the children's grades or placement in any programs.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. No compensation is offered for participation. Group results of this study will be available in September 2014 upon request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 904-476-2811 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Fu, at 392-9191. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Eva L. Solano

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2013-U-1141
For Use Through 9/30/2014

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Eva began her doctoral studies in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Florida in 2005. In addition to completing her doctoral studies she obtained tenure as Spanish professor at Florida State College at Jacksonville in 2013. She has presented research on language and culture at both regional and national conferences.

She currently resides in Jacksonville with her family.