

A MODEL OF THE PROCESS AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS USE TO  
INTEGRATE THEIR BILINGUAL IDENTITY WITH THEIR OVERALL IDENTITY IN A  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION ENVIRONMENT: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

by

Kim Cooper Romero

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that illustrates how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. For this study, bilingualism is defined as the ability to use two languages for academic and/or business purposes. I used multiple interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and journals to collect data. The most important part of the identity integration process for African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment is choice. The loss of choice caused conflicts during the identity negotiation process. The participants perceived their bilingual identity as symbolic capital which put them ahead of their peers academically and socially. Bilingualism allowed them to feel a sense of belonging and helped them overcome feeling marginalized from their African American peers in the school community. The Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration model was developed from this study. The model conveys that the process the participants used to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity was one of positioning. The participants used positioning to convey how retaining or losing the choice of which dimension of identity they wish to share determined whether they experienced a conflict within their personal identity and the identity integration process as a whole. During academic situations, the participants chose to share their bilingual identity and demonstrated high agency. When forced to share their bilingual identity with native speakers they used low agency to describe their experiences. However, in social situations with native speakers when the participants chose to practice their Spanish, they demonstrated high agency.

*Keywords:* identity, immersion, second language, foreign language, second language acquisition, identity negotiation, agency

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## Dedication

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). I must begin by thanking my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Him, I could not have endured the many challenging life events that I faced while working on this project, nor could I have completed it. While my faith kept me grounded spiritually, the love, patience, and support of my husband, David Romero, kept me grounded mentally and emotionally. This project is dedicated to my husband and to my family who made numerous sacrifices so that I could finish it. Their continued support and encouragement makes this work as much theirs as it is mine.

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of Dr. Joan Fitzpatrick. Dr. Fitzpatrick was a constant source of encouragement and wisdom. I am grateful for every email I received from her just to see how I was doing. Her encouraging words always came at a time when I needed some uplifting, so I know that she was praying for me constantly. She was an amazing educator and will be missed by all who knew her.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my father, Leon Cooper. Losing my father was the most difficult challenge I have faced. Education was important to my father, and my pursuit of a doctorate degree made him proud. His physical presence is missed, but he remains ever in my heart.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Overview

Language immersion classes have been positively associated with successful acquisition of a second language and improved academic achievement in the heritage language (Genesee & Jared, 2008; Liying, Miao, Kirby, Haiyan, & Wade-Woolley, 2010; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). However, since language is connected to identity, it is important to understand how students in immersion classes integrate their acquired second language with their overall identity. African American students in a language immersion class have the unique opportunity of improving their use of Standard Academic English while becoming bilingual (Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). One could apply Chambers and McCreedy's (2011) idea of "making space," that is, academic striving as a means of coping with marginalization – to the successful acquisition of a second language and the improved academic achievement in Standard Academic English to African American students with the expected outcome of increased academic resilience and decreased likelihood of academic disengagement upon entering middle and high school. However, little is known about how these students integrate their bilingual identity into their overall identity, a problem that could be exacerbated when they enter Erikson's (1963) identity crisis. Identity is a complex concept, and African American students in a language immersion class must integrate each dimension of their identity as they develop an overall self-concept. The purpose of this study was to develop a model of the process African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

Because the African American experience in America is significant to the identity construction and language use of African American students (Baugh, 2004; Delpit, 1995;

Marable, 2006; Stockman, 2010), I begin the Background section with a brief discussion of African American educational history followed by a discussion of African American language use. I conclude with a discussion of language immersion and identity.

Creswell (2007) stated that a research study is framed by the researcher's philosophical stance and paradigms which I discuss in the Situation to Self portion of this chapter. I follow the Situation to Self with the Problem Statement and Purpose Statement where I identify the problem, gap in the literature, design, participants, phenomenon, and theoretical framework. In the next section I discuss the practical, empirical, and theoretical significance of a model of the process that African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The chapter ends with the Research Questions and Definitions.

### **Background**

Although there has been significant discussion of African American students' academic achievement and its relationship with language use, as well as significant discussion of African American adolescents' identity development, little attention has been given to African American students learning a foreign language in an immersion environment. Researchers who focus on African American students in language immersion environments target the immersion program itself (Beal, Haj-Broussard, & Bourdeaux, 2012; Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lightbrown, 2007; Nicoladis, Taylor, Lambert, & Cazabon, 1998) or equity of access to the language immersion environment (Palmer, 2010; Valdes, 2002; Wiese, 2004). Little is known about the process that African American adolescents in a language immersion environment use to integrate their language identity with their overall identity. A model of this process could have significant implications for both language immersion pedagogy and identity construction theories specifically related to African American adolescents.

It is impossible to discuss the educational history of African American students in the United States without acknowledging the years of overt discrimination against African Americans that began with the institution of slavery (Holt, 2010; Marable, 2006). A discussion of all the issues of discrimination that African Americans have experienced is beyond the scope of this study; therefore, I will focus on the one that is most relevant to the study. Government-sanctioned discrimination after the abolishment of slavery resulted in limited educational opportunities for African American people (Holt, 2010; Marable, 2006). A significant result of limited educational opportunities is evident in African American language use.

African American people were denied access to educational opportunities for centuries; however, they developed a form of English known as African American English which they used to communicate with each other. Unfortunately, even today, many African American students have failed to develop proficiency in Standard Academic English, which has had a negative impact on their academic achievement and academic motivation, resulting in fewer postsecondary opportunities (Baugh, 2004; Hollie, 2001; Smitherman, 2004; Stockman, 2010; Wassink & Curzan, 2004). After much debate in the linguistic community, African American English gradually moved from being perceived as a deficient attempt at Standard Academic English to being considered a Standard Academic English dialect. The transition also involved a change in terminology from Black English to African American English which reflected the political changes, specifically in the terminology used to refer to African American people (CAL, 2014; Green, 2002).

Over time, the terms African American and Black have become commonly accepted descriptors for African American people and the use of either term is now a personal choice. I chose to use the terms African American and Black interchangeably. There are those who

believe that the African American experience in America has created a people who have forged their own cultural legacy that bears little resemblance to that of the people of Africa; therefore, the term African American is not a true depiction of Black Americans. However, there are others who perceive the term Black as politically charged with a negative connotation. In current research studies both terms are used interchangeably. Although I primarily used the term African American throughout the paper, there are times when the term Black was needed for linguistic clarity and flow. Therefore, the terms African American and Black are used synonymously. I chose to use the linguistically-accepted term African American English when referring to the language of African American people.

Discussion of the language of African American students was brought to national attention in 1996 by members of the School Board of the Oakland Unified School District in California who attempted to gain financial support for their efforts to meet the educational needs of the African American students in their schools. In response to a report presented by the Task Force on the Education of African American Students, school board members attempted to use federal bilingual education funds to improve the education of students speaking African American English (Baron, 2000; Pandey, 2000). Although the members of the School Board of the Oakland Unified School District did not consult linguists in their decision-making process, their suggestion that Second Language Acquisition pedagogical practices and literature on bilingualism should be included in the discussion of language instructional practices for speakers of African American English was a catalyst for empirical studies of the effectiveness of such practices (Pandey, 2000; Terry, Connor, Thomas-Tate, & Love, 2010). In one such study, Pandey (2000) found that using the Test of English as a Foreign Language as an assessment of the effectiveness of second language acquisition pedagogical practices with speakers of African

American English produced similar results for speakers of African American English as it produced for speakers of other foreign languages. In the study, instructors used the same second language acquisition pedagogical practices with speakers of African American English as were used with other English Language Learners. After completing instruction, the Test of English as a Foreign Language was given to both English Language Learners and speakers of African American English with similar results of standard English competency.

Although the Oakland school board members' actions were embroiled in controversy, the idea of using second language acquisition pedagogy (in the form of two-way language immersion programs) to improve academic achievement for speakers of African American English was perceived positively by stakeholders. However, the efficacy of using two-way language immersion programs for improving African American student academic achievement remains a point of debate among scholars. In fact, Palmer (2010) stated that:

the jury is still out on the question of whether [African American] children can be served well in Two-Way Immersion programs and most Two-Way Immersion programs do not appear to make much effort to explicitly address their unique language and cultural needs. (p. 97)

Literature detailing the Oakland School Board members' request for federal bilingual education funding to educate African American students does not specifically name second language immersion as a potential strategy; however, recent studies indicate that second language immersion environments are the most efficient environments for acquiring a second language because the pedagogical practices implemented in second language immersion environments are effective for both language acquisition and for overall achievement (Beal et al., 2012; Genesee & Jared, 2008; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Savage & Hughes, 2014; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012).

Quantitative second language acquisition research indicates that students in second language immersion environments perform better in the second language and in the heritage language than their non-immersion peers (Genesee & Jared, 2008; Liying, et al., 2010; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). As the results of Pandey's (2000) study indicated, second language acquisition practices can be effective in helping African American students improve their use of Standard Academic English. Since language immersion is considered the most effective of second language acquisition pedagogies, theoretically, this data could be used to argue that second language immersion environments could assist African American students in the improvement of their Standard Academic English skills as well as their overall academic achievement. In the language immersion instructional setting, second language learners must negotiate their identities within a language power structure where their heritage language may be perceived as deficient by the majority-language speakers. Since speakers of African American English in American public schools must also negotiate their identity while experiencing a language power structure where their heritage language, African American English, may be perceived as deficient, perhaps immersion environments where only the target language is used should be included in the discussion of language practices designed to improve academic achievement for speakers of African American English.

Speakers of African American English in a foreign language immersion class are in a unique position. Although they are members of the majority culture (American), their heritage language is not adequately developed Standard Academic English, thereby skewing the language power distribution and affecting the process of identity construction (Block, 2007; Brooke-Garza, 2015; Coomber, 2013; Dixon et al., 2012; Jon, 2012; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Moloney, 2009; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011). It is important to note that in foreign language

immersion settings only the target language is used; therefore, the language power differentials that occur when the heritage language is not the language of social and economic power, are somewhat neutralized. However, the effect that learning in an immersion environment has on identity construction is relatively unknown. In cases where second language immersion environments result in improved competence in Standard Academic English for African American students, improved academic achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy can also be expected. However, it is important to understand how African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity, particularly as they approach Erikson's (1963) developmental stage of identity crisis. Such knowledge may impact practices in both the immersion environment and in school-sponsored social environments. Additionally, a model of the process that African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity during the identity crisis developmental stage is likely to provide questions for further research in African American identity development within this population of students.

Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development, with its eight basic stages, is the framework for this study. Each developmental stage has specific tasks that must be successfully negotiated before a person is able to move successfully to the next (Mooney, 2000). The developmental stages are: (a) basic trust versus basic mistrust; (b) autonomy versus shame and doubt; (c) initiative versus guilt; (d) industry versus inferiority; (e) identity versus role confusion; (f) intimacy versus isolation; (g) generativity versus stagnation, and (h) ego integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1963).

Children ages 6-12 years are faced with what Erikson (1963) described as industry versus inferiority. During this time children develop their ability to work in collaboration with others. The sense of industry is reflected in the child's perceived competence in tasks deemed important

to peers and society as a whole (Erikson, 1963; Kowaz & Marcia, 1991). Successful negotiation of this stage produces an intrinsically motivated child. Children who successfully negotiate this stage enjoy learning about new things, exhibit a healthy balance between required tasks and pleasurable tasks, enjoy experimenting with new ideas and being recognized for their efforts, take criticism well, and exhibit a strong sense of persistence (Hamachek, 1988).

Industry describes the child's relationship to the process of applying acquired skills to the completion of a task; however, failure to successfully negotiate this stage results in the feeling of inadequacy that children experience if they do not experience success while working with others (Erikson, 1963; Kowaz & Marcia, 1991). Children who belong to a marginalized group may feel that difference in race, socioeconomics, or academic ability has more bearing on their worth or identity than their desire and ability to succeed (Erikson, 1963). Such children may feel that their acquired knowledge and skills are inferior to those of their peers' and unimportant to their teachers, resulting in the loss of work ethic and motivation (Kowaz & Marcia, 1991). Children who have a sense of inferiority do not enjoy learning new things. They tend to concentrate on responsibilities and neglect pleasure; they are threatened by the idea of tasks that require persistent work and are habitual procrastinators who fail to take pride in their work; they also take criticism poorly or use it as an excuse to stop trying (Kowaz & Marcia, 1991).

Adolescence begins between the ages of 9 and 12 years and continues through approximately the age of 25 years. Adolescents experience what Erikson (1963) calls the identity versus role confusion stage where they are concerned with how their peers perceive them while trying to place themselves in the adult world. This stage is also referred to as the *identity crisis*. The danger for adolescents during this stage is role confusion against which they defend themselves using intolerance (Erikson, 1963). Successful negotiation of the industry versus

inferiority stage is likely to serve as a buffer for children as they negotiate their identity during the identity versus role confusion stage.

Successful identity development is likely to produce positive outcomes. Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development is relevant to this study because the participants were adolescents entering the identity crisis developmental stage. If their identity crisis is aggravated by the addition of a bilingual identity, it is possible that academic achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy may also be affected.

Quantitative studies indicate the likelihood of improved academic achievement for language immersion students who are enrolled as English language learners (Bears & de Jong, 2008; Genesee & Jared, 2008; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). Also, qualitative studies suggest that the identity of second language learners becomes unstable as they learn a new language, especially in an immersion setting (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010). It should be noted that most studies of immersion environments are conducted in two-way immersion settings where the goal is the addition of the language of power (Dixon et al., 2012; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Scanlan & Palmer, 2009; Swain & Deters, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). However, there is a gap in the research studying African American identity construction in second language immersion settings where the goal of instruction is the acquisition of the target language, also known as additive bilingualism.

With the present study, I added to the body of second language acquisition research on identity construction in the immersion environment (Block, 2007; Craig, 2010; Dixon, et. al., 2012; Filmer, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Masso, 2010; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Moloney, 2009; Palmer, 2008; Rindal, 2010; Swain & Deters, 2007; Xue & Han, 2014).

Additionally, I added to the body of research of African American students' identity construction

beyond ethnic and racial identity (Caraballo, 2014; Cokley, McClain, Jones, & Johnson, 2011; Godley & Escher, 2012; Larnell, Boston, & Bragelman, 2014; Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings, & Stadilus, 2012; Stinson, 2011; Watt, 2006). Finally, with this study I highlighted the need for quantitative inquiry into how additive bilingualism might affect the academic achievement of African American students.

### **Situation to Self**

I am an African American educator and a parent of African American students. I espouse a Biblical worldview and believe that educators are entrusted to develop the gifts that God has placed within all children. I hold an M.Ed. in English and Literature and a state-issued professional teaching license. I hold National Board Certification in Adolescent and Young Adult English and Language Arts. Currently, I am pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. Because of these credentials, I am occasionally asked about academic issues by members of my church and by my neighbors. Questions about the immersion programs in our community have increased recently because the programs are expanding. The program started with one Spanish immersion class of kindergarten students in 2007 and has since expanded to three separate schools with Spanish immersion classes and one school with a Chinese immersion class. Several parents in my church have children who will reach school age soon, and they have asked me about the immersion concept. These parents perceive bilingualism as a benefit for their children but are concerned about the effect that learning content in a foreign language will have on their children academically. I have been able to speak confidently about the suggested academic benefits of an immersion program; however, as an educator I am keenly aware that an educational curriculum produces results in areas outside the realm of quantitative high-stakes test data. I became curious about how the children integrate

their bilingual identity into their overall self-concept while learning their academic content in a foreign language. I have had a long-standing interest in African American English and am curious about how African American students in immersion classes integrate their language identities. I developed the framework of this study because of my desire to speak confidently about the immersion concept to African American parents who are considering the program for their children. Once I discovered the gap in literature concerning how African American students in a language immersion class integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity, my decision to move forward with this study was final.

As a qualitative researcher, I am aware that my philosophical assumptions impact my research design, data collection, and analysis decisions. Ontology addresses the nature of reality, and my belief is that reality is constructed in the minds of the actors (Creswell, 2007). My ontological assumption is that “reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in a study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 17). Multiple realities exist because each participant’s reality is valid.

I also espouse a social constructivist paradigm as a means of discovering and reporting the multiple realities of the participants in this study. A social constructivist paradigm involves using participants’ stories to identify patterns of experiences as they interact among each other (Creswell, 2007). Through this study African American adolescents had an opportunity to share their stories of how they integrate their language identity while in the immersion environment. Following Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) reasoning, I assert that the processes of integrating their language identity with their overall identity are individual realities that have been “formed through interaction with others . . . and through historical and cultural norms that operate in [their] lives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Social constructivist researchers ask questions that allow participants to “construct the meaning of a situation” in an attempt to “make sense of (or

interpret) the meanings [participants] have about [their] world” resulting in the development of a “theory or pattern of meaning” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). I used data from the stories of African American adolescents to develop a model that depicts the process they used to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

The fact that education researchers continue to explore the interrelationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement further supports the use of a social constructivist paradigm (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011). Researchers currently conceptualize identity development as a fluid process that is shaped by sociocultural environments; therefore, a social constructivist paradigm with a narrative and dialogic perspective was appropriate for this study (Bamberg, DeFina, & Schiffirin, 2011; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Kanno, 2003; Nance, McLeod, O’Rourke, & Dunmore, 2016; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011; Xue & Han, 2014).

According to Moustakas (1994), through the “process of continuing perceiving of and reflecting on acts, we come to know their meaning in our experience and their relationships to ourselves” (p. 52). The constructivist theoretical approach to this grounded theory study allowed African American adolescents to unite their past, present, and future selves in order to construct an understanding of their process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Analysis of their stories about the process of identity development resulted in the development of the Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model.

### **Problem Statement**

Many researchers document the benefits of academic achievement for students who learn a foreign language, especially students in language immersion environments; additionally, current second language acquisition researchers conduct studies that focus on identity construction for language minority students learning the language of power (Block, 2007;

Palmer, 2008; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Rindal, 2010; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012; Taylor & Lafayette, 2010). However, researchers who focus on African American students in language immersion settings tend to focus on their underrepresentation and low performance in foreign language classes, they or take a deficit view of African American second language achievement caused by African American English usage (Anya, 2011). For example, in her unpublished dissertation, Fernandez (2015) found school leaders report that African American students are not provided the access to dual language immersion programs that other students are afforded. Researchers also are studying the politics of African American students and immersion programs. For instance, Beal et al. (2012) conducted a study of how a school district policy of desegregation, accountability, and foreign language immersion affected student outcomes in two immersion programs that include African American students in Louisiana.

African American students are a marginalized group whose identity construction includes both ethnic identity and linguistic identity. Haj-Broussard's (2003) unpublished dissertation compared the academic and identity construction experiences of African American students in a regular education environment with the experiences of the same population in a one-way French immersion environment similar to the environment of the present study. Although there is interest in African American students' experiences in language immersion environments, there continues to be a gap in the research where it concerns African American students' identity development in language immersion environments. Researchers who are currently investigating African American students in language immersion environments situate their studies in two-way immersion environments where the focus of the program is the acquisition of English. The topic of these studies is the lack of equal access for African American students who may not have mastered Standard Academic English or the lack of pedagogy designed to meet the academic

needs of African American students (Howard et al., 2003; Nicoladis et al., 1998; Palmer, 2010; Valdes, 2002; Wiese, 2004). Current foreign language immersion researchers do not address African American students' bilingual identity development. The problem is that African American students in foreign language immersion classes must integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Currently there is a gap in the empirical research documenting this process.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that explains how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. For this study, bilingual is defined as the ability to use two languages for academic or business purposes (Gueye, 2015). Foreign language immersion is defined as the delivery of nonlinguistic content instruction in a foreign language so that students acquire a second language (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). The primary theory guiding this study was Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development as it is the foundational theory for studying identity development during the identity crisis. The African American adolescents in this study were experiencing the identity crisis developmental stage while integrating multiple identities within their overall sense of self. Additionally, Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of the Multiple Dimensions of Identity provided a framework for understanding how multiple identities are integrated within an overall sense of self.

### **Significance of the Study**

Learning a second language involves more than the mere memorization of words. Successful acquisition of a second language involves social interaction where there are power differentials which affect identity development (Abraham, 2014; Cohen & Wickens, 2015;

Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Jeon, 2010; Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza, 2011; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010). The African American adolescents in this study were students aged 11-15 years. Because adolescence is believed to begin between the ages of 9 and 12 years, some students were experiencing Erikson's (1963) identity crisis developmental stage, while others were entering it.

Students need appropriate sociocultural experiences to successfully transform from adolescence to adulthood (Rubtsova, 2012). Processing their language identity is a sociocultural experience that will benefit students as they make this transformation. The qualitative nature of this study was significant on the practical level because it integrated the meaning-making nature of language with the construction of identity, allowing the participants to reflect on their language learning reality using their own words (Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010).

The pedagogical and psychosocial implications of this study are important because an understanding of identity integration processes is necessary for the creation of inclusive learning environments (Jones, Choe, & Skendall, 2012). Because successful identity development has implications for motivation, self-efficacy, and academic achievement for marginalized students, it is incumbent upon educators to understand the process and provide the appropriate sociocultural experiences. Marginalized students who are experiencing a phenomenon such as an identity crisis are not often given a voice (Chambers & McCready, 2011). The African American students in this study revealed whether they had developed a sense of value and belonging within their second language community and beyond. The process by which they were successful or not successful in developing a sense of belonging may lead researchers to develop instructional practices designed to help minority students improve their academic resilience, self-efficacy, and motivation to expand their learning.

Understanding how African American students in language immersion settings integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity has practical implications for second language instruction. Research shows that students whose home language is devalued may exhibit resistance to second language acquisition and poor self-efficacy (Leeman, et al., 2011; Masso, 2010; Mori, 2014; Rajadurai, 2010). Students who speak African American English can be considered part of the group of students whose home language is devalued. The model constructed from this study has implications for instructors in second language classrooms, especially with regard to how instructors convey their perceptions of African American English.

The results of this study also have theoretical implications. The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (Spencer, 1997) has been used to evaluate African American youths' process of racial identity development, but it does not address African American student language as a construct of identity (Harpalani, 2007; Henfield, 2012; Spencer, Fegley & Harpalani, 2003; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). The underlying assumption of this theory is that "African American youths' interpretations of their experiences influences responsive coping methods, self-perceptions and attitudes, and racial identity development" (Whaley & Noël, 2012, p. 28). The model constructed from this study provides a means of understanding how African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity, thereby furthering the assumptions of the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (Spencer, 1997).

The Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) can be applied to African American students in a foreign language immersion setting as well because of its underlying assumption that individuals have multiple identities that are constructed in the lived experiences of social locations (Jones et al., 2012). However, since the focus of Jones and

McEwen's (2000) model is students in postsecondary institutions, the model developed in this study expands their model to address how younger adolescents integrate multiple language identities. It also furthers theory development about the self-perceptions, coping mechanisms, and self-efficacy of bilingual African American students.

The model developed from this study adds to the empirical studies of identity integration for African American students. Current identity researchers focus on ethnic and racial constructs (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Chidester, Campbell, & Bell, 2006; Cokely et al., 2011; Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015; Larnell et al., 2014; Wright, Counsell, & Tate, 2015). A model of the identity integration process of bilingual African American students furthers the understanding of acquired second language identity, an identity construct that has not been studied extensively in the African American adolescent population.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions set the boundaries of a study while suggesting the method of inquiry and analysis. Although they serve to set boundaries, "qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving and nondirectional" (Creswell, 2007, p. 107). Grounded theory research questions should contain language that frames the study as a query into a process (Creswell, 2007). The following questions framed this inquiry and were designed to derive a model of how African American students integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity during the identity crisis stage of development. These questions were used as a framework for all interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts presented to the participants. Within the answers to each question lies the model of identity integration processes experienced by each participant. Below is the central research question that guides this study.

Central Research Question (CRQ): How do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity?

Identity is the fluid expression of what people believe about themselves within their sociocultural experiences, social groups, and personal belief system (Block, 2007; Cokely et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2012; Rajadurai, 2010; Shakouri, 2012; Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009; Vignoles, 2011; Whaley & Noël, 2012). Adolescence is the stage of development between childhood and adulthood where extreme behaviors, boundary testing, and intolerance of differences in themselves and others often cause adolescents to turn parents and other adults into adversaries as they develop their personal and social identities (Erikson, 1968; Palombo, Bendicson, & Koch, 2009; Rageliene & Justickis, 2016; Wagner, Lorion, & Shipley, 1983). Foreign language immersion programs in the United States are environments in which students who speak English learn their academic content in a foreign language in order to become bilingual. Studies have shown that language immersion students show improved competence on standardized tests in English (Beal et al., 2012; Brooke-Garza, 2015; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). However, African American adolescents may not be proficient in Standard English if they speak African American English which has been linked to the academic achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students (Apel & Thomas-Tate, 2009; Mitri & Terry, 2014; Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010; Pruitt, Oetting, & Hegarty, 2011; Rickford, 2014; Terry et al., 2010; Treiman & Bowman, 2015; Van Hofwegen & Wolfram, 2010; Wheeler, Cartwright, & Swords, 2012). Although content is not delivered in Standard English, the connection between language and identity further complicates identity development for African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion setting.

In order to develop a model of the process that African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity, it is necessary to understand this process from the adolescents' perspectives.

In qualitative studies, the researcher sometimes forms sub-questions to further guide the study. In grounded theory studies, these sub-questions should be procedural in nature and may even be "posed as aspects of the coding steps" (Creswell, 2007, p. 111). The sub-questions below led to the development of a model of how African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

Sub Question 1 (SQ1): What conflicts between bilingual identity and overall identity surface as African American adolescents reflect on their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment?

Sub Question 1 was designed to delve more deeply into the lived experience of identity integration where multiple identities are considered. As African American adolescents reflected on their experiences in the language immersion environment, they simultaneously considered how they integrated their identity at the intersection of multiple social identities, a key construct of the multiple dimensions of social identities (Jones et al., 2012). The results of several studies indicate that language attitude has an impact on identity construction (Besser & Chik, 2014; Filmer, 2007; Luscombe & Kazdal, 2014; Rao & Morales, 2015; Rindal, 2010). As African American students reflected on their bilingualism, they continued discovering its place in their identity.

Sub Question 2 (SQ2): What contextual or intervening conditions in a foreign language immersion environment cause African American adolescents to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity?

The acquisition of a second language is a sociocultural experience that impacts identity construction (Dixon et al., 2012; Swain & Deters, 2007; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). African American adolescents' experiences in the immersion setting directly impact their attitudes toward African American English, Standard Academic English, and their target language. As they reflected on their experiences, they began to identify the contextual and intervening conditions that caused them to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity. According to Roy and Galiev (2011), a person's perception of bilingualism is socially constructed, especially when the second language is considered as social capital, as is the case in most foreign language immersion programs in the United States. The conflicts that African American adolescents experienced impacted how they framed their attitudes toward their languages as part of the identity integration process.

Sub Question 3 (SQ3): What strategies do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment develop to reconcile any conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity?

A strong sense of identity is directly related to the ability to reconcile conflicts within the self. African American adolescents who develop coping strategies are more likely to develop successful academic identities (Chambers & McCreedy, 2011; Fife, Bond & Byars-Winston, 2011). The identity crisis cannot be resolved without appropriate sociocultural experiences (Rubtsova, 2012). Reflecting on the conflicts that they have experienced and the strategies they have used to reconcile those conflicts allowed African American adolescents to use their own words to make meaning of the identity integration process involved in their language learning. Hutala and Lehti-Eklund (2010) state that such meaning-making experiences are a necessary aspect of language identity development. The strategies that African American adolescents

employed to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity was the core of the model of their process of integration.

### **Definitions**

1. *Adolescence* – The developmental period that begins between the ages of 9 and 12 and ends when the youth subordinates all childhood identifications (Erikson, 1968).
2. *African American English/African American Vernacular English* –The term used by linguists to describe the language spoken by many African Americans (Smitherman, 2004).
3. *Bilingualism* – Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages for academic or business purposes (Gueye, 2015).
4. *Ethnic Identity* – A person’s perception of their ethnic group’s traditions and history (Fife et al., 2011).
5. *Foreign Language Immersion* – The delivery of nonlinguistic content instruction in a language students are learning as a second language (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012)
6. *Heritage Language* – Heritage Language is the language spoken at home (Leeman et al., 2011).
7. *Identity* – The expression of one’s beliefs about the “self” in relation to sociocultural experiences, social groups, and personally held beliefs (Block, 2007).
8. *Identity Crisis* – The term used to by Erikson (1963) to denote the identity versus role confusion state of development that occurs during adolescence.
9. *Mainstream American English* – The term used to describe the variety of English considered acceptable to speak in daily conversation and casual settings (Pearson, Velleman, Bryant, & Charko, 2009).

10. *Non-Mainstream American English*– The term used to describe any variety of English that varies from the English considered acceptable to speak in daily conversation and casual settings (Pearson et al., 2009).
11. *Second Language Acquisition* – The term used to indicate learning of a second or foreign language (Block, 2007).
12. *Standard Academic English/Standard English* – The term used to describe the variety of English considered acceptable for use in business or academic settings (Baugh, 2004).

### **Summary**

African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion setting must integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity while experiencing the identity crisis stage of development. The connection between language and identity is well documented; therefore, any discussion of second language acquisition must also consider the impact of language learning on identity. Although quantitative data indicate that language immersion settings improve academic achievement in the target language for both native speakers and second language learners (Genesee & Jared, 2008; Liying et al., 2010; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Savage & Hughes, 2014; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012), qualitative studies reveal the instability of identity in foreign language learning environments, especially where the target language is considered social capital and the home language is devalued (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Rajaduari, 2010). African American students who speak African American English, may experience such instability when they perceive devaluation of African American English, further complicating the identity crisis stage of development.

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that illustrates how African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The

model developed from this study should help educators understand the process that African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity so that they can better create appropriate sociocultural experiences for African American adolescents in language learning environments. Additionally, the model will help educators create appropriate pedagogical experiences that reduce the risk of African American students perceiving a devaluation of African American English in the language learning environment. Finally, the model will add to the body of literature of African American student identity development beyond ethnic, racial, and academic identity constructs. Theorists may use the model to question how the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000), which was developed to explain identity integration of college students, can be applied to the identity integration process of younger adolescents.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Foreign language immersion environments are known to produce bilingual students who excel academically in both the native and target languages (Genesee & Jared, 2008; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Savage & Hughes, 2014; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012); however, little is known about how additive bilingualism affects identity development among a marginalized population of adolescents. The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that explains how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Chapter Two presents a brief discussion of the theoretical framework and conceptual model that are essential to the present study. Both Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development and Jones and McEwen's (2000) Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model frame the study. Following the theoretical framework is a description of common adolescent behaviors and a discussion of the literature related to African American identity, African American English, Second Language Acquisition, and foreign language immersion. Each of the key concepts related to the present study are discussed in the chapter.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of the theoretical framework is to situate a study within the body of literature. In a qualitative study the theoretical framework identifies the theories that are connected to a complex phenomenon and explains their relationships to each other and the current study (Glatthorn, 1998). For grounded theory researchers, the role of theory in a qualitative study is to serve as a type of "conceptual language" that forms the "disciplined body of knowledge" around which further "discussion, conflict, negotiation, or development of

knowledge-based practice” occurs (Corbin & Straus, 2015, p. 26). The theory that is essential to this study is Erikson’s (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development, and the conceptual model that is essential to this study is Jones and McEwen’s (2000) Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model.

Erikson (1963) is credited with introducing the study of identity construction (Coles, 2000; Mooney, 2000; Rubtsova, 2012). In developing his theory, Erikson (1963) expanded Freud’s (1923) Ego Identity Theory into a concept of identity as a stage of ego growth. As a person progresses through each stage, identity strengths or weaknesses are revealed dependent upon the successful navigation of the ego tasks presented at each stage (Mooney, 2000). Erikson (1963) identified eight stages that humans must navigate in order to achieve the optimum ego identity. These stages are basic trust versus basic mistrust; autonomy versus shame and doubt; initiative versus guilt; industry versus inferiority; identity versus role confusion; intimacy versus isolation; generativity versus stagnation; and ego integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1963). The stage that was significant to this study was identity versus role confusion.

The stage of industry versus inferiority generally occurs in children ages 6-9 years (Erikson, 1963). The task that children in this age range are faced with is learning to work in collaboration with others. Children who feel competent in their contributions exhibit industry, and those who do not value their contributions exhibit inferiority (Erikson, 1963; Kowaz & Marcia, 1991). The child who has successfully navigated this stage emerges with intrinsic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and a strong sense of persistence (Hamachek, 1988). Failure to successfully navigate this stage results in a feeling of inferiority, procrastination, and an inability to accept criticism (Erikson, 1963; Kowaz & Marcia, 1991).

The stage of identity versus role confusion occurs in adolescents aged 9 - 25 years (Erikson, 1963). During this period of development, adolescents are primarily concerned with how they are viewed by their peers, causing them to become intolerant of differences. Their hoped for and feared possible selves may lead adolescents to connect themselves with groups who share and reinforce certain identities or into groups that discourage the development of certain identities (Torres et al., 2009). They are faced with the task of developing a stable self-concept and planning for future employment (Erikson, 1963; Hamachek, 1988). During the identity versus role confusion stage of development, adolescents are “searching for a combination of freedom and discipline” which causes them to sometimes reject those who are in a position to help them (Coles, 2000, p. 289). Some of the contradictory emotions that adolescents experience cause them to fear that their needs will not be met, leading to ambiguous feelings about themselves and others (Coles, 2000; Rubtsova, 2012). Adolescents who have successfully negotiated the stage of identity versus role confusion develop a stable self-concept, and they are able to make decisions and form relationships without fear of losing their sense of self (Coles, 2000; Erikson, 1963; Hamachek, 1988). Conversely, adolescents in role confusion have an unstable self-concept, which causes difficulty in decision-making and relationship building (Coles, 2000; Erikson, 1963; Hamachek, 1988).

Current researchers of identity hold a view that identity is the expression of one’s belief about the self in relation to sociocultural experiences, social groups, and personally-held beliefs (Block, 2007; Cokley et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2012; Rajadurai, 2010; Shakouri, 2012; Torres et al., 2009; Vignoles, 2011; Whaley & Noël, 2012). Since Erikson (1963), the study of identity has produced a variety of theories and frameworks from the fields of psychology and sociology

that have been used to help educators understand how students develop their academic identities (Karkouti, 2014; Torres et al., 2009).

Researchers who view identity from a psychological standpoint tend to build upon Erikson's (1963) work. The focus of these studies is understanding the self and development of identity based on environmental influences (Karkouti, 2014; Torres et al., 2009). Researchers who situate their studies in the sociology field tend to focus on positions within a social group and the forces that act upon individuals as they develop their identities (Stets & Carter, 2012; Torres et al., 2009). Emphasis is placed on political relationships, perceived power structures, and group membership (Block, 2007; Rajadurai, 2010; Stets & Carter, 2012; Thornton & Rupp, 2016; Whaley & Noël, 2012). Recently, researchers have turned their attention to the topic of morality and group identity or membership (Ellemers, Pagliaro, & Barreto, 2013; Parker & Janoff-Bulman, 2013; Stets & Carter, 2012; Thornton & Rupp, 2016). Researchers who view identity from a human ecology perspective focus on the development of individual identity within the broader social context (Bennett, 2014; Carter, 2013; Torres et al., 2009). Although identity construction theories vary in their foundational principles, it is commonly held that identity is socially constructed and progressive. The sociocultural nature of identity development means that changes in environment and the uncontrollable external pressures of marginalization due to racial, gender, or socioeconomic oppression are likely to force the continuous reconstruction of identity (Torres et al., 2009).

Because identity is as complex as the human psyche, each person functions in multiple roles daily (Torres, et al., 2009). For example, a woman may be a wife, mother, sister, teacher, friend, and student. Each role is considered a social identity that is constructed simultaneously, in accordance with lived experience (Torres et al., 2009). Each role is also connected to the

other and is meaningful to the person individually and in relation to the others (Jones et al., 2012). The main idea behind psychosocial identity theories is the “intersections between how we see ourselves and how we see our relationships with others” (Magolda, 2009, p. 623). Jones and McEwen (2000) used Erikson’s (1963) tenets of psychosocial development as a theoretical framework in the development of their Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model. The researchers chose the interaction of the multiple dimensions of social identities with the personal identity, or core sense of self, also described as intersectionality, as the focus of their model (Jones et al., 2012; Taylor, 2008; Torres et al., 2009). When viewed through this lens, identity development is the process by which “an individual’s primary style of knowing combines with his or her socially constructed identities, family background, life experiences, attitudes and ideologies to comprise a particular way of seeing and interacting with the surrounding network of social environments” (Taylor, 2008, p. 221).

The Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) was particularly relevant to this study as the students were adding the social identity of bilingualism to their other social identities and their overall sense of self. It should be noted that a person’s ability to make meaning of experiences influences their development of self-perceived social identities.

Individuals with complex meaning-making ability are able to resist external influences, thereby developing a more authentic sense of self (Jones et al., 2012).

The integration of social identities and personal identity causes a conflict at any age, but especially for adolescents. Because their multiple social identities are constructed in lived experiences, adolescents must navigate them within sociocultural context along with an emerging awareness of the influence of power and privilege (Jones et al., 2012). When the boundaries between personal identity and social identity are blurred, as they are in a foreign

language learning environment, an individual experiences a conflict of personal identity that is only resolved by being able to choose which dimension of identity to share in a given sociocultural context (Jones et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2009).

Proponents of the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) distinguish between social identities and personal identity even though these identities cannot be viewed as independent of each other (Jones et al., 2012). The Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model has been used to frame investigations of identity construction among college students because they bring so many social identities to the campus. For the adolescents in this study, the dimensions of identity were complicated by their identity crisis stage of development.

### **Related Literature**

Erikson (1963) defined identity as a process that is constructed in social contexts. Adolescence is a period of development where cognitive, physical, and sociocultural development converge allowing the adolescent to interpret childhood experiences and use them to map out a path to adulthood (Luycks, Klimstra, Duriez, Van Petegem, & Beyers, 2013; Marcia, 1980; Pittman, Keiley, Kerpelman & Vaughn, 2011; Rageliene & Justickis, 2016). The period of adolescence serves as a bridge connecting the emerging identity of the child who is now able to interpret parental images and self-concept within cultural connotations with the young adult who recognizes the variety of social roles that are now available (Erikson, 1963). Adolescence begins between the ages of 9 and 12 years and ends when the youth subordinates all childhood identifications and accepts social expectations in the form of competitive career aspirations (Erikson, 1968).

Adolescence can be a difficult time for youth and the adults in their lives. The “adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychological stage between

childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult” (Erikson, 1963, p. 262). The moratorium is a time when the adolescent pauses to make a bridge between past learning and future career. During this developmental stage, adolescents test boundaries, engage in extreme behaviors and turn parents into adversaries (Erikson, 1968; Palombo et al., 2009; Rageliene & Justickis, 2016). They are clannish and cruel in their intolerance of difference as they attempt to locate themselves within their culture (Erikson, 1963; Palombo et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 1983).

The identity crisis occurs when adolescents transition from child to adult (Erikson, 1963) and should be seen as a matter of negation as opposed to a matter of affirmation because the young adult must let go of the “taker” position of childhood and the imagined possibility of multiple glamorous lifestyles in order to cross over into adulthood and choose a competitive career (Marcia, 1980). A crisis ensues because the youth is letting go of the known and must affirm the unknown, a process that can be problematic for most and pathological for some. According to Erikson (1968), during the crisis young adults are faced with conflicting desires, which may cause them to question their entire identity. The identity crisis is resolved with the choice of a career because it represents a continuity of past and future along with a sense of identity and self-confidence (Erikson, 1968; Palombo et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 1983).

When the identity crisis results in role confusion there is a disconnect between past experiences and the anticipated future caused by the lack of commitment to a career or ideology. The inability to settle on a future career carries much weight in the life of an adolescent because it represents a discrepancy between self-concept and society’s view of adulthood (Erikson, 1963; Wagner et al., 1983). Adolescents who are having difficulty overcoming role confusion exhibit delinquent or even psychotic behaviors in order to create a psychosocial moratorium. Some

grow out of their problematic behaviors, but more severe cases may end up with a psychiatric label that follows them into adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Important to this study was the fact that identity weakness does not become apparent to young adults until they attempt to engage in interpersonal relationships, such as those found in a language immersion program. The symptoms of severe role confusion include a heightened sense of isolation, fear of being different, overall sense of being ashamed, inability to feel accomplishment in any activity, disbelief that time will bring change, inability to concentrate, excessive preoccupation with competition, and scorning of roles that are accepted or expected by the family (Erikson, 1968).

### **Identity and Systems of Power**

The influences that affect social and personal identity can be divided into systems (Bang & Zhou, 2014; Mocaraka-Harris, Thompson-Fawcett, & Ergler, 2016; Moss & Singh, 2015; Nakamura, 2016; Taylor, 2008). Microsystems are family, friends, classmates, and other environments where a person interacts face-to-face. Mesosystems are settings where two or more microsystems interact such as school and social life. Exosystems are settings that influence the development of a person through policy, curriculum, or laws. Macrosystems are the result of the interaction of all the other systems to create a pattern of cultural beliefs (Taylor, 2008).

Multiple identities are constructed simultaneously and are integrally connected to each other as individuals interact within microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems in social contexts such as schools. (Jones et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2009). The balance of power that exists in broader social contexts dictates the norms and expectations within a society. The sense of self is affected by the ability to develop personal identity in the face of such systems of power and inequality. Individuals with more complex identity construction skills are more adept

at refining a sense of self that is not encumbered by social identities, especially with regard to marginalization and oppression (Jones et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2009).

According to Chambers and McCready (2011) students whose race or ethnicity is outside the mainstream culture experience marginalization in a variety of forms within the academic setting. On the other hand, marginalization can also occur based on minority students' perceptions of policies and procedures. Minority students tend to notice the racial identity of those who are in leadership and those who are subservient in academic institutions. When minority students negatively view the social status of those with whom they identify culturally, they perceive marginalization and their identity construction process is affected (Torres et al., 2009). Minority students are also aware that their "individual identities cannot be separated from structures of inequality in social locations" (Jones et al., 2012, p. 700).

Recognizing the need to address perceived marginalization in students, Moss and Singh (2015) published an article discussing the need for Caucasian school counselors to become allies to students of color. Because of their position in the schools, Caucasian school counselors can design and use interventions that create an environment that champions social justice. Moss and Singh (2015) suggest that Caucasian school counselors would benefit from training in both Relational Cultural Theory (Comstock et al., 2008) and Critical Race Theory (Taylor, Gillborn & Ladson-Billings, 2009) in order to effectively serve as allies for minority students.

One result of African American student marginalization is academic disengagement which occurs when African American students choose to avoid engaging in their learning. Academic disengagement is intensified for African American students who have dimensions of social identities that are stigmatized by their peers making them different from other African American students (Chambers & McCready, 2011). A few examples of dimensions of social

identities that might cause African American student marginalization to be intensified include enrollment in special education, having physical disabilities, and even striving for academic excellence, which can be perceived as acting “White” (Murray et al., 2012).

The study of African American identity is intricately connected with systems of power and the resulting marginalization. Recognition of the systems of power and the sense of being marginalized occurs at different ages for minority children. Erikson (1963) marked the period of entry into the educational system as the point where minority children are first faced with the reality of the systems of power and of marginalization. Entry into school marks the beginning of what Erikson (1963) called the stage of industry versus inferiority where children learn to take pride in their work and to be recognized for their good performance or their industry. However, when minority children feel that the differences in race, socioeconomics, and intellectual ability are more important measures of their identity than their desire and ability to succeed they fall into inferiority. During adolescence, minority children are exposed to “the standardization of individuality and the intolerance of ‘differences’” (Coles, 2000, p. 132). While focusing on the theme of marginalization researchers have studied African American identity as both a social construct and as an academic construct.

According to Erikson (1963) children ages 6-12 who belong to a marginalized group may feel that difference in race or socioeconomic status has more bearing on their identity than their abilities, and it is possible that they may carry these perceptions into adolescence. Torres et al. (2009) found that minority students are aware that they cannot separate their individual identity from systems of inequality in schools or other social locations. One could reasonably argue that African American adolescents in this study were aware of the systems of power present in their schools. Their awareness of the systems of power and of marginalization may have impacted

their identity integration process during the identity crisis developmental stage. Another important consideration is the fact that an awareness of the systems of power may have been a consideration for parents who chose the immersion setting for their children in kindergarten. It is important to note that the decision to learn in a foreign language immersion environment was made for these students by their parents.

While there are several factors involved in identity construction, language use is a common theme among researchers (Jeon, 2010; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). Any discussion about the language spoken by African Americans must consider educational, social, and political history because African American English is not viewed as a legitimate English variety but rather as a deficient attempt at Standard Academic English (Baugh, 2004; Stockman, 2010). Researchers who conduct investigations into the language of African Americans from the social and political standpoint focus on the history of educational and economic discrimination based on a deficit view of African American English while the focus of educational investigations is on how to turn African American English constructions into Standard Academic English constructions.

### **History of African American English**

Four hundred years of slavery in America had a detrimental effect on African Americans. African slaves from different countries were thrown together in isolated conditions and denied education for centuries. Although they were not permitted to learn to read and write the language of their owners, the slaves were able to develop a spoken language that they used to communicate with each other and with slave masters (Marable, 2006). Linguists believe that this language, which has survived generations and spread beyond the African American race, is a derivative of pidgin-creole with patterns related to both African and English languages (Baugh,

2004; Stockman, 2010). The abolishment of slavery did not eradicate the racial, social, educational, and economic discrimination inflicted upon African Americans, and the use of African American English continued. While the Supreme Court overturned the system of separate but equal education, the ruling in “Brown V. Board of Education didn’t [sic] include provisions to reverse the linguistic consequences of slavery and a racially segregated education system” (Baugh, 2004, p. 198). The history of discriminatory practices has led to a perception of African American English as a deficient form of Standard Academic English among all ethnic groups. Even many African Americans hold this deficit view of African American English, though it remains a legitimate means of cultural expression. In fact, many African American students actively resist mastering Standard Academic English in order to avoid the accusation of acting or talking “White” (Baugh, 2004; Grantham & Biddle, 2014).

The focus of early research into the language of African American children was the differences in speech patterns between African American children and Caucasian children. However, changes in the cultural and political climate of the United States brought about a change in the research focus as well. Linguists began to provide empirical evidence for legitimizing African American English as a linguistic system during the 1960s and continued to do so through the Civil Rights Era (Stockman, 2010). Later linguists used methods that considered the sociocultural contexts of the participants and focused on the typical language patterns, development of the language, and the meaning and use of the language in an effort to determine the linguistic status of African American English as either a language, a dialect, or deficient form of Standard Academic English (Stockman, 2010). The Linguistic Society of America confirmed that African American Vernacular English, now known as African American English, is a rule-governed variety of Standard Academic English and stressed the importance of

legitimizing it while maintaining that Standard Academic English is the goal for speakers of African American English (Baron, 2000; Sclafani, 2008).

### **African American English and the American Legal System**

The American legal system was brought into the language use debate with the *Martin Luther King, Jr. Etc v. Ann Arbor School District* (1979), the first lawsuit to apply the statutes of previous lawsuits affecting the schooling of non-English speaking children to African American children and to frame its argument using sociolinguistic research. Known as the *Black English Case*, this ruling resulted in a precedent requiring administrators of the Ann Arbor (Michigan) School District to submit a plan that helped teachers at the King School identify children speaking African American English, and required teachers to implement the plan in teaching African American students how to read Standard Academic English (Stockman, 2010).

The American public became involved in the language debate in December 1996 when members of the School Board of the Oakland (California) Unified School District passed a resolution declaring Ebonics to be the primary language of African American students in Oakland's schools in an attempt to actually declare language status for African American English (Baugh, 2004; Hall, 1997; Sclafani, 2008; Stockman, 2010). The resolution underwent two revisions and ultimately stated that African American students speak a non-standard form of English that presents a challenge to their mastery of Standard Academic English.

The Oakland School Board resolution caused much political and social backlash. The initial resolution spoke of Ebonics, a word that combines ebony and phonics, as a distinct language; however, as a means of compromise, later revisions removed the term Ebonics and replaced the language status with dialect, which seemed to calm the sociopolitical climate (Hall, 1997; Stockman, 2010). The purpose of the resolution was to improve African American student

competence in Standard Academic English by requiring teachers to teach African American students using some of the pedagogical strategies that were being used with other bilingual students. A secondary purpose of the resolution was to gain access to federal funding for bilingual education and use it to educate African American students (Baugh, 2004; Scalafani, 2008; Stockman, 2010).

The resolution passed by the members of the Oakland school board revealed the negative perceptions of African American speech patterns from all ethnicities, including African Americans. The public outcry against the language status that the members of the School Board of Oakland claimed for Ebonics demonstrated the sociopolitical position of language education laws in America during the 1990s (Baugh, 2004; Hall, 1997). When the members of the School Board of Oakland declared language status for African American English and used the term Ebonics in the initial resolution, African American leaders spoke out against a perceived effort to keep African American children from mastering the language of power while Caucasian leaders spoke out against legitimizing what was considered a deficient form of Standard Academic English.

The Oakland School Board members' resolution made headlines across the nation. It is worth noting that while the members of the School Board of Oakland did not consult linguists about their resolutions, news reporters did and used the information gained to spark debates about race relations, education, and other social issues (Baron, 2000; Baugh, 2004).

### **African American English and Learning**

Considerable pedagogical attention has been given to African American English and its impact on learning (Baron, 2000; Baugh, 2004; Hall, 2001; Harris & Schroeder, 2013; Scalafani, 2008; Stockman, 2010). Additionally, researchers have studied the identity construction process

of African Americans within the framework of the relationship between African American English and racial identity, academic achievement, sociopolitical contexts, and resilience (Cokley et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2012; Watt, 2006; Whaley & Noël, 2012). It should be noted that language use is intimately connected to identity construction for both monolingual and multilingual people (Jeon, 2010; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011).

Although there are several terms used in current research to refer to the language spoken by many African Americans, I use the term African American English in this study because it is the term that is closely related to African American Vernacular English, the term preferred by linguists (Baron, 2000; Baugh, 2004; Stockman, 2010). Current researchers have moved away from debating the status of African American English toward investigating the linguistic aspects of the language, its impact on academic achievement, and its impact on identity construction (Edwards & Rosin, 2016; Filmer, 2007; Flowers, 2000; Godley & Escher, 2012; Harris & Schroeder, 2013; Mitri & Terry, 2014; Murray et al., 2012; Rahman, 2008; Smitherman, 2004; Terry, 2010; Treiman & Bowman, 2015).

Although linguistic studies are no longer seeking to validate African American English as a dialect, linguists continue to focus on the rule-governed phonological and morphemic differences between African American English and what is now referred to by some researchers as Mainstream American English (Pearson et al., 2009; Terry & Connor, 2012; Terry et al., 2010). The change from the use of Standard Academic English to Mainstream American English is likely grounded in the reality that Standard Academic English is not the common dialect of mainstream America outside the academic or business setting.

A group of researchers published studies in *American Speech* comparing regional vowel productions of African American English speakers with that of Mainstream American English speakers in an effort to dispel the overgeneralization of African American English as a self-contained dialect with rigid rules and little variation among speakers (Andres & Votta, 2009; Childs, Mallison, & Carpenter, 2009; Coggshall & Becker, 2009; Eberhardt, 2008; Kohn, 2014; Purnell, 2009; Wroblewski, Strand & Dubois, 2009). Although the studies were conducted in different regions and the researchers focused on different vowel phonology, each researcher concluded that African American English phonological changes occur in the same patterns as Mainstream American English phonological changes. Additionally, speakers of both African American English and Mainstream American English produced similar regional variations in vowel sounds. It is clear that both African American English and Mainstream American English vowel patterns are affected by regional and ethnic norms and that linguists should refrain from overgeneralizing African American English as a self-contained dialect since changes in the sociopolitical environment in America have allowed more contact among races resulting in the assimilation of both African American English and Mainstream American English forms (Andres & Votta, 2009; Childs et al., 2009; Coggshall & Becker, 2009; Purnell, 2009; Wroblewski et al., 2009). Studies conducted by Simmons (2014) and Swindler (2015) indicated a move toward helping teachers understand African American English so that they can better communicate with African American students who use it.

Another focus of current African American English researchers is the relationship between the production of African American English and attainment of literacy skills in early grades. The academic achievement gap has been widely studied and researchers agree that it is the result of a complex relationship among a number of variables (Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010;

Terry et al., 2010; Wheeler et al., 2012). Researchers are studying the rate of production of Nonmainstream American English as one of the variables that contribute to the achievement gap. Studies have shown that younger children tend to produce Nonmainstream American English features more often than older students, and there is a positive correlation between the density of Nonmainstream American English features and attainment of phonological skills (Apel & Thomas-Tate, 2009; Mitri & Terry, 2014; Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010; Pruitt et al., 2011; Rickford, 2014; Terry et al., 2010; Treiman & Bowman, 2015; Van Hofwegen & Wolfram, 2010; Wheeler et al., 2012). African American English and Southern American English are Nonmainstream American English forms that are often studied together because they share so many features; however, the use of Southern American English does not carry the social stigma that African American English carries (Apel & Thomas-Tate, 2009; Terry et al., 2010).

There are multiple theories that explain how the production of Nonmainstream American English is related to the gap in reading achievement between speakers of Nonmainstream American English and speakers of Mainstream American English. One theory is the teacher-bias or negative perspective theory. The idea behind this theory is that a teacher's negative perceptions of Nonmainstream American English results in lower expectations, less optimal instruction, and negative interactions between student and teacher, ultimately resulting in lower student achievement (Beneke & Cheatham, 2015; Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Hill, 2009; Newkirk-Turner, Williams, Harris, & McDaniels, 2013; Terry et al., 2010). In their study of preservice teacher attitudes toward African American English, Newkirk-Turner et al. (2013) found that their participants held negative perspectives of African American English. The researchers reported that although 65.8% of the participants felt that their education program had prepared them to deal with language diversity in the classroom, a larger percentage (81.6%)

indicated that they needed to learn more strategies specific to addressing the needs of students who speak African American English.

Some researchers have suggested that speakers of Nonmainstream American English in early grades experience a linguistic mismatch between Nonmainstream American English and written Standard Academic English which may cause confusion as students learn to read (Apel & Thomas-Tate, 2009; Dresser & Asato, 2014; Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010; Terry, 2006; Terry et al., 2010). Researchers have noted that students who are more linguistically diverse and those who are more linguistically aware tend to have stronger reading achievement because they are better able to vary their language use (dialect shifting) and negotiate linguistic mismatches (Charity et al., 2004; Craig, Lingling, Hensel, & Quinn, 2009; Terry, 2006).

### **African American English and Identity**

Because language is an expression of identity, the role of African American English in the identity development of African American students has been a common theme of African American identity studies. In fact, identity is expressed through language (Gu, 2010). In identity studies, African American English has been studied in relation to its effect on achievement and as a cause of marginalization and academic disengagement. Varelas, Martin and Kane (2013) argued that in an academic setting, African American children construct their academic identity alongside their racial identity. When African American students perceive that their teachers hold a negative attitude toward their use of African American English, or when they experience being corrected mid-sentence during classroom discussions, the process of identity development is complicated causing some African American students to respond by choosing to develop a meaningful racial identity rather than their academic identity (Beneke &

Cheatam, 2015; Charity et al., 2004; Delpit, 1995; Hill, 2009; Newkirk-Turner et al., 2013; Smagorinsky, Hansen, & Fink, 2013; Terry, 2006; Terry et al., 2010; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011).

Another frequently discussed relationship between African American English and achievement is the connection between frequency of production of African American English and the achievement gap, especially reading achievement deficits (Charity et al., 2004; Mitri & Terry, 2014; Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010; Terry, 2006; Terry et al., 2010; Terry & McDonald-Connor, 2012). Students with greater production of African American English have more reading achievement deficits in early elementary school. Although the production of African American English is not the sole cause of the academic achievement gap, it is one of the variables that has frequently appeared in research. The impact that social identity has on learning is also noted in research (Varelas et al., 2013).

Researchers investigating African American English have become more pedagogical in recent years, and they have moved away from identifying language use as a cause of achievement gaps. For example, Wright et al. (2015) published an article that encouraged teachers to focus on providing African American children with opportunities to develop a positive identity through purposeful selection of curriculum tools with which African American children can identify. The authors also encouraged educators to be cognizant of practices that deny African American children agency in their classroom and extra-curricular experiences.

Topics such as motivation and self-efficacy and their relation to academic success for African American students have been recently studied. Matthews, Banerjee, and Lauermaann (2014) conducted a quantitative study examining whether efficacy has a moderating effect on self-regulated learning in 600 African American and Latino adolescents. The researchers also examined the relationship between self-regulated learning and value and belonging, two

dimensions of academic identity in this population. The results of Matthews' et al. (2014) study indicated that marginalized students who struggle to achieve can become motivated and self-regulated when they are provided an opportunity to develop the identity dimensions of value and belonging.

Although researchers have conducted many studies from a deficit view of African American academic identity in the decades since the Civil Rights Era, Goings (2016) suggested that the findings of his qualitative study should serve as a springboard for a counter-narrative in African American academic achievement research. He interviewed four non-traditional high-achieving African American males attending the same historically Black college to determine the factors that enabled these men to succeed while meeting family and job responsibilities. He found that the men were intrinsically motivated to improve the quality of life for themselves and their family. Goings (2016) also found that support from family and peers, as well as a campus environment where they were embraced and their identity as African American males was affirmed, had a positive impact on the academic success of these men. Goings (2016) has encouraged other scholars to use Harper's (2010) Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework for future research to begin the process of changing the discourse of African American academic achievement from a deficit view to one that looks for keys to success.

Before closing the discussion of African American English, it is important to note that research has shown a relationship between home language, in this case African American English, academic achievement, and student identity development (Block, 2007; Dixon et al., 2011; Hill, 2009; Jeon, 2010; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Masso, 2010; Moloney, 2009; Rajadurai, 2010; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Scanlan & Palmer, 2009; Swain & Deters, 2007;

Tedick & Cammarata, 2012; Varelas et al., 2013). Because of this relationship, an investigation into the study of African American identity development is the next logical step.

### **African American Identity**

Researchers studying African American identity as a social construct have focused on the issues related to locus of control—that is, “who determines who I am” (Bamberg et al., 2011; Chambers & McCreedy, 2011; Gu, 2010; Taylor, 2008; Torres et al., 2009; Varelas et al., 2013), racial identity versus pressures of diversity (Caldwell, Zimmerman, Bernat, Sellers, & Notaro, 2002; Chidester et al., 2006; Fife et al., 2011; Horton-Ikard & Miller, 2004; Jones et al., 2012), the relationship between identity and academic achievement (Apel & Thomas-Tate, 2009; Charity et al., 2004; Craig et al., 2009; Goings, 2016; Hill, 2009; Ivy & Masterson, 2011; Matthews et al., 2014; Mayes & Moore, 2016; Smagorinsky et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2015), the influence of racial identity on mental health (Hughes et al., 2015) and the influence of various types of experiences on racial identity development (Daughtery, 2011; Debnam, Howard & Garza, 2014; Gullan, Hoffman & Leff, 2011; Johnson, 2014; Tang, McLoyd, & Hallman, 2016; Whaley, 2016).

Identity is the lens through which individuals position themselves within a group when the locus of control remains with the individual (Varelas et al., 2013). However, when the locus of control moves to others within an environment, identity becomes the lens through which others perceive an individual’s position within a group (Varelas et al., 2013). Such positioning remains fluid as identity is constructed and is exacerbated by marginalization. Because identity involves understanding the position of the self in relation to others, identity development reflects a person’s relationship with the external environment as much as internal (cognitive) development (Gu, 2010). The complicating factor in this equation is that the privileged social

group determines the value of any minority group identity, resulting in such phenomena as institutional discrimination and perceived hostility toward the minority group members' self-expression (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Taylor, 2008; Torres et al., 2009). In situations in which the privileged social group determines the value of any minority group identity, the identity development locus of control is external to the individual and placed into the hands of a perceived hostile entity.

Very similar to locus of control is what Bamberg et al. (2011) identified as agency of control. With agency of control, individuals either construct their perception of the world internally or are constructed by the way the world is externally. Agency of control is directly influenced by an individual's expectations for now and for the future (Varelas et al., 2013). Both locus of control and agency of control were complications for the adolescents in this study who were working through Erikson's (1963) identity crisis (Taylor, 2008).

Another important construct of African American identity development is what Varelas et al. (2013) identified as private and public regard.

Private regard refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively towards African Americans and their membership in that group . . . while public regard refers to the extent to which individuals feel that others view African Americans positively or negatively. (Varelas et al., 2013, p. 327)

African American students must navigate multiple sociocultural dimensions that affect their identity development as they struggle through Erikson's (1963) identity crisis developmental stage. The African American students in this study were adding the dimension of bilingualism to their overall identity and were in the process of integrating their bilingual identity dimension into

their overall sense of self as they developed their perceptions of identity, locus of control, agency of control, private regard, and public regard.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

African American identity within itself is a complicated matter that is further complicated by the ambiguous use of the terms race and ethnicity. The generally accepted definition of race is “a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics; a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). The denotative meaning of race indicates that it is socially constructed. Roth (2016) confirmed the idea that race is socially constructed in his synthesis of literature on the concept of race. He found that there are multiple dimensions of race that are experienced and measured in an increasing number of race studies. Individuals may experience any of the dimensions of race depending on the social situation (Roth, 2016). The greatest area of concern for researchers is not which dimension is true or correct, but rather that researchers understand the influence that using different dimensions has on findings of inequality as each dimension is fluid. Further research is needed to understand the impact of the various dimensions of race on findings of inequality (Roth, 2016).

Several researchers published a collection of articles investigating the way the term race is used linguistically and its effect on perceptions of social inequality in the journal, *Discourse and Society*. In the series introduction, Alim and Reyes (2011) stated that the overall purpose of the articles is to “destroy the myth of a postracial and colorblind America [and to] recast the relationship between language and race in sociolinguistic studies” (p. 380). These articles are filled with findings that illuminate the way language and race intersect to create power differentials within cultural contexts. For example, Chun (2011) reported the results of a study

conducted in a Texas high school community where the teens engaged in the practice of labeling people and practices with explicitly racial terms, creating racial meanings for specific cultural signs. The students used terms like “White music” or “Black clothes” which were “linked with complex ideologies of authenticity, gender and class . . . [and were] rarely value-free” (p.417). One result of what these authors labeled race-talk was the creation of race reversal where White youth portray themselves as disadvantaged based on perceived but unsubstantiated reverse discrimination (Bucholtz, 2011).

Most literature dealing with racial identity is limited to African American and Caucasian races. When studying races other than African American and Caucasian or when dealing with multiracial subjects, researchers use the term ethnicity. Ethnicity is the noun form of the adjective ethnic which means “of or relating to races or large groups of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc.; associated with or belonging to a particular race or group of people who have a culture that is different from the main culture of a country” (Meriam-Webster Online, 2016).

Ethnic identity is a person’s perception of their ethnic group’s traditions and history (Fife et al., 2011). Because ethnic identity is a highly personal dimension of identity development, it is difficult to measure. Individuals’ ethnic identity is forged through their family socialization and other lived experiences. Affiliation with others with a shared ethnic identity is related to higher ethnic identity (Caldwell et al., 2002; Corenblum, 2015; Fife et al., 2011). Strong ethnic identity has a positive effect on the overall mental health of minority students (Caldwell et al., 2002; Fife et al., 2011; Williams, Anderson, Francois, Hussain, & Tolan, 2014). Additionally, a quantitative study by Romero, Edwards, Fryberg and Orduña, (2014) indicated that ethnic identity development has a positive effect on resilience to discrimination and prejudice.

Researchers' interest in ethnic identity and racial identity can be traced to the recent changes in racial and ethnic populations in the United States which are mirrored in the classroom. Educational researchers are now investigating the identity development of immigrant, biethnic, and multiethnic adolescents. Although ethnic minority students are a marginalized group, their experiences of marginalization are often considered separately from the experiences of African American students. However, Fisher, Reynolds, Hsu, Barnes, and Tyler (2014) reported the results of an investigation that considered the experiences of multiracial, African American, and Caucasian adolescents. In their quantitative study of 4,766 adolescents, of which 215 were multiracial, Fisher et al. examined the way adolescent multiracial students explore their ethnic identity and their level of ethnic identity development. Additionally, these researchers were interested in the relationship between ethnic identity affirmation and levels of mental health issues in the minority population. They found that although multiracial youth experienced more identity exploration, they had less identity affirmation than African American youth. Interestingly, the multiracial youth demonstrated more identity affirmation than Caucasian youth in this study. The researchers also found that multiracial youth had higher levels of depressive symptoms and other mental health issues than either African American or Caucasian youth. Fisher et al. (2014) called for further research into the identity development processes of multiracial youth with specific focus on their mental health.

Gonzales-Backen (2013) proposed an "ecological framework of biethnic identity development" which she conceptualized by using the cultural ecological framework in her review of theoretical and empirical literature on monoethnic identity development (p. 106). She suggested that scholars move beyond a focus on ethnic labels in their study of ethnicity because a

single ethnic identity is not reasonable given the fluidity of ethnic identity. Instead, Gonzales-Backen (2013) has promoted a multidimensional ethnic identity process viewed through the lens of the cultural ecological model.

Similar to studies on the identity development of African Americans, studies related to the identity development of immigrant youth have focused on the impact of institutional policies on their identity development. Gonzales, Eades, and Supple (2014) suggested that schools provide activities that promote ethnic identity development to help marginalized students develop personally and socially. The results of Malcolm and Mendoza's (2014) study of the ethnic identity development of Afro-Caribbean International students at an American public university have provided support for the suggestion made by Gonzales et al. (2014). Afro-Caribbean individuals are a mixture of African, Caribbean and Latin American ethnicities. The students in this study expressed that they felt more pressure from programs and curriculum than they felt from demographics and ethnicity documentation requirements indicating that ethnic identity development involves more than choosing an identity to record or document.

Nesteruk, Helmstetter, Gramescu, Siyam, and Price (2015) reported that young adults who were fluent bilinguals had a stronger connection to their heritage than that of limited bilinguals. Since most of the immigrant students in the Nesteruk et al. (2015) study demonstrated an integrated or bicultural ethnic identity, the results can be used to support the connection between language and identity. The connection between language and identity was significant for the present study because the participants have emerged as bilingual but remain outside the second language ethnicity. Additionally, they needed to integrate their second language identity with their African American identity. The narratives of their experiences

indicated how these adolescents perceived their race or ethnicity as well as how they integrated their bilingual identity with their perceived racial or ethnic identity.

Recently, many schools in the district where this study took place have moved away from having a Black History program that celebrates the achievements of African Americans in February to having a Cultural Awareness program that celebrates the achievements of all minority groups in the United States as a means of promoting diversity. However, this push for diversity presents a challenge to African American adolescents who are attempting to forge a racial identity. According to Hughes et al. (2015) positive racial group identification is associated with higher self-esteem; however, in incidences where African American students perceive the push for diversity as a means of degrading African American history such positive racial group identification is problematic.

The push for tolerance and diversity has positively impacted the overall sociocultural environment in the United States. However, diversity devalues individual racial identity which places minorities into a situation where they must choose either to conform or maintain their ethnic difference (Chidester et al., 2006; Torres et al., 2009). Racial awareness generally occurs at the preadolescent and adolescent stage of development (Horton-Ikard & Miller, 2004). The conflict associated with the push for diversity further complicated the identity crisis that students in this study needed to navigate as they developed their identities.

### **Coping Strategies**

African American students have developed a few ways to cope with their marginalization in the school setting. According to Chambers and McCready (2011), racism experienced in adolescence is counteracted by the ability to “see oneself as part of a larger group from which

one can draw support” (p. 1355). The effect of drawing support from the larger group is the creation of a strong ethnic identity, which is also considered a coping strategy (Fife et al., 2011).

The process of “making space” or creating social boundaries is another coping technique that African American students use to deal with marginalization at school (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Fife et al., 2011). Social boundaries are created to affirm social and cultural identity and may be created by striving to excel in academic achievement, artistic expression, and political affiliations (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Fife et al., 2011). African American peer groups may also “make space” for themselves by forming what Chambers and McCready (2011) call “fictive kinship” by speaking African American English, de-emphasizing academic achievement, and rejecting institutions dominated by oppressive mainstream systems (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Fife et al., 2011).

Code-switching, also known as becoming bidialectal, is a coping strategy that has a positive impact on African American students’ reading and writing achievement (Craig et al., 2009). When African American students code switch, they shift from African American English to Standard Academic English during academic tasks. The ability to code switch is usually acquired by linguistically diverse students during adolescence (Craig et al., 2009; Craig & Washington, 2004; Ivy & Masterson, 2011). The students in this study were linguistically diverse students and had acquired the ability to code switch. They demonstrated code-switching with both their English and Spanish languages.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

While the focus of this study is identity development, research in second language acquisition was significant since the students were learning a foreign language in an immersion setting. Current Second Language Acquisition researchers investigate issues of identity and

culture as well as cognitive measures (Mackey, 2014). Several studies have revealed the intimate relationship between language and identity with special attention to the issues of the distribution of power, the acquisition of culture, and the negotiation of identity from the perspective of the minority language speaker learning the language of power within a given culture. (Block, 2007; Brooke-Garza, 2015; Dixon et al., 2012; Jon, 2012; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Moloney, 2009; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Scanlan & Palmer, 2009; Swain & Deters, 2007). In his review of literature, Block (2007) found that current second language acquisition researchers are investigating the language of power relationships and how they affect identity development. He found that several researchers reported that learners' perceptions of the balance of power within the classroom and the greater social context influenced their choices to use the target language outside of the academic setting.

In their review of literature of content-based language instruction research, Tedick and Cammarata (2012) found that the concept of language as a tool for making meaning and constructing identity within a social context appeared regularly in content-based and language immersion studies. The same theme appeared in a review of literature conducted by Dixon et al. (2012). Rindal (2010) found that identity is constructed through social interaction and that language choices are acts of identity construction in his study of Norwegian learners of English. In Roy and Galiev's (2011) study of Canadian French immersion students, the researchers concluded that the perception of bilingualism is socially constructed and that the instability of identity in immersion settings results in the target being perceived as cultural or symbolic capital (Block, 2007; Hutala, & Lehti-Eklund (2010); Rajadurai, 2010). However, for many second language learners, ethnic affiliation provides some stability (Masso, 2010). The process of integrating their bilingual identity with their other developing identities, including their ethnic

identity, was ongoing for the students in this study as they developed competence in their target language.

### **Second Language Acquisition and Identity**

African American students in a second language acquisition environment must simultaneously develop their racial identities, their academic identities, and their language identities. Researchers of second language acquisition often explore identity in conjunction with the acquisition of a second language because of the identity instability that students experience when learning a second language (Block, 2007; Hutala, & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Liu, 2014; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Nance et al., 2016; Xue & Han, 2014). Although some researchers have focused their studies on the effects of ethnic affiliations and identity construction in the second language acquisition environment, others have focused on finding ways to help students construct their identity in the second language acquisition environment (Block, 2007; Hutala, & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Jeon, 2010; Leeman et al., 2011; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010).

Xue and Han (2016) examined the identity changes of 105 Chinese college students learning English. The results of their study indicated the existence of distinct phases of the participants' bilingual identity which correlate with the depth of target language acquisition. The first phase is described as an instrumental bilingual identity where the target language serves as a tool (Xue & Han, 2016). For individuals experiencing the instrumental bilingual identity phase the target language may serve as cultural capital, or it may serve as a coping strategy for survival in an environment where it is the predominant language. The instrumental bilingual identity phase begins to emerge early in the acquisition of the target language, and according to Xue and Han (2016) may be present in all phases of bilingual identity development.

The second phase of bilingual identity development observed by Xue and Han (2016) is the subtractive and split bilingual identities representing a conflict between the learners' two cultures. A key component of this phase is the learners' perception that their heritage language and culture are being usurped by the study of the target language. According to Xue and Han (2016), "Subtractive and split bilingual identities are a stage where learners endeavor to acquire [the target language's] culture and construct their own understanding of self-culture" (p. 1163).

Ultimately, additive and productive bilingual identities representing an integration of the heritage and target language and cultures emerged at the higher levels of second language study. A well-developed ability to think critically and a multicultural perspective are necessary for this level of identity development. Because the participants in Xue and Han's (2016) study perceived their additive and productive bilingual identity in a positive light, they were able to develop a reflective consciousness that allowed them to continually remodel their cultural identities.

Xue and Han's (2016) study was relevant to the present study because the African American adolescents in this study were at the intermediate stage of their language acquisition while also navigating through the adolescent identity crisis developmental stage. Providing this group an opportunity to narrate their experiences assisted them in resolving the language identity crisis present in the subtractive and split bilingual identity phase. Those students who spoke African American English had an additional factor in that their heritage language is sometimes devalued in the classroom (Beneke & Cheatham, 2015; Charity et al., 2004; Hill, 2009; Newkirk-Turner et al., 2013; Terry, 2006; Terry et al., 2010). Their stories revealed themes related to their overall identity crisis as well as their language identity crisis.

The social interactions inherent in the second language acquisition environment have also given rise to researchers' interest in the sociopolitical aspects of foreign language learning. The

social phenomenon of acquiring a second language along with developing an identity within that language occur within communities of practice such as second language classrooms, geographical communities, and other social communities where one or both languages are practiced (Block, 2007; Coomber, 2013; Rajadurai, 2010). The sociopolitical power phenomenon is most obvious when native speakers of the target language are present with target language learners. Recently, however, researchers have begun to study this power phenomenon as it relates to the value placed on heritage language during the acquisition of the target language (Jeon, 2010; Leeman, et. al., 2011; Masso, 2010; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Rajadurai, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011). Such power struggles may result in the target language being viewed as a type of symbolic capital to improve sociopolitical status (Coomber, 2013; Liu, 2014; Xue & Han, 2014) or it may result in resistance toward learning the target language as a means of retaining cultural heritage (Block, 2007; Jeon, 2010; Leeman, et. al., 2011; Liu, 2014; Masso, 2010; Rajaduari, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011).

### **Foreign Language Immersion**

According to Tedick and Cammarata (2012) researchers' interest in second language acquisition research has been fueled by an interest in foreign language immersion programs. Foreign language immersion programs are actually an offshoot of content and language integration programs which are defined as "a curricular and instructional approach in which nonlinguistic content is taught to students through the medium of a language they are learning as a second, heritage, indigenous or foreign" language (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012, p. S28). Content and language integration programs have been categorized as content-driven or language-driven and either high time intensive or low time intensive. Although both content-driven and language-driven programs use a second language to teach content, they differ in priority and

accountability. In content-driven programs language learning is secondary to content mastery. However, in language-driven programs content learning is secondary to language mastery, and neither teachers nor students are held accountable for content mastery. Few programs are purely content driven or purely language driven, but instead, local needs determine the level of priority, whether content or language (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012).

Because a foreign language is used to teach content with the goal of additive bilingualism, all content and language integration programs are considered to be foreign language immersion programs. However, foreign language immersion programs also work towards academic achievement (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). Such foreign language immersion programs are either one-way (serving only language majority learners) or two-way (serving both language majority and language minority learners).

Total or full language immersion is a setting where at least 90% of the content is taught using the target language for the first few years of the program; partial immersion is a program where at least 50% of the content is taught using the target language. Early language immersion programs begin when learners enter school or are in first grade; middle language immersion begins when students reach third or fourth grade, and late language immersion begins when students reach sixth or seventh grade (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012).

While content and language integration programs are very similar to foreign language immersion programs, the differences between the programs are key to understanding a school's preferences for one over the other. Instructors use a foreign language to teach content with the goals of additive bilingualism and increased intercultural sensitivity in both content and language immersion programs and foreign language immersion programs. Administrators determine the percentage of time learners are instructed in the target language and the age at which the program

is implemented in both program types. The primary difference between the programs lies in the theoretical perception of language. In content and language integration programs language is viewed as a meaning-making system and is an integral part of identity. In foreign language immersion programs language is viewed as “a resource that enriches the learners’ lives and school experiences” (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012, p. S32). Finally, content and language integration programs appear more often in Europe while foreign language immersion programs appear more often in North America. As of 2011 there were 448 foreign language immersion programs registered with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in the United States (CAL, 2011).

### **Summary**

Many African American students bring to school a spoken language that has been defined linguistically as African American English (Baron, 2000; Baugh, 2004; Stockman, 2010). Since language is related to identity construction, any discussion of African American identity construction must consider African American English. The use of African American English has been implicated as a cause of academic disengagement resulting in poor academic achievement among African American students, but it remains a form of cultural expression. The sociopolitical phenomena of language power structures in America have been the focus of researchers investigating the perceptions of African American English (Baugh, 2004; Sclafani, 2008; Stockman, 2010). Although similarities exist between African American English and other heritage languages, sociopolitical perceptions of African American English as a deficient form of Standard Academic English have prevented the adoption of second language acquisition instructional practices in the teaching of African American students (Pandey, 2000). Although language use is connected to identity, the study of the use of African American English as a

dimension of identity has been replaced by an emphasis on racial identity as it relates to academic achievement, social positioning and resilience (Beneke & Cheatham, 2015; Charity et al., 2004; Hill, 2009; Newkirk-Turner, et al., 2013; Terry, 2006; Terry et al., 2010).

The process of learning a new language is associated with an instability of overall identity, and African American students are not exempt. Second language acquisition researchers have focused on the identity construction of minority language speakers who are learning to speak the language of power in a setting with native speakers of the target language (Block, 2007; Brooke-Garza, 2015; Dixon et al., 2012; Jon, 2012; Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Moloney, 2009; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Scanlan & Palmer, 2009; Swain & Deters, 2007). These students must integrate their bilingual identity with their other identities. However, the students in this study were in a precarious position. They were in the process of integrating multiple dimensions of their personal and social identities while learning in a foreign language and navigating the identity crisis developmental stage. There is a research gap concerning African American bilingual identity construction that this study filled.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Overview

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that illustrates how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. In this chapter I describe the research methods I used for the study. Specifically, I discuss the rationale for using a qualitative method followed by the rationale for using the grounded theory design. I also present the research questions for this study followed by a description of the setting and participants. Next, I discuss the process for attaining necessary approvals and soliciting participants for the study as well as my role as *human instrument* in this study. I end the chapter with a discussion of the steps I took to increase trustworthiness and the ethical considerations of the study.

### Design

Qualitative research was the best method for this study because the research questions did not lend themselves to quantitative analysis. Instead, they help understand lived experiences with a focus on process rather than on a specific quantifiable conclusion. The present study exemplified distinctive characteristics of qualitative research in that it took place in natural settings, and I attempted to develop a model explaining how African American students integrate the phenomenon of being bilingual, which Gueye (2015) defines as the ability to communicate in academic or business settings using two languages (Creswell, 2007). The process of integrating bilingualism for African American students is complex and needs a detailed explanation, which is a fundamental of qualitative studies (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, qualitative research is often used for exploration of inner experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The “fluid, evolving, and dynamic nature” of qualitative research mirrors the development of identity, making

qualitative research the most appropriate method for studying identity (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.5).

Grounded theory was a fitting design for this study because I investigated how African American students integrate their bilingual identity into their overall self-concept. I used Charmaz's (2014) social constructivist approach to grounded theory. A social constructivist approach to grounded theory "includes emphasizing diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, and actions" (Creswell, 2007, p. 65). The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a model that illustrates how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Social constructivist grounded theory was best for this study because the participants held complex views of their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment, in spite of their shared ethnic background. Those complex views of their experiences represent multiple realities within the group. Because of their age and maturity levels, the African American students in this study did not understand the impact that the integration of their bilingual identity had on their overall identity development. They were aware of their feelings and experiences, but they had been unable to express them to educators or parents. The model developed through grounded theory provides educators with a picture of how these students integrate their language identity as well as the impact that integration had on how they developed their overall identity. The procedures of grounded theory are culturally sensitive and allow for the development of comprehensive models making it the best method for this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

A key analytical practice in grounded theory research is the use of the constant comparative model of data analysis. Constant comparison involves examining data in

comparison with other data “both within and between documents” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 93) in order to “help define implicit meanings” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 21). The constant comparative model assists researchers in identifying areas within a pattern that require further development through theoretical sampling. Additionally, the constant comparative model assists researchers in determining when theoretical saturation has been reached. The constant comparative model was beneficial for me as a beginning researcher because it helped move the thought process from descriptive to abstract and was used to examine my researcher assumptions and biases (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

### **Research Questions**

The following questions framed this inquiry and were designed to produce a model of how African American students integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. These questions were used as a framework for all interviews and journal questions. The answers to these questions created the foundation for the model of the integration processes. The central question and sub questions are listed below.

Central Research Question: How do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity?

Sub question 1: What conflicts between bilingual identity and overall identity surface as African American adolescents reflect on their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment?

Sub question 2: What contextual or intervening conditions in a foreign language immersion environment cause African American adolescents to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity?

Sub question 3: What strategies do African American adolescents in a foreign language

immersion environment develop to reconcile any conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity?

### **Setting**

The Southeastern region of the United States is an area with widespread academic achievement disparity for ethnic minority and poverty-stricken students. Educators in the Southeast, have implemented a variety of curricular changes to meet the needs of students achieving below local, state and national achievement standards. Foreign language immersion programs are being implemented in several Southeastern United States school districts because of their documented academic benefits (Teddick & Cammarata, 2012). In fact, according to Center for Acquired Linguistics data, the state selected for this study has several foreign language immersion programs (CAL, 2011). The school district selected for this study has foreign language immersion programs in both elementary and middle schools, allowing students to continue to learn nonlinguistic content in a foreign language throughout Erikson's (1963) identity crisis developmental stage, making this district ideal for the present study.

The school district is one of average size in the state. The main employer in the district is a manufacturing plant, closely followed by the local hospital. Other major full time employers include manufacturing plants, small medical facilities, and retail industries (Vancouver County, 2012). There are three universities and four community colleges in the surrounding area. The number of students receiving free and reduced lunch is an indicator of poverty. Approximately 62% of students in this district receive free or reduced lunch, placing the district in the low-wealth category. Student demographic estimates indicate that most students are either African American (45%) or Caucasian (32%). Other ethnic groups represented in the district are Hispanic (12%), Asian (2%) and Native American (2%). Approximately 7% of students make

up the category designated as other (Pender, 2017). Academic achievement is measured using state tests. Currently 43% of students in this district are proficient in reading and 37% are proficient in math (Niche, 2017).

Students are assigned to schools based on their residence but have the opportunity to attend schools with specialized curricular offerings under a special program (Great Schools, 2017). The immersion classes for this school district are part of this program. Schools with the special program accept students from outside the attendance area if their parents provide transportation. However, enrollment is limited, and selection is made through an application process and lottery drawing.

Students must enter the immersion program in kindergarten and must remain in the program through fifth grade (Vancouver County, 2012). If they choose to exit the program before fifth grade they cannot be re-enrolled. The immersion environment is implemented in a limited number of classes in selected schools throughout the district. The classes are not physically separated from the school in any way; however, the schedule of recess and resource periods are different from the rest of the school. The school principal and assistant principals provide leadership for the immersion classes and mainstream or general education classes alike. The teachers for the foreign language immersion classes are native speakers contracted through the Visiting International Faculty program. The students in the foreign language immersion program are taught 90% of their academic content in the foreign language. Such immersion environments are known as minority language dominant (Palmer, 2008). The school district's goals are to increase English language achievement in reading and to teach the foreign language to the students so that they will emerge as bilingual middle school students. This study was conducted at two sites presented below using pseudonyms.

**I. I. Stevens Middle School (pseudonym)**

The first site for this study is I. I. Stevens Middle School. I. I. Stevens Middle School offers a Spanish immersion class for students who have completed the K- 5 elementary Spanish immersion program. Students are taught an upper level Spanish class in Spanish and the remaining courses in English. The ethnic composition of I. I. Stevens Middle School is 50% African American, 48% Caucasian, 1% Hispanic and 1% Asian. Approximately 53% of the student body is eligible for free or reduced lunch.

**Greenleaf Preparatory Academy (pseudonym)**

Greenleaf Preparatory Academic operates a middle school immersion class for students who have completed the K-5 elementary immersion program. Students are taught an upper level Spanish class in Spanish and the remaining courses in English. Administrators plan to add more subject areas to be taught in Spanish but are hindered by current budget constraints. The ethnic composition of Greenleaf Preparatory Academy is 61% African American, 15% Caucasian, and 15% Hispanic. Approximately 60% of the student body is eligible for free or reduced lunch.

I chose these schools primarily because they have the immersion program, but also because of the relatively large number of African American students and the relatively large number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Eligibility for free or reduced lunch is an indicator of poverty, and poverty has been positively correlated with the production of African American English (Charity, et al., 2004; Terry et al., 2010; Patton-Terry & Connor, 2010; Terry, 2006).

**Participants**

The sample size for this study was 11 participants enrolled in foreign language immersion classes in the participating schools. The participants were enrolled in grades 6 and 8

and were between the ages of 11 and 14 years. Participants were African American because these students are in the unique position of being part of the dominant culture (American) without fully holding the position of power. Although some of the participants used African American English, only one participant demonstrated difficulty with using Standard Academic English, the language of power. Students of other races would bring issues of power and identity that are beyond the scope of this study (Pandey, 2000; Rindal, 2010). Also, participants lived in homes where English is the only language spoken by parents and siblings, so that they are free to develop their bilingual identity without the influence of additional heritage language issues which are beyond the scope of this study (Craig, 2010; Hutala, & Lehti.-Eklund, 2010; Jeon, 2010).

Theoretical sampling is an integral procedure of grounded theory research but should not be confused with initial sampling procedures. “Initial sampling in grounded theory gets [the researcher] started; theoretical sampling guides where [the researcher goes]” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 197). Grounded theorists must use initial sampling to establish a set of sampling criteria that will be used to select participants before research begins. The purpose of theoretical sampling, on the other hand, is to “obtain data to help [the researcher] explicate categories” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 198). The criteria I used for initial sampling was the age of the students and the racial/ethnic heritage that students self-reported. I selected only participants between the ages of 11 and 14 years who reported their race/ethnicity as African American without additional ethnicities or languages other than English spoken in the home. During data collection and analysis, I used theoretical sampling as I “[sought] to develop the properties of the categories or theory” (Charmaz, 2014 p. 345). If there had been more than 25 volunteers who fit the criteria, I would have purposefully selected participants who represent the school demographics with regard to

gender and socioeconomic status.

### **Procedures**

No research data collection efforts were conducted until Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A), school district Research Review Committee approval (see Appendix B), site administrative approval (see Appendices C and D), informed parental consent (see Appendix E), and informed participant assent (see Appendix F) forms were secured.

### **Selection of Participants**

The first step in the selection of participants was contacting the principals of both sites to discuss the logistics of the study and how it would involve the school. The principals of each site required me to meet with the immersion instructors to explain the study and discuss how participants would be selected. I met with Mrs. Garcia (pseudonym) in her classroom during a teacher-workday. She was very supportive and explained that most of the African American students were 6<sup>th</sup> graders. She also stated that she was certain that most students would want to participate, but she did not think a parent meeting would be a good idea because there were several afterschool events that parents were required to attend and adding another might be discouraging. Instead, she suggested that she send out the parent recruitment email (Appendix G) and pass out printed copies of the Parental Consent (Appendix E), Participant Assent (Appendix F), and Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix H) which I would use to verify volunteers met the criteria of African American living in a home where only English is spoken. Mrs. Garcia requested that forms be returned even if parents do not approve of participation in the study so that she could be sure parents had seen the documents.

I met with Mrs. Velasquez (pseudonym) in her classroom after school. She was also very supportive. Mrs. Velasquez was surprised to realize that most of the immersion students are African American. She informed me that there are at least 15 African American students in each grade level and that she would encourage all of them to participate in the study. Mrs. Velasquez discouraged me from conducting an evening parent recruitment meeting by stating that there is very little parent attendance at after school events and that parents trust the school, so sending the recruitment email would be sufficient. I left printed copies of the Parental Consent, Participant Assent, and Demographic Questionnaire which I used to verify volunteers met the criteria of African American living in a home where only English is spoken. Mrs. Velasquez agreed to collect the forms and contact me when she had them back. She later told me that she offered the children a piece of candy for returning the forms as she does with other important documents sent home for signatures.

Students returned the forms to the teachers, and I picked them up one week later. Forms were given to students that the teachers thought would identify as African American. I received a total of 14 forms, but after reviewing the demographic questionnaires I had to eliminate three volunteers because they did not fit the criteria of African American with only English spoken in the home. One of the volunteers identified as biracial Korean and African American, another identified as Puerto Rican, one volunteer lives in a home where both French and English are spoken. The remaining 11 volunteers were selected as participants for the study. Of the 11 participants, nine attend I. I. Stevens Middle School and two attend Greenleaf Preparatory Academy. Six participants are in sixth grade and four are in eighth grade. None of the seventh-grade students were interested in participating.

### **The Researcher's Role**

I am a researcher who espouses a social constructivist paradigm; therefore, in this study, I functioned as the human instrument. As the human instrument, I was responsible for identifying my role in the research and any potential bias that could have manifested itself in data collection and analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest that researchers keep a journal in addition to writing memos as a means of identifying possible biases in data collection or analysis. I have not had any previous contact with the students or staff of the research sites. I do not know any of the staff, administrators, parents, or teachers of either site. I have African American friends who have been considering enrolling their children in the language immersion class once they reach school age. I was interested in knowing more about the program and its impact on student identity development so that I could speak more intelligently when asked for an opinion.

I am African American, and I have children who are in the age range of the identity crisis. Specifically, I have one daughter who is struggling with this stage and is experiencing many of the pathological symptoms associated with failure to successfully navigate the identity crisis. I struggled at times, to remain focused on the identity literature specific to this study because of the connection to my experiences with my daughter. I used a journal to reduce bias from personal experiences during data collection and analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2015) also suggest that researchers sometimes feel “overwhelmed, fatigued, and torn between multiple responsibilities” and that such feelings could “affect how a researcher responds to data” (p. 47). I made note of these emotions in my journal and referred to them as I checked for signs of bias or assumptions during data analysis.

Language use is a key construct of this study. I am not a constant speaker of African American English, probably because both my parents speak Mainstream American English and

have always encouraged me to do the same. I attended diverse schools as a child and spoke the language of my peers. Additionally, my love of English literature and subsequent reading habits have also impacted my language use. However, I have become aware of my subconscious code-switching, or shifting from Mainstream American English to African American English or Standard Academic English according to the situation (Craig et al., 2009). I code switch according to the ethnicity of those with whom I am communicating. My husband brought this to my attention a few years ago at the end of a telephone conversation I had with a parent. He said to me, “You were talking to a White person, weren’t you?” He then revealed to me that he noticed the change in the cadence of my speech when I’m talking to a White person as opposed to the cadence and other elements of African American English that I use when I’m talking to a Black person. I have since noticed the same type of code-switching in my own parents and in my son; however, it is not evident in my daughters who are quite introverted.

My father was in the US Army, and I spent my youth living on military bases on the West Coast and in Europe. When I entered high school my father was transferred to a large military base on the East Coast and for the first time we lived “on the economy” or off post. This was my first exposure to civilian life, civilian youth, and racism. I vividly remember the identity crisis that I had to navigate at the age of 14 years. I was ridiculed by some African American students for “talking White” and rejected by Caucasian students because I was “African American.” My parents shared their story with me and helped me navigate my way through this trying time. They explained that they also faced rejection when they were young because they are both half Cherokee and half African American. They were rejected as “half-breeds” by both African Americans and Native Americans. I used my parents’ story as motivation and learned how to decrease the amount of ridicule by picking up some of the

cadences and morphemic structures of African American English and using them for code-switching.

My husband was born in California to Mexican immigrant parents, but he does not speak Spanish. His mother was brought to the United States illegally as a toddler and received her citizenship in 1996. My husband regrets not learning his heritage language. He remembers the prejudice he experienced as a Mexican youth growing up in California and attributes his rejection of Spanish to trying to fit in. Fortunately, my children live in a world that is much more tolerant of multiracial families. My son is the only one who has an interest in speaking Spanish. I learned to speak Spanish in school and taught it for a few years. However, my accent and vocabulary are limited because I do not use Spanish regularly. My son listens to music in Spanish and initiates conversations with me in Spanish. He also enjoys listening to his grandmother tell him stories in Spanish. None of my children have told me of having experienced racism because of their language or ethnicity. Because of our socioeconomic status, they enjoy the privilege of the middle class (living in an exclusive neighborhood in the suburbs and attending private school) that is not the norm for many African American youth.

My role as the human instrument in this study was to develop a model grounded in the data that illustrates how African American students in a foreign language immersion class integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The African American students in this study spoke openly with me because of our shared ethnicity and culture. Their parents trusted me for the same reasons. My ability to code-switch was valuable in building trust with their parents.

## **Data Collection**

Data was collected through an initial demographic questionnaire, group work questionnaires, multiple semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journals. The purpose of data collection is to elicit from the students a description of their process of identity construction as they integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Because the result of a grounded theory study is the “construct[ion] of a theory ‘grounded’ in data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1), grounded theory researchers carefully consider the data collection and analysis process. Analysis begins with the first collection of data and continues throughout the study. I used Analytic memos to record the analysis process beginning with the first collection of data. Key to data collection is the idea of triangulation where “researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories to provide corroborating evidence. . . from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). I used a variety of sources as well as comparative analysis to achieve triangulation in this study.

### **Interviews**

The qualitative interview is a tool used to obtain detailed descriptions of the lived experiences that participants have had with a phenomenon (Kvale, 1996; Moustakas, 1994; Weiss, 1994). Prior to conducting the interviews, I ensured that all ethical considerations such as Liberty University IRB, district, and site approvals, informed consent and assent, and confidentiality procedures were in place. These considerations are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest semi-structured interviews for grounded theory studies. I conducted both individual interviews and group interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to share more freely which produces richer data. Each interview

session was followed by analysis using the grounded theory procedures explained in the data analysis section of this chapter. After analysis of initial interviews, data was used for follow-up interviews, constant comparison, and theoretical sampling until concept saturation was achieved (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

During the first interview session, I began with a social conversation to relax the participants as suggested by Moustakas (1994). Although the purpose for the social conversation was to relax the participants, I recorded and transcribed this part of the interview for analysis of significant data. Topics for the opening conversation were based on the students' response to the demographic questionnaire question: What do you like to do in your spare time? Following the social conversation, I began the interview. I focused on two or three questions per session to allow the students to fully develop their responses without tiring. Guiding questions are listed in Table 1. See Appendix I for the complete list of individual interview questions and Appendix J for group interview questions.

Table 1

*Interview Guide*

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**Questions**

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1. Please describe a typical a day in Spanish immersion class.
2. How is middle school immersion different from elementary immersion?
3. How is your immersion Spanish class different from your other classes?
4. What would you say to parents who are considering enrolling their child in Spanish immersion classes?

5. Please describe the physical layout of your Spanish immersion classes. Where do you sit in each classroom? How was your seat determined? How do you feel about the physical layout of the classroom?
  6. Think for a moment about your Spanish immersion lessons. Please describe one of your favorites for me.
  7. Please describe a lesson that you did not like in your Spanish immersion class.
  8. Please describe one of your group activities where you spoke Spanish.
  9. Please describe a typical day in one of your English language classes.
  10. Please describe the physical layout of your favorite class. Where do you sit in that classroom? How was your seat determined? How do you feel about the physical layout of the classroom?
  11. Think for a moment about your English language class lessons. Please describe one of your favorites.
  12. Please describe a lesson that you did not like.
  13. Has being in an immersion class created any conflict for you? If so, please tell me about it.
  14. How would you describe yourself?
  15. Tell me about a time when you used Spanish outside of the classroom.
  16. Tell me about a time when you could have used Spanish but chose not to.
  17. How has immersion changed you?
  18. What does it mean to be bilingual?
-

The Interview Guide is the final list of interview questions. The questions were modified after the first set of interviews because they were worded in a manner that did not always elicit thick descriptions. The initial set of questions served as a pilot. A change in wording was necessary and the result was the list of questions on the Interview Guide.

Question one was designed to elicit students' perceptions of the language-learning environment which might have led to the revelation of contextual or intervening conditions that caused conflict. Block (2007) and Hutala and Lehti-Eklund (2010) stated that identity is most unstable in a second language learning environment. Students' description of a typical day in a Spanish immersion class provided ideas for coding and further theoretical sampling relative to the contextual or intervening conditions that caused language identity conflicts and relative to the strategies the students developed to resolve the language identity conflicts.

Jones et al. (2012) as well as Torres et al. (2009) posited that schools present a social context where multiple identities are constructed and integrated under the constraints of a balance of power that is socially constructed. Questions seven and twelve were designed to dig into students' perceptions of the balance of power within the physical layout of the classroom. Students' responses to these questions indicated whether they perceived themselves to be marginalized physically which could indicate a contextual or intervening condition that causes a language identity conflict. Responses also provided an indication of the students' perception of locus of control within the classroom. According to Varelas et al. (2013) locus of control reveals the lens through which an individual perceives his or her identity. For those who perceive identity as the lens through which we position ourselves within a group, the locus of control is internal. However, for those who perceive identity as the lens through which others perceive our position within a group, the locus of control becomes external. As identity is developed, locus of

control fluctuates and can be further complicated by marginalization, which can occur in the academic setting. For the students in this study, locus of control proved to be an intervening condition that caused conflict between their bilingual identity and their overall identity.

According to Rindal (2010) and Roy and Galiev (2011) language and identity are linked, and questions seven and twelve allow the students to share experiences they have had when using each of their languages in school. Additionally, the concept of language as a tool for making meaning and developing identity within social contexts appears regularly in language immersion research (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). Reflecting on their language use experiences is a necessary step in the process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity; therefore, these questions were integral in the development of the model that answers the central research question.

The intersection of social identities and personal identities causes conflict. Adolescents must navigate their multiple identities within sociocultural contexts along with an emerging awareness of the influence of power and privilege (Jones et al., 2012). The purpose of questions 17 and 18 was to gain an understanding of students' perceptions of any conflicts that have arisen because of their enrollment in the immersion class, which is the focus of sub question 2. The students' responses to questions 17 and 18 were important for understanding where students place the locus of control. Student responses to questions 16, 17, and 18 also indicated the students' use of "making space" as a coping technique to counteract marginalization which answers sub-question 3 (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Fife et al., 2011).

The purpose of questions 10, 23, and 24 was to hear the students' perception of their language use. Identity construction occurs in social environments; however, the second language environment is a place where identity is most unstable (Block, 2007; Rajadurai, 2010). Rindal

(2010) stated that identity is developed through social interaction, and language choices are acts of language identity development. As the students described their use of Spanish, they were given the opportunity to conceptualize themselves as speakers of both languages. Craig et al. (2009) suggested that African American students use code-switching as a coping strategy. As the students reflected on their responses to questions 17, 25, and 26 they began to answer sub question 3.

Bilingualism is a socially-defined concept, and since identity is constructed within social concepts, the purpose of question 26 was to allow the students to conceptualize the phenomenon of bilingualism (Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011). Their process of conceptualizing their bilingual identity led to the development of the model that answers the central research question. Question 24 indicated that students used code-switching with their second language. Responses to question 24 also indicated that the students view their second language as social capital (Roy & Galiev, 2011).

### **Questionnaires**

I used a demographic questionnaire to gain demographic information about the participants to ensure that all participants were African American, foreign language immersion students in grades 6 through 8 living in homes where English is the only language spoken. Additionally, the demographic questionnaire provided contact information that I used to set up the interviews. The demographic questionnaire questions are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

#### *Demographic Questionnaire*

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### **Questions to be completed by the student**

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Name:

Grade:

What is your gender?

How old are you?

What is your race or ethnicity?

Who do you live with?

What language(s) are spoken in your home?

What school do you attend?

List your daily class schedule. Include times if possible.

What do you like to do in your free time?

**Questions to be completed by the parent/guardians**

Name:

Home Phone:

Mobile Phone:

Email address:

What is your preferred method of contact?

How would you describe your child's experience in the immersion setting?

Why did you choose the immersion setting for your child?

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Questionnaires provide data that can be used for comparative analysis and theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The questions in the *Spanish Class Group Work Questionnaire* were designed to help me understand student experiences of language use and

group participation. According to Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development, students in this study in the industry versus inferiority developmental stage or the identity crisis developmental stage. The task that children in the industry versus inferiority stage are faced with is learning to work in collaboration with others. Those who feel competent in their contributions exhibit industry, and those who do not value their contributions exhibit inferiority (Erikson, 1963; Kowaz & Marcia, 1991).

The questions on the *English Class Group Work Questionnaire* were crafted to gauge student perceptions of their ability to work collaboratively. According to Tedick and Cammarata (2012) language is a tool for negotiating identity in social contexts; therefore, the students' perception of their ability to work in groups using their heritage language as well as their second language impacts their identity construction. As the students reflected on their experiences, the answers to Sub question 2 and Sub question 3 became clear. The responses to both group work questionnaires were used for comparative analysis and triangulation with interviews, focus groups, and journals during data analysis. The purpose of both *Group Work Questionnaires* was to encourage the students to reflect on their experiences during group activities. Analysis of the students' descriptions revealed the conflicts between the students' bilingual identity and their overall identity. Further analysis revealed the existence of contextual and intervening conditions that caused the students to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity.

The questions in Table 3 relate to participants working in groups during Spanish class.

Table 3

*Spanish Class Group Work Questionnaire*

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**Questions**

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1. How do you decide whether you will speak Spanish or English when working in groups?

2. How was your participation when using Spanish during group work?

What did you contribute?

3. How did you feel about your contribution to the group product when using Spanish? Please explain why you felt this way.

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The questions in Table 4 relate to participants working in groups during classes conducted in both Spanish and English.

Table 4

*English Class Group Work Questionnaire Questions*

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**Questions**

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1. How do you decide whether you will use English or Spanish when working in groups?

2. How was your participation in groups? What did you contribute?

3. How do you feel about your contribution to the group product? Please explain why you feel this way.

---

## Journals

Current language acquisition research studies use participants' narrative stories, described as language learning narratives as a methodology in studies about identity construction in the language acquisition environment (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010). The reflective nature of the autobiographical narrative makes it a useful method for participants to actively construct their linguistic identity (Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010). The students in this study received journals from the researcher. They used the journals to respond to topics that encouraged reflection on their language use and experiences in the immersion class. They had the option of responding in English or Spanish. The students also had the option to create visual stories in their journals as a means of explaining their process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Table 5 lists sample journal topics. See Appendix K for the complete list of journal topics.

Table 5

### *Journal Prompts*

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#### Journal Topics for Students

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1. An autobiography is a story a person writes about himself or herself. It can cover an entire lifetime or a small segment of a life. Write an autobiography of your school experiences. You may use words and/or pictures and you may write in either English or Spanish or any combination of the languages.
2. What do you think school is like for students who are not in the immersion program?

3. Describe the day you realized that Spanish immersion classes were different from the other classes at your school. How did you feel about being in the Spanish immersion class? How do you feel about being in it now?
  4. What do you think your life will be like in the future? Describe your future self. You can use any mode you like. You can write a poem, story, or essay. You can draw a picture. You can free write or use a diagram or any other form of representation you are would like to use.
- 

Prompts one, three, and four are grounded in Block (2007) and Hutala and Lehti-Eklund's (2010) suggestion that narrative is the primary method of discovery for researchers seeking to discover participants' identity construction processes in language acquisition contexts.

Prompts two and three are grounded in Block (2007) and Hutala and Lehti-Eklund's (2010) research that suggests that identity is most unstable in the language acquisition environment. Responses in the students' journals provided an indication of their identity integration process and suggested further theoretical sampling, which resulted in follow-up interviews.

### **Observations**

The connection between language and identity is well documented (Jeon, 2010; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010; Rindal, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011). Language is an expression of identity; it is a means of expressing identity (Gu, 2010). I used 4 observations and multiple interview transcripts to note language choices in academic and social environments. The purpose of the observations was to identify the social contexts around the participants' language choices. The observations involved noting the location or social situation and the language used

by the participants. The language options were Spanish, English, or African American English. See Appendix L for the observation data table.

### **Data Analysis**

Grounded theory analysis should begin with the initial collection of data, transcription of interviews and videos, and a reading without analysis in order to enter “vicariously into the life of the participants” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 86). I used Rev.com transcription service to transcribe all interviews. See Appendix M for the Rev.com confidentiality agreement and Appendix N for a sample transcript. The process of data collection and analysis is ongoing and reciprocal. Meticulous record keeping is a must for grounded theory research. I prefer working with print data and colors. I managed the print documents with binders and colored ink for coding. I used the three-column format suggested by Saldaña (2013) so that I could practice “preliminary jotting” of my first impressions of key words and phrases that led to final codes (p. 20). The three-column format includes a column for the raw data, a column for preliminary jottings (codes), and a column for final codes. As I developed categories that synthesized the data I continued to print updated data and placed them into new binders. Although the number of binders increased, I easily managed the critical thinking and analysis of text.

Data analysis is a repetitive cycle of coding and memo writing. I employed memo writing throughout data collection and analysis. Memo writing is an integral part of data analysis in grounded theory research because in memos the researcher shares the analytical thought processes, thereby moving the analytical process forward (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). Analytical memos reveal researcher bias, assumptions, and preconceptions as well as gaps in the data or data saturation (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). The most effective analytic memos have the date and a conceptual

heading so that the researcher can quickly refer to them as analysis develops or during coding of memos (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). See Appendix O for a sample analytic memo.

Data analysis involves thinking about the data and coming up with codes that indicate the researcher's interpretation of the participant's intended meaning. Corbin and Strauss (2015) offer strategies to help novice researchers with the analytical process. Asking questions, identifying time markers, and recognizing or using metaphors and similes are the strategies that were used for this study.

Asking questions helps the researcher to “probe data, think outside the box, and break through writer's block” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 90). Sensitizing questions “help researchers become more sensitive to possible meanings” while theoretical questions “help researchers see process and variation and make connections between concepts” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 92). Practical questions “provide direction for theoretical sampling and help with development of the structure of theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 93). Questioning a text is a skill that I have taught my students to use in order to fully understand an author's explicit and implicit meanings. The process of asking questions was an ideal springboard to analysis for me because I used the questions to write beginning memos, which were further developed as I became more comfortable with the data and the analytical process.

Words that indicate time often indicate a “shift in perceptions, in thoughts, in events, or interpretations of events” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 100). I focused on words such as *when*, *after*, *since*, *before*, and *if*, because they indicated conditions, contexts, and processes that impacted the participants' perceptions of their experiences. Considering words that indicate time provided direction for theoretical sampling as well.

Both participants and researchers can use metaphors to “help them make a statement ... or create images in our minds” that delineate the meaning of an experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, pp. 100-101). Recognizing and interpreting metaphors is especially important for studies involving African American participants since African Americans tend to use similes and metaphors in their speech and narratives. I drew on my professional experience as an English teacher to recognize, interpret, and use metaphors during data analysis.

Constant comparison is “the act of taking one piece of datum and examining it against another piece of datum both within and between documents” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 93) in order to “help define implicit meanings” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 21). Making constant comparisons allows the researcher to identify patterns of behavior. Additionally, constant comparisons suggest directions for theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Beginning researchers can use constant comparisons to assist with moving from descriptive codes to abstract codes and to examine assumptions and biases on their part and on the part of participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I used constant comparisons throughout the data analysis process.

Ultimately, coding is a system of analysis. A code can be any word or phrase that “symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute” of the data (Saldaña, 2013, p.3). The process of coding involves phases of analytically questioning the data and developing symbolic statements that describe what the data is about or how it is sorted (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). Codes allow researchers to organize data and identify patterns that lead to categories that researchers can use to further analyze connections and even re-code where appropriate (Saldaña, 2013). I used coding cycles as suggested by Saldaña (2013). I began by using open coding (Appendix P) suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2015) also known as initial coding (Saldaña, 2013), which is geared toward

exploring the data, and then I used a second cycle of focused coding so that initial codes could be reorganized in preparation for developing categories, themes, and concepts and finally, I used theoretical coding of the core category (Saldaña, 2013).

### **First Cycle Coding Strategies**

Initial coding involves breaking down the data, examining it, and comparing it with other data in order to become immersed in the data and to identify theoretical ideas and patterns (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). During this cycle of coding I looked for patterns using the analysis techniques mentioned above. I then organized the coded patterns into categories. I followed Saldaña's (2013) suggestion of setting parameters for inclusion into each category. I coded as a "splitter – one who splits the data into smaller codable moments" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 23). Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Charmaz (2014) suggest breaking the transcripts into natural breaks because doing so allows for more trustworthy analysis and reduces researcher intrusion. Additionally, I conducted line-by-line analysis and used code words that expressed action in order to focus on the actions rather than on types of people (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). I selected several of Saldaña's (2013) approaches to coding that served as a pool from which I pulled as appropriate during the first cycle of coding.

**Attribute coding.** Attribute coding provides a demographic overview of the data and is appropriate for studies with multiple participants, sites, and data forms (Saldaña, 2013). I employed this method of coding to all demographic data as it helped me with organizing in preparation for future coding.

**In vivo coding.** In Vivo coding is suggested for beginners and for studies that "prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). During In Vivo coding, researchers use participants' exact words as codes (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013).

Because In Vivo codes use the participant's words, they accurately reflect the participant's meanings and can provide symbols, metaphors, and similes that researchers can further analyze throughout the study (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). I used In Vivo coding with all interview transcripts because the participants in this study have marginalized voices, and In Vivo coding allowed their voices to be heard (Saldaña, 2013).

**Process coding.** Process coding is an approach that uses gerunds to express actions in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Gerunds are verb forms that end with *-ing* but function as nouns. Using gerunds as codes to express action allowed me to focus on the action while developing conceptual ideas. According to Saldaña (2013), process coding is best for “studies that search for ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems” such as those inherent in psychological concepts like identity (p. 96). I used process coding during the open coding phase for data related to identity. My preliminary codes and In Vivo codes alerted me to data that was appropriate for process coding.

**Emotions coding.** Emotions coding is appropriate for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences because it “provides insight into the participants’ worldviews and life conditions” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 106). Saldaña (2013) defines an emotion as “a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act” (p. 105). Both Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Saldaña (2013) suggest coding for emotions as an open coding approach. The participants in this study conveyed emotions during interviews and in their journals, so I used emotions coding as an approach when warranted.

**Narrative coding.** Narrative coding refers to the coding of literary conventions in stories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña (2013) suggests that narrative coding is appropriate for studies of identity development. I looked for the positions of subjects and other

characters in the stories, motifs, and other thematic elements in the participants' stories. I drew on my professional knowledge as an English teacher but used comparative analysis to identify any researcher interference in the data. I used narrative coding specifically with data pertaining to locus of control and agency.

### **Second Cycle Coding Methods**

Once initial or open coding is completed it is important to organize codes before moving on with the second cycle or axial coding (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Saldaña, 2013). Charmaz (2014) calls this organizing process focused coding. Focused coding “involves attending to how [my] initial codes account for [my] data” and look[ing] for what these codes imply as well as what they reveal” in order to validate my initial codes and to “advance the theoretical direction” of my analysis (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 138 & 140). Focused coding requires the researcher to check codes for frequency and significance and use the results to organize codes into categories (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Focused coding is a process used to “synthesize, analyze and conceptualize larger segments of data” by comparing initial codes with the data resulting in a stronger “sense of direction . . . and clarifie[d] theoretical centrality” of ideas (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 138 & 140). Two collateral benefits of focused coding are the emergence of ideas that lead to theoretical sampling and the opportunity for researchers to check their preconceptions about a topic (Charmaz, 2014).

Saldaña (2013) suggests code mapping, code landscaping, and theming as methods for organizing codes during second cycle or axial coding. The process of code mapping begins with listing all codes and then categorizing them with new labels. The researcher then further synthesizes the data and re-categorizes the categories with new labels until reaching approximately three major categories all the while documenting the analytic process in memos.

Code mapping “serves as part of the auditing process for a research study” because it “documents how lists get categorized, recategorized and conceptualized” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 198). See Appendix R for complete list of codes.

### **Theoretical Coding**

Theoretical coding, also known as conceptual coding is the final process of theory development. During this stage, the researcher identifies the central or core category that explains the research topic and integrates all categories and sub-categories (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013). The core concept must be broad enough to represent all participants and abstract enough to be used in future studies that will further develop the theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The ultimate goal of grounded theory research is theory development. In layman’s terms, a theory explains why things happen and how individuals act and interact under changing conditions while maintaining focus on their desired outcome or goal (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For researchers, a theory is a statement used to describe the relationship between concepts that are abstract (Charmaz, 2014). The purpose for theories is to “predict and control action through an if-then logic; explain how and/or why something happens by stating its cause(s); and provide insights and guidance for improving social life” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 250). Once formed, theories contain levels of concepts that have been developed with regard to their properties and dimensions and then formed into statements that convey the relationship between said concepts. Theories must be grounded in the data; therefore, Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest writing conceptual memos that produce a summary of the research findings. Conceptual memos that produce main ideas using category codes and “explanations of relationships between the categories to each other and to the core category” could serve as a blueprint for the final

report or dissertation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 192). See Appendix Q for a sample conceptual memo.

As a novice researcher, I employed the integration strategies suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2015) to ensure theoretical saturation which occurs when no new concepts are coming from theoretical sampling. However, Both Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Charmaz (2014) warn that theoretical saturation involves full development of the concepts and their variations; therefore, researchers should verify saturation through self-assessment. While writing my conceptual memos I used integrative diagrams to force myself to think about the data at the category level while considering the logic of the relationships between and among categories. I also reviewed for internal consistency by ensuring that all properties and dimensions of the core category were defined and grounded in the data. I removed superfluous concepts and validated the theory by conducting comparative analysis of the theoretical scheme with the data. I also performed member checks by explaining the theoretical scheme to the participants and asking them for comments on how well the theory fits their experiences.

### **Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research engages in describing the multiple realities of a phenomenon. Because the realities are constructed by individual perceptions of experiences, it is important to establish trustworthiness for qualitative studies. Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is similar to validity in a quantitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); it adds value to the study. The criteria for trustworthiness are credibility dependability, transferability, and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **Credibility**

Credibility is similar to validity in a quantitative study. It is the amount of confidence other scholars can have in the truth of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order for a study to be credible it must be able to withstand replication. I increased credibility with prolonged engagement with the participants, multiple interviews with member checks after transcription, triangulation, and constant comparisons of different data forms. I used questionnaire data, interview transcripts, and journals for triangulation. I wrote both analytic memos and a researcher journal delineating my analytic thought processes and reflecting on my potential biases, assumptions, and preconceptions in order to increase credibility. Code mapping of memos added to credibility because they served as part of the “auditing process for a research study” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 198).

## **Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability is similar to reliability in a quantitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It means that if the study were repeated under the same conditions the results would be the same. I increased dependability by using precise descriptions of research methods and procedures. I also included peer audits and credentialed design expert reviews of the methods and procedures. Additionally, I kept meticulous records in the form of a researcher journal and analytic memos.

In a qualitative study, confirmability is similar to objectivity in a quantitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability was established through the researcher journal and analytic memos that delineate my thought processes and personal relationships to the data. I used quotes from the data to support my choice of codes to further establish confirmability. Member checks increased confirmability among the participants. Expert review of my codes and categories increased trustworthiness.

## **Transferability**

Transferability means the findings in this study have relevance in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is especially important for this study because of the many constructs involved -- African American identity, adolescent identity, and second language acquisition. In order to increase transferability of this study I used thick and rich descriptions as well as constant comparisons. Analytic memos also enhanced transferability because they focused on how the analysis developed (Charmaz, 2014).

## **Ethical Considerations**

I increased confidentiality by securing all data according to Liberty University IRB standards. This includes storing data in password-protected folders on a password-protected computer. Individual files had an additional password for access. Print documents were stored in a locked cabinet. I was the only person to handle data in raw form. I adhered to state and local confidentiality guidelines. I used pseudonyms for the sites and for each participant. I had no positional influence over participants. Two weeks after data collection ceased, I held a debriefing group meeting to ensure a healthy break in the relationships that was formed between the students and me.

## **Summary**

Research methods delineate the design and procedures of a given study. A study may be quantitative or qualitative in nature. I have chosen to conduct qualitative research because I am attempting to explore the identity development experiences of African American adolescents. Such experiences are not quantifiable. Grounded theory is best for this study because I wanted to create a model of the process that African American students use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity during. I selected Charmaz's (2014) social constructivist

approach to grounded theory since it correlates with my social constructivist research paradigm in its emphasis on diverse worlds and multiple realities.

The central research question of this study asked how African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The participants were 11 African American students between the ages of 9 and 14 years who live in homes with African American parent(s) where only English is spoken to limit the influence of additional heritage issues which could affect identity development. The study was conducted according to grounded theory procedures to include theoretical sampling, continuous cycles of data collection and analysis, multiple cycles of coding, and finally the development of a theoretical model. Throughout the study, I engaged in journal and memo writing to enhance trustworthiness. No data was collected until Institutional Review Board approval had been granted from both Liberty University and the research site. Confidentiality was paramount throughout the study and measures were taken to secure raw data. Additionally, pseudonyms were used to increase confidentiality.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

The focus of this grounded theory study is the process that bilingual African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Researchers have produced a strong body of literature concerning African American identity development (Bamberg et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2012; Matthews et al., 2014; Whaley, 2016) and the identity development processes which occur while acquiring a second language (Block, 2007; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Xue & Han, 2014). However, there is a gap in the literature explaining how bilingual African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

The central research question for this study was: How do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity? The central question was designed to derive a model explaining the process bilingual African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The three sub questions for this study were: (a) What conflicts between bilingual identity and overall identity surface as African American adolescents reflect on their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment? (b) What contextual or intervening conditions in a foreign language immersion environment cause African American adolescents to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity? (c) What strategies do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment develop to reconcile any conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity?

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section is a brief introductory description of each participant. The next section delineates the results of the study. In the results

section I discuss the development of themes and answer the research questions. In the final section I provide a summary of findings for this study.

## **Participants**

### **Description of Participants ( $n = 9$ ) from I. I. Stevens Middle School**

I. I. Stevens Middle School is located next to an elementary school and within walking distance of a public library. The school district does not provide after school care for middle school children, so many students walk to the library to wait for their parents after school. The school has a global focus, and students explore different regions of the world each month during their home room period. I. I. Stevens Middle School serves immersion students who completed the K-5 immersion program. Students take an upper level Spanish class in Spanish and their remaining courses in English.

**Pablo.** Pablo is 12 years old and in sixth grade. He lives with his mother and father but also has a step-sister who lives in another city with her father. She is in Spanish immersion as well. According to Pablo, they “share a mother.” He enjoys playing games on his phone and sports. Like other students, Pablo entered the Spanish immersion class in kindergarten and has continued into middle school. Before meeting with Pablo, I spoke with his mother to confirm the logistics of interviews. During our conversation, she informed me that she had attempted to supplement Pablo’s English reading and grammar at home because she feared he might fall behind in English. However, Pablo’s immersion teachers asked her to discontinue the English lessons because they were causing confusion for him. He was having difficulty distinguishing between the phonetic sounds of English and Spanish letters at school and he was becoming frustrated with his Spanish lessons. Pablo’s mother stated that she chose immersion for Pablo

because her daughter's experience had been positive, and because she believes the second language would give Pablo an advantage in the job market.

Pablo is a quiet and reserved young man who is eager to please. During interviews Pablo seldom looked up and constantly rubbed his eyes and held his head in his hands. After spending some time with him I began to suspect that he may have some learning difficulties because his oral and written responses often indicated that he did not understand what he was being asked. Also, Pablo told me that for him "education means forgetting what you learned last year and learning something bigger," and that is why school was difficult for him. It is apparent that he does not understand how learning builds upon previous learning. On several occasions, Pablo reminded me that he has what he calls "stage fright," meaning, he becomes anxious when required to read or speak aloud in class. He said it did not matter whether he was in an English class or a Spanish class but that he was "embarrassed because people know [he doesn't] speak correctly or read correctly." Pablo did not demonstrate any markers of African American English during our interviews or during my observations. It was difficult to get information from Pablo; however, with effort, patience, and multiple interviews I successfully gathered a detailed description of his experiences, feelings, and processes.

Pablo demonstrated some pathological adolescent identity crisis behaviors during our time together. For example, he stated that he is often "unhappy inside but pretend(s) to be happy outside" and that he "prefers to forget the past ... including last year." He reported that he has few friends, and he only talks to the "kids in Spanish class." When asked what he was most proud of, Pablo could not think of anything. When I asked him what he thought his parents were most proud of him for he said that they were probably not proud of him.

**Zanita.** Zanita is 11 years old and in sixth grade. She enjoys playing outside with her friends and participating in sports. Zanita's parents are divorced, and she lives with her mother. Her father lives in another state, and Zanita visits often, especially during the summer. According to Zanita, her father lives in a state with a large population of Hispanics, and when she visits she is often required to demonstrate her Spanish fluency with his co-workers and friends. In addition to enjoying sports and outdoor activities. Zanita is an avid reader. She reported that she has read multiple books in both English and Spanish.

Zanita is an active, high-strung young lady who is eager to please. During interviews, she responded to my questions confidently and seldom needed prompting to provide detailed accounts of her experiences. At the end of each interview I asked the participants if they had any questions for me. Zanita always took the opportunity to connect with me by asking me questions about my family and about the research study. She was always happy to see me and would give me a hug before leaving.

Zanita demonstrated some instability in her identity as it relates to language. She claims to speak multiple languages including Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic; however, upon further investigation it became apparent that the only foreign language that she is fluent in is Spanish. If Zanita, has been exposed to a foreign language, she claims to speak it. Additionally, during observations I noticed that Zanita's behaviors were sometimes exaggerated for attention, perhaps because she felt unsure of herself. When asked to describe herself, Zanita responded with "Funny, smart, athletic, of course, and I know how to talk Spanish and Japanese."

During our interviews, Zanita used Mainstream American English for the most part, but occasionally she used an African American English marker in her responses. However, during observations of Zanita in a social setting with both immersion and non-immersion students I

recorded several markers of African American English as she communicated with her African American peers. She did not communicate in Spanish during my observations.

*Ventura.* Ventura is 11 years old and in sixth grade. She enjoys gymnastics, playing on her phone, and spending time with friends. She lives with her mother and one older sibling who is not in immersion. Throughout the study, Ventura was bubbling with pride at her extracurricular accomplishments and often talked about how hard she worked to do her best.

Ventura was always energetic and excited when it was time for our interviews. She responded to my questions openly and confidently. She provided lots of detail and seldom needed prompting to provide a thick description of her experiences. Initially, I had the impression that Ventura was providing answers that she thought I might be searching for; however, as she became more comfortable, she seemed to provide more sincere responses.

Ventura was one of the few participants who was eager to speak to me using Spanish. Her accent is native and she communicates naturally and fluently. She told me that she thinks in Spanish, so there's no need for translation. Ventura did not present any markers of African American English during our interviews.

*Natalia.* Natalia is 12 years old and in sixth grade. She enjoys listening to music, drawing, and playing sports. She lives with her mother and three younger siblings who are also in the immersion program. Unfortunately, Natalia's siblings are not participants because their principal did not agree to become a site for this study.

My first impression of Natalia is that she is confident but slow to warm up to strangers. During our first interview, she provided basic responses to my questions and required significant prompting to share thick descriptions of her experiences. However, after the third meeting, Natalia was comfortable with me and began sharing detailed descriptions without prompting.

Although she presented herself as eager to please, I found her responses to be sincere. Natalia did not present any markers of African American English during interviews; however, she did use African American English when socializing with African American peers.

**Henriqua.** Henriqua is 13 years old and in eighth grade. She enjoys dance, gymnastics, talking to friends, and listening to music. Henriqua lives with her parents, her aunt, and two younger siblings who are also immersion students. Unfortunately, her siblings are not participants because their principal did not agree to become a site for the study.

Henriqua is a withdrawn, quiet, shy young lady who doesn't trust easily. She was quite soft-spoken during our interviews and often asked for reassurance that her responses would be kept confidential. Although her initial responses to my questions were vague, she later became comfortable with me and began providing detailed descriptions of her feelings and experiences. She seemed to be open and honest about her feelings once she felt secure sharing them.

Henriqua demonstrated evidence of grappling with the identity versus role confusion stage of the identity crisis because she is unsure about a future career. According to Erikson (1963), the identity crisis is resolved when an adolescent decides on a future career. I tried to encourage Henriqua by telling her that she is still young, and she has time to decide on a career. However, she said that her mother is distressed and tells her that it is a bad thing for her to be unsure at this point. It appears that Henriqua's indecisiveness is a point of conflict between her and her mother and she feels badly about it.

**Beatrisa.** Beatrisa is 13 years old and in eighth grade. She enjoys reading, cooking, and participating in school clubs. One of the extracurricular activities that she is most proud of is her involvement with a school-sponsored academic competition conducted in Spanish. She lives with her mother and grandmother. Beatrisa recently took a DNA test through *Ancestry.com* and

discovered that she has Latina ancestry in her DNA. Learning about her ancestry has caused Beatrisa to embrace her bilingualism, and she reported that she wants to learn even more about the language and culture now that she knows that she has Latina ancestry as part of her genetic background.

Beatrisa is a confident and mature young lady. She greeted me with a professional handshake, made eye contact throughout our interviews, and responded to my questions after pausing a moment to reflect. Initially, I felt that Beatrisa provided responses that she thought I might be looking for; however, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview she seemed to be responding sincerely and providing detailed descriptions of her feelings and experiences with little to no prompting. Although she never exhibited any symptoms during our time together, Beatrisa informed me that she has been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. Her clinical anxiety could be evidence that she is struggling with the identity versus role confusion stage of the identity crisis. Beatrisa did not present any markers of African American English during interview or my observations.

*Elvita.* Elvita is 13 years old and in eighth grade. She enjoys playing video games, photography, and drawing. She lives with her parents and one sibling. Elvita is a confident, outgoing, and enthusiastic young lady. She seemed to enjoy our interview sessions and would always ask to schedule our next session before leaving. Elvita gave thick, rich descriptions of her emotions and experiences, though at times she seemed to ramble.

Elvita's favorite part about being in immersion is learning about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries. She stated that learning the culture helps make learning the language more realistic because she better understands why certain words are acceptable and others might not be when they have the same translation into English. Elvita prefers to read a book in Spanish when

given the choice because she wants to practice whenever she can. Like the other students, she fears forgetting her Spanish.

**Inez.** Inez is 13 years old and in eighth grade. She lives with her parents, paternal grandmother, and a paternal aunt. She enjoys playing video games and spending time with friends. Inez is quite withdrawn and soft-spoken. She describes herself as very shy; however, she provided candid responses to my questions with some additional prompting.

Although Inez has not settled on a future career, she is confident that she will have a happy and successful life. Her lack of career choice has not precipitated an identity crisis thus far. She describes herself as a “good person” and one who “follows the rules” and is proud to report that she has never been disciplined for misbehaving at school. Inez is aware of the socio-political climate where African Americans may experience racism. She stated that her parents talk to her a lot about being African American and having to work extra hard to get ahead in the world. When asked if such advice frightened her at all, she responded that it did not because she knows her parents have her best interest in mind and they will help her. Inez did not include her bilingual identity in her self-description, nor did she include her racial identity. She described herself as a shy girl who is an excellent student and good friend.

**Felipita.** Felipita is 13 years old and in eighth grade. She lives with her mother. She enjoys a variety of music and art as well as spending time with family and friends. Felipita is a confident and intellectual young lady. During interviews, she made eye contact with me and answered all questions after a brief pause indicating that perhaps she was thinking deeply about her response. Felipita intends to remain in the immersion program until graduation from high school because she believes that the immersion experience has been a positive one. During one of the interviews, I asked Felipita what advice she would give to parents who are thinking of

enrolling their child in immersion, and her suggestion was to supplement the child's English learning at home. I found this significant because Pablo's mother mentioned that supplementing his English reading and grammar had a negative impact on his learning.

Felipita is not sure what career path she will choose but she stated that she loves animals and will probably do something in the veterinary field. She also enjoys spending time with her younger nieces and cousins so she is considering something in the child care field. According to Felipita, whatever she chooses she wants to be the best, so she's taking her time to make up her mind.

### **Description of Participants from Greenleaf Preparatory Academy ( $n = 2$ )**

Greenleaf Preparatory Academy is a middle school that operates on a year-round schedule meaning students receive 45 days of instruction followed by 15 days of intercession, enrichment, or vacation throughout the year. Students at Greenleaf Preparatory Academy are exposed to foreign language and global communications experiences each month during homeroom. Greenleaf Preparatory Academy serves students who have completed an elementary immersion program. Immersion students take an upper level Spanish class in Spanish and all other classes in English. The principal stated that she has plans in place to add a social studies class to be taught in the foreign language but has not been able to implement it because of budget constraints.

***Estefania.*** Estefania is 11 years old and in sixth grade. She lives with her parents and three younger siblings who are also in immersion. Unfortunately, her siblings are not participants in the study because their principal declined participation. Estefania enjoys being on the computer and watching videos on YouTube. She hopes one day to make a living doing YouTube videos herself. Her subjects will be gaming and reality shows.

The first word that came to mind when I met Estefania for the first time was “feisty.” She is sweet and respectful but with a rough edge. Although I never experienced any snarky comments or disrespectful behavior from Estefania, she told me that she often gets into trouble at school and at home for what she calls having a smart mouth and rude facial expressions.

Estefania told me that she never wanted to be in the immersion class in elementary school, but that when her parents asked her about middle school she chose to remain in the program. She said she is undecided about whether she will continue learning in Spanish because she finds it hard to keep up and she forgets everything over the summer. She is convinced that immersion students have a more difficult time in school because they are held to a higher standard. She reported that she remembers being scolded for “not taking advantage of such a special opportunity to learn a foreign language” when she had misbehaved in class recently. Estefania presented minimal markers of African American English during our interviews but multiple markers while socializing with her peers.

***Adelina.*** Adelina is 11 years old and in the sixth grade. She lives with her parents and younger siblings who are also in immersion. Unfortunately, her siblings are not participants in the study because their principal declined to have the school included as a site. Adelina enjoys reading, playing games, and watching television shows. She is reserved but open in her communication. She was very curious about the research study and eager to provide detailed descriptions of her experiences and feelings.

Adelina hasn’t decided on a career but she knows she wants to be involved in the fashion industry, maybe as a model or clothing designer. She stated that knowing Spanish will help her in her future career because she wants to be a world-famous designer, and the more languages she speaks the better she can conduct business. She also believes that knowing the cultures of

different countries will help her with her clothing designs. Adelina did not present any markers of African American English during interviews or observations.

## **Results**

Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development is the theoretical framework and the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) is the conceptual framework for this study. The participants are in the age range of Erikson's (1963) identity versus role confusion (identity crisis) stage of development. During the identity crisis stage of development, adolescent identity becomes unstable as identity strengths and weaknesses are revealed through social interaction. Adolescents in the identity crisis stage of development are primarily concerned with what their peers think of them, which can cause them to become intolerant of differences. For the participants in this study, their bilingual identity sets them apart from their non-immersion peers. The language differences between the participants and their mainstream African American peers was a source of conflict. Although Erikson's (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development was used to identify the identity developmental stage of the participants, the focus of the study was the process the participants used to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity; therefore, no identity measures were used to determine the actual stage of identity development.

The Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) is grounded in Erikson's (1963) principles of psychosocial development, but the focus is on the interaction of individuals' socially constructed identity with their core sense of self, or overall identity. Viewed through the lens of the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) the participants' responses revealed that their process of integrating their socially-constructed bilingual identity, with their overall sense of self is fluid and recursive. Chambers and

McCready (2011) stated that African American adolescents create social boundaries to affirm their social or cultural identity through *fictive kinship* as a means of coping with feelings of marginalization. Most of the participants told stories that indicated the creation of such fictive kinships with their peers in immersion. As the participants reflected on their experiences with immersion, patterns emerged that reflected feelings of marginalization and a desire for belonging that was alleviated by forming fictive kinships.

When narrating stories of their experiences using their second language with natives, participants used agency to reflect an instability in their identity integration process. As participants reflected on their language learning, patterns of symbolic capital emerged. Studies of second language acquisition and identity have suggested that the perception of bilingualism is socially constructed and often results in the second language being perceived as symbolic capital.

Identity is perceived as the expression of one's beliefs about the self in relation to one's environment, sociocultural experiences, and social groups. Viewed through the lens of the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) the process of identity development involves integrating multiple dimensions of social and personal identities.

Figure 1 represents the process that African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity during the identity crisis developmental stage.

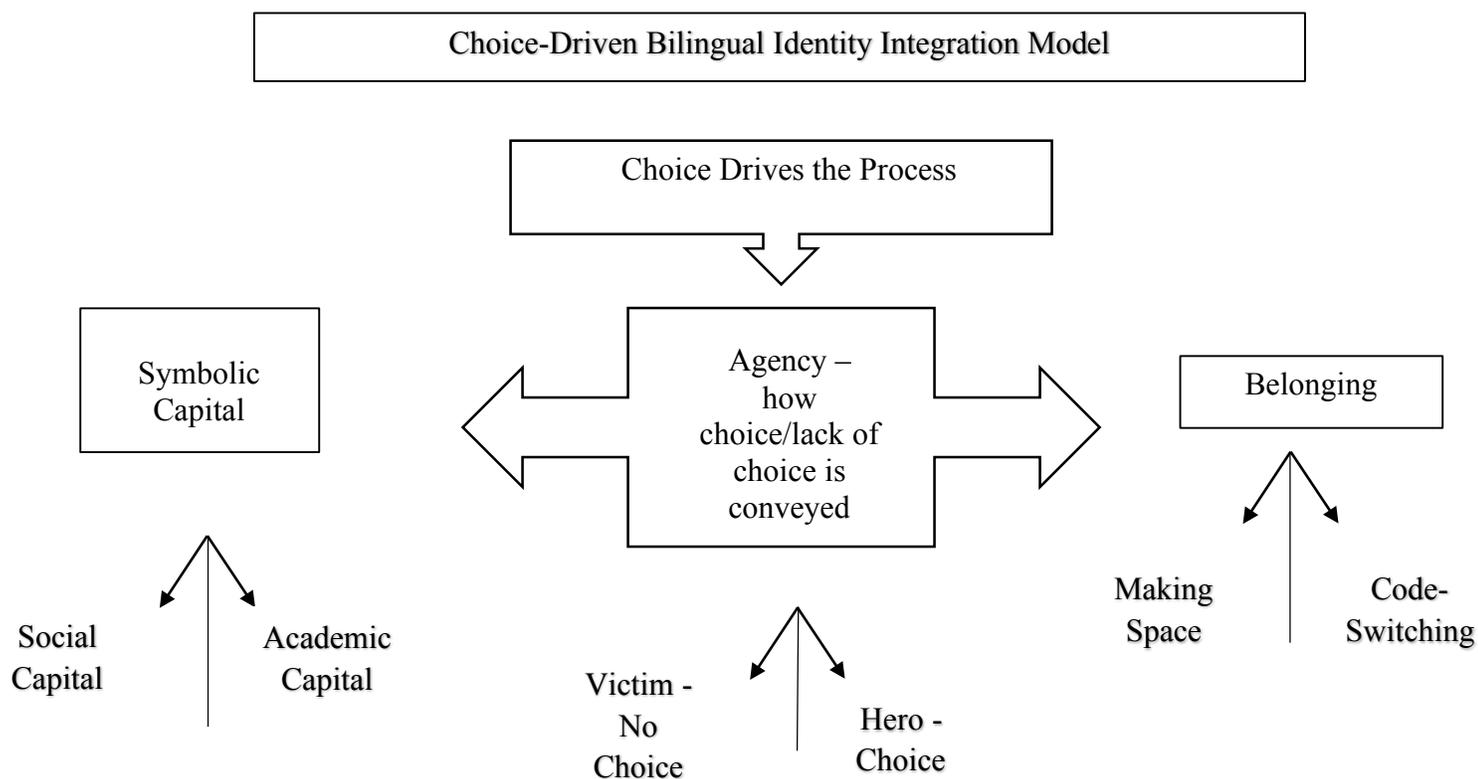


Figure 1. Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model

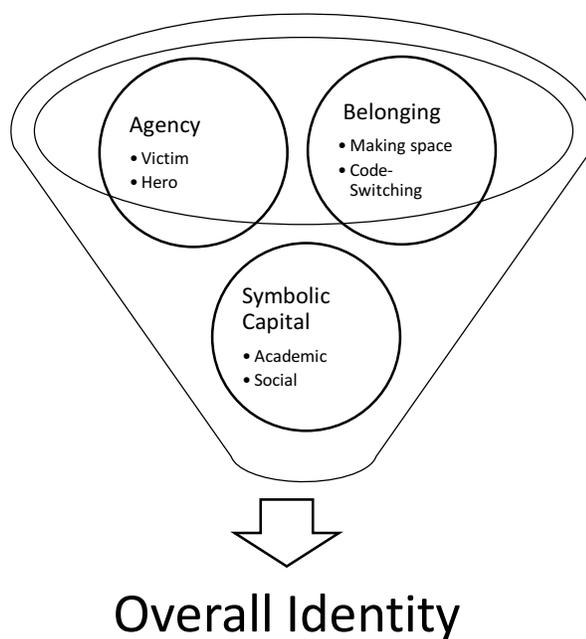
It should be noted that identity development and the identity integration process are fluid and recursive. These processes change with each experience within a sociocultural environment. Additionally, the integration process changes as adolescents choose which dimension of identity to share. When the participants in this study were in an academic setting they perceived their bilingualism as symbolic capital, either academic or social. Although social capital is generally thought to refer to the sociopolitical power struggles of society at large, in the case of these adolescents, the school setting represented their society, so their social capital remains closely related to school experiences. Academic capital for them is distinguished by the value placed on their bilingualism as it sets them apart from their non-immersion peers when competing for college scholarships or future employment. The process of integrating their bilingual identity

with their overall identity in an academic setting involved their choosing to place a symbolic value on their second language as they attempted to maintain a strong sense of self while facing feelings of marginalization. According to Chambers and McCready (2011), African American students may feel marginalized based on any difference from their peers, including excelling academically which might bring about the *Acting White* accusation from their African American peers. Although the participants did not mention the *Acting White* accusation, several were accused of thinking they were better than the others which could have the same effect as being accused of acting White. The process of assigning symbolic capital to their bilingual identity allowed the participants to connect their bilingual identity with their academic identity and avoid a conflict with their overall identity as African American students.

The theme of Belonging is closely related to the theme of symbolic capital because the need for belonging also occurred in school and was precipitated by the policies put in place by program administrators. The participants used the processes of making space to satisfy their need for belonging as they integrated their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Because they were separated from the non-immersion students for the initial six years of their immersion experience, the participants developed a family bond that they used to buffer themselves against the feelings of being different from their non-immersion African American peers. The participants also used the process of code-switching to satisfy their need for belonging. When speaking with their non-immersion African American peers in a social context, away from school, the participants used code-switching from Mainstream American English to African American English as a means of creating a bond with their non-immersion African American, peers outside of school. The processes of making space and code-switching served to alleviate identity conflicts between the participants' bilingual identity and their overall identity.

The participants demonstrated the theme of agency in their narratives as they recounted their experiences using Spanish with native speakers. Low agency means the participants positioned themselves as victims as they shared their stories because they did not perceive a choice in their language use. High agency means the participants positioned themselves as heroes as they shared their stories because they perceived a choice in their language use. The concept of agency is important for identity researchers because of the instability of identity that occurs with language learners use of their target language in the presence of native speakers (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Liu, 2014; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Nance, et al., 2016; Xue & Han, 2014). Although the participants could not maintain full control over their language choices, they were able to resolve conflicts as they integrated their bilingual identity with their overall identity through the process of agency in their narratives.

Figure 2 below represents the themes that emerged as the participants reflected on their experiences in foreign language immersion. The themes of agency, symbolic capital, and belonging appeared most frequently as participants integrated their language identity with their overall sense of self. Figure 2 represents how those themes might appear in a visual representation of the identity integration process. The three themes float around each other in the upper portion of the cone until a sociocultural experience occurs at which time the theme related to that sociocultural experience drops down to the lower portion of the cone and manifests itself as a process of identity integration with the overall identity of the individual.



*Figure 2.* Integration of Identity Themes

### **Symbolic Capital**

The connection between language and identity is well-documented, but it should also be noted that when second language learners choose to use their target language, they are simultaneously negotiating their sense of self within the larger social context (Rajadurai, 2010). The instability of identity in immersion settings may lead immersion students to perceive their second language as a form of symbolic capital (Block, 2007). Most of the participants in this study appear to be in what Xue and Han (2014) described as instrumental bilingual identity where their second language serves as an academic tool. They may perceive their bilingualism as academic capital which will bring them future benefits such as college scholarship and an edge in the job market. They may also view their second language as social capital which they can use to bolster their sociopolitical position in their school society

**Academic capital.** When asked to define immersion, each participant defined it as a class in school where students learn everything in Spanish and speak Spanish all day. For example,

Ventura said, “Well, I would say where you, like, take Spanish class, and all she does is speak Spanish, and you have to write down your answers and your test in Spanish.” Zanita’s response was similar. She said, “When you, um learn that language and you have to speak it because that’s how it was for me. You had to speak it the whole day, well try to speak it the whole day, and if you have questions then just ask the teacher.” Beatrisa’s definition was a bit more detailed but still quite similar. She said, “You know, ever since we were in kindergarten we learned Spanish fluently. Like from different teachers from around the world. And um, we learned, you know Spanish. We did activities in Spanish. And uh, you know, no English up to like third grade, no English.” There was no indication of using Spanish outside of school in any of the participants’ definitions.

When asked about their choices between using English or Spanish the participants chose English for social contexts and Spanish for academic contexts further indicating that they perceived learning Spanish to be an academic endeavor. Since reading is an activity that can be associated with academics or pleasure, I asked participants which language they preferred for reading. Natalia responded, “Probably Spanish because I can learn more words to use to speak with the teacher, so she can know my vocabulary is further in as a sixth grader.” Natalia’s response reveals that Spanish is an academic endeavor for her. Elvita responded, “I only read in Spanish if I have to for school. Like we had to read *María Isabel* and sometimes we had to read at home and sometimes we had to read at school.” When I asked Inez, she first responded by asking me if I meant for school or for pleasure. I asked her to share both and she told me that when reading for pleasure she “always chooses English” but “for school stuff [she] doesn’t mind reading in Spanish so much, it’s okay or whatever.” Ventura and Felipita also stated that they read Spanish only for school.

The participants also chose to communicate with each other in English whenever they spoke outside the classroom. Pablo chose to use English even when in Spanish class. He said that he “likes to be understood and to understand so [he] uses the language that everybody knows.” When asked which language she prefers when communicating with immersion peers, Zanita responded, “Mainly English because, for some reason lots of us, because we didn’t have any work to do during spring, um, summer break, we kind of forgot the Spanish.” Her response indicates that Spanish is reserved for academic purposes and English is used for social purposes. Zanita was even offended when a Hispanic peer in her immersion class used Spanish outside of the classroom. In recounting the story she stated, “Javier [pseudonym], he keeps on talking Spanish all through the day. I said, ‘we are not in Spanish class right now. You don’t have to speak that.’” Ventura prefers to communicate with her peers outside of class in English “cause it’s just more natural, unless you don’t want somebody to know what you’re talking about.”

In Spanish class Natalia used Spanish to communicate with her peers even if they responded to her in English. When I asked her about this she replied, “Well, it’s a Spanish classroom and really the only time we get to practice Spanish plus we’re really not supposed to use English in class but middle school teachers are not as strict about that.” When asked which language she preferred outside of class she said, “English cause it just ends up coming out English. I never really thought about it, honestly.” Estefania was very adamant about only speaking Spanish in class when she is “forced to.” When asked which language she uses to communicate with her peers she replied excitedly, “English, of course! I’m not gonna be out here tryna speak Spanish outside of class! What for? Too much stress!” Adelina also prefers to use English to communicate with her peers. She said, “it’s just more natural” and that she “had never really thought about using Spanish outside of class after elementary school, maybe because

[they] weren't allowed to use English for so long now [they] finally feel free." For Zanita and the others Spanish belongs in the Spanish classroom.

In describing how often she uses Spanish, Inez stated, "Well, it's like in elementary school we used to use it all the time, we only had to talk in Spanish, but now like I can't use it that much, because I have like English classes mostly and I only got like 40 minutes of like Spanish so I don't use it that much." It is significant that Inez feels limited in her opportunities to use Spanish because she only has one class in Spanish and the others are in English. Inez remembered using Spanish with her peers during recess in elementary school but again, it was in a school context. When asked to tell me when a bilingual person should use his second language, Pablo replied, "Well, never really, I mean, maybe in class but never outside ... because it's a subject for school and not everybody has it." Elvita, Ventura, Felipita and Natalia each mentioned a fear of forgetting their Spanish over the summer and during breaks from school further indicating that learning Spanish is an academic endeavor for them.

For the participants, learning Spanish will provide rewards and benefits for them after school making their language learning a type of academic capital. Two of the benefits of knowing Spanish mentioned most often are that it will help them to earn college scholarships and it will help them to get better jobs. Pablo stated that knowing Spanish makes him "more sophisticated and eligible to get like a different kind of job than a regular person would." Zanita believes that knowing Spanish will help her get a college scholarship and help her in her career as an orthopedic surgeon for Hispanic athletes. Ventura, Natalia, Elvita, Inez, and Adelina also believe knowing Spanish will help them get into college and to get a good job.

**Social capital.** In addition to academic capital, being bilingual also serves as social capital for the participants. For example, several participants implied that they are smarter than

their non-immersion peers. Although being smarter might be viewed as academic capital, for the participants it is social capital because it strengthened their self-concept at a time when they were experiencing rejection from their African American non-immersion peers. When asked how immersion students are different from non-immersion students, Zanita stated that immersion students are “smarter because [they] learn in two languages instead of just one and not everyone can do that.” Ventura stated that immersion students “work harder and get better grades because [they] know how to think in Spanish and English.” Pablo stated that immersion students are “more [so]phisticated and eligible for better jobs.” In their journals Beatrisa, Adelina, Evita, and Inez each indicated that immersion students are brighter than non-immersion students because of their experiences with learning in Spanish. During the group interview, Inez was first to mention having a conflict with African American non-immersion peers during elementary school. She said that the immersion students “could only talk Spanish during recess and lunch and the English kids always got mad and said we were talking about them but we weren’t. We didn’t even know enough words to be talkin about them but they kept all that drama so we just started doing it. Like we would practice colors and clothes and stuff by talking about what they had on.” Zanita, Natalia, Beatrisa, Elvita, Felipita, Adelina, and Estefania each agreed with Adelina adding that as time went on and they learned more words they just “started using Spanish whenever they didn’t want the English kids to know what they were talking about even if it wasn’t about them. It was just fun watching them get mad and knowing they don’t know what we’re saying. We could be talking about homework and then just bust out laughing for no reason.” In their school autobiography journals, Natalia, Zanita, and Elvita mentioned that it made them feel special that they could speak Spanish when they didn’t want others to know what they were saying. Pablo, Beatrisa, Felipita, and Estefania also wrote in their journals about using

Spanish as a way to keep others from knowing what they were saying. By using Spanish as a type of social capital, the participants found a way to connect with each other in a community of practice without allowing the peer pressure from the mainstream students to influence their language identity development.

Interestingly, several participants also reported feeling good about using their bilingualism as a communication bridge to connect those who cannot speak Spanish with those who can, another example of their second language being perceived as social capital. Pablo, for example, was adamant that a person should only use their second language in cases where “a person is lost in the world and doesn’t know English to find their way.” In her journal, Ventura described helping her grandmother when she has a Hispanic person come to fix something at her daycare. She stated that she has to “tell the worker what needs to be done and tell my grandmother what he says about it.” She also stated that it makes her feel “special like [she’s] needed by the adults for a change instead of the other way around.” Participants with siblings all mentioned helping their younger siblings with homework because their parents are unable to do so. Natalia, Elvita, Beatrisa, Adelina, Inez, and Zanita each mentioned using Spanish in Spanish restaurants to order for the entire table and to make additional requests if anyone needed anything. Again, each participant reported feeling special because of their ability to communicate in Spanish with native speakers when others are unable to do so.

### **Belonging**

The participants used *fictive kinship* to cope with being separated from the rest of their grade level peers and to fulfill their need for a sense of belonging. In her journal, Ventura mentioned the differences in schedule as one reason immersion students and non-immersion students don’t really know each other. Because they had been in the same class from

Kindergarten until 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the participants had come to view each other like a family. The theme of fictive kinship appeared often in their narratives. When asked to describe her relationship with her immersion peers, Inez said,

Well . . . At first, like, I'm like a shy person, so like I didn't really talk until like maybe first grade, and then up to fifth grade, like I was so used to them, that we became like a family. But like we've got to know each other and we've become very close.

Natalia said that she feels most comfortable around her immersion peers, “because most of the people [she] grew up with are like family since we've been together for six years, I've known them for a while and I got to know their personality and how they act and all that.” For Pablo, the best thing about immersion was being in the same class for six years and getting to be “like family.” Henriqua, Estefania, and Adelina also used the words “like family” in their journals to describe their relationship with their immersion peers. Because of school policies, the participants in this study experienced marginalization in their relationship with their African American non-immersion peers. As adolescents, the participants are primarily concerned with how they are viewed by their peers and tend to connect themselves with others who reinforce dimensions of identity that give them a sense of belonging. Simultaneously, the non-immersion peers are also adolescents who are primarily concerned with how they are viewed by their peers and who also connect themselves with others who reinforce their dimensions of identity. By nature, adolescents can be clannish and intolerant of differences resulting in conflicts which caused the participants to feel marginalized (Erikson, 1963; Palombo et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 1983).

Chambers and McCready (2011) suggested that “students whose culture is outside the mainstream culture are marginalized” (p. 1354). Although Chambers and McCready (2011) are referring to cultures such as African American or Hispanic being outside the mainstream American culture, the same idea can be applied to the culture within a school since schools represent a microcosm of a society. For the participants in this study, the mainstream culture is represented by the non-immersion students who are learning in English. Therefore, those who are learning in the immersion environment are marginalized. The participants’ marginalized condition appeared in their stories of conflicts with non-immersion students and the coping strategies they employed to deal with their feelings of marginalization.

Code-switching is another coping strategy the participants in this study used to minimize feelings of marginalization. Although Craig et al. (2009) reported that code-switching had a positive impact on African American students’ reading achievement, the participants in the present study did not use it in academic settings. Instead, the participants used code-switching in social settings to connect with their English speaking African American peers. Students from the I. I. Stevens Middle School walk to the public library, which is connected to the school campus, after the school day to wait for their parents. During this time, all students, immersion and non-immersion spend time together either talking in the activity room, watching movies in the video room, using the computers in the lab or doing homework. Zanita used code-switching during library time on several occasions. When in conversation with a group of both immersion and non-immersion African American peers, Zanita used multiple African American English markers; however, when speaking with only African American immersion peers she reverted to Standard Academic English. Ventura, Elvita, Natalia, and Henriqua demonstrated the same code-switching behavior. Both Estefania and Adelina used Standard Academic English during

class discussions and communications with their teachers. However, during lunch both participants employed code-switching by using African American English when communicating with their non-immersion African American peers.

### **Agency**

Identity is described as the process of positioning oneself within a sociocultural environment (Varelas et al., 2013). Identity development reflects a person's cognitive grappling with who they are and their relationship with their sociocultural environment (Gu, 2010). One way that researchers can study identity development is through discourse analysis. When identity development researchers analyze discourse data they look for how the participants position themselves within the narrative which indicates the participants' perception of agency. According to Bamberg et al. (2011) agency involves "depicting events in which a self is involved and placing this self in relation to others" (p. 187). Analysis of identity construction would be incomplete without giving attention to the choices that individuals make in positioning themselves as actor or as recipient in their narratives (Bamberg et al., 2011). Researchers can recognize agency by paying attention to the position of the speaker in relation to others in the story.

High agency is reflected in narratives where individuals position themselves as a hero, thereby taking responsibility for any results without regard for how they might be perceived. For example, Beatrisa demonstrated high agency when she explained how she used Spanish with her best friend, who is Columbian, to keep her English-speaking peers from knowing what she was saying or when she wanted to practice her Spanish. In telling her story, Beatrisa conveyed her control over placing her bilingual identity in front with her friend. When Felipita was asked what she does to practice her Spanish, she responded,

It is very hard to practice my Spanish outside of school considering that both my parents do not speak the language so normally I just randomly speak in Spanish to Hispanic people or people who are in the same program as me. That way I can practice my Spanish and use it more.

Felipita's response demonstrated high agency because she conveyed her control over placing her bilingual identity out front when she practices Spanish with Hispanic people or with her immersion peers.

Natalia also demonstrated high agency when she said, "Yes, with my friend, since her parents are Hispanic, I usually talk Spanish when I go to her house or English. We just mix it up. She speaks Spanish too." When I asked Pablo what he would do if he saw a new student who only spoke Spanish and was lost in the hallway he responded that he would "give her directions in Spanish and then buy her a Spanish-English dictionary." Although, Pablo expressed little desire to use Spanish throughout our time together, in this scenario he demonstrated high agency by creating an imaginary heroic self who assists a person by using his Spanish. In her journal, Ventura wrote that she hoped to visit some of her elementary immersion teachers in their country and speak to them in Spanish so that they would know that she continued learning. Here Ventura demonstrated high agency because she positioned herself as a strong bilingual individual.

Low agency is reflected in narratives where the individuals position themselves as a victim, thereby relieving the self of responsibility or blame for any results that might be perceived negatively. As one might expect, the parents of immersion students are proud of their children's language abilities. Each of the participants shared experiences where they perceived that their parents put them in a position of using their Spanish as a way of showing off, such as when they were asked to eavesdrop on native speakers' conversations. Although their parents'

motivations could have been to have their child use Spanish in a practical situation, the participants felt like they were being shown off. Their positioning in these narratives invariably reflected low agency. When asked to describe experiences where she used Spanish with a native speaker, Ventura stated, “um, well when people are speaking Spanish around me, my parents ask me what they sayin- I tell them what they’re saying and whatever.” In Ventura’s response, she positioned herself with low agency. Notice how she relieved herself of the guilt of eavesdropping by making it clear that her parents asked her to do it. Ventura again demonstrated low agency when talking about helping a boy with his Spanish homework. She said, “my grandma runs a daycare, so I have to help her ‘cause there’s a boy that he’s Hispanic so he’s doing like immersion, he’s in kindergarten – I have to help him with his work.” When asked if she was required to help the boy she responded, “They basically told, well, they asked me, but I didn’t say “no.” Again Ventura placed herself in the position of victim being acted upon by her environment. Inez’s response to the question of when she uses Spanish with native speakers outside of school also demonstrates low agency. She stated, “sometimes my mom, she wants me to like say something to people that speak Spanish.” Inez placed herself in the position of victim being acted upon by her mother’s desires for her to use Spanish with native speakers. Zanita’s response also indicated low agency. She stated, “I, well I had to talk it because of my dad, his friend, uh, his friends that work on the job site with him, they speak Spanish because they’re in Texas, there’s a lot of Spanish people. So, my dad wanted to show off my skills.” When asked about any experiences she might have had with her mom, Zanita responded, “If we were in public, my mom knows they can speak Spanish, or my mom, um, thinks that they can speak Spanish, that’s when she says ‘Oh, you speak Spanish? My daughter does too.’ And she’s like ‘She does?’ and they say ‘Oh, speak something.’ And Then we go back and forth.” Beatrisa,

Felipita, Natalia, Pablo, Henriqua, and Adelina also reflected the same type of low agency in their stories of being “shown off” or being required to eavesdrop by their parents. In each of their stories the participants positioned themselves as victims of their parents’ desire to show off their language skills, reflecting low agency.

Low agency, represented by the positioning of self as victim, could indicate some instability in the language identity integration process of these adolescents. It should be noted that this low agency positioning occurs in the presence of native speakers of the second language and in situations where the choice to use the second language rests with an authority figure rather than with the language learner. Identity instability in the presence of native speakers is well-documented in second language acquisition studies (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Liu, 2014; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Nance, et al., 2016; Xue & Han, 2014). For the participants in this study, low agency could represent a lack of confidence in their ability as revealed in Henriqua’s advice to a child who might be entering immersion. Henriqua stated:

Don't be afraid to speak Spanish in public. I, I still kind of am . . . because my mom has a lot of Hispanic friends. She's not Hispanic, but she knows a lot of Spanish people. But, um, whenever they're around me, I have to speak Spanish to them. My mom does that a lot when she introduces me to her friends, and I don't like that. You know, because she's like, ‘Speak Spanish.’

Low agency might also represent an effort to cope with the loss of the ability to control which identity dimension is shared out front in the presence of native speakers as revealed during a focus group session. When asked if there had ever been a time when they wished they were not bilingual, simultaneously, Zanita, Ventura, Natalia, and Adelina emphatically responded with “yes.” When asked to explain, Ventura said, “When my parents want me to speak Spanish to a

stranger.” The others nodded in agreement. Zanita added, “it’s always at the worse possible time they want me to speak Spanish.” Natalia said, “I hate it when my mom says, ‘say something in Spanish’ cause it’s like, um what am I supposed to say, some random words?” Adelina said, “I hate it when I have to tell my mom what people are saying in Spanish. I mean, they’re saying it in Spanish cause they don’t want people to know and then I have to be like nosey or whatever and just tell her what they’re saying and it’s funny cause she wouldn’t even know if I was telling her right or not so what’s the point?” In her journal, Estefania wrote about her mother trying to show her off by telling her to speak Spanish in front of Hispanics and her refusal to do so. She wrote, “after a while she got tired of getting embarrassed and just stopped bugging me about it.” Even Beatrisa who is embracing the results of her DNA test reflects low agency when she is being shown off. She said:

My mom always makes me uh, order for the people that’s at our table. And she makes me um, even if we see a person in Walmart talking. She’s like, oh, go talk to them, go talk to them. And usually I’m scared and all but she’s like, go talk to them. And so I do.

When asked to describe times that they used Spanish with natives outside of school, the participants reflected low agency by positioning themselves as victims of an authority figure who required them to display their bilingual identity because they lacked control of their use of Spanish with native speakers. By contrast, in situations where the participants retained control of their use of Spanish with native speakers, their narratives reflected high agency such as when they use Spanish with natives to practice.

## Research Question Findings

**Central question.** The central question of this study was: How do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity? African American students in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity by assigning symbolic capital to their second language, positioning themselves as victim when they lack language choice or hero when they are empowered, and employing coping strategies to foster a sense of belonging.

**Sub question one.** What conflicts between bilingual identity and overall identity surface as African American adolescents reflect on their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment? The purpose of sub question one was to delve deeply into the participants' perceptions of their experiences integrating their language identity with their overall identity. The conflict that surfaced most often dealt with language choice. Since language is an expression of identity, the loss of language choice creates a conflict for individuals who are integrating multiple dimensions of their language identity. A pattern of using Spanish as a communication barrier versus communication bridge appeared in the participants' narratives. Additionally, the participants' narratives revealed that they positioned themselves with low agency when they were experiencing a loss of language choice and high agency when they felt they had control over their language choices.

**Sub question two.** What contextual or intervening conditions in a foreign language immersion environment cause African American adolescents to experience conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity? The school policy of separating the immersion students in classrooms and in lunch/recess schedules was a source of conflict for the participants. Their stories revealed a feeling of being marginalized by their non-immersion peers because of

the scheduling and separate classrooms. Additionally, when they were with the other students, their teachers required the immersion students to communicate only in Spanish which also caused a conflict with their non-immersion peers. African American non-immersion peers accused the participants of talking about them and of thinking they were better than the non-immersion students similar to the *Acting White* accusation discussed by Murray et al. (2012).

**Sub question three.** What strategies do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment develop to reconcile any conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity? The participants employed strategies that are commonly used with marginalized groups to reconcile the conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity. Their narratives contained patterns of perceiving a family relationship, or fictive kinship, which might have provided a sense of belonging among their immersion peers. To strengthen their family bond, now that they are no longer required to communicate solely in Spanish, the participants chose to use Spanish as a communication barrier to keep the non-immersion students from knowing what they were saying. Through their language choices during social gatherings with non-immersion students, a pattern of code-switching between Standard Academic English and African American English emerged, which the participants might have used to garner a sense of belonging with their African American peers.

### Summary

There is a gap in identity research literature where the focus is African American bilingual identity. Researchers who have an interest in African American identity overwhelmingly choose topics that deal with ethnic identity and with sociopolitical issues. The participants in this study are in the precarious position of being an ethnic minority learning a language that belongs to another minority group whose culture and identity is also the target of

much sociopolitical backlash. Additionally, the participants are adolescents who are in the identity crisis developmental stage (Erikson, 1963) further complicating their identity integration process.

After spending time with the participants, it became clear that the most important part of the identity integration process for these adolescents is agency or choice. Losing the ability to choose which language they want to communicate in is a source of conflict for the participants, especially since language use is a way to demonstrate identity. The loss of language choice also fueled conflict between the participants and their African American non-immersion peers leading to further marginalization within the school community. When asked why they chose the immersion program for their child, the parents' responses indicated that they viewed the opportunity for their child to become bilingual as an opportunity to get ahead. The participants also perceived their bilingual identity as symbolic capital which would put them ahead of their peers when it was time to get into college or as social capital which they used to create a sense of belonging to overcome the feeling of being rejected by their African American non-immersion peers.

A key component of the Multiple Dimension of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2011) is the idea that individuals choose which dimension they wish to share in a given situation. For the participants in this study, their bilingual identity is an academic endeavor that awards them with symbolic capital. During academic situations, they often chose to share their bilingual identity. In social situations with African American non-immersion peers, the participants chose to share their ethnic identity. When forced by their teachers or parents to use Spanish, the participants positioned themselves as victims because they lost the choice of which dimension of identity to share. The process that African American adolescents in a foreign language

immersion program use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity is driven by language choice for these participants.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to develop a model that illustrates the process African American adolescents use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The chapter begins with an explanation of the Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model followed by a discussion of the results viewed through the lens of the relevant literature from the Related Literature section. Next, the practical and empirical implications of the results are discussed, followed by a listing of the delimitations and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

For African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment, the process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity is driven by choice. During their identity integration process, the participants in this study experienced contexts where they could choose to communicate in either English or Spanish and contexts where their choice of language was taken from them and they were forced to communicate in Spanish. They used agency in their narratives to convey how retaining or relinquishing language choice affected their identity integration process.

As African American adolescents, the participants in this study also experienced marginalization. On one level, they experienced feelings of marginalization caused by school policies that separated them from their non-immersion African American peers. On the other hand, they experienced feelings of marginalization because, as children, they were forced to abide by the directives of adults who took away their language choice in the presence of native speakers. The participants in this study used multiple strategies to deal with their feelings of

marginalization. One method they used was assigning symbolic capital to their bilingualism. As social capital, their bilingualism served as a bond among the immersion students which buffered them against the feelings of rejection they experienced from their non-immersion African American peers. As academic capital, the participants' bilingualism functioned as an added value that set them above their non-immersion peers in competition for scholarships, seats in college, and jobs.

The participants in this study also used code-switching to cope with feeling marginalized in their relationships with their non-immersion African American peers. Code-switching occurred when the participants used African American English with their non-immersion African American peers in social contexts. Their use of African American English was a deliberate language choice reserved for social contexts with their English speaking African American peers as a way to connect with them.

Jones et al. (2012) and Torres et al. (2009) reported that identity is constructed while individuals are faced with systems of power in a social context. The sense of self is affected by the ability to develop personal identity while navigating the systems of power (Bang & Zhou, 2014; Mokaraka-Harris et al., 2016; Moss & Singh, 2015; Nakamura, 2016; Taylor, 2008). Exosystem is a term used for the systems that create policies, curriculums, etc. which result in a pattern of cultural beliefs and values within a society and influence the development of personal and social identities of those who are affected by the interactions of that pattern. The participants in this study were forced to endure school policies that segregated them from their non-immersion peers during instructional time, lunch/recess and resource periods. Additionally, the immersion students were forced to use Spanish at all times, even in the presence of their non-immersion peers. When school policies create separation of one group from another the result is

that one group, generally the group that is different, will experience marginalization. Finally, the participants used *fictive kinship* as a coping strategy to combat feelings of being marginalized in their relationships with their non-immersion African American peers. Because the elementary foreign language immersion environment was implemented in a manner that kept the immersion students separate from the non-immersion student population during both academic and social activities, the participants in this study developed strong connections with each other; however, they were prevented from developing such connections with their non-immersion African American peers. When they moved to middle school, the immersion students were intermingled with the non-immersion students, but the participants continued to experience feelings of marginalization from their non-immersion African American peers because of their isolated elementary experiences. The immersion students' family bond provided support against those feelings of marginalization.

The central research question of this study was: How do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity? The results of this study indicate that African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment employ the coping strategies of code-switching, symbolic capital, and fictive kinship to alleviate feelings of marginalization and lack of language choice as they integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

Sub question one of this study was: What conflicts between bilingual identity and overall identity surface as African American adolescents reflect on their experiences in a foreign language immersion environment? The participants in this study experienced conflicts directly connected to their lack of language choice. Being forced to speak only Spanish caused the participants to experience conflict with their non-immersion African American peers.

Additionally, the participants experienced an internal conflict when their parents forced them to speak Spanish with native Spanish speakers. The participants expressed their language choice conflict through agency in their narratives.

Sub question two was: What contextual or intervening conditions in a foreign language immersion environment cause African American adolescents to experience conflict between their bilingual identity and their overall identity? The participants experienced marginalization within the school context as a result of being separated from the non-immersion students academically and socially. They were unable to form connections with their non-immersion African American peers during elementary school. In middle school the contextual barriers were removed, and they were placed into academic and social contexts with non-immersion students. However, the participants in this study felt marginalized from their non-immersion African American peers who had formed bonds with each other in elementary school and were reluctant to let in any newcomers.

Sub question three was: What strategies do African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment develop to reconcile any conflicts between their bilingual identity and their overall identity? The primary source of conflict between their bilingual identity and their overall identity was manifested in their feelings of marginalization. The participants in this study developed multiple strategies for coping with those feelings of marginalization. They assigned symbolic capital to their bilingualism; they employed code-switching and formed fictive kinships; they used agency to convey their language choice conflicts in their narratives.

## **Discussion**

Students in foreign language immersion environments emerge as bilinguals able to communicate in both academic and social settings using either their native or second language. However, integrating a second language into their overall identity causes conflicts for some students, especially those who are part of a marginalized group such as the participants in this study. The purpose of this study was to develop a model that conveys the process African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment use to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. The participants in this study used multiple coping strategies to combat the feelings of marginalization that created conflicts for them as they integrated their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In qualitative studies researchers identify theories that are connected to their study and explain the relationships among those theories as well as the relationships between the theories and the current study. Grounded theory researchers perceive theory as a means of situating the current study within what Corbin and Straus (2015) call the “disciplined body of knowledge” where further “discussion, conflict, negotiation or development of knowledge-based practice” takes place (p.26). The theory that framed this study is Erikson’s (1963) Theory of Psychosocial Development, and the conceptual model that framed this study is Jones and McEwen’s (2000) Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model.

In his Theory of Psychosocial Development, Erikson (1963) conceptualized identity development as a series of eight stages of ego growth through which a person progresses. Each stage produces identity strengths in individuals who successfully navigate the ego tasks of the stage or weaknesses in individuals who are unsuccessful in navigating the ego tasks encountered.

The participants in this study were in the identity versus role confusion ego stage which occurs in adolescents aged 9-25 years. According to Erikson (1963), it is important for adolescents to settle on a career during this stage. Doing so allows them to continue to develop a secure identity; however, failure to do so results in role confusion which is characterized by poor self-concept, which is confirmed by the findings of this study. Most of the participants in this study had either settled on a specific career or had an idea of a career field that interested them. They exhibited a strong self-concept when asked what they were most proud of and why their parents were most proud of them. Those students who had not settled on a career exhibited poor self-concept. They could not describe anything they were proud of and one student even indicated that her lack of career choice was a source of conflict between her and her mother.

According to Erikson (1963), adolescents' unstable perception of their identity causes them to be primarily concerned with how they are viewed by their peers and intolerant of differences. Although most of the participants were successfully navigating the identity versus role confusion developmental stage, their experiences learning a second language produced instability in their overall identity because of the nature of second language learning environments. They also reported feelings of marginalization when their African American peers rejected them because of their bilingual identity, which confirms the idea that adolescents are intolerable of differences.

The Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) was developed to help researchers understand how college students integrate the multiple dimensions of their identity on campus. Jones and McEwen (2000) used Erikson's (1963) concepts of psychosocial development as the foundation of their model which emphasizes the interaction of the many dimensions of social identities with overall identity. Jones and McEwen's (2000) model can be

applied to African American students in a foreign language immersion setting because of the underlying assumptions that individuals have multiple identities that are constructed in the lived experiences of social locations (Jones et al., 2012). The participants in this study were adding the social identity of bilingualism to their other social identities and their overall identity. Identity is most unstable in a foreign language learning environment, and individuals may experience a conflict of their personal identity which can only be resolved when they are able to choose which dimension of identity they wish to share in various sociocultural contexts (Jones et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2009). The participants experienced the instability of personal identity described above but were not always able to resolve it by choosing which language identity they wished to share. When that choice was taken from them by parents and teachers, the participants developed coping strategies to combat the resulting marginalization they experienced from their peers and to resolve the conflict in their personal identity. Each coping strategy is discussed in in the Related Literature section of this discussion. The Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model developed by this study expands the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model (Jones & McEwen, 2000) to address the multiple identities of a marginalized group of adolescents during Erikson's (1963) identity crisis developmental stage. The model furthers African American identity theories beyond racial, ethnic, and academic identity to address the coping mechanisms used by bilingual African American students as they integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

### **Identity and Systems of Power**

Students whose race or ethnicity is other than the mainstream culture experience feelings of marginalization within the academic setting (Chambers & McCready, 2011). The participants in this study experienced feelings of marginalization beyond those caused by being members of a

minority race. Because a school can be viewed as a microcosm of society, adolescents experience in school what adults experience in society at large. The immersion students in this study experienced feelings of marginalization because of the rejection they experienced from their non-immersion African American peers. The participants attributed their marginalization to being separated from the non-immersion students in elementary school and being forbidden from speaking English while in elementary school, even when non-immersion students were present. Chambers and McCready (2011) discussed marginalization in relation to racial and ethnic difference; however, the participants in this study experienced marginalization from peers of the same race. Their experiences extend Chambers and McCready's (2011) findings beyond the constructs of race and ethnicity.

### **African American Identity**

Researchers who study identity integration have focused on the ethnic and racial constructs of African American students (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Chidester et al., 2006; Cokely et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 2015; Larnell et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2015). When African American identity is studied as a social construct, researchers have focused on issues related to locus of control (Bamberg et al., 2011; Chambers & McCready, 2011; Gu, 2010; Taylor, 2008; Torres et al., 2009; Varelas et al. 2013). According to Veralas et al. (2013), individuals demonstrate locus of control by positioning the Self within a group. When individuals maintain control over how they are perceived by others, the locus of control remains with them. However, when individuals lose control of how they are perceived by others the locus of control moves to an external force. The Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model developed by this study adds to the body of empirical studies of the identity integration process of African American students. The findings of this study indicate that African American adolescents in

language immersion environments use agency as a means of demonstrating their control or lack of control in situations where they used Spanish with native speakers. Like locus of control, agency is a matter of positioning the Self. Locus of control occurs internally, but agency is the external representation of an individual's positioning.

When individuals position themselves with high agency they reflect a position of being in control and reveal a sense of strength in their narratives (Bamberg et al., 2011). The participants in this study reflected high agency when recounting stories of using Spanish with native Spanish speakers when they wanted to practice using their second language. When individuals demonstrate low agency, they represent themselves as victims who lack control. The participants in this study demonstrated low agency in their narratives of experiences where they were forced to speak Spanish with natives. The participants' positioning with high or low agency was directly related to their perception of having a choice of when to use Spanish with native speakers. The high and low agency demonstrated by the participants in this study confirms Bamberg's et al. (2011) findings that analyzing participant discourse reveals the participants' identity integration conflicts, and it allows them to resolve the conflicts by positioning themselves in their narratives. Additionally, the participants' use of high and low agency in their narratives confirms the work of researchers who have studied the effect of locus of control on African American identity development (Bamberg et al., 2011; Chambers & McCready, 2011; Gu, 2010; Taylor, 2008; Torres et al., 2009; Varelas et al., 2013). When the participants demonstrated high agency, they maintained their locus of control because they controlled how they were perceived by native Spanish speakers. When the participants demonstrated low agency, locus of control was moved to an outside source because they no

longer controlled how they were perceived by native speakers. The deciding factor was their freedom to choose which language to use in the presence of native Spanish speakers.

In addition to low agency and loss of locus of control, the participants in this study experienced a personal identity integration conflict when they were forced by their parents to use Spanish with native speakers. They reacted negatively to their lack of choice over which social identity is shared with native speakers. The boundaries between personal and social identity are unclear in foreign language learning environments causing a conflict in the personal identity (Block, 2007; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010). One strategy individuals use to resolve this conflict of personal identity is choosing which dimension of social identity to share in a sociocultural context (Jones et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2009). When their parents took away their choice by forcing them to share their bilingual identity, participants responded with a low agency positioning conveying that they were experiencing a personal identity conflict.

### **Coping Strategies**

Researchers have reported that African American adolescents create social boundaries and situate themselves within those boundaries to cope with their feelings of marginalization (Chambers & McCready, 2011; Fife et al., 2011). Chambers and McCready (2011) reported that one type of social boundary that African American adolescents create to combat marginalization is the forming of fictive kinships based on the use of African American English. The participants in this study also used their bilingualism to create a social boundary and form fictive kinships as a means of coping with being marginalized by their English-speaking African American peers. It is significant that these African American adolescents chose Spanish rather than African American English as their social boundary because language is a key identity construct. Their

choice of Spanish as the language around which they formed their fictive kinship places this coping strategy within their bilingual identity integration process.

Code-switching is another strategy employed by African American students to cope with being marginalized (Craig et al., 2009). When African American students use code-switching they usually shift from African American English to Standard Academic English in academic settings. However, the participants in this study shifted from Mainstream American English to African American English in social settings in an effort to connect with their non-immersion African American peers and combat feelings of marginalization. Although none of the participants used African American English as their primary method of communication during their interviews or in any of their journals, several used it when communicating with their African American non-immersion peers in social contexts. When employing the strategy of code-switching the participants chose to share their ethnic identity in front of their language identity to draw support from and to connect with their non-immersion African American peers. As stated previously, choosing which identity to share is part of the identity integration process; therefore, code-switching is an integral part of the participants' process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

The participants used coping strategies to counteract their sense of being marginalized and replace it with a sense of belonging. They used fictive kinship and code-switching based on their bilingual identity which extends the research conducted by Chambers and McCready (2011) beyond using African American English to include using a foreign language as a means of coping with feelings of marginalization. Choosing which language to share is a deliberate identity integration process, so when participants chose to use Spanish to create their fictive kinship they were integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity rather than

integrating their racial identity with their overall identity. Alternatively, the participants also used code-switching in a manner that differs from what Craig et al. (2009) described. Rather than switching from African American English to Standard American English in academic settings, the participants switched from Mainstream American English to African American English in social settings. Their use of code-switching extends the parameters of Craig et al. (2009) beyond the positive academic impact reported for students who switch from African American English to Standard Academic English in the school setting. The participants used African American English to connect with their African American non-immersion peers and counteract feelings of marginalization because of their bilingual identity. In code-switching from Mainstream American English to African American English in social settings, the participants chose to share their racial identity over their bilingual identity when connecting with their non-immersion African American peers.

### **Second Language Acquisition and Identity**

Second language acquisition research supports the idea of a sociopolitical power struggle between speakers of the target language and speakers of the majority language as individuals attempt to develop their bilingual identity and integrate it into their overall identity (Block, 2007; Coomber, 2013; Rajadurai, 2010). The power struggle sometimes results in the target language being perceived as social capital. Although the research studies previously cited referenced the sociopolitical power struggle between people of different races or ethnicities, the idea of a sociopolitical power struggle can be applied on a smaller scale to the experiences of the participants in an immersion program that keeps immersion students separate from the larger school population. Additionally, the participants in this study are part of a minority race but have no connection to the culture or heritage of the target language. With that said, the

sociopolitical power struggle present in this study was between a set of already marginalized adolescents (non-immersion African American) inflicting additional marginalization upon the participants who are in the process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

Researchers have reported that second language learners perceive the target language as social capital to make themselves more acceptable to those for whom the target language is native (Block, 2007; Coomber, 2013; Rajadurai, 2010). The participants for those studies were learning the language of power. Although the participants in this study were not learning the language of power, the findings of this study confirm the idea that second language learners experiencing a sociopolitical power struggle may perceive the target language as symbolic capital. In addition to confirming previous research, the findings of this study extend the concept of sociopolitical power struggles beyond racial and ethnic lines. Sociopolitical power struggles can occur among members of the same race when there is the addition of a second language opportunity that is not available to all.

Roy and Galiev (2011) reported that in a study involving Canadian French immersion students the target language was perceived as cultural capital making them more acceptable to native speakers of the target language. For the participants in this study, Spanish served as social capital because it strengthened their connection with each other during a time when their bilingualism was a source of conflict with their non-immersion African American peers. However, they did not perceive their second language as capital to make themselves more acceptable to native speakers of Spanish. Instead, they perceived their second language as a way to bolster themselves against the rejection they were feeling from their English speaking African American peers. The participants reported feeling good about speaking to each other in Spanish

in front of their non-immersion peers because the others didn't know what they were saying. The participants also reported being pleased with the idea that their peers assumed they were talking about them in Spanish even though they were not. By viewing their bilingual identity as social capital, the participants were able to resolve a personal identity conflict by strengthening their self-concept with a feeling of belonging within a community of practice. According to Rindal (2010), when bilingual students make deliberate language choices they are simultaneously integrating their language identity with their overall identity. The participants in this study confirm Rindal's (2010) findings when they chose to use their Spanish as a way of connecting with each other and as a means of coping with feelings of being rejected by their non-immersion African American peers. Researchers must now consider the sociopolitical power struggles that can occur among groups of the same race when an added dimension of identity is available to some, but not all.

Instability of identity occurs when there is an imbalance of power. Researchers use terms such as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems to describe the systems of power that affect personal identity (Bang & Zhou, 2014; Mocaraka-Harris et al., 2016; Moss & Singh, 2015; Nakamura, 2016; Taylor, 2008). As stated earlier, individuals in a second language learning environment experience identity instability as they integrate their second language into their overall identity. The instability of personal identity in a language learning environment not only accounts for the participants' perception of their bilingualism as social capital, but it also accounts for the differences in agency exhibited by the participants. The participants in this study were subjected to the microsystem of their parents' control which affected their process of integrating their bilingual identity with their overall identity. Their narratives about their experiences of being forced by their parents to share their bilingual identity by speaking Spanish

with natives exhibited low agency, perhaps as a means of coping with their loss of choice over which social identity to share with native speakers and the resulting personal identity conflict they experienced. According to Jones et al. (2012) and Torres et al. (2009) individuals' sense of Self suffers when they lack the ability to develop their personal identity in the face of systems of power and inequality. The findings of this study confirm the ideas of Jones et al. (2012) and Torres et al. (2009) because the participants presented themselves with low agency when they were prevented from choosing the dimension of their identity to share, but they exhibited high agency when they were able to choose which dimension of their identity to share.

Bamberg et al. (2011) noted that researchers studying identity development should analyze participant discourse to determine what causes individuals to position themselves with high or low agency. The findings of this study confirmed the Bamberg et al. (2011) recommendation that researchers attend to the positioning of participants in their narrative discourse. Analysis of participant narratives revealed low agency when participants lacked choice of which language identity to present and high agency when they retained choice of which language identity to present. Choice drove the participants' identity integration process, and it might have been missed without analysis of narrative discourse and attention to agency.

### **Implications**

Foreign language immersion programs are designed to produce bilingual students who can communicate in two languages for academic or professional purposes. However, learning a second language involves social interactions where power differentials that affect identity development may be present (Abraham, 2014; Cohen & Wickens, 2015; Hutala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Jeon, 2010; Leeman et al., 2011; Masso, 2010; Rajadurai, 2010).

### **Empirical Implications**

The Choice-Driven Identity Integration model adds African American adolescents to the discussion of acquired second language identity which has not been studied extensively in this population. Because the participants in this study developed coping strategies to deal with their marginalization in school, this model extends the body of literature where researchers focus on how African American adolescents cope with perceived marginalization from the majority culture to an understanding that African American students can experience feelings of marginalization within their ethnic group, especially when an opportunity exists for some, but not all.

### **Practical Implications**

The model constructed from this study has practical implications for both designers of foreign language immersion programs and instructors in second language classrooms. Foreign language immersion program administrators should consider how policies that separate the immersion students from their non-immersion peers affect African American identity integration. The findings of this study indicate that segregating African American immersion students from their non-immersion African American peers had a negative effect on relationships among African American adolescents. Those who were not in the immersion program were reluctant to form relationships with those who were in the program. Non-immersion African American students perceived the immersion students' language learning as Murray's et al. (2012) *Acting White* syndrome which made them reluctant to connect with the immersion students socially. The immersion students felt marginalized from their non-immersion African American peers which complicated their identity integration process. The source of the conflict among African American immersion students and African American non-immersion students lies in the policies

that isolated the immersion students from the non-immersion students. Policies that kept the students segregated during resource classes, lunch, and recess prevented the African American adolescents from forming connections with other African American adolescents, an experience that has been positively correlated with African American identity development.

Hughes et al. (2015) reported that positive racial group identification has been positively associated with a strong self-concept; however, the policy of keeping immersion students separate from the non-immersion students prevented African American immersion students from positively identifying with their non-immersion African American peers during the school day which is when most social interaction occurs for this age group. More significantly, the segregation caused conflict between the African American immersion students and the African American non-immersion students. The participants in this study were forced to use coping strategies to salvage their positive self-concept. Policy makers must consider the negative impact of segregating immersion students during times when free social interaction can occur. African American adolescents must be free to develop connections with their African American peers during resource classes, lunch, and recess in order to avoid complicating their racial identity development and, subsequently, their language identity integration. Rather than creating immersion programs within a school and segregating the immersion students, program administrators should create immersion schools which would alleviate the need to segregate the immersion students. Providing an equal opportunity to learn the foreign language for all students in the school would also erase the conflicts and resulting marginalization among students.

Second language instructors need to understand how African American adolescents integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity so that they can create inclusive learning environments and sociocultural experiences. Instructors must remember that second

language learners experience an instability in their overall identity as they try to develop an identity within the target language (Block, 2007; Hutala, & Lehti-Eklund, 2010; Liu, 2014; McCrocklin & Link, 2016; Nance et al., 2016; Xue & Han, 2014). The identity integration process is exacerbated for African American second language learners because they are developing their racial and academic identities while simultaneously developing their language identity. Choosing which language identity to share is one method second language learners can use to resolve the overall identity conflict that occurs when second language learners are in the presence of native speakers, including their instructors. The results of this study indicate that African American immersion students take the position of victim when they are not provided the opportunity to choose which language identity they will share. By taking the position of victim, African American immersion students convey that they are experiencing an identity integration conflict that is out of their control. Instructors must carefully weigh their classroom policies to determine where they can allow African American language learners choice in which language identity they will promote. Although instructors might view opportunities to use the target language in context during social experiences as positive learning experiences, they must be aware that requiring African American language learners to use the target language in the presence of their African American English speaking peers causes conflict among the African American students because it presents a barrier between the two groups of already marginalized students. Instead of being provided an opportunity to connect with their African American peers which promotes their racial identity and boosts their overall self-concept, the African American immersion students in this study were put into a position which created more distance between them and their non-immersion African American peers which complicated the language identity integration process for them.

Because the Spanish immersion program began in kindergarten, the participants' parents initially chose the program for them. All 11 participants reported that their parents allowed them to choose whether to remain in the program for middle school or to transition to the English language curriculum. It stands to reason that parents would desire to see the fruits of their choice for their child and that they would be exceptionally proud of their child's progress. In fact, when participants were asked what they perceived their parents to be most proud of them, 9 of the 11 responded that their parents were most proud of their bilingual abilities. The remaining two were not able to perceive any pride from their parents due to other family conflicts. The participants also reported that their parents required them to use their Spanish with native speakers on a regular basis, and that they did not like being required to do so. The conflict here lies in the fact that parents are not aware of the role language choice plays in the identity integration process. As stated by Jones and McEwen (2000), individuals' ability to choose which dimension of identity they wish to share is an important component of the identity integration process. When parents require their children to use their second language with native speakers, they take away their children's ability to choose which dimension of identity they wish to share at that moment. The participants in this study positioned themselves as victims when they recounted their experiences of being required by their parents to use Spanish with native speakers. Such positioning indicates that they were experiencing a conflict in their identity integration process which was out of their control. On the other hand, the participants positioned themselves as heroes when they narrated their experiences of choosing to use Spanish with native speakers as a method of practicing their language skills. Such positioning highlights the importance of choice of language identity in the presence of native Spanish speakers.

Parents should consider the impact of depriving their children of their language choice when they force them to use their second language in the presence of native speakers. According to Jones et al. (2012) and Torres et al. (2009) individuals' sense of Self suffers when they lack the ability to develop their personal identity in the face of systems of power and inequality. In this case, parents represent a system of power under which the adolescents must subject themselves. When parents force the adolescents to use Spanish with native speakers, they deprive their children of their language choice and complicate their language integration process. Rather than forcing their children to use Spanish with native speakers, parents should allow their adolescents to choose to do so. Those parents who are concerned that their children may not use their Spanish in practical situations should use encouragement and praise rather than coercion so that the language identity choice remains with the adolescents.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

In order to keep a research study manageable, it is necessary for a researcher to include a set of delimitations that serve to narrow the scope and focus of the study. The selection criteria used to select participants is a delimitation that ensures that the participants are appropriate for the purpose of the study. The participants in this study were African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment. Only students who identified themselves as African American were selected because biracial adolescents bring additional identity conflicts which are beyond the scope of this study. Only adolescents who reside in homes where English is the only language spoken were selected because multiple languages being spoken in the home bring additional identity conflicts which are beyond the scope of this study. Middle school students were selected for this study because they are in the age range that Erikson (1963) suggested as the identity crisis developmental stage. Additionally, the middle school students had

experienced the immersion environment for at least five years so they had multiple experiences upon which to reflect during interviews.

Limitations are conditions that are out of the researcher's control. One such limitation for this study is the fact that most of the participants attended one school and the other school was not equally represented. Of the 11 participants, nine attended Site 1 and only two attended Site 2. Schools have different cultures and policies so having a more equitable distribution between the two settings would have allowed the researcher to better identify possible contextual circumstances that might account for certain perceptions. Additionally, only grades six and eight are represented by the participants. None of the grade seven students agreed to participate in the study; therefore, the voices of grade seven students were not heard.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Qualitative research produces rich, thick descriptions of experiences and phenomena. Such descriptions lead to further research problems which could be addressed in future research. Qualitative research and quantitative researchers often study similar phenomena to test or extend findings and results. For example, this study was developed to extend quantitative studies that confirm the academic benefits of foreign language immersion. Future researchers should conduct quantitative studies to test the Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration model with African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment.

Since adolescents change as they mature, a longitudinal study that follows participants beyond middle school, perhaps through high school graduation should be conducted to study coping strategies and to determine if they persist or change. The students in this study are in the early stages of the identity crisis developmental stage. A longitudinal study might discover how

they progress through the identity crisis and how they continue integrating their bilingual identity as they mature.

Future researchers should study how African American adolescents integrate other dimensions of identity and how they use agency in their narratives describing their experiences. The idea of positioning in narratives should be used to analyze the overall identity negotiation process of African American adolescents. Additionally, future researchers should study how African American adolescents in second language classes (as opposed to immersion environments) use agency in their narratives describing their language learning experiences.

Future researchers should study how non-immersion students perceive their immersion peers in environments where immersion students are isolated from the mainstream population. Such a study would evaluate the immersion students' perceived rejection by their mainstream African American peers against the non-immersion students' perceptions.

### **Summary**

According to Jones and McEwen (2009), individuals have multiple dimensions of social identities that must be integrated with their overall identity. African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment are faced with integrating their multiple dimensions of identity during the identity crisis developmental stage. In this study, the participants reflected on their language learning experiences and in doing so provided evidence of the process they used to integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity. With careful analysis of interviews, journals, and observation data, the Choice-Driven Bilingual Identity Integration Model emerged. The participants used agency as a means of demonstrating the impact of having choice versus lacking choice when they narrated their language immersion experiences. They also experienced feelings of marginalization in their relationships with their non-immersion

African American peers, so they used coping strategies that have been identified in African American ethnic identity studies such as fictive kinship and code-switching to combat those feelings of marginalization. African American adolescents in a foreign language immersion environment need to be able to choose which language identity they share as they integrate their bilingual identity with their overall identity.

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**APPENDIX A**

Liberty University IRB Approval

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 1, 2017

Kim Romero

IRB Approval 2963.090117: A Grounded Theory Model of the Process Black Adolescents Use to Integrate Their Bilingual Identity with their Other Developing Identities in a One-Way Foreign Language Immersion Environment

Dear Kim Romero,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project. Sincerely,

  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**The Graduate School****LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

**APPENDIX B**  
District IRB Approval

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Tue, Aug 1, 2017 at 2:07 PM

Subject: Research

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

The attached research study has been approved and is 100% voluntary. Read the details and if you are interested, let her know. If not, simply delete!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Associate Superintendent  
Evaluation and Testing

[REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

This e-mail is for the sole use of the individual for whom it is intended. If you are neither the intended recipient, nor agent responsible for delivering this e-mail to the intended recipient, any disclosure, retransmission, copying, or reliance on the information contained herein is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the person transmitting the correspondence immediately. All e-mail correspondence to and from this email may be subject to disclosure to any third party upon request, including the media. It shall not be necessary to disclose: 1) E-mail correspondence which does not constitute a Public Record as defined under N.C.G.S. §132.1 or; 2) a public record which is exempt from disclosure under other applicable State or Federal law."

**APPENDIX C**  
Site 1 Approval

[REDACTED]

Tue 8/1/2017 1:31 PM

To:

Romero, Kim Cooper

Inbox

Good afternoon

You can complete your dissertation research at [REDACTED]. All of the advertising materials will need to be approved by administration prior to sending out so that we are aware of what is going in and out of the school. Please let me know next steps and we will proceed from there.

[REDACTED] Principal  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**APPENDIX D**

Site 2 Approval

Good Afternoon Mrs. Romero,

I have a teacher that have volunteered to assist in your Research Study. The teachers name [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] please make contact with her via email [REDACTED] or call the school at [REDACTED]

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Principal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

office  
fax

## APPENDIX E

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
9/1/2017 to 8/31/2018  
Protocol # 2963.090117

### PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

A Grounded Theory Model of the Process Black Adolescents Use to Integrate Their Bilingual  
Identity with their Other Developing Identities in a One-Way Foreign Language Immersion  
Environment  
Liberty University  
School of Education

Your child is invited to be in a research study of the identity integration processes of Black adolescents in Spanish immersion classes. He or she was selected as a possible participant because he or she is an African American Spanish immersion student in grades 3 - 8 (aged 9-14 years). Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him or her to be in the study.

Kim C. Romero, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of my study is to develop a graphic model that illustrates how African American students in Spanish immersion classes reconcile any identity conflicts between their bilingual identity and their other developing identities.

**Procedures:** If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask him or her to do the following things:

1. Complete a demographic questionnaire that should take approximately 10 minutes.
2. Complete 2 group work questionnaires that should take approximately 10 minutes each.
3. Complete 4 journal entries that should take approximately 20 minutes each.
4. Participate in multiple interviews that will be recorded and transcribed. Each interview should last approximately 30 - 45 minutes
5. I will also observe your child's language choices during lunch and free time/recess. I will mark the instances where your child uses English and the instances where your child uses Spanish. I will not make any record of the conversation nor will I make contact with your child during the observations.

**Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:** I am a mandatory reporter which means that I must report information that triggers the mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to the field of education include further understanding of African American student experiences in language immersion environments and how language immersion environments affect African American students' identity development.

**Compensation:** Your child will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to them. I may share the data I collect from your child with his or her teacher for translation should he or she choose to

## APPENDIX F

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
9/1/2017 to 8/31/2018  
Protocol # 2963.090117

### ASSENT OF CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?**

The name of the study is A Grounded Theory Model of the Process Black Adolescents Use to Integrate Their Bilingual Identity with their Other Developing Identities in a One-Way Foreign Language Immersion Environment.

The study is being conducted by Kim Romero, a student at Liberty University.

**Why are we doing this study?**

We are interested in studying how African American Spanish immersion students solve any conflicts they experience between their bilingual identity and their other identities.

**Why are we asking you to be in this study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because you are an African American Spanish immersion student, and we are interested in your experiences.

**If you agree, what will happen?**

If you are in this study, you will complete 3 short questionnaires, 4 journal entries and share your experiences with the researcher during one-on-one interviews where your parents may be present if you wish or if they wish. I will also observe you during lunch and free time/recess to notice which language you choose to use when communicating outside the classroom. I will only make tick marks for the times you use English and the times you use Spanish. I will not record your conversation and I will not make contact with you during the observation periods.

**Do you have to be in this study?**

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don't want to, it's OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

**Do you have any questions?**

You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Liberty University Institutional Review Board,  
1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515  
or email at [REDACTED]

Researcher - Kim Romero  
[REDACTED]

Research Advisor - Dr. Lucinda Spaulding  
[REDACTED]

**APPENDIX G**  
Recruitment Email

Dear Spanish Language Immersion Parent,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to develop a graphic model that illustrates how African American students in a Spanish language immersion environment reconcile any identity conflicts between their bilingual identity and their other developing identities. Please find below a brief summary of what participants in the study will be asked to do.

Participants in this study will be asked to complete a total of 3 short questionnaires, respond to 4 journal topics, and participate in multiple brief (15 - 20 minute) interview sessions. You are welcome to be present for the interviews if you would like. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete each questionnaire. Each journal topic should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. Each participant's name and other identifying information will be requested as part of his or her participation, but the information will remain confidential. Additionally, I will observe participants during non-instructional time to make note of their language choices outside of the classroom. I will not make contact with participants during the observations. However, I will make tick marks on a document that indicates the instances where they use English and the instances where they use Spanish during non-instructional time. I am only interested in their choice to communicate in English or Spanish. I will not keep any records of the conversation they are having.

Please discuss this research study with your child. If your child is interested in participating in the study and you are willing to allow him or her to participate, please complete and return the parental consent and student assent forms that are attached to this email and that your child will bring home from school.

These documents contain additional information about my research. If you are willing to participate, please review and sign the consent document and have your child sign the assent document.

Please have your child return all forms to his or her teacher.

Sincerely,

Kim C. Romero, M.Ed., NBCT  
Liberty University School of Education Student

**APPENDIX H**  
Demographic Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. Please begin by completing the questionnaire below and returning it to your teacher. You will notice there are questions to be answered by both the student and parent.  
Mrs. Romero

**Questions to be completed by the student**

<b>What is your name?</b>	
<b>What grade are you in?</b>	
<b>What is your gender?</b>	
<b>How old are you?</b>	
<b>What is your race or ethnicity?</b>	
<b>Who do you live with?</b>	
<b>What language(s) is/are spoken in your home?</b>	
<b>What school do you attend?</b>	
<b>What is the best phone number to reach you?</b>	

What is your name?	
What is the best phone number to reach you?	
What is your preferred method of contact?	
Would you be willing to answer 2 questions about your child's immersion experience?	

Please make note of my contact information.

**Email Address:** [kcromero@liberty.edu](mailto:kcromero@liberty.edu)

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**APPENDIX I**

## Interview Protocol

1. Please describe a typical day in your Spanish Immersion Class.
2. How is immersion class different from your other classes?
3. How is middle school immersion different from elementary immersion?
4. How would you explain immersion class to a friend at a school that doesn't have immersion?
5. What advice would you give to a parent who is thinking about enrolling their child in immersion?
6. What advice would you give the little kid?
7. Please describe the physical layout of your Spanish class. Where do you sit in the classroom? How was your seat determined? How do you like the physical layout?
8. Think for a moment about your Spanish immersion lessons. Please describe one of your favorite elementary school lessons. Please describe one of your favorite middle school lessons.
9. Please describe a lesson you did not like in elementary school. Please describe a middle school lesson you did not like.
10. Please describe one of your group activities where you spoke Spanish.
11. Please describe the physical layout of your favorite class other than Spanish. Where do you sit? How was your seat determined? Do you like your seat?
12. Think for a moment about your ELA lessons. Please describe one of your favorite elementary school lessons. Please describe one of your favorite middle school lessons.
13. Please describe an ELA lesson you did not like in elementary school. Please describe a middle school ELA lesson you did not like.
14. How are immersion students different from students who are not in immersion?
15. How do students who are not in immersion feel about immersion students?
16. How do you feel about students who are not in immersion? Have you had any conflicts with any students who are not in immersion?
17. How would you describe yourself?

18. What are some academic things you are most proud of?
19. What are some non-academic things you are most proud of?
20. If I asked your parents what they were most proud of what do you think they would say?
21. How has immersion changed you?

**APPENDIX J**

## Focus Group Questions

1. Does being bilingual have any value to you outside of school?
2. When should bilingual people use their second language?
3. Have you ever had an experience where Native Speakers react as though they think you might know Spanish?
4. Have you noticed any unusual reactions from others when you use Spanish outside of school?
5. What are some benefits to being bilingual?
6. Have you ever wished you were not bilingual?
7. Where do you see Spanish fitting into your life after college?

## APPENDIX K

### Journal Prompts

1. An autobiography is a story a person writes about himself or herself. It can cover an entire lifetime or a small segment of a life. Write an autobiography of your school experiences. You may use words and/or pictures, and you may write in either English or Spanish or any combination of the languages.
2. What do you think school is like for students who are not in the immersion program?
3. Describe the day you realized that Spanish immersion classes were different from the other classes at your school. How did you feel about being in the Spanish immersion class? How do you feel about being in it now?
4. What do you think your life will be like in the future? Describe your future self. You can use any mode you like. You can write a poem, story or essay. You can draw a picture. You can free write or use a diagram or any other form of representation you would like to use.

## APPENDIX L

Observation Data Table

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>Situation (classroom, lunch, playground, etc.)</b>	<b>Language choice (E = English; S = Spanish; AAE – African American English)</b>
11/17/17 2:45 PM	Pablo	Library media Room – mixed group immersion and mainstream	E, E, E, E, E E, E
11/21/17 3:30 PM	Pablo	Library media Room – immersion only	E,E,E,E,E
12/8/17 11:45 AM	Pablo	Spanish Class	S, E,E,E,S,S,E,E,E
12/14/17 12:30 PM	Pablo	Lunch	S,S,S
11/17/17 2:45 PM	Zanita	Library media Room – mixed group immersion and mainstream	AAE, AAE, E, E, AAE, AAE
11/21/17 3:30 PM	Zanita	Library media Room – immersion only	E,E,E,E,E,
12/8/17 11:45 AM	Zanita	Spanish Class	E,E,E,E,E,E,E
12/14/17 12:30 PM	Zanita	Lunch	E, E, AAE, AAE, AAE, E, E,
11/17/17 2:45 PM	Ventura	Library media Room – mixed group immersion and mainstream	AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE,
11/21/17 3:30 PM	Ventura	Library media Room – immersion only	E,E,E,E,E, S, E, E, S, S,
12/8/17 11:45 AM	Ventura	Spanish Class	S,S, S,S, S,S, S,S, S,S,
12/14/17 12:30 PM	Ventura	Lunch	S,S,S, E, E, S, E,

11/17/17 2:15 PM	Natalia	Library media Room – mixed group immersion and mainstream	AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE, AAE,
11/21/17 3:00 PM	Natalia	Library media Room – immersion only	E,S, S, E, E, AAE
12/8/17 11:30 AM	Natalia	Spanish Class	S, S, S, S, S, S, S,
12/14/17 12:30 PM	Natalia	Lunch	E, E, AAE, AAE,
11/27/17 3:45 PM	Henriqua	Library media room mixed immersion and mainstream	AAE, AAE,
12/4/17 4:15 PM	Henriqua	Library homework area - immersion only	E
12/12/17 1:00 PM	Henriqua	Spanish Class	S, S, E, E, S
12/14/17 1:30 PM	Henriqua	Lunch	(did not speak)
11/27/17 3:45 PM	Beatrisa	Library media room mixed immersion and mainstream	E, E, S, S, S, S, S,
12/4/17 4:15 PM	Beatrisa	Library homework area - immersion only	S, S, S,
12/12/17 1:00 PM	Beatrisa	Spanish Class	S, S, S, S, S
12/14/17 1:30 PM	Beatrisa	Lunch	E, E, S, S, E, E, E
11/27/17 3:45 PM	Elvita	Library media room mixed immersion and mainstream	AAE, AAE, S, AAE,
12/4/17 4:15 PM	Elvita	Library homework area - immersion only	Did not speak

12/12/17 1:00 PM	Elvita	Spanish Class	S, S, S
12/14/17 1:30 PM	Elvita	Lunch	E, E, AAE, E
11/27/17 3:45 PM	Inez	Library media room mixed immersion and mainstream	E, E
12/4/17 4:15 PM	Inez	Library homework area - immersion only	E
12/12/17 1:00 PM	Inez	Spanish Class	S, S, E, E, S
12/14/17 1:30 PM	Inez	Lunch	(did not speak)
11/27/17 3:45 PM	Felipita	Library media room mixed immersion and mainstream	E, E,E,E,E,E,E,AAE,AAE,E,E,E
12/4/17 4:15 PM	Felipita	Library homework area - immersion only	Did not speak
12/12/17 1:00 PM	Felipita	Spanish Class	S, S, S,S,S,S,S,S,S,S,S, S
12/14/17 1:30 PM	Felipita	Lunch	E, AAE, E, AAE, AAE,

## APPENDIX M

### CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT, effective as of the date last set forth below (this "Agreement"), between the undersigned actual or potential client ("Client") and **Rev.com, Inc.** ("Rev.com") is made to confirm the understanding and agreement of the parties hereto with respect to certain proprietary information being provided to Rev.com for the purpose of performing translation, transcription and other document related services (the "Rev.com Services"). In consideration for the mutual agreements contained herein and the other provisions of this Agreement, the parties hereto agree as follows:

#### 1. Scope of Confidential Information

1.1. "Confidential Information" means, subject to the exceptions set forth in Section 1.2 hereof, any documents, video files or other related media or text supplied by Client to Rev.com for the purpose of performing the Rev.com Services.

1.2. Confidential Information does not include information that: (i) was available to Rev.com prior to disclosure of such information by Client and free of any confidentiality obligation in favor of Client known to Rev.com at the time of disclosure; (ii) is made available to Rev.com from a third party not known by Rev.com at the time of such availability to be subject to a confidentiality obligation in favor of Client; (iii) is made available to third parties by Client without restriction on the disclosure of such information; (iv) is or becomes available to the public other than as a result of disclosure by Rev.com prohibited by this Agreement; or (v) is developed independently by Rev.com or Rev.com's directors, officers, members, partners, employees, consultants, contractors, agents, representatives or affiliated entities (collectively, "Associated Persons").

#### 2. Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information

2.1. Rev.com will keep secret and will not disclose to anyone any of the Confidential Information, other than furnishing the Confidential Information to Associated Persons; provided that such Associated Persons are bound by agreements respecting confidential information. Rev.com will not use any of the Confidential Information for any purpose other than performing the Rev.com Services on Client's behalf. Rev.com will use reasonable care and adequate measures to protect the security of the Confidential Information and to attempt to prevent any Confidential Information from being disclosed or otherwise made available to unauthorized persons or used in violation of the foregoing.

2.2. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, Rev.com is free to make, and this Agreement does not restrict, disclosure of any Confidential Information in a judicial, legislative or administrative investigation or proceeding or to a government or other regulatory agency; provided that, if permitted by law, Rev.com provides to Client prior notice of the

intended disclosure and permits Client to intervene therein to protect its interests in the Confidential Information, and cooperate and assist Client in seeking to obtain such protection.

#### 3. Certain Rights and Limitations

3.1. All Confidential Information will remain the property of Client.

3.2. This Agreement imposes no obligations on either party to purchase, sell, license, transfer or otherwise transact in any products, services or technology.

#### 4. Termination

4.1. Upon Client's written request, Rev.com agrees to use good faith efforts to return promptly to Client any Confidential Information that is in writing and in the possession of Rev.com and to certify the return or destruction of all Confidential Information; provided that Rev.com may retain a summary description of Confidential Information for archival purposes.

4.2. The rights and obligations of the parties hereto contained in Sections 2 (Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information) (subject to Section 2.1), 3 (Certain Rights and Limitations), 4 (Termination), and 5 (Miscellaneous) will survive the return of any tangible embodiments of Confidential Information and any termination of this Agreement.

#### 5. Miscellaneous

5.1. Client and Rev.com are independent contractors and will so represent themselves in all regards. Nothing in this Agreement will be construed to make either party the agent or legal representative of the other or to make the parties partners or joint venturers, and neither party may bind the other in any way. This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California governing such agreements, without regard to conflicts-of-law principles. The sole and exclusive jurisdiction and venue for any litigation arising out of this Agreement shall be an appropriate federal or state court located in the State of California, and the parties agree not to raise, and waive, any objections or defenses based upon venue or forum non

**APPENDIX N**

## Sample Interview Transcript

- Ms. Kim: Okay. Okay. Um, what kind of assignments did you guys have to do when you were studying that book?
- 188512123 We had to read and we had- when- when we come back from home, we have to finish some questions that she gave us.
- Ms. Kim: Okay.
- 188512123 Like a test.
- Ms. Kim: Do you finish those questions in English or Spanish?
- 188512123 Spanish.
- Ms. Kim: In Spanish. You have to write it in Spanish, or just say it in Spanish?
- 188512123 Write it down.
- Ms. Kim: You do? Okay. And how do you like that?
- 188512123 Um, it's good.
- Ms. Kim: Yeah. If you had your choice, what would you use?
- 188512123 I would say it instead of writing it down.
- Ms. Kim: You would say it instead of writing it? Okay. And if you had your choice of saying it in English or Spanish, which one would you choose?
- 188512123 E- um, Spanish, probably.
- Ms. Kim: Yeah? Okay. Do you know why y- you would prefer that?
- 188512123 Because it's a Spanish classroom, so I think that's what she would want us to do.

## APPENDIX O

### Sample Analytic Memo

Capital: parameter for inclusion —> expressing perceived benefit

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Memo Date</b>	<b>code</b>	<b>Raw Data</b>	<b>What is happening here</b>
-188512123	11/2/17	valuing Spanish	“Uh. They, they were just learning English when we were learning Spanish and English”	participant is placing value on learning both Spanish and English compared to nonimmersion students who are learning English only
1824828	11/2/17	using Spanish as a barrier	“that’s the other thing I like about Spanish, they don’t know what I’m saying”	this came just after a comment that she doesn't like being forced to use Spanish to help or to show off - demonstrates that she sees benefit in using Spanish to keep information from her parents
9512316	11/17/17	perceiving future benefits of bilingualism	“You could just uh, you could just go there and then since, since uh, I heard, uh, Spanish has a lot of great places to go you could, you could do that. And then you could like, you could speak fluently to like, the person you’re talking to in Spanish.”	Here he is describing how Spanish could help him in the future - he uses the pronoun "you" in 2nd person so he is including himself in the description of going to "great places" where they speak Spanish and being able to communicate with them --> indicates a value he perceives to bilingualism

128122	11/29/17	perceiving future benefits of bilingualism	I mean ... I would say that they should do it, because, you know, it opens up opportunities for you and stuff, like getting a job where you can like translate, like other things- yeah.	this is in response to the question - what advice would you give to a parent considering immersion - response demonstrates expectations of future opportunities in the job market
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Memo Date</b>	<b>code</b>	<b>Raw Data</b>	<b>What is happening here</b>
2005221221	11/30/17	perceiving future benefits of bilingualism	Well it's you know, you learn from there, it's- it's, sometimes it'll be fun you know, it'll be serious but you know then again, it'll be fun. And you'll just learn something new and then once when you'll learn it that could you, benefit you in the future, you know, like you can just get a job and that'll help you out. Mm-hmm	she is describing advice she would give to a child who will be enrolled in immersion. She says, "it will benefit you in the future" then extends to getting a job - indicates perceived benefit
2005221221	11/30/17	perceiving future benefits of bilingualism	Well, they- learning in, they're just learning a new language you know, and it's- it's different because not a lot of students are able to learn a new language-	she is describing the difference between immersion and nonimmersion students - it's interesting that she is using third person rather than first but could be attributed to being taught to answer a question using the question stem. Indicates value of immersion and by extension bilingualism

## APPENDIX P

## Sample Open Coding Spreadsheet

Question	Raw Data	What's going on here	Codes
When you communicate with your immersion peers outside of Spanish class which language do you use?	mainly English because, for some reason lots of us, because we didn't have any work to do during spring, um, summer break, we kind of forgot the Spanish	-Spanish seems to be something that is reserved for school because she said "lots of us ... we kind of forgot the Spanish" – I wonder if there might be another reason for preferring to speak in English	choosing English during free talk; feeling united with immersion peers; assigning Spanish to academic identity
Can you tell me about a time you used Spanish outside of school?	I, well I had to talk it because of my dad, his friend, uh, his friends that work on the job site with him, they speak Spanish because they're in Texas, there's a lot of Spanish people. So my dad wanted to show off my skills	she starts by saying that she had to talk it - sounds like she didn't have a choice but I wonder if she really wanted to use the Spanish to impress her dad since she doesn't live with him and only visits during summer and holidays – her demeanor while telling this story doesn't seem to indicate that she disliked being "forced" to use Spanish but since this is our first interview she may be a little nervous. I will ask this question again later and compare her response and demeanor. (11/21/17) – She gave the same response to the question but this time with more demonstrative body language – moans, heavy sighs, rolling of eyes I can see that she didn't like being forced to show off	lacking control of language choice at home; using Spanish outside of school - being forced;

## APPENDIX Q

### Sample Conceptual Memo

Theme – Agency

Categories:

- lacking language choice – victim position
  - forced to help others by parents/caregivers
  - forced to *show off* by parents
  - forced to eavesdrop by parents
  - forced to use Spanish by teachers
- language choice — hero position
  - language barrier → excluding mainstream students
  - language barrier → excluding non-speakers
  - language bridge → connecting with immersion peers
  - language bridge → practicing Spanish with peers

In listening to the participant narratives about Spanish language use outside of school I see patterns that deal with language choice or the lack of choice. When participants share stories in which they have no choice in which language they use they use a construction where they are no longer the subject of the sentence or if they are the subject of their sentence they use terms that indicate that they had no choice. In these instances the participants' body language seemed to indicate a state of being agitated or annoyed. Examples: 182428 – leaned over the table and rested her hands on the side of her arm and rolled her eyes and 188512123 – cupped her head in both her hands and gave a heavy sigh as I asked her to provide more details about being forced to use Spanish. With each participant there was some form of non-verbal communication that matched the conclusion that they disliked being forced to *show off* their Spanish or to eavesdrop on natives speakers' conversations. The participants didn't demonstrate the same type of non-verbal clues when talking about being forced to use Spanish by their Spanish teachers, even though the sentence constructions were similar. They spoke rather matter-of-factly as if being forced to use Spanish by their teacher was to be expected. Since they use the same type of sentence construction I'm inclined to believe that they don't like being forced by their teachers but for different reasons than being forced by their parents. Could be because with their parents they are being forced to use Spanish with natives which might make them uncomfortable. I remember reading about **identity being unstable when language learners use the target language in front of native speakers ... I need to look that up.** I also read something about **language choice being an indication of identity negotiation ... I need to look that up** as well... both these principles are at play here and need to be further explored.

The participants enjoyed talking about times they use Spanish by their own choice. The pattern I see here is they choose to use it either to exclude or to unite. They talked about using Spanish with their immersion peers to exclude mainstream students from their conversations. Each participant who shared an experience doing this seemed to be satisfied in some way. It's like they were able to redeem themselves or make themselves feel better by excluding the mainstream students. They did say that being forced to use Spanish outside of the classroom in

elementary school caused conflict with the mainstream students who accused them of thinking they (immersion students) were better than them (mainstream students). Participant 97751112 said that it wasn't true that immersion students thought they were better it's just that they had to follow the rules. This reminds me of the **Acting White accusation** ... **look that up in the lit review**. So maybe excluding their mainstream peers was a way to deal with being accused of "Acting White" so to speak. They also seemed to enjoy excluding other non-speakers, like parents and siblings. Their exclusion of other students also seems to serve as a way for the immersion students to bond, kind of like having a secret language. They each seemed to be pretty excited about that. They talked about using Spanish at lunch and talking about nothing but laughing like they were talking about something really funny. I get the sense doing so is a little adolescent mischief.

**APPENDIX R**

## List of Codes

Lacking control of language choice in school

Remembering being in class with friends – maintaining connections

Feeling confident speaking in front of the class in Spanish

Using Spanish outside of school – being forced

Lacking control of language choice at home

Valuing Spanish

Excluding non-immersion peers

Attributing academic success to immersion

Using Spanish to connect parents to native speakers – when it's needed

Describing peers based on language – “English kids” vs “Spanish kids”

Choosing to read Spanish books over English books

Speaking Spanish with peers

Condemning a peer for using Spanish outside of Spanish class

Perceiving native speakers surprised at Spanish ability

Choosing English during free talk

Using Spanish with natives – parents of Hispanic friends (choice)

Using Spanish with peers – choice

Being separated from English Peers

Experiencing conflict with English peers

Valuing Spanish for future connections

Embracing Panamanian Culture

Recognizing connection between language and identity

Valuing fluency and native accent

Feeling ignored by natives

Attributing natives surprise to race

Valuing bilingualism outside of school

Feeling that bilingualism has changed how she relates to others

Feeling rejected in favor of natives

Including bilingual in self-description

Choosing to write journal in Spanish

Valuing teachers' experience with the language

Expecting to be misunderstood

Using Spanish to exclude those who don't know the language

Perceiving it to be easier to think in Spanish

Preferring to us English during Spanish class

Avoiding conflict

Feeling united with immersion peers

Valuing fluency

Experiencing conflict with English students

Finding benefit is 2<sup>nd</sup> language opportunities

Using Spanish with natives to practice so she won't forget

Attributing broadened perspectives to immersion

Including culture in the language learning experience

Feeling proud of language accomplishments

Feeling different because of language