THE IMPACT OF MULTILINGUALISM ON ADOLESCENT ENGLISH LEARNERS’ IDENTITIES: CONSTRUCTING A THEORY OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate events, beliefs, attitudes, and social structures surrounding adolescent identity construction and the impact of multilingualism, and to further understand students’ reactions and perceptions of opportunities afforded through public education. Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives within sociocultural, identity, and language learning theories, this study explores the dialogic tension between the individual and the parameters of her society contextualized within the public high school setting. This qualitative multiple case study draws from ethnographic traditions to investigate the impact of multilingualism on adolescent English learner identity construction. To ensure triangulation of the data, a variety of data sources inform the study, including visual self-portraits, journal entries, interviews, observations, field notes, and analytic memos. Data analysis involved transcriptions and translations, along with descriptive and in vivo coding. Based on analysis of the three participants’ use of language during school, salient themes emerged that describe the unique way each participant asserted her varied identities while negotiating societal expectations. A significant finding portrays how these negotiations create an identity in school that corresponds with each participant’s ideas of what it means to be educated. Based on these findings, implications for long-term English learners, the importance of promoting first language literacy skills, the need for career planning, and diversity training for secondary educators are discussed.
DEDICATION

For my mother, Grace Gilchrist,

whose love and support encouraged me to begin the doctoral degree

and to complete the doctoral degree.

For all those who negotiate multiple languages and cultures. May you have the opportunity to

share your unique perspectives in many languages.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Study

The United States is a country comprised of immigrants who have been arriving to North America for nearly 400 years. During this time, immigration waves have risen and fallen in accordance with the politics and economies of the day. Two historic immigration waves occurred during the 20th century. The first of these occurred at the turn of the century, when massive numbers of immigrants arrived in the United States (Pavlenko, 2004). During the last few decades of the century, the United States experienced another significant increase. Unlike earlier immigrants who were mostly from Europe, nearly 80% of immigrants during the second wave originated in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). As newly arrived families have been placing their children in U.S. public schools around the country during the past 30 years, the numbers of school-aged children whose home language was not English has dramatically risen nationwide from 9% to 21% (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010).

Immigrant families settled in towns and cities across the United States, but it was not until the 1990s that the southeastern region of the United States began to experience an influx of immigrants who spoke languages other than English. As immigrant parents began working in southeastern states, their children attended public schools, and since this time, English Learners have become the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population. Growth during this decade was noteworthy; some rural areas experienced as much as a 75% increase in numbers of
English learners (ELs) attending school between 1990 and 1998 (Hamann, 2003). In 2001-2002, the numbers of English learners corresponded to slightly more than 10% of the total statewide enrollment of school-aged children in Alabama (Mikow-Porto, Humphries, Egelson, O’Connel, Teague, & Rhim, 2004). Data from the Alabama State Department of Education indicate that the number of school-aged ELs grew from 11,243 students in 2002-2003 to 20,816 in the 2009-2010 school year (Goertzen, Roberts, & Starnes, 2010). Of the total enrollment of ELs, both national and statewide, approximately 70% were reported to be native Spanish speakers (Goertzen et al., 2010; Mikow-Porto et al., 2004; Sox, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Urrieta & Quach, 2000).

These school enrollment figures correspond roughly to those in the 2010 Census Brief (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2010) reviewing race and Hispanic origin, which stated that “more than one half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population” (p. 3). The South is one of four U.S. Census regional categories that includes states as far west as Texas, as far south as Florida and as far north as Maryland. Of the four regional categories (Northeast, South, Midwest, West), the South’s 40% increase in total minority population was one of the most significant in the nation. The Census Bureau stated that in Alabama 33% (1.5 million) of the total population reported themselves to be a minority. The change in Alabama’s population between 2000 and 2010 shows that the minority population, increasing 19.2%, grew 7 times faster than did the non-Hispanic White population, increasing 2.5% (Humes et al., 2010).

The numbers alone speak to the urgency of addressing immigrant English Learners’ educational needs. The benefits of education are numerous and significant to both individuals and to society as a whole. Formal education is widely believed to be connected to improved health, smaller families, and greater economic stability. On a larger scale, educated individuals
are needed to solve important current issues such as climate change, or managing a growing global population with increasingly limited natural resources. Immigrant youth, like their U.S.-born adolescent counterparts, require the educational foundation to tackle these and other complex issues of the day. The school setting is especially important because it also offers immigrant English Learners their first opportunity to engage with the nuances of a new language and culture (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Despite these important advantages, the school setting has not always provided the ideal learning environment for English learners.

**Politics and Policies Affecting English as a Second Language**

In the past four decades, changing political views have shifted U.S. educational policies in different directions, affecting English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. A lengthening list of legal actions reflects the attempt to address this growing educational need as well as curtail discriminatory practices. The Supreme Court ruled in *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974) that schools must offer “meaningful education” (Ovando & Collier, 1998, p. 45) regardless of English language proficiency. At the time of the ruling, the San Francisco school system interpreted this phrase by incorporating bilingual and bicultural programs into the curriculum for their English learners. Additional rulings followed, such as *Castañeda vs. Pickard* (1981), which established criteria for evaluating ESL programs offered by school systems, and *Plyler vs. Doe* (1982), which, based on the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution, guaranteed the right of undocumented immigrants to a free public education (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Although a free public education is still available, recent state legislation threatens to unravel educational support systems built on these Supreme Court rulings. Since 2010, states such as Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia have passed restrictive legislation focused on undocumented immigrants residing in these states. The most recently passed state bill was
Alabama’s HB 56, signed by Governor Robert Bentley on June 9, 2011. Incorporating elements pertaining to education, this bill prohibited undocumented immigrants from attending public colleges and universities, as well as required elementary and secondary schools to maintain a record of their students’ immigration status (Couch, 2011). Enforcement of HB 56 was delayed by a federal judge to consider the constitutionality of the bill (Robson, 2011). Because Alabama’s HB 56 encompassed a broad spectrum of topics and limited undocumented immigrants’ access to public services related to health and education as well as work opportunities, this legislation has had a powerful impact on this population’s economic stability and sense of well-being.

During the past 10 years of educational strategy concerning English learners, interpretations of the Supreme Court rulings and federal educational policies have shifted the emphasis away from bilingual and bicultural education to focus on teaching English language skills through academic content. Significant educational policy, such as No Child Left Behind, passed in the initial years of the 21st century concentrated on standardizing the curriculum with special emphasis on improving English and math skills for all children. Student mastery of these academic skills was measured by their performance on norm-referenced tests. Because ELs had to also demonstrate yearly improvement on standardized tests in content areas as well as in English language skills, educators came to rely on teaching English through content as a mainstay method to provide ELs with access to the curriculum as well as improve their skills in English (Hess & Petrilli, 2006).

Because No Child Left Behind (NCLB) stressed the importance of gaining proficiency in English while learning academic content in English, particularly math and reading, researchers focused on improving ESL instructional strategies. Although language scholars and teacher
educators have long offered theory-building research related to educational needs of minority language children (Cummins, 1976, 1979, 1981, 2000; Krashen, 1982, 2003), ESL resources for classroom teachers (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Wong-Fillmore, & Snow, 2005) have become more prevalent since the accountability system of NCLB has been enacted.

This research focuses on providing the classroom teacher with manageable instructional strategies for English learners. The underlying message for both teacher and student is that a high school or college diploma and proficiency in English leads to social and economic benefits. In making the connection between English proficiency among immigrants and higher wages, DebBurman (2005) supported the widely accepted idea that having limited English skills hinders earnings and work opportunities, noting that “U.S. immigrants, who are fluent in English, earn 20-30 percent more than immigrants who are not fluent” (p. 10).

Although a formal degree and proficiency in the dominant discourse has promised to expand work opportunities, it is important to problematize this assumption. Present political and economic happenings are events that will affect all members of society, particularly the participants of this study. Although these influences cannot be ignored, the focus of this study was to explore issues of language and identity. Existing U.S. educational policy on English language acquisition shifts attention away from the development or even maintenance of the learner’s first language, to establish an educational system that supports subtractive bilingualism (Ellis, 1994; Lambert, 1974; Valenzuela, 1999) where learners lose proficiency in their first language, the minority language, as they gain proficiency in their second, the dominant language. This study considers what is lost as well as what is gained for the immigrant English learner.
Statement of the Problem

The central premise of this study is to explore the relationship of language and identity for an individual as well as how the individual uses this relationship of language and identity within larger social constructs. Tension occurs when disparities exist between the individual’s language, her identity, and the social constructs that exist for the individual. For example, Espinoza-Herold’s (2003) ethnographic study of Latino adolescents studying in Arizona schools documented her participants’ apathy with school as “a lack of connection between school curriculum and the reality of their communities and experiences” (p. 8). Furthermore, Valdés (1996) argued in her ethnography, *Con Respeto*, that culturally mismatched educational expectations between immigrant Latino families and schools damaged the connection between home and school.

Valdés (1996) described first generation Mexican working-class families whose goals and dreams did not prepare them to understand the expectations of U.S. schools. Family values that Valdés recorded include the concept of respect (*respeto*), which “involve[d] both the presentation of self before others as well as a recognition and acceptance of the needs of those persons with whom interactions took place” (p. 132). Other general beliefs include the idea that doing well in school does not necessarily equate to being clever (*ser listo*). Having a good memory, which may help one do well in school, is not valued. Furthermore, every person does something well whether it is related to school or not. Therefore, individuals should focus on what they are good at doing and let go of what they struggle with regardless of whether or not the individual’s talents coincide with qualities needed to be successful in school. Valdés’ research highlights important differences in values between her participants and American educators.
In the United States, education has long been considered one of the most important ways to gain economic stability, which equates to success. This pathway to success currently takes a linear approach beginning with mastering math and English skills as well as information from other content areas, such as science and history. The thought process behind this belief system is that success in academics leads to opportunities in postsecondary education, resulting in career opportunities that are associated with prestige and economic stability, both recognized as successful qualities in U.S. society.

However, education involves more than mastery of content area knowledge. In Spanish, to be educated (ser educado/a) has a much broader meaning than it does in English, because the word involves moral, social, and personal responsibility (Valenzuela, 1999). The interplay between the two languages highlights sociocultural and epistemological distinctions that multilingual adolescents must negotiate while interacting within a monolingual school environment. Multilingual adolescents manage and negotiate more than languages, but they use language to make meaning in their daily interactions and personal reflections as they construct identities that are fluid and transcultural in a new environment.

Past research (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999) pointed to a mismatch in cultural values concerning education between U.S. educators and Mexican immigrant families and students. Within the context of this study, the cultural gap became important in relation to immigrant adolescents’ language use and the impact this had on their identities.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate events, beliefs, attitudes, and social structures surrounding adolescent identity construction and the impact of multilingualism, and to further understand students’ reactions and perceptions of opportunities afforded through public
education. By learning the ways in which adolescent English learners negotiate their identities between varying contexts and how they use language to express their identities, educators gain a deeper understanding of their English learners’ educational needs, resulting in more effective instruction.

**Theoretical Limitations**

Regarding identity, there are many socially constructed categories of difference, such as language, race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and ideology that impact an individual’s identity construction. Although each of these elements combines uniquely together in an individual, it was beyond the scope of this study to address every category. Language was the central focus of this study, with additional categories emerged for individual participants as salient in their identity construction that required individual attention.

**Significant Contributions of the Study**

Learning how immigrant multilingual, multicultural youth perceive and negotiate familial expectations, cultural expectations, and their personal expectations with their realities provided a base to construct a framework supporting a theory of educational needs for English learners. This theory built on earlier salient research about multicultural, multilingual identity construction and on the more recent research emphasis to simultaneously teach English language skills and academic content.

Although much of this research occurred a decade ago, many of the underlying issues driving these earlier studies exist still within the present sociohistorical context. Furthermore, the research was conducted either outside of the United States or in urban midwestern or southwestern contexts. Prior research in the southeastern region of the United States has focused on educational issues for immigrants and ELs from the perspective of educators and policy makers, not from the learner’s perspective (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; Hamann, 2003; Sox, 2009; Wainer, 2006).

Therefore, this study addressed the gap in research on language learners in the southeast by documenting immigrant ELs’ daily experiences with language learning, language choice, and their perception of how this experience influenced their identity development within a variety of discourses, including institutionalized education (Harklau, 2000; 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008; Valdés, 2001). This study intended to create space for these students to articulate who they were, who they wanted to become, and how their educational experiences supported them in this process. As English learners are often misunderstood or simply overlooked in the classroom, this research intended to offer educators a window of insight into these students’ experiences. With raised awareness, educators can reconsider if current teaching and learning environments reflect best practices for everyone. With this in mind, the following research questions have emerged:

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?
Theoretical Assumptions

Language in Culture

Emphasizing the importance of first language maintenance was one of several reasons that placed language at the center of this study. As a social action, language is a tool that enables humans to interact with one another and to participate in the world in ways that expand far beyond the physical limitations of an individual. These expansions require creativity from language users who initiate and respond to new thoughts, experiences, and situations. This creative expression is bound within a system recognized as a language, such as Japanese, Arabic, American Sign Language, Spanish, or English. In order to study a language, linguists have created the following categories, each one taking a broader view of language: Phonetics analyzes the sounds of a spoken language; phonology explores the function and pattern of those sounds. Regardless of whether the language is written or not, all languages have a structure for words, known as morphology, as well as syntax, which describes the sentence structure of a language, and finally, semantics, which considers and analyzes the meaning in language (Duranti, 1997).

However, language involves so much more than these five classifications. Linguistic anthropologist Duranti (1997) viewed language “as a set of symbolic resources that enter the constitution of social fabric and the individual representation of actual or possible worlds” (p. 3). Language provides individuals with the ability to consider and reflect on the world. Language even reflects on itself. Part of the work of linguistic anthropologists and of this study is to find ways in which language provides insight into how the world works for the interlocutors.

Besides providing individuals with the ability to reflect on the world, language enables people to interact with one another, supporting the notion of language as a social action. However, language and culture are so closely intertwined that they become inseparable (Seidl,
Referring to Hoijer’s (1954) notion of language in culture, as opposed to language and culture, Attinasi and Friedrich (1995) thought of culture and language as “one unit of analysis” (p. 33). The theory that views culture as a system of participation assumes that all actions are social, including linguistic ones. From this viewpoint, language is interwoven through all aspects and actions of culture. By participating in language events, the speaker can evoke a larger world than the interlocutors can see, hear, or touch. Language connects individuals to groups of people, places, events, objects, beliefs, and emotions in the past, present, and future (Duranti, 1997).

**Language in Society**

Besides connecting individuals with cultural commonalities, language also distinguishes separations found within social hierarchies. Registers used in spoken language can acknowledge prestige and honor between interlocutors or recognize the close intimate connections found within family contexts. Underneath the use of registers and forms of address run the undercurrents of power differentiation. Identifying the connection between language and power as a set of dispositions and expectations shared within a speech community, Bourdieu (1991) used his term *habitus* within a linguistic context. Habitus comprises historical ideas and belief systems of the human experience that become embodied in an individual as he acquires competence over time to successfully move through the expectations of his environment. Generally, the dispositions of habitus are internalized at a very young age. The participants in this study immigrated to the United States between the ages of 5 and 8 years old. They were in the unique position to have integrated dispositions from their original home while learning dispositions more familiar with their daily interactions.
Language in Identity

Identities are lived in and through social practice; individuals and their identities will change over time, and flow between private and public domains (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). However, identities are embedded within power relations, and language is an important transmitter of power. Those who do not speak the privileged variety are subject to symbolic domination, which Bourdieu (1991) described as the acquiescence of the dominated group in misrecognizing the language of prestige as the inherently better form. Acknowledging the influence of language ideology on the language learning process, Norton Peirce (1995) illustrated the concept of agency in her seminal work on social identity as ways in which a language learner is able to reshape her identity by resisting or confronting a dominant discourse rather than acquiesce to marginalization.

When considering identity, three categories have been determined (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), which relate to the positioning of the individual within discourses; these include imposed, assumed, and negotiable identities. Imposed are specific to time and place and are non-negotiable; assumed are accepted or assumed, but may be become negotiable; negotiable identities are acted upon or resisted by individuals and/or groups. Differing levels of agency on the part of the individual are required for each of these categories. The researcher seeks to learn from participants how they negotiate their identities and the role that language plays in their self-expression.

Language in Discourse

As a social action, language becomes a tool that enables individuals to communicate. Because culture is an integral part of human interaction, language and culture become closely intertwined. Although discourses exist through and because of language, discourse involves
much more than social context or language choice. Discourse interweaves sociocultural, historical contexts with language use to influence the ways we understand the world (Miller, 2003). Ngo (2010) described discourse as “a set of historically grounded yet dynamic statements and images that have the power to legitimate and create knowledge, identities and realities” (p. 10).

Drawing from a Bakhtinian framework, Gee (1999) distinguished discourse as “how language is used ‘on site’ to enact activities and identities” (p. 7) from Discourse as the integration of language-in-use combined with other elements of human communication, such as body language, symbols, actions, or intentions to create meaning for a particular situation or context. For the purposes of this study, the term discourse refers to Gee’s “big D” description, but for clarity it is not capitalized in this study. As discourses organize knowledge through a combination of language-in-use and other communicative acts, one can see how institutions, such as schools, organize the private lives of individuals.

Emphasizing the influence of discourse on language practices, Miller (2003) drew from Bourdieu’s (1991) work in Language and Symbolic Power to describe the connection between discourse, the social relationships of the interlocutors, and symbolic power. Although language is a tool for communication, language alone does not create communication between individuals. Communication is initiated through language, but meaning is constructed within sociohistorical conditions and context, or discourse. Within these discursive parameters, the listener legitimizes the speaker’s form of communication, giving the speaker partial authority to speak. This form of legitimization incorporates Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of symbolic power, which acknowledges the language form as a valued form within a particular discourse. Through symbolic power, a dominant discourse is established and legitimized, generating negative consequences for
speakers whose language deviates from the powerful discourse (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1996; Lippi-Green, 1997).

Language deviation includes more than grammar and vocabulary; it also includes accent and register. To successfully communicate, English learners need to learn not only the language, but also learn to integrate a range of discursive practices such as body language, symbols, actions, or intentions. In other words, successful communication means that the user is recognized as a member of the discourse community as she engages in the activities of that community. In this way, the individual extends the discourse through the sociocultural and historical context (Gee, 1999).

Discursive practices, whether they are part of the dominant group or not, constantly shift and change, maintaining fluidity much as water flows through a stream. However, if a fragment of the discourse is left unanalyzed or unattended, then the surface of the discourse may appear to continue flowing while the unevaluated fragment beneath the surface becomes static and monolithic, like a fossil, representing a thought locked in time. Without continuous critique from its community of speakers, discourse solidifies into a commonsensical state. Once discourse fossilizes into “common sense,” it settles heavily and solidly at the bottom of our cultural consciousness, unnoticed. Questioning or criticizing discourse in this state, which appears so solid and settled, seems to go against the “natural” way of the world (Ngo, 2010).

Just as discourses shift and change, so do identities, often recognized as multiple, fluid, dynamic, and contradictory within one individual across contexts and time (Holland et al., 1998; Ngo, 2010; Norton Peirce, 1995). Identities and discourses are tightly interwoven to form a dialectic relationship. When a powerful or dominant discourse identifies an individual, this individual can position herself to counter this identity with discourses available to her (Manteroo,
2007; McKay & Wong, 1996; Ngo, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). An example of this dialectic positioning through language is illustrated through the vocabulary choice of Latino or Hispanic.

**Latino or Hispanic**

The adolescent participants in this study were Spanish speakers from Mexico, making a discussion of terminology relevant. Ethnic identity is often essentialized, creating the need to reiterate that the Latino population in the United States is numerous, multigenerational, and diverse culturally, linguistically, and ethnically.

Because the term *Latinos/Latinas* refers to persons of Latin American ancestry residing in the United States, and *Hispanic* refers to persons of Iberian or Spanish ancestry (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001), *Latino* was selected as the primary term (Bohon et al., 2005; Diaz-Greenberg, 2003) for this study. Furthermore, among many people with this ethnic heritage, *Latino* is a chosen term, rather than assigned, as in the case of *Hispanic*, which is used on official documents (Hamann, 2003). However, recognizing participants’ preferred self-identification was a principle tenet of this study. Therefore, although the researcher preferred *Latino/Latina* in reference to persons of Latin American ancestry, the researcher also acknowledged when participants preferred *Hispanic*; both terms were used intermittently.

**Researcher Positionality**

As a former ESL Specialist, I completed a variety of tasks that required me to interact with people at various levels of the educational hierarchy. These interactions provided me with insights into the purpose and function of the ESL program within that school system from the often contradictory perspectives of administrator, classroom teacher, and student advocate. Working to creatively solve problems within the restraints of a bureaucracy can be challenging,
and yet this experience underlies one of my deepest interests, which is the exploration of the
tension between an individual attempting to establish identity and the power of dominant
discursive practices. While this tension occurs from all three perspectives of administrator,
classroom teacher, and student (advocate), it is the last one that I have chosen to align myself
with, because, of the three, the student has the least amount of power. Although my study will
not focus solely on the discourse of formal education, it is this discourse that has spurred me on
to pursue this study.

**Definition of Terms**

*Agency* creates the individual’s initiative to negotiate an identity that the dominant culture
assumes to exist for that individual. This expression of human agency occurs in the everyday
practices of our daily lives (Holland et al., 1998).

*Code-switching* is an “in-group phenomenon restricted to those who share the same
expectations and rules of interpretation for the use of the two languages” (Woolard, 1988, 69-70).

*Culture* is viewed as a system of practices that socially construct understandings of the
world, and which originate from a group of people’s interactions with their environment.
Important relationships exist between past and present, and between knowledge and actions.
Individuals living within the culture are both influenced by their environment and retain a certain
level of self-sufficiency (Duranti, 1997).

*Cultural mismatch* is when the goals, actions, or aspirations belonging to one group of
people are unfamiliar or unknown to another group of people. Valdés (1996) described the
cultural mismatch between first generation Mexican mothers and U.S. educators.
Discourse means more than speech acts; discourse organizes knowledge through speech and illustrates how institutions such as schools, hospitals, or prisons organize the private lives of individuals (Duranti, 1997).

Hegemony is the “social psychological attempt to win people’s consent to domination through cultural institutions such as the media, schools, family and church” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 54).

Identity was used by Norton (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011) within the poststructural concept of subject/subjectivity. The term identity used across academic fields and in everyday speech is associated with the humanist notion of the static individual who has a unique, essential core, contradicting the poststructural concept that portrays the individual as fluid, contradictory, and changing over time and space. Within the field of second language acquisition, identity remains the term of choice because it encompasses the notion of subject/subjectivity.

Multilingualism has a broad meaning in order to provide the participants with maximum flexibility for self-expression. When considering many languages, this study drew from Gee’s (1999) definition of “social languages” (p. 12), which included not only linguistic diversity as in Spanish and English, but also language variation ranging from African American Vernacular English to “standard” American English. Social languages also include different registers of language used to make meaning and distinguish social hierarchies.

Subtractive assimilation is an educational program that “does not reinforce students’ native language skills and cultural identity” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 25).
Subtractive bilingualism is when learners gain proficiency in their L2 while losing proficiency in their L1. Lambert (1974) posited that the learners’ attitudes the minority and majority cultures play a role in their linguistic abilities.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 describes the impact of the second immigration wave particularly in the southeastern region of the United States. Settling in their new communities, families registered their children for local schools, and the numbers of English learners in schools soared. The chapter briefly provides a historical account of Supreme Court rulings that attempted to address the educational needs of English learners and of the federal educational policy (NCLB, 2001) which narrowed the focus of educational goals to promote a skills-based curriculum measured through standardized tests. Within these parameters, educational research proliferated ESL resources and strategies for classroom teachers, leaving a gap in research pertaining to the educational experience of the learners, particularly Latino adolescents in the southeast. Chapter 1 addresses the researcher’s theoretical assumptions pertaining to the relationship between language and culture, society, identity, and discourse; the final section reviews terminology and researcher positionality.

Chapter 2 launches the initial discussion of the complex relationship between language, culture, and identity that introduces the theoretical framework of identity theory, particularly in terms of imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities within the language learning context. A brief review of cultural historical activity theory problematizes the dialogic tension between the individual and his sociocultural context is considered in the discussion of the relationship between language and agency, and language and Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic domination, where language is legitimimized or standardized. The impact that language standardization has on
complementary forms of language is discussed, especially when concerning adolescent language learners’ identity construction within educational contexts.

Chapter 3 begins the discussion of research methodology with methodological assumptions in order to strengthen the integrity of the study. The study defines its case boundaries with the adolescent Spanish-speaking English learner as primary participant along with the primary caregiver, content teacher, and ESL Specialist as secondary participants. In the study, lengthy discussion was given to the criterion sampling process for both primary and secondary participants. The principle setting for the study was the local public high school. The time frame for data collection was 20 weeks and included data sources such as journals, a visual self-portrait, field notes, observations, and interviews. Protecting the participants’ identities and reciprocity are discussed, as well as triangulation of data sources and theories.

Chapter 4 reiterates the purpose of the study, which was to explore the daily routines and language choices of three adolescent Latinas as they negotiated their identities through the discourses required in school and other contexts. In order to provide ample opportunity to highlight pertinent findings from both primary and secondary participants, the chapter is organized by research question, with each question containing all relevant findings from corresponding data sources. With a total of five data sources, visual self-portrait, journal entries, observations, field notes, and interviews, at least three sources answered every question for purposes of triangulating the data. At the end of each question’s findings, a brief conclusion draws out themes to extend the analysis. Data are viewed through the overarching theoretical lens of sociocultural theory pertaining specifically to language learning issues. Within the broad scope of sociocultural theory, the researcher incorporates cultural historical activity theory, identity theory, positioning theory, and symbolic domination.
Chapter 5 reviews the study’s introduction, theoretical framework and methodology before beginning a discussion of each research question. The researcher considers ways in which the participants experienced multilingualism in their day-to-day lives, followed by discussions on identities in discourses, language and identity and identities that have been supported at school. The implications revealed suggestions for long-term English learners, L1 literacy practices, educational choices and secondary educators. Limitations of the study are discussed as well as implications for further research and the conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives on sociocultural, identity, and language learning theories, chapter 2 describes theories that support the relationship between language, culture, and identity, specifically in relation to ways that adolescent English learners experience multilingualism in their lives and the impact of these experiences on their identity construction. A central theme within the chapter pertains to the dialogic tension between the individual and the parameters of his society. This theme is addressed in the discussion of identity theory, particularly in relation to legitimized language. A review of literature throughout the chapter supports the framework by offering a historic overview of seminal studies concerning language and identity, as well as salient literature relating to adolescent English learners in school contexts. This discussion framed the analysis of the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?

The theoretical framework drew from the poststructural notion of fluid, shifting identities (Norton Peirce, 1995) particularly in the language learning context. When the individual’s notion of her identity differs from norms within her sociocultural context, tension often occurs, as is
represented in the framework of *imposed, assumed, and negotiated* identities (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of symbolic domination and language legitimization addressed notions of power and exchanges of power that occur through language use during human interactions or activities. Not only is language a tool for exchanges of power, but as with the idea of language legitimization (Bourdieu, 1991; Lippi-Green, 1997), dominant groups determine which language variety receives legitimacy.

**Cultural Historical Activity Theory**

The origins of cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) include a combination of ideas from German philosophers such as Kant and Hegel, the writings of Karl Marx, and the works of Russian cultural-historical psychologists, Vygotsky, Luria, and Leont’ev. In developing activity theory, Leont’ev drew from Vygotsky’s work on mediated learning, and expanded it to describe a system that can more fully express the complexities of real-life actions and situations. To describe mediated learning, the original model took the form of a triangle with subject, mediating tool, and object at each corner (Engeström & Mietinnen, 1999).

Vygotsky’s (1986) concept of mediated learning describes how an individual can negotiate his environment through the use of tools. Tools can be material, such as a handbook (Douglas & Ellis, 2011) or nonmaterial, such as language, but all tools are created by humans within a sociohistorical context. The mediating function of the tool unveils a connection between the sociohistorical process and the thought process of the individual or group of individuals using the tool (Douglas & Ellis, 2011; Engeström, 1999; Engeström & Mietinnen, 1999). In other words, the concept of mediation breaks down the Cartesian dichotomy of the inner psychological world of the individual and the sociocultural influences of his outer world.
Within the framework of activity theory, the interconnectedness of an activity can be useful in revealing how the English learner uses language in order to construct his identity, the object. Douglas and Ellis (2011) explained that the object “is the potentially shared problem or societally significant goal that humans are working for” (p. 468). Because identity (the object) is a cultural, collective construct, it may be difficult for individual participants (the subjects) to analyze on a deeper level without substantive methodological structures in place.

Because identity construction involves both the individual and her sociocultural surroundings, activity theory provides the structure needed to problematize surface binaries. One step beyond the object is the outcome; in creating the outcome, activity theory allows for movement beyond the object or articulation of identity in order to state the realization of the goal or the solution to the problem. The language used to describe the outcome, realization of the goal, or solution to the problem suggests finality to the very fluid process of adolescent identity construction. Although the participant will continue in his or her lifelong endeavor of identity construction, the framework of activity theory provided a means to articulate findings and implications within the scope of this study.

Although the original concept of activity theory establishes a connection between an individual and his sociocultural context, the unit of analysis was the “object-oriented action mediated by cultural tools and signs” (Engeström & Mietinnen, 1999, p. 4), which did not include other individuals. To distinguish between a collective and an individual activity, Leont’ev (1978) developed the notion of the division of labor in order to differentiate between activity and action. Engeström (1999) describes Leont’ev’s three distinctions of activity beginning with activity, which is collective and driven by an object-related motive. The second distinction is action, which is usually carried out by an individual and is goal directed. The third
distinction is operation, which occurs automatically and is usually driven by the tools of the action at hand. These distinctions have significant ramifications for determining a unit of analysis. An individual action directed by a concrete goal has a beginning and an end, but without the broader perspective of the collective activity, it is difficult to discover underlying sociocultural reasons or motives for the original goal.

A unit of analysis is required that can make sense of complex human interactions and of underlying sociocultural motives. Engeström and Mietinnen (1999) described a unit of analysis that is an “object-oriented, collective and culturally mediated human activity or activity system” (p. 9). Within this system, additional elements have been added to the previously mentioned three-point model of subject, mediating tools, and object. Cole and Engeström (1997) described the augmented model as having an inverted triangle with three additional components: rules, community, and division of labor. The community, the group of people involved with the activity, may support or oppose the activity. The community also establishes the rules surrounding the activity as well as dividing the labor by organizing and sharing responsibilities pertaining to the activity. Each of the six components surrounds the triangle model and has contact with the other five points. Not all components may work together at the same time, but there is that potential. In representing the complexities of human interaction, contradiction and movement are important elements to this model. Change and multiplicity within the framework of activity theory complicate the process but also drive development and transformation.

Engeström, Engeström, and Suntio (2002) viewed activity theory as a “framework for understanding transformations in collective practices and organizations” (p. 212). This study addresses the tensions that exist between collective activities and individual actions. The elements within the activity theory model provide a framework to make sense of the collective
activities and individual actions that were revealed in the data collection process. In this way, activity theory informed the methodology of this study with an initial example provided below. However, it is the English learner participants within their sociohistorical contexts who defined and made meaning of these categories.

Figure 1. Cultural historical activity theory contextualized.

**Language, Culture, and Identity**

In general, the impact that language and culture have on each other can be difficult to distinguish. Language, a tool that expresses thought and experiences beyond the physical world of the interlocutors, produces culture; whereas, culture, being the thoughts, ideas, customs, and values of a group, influences language. This dialogic relationship also exists between specific languages and cultures. Buchholtz and Hall (2005) refined the Sapir-Whorf theory of linguistic relativity in describing the connection between language and culture. An individual language,
verbal, written, or signed, represents a collection of symbols that is organized to create meaning among individuals within a cultural context; however, the cultural context also influences the language.

When attempting to understand a particular language, such as Spanish, the relationship between language and culture becomes more complex. For example, Spanish may be spoken within a wide range of sociocultural contexts that crosses nationalities, geographic regions, class, gender, and race. Varieties of Spanish are also influenced by linguistic factors such as register and other languages (Risager, 2006). Although each variety of Spanish intermingles with a set of cultural practices, the relationship of specific languages and specific cultures becomes situational, multiple, and fluid. In other words, although culture and language are interconnected, specific varieties of languages and individual cultures are not monolithically and irresolutely bound to the other. As an individual experiences her life steeped in language and culture, and within these constructs, she builds her identity, creating a complex connection between the three concepts, each influencing or disrupting the others, with a disruption severing normative connections between an individual’s identity and her language and culture as in the example of gender crossing where a biological male used feminine gendered pronouns (Buchholtz & Hall, 2005).

Whether identity construction reinforces or disrupts cultural/linguistic connections, the process is contextualized within historical, cultural, and societal parameters; it is not isolated. The notion of subjectivity or how an individual is positioned in society is an integral part of second language acquisition (SLA) scholars’ notion of identity. Poststructuralist scholarship on identity and language (Mantero, 2007; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003; Ngo, 2010; Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Norton Peirce, 1995; Paris, 2011; Pavlenko & Blackledge,
2004) incorporated the notion of subjectivity to further probe issues surrounding identity construction and language use and language learning.

By drawing from poststructural feminist scholar Weedon (1987/1997), Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995) shifted the paradigm within the field of second language acquisition. Norton adopted the notion of subjectivity, in which the individual uses language to negotiate institutionalized practices as well as to position herself (and be positioned) within her social structure. Challenging humanist Western conceptions of an individual’s core or essence, the poststructural individual, or subject, changes over time and place, is contextualized within social and historical parameters, and is contradictory. Drawing from the poststructural understanding of positioning and agency, Norton developed the sociological construct of investment to complement the psychological construct of motivation when referring to language learners’ strategies for addressing inequitable power relations within particular discourses (McKinney & Norton, 2008; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Norton’s (2000) concept of individual agency in her definition of identity includes “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 5). In other words, identity is lived in and through social practice; an individual’s identity will change over time, flow between private and public domains, and shift within different contexts. A closer look at Norton’s (2000) definition of, “how a person understands … her relationship to the world” (p. 5) reveals possible tension between the individual and her surroundings if she positions herself in ways that conflict with how her world has positioned her (Holland et al. 1998).
Davies and Harré (1990) described identities as located in discourse and situated in narratives. Their understanding of discourse included the “institutionalized use of language and language-like sign systems” (p. 45), which occurred in a public process of meaning making within, between, and among groups of people. Interlocutors negotiate through varying discourses that may overlap, contradict, or compete with each other. Situating positioning theory in conversation, Davies and Harré used pieces of conversation that acknowledged the interlocutor’s perception of himself and that also positioned him in the conversation. Interactive positioning is when one individual positions another; whereas reflective positioning (self-representation) is the process of positioning oneself. Negotiation is the tension between the two types of positioning. However, from a heteroglossic Bakhtinian (1981) perspective, the tension between interactive positioning and reflective positioning can occur within an individual.

Another way to approach this concept of tension between interactive positioning and reflective positioning is through ambivalence, or conflicting feelings or opinions of an individual. Ambivalence is inescapable (Ngo, 2010; Yon, 2000) due to the fact that the static quality of socially constructed categories does not adequately reflect the complexities of an individual. The intersection of categories, such as race, class, and gender, among others, illustrates the multiplicity of identity. However, as identity is temporary, it changes and is inconsistent and contradictory, creating ambivalence for the individual. “Ambivalence allows us to emphasize the ways that identity is conflictual, partial and unresolved” (Ngo, 2010, p. 99).

**Imposed, Assumed, and Negotiated Identities**

Further research on negotiating identity within the field of second language learning (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) has generated a framework of three categories, imposed, assumed, and negotiable identities, where individuals are positioned within discourses.
Imposed identities are recognized within the context of rules and laws; they are specific to time and place and are non-negotiable. For example, state immigration laws determine an individual to be an undocumented immigrant if the individual cannot produce government issued documents such as visas or proof of U.S. citizenship. Under this law, all undocumented immigrants are excluded from state benefits such as access to health care and transportation to public education. Although these laws may be disputed in the court system, the imposed identity of an undocumented immigrant is currently non-negotiable in the United States.

Assumed identities are based on cultural norms. In other words, they are representations of the dominant group’s values or stereotypes. Because these identities are assumed, they may not always be highly visible and therefore, not often critiqued. Because they are not fluid or multifaceted, assumed identities lack the flexibility to adapt to shifting contexts, creating constraints for the individual, such as gender or sexual orientation, which is often assumed in predominantly heterosexual cultures. Depending on the context and the inference made about the person, the assumed identity may or may not have a negative impact on the individual. Left unchallenged, the assumed identity becomes invisible, but once questioned, the assumed identity becomes negotiable.

The third category, negotiated identities, involves a response from individuals who recognize the existence of assumed and imposed identities. Negotiated identities are resisted by either individuals or groups and are not bound to certain times or places. Forms of resistance will vary; studies illustrate a sliding scale of resistance between public confrontations of the assumed identity within the dominant discourse to the apparent acceptance of the assumed identity, veiling the acts of resistance. The earlier mentioned Buchholtz and Hall (2005) example of gender crossing illustrates a biological male’s public attempt to get past or negotiate the assumed
gender identity of male as s/he uses female pronouns. Less confrontational acts of resistance to assumed identities involve language learners using their native language (McKay & Wong, 1996), incorporating passivity (Harklau, 2000), adopting counter hegemonic culture (Ibrahim, 1997), and expressing themselves in vernacular discourse in the classroom setting (Canagarajah, 2004).

In order to negotiate an assumed identity, the individual requires an awareness that the identity exists and a desire to resist or disassociate from that identity. Resisting an assumed identity may cause confrontation or consternation within one discourse, such as with the biological male who resisted the assumed gender identity through pronoun use. However, this individual benefits from his/her resistance by receiving support within a different discourse.

Literature on second language learning and identity (Canagarajah, 2004; Cummins, 1997; Harklau, 2000; Ibrahim, 1997; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995) addresses the notion of assumed identities becoming negotiable in a variety of contexts. These studies analyze the complex relationship between the dominant culture and minority cultures while language learning is taking place and reveal that language learners have choices about their identity and their language learning process. Regardless of whether they can name the assumed identity or not, individuals take many forms of resistance to contest an assumed identity. With some forms of resistance, the language learner provokes confrontation with interlocutors by publically refusing his or her assumed identity (Norton Peirce, 1995). Others choose non-confrontational means of opposition by allowing the assumptions to cover their activities of resistance (Canagarajah, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996).

In a seminal study of adolescent identity and language use, McKay and Wong (1996) illustrated how an individual gained prestige from his assumed identity. Drawing from Norton
Peirce’s (1995) theorizing on investment, McKay and Wong explored multiple identities of junior high Chinese adolescents and how these students were placed into assumed identities by others, even as the students, through acts of agency, managed those identities for their own benefit. For example, within an ESL writing assignment, one student included an illustration that contained cultural and linguistic jokes excluding his non-Chinese speaking ESL teacher and privileging his Chinese speaking classmates. He worked within the boundaries of his assumed ESL identity to resist the ESL discourse, and thus negotiated his assumed identity by using Chinese to convey a more sophisticated and controversial message to his peers.

In this example, the junior high school student benefitted from the assumption within the ESL discourse that he did not have sufficient language in English to express his ideas, and therefore must resort to use of his first language, Chinese. With this assumed identity in place, his non-speaking Chinese ESL teacher did not question his use of Chinese or understand the underlying sexual messages that were presented in the drawing. By managing the assumed identity of ESL student to meet his needs, the young artist avoided conflict with his ESL teacher and simultaneously gained respect from his Chinese peers.

In agreement with Norton Peirce (1995) that identity is a fluid concept and is contextualized within a discourse, McKay and Wong (1996) explored learners’ identities through conventional discursive categories such as race, gender, and class but contextualized their categories in sociocultural and sociohistorical terms, such as the model minority discourse or the “Chinese cultural national discourse” (p. 588) to connect the social context, power, and identities of the language learners. Their discussion of school discourses was particularly relevant to this study, because they distinguished social and academic discourses to describe prescriptive behaviors and attitudes pertaining to both subcategories. In focusing on the academic discourse,
McKay and Wong examined learners’ investment in all four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Their findings showed that learners’ multiple identities allowed for selective investment in the language learning process, depending on the learner’s social or academic need.

One of the earliest inquiries within the field of second language acquisition to address identity as fluid and multiple is Norton Peirce’s (1995) influential study on social identity, investment, and language learning. In her work, Norton (Peirce) found second language acquisition research lacking a theory that integrated the language learner with the learning context. Addressing tensions between topics such as power and identity, motivation and investment, ethnicity, class, and gender, as well as language and communicative competence, Norton’s theory of social identity recognized three central notions: the multiple nature of identity, site of struggle, and identity changes over time.

Norton’s distinction between motivation and investment supported her argument for the fluidity of identity and language. She expanded on Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) foundational work of instrumental and integrative motivation used within the field of second language acquisition. Integrative motivation represents the desire of the language learner to integrate into the target language community; whereas, instrumental motivation refers to learning a language for functional purposes, such as work or schooling. Norton drew from Bourdieu’s economic metaphor, cultural capital, which describes knowledge and ways of thinking as specifically situated within different social groupings. A language learner’s cultural capital may not be valued within the dominant discourse. Therefore, Norton argued that language learners invested in an additional language to accrue the valued cultural capital.
This notion of investment resembles instrumental motivation on the surface in that one expects a high return from an investment, just as the language learner with instrumental motivation expects to gain work or education as a result of learning his new language. However, Norton Peirce’s (1995) concept complicated the traditional understanding of motivation because investment takes into account the learner’s social-cultural context and multiple, possibly contradictory, desires for learning the dominant language. Considering that individuals use language to further develop their identities, investing in the dominant language and its cultural capital is also investing in one’s identity. However, learning the dominant language does not require the learner’s identity to assimilate to the dominant culture. The learner can use language to resist, to negotiate, and to create her own emerging, shifting identity.

While investing in the language learning process, and in doing so simultaneously investing in their shifting identities, learners also manage their imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). These categories clarify the power structure within a culture in order to make the multiple identities of an individual visible. One of Norton Peirce’s (1995) adult immigrant participants, Martina, portrayed her site of struggle in her attempts to express herself in English during her daily activities. Her assumed identity as primary caretaker of her children heightened her investment to learn English so that she could better manage her family’s organizational tasks. Her investment also enabled Martina to position herself to overcome feelings of linguistic inferiority in order to confront Anglophone Canadian coworkers who were the age of her children.

Gaining an understanding of English learners’ educational needs was one of the foundational components of this study. When choosing their level of investment in the language learning process, especially within academic discourses, adolescents are utilizing their agency to
determine how they will use language to express themselves socially and academically. However, schools, which embody the patterns of power relations within the dominant culture (Cummins, 1997), will place both imposed and assumed identities on all students, including English learners.

Scholars (Canagarajah, 2004; Harklau, 2000; Ibrahim, 1997) have approached these issues in various ways. In a case study of immigrant English learners transitioning from senior year in high school to a postsecondary environment, Harklau (2000) revealed educational discourses that portrayed these high school graduates as deficient in academic proficiency. The complexity of their identities as longtime residents of the United States and high school graduates was not valued. Instead, instructors assumed that they were newcomers and cultural novices, creating a static monolithic identity, which Harklau referred to as representation, specifically as “an artifact of the discursive processes through which teachers and students make sense of the social world, processes that are seemingly self-evident” (p. 63). In defining Harklau’s notion of representation in this statement, the overlap of her idea with the notion of an assumed identity becomes clear.

Within an educational context of a community college, Harklau (2000) argued that providing students with labels or assumed identities affected their level of investment (Norton Peirce, 1995). Harklau’s study revealed that because students’ self-recognized identities as competent high school graduates were not validated, and because the assumed identity or representation of newcomer continued, student investment and participation in the ESOL classes dropped significantly. Students in this study negotiated this assumed identity of novice and newcomer through passive resistance and, ultimately, through avoidance of the class altogether.
As with the junior high Chinese English learners (McKay & Wong, 1996), assumed identities are often racialized. In his study of French-speaking, adolescent African English learners, Ibrahim (1997) found that the dominant culture in North America expected the African ELs to adopt African American or African Canadian culture. By embracing hip hop and rap music, African ELs appeared on the surface to assimilate to the assumed identity, but further analysis revealed that their music choices, originating from a counter-hegemonic culture, characterized their own process of identity construction of negotiation and resistance to the assumed identity of African American or African Canadian culture.

Canagarajah’s (2004) research revealed the similarities between seemingly disparate groups, African American university students in a writing class and Tamil English learners studying English for general academic purposes. Both groups appeared to have assimilated or accepted static, assumed identities, but closer analysis uncovered students’ use of vernacular discourse and their first language to negotiate a more complex learner identity.

Through a detailed study of literacy practices, Canagarajah (2004) explored hidden spaces within the classroom context and off-task activities that bolstered students’ negotiation of their identity construction, which he named safe houses. In the classroom, these safe houses occurred among students when they communicated without direct teacher supervision, as asides to each other, in small group activities, passing notes, or before and after class. Online communication and less structured school locations such as the cafeteria or library are other sites where students used vernacular discourse or their first language. Canagarajah argued that students used language to create a more “creative and sometimes pedagogically oppositional” (p. 128) identity than the ones they presented in the classroom. However, he emphasized that safe houses not only provided a space for students to critically view their situations and their
difficulties, but they also created a means to develop problem solving strategies. By giving students opportunities to choose their forms of self-expression, safe houses offered a way for students to use their languages in order to negotiate their identity and to promote agency.

**Language and Agency**

Individuals’ identities meld with their sociocultural and historical contexts, leading to an understanding of a fluid, but contextualized and precarious identity (Ngo, 2010; Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). Although elements of identity are socially constructed, such as race, class, gender, language, nationality, or religion, the individual retains some freedom of choice within any given set of social constraints. The individual’s agency to move beyond normative roles creates tension within established cultural limitations. Agency, then, generates the individual’s initiative to negotiate an assumed identity, which occurs in the everyday practices of our daily lives (Holland et al., 1998).

As these practices settle into our lives and interactions, they become more subtle and difficult to perceive. Bourdieu (1991) explained the dialectic relationship between agency and cultural constraints or structure with his term, *habitus*. With this concept, Bourdieu described an individual’s embodiment of society’s rules and norms that does not need to be either verbal or conscious in order to occur. Once an individual has internalized society’s expectations for her behavior, her habitus can be perceived in myriad ways, such as through body gestures, dress, tone of voice, or accent. Bourdieu argued that although the structure of society influences the individual, the individual can make choices within and through these constraints that affect her relationships, social interactions, and her identity.

Although individuals embody culture, language is a social action through which an individual’s identity can be asserted. “Thinking, speaking, gesturing, and cultural exchange are
forms of social as well as cultural work” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271). People continually learn new ways of speaking and acting in new or changing sociocultural contexts, while negotiating the tension between individual desires and cultural constraints. Acknowledging the psyche and society as well as the private and public domains is important, but it is also vital to recognize the relationship as more complex than a dichotomous one. Both the individual as well as his cultural context are historical; both are situated in current sociocultural practices that intermingle with each other to create multiple overlapping contexts.

Practice theory provides a useful frame for explaining the individual’s impetus to act outside or around cultural expectations. Improvisation or creative problem solving to achieve one’s goal while managing social constraints is one way to describe agency (Holland et al., 1998). Ahearn (2001) drew from practice theory to provide a succinct definition of agency. In her words, “agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). Adding to her explanation, she distinguished between an actor who follows the rules, involving no change, and between an agent who has the ability to change and transform. In further discussion, Ahearn included salient questions, such as whether agency must be individual, following the Western assumption of individualism; whether agency can involve a group; or if agency can represent tension within one individual. Just as identity is multiple, Ahearn argued for the multiplicity of agency within one individual. In a similar vein to the concept of imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities, the multiplicities of agency include oppositional, complicit, agency of power, and agency of intention.

To analyze the relationship between power and identity within the field of second language acquisition, Norton (2000) considered the individual’s relationship to the world as well as his perception of that relationship. Through her analysis, Norton explored the tension between
the individual’s desire and the cultural limitations of that desire. She drew from Bourdieu’s (1991) work, which links identity with symbolic power by questioning the assumption that conversation partners consider each other equally worthy of speaking and receiving information. From this premise, Norton reframed traditional theories of communicative competence by problematizing the power relations underlying the ways language rules are used in communication.

**Language and Symbolic Domination**

The complex relationship of language and power operates beneath the surface of linguistic interactions. Bourdieu’s (1991) social theory of symbolic capital in relation to language explained the power transacted through linguistic exchanges. Symbolic capital, one of Bourdieu’s four economic metaphors, illustrates the transaction of intangible concepts such as power and prestige. Economic capital represents financial resources; social capital includes an individual’s network of acquaintances, friends, and colleagues. Cultural capital refers to the life experiences and forms of knowledge that an individual can draw from when interacting with others and has been widely used by scholars (Kusserow, 2004; Lareau, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1995; Yosso, 2005) across academic disciplines to explain social interactions in diverse educational settings. Although every individual has cultural capital to draw from, certain forms of cultural capital are valued more within a society than other forms. The value of the individual’s capital becomes symbolic capital, which consists of resources such as prestige, recognition, or honor. Economic, social, and cultural capitals retain varying amounts of symbolic capital, but it is symbolic capital that is the important source of power.

Using symbolic capital to attain power within society is foundational within Bourdieu’s (1991) discussion of legitimate or normalized language. He defined legitimate language as the
result of a complex historical process, involving conflicts and taking place in colonial settings. A particular language became legitimimized as its speakers took political and economic control over an area. All other languages were reduced to lesser forms of the language as in a dialect. As the dominant group settled in, they were able to reproduce the legitimate language through both the labor market and the educational system, a process that Bourdieu named symbolic domination.

Once the domination process was complete, the legitimatized language was more subtlety reproduced through symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1991). Through unspoken gestures, expressions, or silence, a secret code of disapproval and intimidation enforced the norms and standards of society and of its legitimate language. Bourdieu argued that symbolic domination successfully reproduced linguistic norms because the dominated group misrecognized the social construction of symbolic domination. “The language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs, without the help of the social mechanisms capable of producing this complicity, based on misrecognition, which is the basis of all authority” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 113). Only some speakers possess legitimate styles of communicating that could provide access to power; such authorities reproducing legitimate language include writers, grammarians, and teachers. Because of the intersection of socially constructed categories delegated to identity, such as race, gender, class, and religion, among others, speaking the prestigious language variety does not guarantee full access into the dominant discourse.

Heller’s (1995) study of language ideology and symbolic domination within the context of a Franco-Ontarian school exemplified Bourdieu’s ideas. She highlighted the notable paradox of the Franco-Ontarian school’s purpose to support and promote the language minority of French-speaking Ontarians, because in this context cultural and ethnic identities were closely
connected to language use. However, it was the middle-class English-speaking Ontarians who benefitted most from the academic setting in French.

In her study, Heller (1995) observed two 10th-grade Français classes in a monolingual French speaking school in Toronto. One class, the Français general (general French) was composed of working-class bilingual students (French and English) and Somali immigrant students who spoke French as their second or third language, lacked literacy skills in French, and knew little English. The teacher for the general French class was a Canadian French speaker whose background was physical education. The curriculum focused on life learning skills, and she permitted Canadian French as well as code switching with English and French. The Français avancé (advanced French) class was composed of middle class Toronto educated students who had the background knowledge to perform within school expectations. The teacher in the advanced class was a trained French teacher from France and spoke only French at school. The curriculum entailed literary analysis with an emphasis on writing. All classroom communication was conducted strictly in standard French; all other variations were corrected in class. Students used vernacular or English in asides between themselves or other forms of private speech in class.

Although the school was created to support Francophone students with limited social mobility, Heller (1995) found that the French varieties spoken by Canadians were not valued at the school. Through the divide in curriculum, language use, and prestige between the general and advanced French classes, Heller argued that the legitimatized language was decontextualized standard French, focusing on the written form, privileging the advanced class who excelled at school French, but did not incorporate French into their private speech to affirm Francophone identities. However, achieving proficiency in French provided these students with additional
career opportunities. Ironically, the Canadian French-speaking students who were marginalized as language minorities living in Toronto learned that their variety of French was not the privileged or legitimate variety of the school, which further devalued their language variety.

**Language Standardization**

In Bourdieu’s (1991) discussion of the production and reproduction of legitimate language, he referred to the French revolution in order to describe the historical process by which French became the legitimate language and to explain his ideas of symbolic domination and symbolic violence. In an additional example, Bourdieu drew from the 19th century French educational system, which he argued played a significant role in normalizing the French language. He posited that one of the most important factors in devaluing dialects was the connection between the language of an educated speaker and the work opportunities an educated speaker was afforded within the emerging industrialized labor market. Once this connection was established, language became a class marker, solidifying the standardization of French.

Although Bourdieu’s (1991) examples were situated within the sociocultural context of historical France, his notion of symbolic domination and symbolic violence through culturally recognized institutions, such as schools and language authorities, as in teachers, holds true in order to legitimize and reproduce the idealized uniformly, static language that Lippi-Green (1997) named mainstream U.S. English within the U.S. cultural context. The educational system plays a central role in the reproduction of the legitimate language of mainstream U.S. English. Educators tolerate the existence of nonmainstream varieties but encourage speakers to confine the nonmainstream language variety to the boundaries of the speaker’s home or community outside of school. When the child is at school, only mainstream U.S. English is encouraged.
Lippi-Green’s (1997) term *mainstream U.S. English* defined a uniform language that fit a set of norms. Although commonality creates a community with shared interests, standardization strips away individuality, leaving a superficial sense of sameness. Standardized identities generate stereotypes, which have no faces and are static, stiff, shallow representations of a group of people. In its uniformity, standardized language, like standardized testing, lacks individuality and creativity. A common language is needed within the classroom, but the language of the classroom does not need to delegitimize other language varieties in order to function. Language use is one of many ways for an individual to assert his identity. However, because one individual has multiple identities that change over time and serve as sites of struggle (Norton Peirce, 1995), identity cannot be adequately expressed through a single, static, standard language.

**Complementary Forms of Language**

Ethnographic studies abound (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003; Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Kanno, 2003; Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Miller, 2003; Ngo, 2010; Paris, 2011; Rampton, 1995; Toohey, 2000; Valdés, 1996; Valdes, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Yon, 2000) that have examined the connection between adolescent English learners’ identity construction and language variation within an ESL academic setting. However, in order to highlight the most salient ideas for this study, these parameters required a narrower focus.

One area of interest among language researchers has been to transcend the notion of binaries and dichotomies, such as with native/nonnative speaker or immigrant/nonimmigrant status (Kanno, 2003; Leung et al., 1997; Ngo, 2010; Paris, 2011; Rampton, 1995; Yon, 2000). Researching unique contexts, each scholar or group of scholars uncovered the complexities of dichotomous expectations about language, language proficiency, and ethnicity.
In Rampton’s (1995) groundbreaking work in sociolinguistics and multilingual youth, he explored bilingual language choices and interactions among adolescents in late industrial Britain. Despite the variety of existing terms that describe this linguistic phenomena, Rampton selected *code-switching* as the most generally accepted term and defined it as “when speakers make more extensive use of two varieties and switch between them purposefully” (p. 275). Further clarifying the term, Rampton (cited in Woolard, 1988) defined *code-switching* as an in-group phenomenon restricted to those who share the same expectations and rules of interpretation for the use of the two languages. Code-switching is thus usually seen as a device used to affirm participants’ claims to membership and the solidarity of the group in contrast to outsiders. (Woolard, 1988, pp. 69-70)

In order to share the same rules of interpretation in both languages, sociolinguists have argued that code-switchers require similar levels of proficiency in both languages.

Although Woolard’s (1988) definition held explanatory power for this study, a more complex explanation of code-switching was needed for a meaningful understanding of the topic. In connecting language choice with identity, Mendoza-Denton and Osborne (2010) presented two prevalent perspectives on code-switching and argued that instead of determining one language to be the base language or “matrix language,” with the other being the “embedded language,” sociolinguists should refrain from predetermining categories in order to allow the interlocutors to establish locally relevant meanings and identities. Releasing a binary interpretation of language choice and usage creates space for a dialogic Bakhtinian approach of hybridity, which is created with “the mixing, within a single concrete utterance, of two or more different linguistic consciousnesses” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 429).

In Rampton’s (1995) discussion of code-switching, he distinguished between *discourse-related* changes in language use and *participant-related* switches. In a discourse-related language change, the speaker is “marking out a different addressee, a new topic, [and] a distinct narrative.
segment” (p. 277). With participant-related switches, the speaker makes changes according to her proficiency with the languages and her language preferences.

Rampton’s (1995) research developed the notion of *code-crossing*, which is a subset of code switching. Although code-crossing involves the exchange of words between languages and interlanguage word play, Rampton found that the in-group of multiethnic language users often had high levels of proficiency in only one of the two or more languages being used. Furthermore, Rampton’s findings indicate that code-crossing often occurred with adolescents who were not members of the language group. Because language has been traditionally recognized as a significant marker of ethnicity, framing his study of language crossing in terms of race and class made an important impact on perceptions linking language and ethnicity. Rampton disrupted the rigid association between language, ethnicity, and class to argue that language crossing occurred when a speaker used a language variety to traverse ethnic or class boundaries. His study exemplified adolescents who used language as a tool for agency to break free of socially constructed restraints.

In his ethnographic study exploring the relationship of language, ethnicity, and identity of urban youth, Paris (2011) expanded Rampton’s notion of language crossing to include *language sharing*. Paris found that in-group speakers of the heritage language, whether it was the African American Language, Spanish, or Samoan, continued their interactions in that language with out-group peers who attempted to join in the conversation without ridicule or criticism. Paris argued that language sharing enabled speakers “to use a range of linguistic practices in a multiethnic and multilingual society” (p. 15). Notably, Paris included the caveat that the linguistic dexterity required for language sharing did not automatically remove social barriers for the speaker.
Leung et al. (1997) built on Rampton’s earlier work on language crossing to argue that a fixed correlation between languages and ethnicities found in ESL settings allowed for only flat representations of multiethnic, multicultural selves. Their argument corresponded to an earlier assertion in this study that although language and culture influence one another, languages are not bound to one culture; language users are able to cross any socially constructed category in using their language. Leung et al. (1997) maintained that terms such as native speaker and mother tongue reduce complex identities and language use to simple dichotomies and, more importantly, elevate one language user over another. The native speaker concept then becomes the unattainable goal for the English learner who can never reach native speaker status, but only strive to be compared to one.

Complicating the binary relationship of native versus non-native speaker, Leung et al. (1997) offered the alternative concepts of language expertise, language affiliation, and language inheritance. Language expertise relates to the level of proficiency an individual has in a particular language. Language affiliation expresses the attachment an individual feels toward a certain language regardless of social constraints, such as ethnicity or nationality. The final term, language inheritance, considers individuals who are born into a language tradition within their families and communities. Because each of the three concepts is independent of the other two, the levels of participation or identification with each group varies among individuals. For example, an individual born into a family who are speakers of a minority language may relate most to the language inheritance group, less with the language affiliation group, and the least with the language expertise group.

Language researchers who focused their scholarship on the topic of ambivalent identities and language use (Kanno, 2003; Ngo, 2010; Yon, 2000) built their work on Norton Peirce’s
(1995) concept that identity is contradictory, shifts over time and place. Ngo (2010) combined Norton’s ideas with Yon’s (2000) *roots* and *routes* metaphor to portray that culture is heritage, but it is also intertwined with the pathways of an individual’s life, creating flow through time and space. Kanno (2003) studied *kikokushijo*, Japanese adolescents who spent several years abroad, then returned to Japan and experienced difficulties re-adapting to Japanese culture. Kanno’s study found that the *kikokushijo* recognized the symbolic capital of the majority language (both English and Japanese). Proficiency in the majority language ensured access to the local community. However, knowledge of the minority language distinguished them as unique, setting them apart in both positive and negative ways.

**Adolescent English Learners in School Contexts**

Kanno (2003) found that upon arrival at a North American school, her Japanese participants initially did not determine how they wanted to belong to the school community, only that they assessed their chances of gaining eligibility for membership. As her students gained more sophisticated skills in negotiating social expectations, they shifted their focus from trying to fit in with a group to looking for groups that fit with them. Kanno acknowledged that this is a common characteristic of adolescent development in that as the maturing adolescent feels increasingly more comfortable with himself, he will follow this pattern. However, she argued that this characteristic was intensified for individuals negotiating different languages and cultures.

Framed within a critical approach, Espinoza-Herold (2003) documented that participants in her study connected their sense of apathy with “a lack of connection between school curriculum and the reality of their communities and experiences” (p. 8). Articulating this divide between school and home supports Valdés’ (1996) notion of cultural mismatch between U.S.
educators and Latino families. More broadly stated, the cultural mismatch illustrated the embodiment of U.S. cultural values and linguistic standards through schools, requiring newcomers to assimilate the dominant values and to abandon all other sets of values (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003; Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Kanno (2003) noted that her students’ schools “were intent on asking whether the students were good enough for them, but they rarely considered whether they were good enough for the students” (p. 134).

Kanno’s (2003) implications for education were salient to this study’s goal of determining educational needs for Latino English learners. As the educational focus was on cognitive aspects of learning, there was little opportunity for English learners to engage socially in a low-risk setting with more proficient English speakers. Although group work was recommended as an opportunity for language interaction, Kanno argued that academic group projects posed a higher risk setting for the English learner who might avoid seeking out a partner for fear of being a burden on the members of his group. Kanno’s findings revealed a need from her participants for social interaction and recommended expanding the pedagogical and linguistic goals for English learners within their educational contexts so their language learning process involved additional discourses besides academic in order to provide an array of opportunities to become full members of their school communities.

Kanno (2003) offered several ways for educators to engage English learners as complex individuals. Believing in students’ potential of what they might accomplish in 5 or 10 years sustained Norton Peirce’s (1995) notion of identities that are multiple, that change over time, and are the site of struggle. In order to believe in students’ potential, it was important to listen attentively to what they said. Receiving the full attention and recognition from an adult could be meaningful to the adolescent and allowed the adult to become acquainted with the multiple
identities of his student. However, listening is not sufficient. To understand how discourses overlap within the school setting, English learners need a mentor to guide them into and through different discourses.

Summary of Chapter 2

The initial discussion of the complex relationship between language, culture, and identity introduced the theoretical framework of identity theory, particularly in terms of imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities within the language learning context. A brief review of cultural historical activity theory problematizes the dialogic tension between the individual and his sociocultural context is considered in the discussion of the relationship between language and agency, and language and Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic domination, where language is legitimized or standardized. The impact that language standardization had on complementary forms of language was discussed especially when concerning adolescent language learners’ identity construction within educational contexts.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Because the research questions of this study explored the beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of adolescent English learners within natural settings, this study lent itself to qualitative inquiry. Through the genre of a multiple case study, the researcher investigated the impact of multilingualism on adolescent English learner identity construction. Each case was composed of the adolescent English learner and key adults in the adolescent’s life such as the primary caregiver, content area teacher, and ESL Specialist. The multiple components of cultural historical activity theory operationalized the study’s theoretical framework of identity theory and language legitimization through symbolic domination. Triangulating with methods that respect the dignity of participants, the researcher analyzed data from each case to obtain a detailed picture of the adolescent EL’s experiences with multilingualism and identity construction (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). With this design in mind, the research questions were as follows:

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?
Methodological Assumptions

Before giving a detailed review of the study’s design and methodology, it is important to consider the researcher’s methodological assumptions in order to strengthen the integrity of the study. As an advocate for adolescent English learners, the researcher’s intent is not neutral, but seeks to discover the educational needs and goals of the participants in order to focus on the growth of the whole person. The purpose of this study was to offer a theory of educational needs that merges identity construction in multilingual contexts with current pedagogical trends within the teaching field of English as a Second Language. The researcher aimed for an audience that would include a variety of educators from both higher education and K-12 settings.

Methodological Limitations

Because the purpose of the study was to inform educational thought and practice concerning English learners, the high school was chosen as the primary setting for the study. Although school faculty and administrators were welcoming and fully cooperative, access to students should be considered a limitation to the study. Limited access to students occurred at several different levels. At the school level, periodic standardized testing rearranged daily schedules, cancelled bells, and occupied one of the participants, Mariposa. At an individual level, my participants, particularly Brisa and Kimberly, were often absent when I went to observe them or talk to them during bonus period. Initially, I had difficulties finding all three girls because I had been given out-of-date class schedules that did not reflect more recent changes. Occasionally, I appeared at the door of a class to find that they were not in the room. Later, I learned that these classes might periodically go to the computer lab. One important limitation is that I was not able to gain access to settings away from school, such as home, work, church, or
the mall, where Mariposa or Brisa spent their time when not on the school campus. Kimberly’s mother invited me once to their house for dinner.

Limited access to nonschool settings relates directly to other major limitations in the study: time and trust. I underestimated the time it would take my participants to create their visual self-portraits and to write journal entries. Therefore, I extended the data collection period in order to reach the data saturation point. Although the data collection period was prolonged beyond the initial 12-week period to 20 weeks, the extension still barely offered time to build the trust needed to gain access into the private space of all three girls and their families. I only gained access to Kimberly’s house because both she and her mother had open and social personalities.

Only toward the end of the 20-week period was I beginning to gain Brisa’s trust. However, I was not able to gain her mother’s trust in order to meet with her face to face. We had several phone conversations, when I explained the study in detail and the privacy protections that were in place. I called several times to set up an appointment for an interview with Brisa’s mother, but when I did go at the agreed upon days and times, no one answered the door. I chose not to ask for a phone interview because the quality of communication would have been diminished due to the distractions of childcare (for Brisa’s mother) and conducting the interview in Spanish without recording the conversation (for me). Several weeks into the data collection process, I mailed her the IRB consent forms as well as sending copies home with Brisa. The following week, I received a signed copy from Brisa.

An additional limitation, relating to trust, involved my conflicting roles as researcher and school authority figure. For 3 days a week, I acted as researcher and at the high school as facilitator of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Resource Center. Although this role made
initial access into the school easier, the combination of the two roles as participant-researcher and ESL Center facilitator divided my time and my attention, creating a significant limitation to the study.

**Defining the Case**

Although the term *case study* can mean both the process and the product, one topic of concern for researchers is defining the case itself (Gerring, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1998, 2005; Yin, 2009). In describing its adaptability to a variety of research methods, Stake (2005) argued that “the case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 443). Gerring’s (2004) definition of case study provides a solid base from which to begin. He explained that a case study is “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (p. 342). A unit, the case, could include any example that is observed for a set amount of time, such as an individual, an institution, an event, or a nation. Setting the boundaries of the case is critical to the success of the case study, which echoes Stake’s (2005) well-known description of the case as a “specific, unique bounded system” (p. 445). The boundaries of this study’s case comprise an adolescent English learner as the primary participant, with a parent/primary caregiver, a core content area teacher, and the ESL Specialist as secondary or supporting participants in the case. The intensive study focuses specifically on English learners’ use of language in their day-to-day lives and how language is used to express their identities.

Case study research is situated within a variety of contexts that affect and influence the lives of individuals. Case study researchers draw from sociocultural, historical, physical, and economic contexts, among others, to learn both the commonly shared and unique elements of the case being studied. Because every case will have multiple characteristics, the researcher must
choose which ones to highlight. In studying an English learner’s use of language on an everyday basis, the researcher observes what is naturally occurring within the context of the study. As the researcher reflects on, describes, and interprets everyday events and local meanings, the study takes on the characteristics of an ethnographic case study (Stake, 2005).

Patton (2002) described steps to take in order to generate a case study. The first step is to collect the data. This process is observational and reflective, depending heavily on the abilities of the researcher to distinguish and prioritize the assembled data, which is the second step: condensing the data into a manageable file. The third step is to produce the final case study narrative, which describes or illustrates the story of the case and may be organized either chronologically or thematically. In the telling of the story, the content of the case emerges through the process of writing. As the patterns of data come to light within each case, the researcher can employ cross-case analysis in order to establish commonalities or distinctions between cases.

Setting

The study took place in a mid-size town in Alabama. Institutions that significantly contribute to the community’s economic stability included local colleges, a university, and a car factory. According to the 2010 Census, the county’s population was 194,656 and since 2000 has increased by 18.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In Table 1, additional census figures describe racial and ethnic percentages of county residents; they also describe the percentage of immigrants living in the county between the years 2005–2009 and the percentage of households who spoke a language other than English at home between the years of 2005–2009.
Table 1

2010 Census Demographics of an Alabama County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic Persons</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Persons</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native Persons</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origins</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons of Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English spoken in the home (2005–2009)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study’s primary setting was a secondary school in the city school district, which had a total of 22 facilities and served approximately 10,000 K-12 students. According to public data reports located on the ALSDE website for the academic year 2012-2013, River High School was one of three public high schools in the school system with 838 students enrolled. Of the 838 students enrolled in Grades 9-12, 4 students identified themselves as Asian males, 307 as Black females, 368 as Black males, 14 as Hispanic females, 14 as Hispanic males, 1 student as a multirace female, 70 students as White females, and 60 students as White males. Fifty-four percent, or 460 students, were eligible for free lunch, with another 74 students, or 8%, eligible for lunch at a reduced price (Alabama State Department of Education, 2012).
Participants

To achieve criterion sampling (Miles & Hubermann, 1994), participants in the study needed to share the following criteria: attendance at a secondary public school, exposure to English during the school day and during instruction, and exposure to Spanish at home or in other settings. It was important that participants also shared similarities in additional criteria such as age, length of time living in the United States, and proficiency levels in both English and Spanish. However, the study allowed for greater flexibility within the parameters of these criteria to allow for variation within potential participants’ life experiences. The girls who chose to participate shared many commonalities within these criteria. The following descriptions clarify the last three criterion parameters and their significance to the study.

Second language acquisition theories determine age as an important aspect in language learning because an individual’s age correlates to social and cultural expectations from the community, as well as affects human development, which influences behavior and choices (Ellis, 1994). All three participants were either 14 or 15 years of age corresponding to U.S. cultural norms of adolescence and were in either the ninth or tenth grade at the same high school.

The second criterion for participants, length of time living in the United States, has a significant impact on individual linguistic and cultural interactions. There was flexibility within the parameters of this study to allow for individual variation for this criterion. However, the participants all immigrated to the United States between the ages of 6 and 7. Researcher-educators across a variety of fields (Davidson, 2011) have found that English learners who immigrated to the United States as young children and have attended school mostly in the United States often “share language characteristics of both first and second generation immigrants” (p. 13); a category known as the Generation 1.5 has been created for this group of individuals’
specific language needs. The Generation 1.5 individual can comfortably communicate in everyday English. However, a discrepancy appears between the individual’s speaking abilities and her writing abilities, especially writing in an academic context, which, according to the ESL Specialist, was a language characteristic the participants shared.

All three girls were in the ESL program, which addressed part of the last criterion concerning proficiency in English and Spanish for participant participation. Because the researcher’s interest was in exploring the needs of English learners, it was important for the participants to learn some aspect of English and therefore be in the ESL program. The three participants shared not only similar proficiency levels in English, ranging from 3 to 4 on the WIDA English Language Proficiency scale, but they also shared the basic commonality of negotiating the registers that Cummins (1979, 1981) named BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), more commonly referred to as social and academic language, respectively.

Alabama State Department of Education determined that an English learner is proficient and eligible to exit the ESL program when a score of 4.8 (out of 6.0) is achieved on the cumulative score for the language proficiency test called ACCESS for ELLs®, Assessing Comprehension and Communication State to State for English Language Learners (Goertzen et al., 2010). ACCESS for ELLs tests both social and academic language in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as academic language in the four content areas, math, science, English language arts, and history. All students in the ESL program must complete all parts of ACCESS for ELLs every spring. Test scores measure individual student progress in their English language proficiency (ELP). School districts use this data to
evaluate the effectiveness of their ESL programs to advance English Learners in the English acquisition process (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013).

The second part of the final criterion concerning proficiency in Spanish allowed for the greatest flexibility among participants. Obtaining the initial criterion of exposure to Spanish as home language, as well as being in the ESL program, then the participants could include Spanish as they felt most comfortable. The researcher’s proficiency in Spanish allowed for both Spanish and English to be incorporated into the research process. In this way, the 3 adolescent participants and their families were free to use any combination of Spanish and English in order to express themselves to the fullest so that the richest data was obtained.

Table 2 describes all participants and their roles in this study. Each case was comprised of one English learner as the primary participant, as well as one primary caregiver, one content area teacher and one ESL Specialist as secondary participants. Each case consisted of persons surrounding the adolescent because an individual’s identity not only emanates from the individual but is also mirrored back from others in her environment. One of the most powerful influences in an adolescent’s life is her peers. Notably, this study included the adults who interacted with the adolescent, instead of peers. To highlight the connection between the participant’s language, culture, and identity with her personal and educational goals, the researcher chose to include individuals who helped clarify the participant’s educational needs, rather than focus on social needs.

Every adult participating in the case study offered an important perspective relating to the participant’s daily life. The caregiver provided perspective on the EL’s experiences outside of school, providing insight into how the participant negotiated her identity between home, school, and other contexts. The ESL Specialist provided expert knowledge pertaining to the student’s
English language proficiency level and, accordingly, what academic assistance best supported the EL. The third adult participant, the content area teacher, discussed the student’s social and academic experiences in that content class.

Because there was only one primary caregiver and one ESL Specialist for the school, there was only one person who met those criteria. However, the teacher participant had a different selection process. Every student had four content area teachers (e.g., math, science, social studies, and English language arts), and the interview for participating teacher addressed the teacher’s perceptions of the student’s language choices to express her identity, particularly in the classroom. Therefore, the researcher used snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998), in asking participants to recommend the content area teacher for the interview. A recommendation from the student indicated a positive, established student-teacher relationship, creating an opportunity for richer data collection, including teacher insights into educational goals for the students. To articulate these insights, the content area teacher needed to have a high level of awareness of the EL in the classroom.

**Primary Participant Summary**

The primary participants shared several characteristics, such as they were all immigrant adolescent females between the ages of 14 and 15 from various provinces in Mexico. They had lived in the United States similar lengths of time, and their proficiency levels in English were at similar levels. Because this study was about identity and language, each participant chose her own pseudonym.
Table 2

Role and Description of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Participants</th>
<th>Description of Participants</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sampling Strategy</th>
<th>How participant will interact with study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Learner (Mariposa, Kimberly, Brisa)</td>
<td>Between 14-15, enrolled in ESL program, home language is Spanish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Criterion Sampling</td>
<td>Self-portrait journals interviews observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother of participant Ana (Mariposa) Irene (Kimberly)</td>
<td>Primary caregiver (mother)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Criterion Sampling</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Area Teacher Davis (Mariposa) Jones (Kimberly) Hall (Brisa)</td>
<td>Science teacher (Mariposa) English teacher (Kimberly) Math teacher (Brisa)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Criterion Sampling</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Specialist Ms. Brown</td>
<td>ESL Specialist responsible for ELs during data collection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Criterion Sampling</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number is the number of participants in that category (e.g., EL, caregiver).

Mariposa was a petite 15-year-old girl in the 10th grade. She chose Mariposa (butterfly) as her pseudonym because butterflies were her favorite animal. Mariposa had lived in the United States since she was 6 years old. She lived with her mother, Ana, and her older sister, Clara, who was a senior in high school. Her sister had a car and drove them to school, so staying for after-school tutoring was a possibility. Mariposa had an American boyfriend, Lee, who was a senior football player. During her school day, Mariposa focused on school work and was surrounded by English speakers. She ate lunch and talked occasionally in the hallways to her friend, Lucía, also
a Spanish speaker in the 10th grade. Mariposa reported that she spoke mostly English with Lucía, so except with her sister, Mariposa almost never spoke Spanish at school.

In September, when the data collection process began, Mariposa was suspended for fighting with the other two participants, Kimberly and Brisa. According to Mariposa and Kimberly, the fight occurred between Mariposa and Brisa when Brisa insulted Mariposa’s mother and Mariposa tried to hit Brisa; Kimberly got involved to prevent further fighting. All three girls were suspended for 1 day. There was no additional contact between Kimberly and Brisa with Mariposa. The secondary participants in Mariposa’s case were her mother, Ana, as primary caregiver, Ms. Brown, the ESL Specialist, and Ms. Davis, her 10th-grade physical science teacher.

Kimberly was a smiling, chatty 14-year-old in the ninth grade. She chose Kimberly because she liked the name, adding that she would like to name her future daughter Kimberly. Like Mariposa, Kimberly had lived in the United States since she was 6 years old. At that time, the researcher was working in the school system as an ESL Specialist and remembered Kimberly as a young child when she began school. During this study, Kimberly was living with her mother, father, and 4-year old brother. Kimberly and Brisa were best friends and had most of their classes together. Of the three participants, Kimberly was very comfortable interchangephrases and words in English and Spanish as she told her stories and communicated her thoughts.

Through fall semester, Kimberly got into trouble in school. After getting suspended for fighting with Mariposa in September, she and Brisa got caught skipping in October and November. The second time caused Kimberly to get suspended from school for a day and required a parent conference with the assistant principal. After Christmas, Kimberly attended class more regularly, but because of the past trouble at school, she was not given a quinceañera
birthday party when she turned 15 in March. This was a significant consequence for Kimberly because this party is an important rite of passage for the teenage Latina to be officially introduced into society as a “señorita.” Kimberly’s secondary participants were her mother, Tina, her English Language Arts teacher, Ms. Jones, and the ESL Specialist, Ms. Brown.

Brisa (breeze) was a reserved 15-year-old ninth grader. She, too, chose this pseudonym because she liked it but she did not explain her reason. Later in the study, she complained about the name, but never offered a substitute. Although she and Kimberly were best friends, they had very different personalities. Where Kimberly was bouncy and chatty, Brisa was very quiet and reserved with the occasional, very beautiful smile. Because Brisa and Kimberly were best friends and spent so much time together at school, they could seamlessly glide between Spanish and English in their conversations.

Of the three participants, Brisa was the most challenging for the researcher to get to know. Brisa did not lightly share personal information; over time, bits and pieces of her life were revealed mostly through multiple, informal conversations with both Kimberly and Brisa. From both the conversations and interviews, the researcher learned that during the study, Brisa lived with her mother, her four younger sisters (ages: 11, 10, 6, and 3 years) as well as Brisa’s own infant daughter who grew from 3 to 7 months over the course of the data collection period. Although Brisa and Kimberly were caught skipping school together, Brisa did not reap the observable consequences that Kimberly did, as there were no parent-teacher conferences or suspensions administered to the researcher’s knowledge.

Brisa’s secondary participants were her mother, her math teacher, Ms. Hall and the ESL Specialist, Ms. Brown. However, because the researcher could not gain a face-to-face interview with Brisa’s mother, the researcher interviewed Brisa’s English language arts teacher, Ms. Jones.
Participant Observer

In organizing the study, the researcher anticipated that academic tutoring or exploration into postsecondary studies, such as preparing for college admission exams, looking for colleges, or applying for financial aid, would lead the researcher into the role of participant observer. However, the researcher’s role of participant observer added an unexpected dimension.

Researcher Positionality

The earlier discussion of researcher positionality in chapter 1 articulated my epistemological perspective relating to the origins of topic choice and my theoretical assumptions. That section holds true, keeping its place in the study’s introduction. However, during the data collection process, I found myself in multiple and sometimes contradictory roles, layered in history, authority, and research, that simultaneously positioned me as an outsider, but also afforded me opportunities to engage in a broader span of experiences relating to my participants. Complementing the idea that the qualitative researcher is an instrument of data collection, a brief discussion of the complexity and contradictions of the roles will both enrich the context of the study as well as offer transparency for the findings.

Gaining Access

As a former ESL Specialist for the school system where I carried out my research, I had maintained professional relationships with the faculty in the system’s ESL program. However, enough time and employee change had occurred at the district level, that I no longer retained an insider status in general. However, I encountered many teachers and staff during my time at the high school who remembered me as a former school district employee. As I prepared my application for the university’s Institutional Review Board, I learned that my name had been recommended as one who could serve as facilitator for an ESL resource center at River high
school. Knowing that the primary context for the study would be school, I saw this opportunity to gain access to a building, the students, and the employee network.

**Multiple Roles**

Physical access to the building, the students, information about students, as well as additional logistical support from administrators, educators, and support staff contributed significantly to the success of the early data collection process. In return, I found myself in dual roles as researcher and ESL resource facilitator. Early field notes recorded my difficulties in sorting out my responsibilities, specifically relating to time management. I wrote, “[The roles] all dovetail, and there is great potential for everything to work together. However, my priority must always remain my research and staying on the data collection schedule” (Field Notes).

An additional limitation to managing the dual roles emerged as two participants, Kimberly and Brisa, began to miss increasing amounts of class, leading to confrontations with school authorities. At this juncture, I recognized a potential conflict of interest and a pull from both past and present roles. My past role as ESL Specialist continued to play a part, because Kimberly’s mother remembered me from years past as ESL Specialist, re-establishing this earlier relationship.

When a meeting was set to discuss Kimberly’s attendance issues, both her parents and the school’s assistant principal requested that I interpret at the meeting. As past and present ESL roles converged, both roles supported the parent and school perspective in the situation. However, because my primary participants were adolescents, I wondered if interpreting and supporting the authority figures in this situation would hinder my process of building trust with the participant involved in the meeting. After the meeting, Kimberly continued to engage in the data collection process with a smile, so it was difficult to determine if she harbored mistrust. Just
as gaining access to the school provided both opportunities and limitations, so did entrance to the attendance meeting. Participating in the attendance meeting caused me to question my ability to gain Kimberly’s trust; however, it also gave me access to rich data about Kimberly and her relationship with her mother, leading to insights about Kimberly and her family relationships.

Although I had developed a relationship from the past, spoke Spanish, and could act as interpreter in school meetings, I retained an outsider status with both the parents and the participants during the study. Surface reasons, such as ethnicity, class, or the weight of the educational institutions that I represented may have slowed the trust-building process initially. Over time, I built a level of trust between the participants and myself. However, I also uncovered my assumptions about respecting the participant’s privacy and my role as ethnographic researcher to learn the emic perspective. These conflicting approaches toward my role in the ethnographic research process resulted in limiting my interactions with the participants to the school setting and narrowed the focus of the study.

**Time Frame for Study**

In order to begin the study, the researcher first approached the school principal. Her written permission to conduct the study in the school building facilitated the approval of the school system as well as of the university’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). Once approval at the institutional level was complete, the next step was to meet English learners at the high school who met the criteria for the study (see participant section for details). The ESL Specialist arranged for a meeting with all Spanish-speaking English learners.

After speaking with them in a group and later as individuals, the researcher determined which adolescents showed enough interest in participating in the study and followed up with another meeting to fully disclose the research process, including the proposed 12-week time
frame and each activity. Mariposa agreed to participate 2 weeks earlier than Kimberly and Brisa, allowing the researcher to begin the data collection process with Mariposa first. Because most of the data collection occurred at school, conversations and interviews were conducted only during a free period in the morning, known as bonus period. Absences or changes in schedule due to school-wide testing limited the researcher’s opportunities to interact with the participants, causing the data collection period to extend from 12 weeks to 20 weeks (see Table 3).

Mariposa showed interest in participating almost immediately after our initial conversation. In order to begin the study, Mariposa’s mother, Ana, needed to sign the consent form, and Mariposa needed to sign the assent form. Because of work schedules, it was most practical for Mariposa to take the forms home and talk with her mom about it. Her mother did sign the consent form, but the researcher also called Ana to talk more in detail about the study and to address any questions or concerns she had.

Kimberly showed less interest initially than Mariposa, and Kimberly was often not in class when the researcher looked for her. Two weeks after Mariposa agreed to participate in the study, Kimberly agreed to participate. She took the consent form home for her parents to sign. Within a day or two of agreeing to participate, Kimberly’s mother came to school to address Kimberly’s attendance problems. At that time, the researcher talked with her in person about the study. Kimberly’s mother had already talked with Kimberly and agreed to give her permission and to participate herself in the study, but Kimberly had not been able to find the first consent form, so her mother signed the form again.

Brisa followed Kimberly’s lead and agreed to participate in the study as well. The researcher had the opportunity to talk with Brisa alone one day and was satisfied that Brisa actually did independently choose to participate in the study. Early in the study, contact with
Brisa’s mother was infrequent because she did not answer phone calls from the researcher, and Brisa was an unreliable messenger, often forgetting or losing communications that the researcher requested be sent home. The researcher did eventually speak with Brisa’s mother on the phone and explained the study. The researcher mailed a copy of the consent forms in English and Spanish to Brisa’s home. Within a few days, Brisa brought back the signed consent form.

Table 3

*Data Collection Time Frame for Mariposa (M), Kimberly (K), and Brisa (B)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Field Notes</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Journals</th>
<th>Self-Portrait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>K B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>K B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M K B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td>K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>M K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>M K B</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66
Data Collection Methods

Journals

Gaining a deeper understanding of the adolescent English learners’ experience from an emic perspective was vital to the integrity of this study. With prompts provided (see Appendix B), autobiographical writing offered Mariposa, Kimberly, and Brisa an opportunity to express themselves through written discourse in the language(s) of their choice. The researcher encouraged the participants to choose one or two topics to write about. Although the option of technology was given, not everyone was comfortable with using wikis or Google Docs, so the researcher asked them to handwrite their answers either at home or during bonus period at school. A few of the prompts encouraged reflection on the future in order to elicit information about the participant’s vision for his or her future, including educational and personal goals. The third prompt was to create an audio journal, where the participant used a digital recorder to narrate her day, including transitions from home to school, class to class, and afternoon and evening activities. The fourth prompt was to write a letter to her future-self 5 years in the future. Once the letter was written, she could attach it to the website www.futureme.org, and in 5 years she would receive an email containing this letter from the website.

Visual Self-Portrait

At the beginning of the data collection process, the researcher asked participants to create a visual self-portrait that represented aspects of their identities that they recognized in themselves and aspects of their identities that others recognized. This was described as viewing their inner and outer identities. The participants were encouraged to select from a variety of forms, such as a collage, a video, a drawing, a photograph, or a series of photographs that could be produced digitally, on paper, or as a three-dimensional model. The participant could choose any form;
however, the researcher requested that each participant explain her self-portrait upon completion. The research intended for the participants to create a visual conceptualization of themselves. Because images can be interpreted in various ways, the researcher requested a verbal explanation from each participant in order to better grasp the participant’s intended meaning.

The researcher suggested that all three participants use the website Glogster.com in order to create a digital poster. Mariposa decided to use Glogster and within a few minutes had created an account and chosen a template for her digital poster. However, the project took much longer than expected. Mariposa worked on it at home and during the bonus or advisory period.

Kimberly and Brisa began their project a few weeks later. They had difficulties managing the website, so they opted for creating a PowerPoint presentation instead. They worked on the project together, without much guidance from the researcher. They significantly changed the organization of the project by creating categories that were meaningful for them. Each category was a separate slide, which coincided with the software format. Although Kimberly and Brisa chose many of the same categories (favorite music, friends, or foods), they also included categories that were uniquely theirs. These images and photographs that each girl has chosen to represent herself are significant and provide an excellent base for future in-depth interviews.

Field Notes

A fundamental component of any interaction in the field was the collection of field notes that accompanied each observational and interview episode. Using “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) to describe observed behaviors in the sociohistorical and physical context in which they occurred deepens understanding of the behavior, especially as the researcher was observing initially from an etic or outsider’s perspective. Because the researcher observed events, actions, and behaviors through the lens of the study’s theoretical framework, writing field notes involved
the researcher’s perception and interpretation as well as biases and assumptions. Continuous note-taking and analysis were critical to generating field notes in which patterns became apparent to the researcher and constant reflection was imperative in order to maintain a high level of researcher reflexivity. As the researcher became more familiar with the participants’ daily lives, it was important to build new understandings and familiarity with earlier, more detached perceptions.

The researcher made abbreviated notes during observations or immediately after each interview using a researcher-generated field notes form (see Appendix C), while keeping the research questions in mind in order to describe the interactions as fully as possible. In order to support multiple perspectives, the researcher used the field notes form to write personal experiences in first person and report what she saw others doing and saying in third person. In order to better comprehend the participants’ perspective, it was not only important to recognize terms that participants used to describe themselves, but also to identify the context surrounding the use of those terms (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). To document multiple perspectives of an activity, the researcher implemented various components of cultural historical activity theory in order to engage the researcher’s theoretical framework during the note-taking process.

Observations

Observation is a primary method for collecting data within the tradition of qualitative inquiry because flexibility within the method allows for new insights and research paths to emerge by observing participants within naturalistic settings. Researchers may choose to observe without engaging the participants directly or to become more involved with the activity at hand, taking on the role of participant-observer. Because of this flexibility, it was critical that the
researcher maintain focus on the research questions during observations in order to see through the lens of the chosen conceptual framework (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Within the parameters of this study, the researcher employed observations to address each of the four research questions relating to the participants’ strategies for negotiating their identity and language choices throughout the daily events. Every week, the researcher observed each participant in at least one class as well as movement through the hallways. The researcher observed each participant in all of her classes at least once.

**Interviews**

Like observations, the interview is a fundamental method for gathering data within the field of qualitative inquiry. Particularly in-depth interviews offered opportunities to dig under the surface of everyday occurrences to uncover new insights and information about the research questions. In order to allow participants the maximum opportunity to share meaningful insights relating to their identity construction and language choices, the researcher conducted unstructured in-depth interviews with each participant (Seidman, 1998).

The in-depth interview, as opposed to a more structured interview, combined the structure needed to achieve the purpose of the interview as well as the flexibility needed to pursue topics that arose spontaneously during the interview. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to respond freely, creating opportunities for the researcher to ask follow-up questions if needed in order to gain a clearer, deeper understanding of the participant’s beliefs and opinions relating to her identity construction and language choices (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

The researcher, as the instrument, exhibited several important qualities during the interview in order to create a successful interview interaction. The ability to listen was essential
for the researcher in order to digest the participant’s message. In addition to listening, the researcher needed to sift through all the information, using the theoretical framework, in order to recognize the participant’s message. Particularly in this study, understanding the language and culture of the participants facilitates authentic communication during the interview process, supporting the bilingual researcher’s choice to focus on individuals whose languages are Spanish and English (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Legard et al., 2003).

The researcher followed Legard et al.’s (2003) description of the steps taken during an in-depth interview. The first step was for the interviewer to meet each participant. With this study, the researcher built a rapport with Mariposa, Kimberly, and Brisa with informal conversations about the study, observing each of them in a variety of classes, and in working together on the visual portrait. Because Kimberly and Brisa were best friends and had most of their classes together, the researcher interacted with them as a pair. As friends, they shared a deeply contextualized language, which included both Spanish and English. Their shared language and interactions made them (as a pair) particularly interesting to the researcher. Therefore, the researcher interviewed them as a pair, asking one a set of questions, then the other. However, both Kimberly and Brisa were interviewed separately at least once. Because the three girls did not get along, the researcher always engaged with Mariposa independently from the other participants. Although the interview questions were open, none of the girls’ answers were verbose or off-topic. Indeed, many times follow-up questions and encouragement from the researcher was necessary for the girls to expand on cursory answers.

Besides drawing from a list of basic questions for the primary participants (see Appendix D), the researcher built on themes for the first interview that included questions arising from the self-portrait project and initial observations. The researcher reminded the girls that all
information in the interview was protected and confidential (Legard et al., 2003). The researcher wrote field notes immediately after each interview in order to document insights, contextual descriptions, and initial connections. For adult participants, the researcher used a bilingual protocol for the primary caregiver that focused on activities outside of school (see Appendix E), and a protocol for the content area teacher and ESL Specialist that emphasized interactions in school (see Appendix F).

**Transcription and Translation**

The act of transposing the spoken word to the written word required interpretation and analysis on the part of the transcriber/researcher. During transcription, paralinguistic clues were no longer available; therefore, transcription conventions had to be noted so that the reader could gain the richest understanding of the verbal interaction.

Some interview transcriptions contained a combination of both Spanish and English, or were entirely in Spanish, creating an additional set of issues to address. The first issue involved analyzing language choices within hegemonic systems. Translating interviews into English provided access to an English-speaking audience but not a Spanish-speaking audience, which continued to feed the hegemony of the English-speaking world.

Furthermore, translation from one language to another creates another layer of complex interpretation, as phrases and words often have multiple meanings, which the speaker could have been consciously employing or not. By consulting with the speaker to clarify linguistic and content meaning within a transcription, the researcher shared some power of analysis and interpretation with the participant. If the participant was not always able to verify the accuracy of the translation, an additional translator was needed to confirm the translation’s accuracy. To
maintain a high level of consistency, accuracy, and trustworthiness, a bilingual college-level Spanish instructor validated translations of interviews and journal entries.

Although translating both the spoken and written word (from interviews and journals) was a valuable data collection method and analytical process, the researcher recognized the importance of integrating key words and phrases in Spanish into the final text to retain the unprocessed meaning, as well as to remind the reader of the value of both languages (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Finally, when considering an emic perspective, all participants had the opportunity to review transcripts of interviews for content as well as the translations for linguistic accuracy. This strategy, known as member checks, allowed the participants to validate the accuracy of translations of interview transcripts.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness within a qualitative study took precedence within several sections of the study. For example, determining trustworthy findings related directly to a relevant sampling strategy. In this study, the sample needed to represent adolescent English learners attending a public high school in a suburban community within the southeastern region of the United States.

The Alabama state immigration law (HB-56, 2010) initially created a climate of insecurity for immigrant families, resulting in many families leaving the community. With participants and their families, the researcher acknowledged the possibility of a lowered level of trust to engage with research studies outside the school setting. In order to gain participants’ trust, the researcher needed to consistently implement a variety of trust building measures that invested in the participants’ well-being. For example, the political climate required that participants maintain complete anonymity. Besides using pseudonyms for each participant, actual data was viewed only by the researcher and her dissertation chair and kept in a locked file.
However, an essential component of building trust within the participant’s community is reciprocity. The researcher did not expect participants to willingly spend time and energy on interviews and journals, allowing observations without something in return. The researcher proposed tutoring in academic courses, in English language acquisition or for postsecondary education possibilities, such as preparing for college entrance exams. The researcher advised Mariposa on preparing for college entrance exams and encouraged her to register for advanced class in her junior year. She did not require any academic assistance. However, Brisa and Kimberly’s grades would rise and fall depending on whether they had turned in their assignments. The researcher provided structured time during most weeks to encourage the girls to turn in missed class work. All three girls seemed to like the attention and gladly worked on projects if asked.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation of data sources and of methods of analysis provided multiple perspectives that created pathways for more insightful analysis and a fuller understanding of the research questions. Because of the complexity of the study, five separate methods of data collection were selected to provide enough perspectives to confirm emerging themes. With minimal prompting, the three English learners generated two of the five sources, the visual self-portrait and journal entries, with the researcher’s intent of gleaning insights into an emic perspective. The researcher used observations in and out of the classroom to focus exclusively on the three English learners. Field notes were kept whenever the researcher interacted with any of the primary or secondary participants. The researcher interviewed the primary participants twice and held numerous informal conversations that were recorded and transcribed. Secondary participants were each interviewed one time.
To triangulate the methods of analysis, the researcher transcribed all interviews, observations, field notes, and analytic memos regarding interactions with any participant in the study. When it was necessary, the researcher translated journals and interview transcriptions from Spanish into English. As mentioned earlier, both transcription and translation are forms of data analysis. Once the transcriptions were prepared, the researcher used descriptive and in vivo coding to categorize, organize, and prepare for further analysis.

The variety of data sources (see Table 4) and methods of analysis offered unique information to each of the research questions, which are as follows:

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?

Table 4

*Data Sources that Address each Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Self-Portrait</th>
<th>Journal Entries</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Field Notes</th>
<th>Interviews 1 &amp; 2 Transcriptions</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<td>Primary Caregiver</td>
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**Data Analysis Procedure**

Cultural historical activity theory provided a frame to examine the complexity of a community and its practices while also considering the individual and her actions within the community. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) argued that “to understand both individual and community learning it is necessary to examine the nature and forms of cultural artifacts and tools used; the social relations, rules and division of labor; and the historical development of individuals and communities” (p. 22). To gain understanding of “developing individuals and changing communities,” (p. 23) the researcher must comprehend the practices involved at both levels and recognize the relationship between individual and community.

With so many factors to consider, determining the unit of analysis was critical. Contextualizing Engeström and Mietinnen’s (1999) definition of unit of analysis as a “collective and culturally mediated human activity” (p. 9), the unit of analysis became the language choices of the adolescent English learner as she experienced her daily activities and used language to express her identity. More specifically, the researcher focused on the mediating tool of language as the participant actively engaged with her larger social context.

Analyzing the data involved organizing the data and integrating layers of description in order to build abstractions. Working with these layers created an iterative process that required both inductive and deductive reasoning skills. Inductive skills were needed to infer abstractions from the collection of raw data, and deductive reasoning skills were needed to connect which abstractions from previous research applied to the current collection of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009).

Spencer, Ritchie, and O’Connor (2003) described this iterative process as an “analytic hierarchy” (p. 213), which involves three levels: data management, descriptive accounts, and
explanatory accounts. To manage raw data as it accumulated during the collection process, the researcher first made organizational decisions, such as how the information would be stored. In this study, each case was bound separately and included every component of data collection. In this initial stage, the physical boundary of each case’s data reinforced the bounded case.

Once the case boundaries were clear, the next stage of analysis was the coding process. Miles and Huberman (1994) succinctly argued that “coding is analysis” (p. 56). To code data is to provide a semantic label that assigns meaning to bits of collected information, whether they are phrases, sentences, or thoughts. Codes create the context that has been developed through the lens of the conceptual framework. To permit the most relevant analysis, codes require conceptual and structural order and should connect directly to a research question. Coding is an iterative and ongoing analytical process; as the analysis becomes more abstract, the codes will change to reflect new insights and unexpected events and perspectives (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

At the data management level, the researcher first used a color coding process to sort the data by research question. Then descriptive coding and in vivo coding were used to sort data into initial themes. Where descriptive coding often summarizes the topic of a passage in a single word, in vivo coding uses participants’ own words so that their voices become part of the analysis process. Saldaña (2009) wrote, “in vivo coding is particularly useful in educational ethnographies with youth. The child and adolescent voices are often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens an adult’s understanding of their cultures and world-views” (p. 74).

As coding continued to evolve through the data collection process, the next level of analysis, the descriptive accounts, involved reducing and synthesizing data that had been organized into general themes. This process involved identifying deeper dimensions, refining
categories, and exploring new associations and emerging gaps within the data. When constructing categories, “it should be clear that categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves” (Merriam, 1998). Categories were devised from concepts that the researcher saw arise from the data, concepts that participants initiated, and concepts supported by the literature, all of which should answer the research questions.

Translation was an important component to the data analysis process and was required for the researcher to examine the language choices of the participant as well as understand her message. Within the framework of cultural historical activity theory, language is viewed as a constructed tool to mediate the relationship between the human and her environment (Douglas & Ellis, 2011; Vygotsky, 1986). The mediating function of the tool, language in this study, unveiled a connection between social and historical processes as well as the thought process of the individuals and of the group who use the language (Douglas & Ellis, 2011). Activity theory provided a solid basis from which the researcher could interpret meaning of language used within the larger construct of the participant’s sociohistorical environment. Translation and discourse analysis supported the researcher’s interpretation of participants’ speech at a semantic and pragmatic level.

To transition from the descriptive to explanatory accounts, the third level of analysis, the researcher explained why events were happening, not merely a description of what was happening. In other words, at this level of analysis, the researcher began to generate theory (Merriam, 1998).

Moving through the analytic hierarchy, it was imperative for the researcher to keep the unit of analysis clear and in the forefront, which for this study, was the English learner’s process of identity construction. The term process indicates movement and change, which supports the
concept of a fluid, changing identity (Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). However, identity construction is also a social phenomenon, which requires the interaction of the individual with members of his or her community. Cultural historical activity theory offered the conceptual framework to analyze the activity of ELs constructing their identities.

**Summary of Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 began the discussion of research methodology with methodological assumptions in order to strengthen the integrity of the study. The definition of a case considered the boundaries, which for this study, included the adolescent Spanish-speaking English learner as primary participant, along with the primary caregiver, teacher, and ESL Specialist. Lengthy discussion was given to the criterion sampling process for primary participants. The principle setting for the study was the local public high school. The time frame for data collection was 20 weeks, and data collection methods included journals, a self-portrait, field notes, observations, interviews, transcriptions, and translations. Protecting the participants’ identities and reciprocity were discussed, as well as a review of the triangulation of data sources and theories.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the daily routines and language choices of three adolescent Latinas as they negotiated their identities through the discourses required in school and other contexts. Each adolescent girl was the primary participant and the center of one case. Secondary participants included her primary caretaker, which was the girl’s mother, the ESL Specialist for the high school, and a content area teacher selected by the primary participant.

Data sources for the three primary participants included a visual self-portrait to illustrate their identities, written journal entries on a variety of self-selected topics, observations in classroom settings, field notes, and interviews for both the primary and secondary participants in each case study. Data analyses were organized by research question and salient data sources as relating to the question. For a visual representation of data sources that addressed each research question, see Table 4.

The following research questions have guided the researcher’s investigation of multilingualism’s influence on adolescent identity construction:

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?
Introduction

In order to include as many of the participants’ perspectives as possible within the data analysis, the researcher listed salient data sources with contextualized examples of data for each research question. With the data organized in this manner, each section concluded with a brief discussion of emergent themes in relation to the study’s conceptual framework in order to bridge into the next chapter’s discussion of the findings.

Cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) provided a foundation for the study’s conceptual framework. Because the unit of analysis in CHAT is the activity and not the individual, CHAT’s structure created the flexibility to consider the sociocultural context and contradictions as well as other complexities of human activity in order to generate richer insights. The researcher viewed identity theory through the lens of being fluid and changing over time (Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995), as well as within the constraints of being imposed, assumed, or negotiated (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Because the study’s focus was about language and language choices, Bourdieu’s (1991) symbolic domination and language standardization offered a platform from which to discuss the participants’ language choices and language varieties.

Viewing the data through these theoretical lenses, the researcher uncovered the following emergent themes as significant throughout the research questions. The data indicate that the girls employed their agency in a variety of ways to assert multiple identities. Self-assertions of their identities may or may not have been in response to the second overarching theme which is about expectations. As the girls were positioned by others, cultural expectations implicitly or sometimes explicitly influenced the girls’ opinions of themselves and their interactions with people around them. Cultural expectations might have originated from U.S. culture or from
Mexican culture and might have overlapped or contradicted one other. The data demonstrate how the girls negotiated those complexities as they lived their lives. Viewing this theme through a CHAT lens, cultural expectations could be the rules of the community. The data illustrate how the girls maintained or disrupted this complicated web of expectations, using language to connect all the pieces. With this mediating tool, the participants utilized language in a variety of forms to manage, negotiate, and assert their needs, their interests, and their identities.

**Findings for Research Question 1**

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

**Visual Self-Portrait**

Culture, as a system of participation, assumes that all actions are social, including linguistic ones. Participating in language events, the speaker can evoke a larger world than the interlocutors can see, hear, or touch, and by doing so, build commonality among interlocutors.

To create the visual self-portrait, Kimberly and Brisa selected PowerPoint™ instead of Glogster. Using the alternative format, Kimberly and Brisa organized their presentations by categorizing each slide, one being for music or food with a caption at the bottom of several slides.

For many adolescents, music is an important and defining element in their daily lives, as demonstrated by Brisa and Kimberly in their visual self-portraits. Brisa included two slides with photographs of her favorite musicians. One slide had five photographs of male soloists, one photo of a female singer, and one photo of a band (see Appendix G). The second slide focused on one male singer with the caption “I luv Chuntaros <3” in the middle. The last slide of Kimberly’s presentation included a list of links to youtube videos for five of her favorite songs.
All the songs were sung in Spanish and evoked a Mexican or Mexican American cultural context. Three of the artists and their songs were:

- Los Primos de Durango (“Mienteme”)
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8eT3LQFMmY&safe=active](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8eT3LQFMmY&safe=active)
- Bachata Heightz with Hector Acosta (“Me Puedo Matar”)
- DJ Otto with 3BallMty (“Ritmo Alterado”)
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TgDdo4Ph_s&safe=active](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TgDdo4Ph_s&safe=active)

It is not necessary to understand the language of the song lyrics to enjoy the musical experience. However, when Kimberly and Brisa presented their favorite songs and groups, they also asserted their interest in belonging to this particular music community.

**Journal Entries**

The mixing of more than one language has been termed code-switching when the speaker is familiar with the rules and expectations for more than one language and integrates both languages into her message. Sociolinguists have considered motivations for code-switching, such as in-group identification, as well as categories for analysis, such as whether the code-switching is related to discourse or related to the language preferences and proficiency of the speaker.

In writing her journal entries, Kimberly mingled phrases and words of Spanish and English. Of the three participants, Kimberly used this strategy the most in her verbal and written communications during the data collection process. The technique that she used to code-switch between English and Spanish varied from Brisa’s, for example. This example of Kimberly’s writing illustrates one of the ways that multilingualism has impacted her day-to-day
communication strategies. From her first journal entry, Kimberly wrote about the experience of having her house robbed one night. The following excerpt describes the beginning of the story:

Era un 25 o 26 de April del 2012 cuando eschucho a mi mama gritar. I thought she had felt down the stair with my brother or some…so I kinda got up, but then I was like naa if she get hurst or some, al lo mejo mi papa me viene to wake me up para ir al hospital….

(Translation)
It was the 25th or 26th of April 2012 when I hear my mom scream. I thought she had fallen down the stairs with my brother or something, so I kinda got up, but then, I was like, ‘naah,’ if she gets hurt or something, my dad will probably come wake me up to go to the hospital….

Kimberly’s initial sentence set the dramatic tone for her narrative and was entirely in Spanish. Because her writing examples reflected more frequent phrasal interchanges of language, this first sentence illustrated Kimberly’s use of discourse-related code-switching in which she used the language to express a particular message, in this case, to set the stage of her narrative.

Brisa interchanged Spanish and English when she wrote her letter to her future self in 5 years. She began her journal entry mostly in Spanish, and then gradually shifted to English. This excerpt is the second, third, and fourth sentences of her entry:

Un día en la vida me veo graduada de high school graduate de college. I see myself in five years and I want to own my own house have about three or five cars trucks. In five years I want to own my propio salon de hai style and makeup and mas Sage Publications.

(Translation)
Someday, I see myself graduated from high school and a college graduate. I see myself in five years and I want to own my own house have about three or five cars or trucks. In five years, I want to own my own salon for hairstyle and makeup and mas Sage Publications.

Brisa chose to use mostly Spanish to write the initial sentence in this excerpt which arguably was the message that was most real to Brisa. As a freshman in high school, Brisa was immersed in the realities of her environment with a significant goal being graduation. That sentence was written in Spanish. The following two sentences were written almost entirely in English; they represented dreams of the future, but Brisa gave little indication of how she might
achieve those dreams. Although a true emic perspective into Brisa’s language choices was not available to the researcher, it was noteworthy that Brisa chose to write the most realistic future goal in Spanish, providing an example of discourse-related code-switching.

Observations

In between classes. All the notes taken while observing Mariposa in the hallways between classes or during class indicated that Mariposa’s primary language at school was English. Walking from class to class, Mariposa was often accompanied by her boyfriend Lee (pseudonym) and her sister Clara (pseudonym). Mariposa would speak Spanish with her sister when they were unaccompanied by others, but Lee did not speak Spanish. Sometimes Mariposa was accompanied by her girlfriend Lucía (pseudonym), but Mariposa reported speaking mostly English with her.

Kimberly and Brisa were also observed both in and out of the classroom. Both girls demonstrated the pattern of being the first ones to leave the classroom and the last ones to enter their next class. When observed, their destination between classes was the courtyard, where they met their friends, and where Spanish was the preferred language. The courtyard was a place for socializing with friends in Spanish; it was also a place to gather before covertly leaving campus. During one classroom observation, I recorded these notes about Kimberly’s transition from first to second periods:

I found Kimberly and Brisa in the quad with their friends. I hadn’t seen them all week, so I was excited to see them and walked over to say hi. They smiled and seemed glad to see me too. They asked me if I was going to pull them, and I talked about the schedule that I had for that day. I wanted to see Kimberly in science (the next class period) and then observe them both in history. Kimberly’s face fell when I told her that I wanted to see her second period. I think she may have been planning to skip and was rethinking her plans. She was pretty late to class and I thought she might not come. The teacher waited at the door for her for at least 3 minutes after the bell rang. I was thinking about leaving when she arrived to class.
Spanish in class. Without the other, neither Kimberly nor Brisa had opportunities to speak or hear Spanish during class time, although conversations between the girls were spoken quickly and quietly. There was another Spanish speaker (who was not Brisa) in Kimberly’s math class, but Kimberly did not interact with him while being observed. Kimberly and Brisa were in different math and science classes, but otherwise they shared the same schedule. When they did not sit together in class, they interacted less frequently. For example, in health class (12.12.2012), the girls sat at separate tables and worked in different small groups, speaking only English. The researcher heard Brisa tell her tablemates, “I did it last time,” in reference to summarizing the assigned article for the class.

Even when they did not sit next to each other, quick exchanges in Spanish were often overheard. In their computer class, they sat in different rows. On two occasions, they had a brief, functional conversation in Spanish. Because they shared a backpack, one would need something and have to ask the other for the item. Kimberly asked Brisa quickly in Spanish for ear buds and for a flash drive on two separate occasions (11.05.2012, & 12.12.2012).

Of the sixteen classroom observations for Mariposa, there were only two when Spanish was directly or indirectly noted, and those were conducted in Mariposa’s Spanish 3 class. On both occasions (10.22.2012 and 11.28.2012), the lesson objective was for the students to write three to five separate sentences using the vocabulary or grammar point of the day. Students read their sentences aloud during the last few minutes of class. The first observation notes (10.22.2012) commented on English being the language of instruction in a Spanish 3 class. Additional notes mentioned that the topic was homecoming, with pertinent vocabulary focusing on the retelling of personal experiences.
In this class, Mariposa received a lot of attention from the teacher. She was asked for assistance with vocabulary such as bonfire (fogata) and parade float. When Mariposa offered to read her sentences first, the teacher loudly instructed every student to listen quietly to Mariposa read her three sentences. The teacher did not explain why it was so important to listen to Mariposa’s sentences. Possible reasons could have been that the teacher wanted the other students to listen to Mariposa’s pronunciation or sentence structure, or that the researcher’s presence in the classroom influenced the teacher’s level of engagement with Mariposa.

In week 8 (11.28.2012), the lesson objective consisted of students writing three to five sentences using the grammar point, tener que. Mariposa finished writing her sentences within 5 minutes of the assigned task. As noted on the observation template, she looked “incredibly bored.” She put her head down on her desk for a few minutes. Then she checked her phone until the end of class. When asked why she had taken Spanish 3, she responded that she had wanted to improve her writing skills.

**Culinary language.** The third observation (12.15.2012) revealed Mariposa’s unfamiliarity with vocabulary in English relating to the kitchen. Just before winter break, Mariposa’s health class went to the home economics room in order to begin building gingerbread houses as a small group project. To begin the project, the teacher asked several students from each group, including Mariposa, to get a cookie sheet. As she stood up, she mumbled under her breath that she didn’t know what a cookie sheet was or where it would be. A classmate heard her and said something to the teacher. Having not heard Mariposa’s comment, the teacher responded to the student, “How do we know what is in her mind?” By this time, Mariposa had observed where the other students were getting their cookie sheets and had brought one back to her group. Although Mariposa lacked the vocabulary and prior knowledge for cookie sheet, the teacher did
not make assumptions. Had Mariposa not said anything, no one might have guessed that she did not know at first what a cookie sheet was. An interesting coincidence was that Mariposa’s mother, Ana, used the Mexican kitchen as her example in describing some of Mariposa’s limitations in Spanish. Perhaps the kitchen was not a familiar place to Mariposa in either language.

**Interviews**

Following state guidelines, the English as a Second Language (ESL) program for the school system tested each student to determine progress made in language proficiency, both in language for academic as well as social contexts.

**ESL.** Being the only ESL Specialist for secondary education in the school system, Ms. Brown participated in each case study. In three different interviews, Ms. Brown was asked about each individual girl and her abilities in English according to the information available to Ms. Brown. Ms. Brown reported that all three girls were communicatively competent (Cazden, 2011; Hymes, 1972), in that they could express their needs but that the rigors of the standardized language test (ACCESS for ELLs) had placed them at a disadvantage.

For example, Ms. Brown explained that Kimberly had tested within level 3/Developing but that the score was not an accurate depiction of Kimberly’s abilities in English. “If Kimberly had more of an academic base, that her language would have been more reflective of her proficiency—be reflective of her actual language knowledge.”

One reason why Ms. Brown believed Kimberly’s score did not correctly reflect Kimberly’s linguistic skills was partially because of Ms. Brown’s perception of cultural bias within the test. Ms. Brown provided this example:

The speaking portion of the middle school test requires outside extrapolated historic knowledge. The question is about a Puerto Rican man, who goes in the newspaper
business, and in order to progress past a certain level, [the students] have to incorporate their own knowledge of history, and they don’t have the historical knowledge to say enough to progress. I think it’s a flawed testing measure versus language proficiency with her.

Ms. Brown’s review of Brisa’s abilities in English was similar: “I think she’s very proficient in English. If you look at ACCESS data, she is perfectly proficient in speaking and listening, but her reading and writing hinders her ability to test out (Brown, interview). More specifically, in discussing Mariposa’s abilities in ESL, Ms. Brown stated the following:

She is proficient in social language. She understands most everything. She’s level 4/Expanding on ACCESS, so what she can do, she can do a whole lot….I think that the reason that Mariposa still requires language services through our department is academic language. Her BICS language is through the roof and her CALP language is not there.

All three participants entered the U.S. public school system between first and second grade. As ninth and tenth graders, they have been in the ESL program for 9 to 10 years, placing them into the category of long-term English Learner.

**Language choices.** After some confusion with the questions during the first formal interview, Brisa talked about her language use and mentioned the word *Spanglish* for the first time. In this excerpt from the interview, Brisa first talked about her language choices with her family and friends.

R: Brisa, what languages do you speak?
B: English and Spanish
R: All right. When do you speak English and Spanish?
B: (giggles) I don’t remember.
R: Just sort of think of your day, like, you’re at school, when do you speak English?
B: I know that when I was at school, first I speak Spanish and then I learned English
R: Yeah, slowly, but think about today, just today. As you use your languages as you go through today. You’ll use English…when? In English? Or in Math? When do you use Spanish?

B: Oh! When I’m talkin’ to my friends!

R: Right. Ok, what about at home?

B: I use both languages—Spanish to talk to my mom and English to talk to my sisters or both, Spanglish.

In a recorded conversation with Mariposa, she talked about her use of Spanish and English, explaining that her language choices often depended on the person or people in the conversation. She stated that she almost always spoke English with her sister.

M: Just me and her, we’ll speak English all the time…whenever we hang around, we just speak English, but around the house, we gotta speak Spanish.

R: Your mom, right?

M: Yeah, her boyfriend speaks Spanish so we speak Spanish, but whenever Lee gets around, we speak English so he won’t feel left out—it just depends.

In Kimberly’s first interview, she explained some of her reasons for her language choices. She began that segment of the interview by saying she spoke Spanglish in response to the question of what languages she spoke. In this segment, she also described her reasons for code-switching. When asked which language she preferred, Kimberly responded,

K: Uh, English, sometimes

R: Sometimes? Can you talk about when? Is it who you are talking to? Where you are? How you are feeling? What you are doing?

K: Uhh, it’s like who I’m talking to, like, what I’m feeling. Sometimes I don’t feel
like talking Spanish so I’d rather talk English.

R: Yeah, it does take more. Do you have to think more or does it take more energy to speak one or the other?

K: Right. Yeah. Especially in Spanish, coz I… I don’t know how to say it, the word, so, I’m like, Oh gosh.

R: Yeah, do you have to talk around it?

K: Yeah, maybe change the words to English or explain what I’m saying.

**Conflicting perceptions.** When Mariposa’s mother, Ana, (pseudonym) was being interviewed, she confirmed that Mariposa spoke English with her sister and Spanish with her. However, Ana perceived Mariposa to have limited abilities in Spanish, pointing to a discrepancy in Mariposa’s perception and her mother’s perception of her abilities in Spanish and when and how she used Spanish.

During our interview in McDonald’s, Ana talked about her perceptions of Mariposa’s abilities in Spanish. She said,

Llegó de los 6 años aquí, incluso en español, si se da cuenta, ella no habla—bueno, habla menos. Hay muchas cosas que ella no entiende en español y que hay – ella tiene un poquito de problemas con los partes del cuerpo. Hay muchas cosas en la cocina en México y ella no las conoce. Pregunta, eso, para qué sirve? Esto, para qué es?”

*(Translation)*
*She arrived here when she was 6 years old. She understands Spanish, but doesn’t speak it, -- well, speaks less. There are many things that she doesn’t understand in Spanish and there are – she has a little bit of trouble with body parts. There are many things in the Mexican kitchen and she doesn’t know these things. She asks, “what does this do? What is this for?”*

In Mariposa’s follow-up interview, she discussed her difficulties with conversation in social settings, particularly with her boyfriend’s family. With her mother’s friends Mariposa noted that she did have conversations and thought that speaking Spanish might have helped her
get through the conversation. Although Mariposa admitted that writing was difficult for her in Spanish, she preferred Spanish to English when talking about feelings:

It’s not like I don’t like it [making conversation], it’s that I don’t know how to. It’s just difficult, but, you know, with my mom’s friends, I do have a conversation….I think it’s the language because, you know, I feel like….I could feel a way and then – I know how I feel but I can’t write my feelings in English, you know, that’s really hard for me…and whenever I know my feelings in Spanish and I know myself, but I can’t – either way I can’t write ‘em. I just know how I feel but I can explain it better in Spanish than I can in English.

Although Mariposa’s mother perceived Mariposa’s Spanish to have its limits, Mariposa stated that she felt more comfortable in conversational settings in Spanish than in English. Because the researcher wanted to gain a clearer understanding of why Mariposa perceived different levels of comfort in making conversation, she was asked to consider several possible reasons other than language, such as location, topics of conversation or the people themselves; however, Mariposa attributed her higher comfort level to the language.

When discussing what Mariposa liked to do at home, her mother said that she did not enjoy watching television but liked to read books, especially her Bible. Ana discussed this in the following excerpt:

A: Mucho. Ella lee mucho.

A lot. She reads a lot.

R: ¿Qué tipo de cosas lee? ¿Libros?

What kind of things does she read? Books?

A: Lee lo que son libros, historias, pero más lee su Biblia, más lee la Biblia.

She reads books, stories, but mostly she reads her Bible, mostly she reads the Bible.

R: ¿Prefiere leer en inglés o en español?
Does she prefer to read in English or Spanish?

A: En inglés, en inglés.

In English, in English.

R: ¿Sí? ¿Sabe leer en español?

Yes? Does she know how to read in Spanish?

A: No, no mucho.

No, not much. (Ana, interview)

In Mariposa’s first interview, she talked about reading in both English and Spanish:

I like reading in English. I like to read books, but I never come to the library because I never get a chance, like, free time to come in the library, but yeah. I like reading….But when it comes to my Bible, I’ll read it in Spanish the most coz I don’t have a big Bible in English. My big Bible is in Spanish, so I read it in Spanish. Whenever I get together with Lee, we’ll read sometimes in English.

Ana’s excerpt stated that Mariposa did like to read, especially her Bible, but Ana perceived Mariposa to be reading mostly in English. However, Mariposa clearly stated that she enjoyed reading her big Bible in Spanish.

Kimberly and her mother, Irene, also offered differing perceptions of home language use in each of their interviews. In her first interview, Kimberly described how she used Spanglish with her mom because “she doesn’t speak English but she understands, so I use English and Spanish with her—like she worry [but] she doesn’t care. She doesn’t say anything.” Kimberly explained that she used only Spanish with her father because “he doesn’t let us talk English at home, so we have to use Spanish with him.”

Kimberly’s mother reported otherwise. During the interview with her at Panera, Irene’s (pseudonym) perception about home language was summed up with a single word:

I: Español.
When describing in more detail about home language activities, Irene explained that television and radio were all in Spanish. Kimberly had some books in both Spanish and English, but Irene did not see her read them. Although Kimberly claimed to code-switch with her mother, Irene perceived Kimberly’s language use at home to be less intermingled between Spanish and English and more separated depending on Kimberly’s conversation partner. As an example, Irene explained that the family often attended and hosted social gatherings; Irene described Kimberly’s language use this way:

I: Cuando está con los amigos en las pequeñas fiestas o reuniones donde vamos, si ella está en el círculo de los adultos, se habla español pero si se encuentra cualquier hijo de las amigas o eso, ellos hablan solo inglés –

_When she is with her friends at the little parties or gatherings where we go, if she is in the circle of adults, she speaks Spanish but if she finds any child of my friends or someone like that, they speak only English--_

R: ¡Ahhh, solo en inglés!
Ahhh, only in English!

I: Si, sus conversaciones son en inglés. Allí en un o otro que se escuche en español, pero su conversación, su vocabulario, todo es en inglés. Se cuenten de la escuela, se cuenten de lo que han hecho o de nosotros, incluso decimos luego “mi-mami me-regaño.” Eso se lo dicen en inglés.

Yes, their conversations are in English. Here and there you can hear one in Spanish, but their conversation, their vocabulary is all in English. They tell each other about school. They tell each other what they have done and they talk about us. In fact we call it “my-mom-scolded-me” stories. Those they tell in English.

Conclusions for Research Question 1

The question of how adolescent English learners experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives was the overarching question of the study. The word experience was intended to be comprehensive in that it encompassed both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) aspects of language, as well as the individual’s active or passive use of the tool of language as she communicated in various languages and the differing registers found in each language.

Four data sources, the visual self-portrait, journal entries, observations, and interviews, provided salient information to explain how the participants experienced multiple languages in their lives. The visual self-portrait, journal entries, and interviews offered the primary and secondary participants opportunities to voice their opinions, impressions, and thoughts about the topics. The observations differed from the other three data sources in that insight was gleaned from the researcher’s perspective. For example, through multiple observations in and out of
class, the researcher gained a basic understanding of the girls’ social circles and their preferred languages.

**Asserting identities.** Throughout the course of their day, the girls found myriad ways to assert their identities through multilingualism. For example, regardless of language, interest in a particular music genre is an important identity marker for adolescents. In sharing their favorite musical groups, Kimberly and Brisa aligned themselves with the Mexican American musical community. As it happened, all of the songs that Kimberly shared were in Spanish.

Language choice was very much part of the participants’ daily experiences as they chose when to speak which language or register of language with whom. Code-switching, which Kimberly and Brisa called Spanglish, would be included in the larger category of language choice. In observed conversations, Kimberly and Brisa code-switched between Spanish and English on a regular basis. As Kimberly became more comfortable with the researcher, she began to code-switch more often, instead of speaking only English. The data offered the most examples of code-switching through the journal entries that Kimberly and Brisa wrote, when Spanish was used (consciously or not) to express emotion or an obtainable reality as opposed to a dream for the future.

Mariposa, however, was not observed to code-switch. On the contrary, her interview responses, her language choices, and her explanation of her visual self-portrait indicated that she chose to speak either English or Spanish, but rarely mixed the two in a single message. In Spanish, Mariposa reported reading her Bible, posting statuses on Facebook, and talking with her mother, her mother’s friends, or her sister’s boyfriend. English was the language she used in school, and the primary language among her inner circle: her sister, boyfriend, and school friend.
During the school day, the data indicate that there was not a physical place or a social space for the participants to speak Spanish. Although Kimberly and Brisa spent every minute they could between classes talking with friends, often in Spanish, they did not have many opportunities to speak Spanish in class. During class, even with others talking around them, Kimberly and Brisa’s conversations in Spanish were quiet, whispered, and private.

Mariposa’s experience differed significantly in that in-between classes she spoke Spanish regularly only to her sister, and then only when the two were not accompanied by Mariposa’s English-speaking boyfriend. Spanish in between classes was an opportunity for private conversations between her, her sister, and sometimes with her friend, Lucía. Ironically, during observations in Spanish 3, where the Spanish language was the academic content and available for public discourse, Mariposa rarely had opportunities to interact in Spanish.

Negotiating expectations. When an individual is positioned by others who enact their community’s cultural expectations, the individual who has been positioned must negotiate the physical, psychological, societal, and metaphorical placement to the best of her ability. When considering how English learners experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives, the secondary participants, teachers and mothers, offered salient and varied opinions of the participants’ abilities to negotiate expectations surrounding language proficiency and communicative competence in both Spanish and English.

Reflecting a criterion for participation in the study, each girl was in the ESL program during the data collection process. The girls had arrived in the U.S. public education system and entered the ESL program between first and second grade. The length of time each girl had been in the ESL program (between 8 and 9 years) qualified them as “long-time English learners”
(Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002). These terms and categories have resulted from educational policies that classify students within the U.S. public educational system.

Depending on the school community across the United States, the term ESL may carry more or less stigma. However, “long-term English learner” is not positively viewed among educators because the language learning goal is for the English learner to meet state requirements pertaining to English proficiency in order to exit the ESL program. The state of Alabama’s goal for English learners is that they exit the ESL program within 5 years.

These concerns were expressed, not by the participants, but by their ESL Specialist who defended the girls’ abilities to successfully communicate in English. Ms. Brown recognized the disparity in the participants’ performance regarding test questions that required content and linguistic knowledge in math, science, English language arts, and history. She defended the girls’ performance by arguing that the ACCESS for ELLs test was unnecessarily demanding. This gap in the data highlighted a significant difference between Ms. Brown’s concerns and the girls’ lack of awareness; they did not talk about being in the ESL program or what that meant for them, or indicate that being in the ESL program had a positive or negative effect on their educational experiences.

Finally, in terms of experiencing multilingualism on a daily basis, salient data indicate contradicting perceptions between mother and daughter about language use and language proficiency. Mariposa’s mother, Ana, spoke of her perceived limitations in Mariposa’s proficiency in Spanish, providing examples relating to vocabulary. Although Ana reported that Mariposa did like to read, especially her Bible, Ana believed that Mariposa was reading in English. However, Mariposa conveyed confidence in her ability to communicate in Spanish and clearly indicated that she read her Bible in Spanish.
Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Visual Self-Portrait

Culture. The second slide of Kimberly’s PowerPoint™ presentation was a photograph of developed beach front property representing Veracruz, Mexico, her first home (see Appendix H). In three corners of the photograph, Kimberly included smaller images that illustrated cultural components of Veracruz. The top right photograph was of a traditional female dancer’s dress; the photos on the top and bottom left side were of traditionally prepared dishes, such as fish. In the center of the beach photograph, Kimberly added two links to videos on youtube. The top link led to an excerpt from a modern ballet called “La Bruja” danced by the group, Jarocho (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfV0uLaRQAo&safe=active). The second link led to a traditional rendition of the regional dance “La Bamba,” Baile Regional del Estado de Veracruz con el Ballet Folklorico de Amalia Hernandez (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHqXgJ-KmV8&safe=active).

With the examples provided on this slide, Kimberly demonstrated her knowledge of the traditions of Veracruz as well as sufficient interest in the topic to research videos of modern and traditional dances from Mexico. Her presentation of these cultural examples represented a focused and actively engaged interest and connection to her heritage, her ethnicity, and her nationality. In her Veracruz slide, Kimberly reflected personal life experiences, such as having lived in Veracruz as a young child; the dance videos represented both traditional and modern components of culture in Veracruz that would not necessarily be appreciated among the broader population of Mexican-American adolescents living in the United States. Indeed, the videos had
an educational quality about them with the intent of educating Kimberly’s audience, the
researcher, about the culture of Veracruz.

**Bears and butterflies.** Mariposa created a visual self-portrait on *Glogster* that was
divided down the middle with the left side representing how she saw herself, and the right side
representing Mariposa’s perception of how others saw her (see Appendix I). During her
explanation of her work, she emphasized the importance of love, caring, and sharing. Mariposa
compared her perception of herself to A.A. Milnes’ character, Winnie-the-Pooh. She described
how she saw herself:

Here’s a picture of a heart and a little heart with God inside so that I always keep God
first. Sometimes it’s hard for me, but yes, I always want to read my Bible. I try to do the
right things even though it’s kinda hard ‘coz I get really mad easily.

And then here is Winnie the Pooh; he’s my favorite bear. He is lookin’ at a
butterfly and that’s because I like to think—I like to—I dunno know—I always think
about people. Sometimes I watch the news and cry about it. I care about people even
though I don’t know them.

This one is—he’s with Piglet and friends. They are cleaning up because I like to
be organized. I love, you know, I love to clean the house. On Saturday, you know,
whenever we wake up, that’s the first thing we do without nobody tellin’ us.

Um, and my make-up, I like to be neat. I like to take care of myself. I always like
to whenever I go out, to look nice.

The left side of the *Glogster* represented how she believed that others saw her. Mariposa said,

I’m very shy. I just hate speaking in front of the class or standing up. That’s the worst
thing. In this one (*illustration of Winnie-the-Pooh giving his friends a hug*), I’m very
caring. I like to think about others and be around others. This one is he’s mad. It’s just
that I get really, you know, angry fast.

This is putting make-up on and I guess that’s really funny because people always
see me and that’s the one thing—I always put my make-up on.

In this one, he’s just Winnie-the-Pooh, umm, sharing. I love to share.
Food. After some initial logistical difficulties with the Glogster website, Brisa chose to create her visual self-portrait through PowerPoint™, which she entitled, “All about Me.” Although she did not include subheadings, Brisa’s slides could be sorted into several categories: life at school, life outside of school, future goals, and current interests—such as food, clothes, or music—and finally heritage.

Four of Brisa’s slides pertained to food, including a photo of a chef as a possible career choice that she entitled, “What I want to be (when I grow up).” The first slide, “My Favorite Food,” contained 8 photographs of prepared foods including Chinese take-out and a plate of wings. The second slide, “Favorite Drink,” showed photographs of hot chocolate, a bottle of Coke, and what looked like a piña colada and a margarita. The third slide highlighted her “Favorite Desserts” such as cheese cake, chocolate chip cookies, and chocolate cake, common desserts in the United States. In these slides, some of the dishes and drinks Brisa chose might have had Mexican origins but were commonly consumed in the United States.

After slides about clothes and music, Brisa’s final slide, “Comida Michoacana ☻,” about food specifically from the Mexican state of Michoacán, illustrated food pertaining to her heritage and had five photographs of prepared dishes. One picture had the caption, “La comida mexicana y el paradigma de Michoacán” (Mexican food and the model of Michoacán). To conclude her slide show, Brisa created a collage of photographs about the city of Morelia, which she entitled, “Morelia Michoacán Where I am from ☻.”

Teenage motherhood. After the title page, Brisa’s first slide in her project was entitled, “My Daughter ☻,” and had six photographs of her infant daughter wearing various dresses. Slides 4 and 5 represented Brisa’s life outside of school. Slide 4 had three photographs of Brisa with her baby and the following title: “Me & Cristina (my life as a mom).” Brisa also included
text on this slide: “I’m 15 years old I’m from Mexico.” and “I have a daughter she’s 3 months and her name is Cristina Jimenez.” Slide 5 was titled “Me (Brisa)” and showed a collection of four photographs of Brisa dressed for a party.

**Journal Entries**

Mariposa responded to the journal prompt, “What’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done?”

There’s many things I’ve done, but the hardest is when I moved to a different country. I was very upset! I didn’t want to leave my family in Mexico, but I did not have a choice. Just the feeling about me moving to a different place where I didn’t know anyone was terrible! But I also wanted to see my mother, the woman I didn’t see for about a year! When I came to the United States, everything was very difficult. I didn’t speak the “language” and I hated school. I hated the way “kids” made fun of me. Hated the way I couldn’t communicate with teachers. The [sic] Hardest thing I’ve done is leave my country, and leave behind my lovely family. But deep inside of me, I know who I really am, and I will never forget my culture, and where I come from.

Mariposa remembered the intensely conflicted feelings of not wanting to leave what she knew and loved, but also wanting very much to see her mother again. This journal entry also pointed to her difficulties in adjusting to new customs, a new language, and new school. Yet acculturation is not equivalent to assimilation, as was illustrated in Mariposa’s last line.

Although she left behind much that she loved, those ideas, customs, and familial bonds remained an integral part of who she had presently become.

**Observations**

Having had the opportunity to observe Mariposa only at school, the researcher observed Mariposa in and between sixteen class settings over several months. During this time, it was noted that certain characteristics occurred in every class, such as being focused on the assigned task. If Mariposa was working in a group, she laughed at classmates’ jokes, but kept the group focused. Students often asked her for help or for the answers. At least once in science class, she tutored another student through the assignment.
During class, Mariposa was quiet but friendly and would laugh and talk with others who approached her first. Most of her talk during class time was related to classwork. In one math class, she shared a calculator and worked collaboratively with her neighbor to solve the day’s problems. In English language arts class, she answered a neighbor’s question about the day’s journal prompt. As part of her explanation, she reminded her peer of the video they had seen. They continued discussing the assignment for the next few minutes.

**Field Notes**

**Welcoming a guest.** After an interview with Kimberly’s mother, Irene, in December, she invited me to their home for a meal with friends. When I arrived, the small apartment was crowded with guests who were seated along the walls of the living room and jammed around the small kitchen table. Kimberly graciously made room for me at the table and then continued to run plates of food to the guests. Kimberly was a friendly host and seemed to enjoy talking with guests of all ages. She appeared to be equally at ease in speaking Spanish with the adults and mostly English with her peers. Kimberly’s language patterns corresponded with other children present at the gathering. Preschool children sitting near me spoke Spanish among themselves; whereas school-aged children spoke English to each other and Spanish to the adults (Kimberly, field notes)

**Choosing a name.** One day, Kimberly’s English teacher, Ms. Jones, mentioned to me that Kimberly would prefer to be called by her middle name instead of by her first name, which was how all her teachers addressed her and what she has answered to since she entered school in first grade. From recent interactions with Kimberly’s parents, I noticed that they call her by her middle name, instead of her first name.
When I pulled Kimberly and Brisa out of bonus period to work on their visual self-portraits, I asked them both why they changed their names. Kimberly explained in Spanish that she had always been known by her middle name, but at school she was called by her first name, until one of her eighth-grade teachers explained that she could request to be called by her middle name. Brisa said simply that she liked her middle name.

In asserting their preference for their middle names, both girls actively reinvented themselves as they transitioned from middle to high school. Furthermore, in Kimberly’s case, her first name was the one her family used, so the name change bridged Kimberly’s experiences between home and school.

**Experience with babies.** During the beginning of bonus period, Brisa and Kimberly were chatting about one of their teachers who had had a baby in December. They were anticipating her return to school. I misunderstood (thinking the teacher had only recently delivered the baby) and exclaimed that it was too soon for her to return to work. Brisa agreed with a voice of authority, confidence, and experience. This was not the first comment she had made that asserted her identity as mother. Juxtaposing messages from teacher interviews concerning Brisa (ESL Specialist and math and English teachers), Brisa’s inclusion of her daughter in conversations and her visual self-portrait began to reveal varying levels of silence and engagement from Brisa and those around her relating to this aspect of Brisa’s identity.

**Generational conflicts.** Kimberly and her mother Irene were going through a tumultuous time in their relationship during this study. In December, school authorities reprimanded Kimberly for leaving campus during school hours without permission by suspending her from school for 1 day and by requiring a parent meeting with the assistant principal before being given permission to return to school. Both the assistant principal and Irene requested that I be present
The meeting took place in the assistant principal’s office and lasted for almost 2 ½ hours. The assistant principal’s agenda was to get to the bottom of the skipping problem and determine who was driving the girls off campus. Mom’s agenda was to find out information, strategies, or programs that would encourage Kimberly to focus on staying at school. She even requested that the resident police officer attend the meeting, which he did. Kimberly’s agenda was a mystery to me. She remained quiet and took it all in; she answered politely when spoken to, but revealed very little if any new information.

During the course of the conversation, Irene described her concerns about Kimberly’s behavior through several examples. For instance, Kimberly did not want to take care of her 4-year old brother and, according to Irene, complained at length about babysitting him. Because Kimberly had to ask permission to go out and socialize with friends, she would hide bad grades or problems with attendance, so that she could continue to get permission. Irene talked about a temper tantrum of Kimberly’s when they would not allow her to wear heels to church. In response to the constraint, she swiped all of Irene’s perfume bottles off the dresser. Finally, Irene complained that Kimberly did her chores with a bad attitude and only after much nagging.

Although Irene’s examples of Kimberly’s behavior did not concern the assistant principal and police officer, Irene was very disturbed by her daughter’s behavior. She confided in me later that she felt quite embarrassed to discuss Kimberly’s defiant behavior so openly with school officials. Kimberly’s behavior was confusing for Irene, who blamed herself for inadequate parenting skills to have raised a child with such behavior. During the meeting, Irene asked about boot camp at least twice. The police officer tried to persuade her that Kimberly’s behavior did not warrant boot camp. Irene did not appear convinced but dropped the request.

Irene’s discomfort with the process and with her daughter’s behavior was evident. The mother-daughter clash in a public forum was humiliating for Irene. However, she endured her embarrassment in order to address her concerns about her daughter’s safety because Kimberly was leaving campus in a car with an unknown driver and because her trouble at school might cause problems with the family’s request for changed immigration status.

Kimberly remained stoically silent during the entire meeting. Never disrespectful, she answered questions, but did not offer any information. It was difficult to gain any insight into Kimberly’s experience.
One comment from the assistant principal during the meeting suggested a possible and very significant shift in school administrators’ perception of English Learners’ behavior at school. She observed that ELs had never been “on the radar before for skipping.” She was not sure if that was because they had just never gotten caught, because there were so few, or if “this group” was one of the first interested in this behavior (Kimberly, field notes).

Another incident between Kimberly and her mother occurred at school in February. This was unplanned but provided insight into their relationship. Kimberly’s attendance problem had improved since December but was still problematic. One day in February, an unanticipated meeting occurred at school. The following field notes describe the emotional mother-daughter encounter.

Irene had come to the school campus for adult ESL class. As we walked down the hall, Irene asked for help with Kimberly’s attendance problem. We dropped by the social worker’s office to ask for advice. As it happened, the social worker had just mailed a letter requesting a parent conference about Kimberly’s attendance. When Irene became quite agitated, the social worker pulled Kimberly from class so everyone could talk about it. The four of us sat around a table. At one point, the social worker suggested in-school counseling sessions, which Irene found to be a practical solution—no appointments, no transportation issues, no cost. However, Kimberly did not want to do this. She wanted to return to the therapist she had been seeing in Birmingham. Irene and Kimberly argued in Spanish about this, more specifically, Irene lectured Kimberly, and Kimberly shut down. Both were crying. One of the things Irene kept repeating was for Kimberly to talk to “them” (she pointed to the social worker and to me) to find help and get options because she (Irene) didn’t speak English.

The social worker did not speak Spanish and so did not understand their discussion or the generational, cultural, and linguistic clash between mother and daughter. Irene’s message indicated that she felt excluded from the part of Kimberly’s life involving English and U.S. culture. In this conversation, Kimberly did not respond or react, except to cry and to pass the tissues in exasperation over to her mother.
Interviews

Choosing languages. In her first interview with the researcher, Mariposa responded to a question about whether her language choices depended on the people around her or if she preferred to talk about certain topics in one language or another. Her answer described using private conversations or a private context in order to exclude her mother or her boyfriend Lee from conversations with her sister. Her interactions with her mother were away from the school setting; her interactions with her sister and her boyfriend crossed both school and home contexts.

Whenever I feel bad, I don’t want nobody to know, and my sister is around and my mom’s around and I feel like, my mom makes me upset, she makes me feel bad, I’ll tell my sister in English how I felt or whenever I get around Lee, I’ll tell her in Spanish. So, it’s just me and her.

In a recorded conversation of Kimberly and Brisa with the researcher, Kimberly began to explain about medicinal cures in Mexico. As she introduced the new topic of conversation, she switched from English to Spanish as she shifted from one cultural discourse (home remedies in the United States) to another (home remedies in Mexico). This is an example of Kimberly using language as a tool to portray an aspect of her ethnic identity. Although language is always a tool for expression, Kimberly used it in this example to facilitate the description of a culturally bound event.

Socializing in and out of school. Peer-to-peer interaction both in and out of the school context offered a variety of opportunities both socially and academically for the participating adolescents to negotiate their identities. At school, Mariposa held a tight inner circle of confidants. In addition to her sister Clara and boyfriend Lee, Mariposa mentioned socially interacting with only one other 10th-grade Latina. During the school year, Mariposa had lunch with her friend, Lucía, but they did not have any classes together. Mariposa explained:
Me and her, we never see each other on the weekends, but I guess, you know, in school, we’re really close. You know, we talk about our stuff, and I mean, I guess you could say I’m shy too. She knows I really am. She knows I get angry really fast.

Mariposa socialized with only a few people at school. In her second interview, she voiced hesitation to interact within certain social settings outside of school, such as parties or prom, as well as with the friends and family of her boyfriend. She described the reason as, “I don’t feel comfortable with his friends and his family because I don’t feel like I’m being myself.” Mariposa explained further, “I feel like I’m a very quiet person…even if people know me, I really don’t talk.” When asked why she is so quiet, Mariposa responded, “I just feel like I can’t find something to talk about, whenever, like, they ask me something, I just answer the question. I don’t make conversation, you know.” She clarified that “it’s not like I don’t like it, it’s that I don’t know how to.” However, she had noticed a difference when talking with the friends of her mother. “It’s not that it’s easier, you know, sometimes I just gotta be comfortable.”

Of the three participants, Kimberly appeared to have the most open and easy-going personality. During the ESL Specialist’s interview, Ms. Brown described Kimberly as “very pleasant— just an adorable, friendly, interactive, engaged child…typical eighth- or ninth-grade student. She is a social creature and she has learned from her peers; she’s learned from what she hears. She’s learned from television…. She’s pretty much right on with other teenagers” (Brown, interview).

Ms. Jones, Kimberly’s English Language Arts teacher, agreed that Kimberly had an easy-going personality, which allowed Kimberly to keep interactions with non-Spanish-speaking peers friendly and inclusive. She related her impression from repeated experiences in her classroom:

For example, her and [Brisa] will be talking in Spanish and another student will come up to them and “Hey! Whachy’all sayin?” and then she’s like—I mean she could easily be
offended—but she’s like, “aah—no, it like” blah, blah, blah. “Come on, this is how you say this.” It’s hilarious to watch them interact and teach them Spanish words and stuff. She’s….it’s seamless. I’ve never seen her have a bad attitude about it. A couple of weeks ago, they were listening to music, and she was showing the kids her kind of music and stuff.

In Kimberly’s second interview, she talked about places she liked to go when not in school. She explained that she did not enjoy going to church but did like going to a local city park where she could watch some of her friends play soccer. She said, “Yeah, so I go and watch them sometimes or para ir no mas para comer tacos (we just go to eat tacos). Me gustan tacos de carne (I like beef tacos) and we just stop there to get something to eat.” Kimberly also explained that she would visit friends at their houses, but she did not like spending the night:

No, coz I miss my bed and I don’t feel, like, comfortable to spend the night there. I be like huh–huh (giggles). I guess I’ll go para la noche (for the evening) but I gotta go to sleep in my house.

When it became apparent that an interview with Brisa’s mother would not be possible, the researcher decided to interview Ms. Jones, who had a good rapport with both Kimberly and Brisa. When asked about Brisa’s interactions with her peers during English and bonus period, Ms. Jones replied,

She doesn’t talk to anybody other than [Kimberly], but if somebody talks to her, she’s not shy. She’s not reserved. She just doesn’t initiate anything. She’ll respond to anybody—to me, to a kid—it doesn’t matter. She won’t just walk up to somebody else and start a conversation. I think maybe she’s just really shy. She doesn’t have—from what I can tell—that language barrier where she’s not sure what somebody’s saying. It’s not that, she just doesn’t ( ). She just doesn’t. She’ll talk to Kimberly all day long….usually in Spanish, but you know, she doesn’t have an issue carrying on a conversation with somebody, she just doesn’t initiate it.

In an earlier interview with Brisa’s math teacher, Ms. Hall described an opportunity to observe Brisa socialize with her peers. Math class was one of the two classes during their school day when Brisa and Kimberly were not together, so Ms. Hall observed Brisa interact with her peers without Kimberly being in the class:
Bonus period has been taken away because of grad testing, so this week they have been in my class for an additional 38 minutes. I’ve gotten to see her interacting with—now, of course, she never moves. She always stays in her desk and they come to her, which is funny, but they do. They’ll come over and they’re very quiet—whoever she’s talking to—she’s talking very quietly but she does smile and laugh when somebody says a joke or something like that. She’ll smile and laugh. She’s not a zombie or anything.…

**Staying on task.** In the fall, I observed all three participants in their classes for several hours every week. By the time Mariposa had participated in her first interview, I had observed her in all of her classes at least once. She asked me within the first minute or two of the interview, “So, you’ve been to all of my classes. Which class do you think I do better on?” In response, I described some of my impressions from observations thus far:

You are focused on your school work. There are a lot of students around you who are not focused on their school work, but you don’t seem to let that distract you and I’ve seen that as a pattern over and over again. In every class that I’ve seen you, and I’ve seen you in all of your classes, you’re focused; you’re quiet; you’re attentive; you’re conscientious, and yeah, you look like a pretty good student.

In seeking adult approval, Mariposa looked for validation or recognition of her academic work, behavior in class, and an element of her school identity as a “good student.” The follow-up interview with Mariposa revealed differences in her behavior at home, at school, and in social settings relating to language. In an excerpt from the interview, her comments about her behavior at school revealed insights into her reserved “good student” identity, in that language played a role in the quality of Mariposa’s social interactions.

At home, I’m different. I’m really different, ‘cause I’m around them (mother and sister) and I feel like I can be goofy around them. Then here (school) I’m just a person that is doing homework and I’m not playing around like others. My personality is not as friendly as it is, you know, whenever I’m around Hispanic people. I guess, you know, it’s my first language and I can be more friendly.

**Straddling cultures and languages.** In the interview with Mariposa’s teacher, Ms. Davis, the researcher asked Ms. Davis about Mariposa’s ability to straddle a variety of cultures and languages. She responded with the following:
I think at River High, she is straddling three cultures because you have the culture of our school thrown in and you have the culture of the students that we serve as well as trying to fit into the culture of what the ideal student is, which is generally the middle class White student and trying to fit that as well as still trying to fit her own culture. I could see where a school like River High would be kind of difficult for her, I think, because there’s not just two but definitely at least three that she is straddling.

The first documented instance that Kimberly decided to switch from speaking English to Spanish was during a recorded conversation with Kimberly and Brisa in which we began to talk about home medicinal remedies that treated upset stomachs or nausea. Brisa mentioned that she drank tea when she did not feel well. As Kimberly joined the conversation to share a culturally bound topic, she also switched to Spanish. The following is an excerpt of the dialogue:

K: ….empacho con manteca (*indigestion with lard*)
R: ¿con manteca….? (*with lard?*)
K: curar….con perfume, creencias. (*cure…with perfume, beliefs*)
R: mmmm…..
K: Cuando nacen los niños, hiervan el huevo (*when babies are born, they boil an egg*)
R: ¿Sí? Con cáscara o sin cáscara? (*Really? With the shell or without the shell?*)
K: Con cáscara
K: Huevo hervida (*boiled egg*). [ ] Mexican stuff
R: Está bien! (*It’s ok!*)
K: ….Caída de la cama (*naïve*)

Kimberly’s choice to switch languages was significant as she was talking about medicinal beliefs and practices that were culturally bound. Kimberly took on a disparaging tone when talking about these remedies. The last few lines of the excerpt, especially Kimberly’s comment
about Mexican home remedies being naïve illustrated her impatience with certain aspects of this discourse. As Kimberly negotiated culturally bound belief systems within discourses, she adapted her language to support the discourse while simultaneously critiquing it.

**Managing family expectations.** In the interview with Mariposa’s mother, Ana, she talked about her expectations for her daughters. In an excerpt from the interview, Ana said this:

> La vida es muy duro en México. Cuando vivía allá, aprendí a leer y a escribir en las calles. Yo no quiero que pasen lo mismo que yo. Yo he trabajado para poder [ ] y ustedes van a trabajar para defendernos. Eso es lo que hemos hecho y hasta ahora no me han defraudado. Porque darme problemas es como que, como pagarme mal, ¿entiende? Es como mi mami se mata tanto trabajando y yo le di problemas.

*(Translation)*

*Life is very difficult in México. When I lived there, I learned to read and write in the streets. I don’t want them to go through the same thing I did. I have worked in order to be able to [ ] and you all are going to work to protect the family. That is what we have done, and so far they have not disappointed me. Because to give me problems is like, like paying me back badly, do you understand what I mean? It’s like my mom kills herself working so much and I am going to give her problems.*

Ana’s comments pointed to the importance of the family unit and each member’s role and responsibilities. She outlined her responsibility to provide for the family and her daughters’ responsibilities to not cause her any problems. She later specified that she expected her daughters to study hard, not get in trouble, and help with the housework.

Kimberly’s mother, Irene, described in an interview what Kimberly did at home in terms of a daily routine:

> Nos levantamos, desayunamos, el hábito de recoger, hacer el aseo de la casa, ver la televisión, y eso. Si hay que trabajar, si ella a la escuela, el niño con quien lo cuida, el babysitter o la guardería, yo al trabajo. Se regrese en la tarde para hacer de comer, levantar, si hay que hacer las tareas si las hace, ver un rato la tele y a dormir. Eso es la rutina casi todos los días.

*(Translation)*

*We get up and eat breakfast. We have the habit of picking up and cleaning the house, watching television and so on. If it is a work day, she goes to school; my little boy goes with his caretaker, the babysitter or day care, and I go to work. She comes home in the*
afternoon, makes something to eat, cleans up, does her homework if she has any and watches TV for a little while, then goes to sleep. This is the routine almost every day.

**Choosing silence.** Although Brisa sometimes talked openly about her daughter, there were times when she left a question dangling unanswered in silence, leaving the listener to her own interpretations. Brisa could be silent about topics other than motherhood, but the following excerpt exemplifies the silence that sometimes occurred. The researcher asked Brisa in the follow-up interview if she thought she needed to change the way she should act, think, or dress when at home or at school:

B: Sometimes. *(responded quickly with confidence)*

R: Can you tell me more about that?

B: Actúo más maduro. Ya no tengo que actuarme como niña.

*I act more mature. I can’t act like a girl anymore.*

R: ¿En casa? ¿O aquí?

*At home? Or here?* [school]

B: Both.

R: Oh, ok. Why?

B: I don’t know.

With this final comment, Brisa ended that section of the conversation. Silence hovered around the reason or reasons why Brisa thought she needed to grow up. She did not verbalize her responsibilities for her daughter as a cause for her shift in her expectations about her own behavior. Because she did not articulate reasons, questions remain about the silence. Several reasons were inferred, such as she intuitively understood the reason for the shift, but could not find the words. It could be that she was not actually aware of the reasons, but was repeating
expectations that she has been told. Finally, it could be that she chose not to share in order to protect her privacy.

Silence also permeated through one of Ms. Brown’s answers in her interview relating to Brisa. Unlike Brisa’s other teachers in high school, the ESL Specialist had had the opportunity to get to know Brisa in eighth grade and suggested a contrast in Brisa’s behavior between eighth and ninth grades. Although she described her perception of Brisa’s behavioral changes in detail, she did not talk about her baby as being related to the change. Ms. Brown was aware of Brisa’s baby because as she gave this answer, she also made a gesture of a rounded belly to indicate pregnancy. At the time of the interview, Ms. Brown still called Brisa by her first name, Silvia (pseudonym). Ms. Brown explained,

I think that I’ve seen a change in [Silvia] in relation to this year from last year. I think that a lot of girlishness, a lot of the joie de vivre, silliness has kind of been taken from her. I don’t know, there’s a very kind of removed sense, kind of a sedated quality. She just is not, um, girlish. She’s not your typical 14-year-old. She’s got a lot of responsibility that weighs heavily on her. Her demeanor is not what you would expect of a 14-year-old. I think that a lot of times her thoughts are elsewhere. She, um, often looks tired. You see dark circles under her eyes and just kind of a reservedness that wasn’t there, kind of a…she takes a step back from where she used to be. There’s not a lot of openness. There is a lot of guardedness in her demeanor.

Conclusions for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 explored the ways in which multilingual English learners negotiated their identities between home, school, and other contexts. Norton Peirce’s (1995) definition of identity as fluid, changing over time, and a site of struggle provided the parameters with which the participants’ identities were considered. The negotiation of identities becomes the activity that was the unit of analysis within the CHAT framework, with the pieces of data as the actions. The community might be the classroom, the peer group, or the family.
Data from each of the five collection methods helped to explain the participants’ identity negotiation process between home and school. The visual self-portrait, journal entries, and interviews offered visual, written, and verbal opportunities for the participants to share their thoughts, opinions, and insights. The researcher wrote field notes after personal interactions with each girl. The discussion of observations represented the researcher’s perspective that culminated from multiple classroom observations over several months.

**Asserting identities.** The data illustrated, with varying degrees of clarity, the individuality of each girl’s life experiences and personality through their words, actions, opinions, and memories. The contexts that the girls crossed were not only between the physical places of home and school but also included the crossing of countries and the distance of time.

Kimberly traversed all of these contexts and did so in a clear, straightforward way. In her visual self-portrait, she remembered her heritage with dances that represented both traditional and modern culture in Veracruz. Kimberly clearly asserted her identity across home and school when she asked her high school teachers to call her by her middle name instead of her first name. Although her family had always referred to her by her middle name, teachers had always called her by her first name.

In Brisa’s visual self-portrait, she bridged time, place, and responsibilities. Her focus on food pointed toward a future goal, but she also used her interest in food to connect Mexican and U.S. cultures. Like Kimberly, Brisa included photographs of her town of origin, Morelia. She also portrayed herself with her two best friends, Kimberly and another girl. Many of those photographs were taken at school, supporting the significance of her social interactions during school hours. The photographs of Brisa’s baby played a significant role in the organization and the message of her visual self-portrait; Brisa shared several photographs of her daughter in her
visual self-portrait but would not always talk directly about her baby when at school. Silence existed around Brisa’s baby, but occasionally in conversation, Brisa offered expertise about pregnancy and babies.

One clear indicator concerning Mariposa was her journal entry where she explicitly described her identity as a site of struggle, as changing over time and of being transnational. Other data illustrated a complexity in her assertion of her identity across contexts. Socializing appeared to be one area of tension for Mariposa. Through observations, interviews, and her visual self-portrait, Mariposa emphasized the importance of her inner social circle, consisting of her sister Clara, her boyfriend Lee, and her friend at school, Lucía. Although Mariposa interacted with classmates in every class, she consistently sought out the company of Clara and Lee in or out of school.

During school hours, Mariposa consciously worked at maintaining her identity as a good student. Despite her efforts, Mariposa described herself as “someone who does homework” instead of as a good student. She seemed uncomfortable with the notion that her classmates asked her for help, implying that she was smart. Even as she worked to assert the good student identity to the world, she also looked to adults for acceptance and validation of her identity, as in the interview when she asked the researcher’s opinion of Mariposa’s “best” class.

Negotiating expectations. In asking for validation, Mariposa was also managing academic expectations that she had created for herself and that she perceived others, such as her classmates, her teachers, and her mother, expected of her.

Ana expected not only that Mariposa make good grades but that she also do her share to keep the family structure operating smoothly. In other words, Ana worked to provide for the
family while Mariposa and her sister took care of the house, attended school, and made good grades; during the study, Mariposa upheld those expectations.

However, the data indicate other instances when expectations were broken. Several tumultuous interactions between Kimberly and her mother indicated that familial expectations had fallen short, which was causing considerable intergenerational conflict. Irene had similar expectations for Kimberly as Ana had for Mariposa. Where Mariposa accepted these expectations and the assumed identity of good daughter, Kimberly did not accept the conditions of the good daughter identity. In choosing her course of action (skipping classes), Kimberly went against her parents’ and school administrators’ rules.

One of Brisa’s strategies to manage expectations surrounding her life as high school student and teenage mother was silence. Brisa chose when to remain silent and when to voice her thoughts.

Findings for Research Question 2a

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Visual Self-Portrait

Stating strong beliefs. Mariposa’s visual self-portrait included two phrases. One, “The best love is God’s love,” is used as a backdrop for the digital poster presentation and partially appears behind photographs and images arranged on the poster. The second phrase has its own space between the image of Winnie-the-Pooh and the photograph of a large heart drawn in the sand near the beach with the word God written inside and a smaller heart below the word. The second phrase states, “…but if you look at me closely, you will see it in my eyes—this girl will always find her way.” Both phrases asserted elements of Mariposa’s identity that she valued, her Catholic faith and her strong will; both phrases were in English.
When explaining her chosen images for her visual self-portrait, Mariposa mentioned that she loved butterflies; they were her “favorite animal” because “God has given them everything they need” (Mariposa, field notes). She also decided on mariposa as her pseudonym, which means butterfly in Spanish. With her unique pseudonym choice, Mariposa asserted her linguistic identity as a Spanish speaker and originality of thought. Using her favorite color, a bright royal blue, Mariposa added images of delicate butterflies in her self-portrait that strengthened her butterfly metaphor.

**Declaring motherhood.** The title of Slide 4 of Brisa’s visual self-portrait included the following phrase “Me & [Cristina] (my life as a mom).” Brisa clearly named herself as her daughter’s mother.

**Journal Entries**

**Code-switching.** In her first journal entry, Kimberly decided to answer the prompt about the worst or best thing that had ever happened to her and to explain how that experience had changed her. She wrote an emotionally charged story about the night her home was robbed. Kimberly wrote,

Well una worst thing that happen was when they came in to the house…

Era un 25 o 26 de April del 2012 quando eschucho a mi mama gritar. I thought she had felt down the stair with my brother or some… so I kinda got up, but then I was like naa if she get hurst or some, al lo mejo mi papa me viene to wake me up para ir al hospital.. so I just went to laydown.. cuando veo someone taller que mi papa open the door.. so I got up and then I saw the guy turn the light on with a gun.. me acuerdo que me dijo que I want money I want money, el esta va pointing me with the gun y le dije q I didn’t have anything , I swear I didn’t… then he said to stay there and don’t move.. and he left!!

*(Translation)*

Well, the worst thing that happened was when they came into the house…

It was the 25th or 26th of April 2012 when I heard my mom scream. I thought she had fallen down the stairs with my brother so something…so I kinda got up, but then I
was like, naah. If she gets hurt of something, my dad will probably come wake me up to go to the hospital...so, I just went to lay down. That’s when I see someone taller than my dad open the door so I got up and then I saw the guy turn the light on with a gun. I remember that he said “I want money. I want money.” He was pointing the gun at me while he said it, but I told him that “I didn’t have anything. I swear I didn’t!” Then he said to stay there and don’t move...and he left!!

Cuando ese man esta va en mi room se fue para el cuarto de mis papas y mi mama me grito que todo i va estar bien que nada malo i va pasar.. y yo me acuerdo que I was just looking at the wall.. saying to my head!! Por que hoy por que use.... Just because we Mexican!!!.. cuando mi mama me grito fue con el man que he open my door came back again to my room and he said don’t move and he try to turn the light off with the gun.. but he couldn’t.. so he just left.. cuando escucho dos guy going down stairs con mi papa.

(Translation)

After this guy was in my room, he left to go in my parents' room and my mom shouted to me that everything was going to be fine. Nothing bad was going to happen...and I remember that I was just looking at the wall, saying in my head, “Why today? Why us....Just because we are Mexican!!” When my mom shouted to me was when this guy opened my door again and he said ‘don’t move.’ He tried to turn the light off with the gun, but he couldn’t so he just left. That’s when I heard two guys going downstairs with my dad.

Y despues de ahi……………………… I didn’t hear anything…….. I only heard when cuando van a carga una gun…y thought que mi papa esta va muerto… y que ya no lo iv aver..... despues que paso eso… I just closed my eyes and open them again.. cuando veo a mi pap open my door and ask me if I was okay y le dije que si.. y luego veo mi mama coming and ask me if I was okay and I couldn’t talk she ask me 3 times que si esta va bien y la 4 time I remember I started crying... she shaid that everythings was gona be okay.. we went down stairs to call the police. The police said if they had some news they would call, but they never did.... Next morning I remember mom took me to school and she went to work... she had text me saying if I was on my way home and I told her que si ya mero llego.. and we went in the house and I saw my mom face got all white... 

(Translation)

And after that.....................I didn’t hear anything.............I only heard when (when) they loaded a gun and thought that my dad was going to be dead....and that now I wouldn’t be able to see him.....then this happened....I just closed my eyes and opened them again....when I see my dad open my door and ask me if I was okay and I told him yes. After that I saw my mom coming and ask me if I was okay and I couldn’t talk. She asked me 3 times if I was okay and the 4th time I remember that I started crying...she said that everything was going to be okay. We went downstairs to call the police. The police said if they had some news they would call, but they never did....Next morning, I remember mom took me to school and she went to work. She had texted me saying if I was on my way home and I told her that yes, I had just arrived and we went in the house and I saw my mom’s face get all white.
This experience has taught me a lot. For example, to show respect to my parents and other people. Don’t be mean to my little brother and of course, live life... because with a blink of an eye you could die....

(Translation)

This experience had taught me a lot....for example to show respect to my parents and other people. Don’t be mean to my little brother ... claro lived life...cause uno cerra y abrir de ojos you could died....

Before beginning to write, Kimberly asked permission to write her journal entry the way she wanted, and then she became very involved in writing her story. She took her time, spending two separate sessions to complete it. Of the 3 participants, Kimberly provided the most examples of interweaving Spanish and English to communicate a message. She frequently code-switched verbally and in written examples.

Kimberly’s journal entry about the break-in provided rich data for analyzing several aspects of her writing, including her ability to write in Spanish and her techniques for code-switching. Because she had complete freedom to write her story, Kimberly’s choices represented her unique depiction of the event and of her emotions in regard to it. She chose an informal writing style, one that is best understood when heard aloud. Her entry contained mechanical and spelling errors, particularly misspelled words in Spanish, indicating a lack of awareness of orthography in Spanish.

Kimberly’s code-switching techniques were fairly sophisticated. She was able to glide in and out of Spanish and English without losing the thread of the narrative. Arguably, alternating languages enriched the story for individuals knowledgeable enough in Spanish and English to follow the linguistic interchange. Kimberly employed both the discourse-related code-switching technique as well as the participant-related technique. In telling her story, Kimberly wrote half in Spanish and half in English until the climax of the story was reached and she found out that her
father was unharmed. At that much calmer point in the story, she began to write mostly in
English. The participant-related technique for code-switching illustrated Kimberly’s comfort
level with both languages in that she was able to seamlessly interweave words and phrases
together.

In her second journal entry, “Letter to my future self,” Kimberly wrote a brief paragraph
to her future self in 5 years that included several goals and ideas for the future. The following
example illustrates the discourse-related code-switching where Kimberly used Spanish and
English to develop and emphasize the emotional undertone of her message. “I also see my self in
lots of places, for example visiting familia en Mexico (family in Mexico) and building a house
para mis (for my) parents! Que tanto quieren (that they want so much).”

In her letter to her future self, Brisa also incorporated code-switching, especially in the
first two sentences of her letter:

Mi nombre es Brisa Jimenez but my first name is Silvia I am 15 years old y tengo una
baby girl de 6 meses her name is Cristina Jimenez. Un dia en la vida me veo graduada de
high school graduate de college.

(Translation)
My name is Brisa Jimenez but my first name is Silvia. I am 15 years old and I have a 6-
month-old baby girl. Her name is Cristina Jimenez. One day, I see myself graduated from
high school and a college graduate.

After that, she wrote five additional sentences about career goals and the material wealth that she
would accrue between now and then. However, she chose to write all of these sentences in
English, with the exception of one phrase about a hair salon. In that sentence she wrote, “In five
years I want to own mi propio salon de hairstyle” (my own hair salon).

When Brisa discussed her current reality, not hopes for the future, the first sentence was
substantively different from the other examples, representing a discourse-related example of
code-switching. Although in the second sentence Brisa looked to the future in hopes of achieving
educational degrees, she was currently working toward that goal as she was attending high school when she wrote the letter. Her active efforts to graduate from high school showed her the steps and path she must take to realize this goal. That knowledge may have made this goal more attainable. Notably, the two sentences that reflected real, concrete parts of Brisa’s life were written in Spanish.

Names. In Brisa’s letter to her future self, several significant examples of names emerge. The first example was the title she chose, “diablita angelical” which means angelic little devil. Written in Spanish, the title conveyed a glimpse into Brisa’s perception of the contradictory complexities of her life. The second example referred to the literal names of herself and her daughter. In the first sentence of her letter, she wrote in both Spanish and English and introduced herself and her daughter formally using all of their names. She wrote,

Mi nombre es (My name is) Brisa Jimenez but my first name is Silvia I am 15 years old y tengo una (and I have a) baby girl de 6 meses (6 months) her name is Cristina Jimenez.

In this introductory segment of her letter, she provided a significant amount of information about herself and her life. Although the intended audience was Brisa herself, this somewhat formal introduction of herself and her daughter portrayed her awareness of the researcher as part of the audience. Brisa introduced herself with her middle name; the one she chose to be called in high school, but she included her first name as additional information. In declaring her age and her 6-month-old daughter, Brisa clearly asserted her identity as teenage mother. She also chose a name for her baby that easily flowed between Spanish and English. Her choice was more easily adapted in both languages than the selected pseudonym because her daughter’s name had no spelling differences and minimal pronunciation differences between the languages.
Observations

Classroom language. As seen through observations, Mariposa’s use of Spanish at school was minimal; as Mariposa reported, she kept Spanish for private conversations with her sister or her friend. All of her observed interactions with classmates were conducted in English. Furthermore, most of her verbal exchanges during class were related to the assignment. In Week 3 of observations (10.19.2012) Mariposa was in math class completing a worksheet about the xy axis. The following notes were taken about her language use in the classroom.

Mariposa begins working with her partner from history (class prior to math). They seem to be friends, talking about math, figuring out the meaning and making it work. She argues good naturedly with her partner about an algebra problem. It seems that the boys she sits with are engaged in class. She continues her conversation with her partner and with other classmates on math problems, using the language of math. She laughs and banters with her classmates. The teacher reprimands Mariposa’s friend because he is laughing a little too loudly. The conversation occasionally meanders away from math, but mostly Mariposa and her classmates stay focused on the task.

Mariposa appeared to enjoy interacting with her peers; by interweaving everyday conversation with talk about the assignment, she could socialize and complete the task. Through her determination to stay focused on school-related assignments, she constructed her identity of good student. She used language to accomplish her goal of completing the daily assignment as well as interacting with her peers.

Brisa and Kimberly had almost all of their classes together except for math and science. Without Kimberly, Brisa was reserved but maintained a quiet confidence about her. In a variety of classes, the researcher observed Brisa interacting directly and individually with her teachers, either by raising her hand or going to the teacher’s desk to ask a question (11.05.2012 & 12.12.2012). She was also observed talking with her math teacher while they reviewed her math test together.
Over the weeks of observations, the researcher often noticed Brisa laugh, smile, and giggle with a variety of peers, in class and between classes. However, verbal exchanges were much less frequent. When observing Brisa in fifth-period, biology and sixth period, business technology applications (BTA) on 11.05.2012, the following notes were recorded:

The biology teacher gave Brisa and neighbor girl an iPad with directions of what to do. There’s a game about science where they answer questions. They worked together with the iPad, answering the questions. Two boys approached to join the group and disrupted them a little. The boys made these comments, “We already played this game.” One boy left, but the other came back, and the three of them played until the bell rang.

Brisa came in almost as the bell was ringing. She came in laughing with the boy from biology who played the game with her and the neighbor girl. Brisa sat in the row ahead of Kimberly between two boys, one of whom was her friend from biology. During her Business Technology Applications class, she talked with her friend intermittently.

Brisa did not always give the impression that she was interested in engaging with peers.

During one observation (11.08.2012), Brisa’s math class received new students who were transferring from a different section of Algebra 1A to Brisa’s section. Brisa sat in the desk closest to the teacher’s desk, but farthest from the whiteboard where instruction was occurring.

Three boys sat around her; they mostly talked among themselves during class, but toward the end of class, they began to interact with Brisa.

One boy tried to start up a conversation by asking “you got sisters?” He tried to shake her hand and asked her name. I was surprised to hear her say Brisa. This was my first indication that she preferred Brisa to Silvia! Ms. Brown and I had been calling her Silvia. A few minutes later, I heard another boy say “She scares me!” I noticed then that Brisa looked quite irritated. The other two boys turned to look at Brisa, who responded quietly. No observable reaction was recorded from the boys.

On 12.07.2012, Brisa was again observed in biology class, fifth period. The following notes were taken to describe Brisa’s interactions with her classmates during this class.

At the beginning of class, Brisa talked with a neighbor boy. As the bingo game was about to begin, the boy changed his seat from the other side of the room to sit in front of her. He turned around and talked to here. It looked like he was asking questions about the bingo card–checking vocabulary. The class consisted of several rounds of bingo to review
biology vocabulary. During transition times between games, I could see Brisa smile, giggle, and laugh while talking to her neighbor. At the end of class, she stood with a group of her peers around a boy’s phone. Brisa seemed to do her work, but did not speak up to ask questions or answer a question during the entire class.

Just as Kimberly was social outside the classroom, she was social in the classroom as well. She enjoyed interacting with both peers and adults, particularly within a friendly social context. During one observation in fall semester, Kimberly was surrounded by girls in the back corner of her world history class. She chatted in English with her classmates. Coincidently, Brisa was not in class because she was absent from school that day. Kimberly’s classmates did not appear to be doing their classwork. Kimberly didn’t talk constantly, unlike many of the students in class. She was quiet for most of the class, sometimes working, sometimes staring off into the distance. At one point, Kimberly explained to the co-teacher and classmates that Brisa was absent from school that day because her baby was sick.

Interviews

Appreciating humor. The interview with Ms. Davis, Mariposa’s 10th-grade science teacher, illustrated Mariposa’s use of language to construct her identity as a good student. Ms. Davis explained the following about Mariposa,

She was a lot more…in tune with a lot of the little jokes that I’d make like to the side. You know, a student makes a comment and I kind of, make a little side comment too. She would notice and she would laugh. She would get it and other people wouldn’t, which is funny. I mean, I can always count on Mariposa to get it. She’s very smart. She’s very witty as well.

Negotiating language. In an interview with Kimberly’s English language arts teacher, Ms. Jones, she described Kimberly’s ability to adjust her language choices depending on her interlocutor and his or her expectations (explicit or implicit) surrounding that linguistic interaction. Ms. Jones remarked,
There are several different ways I would say that she uses languages. When she is communicating with her friends, she uses very—not slang—but not proper English necessarily, that is the same way that all of her peers use English. But when it comes down to me just speaking with her, she is very grammatically correct. So, she knows how to process it. She almost knows….it’s almost like she is trilingual because she knows Spanish and she knows English and she knows how to communicate with her friends.

Of the three participants, Kimberly most often integrated Spanish into her English speaking discourses and English into her Spanish speaking discourses. During the same interview with Ms. Jones, her student intern interjected an observation she had made a few days prior to the interview. The intern remarked, “I noticed that somebody wrote on the board in English ‘Put your assignments in the tray’ or whatever, and she had gone up there and written it in Spanish underneath it” (Jones, interview).

**Conclusions for Research Question 2a**

Because the study centered on language, this research question focused on ways the participants specifically used language to express their identities. As a social action, language is a tool that enables humans to interact with one another and to participate in the world in ways that exceed the individual’s physical limitations. Language enables the individual to construct her identity despite resistance from the dominant discourse. The data sources that offered insights into these questions were the visual self-portrait, journal entries, observations, and interviews.

**Asserting identities.** As this theme directly addressed the research question, much of the data fit easily within this category. Despite similarities in gender, ethnicity, and length of time living in the United States, the data demonstrated unique characteristics for each girl.

The data surrounding Mariposa that best addressed her language use to express her identity was all in English. Significantly, she used two phrases in English on her visual self-portrait that declared her strength of will and dedication to her beliefs. Her use of language in the
classroom included a combination of both social chatter and conversation about the academic task. Mariposa often took the lead in small groups, limiting the socializing in order to accomplish the learning task. Her science teacher, Ms. Davis, remarked that Mariposa was one of the few students in that class who understood and appreciated Ms. Davis’ jokes or witty comments. Mariposa used language to emit her sense of humor and intelligence, reinforcing her identity as a smart, good student.

Of the three girls, Kimberly provided the most complex combinations of English and Spanish in her writing and her speech. Her journal entry about her family’s apartment being broken into used both languages to enhance the dramatic narrative. In class, Kimberly socialized with her classmates in English but cheerfully shared Spanish phrases or words if asked. However, she did not disrupt class; especially during instruction, she quietly sat in her seat although other students were socializing. Conversations in Spanish occurred only in the classes with Brisa and were brief and private.

Brisa also spoke Spanish and English at school, but the interesting matter was not which language or combination of languages she used, it was her message. Data pointed to the complex and sometimes contradictory names that she chose for herself. In her visual self-portrait, Brisa declared herself to be a mother. Brisa’s identity as mother shifted from forefront to background depending on what Brisa chose to share. During an informal conversation, Brisa did not mention her daughter. However, she highlighted her daughter in the tasks relating to the study such as the visual self-portrait and the journal entries. In the letter to her future self, Brisa began the letter with a formal introduction using all of her names and her daughter’s full name. She also entitled her letter, “angelic little devil,” which was a reference to herself.
In the classroom, Brisa might choose to interact with peers or not. She presented herself as quietly confident and when observed, she completed her class assignments quickly. Brisa communicated with silence as much as she did with language.

**Negotiating expectations.** In an interview with Ms. Jones, Kimberly’s English language arts teacher, she explained how Kimberly shifted registers, language variations, as well as languages according to the linguistic expectations of the interlocutor. Her nimble linguistic abilities reflected her skills as a communicator. Additionally, the ELA intern observed that one day Kimberly had written the Spanish translation of class directions on the whiteboard. The teachers found this to be humorous, and Kimberly’s action could have been motivated by numerous factors; one of them might have been pride in her first language.

**Findings for Research Question 3**

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?

**Visual Self-Portrait**

Brisa’s second and third slides of her visual self-portrait were photographs of her and her friends at school. Slide 2’s title is “MY BFF <3 (Kimberly & Estefany). There is one photograph of Brisa and Kimberly with what appears to be a tiled wall found in a restroom. An insert of three individual photographs portray each individual girl with Brisa in the center. Slide 3’s title is “IN SCHOOL - Having fun (parade day). There are two photographs of the three girls together in the restroom.

Kimberly’s title page of her visual self-portrait had the three girls individually taking self-portraits of themselves. Kimberly took her photograph at home, but Brisa and their friend Estefany both took their photographs in a tiled restroom, resembling those at River High. Slide 5
has a headshot of each of the three girls with the caption “This two girl are my best friend. Brisa and Estefany. This girl are always here for me…”

Journal Entries

Teacher–student relationships. Mariposa offered an audio diary of her school day in December. Here is an excerpt:

How was my day? My day was great. I’m just a little tired. It [start] off pretty good. In first period, we were learning about the [revolutionary] war and how George Washington became the first president of the United States. I really enjoy reading, learning new things. I like to know how it was back in the day. And of course, I can’t forget about Ms. [Davis] class. I always enjoy her class. Her smile makes my day. And honestly, to me, she’s the best teacher ever.

Every day I learn something new.

I end my day in English class. Mr. Thomas, he is so funny. He makes me smile.

In this excerpt of her audio diary, Mariposa mentioned two of her teachers that made her feel supported, Ms. Davis, her physical science teacher, and Mr. Thomas, her English language arts teacher. Teacher–student interactions emerged as an important topic for Mariposa who reported reacting positively to teacher recognition and praise.

Planning the future. In her handwritten response to the journal prompt, “If I could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?” Mariposa dreamt of living in Los Angeles, CA because she knew “some friends that live in Los Angeles and they told [her] ‘Los Angeles’ is a place where you always have something to do,’ and there’s several museums [she’d] love to visit.” (Mariposa, journal entry)

Kimberly wrote a letter to her future self in 5 years. Writing the letter took her longer than usual to complete, and she complained about the difficulty of the task. When asked why the task was so challenging, she explained that she lived in the moment and that visualizing the
future was not easy for her. Her letter was brief, but reflected her buoyant, optimistic personality while including a touch of poignancy. The letter in its entirety reads as follows,

**DEAR [KIMBERLY]...**

I see myself in Texas having a great job that I want as a owner of the best club in Dallas Texas! 😊... With no kids till I turn 25 and with a great boyfriends!!... I also see myself in a lot of places, for example visiting familia en Mexico and building a house para mis parents! Que tanto quieren... me veo como alguien que lucha por su sueño y lo concigo .. y que al pensar por todo lo que pase en mi juvenote no me afecta en mi future que al contrario me va ayudar hase una buena persona! Y voy a valorar lo que tengo en esta vida!

(Translation)
I see myself in Texas having a great job that I want as a owner of the best club in Dallas Texas! ...With no kids till I turn 25 and with a great boyfriends!!... I also see myself in a lot of places, for example visiting family in Mexico and building a house for my parents! That they want so much.... I see myself as someone who fights for her dream and I get it...and who, in spite of everything that has happened to me in my youth, it doesn’t affect my future, but on the contrary, helps me to become a good person! And I am going to value what I have in this life!

Brisa also wrote a letter to her future self, where she imagines her life in five years. An excerpt from her letter included the following:

I see myself in five years and I want to own my own house have about three or five cars trucks. In five years I want to own mi propio salon de hairstyle and makeup and massage Publications. I want to be a Ultrasound Technician because I love to see how babies move inside their mommy’s belly and because I like to help people check them if they have a problem. I see in the future that one day I will have a truck go shopping with mi baby [Cristina] and be somebody in life have business. I would like to leave in Miami because I hate the cold and I love the heat.

All three girls dreamt of leaving their current home in the small southeastern town for a city with a well-established Latino community, which articulated a personal goal for each. In these journal excerpts, Kimberly and Brisa also named goals and accomplishments relating to material wealth and successful relationships. For example, Kimberly included personal goals of
having a boyfriend, but no children, visiting family in Mexico, and building her parents a house. Brisa’s personal goals focused on accruing sufficient wealth to obtain properties and assets such as a home, several vehicles, and the ability to comfortably provide for her daughter. In contrast, Mariposa did not mention specific material or relationship goals, rather she referenced the cultural lure of a big city, such as museums and the fact that “there is always something to do” as her reason for wanting to visit or live in Los Angeles.

Observations

From notes taken during class observations, Mariposa seemed to thrive when classwork was structured and rigorous, yet there was enough flexibility in classroom organization that she could interact with her peers. Because Mariposa stayed focused on her task, she managed the freedom of simultaneously socializing and learning with her peers. In classes where the assignments were not challenging, Mariposa completed her work, but did not exceed expectations. The researcher seldom observed occasions when Mariposa engaged in activities other than academic ones. However, two excerpts from observations included moments during class time when Mariposa was not engaged academically.

In Health, Mariposa’s class watched a DVD discouraging drug and alcohol use for teens. No talking was permitted during the playtime of the DVD. One boy came in late and sat across the table from Mariposa, but was immediately isolated for trying to talk to her. There were many heads down during the DVD. As it progressed, Mariposa looked bored! She applied lip gloss; a little later, she still looked bored but also irritated.

In Spanish 3, the teacher went over the term tener que (to have to), and students were assigned to write sentences using this grammar point. Some students wrote and some talked. Mariposa looked incredibly bored. When she finished her sentences, she put her head down on her desk. Twenty-five minutes later, the class was still working on the sentences, so Mariposa began checking her phone. Ten minutes before class ended, Mariposa looked quite irritated as the teacher began asking for student examples of tener que in a sentence.
Accumulated notes from several classroom observations of Brisa indicated that she responded well to some structured activities, but, like Mariposa, lost interest when class moved too slowly. The following excerpts taken from observation notes illustrate Brisa’s level of engagement in a variety of classes. The first excerpt comes from one of the first observations of Brisa without Kimberly, during which the researcher sat very close to Brisa. The second excerpt is from another observation in Brisa’s biology class about one month later.

Brisa sat on the back row of the science room with another girl. Brisa asked her a question, and they had a short conversation. When it was time for the bell-ringer activity, Brisa copied the information from the PowerPoint. Brisa appeared to have completed the work, filling out a Venn diagram, before the teacher actually explained the assignment. During class, Brisa spent most of her time working quietly at her desk. At one point, the teacher came by and gave Brisa individual attention.

Brisa was seated close to the teacher’s desk. She seemed to be on task as she was copying science vocabulary words onto her bingo card. She finished before her classmates. As she waited for the game to begin, she looked bored. Halfway through the class and with the game underway, Brisa still looked bored. A few minutes later, a small group of boys hovered around the board playing hangman, but Brisa sat with a group that did not seem to be engaged with class activities.

Kimberly, the most talkative of the three participants, was generally more socially engaged with her classmates when not focused on classwork. She combined social interaction with completing the work that was asked of her. She was observed on several occasions in her Algebra IA class, which is one of the two classes she had without Brisa. Kimberly consistently focused on her class work first, and then interacted with her peers as the following excerpts indicate:

When the bell rang, the Algebra IA teacher allowed the students in the room. Kimberly came in talking and joking with a boy. She sat down and paired up right away with a girl as their teacher explained the bell ringer. Then students began working through review problems. Kimberly remained quiet through the first 30 minutes of class but began to join in conversation with her tablemates.

Before Algebra class began, Kimberly talked animatedly with a girl and two boys sitting nearby. She was fixing her hair and pulled it up. A few minutes into class, Kimberly was
completing the bell ringer. Then she moved closer to the board to see the class work better and quietly worked through the problems. During class, she talked to her neighbors occasionally, but most of the time, she was quiet. Kimberly has the ability to listen over the constant conversation and hear the directions from the teacher.

Like Mariposa and Brisa, Kimberly’s interest wandered when the class moved too slowly. However, she also had the ability to multitask as she demonstrated one day in biology class.

Kimberly arrived late to class. She sat at a table with four other students while the teacher reviewed vocabulary and biology concepts for several minutes. During this time, Kimberly shuffled papers and organized her backpack, appearing not to be listening. However, she was also not talking, like so many other students in the class. The teacher talked over the continuous undercurrent of conversation. After organizing her backpack, Kimberly wrote in her notebook while her table mates chatted. Occasionally she joined their conversation as well as joining the classroom discourse by answering questions. While the review game of Jeopardy was underway, Kimberly doodled in her notebook or she sat quietly staring into space. She looked quite bored, playing with a marker. Then, she chose a Jeopardy category for her table. When overridden by a louder neighbor who chose a different category, she argued, “That’s hard.” Her team went with that selection but did not get the correct answer.

**Interviews**

**First grade.** Mariposa described her experience with school in Mexico and her efforts to gain first language literacy skills. When asked how long she had lived in the town of her birth, Puebla, Mariposa responded, “Like 6 years. I went to school, like, I was in second grade. I started second grade, and then we came here.” Later in the interview, she described how she learned to read in Spanish.

M: Well, when we go to school in Spanish, I mean in Mexico, I learned how to write and I learned how to write in Spanish here because my sister taught me.

R: Your sister taught you. Wow.

M: Since I was growing up here, my sister taught me Spanish, like, how to write it.

R: Did she teach you to read in Spanish, then?
M: Aah, yeah. She was in fifth grade and was really smart. She knows how to write and, you know, read really good.

In the follow-up interview, Brisa also talked about her experiences in school when she lived in Mexico and her ability to read and write in Spanish. Brisa could not remember learning to read and write in Spanish. When asked if she remembered ever going to school in Mexico, she said,

B: Nope – well yeah! Kindergarten and first through second, I think.

R: Ok! So you learned to read there, then.

B: Yeah…but I don’t remember, like, second grade. I remember first.

R: Well, you told me that you had lived in different places, so maybe you were moving around.

B: No.

R: You weren’t? Ok. You just don’t remember second grade. But you’ve always been able to read and write in Spanish, never –

B: Yeah.

R: Thought about having to learn it. You’ve just always been able to do it?

B: Yeah.

School is fun. In Kimberly’s initial formal interview in December, she talked some about how she managed her school work, what her favorite classes were, and why. Her general impression was that “school is fun” because

we do different stuff. It’s kinda hard to use English and Spanish at the same time at school. Usually when I’m doing a project, it’s better for me to find stuff in Spanish and then I translate things [like] in BTA.
She reported not paying attention in history, but that science was her favorite class because “I think it’s something interesting about the body and animals. I think blood is kinda nasty…” but she thought the most interesting parts of science class were “the experiments and stuff like that” (Kimberly, interview).

During Kimberly’s second interview in February, she again admitted that she liked coming to school. She was answering a question about places she liked to go.

K: I like going to the mall. Umm, go outta eat, go to the movies, I like coming to school (giggled self-consciously). I’d rather go to school.

R: You do?!

K: Yeah, I’d rather stay in school.

R: Why?

K: I don’t know, sometimes it’s like boring, but I really like coming to school. Learn something, you know. Just un poquito (a little bit). I don’t pay attention in all my classes, but kinda learn some things. Pero que se mete en mi cabeza (but if it can get in my head)

Kimberly’s comment about preferring school to the implied movies or restaurants signaled a significant contradiction in her words and her actions, considering that most of the year she had been leaving campus during school. Attendance records showed that during certain times of the year, particularly in the fall, she had missed several classes three to four times a week.

**School talk.** In Kimberly’s December interview, she talked about what prevented her from participating in class:

K: Coz I’m shy sometimes and….

R … and it’s hard sometimes to speak up?
K: Yeah, like, I get nervous.

R: Oh. Yeah. Would it be easier to speak in Spanish or…?

K: Still nervous.

R: Still nervous.

K: My cheeks get red, and I hate it.

R: Is it talking to adults? Or is it asking a question in front of the class?

K: Yea, talking in front of the class or an adult, like, you know?

R: So, it’s like going up to an adult and saying I need help?

K: No, no. It’s like where you’re -- an example is like when you are going to present a project just in front of everybody. I hate that. I hate that. My voice is like nervous and stuff.

**My time with my friends.** During the course of the data collection period, Kimberly and Brisa successfully evaded answering the question of why they chose to continue skipping school when the consequences were becoming more severe. In her second interview, Kimberly explained why she skipped school.

We’re like, ok, we’re not gonna skip no more and we find ourselves already outside la escuela, you know? But platicando, it’s like something. I do it. No precisamente para estar fregando mis papas, no, but it’ like something that I – if I get out of school, it’s like I feel, you know, relief, calmada. I won’t have to worry like en mi casa, with the problems that I already have. Nothing bad about school. It’s got nothing to do with -- en mi casa, porque siempre llego, luego mi papa me habla porque – llego y paro a cocinar y no [ ] para hacer nada y luego me enojo y I be like, si mis papas me ayudara, well más especificamente si mi papa que ayudara en mis tareas o que luego salgamos, luego saliendo, I be like, no, no, whatever. Don’t talk to me, pero I’m freakin’ out about my parents. I don’t care about them.

You know, y ahorita, porque están con un abogado porque nos había pasado el asalto porque aplicaron para una visa, so ahorita, they be really stressed out por el dinero and I’ll be like, primer no tengo la culpa si están gritando porque no tienen dinero. Yo que? I mean, fue ustedes que aplicaron, que me ha portado porque aplicaron. I be like, ok, whatever! You know? I know what good and bad, no voy a robar, no voy a matar, no
porque ni hacemos eso. You have a little time coz it’s like the only time I have – _my_ time with my friends. I have time to feel relieved without stress, you know. I don’t have to worry about them...at home.

(Translation)

_We’re like, ok, we’re not going to skip anymore and we find ourselves already outside the school, you know? But talking, it’s like something – I do it, not exactly to mess with my parents, no, but it’s like something that I – If I get out of school, it’s like, I feel, you know, relief, calm. I won’t have to worry like at home with the problems I already have._

_Nothing bad about school. It’s got nothing to do with – at home, when I get there, later my dad hassle me because – I get there and I start cooking and [ ] to do nothing and later I get mad and, I be like, if my parents would help me, well, more specifically if my dad would help me with my homework or that later we would all go out, all go out, I be like, no, no, whatever – don’t talk to me! But I’m freaking out about my parents. I don’t care about them._

_You know, and now because they have a lawyer because of the break-in and because they applied for a visa-- so right now they be really stressed out about the money and I’ll be like, first it’s not my fault if you all are yelling because there is no money. What’s that got to do with me? I mean, it was you all who applied for the visa and I’ve behaved because of the application. I be like, ok, whatever! You know? I know what’s good and bad. I’m not going to rob, I’m not going to kill. No, because we don’t do that kind of thing. You have a little time coz it’s like the only time I have my time with my friends. I have to feel relieved without stress, you know. I don’t have to worry about them....at home._

Kimberly candidly described issues at home that were causing her stress. She used the structure of the school day to find a reprieve from the stresses of her life outside of school. In a different conversation, Kimberly admitted that she lived in the moment and that looking into the future was quite difficult for her. Certainly she understood that her choices to repeatedly leave campus received disapproval from school administrators, faculty, and her parents. Because of her choices, she missed out on participating in her quinceañera, an important social rite of passage for a 15-year-old Latina.

In Brisa’s follow-up interview, she was also asked again for her reasons for skipping school, even with increasingly harsh consequences. She responded, “Oh! _(laughing)_ We just, like, if we’re hungry, we don’t eat this kind of food – we just go out to eat. That’s it. We don’t do
nothin’ bad” (Brisa, interview). Choosing to eat food other than school cafeteria food was a bland response, especially because Brisa did not explain the importance of continuing risky behaviors instead of considering options such as bringing food from home. Brisa’s answer left additional questions unanswered. However, the continued absences from class indicated that within the structure of school, this activity provided support to an aspect of Brisa’s social life that may have been less available after school because of her responsibilities at home.

**Teacher–student relationships.** For Mariposa, a positive teacher–student relationship was powerful and offered a strong foundation of support. When that positive connection with the teacher did not exist for Mariposa, she struggled with the content. Mariposa reacted favorably when she felt respected, trusted, or cared for by her teachers, just as her anger flared when she felt herself or her peers treated in a noncaring way. When discussing her classes, Mariposa briefly described why history class was one of her least favorites.

> It’s not that I don’t like [history] but it’s just the teacher, the way that she talks to us students. I don’t like that. Like, you know, I told you how I get mad really easy. I guess she thinks it’s fine for her to say stuff out loud and you be looking like “okay.” No. No. That’s something I don’t like, so that’s, like, the worst class of the day.

In the next excerpt from the interview, Mariposa compared her ability to learn in Ms. Davis’ class with her difficulties learning in math class. Mariposa attributed her ease of learning in science with the teacher’s connection to her and to the class as a whole. This connection was developed through interactions in the classroom over time. If Mariposa perceived these interactions to be fair or caring, then she began to trust the teacher. However, the inverse held true for Mariposa as well. When she perceived sarcasm or disrespectful behavior from her teacher, she became angry.

> M: I like school. I do. Like I said, my favorite class is with Ms. Davis. In that class, I don’t never feel like...even if I’m upset, I want to learn stuff from her. But, you know, now that I’m in second period [math], that class is really difficult. Because,
you know, the way he is. I guess because he’s just the coach and he’s just, you know…

R: tough?

M: yeah, but you remember that day when he was doing the notebook check?

R: mhmm

M: You know, he started laughin’, like he was, “It’s not my fault you’re sensitive!”

R: Yeah, something happened to a friend of yours, right? That boy…?

M: Yeah! And it made me, like, I guess, angry!

R: Yeah, I remember…

M: It’s just like, he shouldn’t—he’s the teacher. If he didn’t like it, ok, you know, give him a zero, but it wasn’t—I guess it wasn’t all that, you know, called for — what he did… and I don’t know. It’s just like, that class and first period are like the most difficult classes, and I wanna get them over with. First and second.

Later in the interview, Mariposa remembered a supportive incident with Mr. Thomas, her 10th-grade English Language Arts teacher.

The other day I was really upset. I guess he saw me. He came up to me and said it’s okay, don’t worry about it. I still felt like I wasn’t feeling good, so I was doing my work and that’s when he called me. He was singing a song and using my name. He did that to make me feel, I guess, a little better. He’s good after all.

Mr. Thomas, Ms. Davis (10th-grade science teacher), Ms. Hall (9th-grade math teacher), and Mr. Hales (student dean) were among the adults at school whom Mariposa most trusted. She made a clear connection between her positive experiences at school and her relationship with these adults.

Whenever I get to Ms. Davis, it just makes my day better. You know, it’s that class; I actually feel comfortable around her, like if I had, if I ever had a problem, like, she will be the first one to help me, her and Mr. Hales. I trust them and Ms. Hall. She’s my favorite teacher, you know. Last year when I got to her [ninth-grade math] class, I thought it was going to be hard, but she made it so easy that I actually liked it.
Mariposa described her learning experience in Ms. Davis’ 10th-grade physical science class.

My favorite class is with Ms. Davis. We do bell ringer[s] or homework or study guides. I do really well on ‘em, and I guess because she teaches really good, it stays on my mind. When I write, I don’t be thinkin’ about what I’m writin’, you know. But whenever it – whenever I stop and I listen to her, I feel like I don’t even need to write it because I get it.

If she needed additional help, it was the teacher, regardless of subject, that brought Mariposa to after-school tutoring.

[The history teacher] has tutoring on Thursday I think but I’m not, like, comfortable going. If she’s gonna be the same way, so I decide not to go. But Ms. Davis? I do go to her room whenever I don’t get something, not just in her class, but she’ll help in like, math, history, so I’d rather go with somebody I feel comfortable with and her teaching me well, then go with somebody who is, you know, my real teacher, but she’s gonna be, you know, I guess being a bad mood because, I’m pretty sure everybody’s ready to go home, so I’d rather go with Ms. Davis, ‘cause she’s actually really sweet about teaching.

Mariposa talked about the significant influence that Ms. Davis has had in her own perception of her academic abilities and on her educational choices:

Whenever I got to her class, that’s whenever I start thinking about going to college. I hadn’t thought about it. She was like, she always think about it. She always say to our class, we need to prepare to go to college. That’s her main goal for us to go to college and I feel like, you know, she’s a teacher and she’s not getting paid for her to encourage us to do better than – I feel good. I be like, I should do it. I can do it, if she’s helping me and giving me that support. I can do it.

Ms. Davis is really into the ACT and they say you gotta take the ACT to go to college, so I wanna take the ACT test because, you know, I feel like – I want to take it next year.

Overall, Kimberly did not emphasize the value of her connections to her teachers as overtly as did Mariposa. However, this segment of her first interview revealed that teachers did have a powerful impact on her and gave explicit reasons why her interactions with Ms. Jones had been so positive. Replying to a question about her favorite subject, Kimberly responded,

K: ummmm, English?
R: yeah…
K: That’s why it’s first, yeah... *(Reference to her schedule)*

R: Yeah, if you didn’t have Ms. Jones, would it still be your favorite subject?

K: No! *(Laughs)*

R: And what do you like about Ms. Jones?

K: She... she try to make things easier and she explained things step-by-step, you know, when I’m getting confused and now I’m getting a good grade and she’s funny.

**Contrasting perspectives.** Brisa provided little insight into her perception of her relationships with her teachers and whether she valued them. Therefore, the researcher interviewed Brisa and Kimberly’s ninth-grade English Language Arts teacher, Ms. Jones, requesting her perception of Brisa. At the beginning of the interview, Ms. Jones complained about a recent assignment that Brisa had not finished:

It’s not blatant defiance of not doing [the assignment]. She just doesn’t want to, so she’s not gonna. But if I held her feet to the fire, she’ll give me half of it. You know, once she turned it in, she said, “I didn’t have a highlighter” and you *did* because the first part of it is highlighted, sooo, somewhere along the way you had a highlighter or two, coz I think you had two colors on there. So you just stopped along the way coz you didn’t want to do it anymore. But then, she was the *only* person in the room who stopped. I don’t understand...

In contrast, Ms. Hall, Brisa’s algebra teacher, had consistently had high praise for Brisa’s work in her class. In Ms. Hall’s interview, she described Brisa’s work habits in algebra:

She seems to be good at understanding the material. She is in my standard class, so we go a little bit slower pace. When they raise their hands to ask for help on certain problems, I ask them questions. “What do you do for this problem?” “What do you do first?” “What does this mean?” Brisa can tell me, so she seems to understand all the vocabulary and, of course, she writes all of her notes that I put on the board.
One possibility for the discrepancy in teacher perception of Brisa’s level of engagement might be her interest in the content. When asked in the follow-up interview what she thought of writing at school, Brisa responded,

B: I don’t like writing in school.
R: At all?
B: hmhm (negative response)
R: Yeah, in either language?
B: Spanish, I think I like more.

Brisa clearly stated that she did not like to write, particularly in school, which, because she wasn’t taking Spanish at the time, would have been in English. Therefore, she may have been more interested in the activities that math offered. Additionally, Brisa reported in her first interview that her favorite class was her Business Technology Applications.

**Career plans.** Periodically, the participants answered questions about their career interests and future plans. Answers changed over the course of the data collection period as the girls began to consider alternative careers. In each of the follow-up interviews, the girls talked about their most current thoughts for a career track.

Kimberly had mentioned wanting to own a business in the future. In the following excerpt, she explained the steps she might take to achieve that goal.

Well, finish school—college and stuff. Um probably, you know… take math. Yeah. And probably work in a business to find out como funcionen todo (*how it all works*). Um, preguntar (*ask*), you know, que necesitas para poner un local (*what you need to set up a shop*).

Following previously mentioned language patterns, Kimberly used English for the first idea, which was to finish school. Although she mentioned college, she hedged with “and stuff.” Her plan did not emerge more clearly until she began to talk about interning or following an
apprenticeship in a business. Not only did she get more specific, but she began to merge English and Spanish, reinforcing the discourse-related code-switching that Brisa had used when speaking of a real and foreseeable future.

During the study, Brisa had shown interest in becoming a chef, an ultrasound technician, or a business owner. In the follow-up interview, Brisa thought she needed to stay in school in order to obtain a job like that. In response to Brisa’s comment, the researcher asked this question:

R: How does school help? What does school do for you?
B: Instead of being at home?
R: I guess I want to know, if you think it helps you in your life?
B: Me da mas cosas. (It gives me more things.)

Brisa’s association of school with the ability to collect more things drew attention to her acceptance of the dominant discourse of school that obtaining an education leads to financial stability. It is important to note that an education does not guarantee financial stability, but it was unclear as to whether Brisa understood that caveat buried within her assumption.

Mariposa had also talked about several possible professions, such as becoming a lawyer or a teacher. At one point, she indicated that she wanted to become a forensic investigator. In her BTA class, she had been assigned to research two careers. She explained the steps needed for that profession. One way was to study forensic medicine and graduate with a degree in that field. The other option was to become a police officer first and learn the job of forensic medicine while working. She explained,

It’s better for [ ] all to be a police officer and then graduate to being a forensic investigator because that’s the best thing. So, I actually want to do that, because I’m really, you know, I don’t know, for some reason, that’s something I really really want to do. There are sometimes I believe that, you know, you gotta do the right thing when others don’t do it.
Conclusions for Research Question 3

This question addressed what participating English learners recognized at school to be supportive to their personal and educational goals. One of the challenges of this question was to pull away some of the layers of the researcher’s assumptions in order to allow Brisa’s, Kimberly’s, and Mariposa’s opinions indicate what was supportive, or not, to their personal and educational needs. For that reason, most of the data drew directly from each of the participants. Data from journal entries and interviews were emphasized; however, data from the visual self-portrait and observations were also included.

Although the central themes of asserting identities and negotiating expectations continued to be relevant, the subcategories for Research Question 3 revealed characteristics that overlapped between the two larger themes in an untidy way. Articulating personal and educational goals played a role in constructing future identities; however, managing cultural and gendered expectations became an intrinsic part of that articulation process. Furthermore, data revealed a third theme that centered on school, including the discourse, the activities, and the social space of school. Because education is widely viewed as a necessary platform from which to build a career, the context of school influenced the participants in establishing goals for the future and in taking steps toward achieving those goals.

The participants articulated personal goals through their journal entries. For example, each girl wrote in a journal entry about moving to a large metropolis in a different part of the United States; Mariposa expressed interest in visiting Los Angeles. Kimberly wanted to live in Dallas, and Brisa chose Miami. The glamor of the city may have attracted them, but these cities are recognized for their varied and vibrant Latino cultures and communities. The girls may not have chosen the city because of the Latino community; however, a dynamic community might have been an attractive element. Another personal goal that emerged from the journals was
accruing personal wealth. Both Kimberly and Brisa wrote about obtaining things, such as cars. However, they both mentioned supporting their family with their wealth. Kimberly dreamed of buying her parents a house, and Brisa wanted sufficient wealth to comfortably support her daughter.

Career goals were talked about several times in both formal interviews and unstructured conversations between the researcher and each of the participants. Over the course of the data collection period, Mariposa talked about several potential career paths; initially she explored becoming a teacher, then a lawyer. Toward the end, she focused on a career path of becoming first a police officer, then a forensic investigator. Kimberly expressed an interest in owning a business, and in her first interview offered the idea of a family club, a place specifically for young adolescents (Kimberly, interview).

Brisa suggested a variety of career paths such as becoming an ultra sound technician and salon owner. Not only did Brisa speak most often about becoming an ultra sound technician, she received positive support about her choice from adults such as the ESL Specialist. In her letter to her future self, Brisa wrote about why she wanted to become an ultra sound technician, stating that “I love to see how babies move inside their mommy’s belly and because I like to help people check them if they have a problem” (Brisa, interview).

In terms of each participant’s plan to achieve her goals, all three agreed that finishing high school was the first step. In her follow-up interview, Mariposa remarked that she had talked with her science teacher Ms. Davis about taking the ACT for college preparation. Kimberly mentioned college but also planned to learn more about business by getting involved in an informal apprenticeship. Other than graduating from high school, Brisa offered no specific plan of action to achieve her career goals.
Additionally, in light of their documentation status, each girl faced discouraging bureaucratic and economic obstacles to studying in a postsecondary context. Over the course of the data collection period, adult attitudes toward helping the girls overcome their hurdles ranged from looking for creative out-of-state solutions to not getting involved at all. Some parents were more proactive about obtaining documents than others. This topic generated many emotions, but mostly it was a combination of frustration and fear mixed with some hope.

Although hazy on their future plans, all three had constructed a social network at school that provided them with significant support. Mariposa’s inner circle of her sister, boyfriend, and lunch-time friend offered her support both in and out of school. Kimberly and Brisa’s system of skipping school pushed against adult expectations both from school administrators and Kimberly’s mother. In Kimberly’s interview, she was able to articulate the significance of her time with her friends, regardless of the severe consequences that she suffered.

Broadening the scope to include the context of school, interview data revealed insights about these long-time English learners’ needs in a classroom and how they found support. Positive teacher–student relationships, intellectual movement in the classroom, and first-language literacy were among those emerging themes.

**Summary of Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 reiterated the purpose of the study, which was to explore the daily routines and language choices of 3 adolescent Latina English learners as they negotiated their identities through the discourses required in school and other contexts. In order to provide ample opportunity to highlight pertinent findings from both primary and secondary participants, the chapter was organized by research question, with each question containing relevant findings from corresponding data sources. With a total of five data sources, visual self-portrait, journal
entries, observations, field notes, and interviews, at least three sources answered every question for purposes of triangulating the data. At the end of each question’s findings, a brief conclusion drew out themes to extend the analysis. Data was viewed through the overarching theoretical lens of sociocultural theory pertaining specifically to language learning issues. Within the broad scope of sociocultural theory, the researcher incorporated cultural historical activity theory, identity theory, positioning theory, and symbolic domination.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

_Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself._

—John Dewey

Introduction

For a variety of reasons, English learners have often been overlooked or misunderstood in secondary classroom. A classroom teacher who has little experience engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse students may have a static, shallow understanding of his student and therefore be equipped to address only superficial needs, or may completely misunderstand his EL’s educational needs. This study considered the complexity of multiple identities that change over time and are a site of struggle (Norton Peirce, 1995) within the context of the English learner label in a secondary educational context. In the 1990s through the first decade of the millennium, this expansive topic of English learners’ identity construction generated significant and groundbreaking research among scholars in the field of second language acquisition (Kanno, 2003; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1995; Rampton, 1995; Yon, 2000). Additional research during this time period took a critical look at issues relating Latino students’ school experiences (Diaz-Greensberg, 2003; Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Flores-González, 2002; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Combining both areas of research provided a strong base from which to consider these issues from a contemporary viewpoint.

Because research is an iterative process, recent scholarship reflected renewed interest in the connection between English learners, language, and identity (Ngo, 2010; Paris, 2011) adding
an updated perspective to English learners’ educational experiences in the United States. However, little research exists that explores language learners’ experiences in the southeastern region of the United States. Furthermore, since the southeast experienced its initial influx of immigrants in the 1990s, the immigrant population living in the south has been changing. The adolescents who participated in this study were not newly arrived immigrants, but young people who had experienced the U.S. educational system since first grade. To highlight the variety and complexity of the adolescent English learner, living and studying in the American south, this study intended to explore their day-to-day experiences, to give them an opportunity to share who they were, who they would like to become, and how their educational experiences have influenced their goals.

**Theoretical Framework**

The premise of this study asserted that individuals use language to construct a fluid identity within the constraints of their sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts. Therefore, the study’s theoretical framework needed the explanatory power to examine the myriad assumptions about language, culture, identity, and power residing within this premise. Viewing identity through a poststructural, sociocultural lens (Norton Peirce, 1995) required a framework that could interpret the complexities of the process of using language to engage with an individual’s environment. Cultural historical activity theory provided an effective model to consider a culturally mediated human activity, such as identity construction, in light of sociocultural constraints.

Living within her sociocultural environment, the individual uses language to manage her day and to construct her identity. In this way, language, culture, and identity each interconnect and influence the other, so that the individual’s actions reinforce or disrupt expectations. There
are several ways to consider the individual’s relationship to language, culture, and identity. Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) explains how an individual can be positioned by others, or how the individual can position herself. The third category allows for tension between the other two. Positioning theory provided a solid base for later scholarship in second language acquisition that delineated imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities as being positioned within discourses (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blacklege, 2004).

Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of habitus explained how societal constraints or expectations to comply with normed behaviors become internalized and then embodied in an individual from a very young age. Regardless of embodied expectations, argued Bourdieu, the individual has the ability to make choices within and through these constraints that will affect her engagement with her environment and her identity. In addressing issues concerning language and power, Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic domination explained how language is legitimized or standardized.

**Methodology**

In order to accomplish the study’s purpose, it was important to design the study so that participating English learners had space and a variety of opportunities to share their perceptions and experiences. In order to build trust with the participants, the researcher needed time to interact with each girl in a consistent, purposeful way. The data collection methods provided opportunities for focused interactions, and the case study method with ethnographic influences allowed the researcher time to learn more about these adolescent English learners and their day-to-day engagement with their environment. The study consisted of three cases with each case including one primary participant and three secondary participants. All three primary participants were 14- or 15-year-old Latinas who had been attending U.S. public schools since first or second
grade. The secondary participants included the mothers (except for Brisa’s), classroom teachers chosen by the participant, and the ESL Specialist.

In this chapter, significant findings are discussed based on each research question. Afterward, implications for theory and practice are considered, as well as limitations of the study, implications for further research, and closing remarks.

**Discussion of Research Question 1**

Research Question 1: How do adolescent ELs experience multilingualism in their day-to-day lives?

**Asserting Identities**

Both Kimberly and Brisa highlighted music as a defining characteristic of themselves, creating a commonality with many other adolescents who choose a musical genre as an identity marker. The videos of the songs that Kimberly selected as her favorites portrayed a Mexican American musical and cultural community, which provided a clear marker for Kimberly’s assertion to participate within this ethnic community. Additionally, all of Kimberly’s songs were exclusively in Spanish. Although ethnicity and language can be mutually exclusive, language continues to be a strong connector and an identity marker for an ethnic community.

One issue worth problematizing is recognition within a chosen discourse community without being stereotyped. The underlying notions of positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) and the use of agency (Ahearn, 2001) establish a base from which to launch that discussion. The notion of imposed, assumed, or negotiated identities incorporates both concepts to explain identity construction in relation to language learning (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

With her video selections and desire to live in a large, highlighted Latino community, Kimberly used digital media to expand her possibilities in order to construct and reinforce her
ethnic community. Kimberly actively strived to be a recognized member of this discourse community and was therefore negotiating her identity to employ this ethnic marker. Her experience differed from others in the literature. Ibrahim (1997) wrote of African ELs being expected by the dominant culture to adopt African American or African Canadian culture. Their assumed identities were racialized creating a limited stagnant representation (Harklau, 2000) of African English learners in North America. They negotiated their identities through music that offered a counter-hegemonic culture.

Gee (1999) defined the term social language as the role language plays within a particular discourse. Social languages can cross registers, but also languages, such as English and Spanish, making the term convenient to discuss the many varieties of language that the participants utilized across their assortment of discourses. The data illuminated relevant ways that the participants experienced multilingualism in their day-to-day lives, including a few of the most prominent, which involved language choice such as code-switching or maintaining English and Spanish in separate discourses. With the exception of the dinner party with Kimberly’s family in December, all observations and interactions were carried out at school.

In the hallways and classrooms of River High School, English and community-based varieties of English were heard most often. In and out of the classroom, teachers spoke a standardized version of English, and many of the students observed by the researcher spoke a community-based variety of English, recreating Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of symbolic domination, where the dominant group legitimizes one language and reproduces it through the labor market and educational system. Both function within Gee’s idea of social language in that they each contribute to a larger discourse. Because the participants’ classmates were mostly speakers of a community-based variation of English, then both varieties contributed significantly
to how they experienced multilingualism every day. Indeed, Kimberly’s teacher, Ms. Jones, commented how Kimberly had the ability to speak Spanish, English, and communicate with her friends.

Speaking Spanish was an integral part of the participants’ lives. Although the researcher never heard Spanish spoken in the hallways of River High, Kimberly and Brisa reported speaking Spanish in the courtyard or hallway with friends between classes. In class, Kimberly and Brisa were rarely observed speaking Spanish, and then the conversations were brief, whispered, and private. In appearance, Kimberly and Brisa’s private use of Spanish resembled Canagarajah’s (2004) research that explored hidden linguistic spaces in the classroom in order for language minority students to bolster their identity negotiation.

In Canagarajah’s (2004) study, language minority students used vernacular language or their first language when they communicated without direct teacher supervision such as in small group activities, passing notes, before or after class, or in the cafeteria or library. These were spaces that were “safe” from the dominant discourse where students could critically view their situations and develop problem solving strategies. Kimberly and Brisa did many of these activities, and although their conversations in these unsupervised moments were not recorded, inferences can be drawn that freedom of language choice supported their identity construction.

However, Mariposa was never observed speaking Spanish at school. She had reported speaking Spanish occasionally to her sister or her friend. Particularly with her friend, these conversations in Spanish were meant to exclude eavesdroppers. Communicating in Spanish at school remained an elusive activity for Mariposa. Even when Spanish was the content of a Level 3 language class, Mariposa was observed to have few opportunities for rigorous engagement with the language in a class that she reportedly took to improve her first language literacy skills.
Ironically, had Mariposa’s Spanish class been more rigorous, the content and class structure could have led to a comparison of Heller’s (1995) study of language ideology and symbolic domination within a Franco-Ontarian school. Heller concluded that the Canadian school’s bilingual program was intended to serve the French-speaking Ontarians, yet the academic structure of the French class and the variety of French taught benefitted the middle-class English-speaking Ontarians more than the native French-speaking Ontarian students.

Although Mariposa was observed to maintain distance between Spanish and English, Kimberly and Brisa were observed to verbally switch Spanish and English between themselves and the researcher in conversation; they also combined languages in their written journal entries. In Kimberly’s written work, she successfully combined English and Spanish to send a particular message, which Rampton (1995) defined as discourse related code-switching. However, she admitted in an interview that when speaking Spanish, she sometimes needed to fill in gaps with English words, indicating a participant-related strategy.

Brisa’s style of code-switching differed from Kimberly’s in that Brisa’s journal entries contained both languages, but she did not interweave Spanish and English to create a narrative. Instead, Brisa wrote sentences or ideas in Spanish that were meaningful or that were perhaps the most real, as when she expressed her goals for the future. Graduating from high school, the first goal, was written in Spanish, whereas her goals for material wealth were written in English.

In their written work, both Kimberly and Brisa employed discourse-related code-switching in order to convey a message with both Spanish and English. Brisa’s code-switching at the sentence level did not interweave the two languages as tightly as Kimberly’s written work did. Kimberly’s complex mingling of languages more clearly illustrated Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of hybridity. Because conversations that included Spanish only involved interlocutors who
shared similar levels of proficiency in both Spanish and English, the researcher did not find
examples of Rampton’s (1995) code-crossing or of Paris’s (2011) more updated version of
language sharing. Both concepts included interlocutors who did not share the same level of
proficiency in one of the languages, yet participated in linguistic exchanges with their
multilingual peers.

**Negotiating Expectations Related to Language**

The data concerning the girls’ abilities and proficiencies in both languages indicated
tension between the adult and adolescent perspectives. In English, the language of school, the
girls had not yet performed at the requisite 4.8 level on the standardized English language
proficiency test, ACCESS for ELLs, to exit out of the ESL program. Having been in the ESL
program since entering school in first or second grade, they had been recognized as English
learners for 9 years, placing them in the category of “long-term English learner” (Freeman et al.,
2002).

A closer look revealed that the girls shared additional characteristics with long-term
English learners. Freeman et al. (2002) stated that long-term English learners gained a false sense
of academic achievement because they passed their courses with Cs or perhaps Bs, but that they
could not pass exit exams and made low scores on standardized tests. Another characteristic
discussed included limited linguistic gains for long-term ELs from ESL or bilingual instruction.

Ms. Brown reinforced these characteristics in her defense of the girls’ language abilities,
stating that she believed that the girls’ English lacked the linguistic complexity and academic
vocabulary needed to achieve the score of 4.8 in order to exit the program. Notably, the data did
not reveal that the girls were unhappy or unsatisfied with their language abilities in English.
Furthermore, they did not comment on being in the ESL program, which seemed to play a minimal role in their daily lives.

The tension between the two perspectives was created because Ms. Brown gave importance to the language proficiency test scores, which prevented the girls from exiting the ESL program, providing a clear example of Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of symbolic domination to reproduce a legitimized language. As he argued, one of the most important factors in normalizing a language was to connect the language of an educated speaker and the work opportunities an educated speaker was afforded within the emerging industrialized labor market. In order to reproduce a uniform language, culturally recognized institutions such as schools and language authorities such as teachers are needed. In order to be successful, one must speak, read, and write the educated language of U.S. society, an idealized form of English. Although the girls have dreams, they did not indicate during the study an awareness of these societal language expectations.

Additionally, there existed conflicting perceptions between mother and daughter in relation to the language of home, Spanish. Mariposa’s mother, Ana, mentioned that Mariposa lacked vocabulary, giving examples, such as not knowing names of body parts or names of the cooking tools used in a Mexican kitchen. Although Mariposa did not contradict her mother, she clearly stated that she felt more comfortable speaking Spanish and could express her feelings more clearly in Spanish than she could in English. In order to view these statements as conflicting, the researcher inferred that lack of vocabulary would inhibit fluency and perhaps decrease comfort level with the language.

When discussing Mariposa’s pastime of reading, she and her mother seemed to have different perceptions of the activity and the language in which it was conducted. They both
agreed that she liked to read and that she frequently read her Bible, but Ana believed that she read mostly in English, and Mariposa stated unequivocally that she read her big Bible in Spanish.

Mariposa’s experiences with multiple cultures and languages may have provided her with multiple perspectives into both the cultures and the languages, but also she may have found gaps in both areas. In Norton Peirce’s (1995) seminal work on social identity, she drew from Bourdieu’s (1991) economic metaphor, cultural capital, which described valued knowledge and ways of thinking specifically situated within a variety of discourses. All social groups have cultural capital; not all cultural capital is valued by the dominant discourse. Negotiating multiple social groups and cultures, Mariposa might have gaps in her understanding of her home culture’s cultural capital in that she didn’t know the names of cooking utensils used in Mexico. By reading the Bible in Spanish and conversing with family friends at home, Mariposa was investing in her language, her cultural capital, and her identity at home.

Discussion of Research Question 2

Research Question 2: In what ways do multilingual adolescents negotiate their identities between home, school, and other contexts?

Language and discourses have a dialogic relationship, each existing and giving power to the other. Shifting over time and place, discourses integrate myriad communication tools that enable individuals to understand and negotiate their world (Duranti, 1997; Gee, 1999; Miller, 2003; Ngo, 2010). Identities exist within discourses and, like discourses, are multiple and shift over time and place. Without evidence of conflict, ambivalence or tension, identities, like discourses, are smoothed over to create a static, monolithic representation of a complex, fluid notion. The following discussion reveals ways in which the participating adolescent girls negotiated their identities within varying discourses through conflicts, ambivalence, and multiple perspectives.
The intersectionality of identity, visualized as spokes of a wheel, can generate as many socially constructed categories as is needed for analysis. Located within discourses, these categories may be placed on the individual, or the individual may choose the category. The notion of imposed, assumed, and negotiated identities (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) reframed this discussion toward a sociolinguistic perspective. A deeper look into the discourses of the girls’ lives brought to light the conflict and ambivalence of their identities. Data indicated a multitude of ways that the girls asserted their identities; socially constructed categories, such as ethnic identity, which emerged as significant for all three. However, each individual girl revealed her unique ways of engaging in her daily experiences and discourses.

**Kimberly**

Several salient themes pointed toward Kimberly’s efforts to negotiate her identity through time and place. Her visual self-portrait showcased her ethnic identity with cultural artifacts from Veracruz, particularly the dances in which she linked her past to her present by demonstrating her cognizance of traditional and contemporary culture. In another example of her seamless ability to traverse cultural discourses, Kimberly slid from English into Spanish when she began to explain traditional Mexican home remedies.

Although Kimberly was known at home by her second name, school discourse assumed that she would be called by her first name, which she was, from the day she began first grade until she began ninth grade. Learning from an eighth-grade teacher that she could choose which name teachers used, Kimberly negotiated her identity and bridged home and school contexts by asking her ninth-grade teachers to call her by her second name instead of her first.

Kimberly’s negotiation of her identity was not without conflict. Of the three participants, Kimberly’s data portrayed the most chaos, ambivalence, and raw emotion. Complaints made by
Kimberly’s mother, Irene, pointed to her idealized notion of a good daughter, which created an assumed identity for Kimberly. Conflicts erupted as Kimberly chose to negotiate the meaning of good daughter and good girl. Conversations, comments, and arguments collected through the data signaled that part of the discrepancy was due to gaps in cultural understandings between generations.

In Ngo’s (2010) book, *Unresolved Identities*, she resoundingly criticized the comparison between traditional and contemporary customs, arguing that this dualistic thinking minimized the complexity of the immigrant adolescent’s experiences. Ngo rightly critiqued the assumption found nestled within the binary that tradition from the homeland was antiquated, and therefore, caused generational conflict between old-fashioned parents and the immigrant youth who was adapting to a contemporary U.S. lifestyle. Although Ngo’s critique of this assumption fell within the framework of this study, cultural and generational discord cannot be completely discounted between Kimberly and her mother. Indeed, because her site of struggle was situated within school, she transcended cultures in obtaining cross-cultural disapproval from the older generation. However, additional pressures existed beyond cultural and generational factors that heightened Irene’s anxiety and concern for Kimberly’s actions.

Living as undocumented immigrants under the harshest state immigration law in the United States, Kimberly’s family and others like them had to negotiate a severe political discourse that imposed an identity of lawbreaker on every immigrant without documents. With swift and resolute consequences, including deportation, built into the state law, individuals with this imposed identity were careful about disclosing this volatile piece of information. Kimberly’s truancy at school had alerted school officials and even the court system, causing her mother considerable concern for the family’s welfare.
Through various data sources Kimberly demonstrated that she had not rebuffed her heritage or traditions. On the contrary, she actively incorporated elements of her culture and heritage into her life. However, she made it known that her parents’ concerns were not necessarily hers. Kimberly mostly accepted her parents’ assumed identity of good daughter and reportedly helped in the kitchen, babysat, and completed other household chores, although not always willingly. With the issue of class attendance, Kimberly resisted her assumed identity to negotiate for a place of ambivalence. Although there are constraining forces surrounding Kimberly, data of her conflicted interests could be viewed from a heteroglossic Bakhtinian perspective that she herself was negotiating changes to determine how she presented herself to the world.

**Mariposa**

In the interview of Mariposa’s mother, Ana clearly explained her expectations of Mariposa, which included helping with household chores, protecting the family unit, making good grades in school, and staying out of trouble. Ana unequivocally assumed that Mariposa would comply, and she did. Accepting the assumed identity of good daughter and good student, Mariposa worked diligently to position herself into these identities.

An assumed identity is not necessarily negative or detrimental to an individual; it is often part of a larger, dominant discourse (Mantero, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Returning to Bourdieu’s (1991) argument of legitimate language, a significant element of school discourse is the language of the educated speaker. Mariposa’s good student identity reflected her investment in this discourse and the promises that it held for her. Following Norton Peirce’s (1995) explanation of investment, Mariposa acknowledged the cultural and symbolic capital offered by the discourse of school and worked tirelessly to construct the good student identity in
order to be recognized within that discourse. Even as she gained access into the discourse and recognition from her teachers and peers as a good student, her identity generated tension and ambivalence within herself as she indicated in an interview. Although she worked hard to position herself as good student and to gain recognition within the discourse of school, she minimized herself within this identity as “a person who does homework,” discounting the assumed good student characteristic of intelligence and attributing her identity to work ethic.

Maneuvering through the discourses of school and home, language use and language choice were significant elements for Mariposa to actively obtain her communication goals. When describing her socializing out of school, Mariposa made a clear distinction between social settings. She voiced hesitation about engaging with her boyfriend’s English-speaking friends and family, but reported that she felt comfortable talking to her mother’s friends in Spanish. Between home and school, she thought of herself as more serious at school and more “goofy” at home with her mother and sister, crediting her comfort level to language only.

However, Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of habitus, which is an individual’s internalization of society’s expectations for her behavior, is integrated into all aspects of communication and partly determines the level of success an individual has when engaging in a particular discourse. Because habitus is embodied within the individual, it is impeccably camouflaged, making it difficult to see and to articulate. Mariposa’s belief that language facilitated or hindered her communication in these various discourses reinforced the notion that language is a social tool. However, the concept of habitus also sheds light on the ambivalence of her good student identity. Gaining complete, unhindered access into a dominant discourse requires not only language, but also the embodiment of the requisite cultural and symbolic capital.
Brisa

Like the other participants, Brisa negotiated her identities through the various discourses found with her world. At school, Brisa went about her day as a high school freshman. Being best friends with Kimberly, they shared much of their school day together, including classes, their backpack, their name change request, and even clandestine expeditions off campus. Brisa articulated the importance of her best friends, Kimberly and Estefany, in her visual self-portrait, indicating that she, like Mariposa, maintained a close inner circle of confidants. However, Brisa did not strive for leadership roles in the classroom. Both her math and English language arts teachers stated that she did not initiate conversations with them or with her peers, but that she would engage if approached.

One important distinction for Brisa in negotiating her identity between school and home was that at the time of the study, Brisa was the mother of an infant daughter. Surrounding the topic of Brisa’s baby, there were moments during the study of silence alternating with moments of sharing. Therein lay the tension and perhaps the ambivalence of Brisa’s identity as mother. Part of the silence came from Brisa’s mother, whom the researcher could not locate for a face-to-face interview. Missing this crucial perspective about Brisa at home led to as many questions as it did insights.

As a deeply complex discourse that crosses the boundaries of culture, time, place, and even the internal and external forces of human life, an in-depth discussion of motherhood is beyond the scope of this study. From a sociocultural perspective, motherhood as a discourse integrates cultural and historical constraints and is a distinctly gendered embodied experience. As an adolescent Latina mother living in the American South, Brisa negotiated this newly imposed identity through both sets of cultural constraints and expectations.
When Brisa shared her perspective on motherhood, she did so with confidence. In her visual self-portrait, she placed her daughter at the very beginning of her project, giving her daughter prominence and importance in Brisa’s life. She wrote in her journal entry and talked often of becoming an ultra-sound technician in order to help women during pregnancy. When beliefs about postpregnancy care came up in conversation, Brisa shared her opinion with assurance. These examples and many more portrayed a high level of investment from Brisa in being a mother.

Within a sociocultural framework, Norton Peirce (1995) defined investment as the energy and desire of an individual to learn a language in order to gain cultural and symbolic capital from using that language. Although Brisa may have been invested in learning the “language-in-use” (Gee, 1999, p. 7) of motherhood, her writing, comments, and actions described her exploration of her new identity within the larger discourse. Being invested in this discourse, Brisa is arguably seeking cultural and symbolic capital. At this point, the boundaries and limitations of the study come into play. Without a clearer understanding of what the cultural discourse of motherhood looked like for Brisa, continued analysis of the cultural and symbolic capital becomes speculation and leans dangerously close to stereotyping.

Silence was a significant factor in how Brisa chose to participate in the study. Just as language was a mediating tool for Brisa, so too was silence. Perspectives from teachers indicated that Brisa was not inclined to seek out social interactions with peers other than Kimberly. In other words, being quiet was part of Brisa’s way of being. However, within her school community, Brisa’s identity of motherhood was either actively avoided by some adults or hesitantly talked about by others, generating an unspoken sense of confusion and ambivalence among the adults. In this way, silence bracketed the discussion of Brisa’s language use to
construct her identity. The study’s focus on language authenticated the importance of listening to the silence at school and considering the cultural historical reasons concerning Brisa’s identity as mother.

From an activity theory perspective, Brisa’s identity construction in school engaged several points on the triangle. As the subject, Brisa used both language and silence to mediate her identity construction at school. Two of Brisa’s categories, high school student and mother, were not unique in that other female high school students at River High were also mothers. Layering Brisa’s identity with ethnicity and language, her identity as Latina EL who was also a freshman in high school and mother made her unique in the school. However, silence in Brisa’s school community excluded her identity as mother from her multifaceted identity as adolescent Latina EL who was mother of an infant daughter.

Cole and Engeström (1997) discussed the process of internalization as a reproduction of a cultural act and externalization as a search for new solutions to an existing problem. In Brisa’s example, the cultural act involved negotiating the stigmatized identity of teenage motherhood within school discourses. Silence from both Brisa, the subject, and her community at school mediated the internalization or reproduction of the stigmatized identity. However, the data also illustrated incidents when Brisa articulated her layered identity as Latina freshman in high school and mother who engaged with her community at school, such as her best friend, Kimberly, classmates, and teachers. Brisa’s engagement portrays her way of searching for new solutions to integrate the many components of her complex identity.
Discussion of Research Question 2a

Research Question 2a: How do adolescent ELs use language(s) to express their identities?

Identities, being situated within discourses, involve much more than language. Language, however, deepens and enriches our understanding of discourses and of the world. Furthermore, a central premise of this study concerned language, giving relevance to full consideration of the ways in which the participating adolescent English learners used language to express their identities.

Brisa

As discussed earlier, silence was a notable mediating tool for Brisa. She also used language in succinct, effective ways to communicate relevant ideas and topics about her life. Her identity as an adolescent mother generated a carefully covered swirl of ambivalence within the school context creating a site of struggle (Norton Peirce, 1995) for Brisa to assert her identity as mother.

Within the protected space of the study, Brisa had the opportunity to freely portray herself through the visual self-portrait, journal entries, and interviews. Because Brisa did not demonstrate an interest in verbal exchanges, her voice shone through most brightly in her written and visual expressions. For example, she unequivocally declared herself a mother in her visual self-portrait; again, in her letter, she introduced herself as Cristina’s mother. In these declarations, there was no ambivalence in her recognition of herself as mother. Her language did reveal ambivalence when she entitled her letter to herself as diablita angelical, meaning angelic little devil, a contradictory title in that devils and angels represent opposing moral forces of evil and good, respectively. The push-pull or conflicting forces signaled her recognition of a site of struggle.
In regard to language choice, Brisa made selections that optimized her message and her meaning. For example, in selecting her daughter’s name, she chose one that required no spelling change and little pronunciation change between Spanish and English. Unlike Brisa, whose names have been difficult for her teachers and English speaking friends to pronounce, her daughter has a name that floats lightly between both languages. Although she was not observed to glide in and out of Spanish and English as smoothly as Kimberly did, Brisa did alternate in both verbal and written communications.

**Kimberly**

By constantly alternating languages, Kimberly depicted a multilingual identity of herself to the world. In conversation as well as journal writings, Kimberly demonstrated adept skill at combining Spanish and English to express herself. Kimberly demonstrated her verbal abilities in a variety of ways. In class, she was social and talkative with her peers, without disrupting instruction. Her English language arts teacher, Ms. Jones, remarked that Kimberly had the ability to adjust her language variety and register according to the interlocutor and the situation. Kimberly integrated Spanish into English discourses. For example, in English class she wrote directions in Spanish underneath the directions written in English on the whiteboard. She also integrated English into Spanish discourses when she reportedly spoke English phrases to her mother or brother at home.

Kimberly’s ability to integrate both languages into her daily communications, a skill Paris (2011) called *linguistic dexterity*, attracted the attention of teachers and peers. In an interview, Ms. Jones mentioned that Kimberly would teach her non-Spanish speaking classmates a word or phrase in Spanish. Their curiosity and her ability to interchange languages could have created opportunities for the interlanguage word play found in language crossing (Rampton,
1995). However, because conversations in Spanish were held privately, there was little chance for Paris’s (2011) concept of language sharing to occur when in-group users, such as Spanish speakers, continued conversing in Spanish while non-Spanish speakers attempted to join the interaction.

**Mariposa (butterfly)**

Her pseudonym choice was a unique example of how she used language to express herself. In her interviews, Mariposa talked about situations when she was most likely to use Spanish and its relevance in her life. She read her Bible in Spanish and when she had a Facebook account, she had posted spiritually related statuses in Spanish. Because Spanish was the language of home, she communicated with her mother in Spanish. Socializing in English speaking discourses was more uncomfortable than socializing with her mother’s friends, where she felt more at ease, more herself. Considering her feeling of safety at home, in a Spanish speaking discourse, it was not surprising that she found she could articulate her feelings more effectively in Spanish.

Notably, Mariposa communicated all of that information in English, the discourse of school, and away from the privacy and safety of home. However, drawing a tidy binary of difference between public and private discourses is only the initial outline of a much more complex portrayal of Mariposa’s language usage in relation to her identity. For example, Mariposa used English for private conversations with her sister at home and at school. Her boyfriend, Lee, spoke only English, so all conversations with him would have also been in English. In her visual self-portrait, Mariposa included two significant written texts in English. The first pointed to her strong spiritual faith, and the second alluded to her strong will and
determination to succeed. Both statements referred to prominent and intensely personal aspects of her identity.

Within the discourse of school, Mariposa invested her attention and energy into her good student identity. Mariposa accepted and enacted the assumed identity of good student within the discourse of school and used English in order to gain the cultural and symbolic capital associated with being a good student. Gaining access into the discourse of school required Mariposa to internalize and embody characteristics of the good student identity over time, which could then be observed as she used the discourse of school to take leadership roles in her classes. She balanced on-task activities with some socializing to keep peer interactions friendly and pleasant. She demonstrated a sophisticated level of linguistic and cultural understanding when she, the only English learner in her physical science class, was the only student to laugh consistently at her teacher’s jokes and witty asides.

**Discussion of Research Question 3**

Research Question 3: Within school contexts, what do adolescent ELs recognize as supportive to their personal and educational goals?

A significant discourse for any high school student is the discourse of school. Like other discourses, school discourse encompasses a broad range of ideas, ideologies, actions, activities, languages, and more. Gaining access into the discourse of school is currently viewed in conventional U.S. thinking as the process of obtaining an education, which, in turn, opens doors to career possibilities that then lead to accruing symbolic capital, exemplified as financial stability or prestige within a profession. Because of cultural and societal expectations for adolescents to prepare for adult life, this study considered the transformative process of considering career options and then taking initial steps to meet those goals.
This study rested on years of previous ethnographic research that focused on educational issues surrounding adolescent English learner identity (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003; Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Flores-González, 2002; Kanno, 2003; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003; Ngo, 2010; Norton Peirce, 1995; Paris, 2011; Rampton, 1995; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Yon, 2000). Although penetrating insights and conclusions from earlier studies have deepened our understanding of such a complex topic, sociocultural contexts continually change over time and place. In the last 20 years, adolescent English learners living in the southeast United States and studying in public high schools have been given few opportunities to share their experiences. In order to create as much space as possible for these participants’ voices to be heard, this final research question was designed to highlight the participating adolescent girls’ opinions and thoughts about their educational process and how it complemented their lives.

**Future Goals**

In Kimberly and Brisa’s journal entries, each girl made passing comments related to families, children, and marital status that pointed toward personal goals. Although none of the participants explicitly stated this as a personal goal, they each expressed interest in living or visiting Los Angeles, Dallas, and Miami, all metropolitan areas that host a vibrant, multifaceted, Latino community. Each girl had moved to the U.S. South when she was between the ages of 6 and 8 and had lived in a community where the Latino population was dispersed, so that the girls may have attended school with only a few other Spanish-speaking students. Their interest in living in those particular cities signaled an unarticulated desire to gain access to the many economic and cultural opportunities afforded in these highly populated communities.

As the participants began to make sense of career path possibilities over several months, their ideas fluctuated slightly with every conversation. Most of their ideas for careers involved
postsecondary schooling, although not necessarily from a 4-year college. Espinoza-Herold (2003) related that one of her participants dreamed of owning an auto remodeling business but felt frustrated that he did not learn more business and managerial skills in high school. She argued that her participant had clearly defined his future goals but felt that the discourse of his school focused exclusively on attending college directly after high school graduation, which excluded him.

The findings of the participants’ experiences in this study did not correspond to this finding from Espinoza-Herold’s (2003) study. From observations and lack of clarity in the girls’ ability to talk about college, the researcher found a lack of focus within the participants’ classroom discourse, with the notable exception of Mariposa. She felt supported and motivated by her science teacher’s enthusiastic discussion of college, which in turn had a profound effect on Mariposa’s academic choices for a career path. Over the course of the year, Mariposa, Brisa, and Kimberly eventually settled on career choices that were forensic investigator, ultrasound technician, and business owner, respectively.

Although the research question focused on the girls’ perspectives of what they found supportive in school, larger discursive constraints needed to be considered. With the imposed identity of undocumented immigrant, each girl faced daunting challenges to transition from high school to a postsecondary education plan. Whereas, the discussion of attending college was absent from their general classroom discourse, the more threatening topic of undocumented immigrants attending postsecondary school was locked away, not to be discussed.

**Discourses of School**

Discourse involves language, body language, symbols, actions, and intentions. Through discourses we organize our world, make meaning, and distribute power (Duranti, 1997; Gee,
Within the institution of school, discourse integrates the values from the dominant discourse and reproduces them through legitimized language (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 1995; Miller, 2003). During their day, as the participants negotiated the varying discourses of school, they incorporated elements from the following themes, class structure, teacher–student relationships, L1 (first language) literacy, or peer support during school.

**Class structure.** Primarily through observations, the researcher noticed the similarities and the differences in the levels of engagement with each girl throughout her school day. The researcher’s assumption was that a higher level of engagement in class supported the participant’s educational and personal goals. Observations and occasional comments in the interviews indicated that each girl appreciated movement and structure in the class. Without those elements, all the girls quickly lost interest in the lesson.

For Mariposa, a third characteristic was also important: rigor. Investing in the good student identity (Norton Peirce, 1995), Mariposa thrived when the class activities challenged her to look up answers and to think critically. In taking a leadership role during these activities, Mariposa was investing in symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of her classroom discourse, such as respect from her peers and teacher and the prestige of building her good student identity within the school discourse where such an identity is valued.

Another element of classroom engagement involved forms of public speaking. During the interview process, both Kimberly and Mariposa talked about their fear of speaking in front of the class. Kanno (2003) argued that English learners would benefit from opportunities to practice and improve their language in social settings. Although the girls in this study had developed adequate language for a variety of social settings, Kimberly and Mariposa reported that they were highly embarrassed to participate in the classroom discourse even informally, such as in
answering a teacher’s question. Mariposa attributed her cautiousness to personality, which cannot be completely excluded. Because both girls struggled in varying degrees with academic language, they lacked full use of the language needed to confidently engage in the discourse of school.

Teacher–student relationships. The importance of positive teacher–student relationships is not new within educational research. Researchers focusing on English learners (Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Kanno, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999) have also called for greater awareness of positive teacher–student relationships. When articulating the importance of teacher–student relationships, each girl provided her unique perspective.

Brisa did not directly refer to her relationship with her teachers but talked instead about her favorite classes, such as math or Business Technology Administration class. She also mentioned activities that she didn’t enjoy, such as writing, often required in English language arts. Through her actions and levels of engagement, Brisa demonstrated her areas of interest. However, Brisa reportedly did not extend herself to develop relationships with teachers or with peers, generating an aloof, detached identity. The distance that Brisa created between herself and her teachers increased the challenge to answer Kanno’s (2003) call to resist making hasty judgments about English learners and for educators to listen to what they say and how they say it.

Unlike Brisa, Kimberly was able to express the importance of her teacher and related her good relationship with Ms. Jones to Kimberly’s appreciation for writing and literature. Furthermore, she articulated what Ms. Jones did in class that helped to develop that teacher–student relationship. Kimberly liked Ms. Jones’ sense of humor but had also noticed that in
general Ms. Jones “tried to make things easier.” When Kimberly was confused, she said that her teacher took the time to explain the topic step by step.

However, for Mariposa, teacher–student relationships, both positive and negative had a powerful impact on her school experiences and her perception of being able to engage in the discourse of school. Because Mariposa had invested in her good-student identity, she looked to surrounding figures of authority, especially teachers, for their acknowledgment that Mariposa had the capability to gain access into the discourse of school. This process was problematized in that several school discourses existed simultaneously. Discourses were created around divisions of the school. Students were divided by age; freshmen classes were physically located on one hallway, reducing interactions with older students. Classes were divided by the diploma, advanced, or regular, and by advanced placement. Mariposa’s classes were all regular classes where classroom discourse, as observed by the researcher and commented on by Mariposa, did not include discussion of college preparation. The one exception for Mariposa was Ms. Davis’s physical science class where she built the class discourse around college preparation.

Mariposa appreciated and valued teachers who demonstrated caring, respectful behavior toward students and who listened and were physically and emotionally available to students. Mariposa’s perceptions echoed Kanno’s (2003) recommendations to engage English learners as complex individuals and to believe in their potential. Particularly with Ms. Davis, Mariposa found a mentor who could engage with Mariposa that way. Indeed, as Kanno advised, Ms. Davis not only listened to Mariposa, she was determined to guide Mariposa through the many discourses of school in order to help Mariposa pursue her career goals of attending college and becoming a forensic investigator.
L1 literacy. Literacy skills in Spanish emerged as an important personal goal for each girl. Kimberly and Brisa did not talk about reading and writing in Spanish, but their activities signaled a need. As reflected in her journal entries, Kimberly particularly enjoyed writing in both languages. Both girls used the internet to engage videos, blogs, or social media sites in both English and Spanish. Mariposa highlighted the importance of her Spanish literacy skills, which enabled her to read her Bible in Spanish, an activity of great personal significance.

Although each girl had attended either preschool or first grade in Mexico, none had specific memories of learning to read in Spanish while living in Mexico. Kimberly and Brisa were unclear about how they gained their literacy skills in Spanish. However, Mariposa remembered that when she was in the third grade, she had her first communion. At that time she wanted to read the Bible in Spanish, so her older sister taught her to read. Because literacy skills are part of the school discourse, by third grade, Mariposa would have learned basic reading skills in English and could have transferred those skills to her new task of reading in Spanish.

Mariposa’s story illustrates Cummins’s (1981) common underlying proficiency (CUP) model in which the individual generalizes skills and knowledge learned in one language, often the first language, and employs those skills in a newly learned language. In Mariposa’s case, the languages were reversed in that she learned to read in her second language and then used those skills to help her learn to read in her first language. It is most likely that this learning process and language model also applied to Kimberly and Brisa, but that they did not recollect being tutored through the learning process.

Within the discourse of school, Kimberly and Brisa reported that they occasionally preferred to complete writing assignments in Spanish first. Kimberly also mentioned that when using the internet, she researched academic topics in Spanish before completing the assignment
in English. As long-term English learners who learned to read in English first, their reported strategy to use Spanish as their language for academic work and thinking problematized the concept of subtractive bilingualism (Lambert 1974; Valenzuela, 1999), which states that English learners who do not receive academic support in their first language often lose proficiency in the home language as they gain proficiency in the dominant language. It was beyond the scope of this study to determine the participants’ proficiency in either language, therefore hindering an in-depth discussion as to whether or how much Spanish proficiency had been lost due to lack of first language maintenance.

The study did find the absence of first language support at school. Beyond providing the girls with the option of reading their novel for English language arts class in Spanish, there seemed to be little attention given to their first language. In the case of the novel in Spanish, the first language support would have been a secondary consideration (if considered at all) to the primary reason of accommodating for English language proficiency. Of the three participants, the only girl who had the opportunity to engage with Spanish within the discourse of school was Mariposa, who proactively sought out opportunities within school to improve her Spanish literacy skills. Although she had taken Spanish 3 in order to improve her reading and writing, the class during observations completely lacked rigor and structure, making it little more than a study hall.

**Peer support during school.** It is broadly acknowledged that the peer group has a significant impact on adolescents’ lives. Mariposa’s inner circle consisted of her boyfriend and her sister with whom she socialized in between classes. Brisa and Kimberly were best friends and shared many of the same classes together. They had a wider social circle and spent much of their 4 minutes between classes in the courtyard talking with friends.
However, once in the courtyard, Brisa and Kimberly did not go to their next class, but covertly left campus for as long as 4 to 5 hours a day despite the increasing severity of the consequences for repeated truancy. They consistently left campus during the fall and into January and February, causing consternation among the school faculty, administrators, and parents.

Although spending time with friends is a significant activity for adolescents, Kimberly and Brisa had chosen to resist the discourses of school in order to carry out this activity. More consequences fell on Kimberly than on Brisa. Kimberly was suspended, but Brisa was not. Because of Kimberly’s suspension, her mother was required to return to school with her for a meeting with the assistant principal. When Kimberly continued to leave campus without permission, her parents rescinded her quinceañera (15th) birthday party in March and took away her phone for several weeks.

It was notable that Kimberly received all the attention when both girls were absent from the same classes. Although school administrators were notified of the oversight, Brisa was never suspended, and no explanation was given. The rules against truancy were clear and applied to both girls, who were below the minimum age to withdraw from school. However, the rules were not equally administered; silence once again swirled around Brisa. For Kimberly, the attendance conflict was a site of struggle where Kimberly invested heavily in the activity of leaving campus, while negotiating to maintain her good girl identity. The investment metaphor (Bourdieu, 1991; Norton Peirce, 1995) provides the notion of symbolic capital, such as prestige from her co-conspirators, as a possible explanation for her actions. However, her motivations were never fully articulated. Her rewards did not fall within the discourses of school, and she continued to
resist discursive constraints for months. Kimberly resisted the discourse of school in order to find the support from her peers during school.

Searching for reasons, the researcher repeatedly asked the girls during friendly informal conversations to share their side of the story. In Kimberly’s second interview, she did eventually talk about her perspective. She related that the combination of her responsibilities at home and tension between her parents had motivated her to make space in her day for unstructured time with friends. Brisa offered the cafeteria food as the reason they left campus. Both girls’ answers may have held a partial truth, but neither answer fully explained the significance of the activity.

**Implications**

The findings from this case study have the following implications for teaching and learning adolescent English learners, particularly in the southeastern region of the United States. The first Latino immigrants began to arrive in Alabama in the 1990s. The immigration influx began to slow in 2007, but dramatically decreased in 2010 when the state immigration law was passed. The families who remained had roots in the community and were invested in staying. As members of families who continued to reside in the state, the girls in this study had lived in the South for 9 or 10 years, gone to school, and lived most of their lives in the United States. As a result, they did not have the same educational needs as the many newly arrived immigrants who came to the state years earlier. A full discussion of the study’s implications focuses on the changing characteristics of English learners in the South and how to address their educational needs. To broaden the scope of possibilities, it is important to consider that although the participants were Spanish speakers, English learners living in Alabama speak many languages and have many of the same learning needs as the girls in the study.
Long-Term ELs

Freeman et al. (2002) described long-term English learners as students who have lived in the United States at least 7 years, their literacy skills are below grade level, they make average grades but perform poorly on standardized tests, and they have not interacted with an ESL program or bilingual program consistently. These characteristics apply to each of the girls in the study with a few minor alterations. Instead of interacting consistently with an ESL program, the girls have never exited the ESL program, but have not participated intensively. Because the study did not evaluate the level of their literacy skills, this characteristic may or may not apply to these study participants. However, freely written journal entries exhibited a conversational tone and demonstrated a lack of knowledge of Spanish orthography.

The primary reason that each of these girls remained in the ESL program after 9 years was because of their performance on the annual English language proficiency test. As is characteristic for long-term English learners, the girls lacked skills in their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), commonly known as academic language (Cummins, 1979, 1981). Lacking sufficient skills in CALP to pass the English language proficiency test means that the girls did not have adequate language to fully enter into the academic discourses of school, which hindered their academic progress on a daily basis. Furthermore, having always studied in a monolingual English speaking school, it is likely that as long-term English learners, they did not have the needed literacy skills in their first language to negotiate professional discourses. Long-term English learners require explicit vocabulary instruction and intensive instruction in writing across the curriculum.
L1 Literacy Skills

Although first generation, long-term ELs’ language needs in their home language were similar to second- or third-generation heritage language learners in that neither group had received instruction in their home or heritage language. Without critically engaging their first language, both groups lost a vital opportunity to practice participating in academic and professional discourses needed in adult life. Because there are many languages represented throughout the southeast, the heritage language classes do not have to be limited to Spanish. However, many southeastern communities have large numbers of Spanish speakers, and Spanish is a commonly taught foreign language in high school. When creating a heritage speaker Spanish class in a high school, it is just as important to validate all varieties of Spanish and to offer real-world use for those varieties as it is to teach an academic, standardized variety of Spanish and to improve literacy skills.

Educational Choices

There are a multitude of educational choices, but the choosing process and the steps that must be taken can be convoluted and confusing. The study found that classroom discourse in many of the classes for the standard diploma lacked the ongoing conversation needed to help students keep this topic in the forefront of their minds. Furthermore, a variety of postsecondary options need to be presented to all high school students on a regular basis.

At River High School, there was a 45-minute period called bonus period which was an optimal time for student investigation into career choices. In order to promote student leadership, junior and seniors could be selected to lead workshops on their experiences in choosing a career path. Additional career topics that could be discussed during bonus period include topics related to college, such as ACT preparation, selecting a college, applying to college, writing the
statement of purpose, as well as topics focusing on selecting a technical career. It would be important to divide the topics evenly across the semester for all grades and for students pursuing all levels of diplomas. An important topic to include for immigrant students would be the application process for international students.

Secondary Educators

In exploring the complexities of identity for English learners, one of the major findings that emerged was the significance of positive teacher–student relationships. Although this topic is well-researched across educational content, including in language pedagogy (Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Kanno, 2003, Valenzuela, 1999), this important topic cannot be emphasized enough. Salient characteristics for teachers that were revealed in the findings included that the teacher cared about and respected the student. Being available both physically and emotionally for the student was also important.

Listening to the message that the student is communicating, not the language she is using, is vitally important. Only when the student is heard can real communication begin. Listening to students’ opinions can also begin the process of policy reform (Diaz-Greenberg, 2003), which can shift dominant discourses to alter legal and perceived societal constraints.

Finally, although not a new topic, it continues to be especially important that secondary educators clearly understand intersectionality of identity and its intricate combinations of sociocultural categories. For example, when considering assumptions made about the connection between language and ethnicity, a person of Latino ethnicity may not speak Spanish; not all Spanish speakers are learning English, and not all English learners are Spanish speakers. Understanding the complexity of identity minimizes the attention given to identity markers categorized as minority, whether those categories mark religion, sexual orientation, race,
language, or physical abilities among many others. Teacher training programs that build their curriculum around the importance of a positive teacher–student relationship can include critically vital topics for today’s classroom that range from culturally relevant teaching to classroom management. Teachers with a deep understanding of the intersectionality of identity will be better equipped to interact with an increasingly diverse student population, not only in the Southeast, but in the nation as a whole.

**Limitations**

Although previously mentioned as methodological limitations, the specificity of criteria for participants will limit generalizability in some ways. Additionally, the study was limited by time and place; an ethnographic study offers the richest insights when the researcher can establish a place in the participants’ lives as the participants cross through the social spaces and physical places of their environment. However, limiting interactions to primarily the school building allowed the researcher to narrow the focus of identity construction to school discourses and the ways in which participants constructed their identities within those discourses.

When talking about career goals, none of the participants or the researcher ever questioned the unstated assumption that each girl would strive to develop a professional career outside the home instead of choosing a career path of homemaker. Because every participant in this study was female, gendered and cultural identities played a significant role in allowing this assumption to continue unquestioned, generating a limitation for the study. However, this very limitation leads to intriguing implications for further research.

**Implications for Further Research**

Because all the primary and secondary participants of this study were female, a study that focuses on the importance of gendered roles for female Latina English learners, using a framework from Critical Race Studies, specifically Lat Crit and a poststructural feminist
perspective would reveal intriguing findings. Because the male perspective was missing from this study, adolescent Latino male English learners living in the Southeast did not have the opportunity to share their experiences. With a focus on gender differences, a comparative study could be conducted to learn more about the experiences of both adolescent Latinos and Latinas living in the southeast.

Because adolescent EL identity construction in school involves teachers, families, and communities, further research can provide great insight into broadening the analysis to include concerns and issues surrounding multilingualism and adolescent identity construction. Additional research is needed on the topic of immigrant identity within the political discourse of immigration policy, particularly Alabama’s law HB-56, and principally with school-aged children.

**Conclusions**

The notion of cultural mismatch between U.S. educators and Latino families was a salient finding in Valdés’s (1996) ethnographic study. Cultural mismatch illustrated the embodiment of U.S. cultural values and linguistic standards through schools, requiring newcomers to assimilate the dominant values and to abandon all other sets of values (Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Diaz-Greenberg, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Years later, the issues surrounding the notion of cultural mismatch continue to exist between minority families and U.S. educators because cultural mismatch is a metaphor for disparate discourses, particularly when stigmatized discourses intersect with the dominant discourse. When individuals actively question and critique what has always been considered “normal,” discourses begin to shift, but significant changes in our understanding of a discourse takes time and consistent effort.
This case study explored adolescent identity construction through language choices within school discourses. One significant discourse of school is the dominant discourse, also known as legitimized language (Bourdieu, 1991; Lippi-Green, 1997), which gains prestige because speakers of this language variety control the economic market and educational system. Mastering a language, legitimized or not, does not guarantee mastering the discourse because of sociocultural and sociohistorical factors that are integrated into an individual over time to create a subtle, rarely articulated understanding of the individual’s social surroundings and cultural expectations (Bourdieu, 1991).

As long-term English learners, Kimberly, Brisa, and Mariposa had yet to master the legitimized language of English in its standard academic form as well as the dominant discourse to which it belonged. Mariposa did not express concerns about her abilities in English; however, as she strengthened her identity as a good student, she questioned whether she belonged in that academic discourse. She voiced apprehension about taking advanced classes and was doubtful of classmates who labeled her as smart. Alternately, Brisa and Kimberly portrayed confidence in using informal registers of English and Spanish and did not demonstrate concern about their abilities (or inabilities) regarding the language of school or fitting into the dominant academic discourse.

With the focus on the discourses of school and participants’ language use around these discourses, the most salient identity that each girl independently constructed was her identity in school. In this way two significant concepts, identity and school are joined. As discussed at length in this study, the concept of identity integrates a unique combination of socially constructed categories for every individual, including, but not limited to, gender, race, first language, religion, and class, which are then described as imposed, assumed, or negotiated in
relation to power structures. School also has a complex and layered meaning. At the most basic level, school represents the physical place, the school building. What happens in the building is called education, which becomes much more complicated. Considering cultural and linguistic differences, this study explored educational experiences for 3 Latina adolescent English learners. What it means to be educated and the ways in which an individual obtains this education form a much-debated topic in the United States that is beyond the scope of this study.

However, as Valdés (2001) remarked, educating English learners “does not merely involve helping students to make it, but rather involves trying to change the ways students understand their lives and the possibilities with which they are presented” (p. 158). With this expanded understanding of critical thinking, the idea of education begins to reflect Valenzuela’s (1999) translated definition of being educated in Spanish, ser educado/educada, which includes moral, social, and personal responsibility. As a nation of many backgrounds, languages, religions, and world views, it is increasingly important that educators continue to make spaces where adolescents can learn to think critically and solve the problems of the day.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL
August 23, 2012

Josephine Prado
Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education
Box 870232


Dear Ms. Prado,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on August 22, 2013. If the study continues beyond that date, you must complete the IRB Renewal Application. If you modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure (Investigator) form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB-stamped assent and consent forms.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this application, please include the assigned IRB application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama
APPENDIX B

PRIMARY PARTICIPANT JOURNAL PROMPTS
Primary Participant Journal Prompts

Indicadores de Diario para los participantes principales

Please look through these journal prompts. Choose one (1) prompt every three weeks and write your response. Please write at least 5 sentences, but you can write as much as you like. You can use Spanish or English or both. You can illustrate your writing if you like. Your writing and work will be kept private; only Ms. Prado will see your work.

Por favor, revisa los indicadores de diarios. Escoge uno cada tres semanas y escribe tu respuesta. Te avisaré cuando sea hora de escoger otro. Por favor escribe por lo menos 5 oraciones, pero no hay límite de lo que puedes escribir. Puedes escribir en español o en inglés o los dos. Puedes ilustrar tus diarios si quieres. Lo que escribas y tu trabajo se mantendrá privado; solo Sra. Prado verá tu trabajo.

1) What would you say to your future self in five years? (www.futureme.org)
   ¿Qué te dirías a ti misma en cinco años?

2) Audio journal --- “A Day in the Life of…."
   Un diario grabado ----“Un día en la vida de....”

3) If you could step back in time and re-live one day, what would you do differently?
   ¿Si pudieras regresar en el tiempo y vivir un día de nuevo, que cosas harías distintamente?

4) What is your ideal job? Why?
   ¿Cuál es tu trabajo ideal? ¿Por qué?

5) If I could live anywhere, where would I live? Why?
   ¿Si podría vivir en cualquier lugar, donde viviría? ¿Por qué?

6) What is the best/worst thing about being the age I am now?
   ¿Cuál es la mejor o peor cosa de tener la edad que tengo ahora?

7) What has been my greatest success or failure in (current) grade? How has that changed me?
   ¿Cuál ha sido mi mayor logro o mi peor fracaso en (x) grado? ¿Cómo me ha cambiado?

8) What experience have I had that has taught me something important about myself?
   ¿Qué experiencia he tenido que me ha enseñado algo importante sobre mí?
9) What is the most difficult thing I have ever had to do? What did I learn from that experience?

¿Cuál es la tarea más difícil que yo he tenido que hacer? ¿Qué aprendí de la experiencia?

10) When was the first time I ever felt grown up?

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que yo me sentí un adulto?

11) What is the best or worst, funniest, or saddest thing that has ever happened to me? How did that experience change me?

¿Cuál ha sido la mejor o peor experiencia, la más chistosa o la más triste que me ha pasado? Como me ha cambiado?
APPENDIX C

OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTE FORM
### Interview / Observational Field Note Memo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Record of Events (researcher’s perspective - 1st person)**

**Record of Events (researcher’s observation of participant/s and others - 3rd person)**

**Noteworthy Language Use / Choice**

**CHAT described (rules, community, division of labor, etc.)**
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I FOR ADOLESCENT ELS
Interview Protocol I for Adolescent ELs

You are participating in an interview about how you use language to express yourself and how your language relates to your experiences at school, as well as the impact that these experiences will have on setting goals for the future. All information will be kept confidential.

Estás participando en una entrevista sobre el uso de tu lenguaje para expresar a ti mismo y como tu lenguaje se relacione con tus experiencias en el colegio y el impacto que esas experiencias tendrán en tus metas para el futuro. Toda la información se mantendrá confidencial.

BIOGRAPHICAL / BIOGRAFÍA

1. What is your name? ¿Cómo te llamas?

2. Where were you born? ¿Dónde naciste?

3. What is your ethnic background? ¿Cuál es tu origen étnico?

4. Name all the places you have lived. Nombra todos los lugares donde has vivido.

5. What languages do you speak? ¿Qué idiomas hablas?

6. Which languages do you like to speak? Why? ¿Qué idiomas te gustan hablar? ¿Por qué?

7. When do you speak (English/Spanish/other)? ¿Cuando usas (inglés, español, otro)?

8. Do you like to read and write in (English/Spanish/other)? ¿Te gustar leer y escribir en (inglés / español / otro)?

9. What kinds of things do you talk about in (English/Spanish/other)? ¿De qué tipo de cosas hablas en inglés/ español/otro?

10. Do you ever mix up your languages when you are speaking? If so, do you do that on purpose? Tell me about that. ¿Cuándo estás conversando, hay momentos cuando mezclas los idiomas? ¿Si eso pasa, piensas que estás mezclando a propósito? Describe tu experiencia, por favor.

11. Please describe yourself. Por favor descríbete.

12. What do you think your friends would say about you? ¿Que piensas que dirían tus amigos de ti?
SCHOOL/ COLEGIO

13. What do you think about your experiences in school? ¿Qué piensas de tus experiencias en el colegio?

14. What do you like/dislike about school? ¿Qué te gusta o disgusta del colegio? How do you feel about your schoolwork? ¿Cómo te sientes respeto de tus tareas escolares?

15. What do you do well in school? ¿Qué haces bien en el colegio?

16. What is difficult for you in school? How do you make that better/easier? ¿Qué es difícil para ti en el colegio? ¿Cómo lo haces mejor o más fácil?

17. What do your teachers do to help you with school? ¿Qué hacen tus maestros/as para ayudarte en el colegio?

18. How do your parents or family help you with school? ¿Qué hacen tus padres o familia para ayudarte en el colegio?


ASPIRATIONS or GOALS /METAS

20. What plans do you have for the future? How did you decide on those plans? How do you think the school will help you? ¿Qué planes tienes para el futuro? ¿Cómo tomaste tu decisión sobre tus planes? ¿Cómo piensas que el colegio te va a ayudar?

21. What are your parents’ goals for you? Are they different from your goals for yourself? If so, what do you think you will do about that? ¿Cuáles son las metas de tus papás para ti? ¿Son diferentes de las tuyas? Si es así, que piensas hacer acerca de esto?

22. What are your goals for the future? ¿Cuáles son tus metas para el futuro?
23. What obstacles do you think you might have in reaching those goals? ¿Qué obstáculos piensas que podrías tener para realizar tus metas?


CONCLUSION/CONCLUSION (for both interviews)

Is there anything else we need to talk about? ¿Hay otra cosa que quisieras comentar?

Thank you so much for your time and help! Please remember that everything we have talked about in this interview today remains confidential. ¡Muchísimas gracias por tu tiempo y ayuda!

Por favor, acuérdate que nuestra conversación y toda la información de la entrevista es confidencial.

__Interview Protocol II for Adolescent ELs (Follow-up interview)__

Provide a list of language examples to participant. Ask: Do you remember when you said this?

What did you mean? ¿Te acuerdas cuando dijiste esa frase? ¿Qué quisiste decir exactamente?

Do you think that what you say or how you say it affects how people (friends, family, teachers) see you? If so, how does your language affect others? ¿Piensas que la manera en que dices algo o las palabras que usas influye otras personas (amigos, familia, maestros/as) en como ellos te ven? ¿Si es así, como influye tu lenguaje a otras personas?
What do you do in (math, English, history, science) class? Describe a typical class for me, please. ¿Qué haces en tu clase de (matemáticas, inglés, historia, ciencias)? Por favor, describe una clase típica.

Self-portrait (after completion). This is a visual representation of yourself. Can you describe in words how this represents you? Es una representación visual de ti. ¿Puedes describir porque esto te representa?

When you think of your future, what do you think about? ¿Cuando piensas en tu futuro, en que piensas?
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I FOR PRIMARY CAREGIVER
Interview Protocol I for Primary Caregiver

You are participating in an interview relating to how (adolescent’s name) uses language for self-expression and how this relates to his/her experiences at school and the impact of these experiences on his/her goals for the future. All information will be kept confidential.

Usted está participando en una entrevista sobre la manera en que (nombre de adolescente) se usa su lenguaje para expresarse y como eso se relaciona con sus experiencias en el colegio y el impacto que esas experiencias tienen en sus metas para el futuro. Toda la información se mantendrá confidencial.

GENERAL QUESTIONS / PREGUNTAS GENERALES
What is your name? ¿Cómo se llama usted?

Where were you born? ¿Dónde nació?

Where was (adolescent’s name) born? ¿Dónde nació (nombre del adolescente)?

Please describe your relationship to (adolescent’s name). Por favor describe su relación con (nombre del adolescente).

Who lives at home with you and (adolescent’s name)? ¿Quien vive en casa con usted y (nombre del adolescente)?

QUESTIONS ABOUT LANGUAGE USE / PREGUNTAS SOBRE EL USO DE LENGUAJE
What language(s) do you speak at home? ¿Qué idioma(s) habla usted en casa?

What language(s) do other adults speak at home? ¿Qué idioma(s) hablan los otros adultos en casa?

What language(s) do (adolescent’s name) and siblings speak at home? ¿Qué idioma(s) hablan (nombre del adolescente) y sus hermanos en casa?

If more than one language is spoken at home, under what circumstance is each language spoken? ¿Si se habla más de un idioma en casa, cuáles son las circunstancias en que se habla tal idioma?

Do people ever mix languages? Who mixes languages the most often? Why? ¿Hay personas en casa que mezclan los idiomas? ¿Quiénes los mezclan más frecuentemente? ¿Por qué?

Are there newspapers, books, or magazines at home? What language are they in? Who reads them? ¿Hay periódicos, libros o revistas en casa? ¿En qué idioma están? ¿Quiénes los leen?

Is there a computer at home? Who uses it and what language do they prefer? ¿Hay una computadora en casa? ¿Quién la usa y qué idioma prefiere?
What about television and radio? What language is preferred? ¿Qué idioma se prefiere para la televisión y el radio?

CONCLUSION

Is there anything else that you think is important to mention? ¿Hay otra cosa que sea importante mencionar?

Thank you so much for your time! Please remember that everything we have talked about in this interview is confidential. Muchísimas gracias por su tiempo. Por favor, acuérdese que la entrevista es confidencial.

Secondary Participant Interview (Primary caregiver) II (Follow-up interview)

1) What kinds of activities does your child do when he/she is at home? ¿Qué tipo de actividades hace su hijo/a cuando está en casa?

2) What does your child do with his/her friends? ¿Qué hace su hijo/a con sus amigos/as?

3) What are your child’s goals for the future? What do you think about your child’s plans? ¿Cuáles son las metas de su hijo/a para el futuro? ¿Qué piensa usted sobre los planes (metas) de su hijo/a?

4) What steps does your child take to make those goals become a reality? ¿Qué pasos toma su hijo/a para realizar sus metas?

5) What happens at school to help your child reach his/her goals? ¿Qué pasa en el colegio que ayuda a su hijo/hija a realizar sus metas?

CONCLUSION

Is there anything else that you think is important to mention? ¿Hay otra cosa que sea importante mencionar?

Thank you so much for your time! Please remember that everything we have talked about in this interview is confidential. Muchísimas gracias por su tiempo. Por favor, acuérdese que la entrevista es confidencial.
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I FOR ESL SPECIALIST AND CONTENT TEACHER
Interview Protocol I for ESL Specialist and Content Teacher

You are participating in an interview relating to how (adolescent’s name) uses language for self-expression and how this relates to his/her experiences at school and the impact of these experiences on his/her goals for the future. All information will be kept confidential.

GENERAL QUESTIONS
What is your name?
What subject do you teach (adolescent’s name)?
How long have your known (adolescent’s name)?
Have you had an opportunity to meet his/her parents?

QUESTIONS ABOUT LANGUAGE USE (in and out of the classroom)
How is language (the English language) used in your content area class?
What skills and abilities are needed to succeed in your course?
How does (adolescent’s name) use language in your class?
Have you ever noticed (adolescent’s name) using Spanish in your class? (either written or oral)
Have you noticed how (adolescent’s name) uses language outside of your class (in the hallway, cafeteria, etc.)
How does (adolescent’s name) interact with his/her peers in class? What languages are used?
How does (adolescent’s name) interact with you?
Does (adolescent’s name) struggle in your class? If so, how? Why do you think he/she is struggling? Are his/her struggles related to language?
What support or guidance does (adolescent’s name) need to be successful (academically, socially, in general)?
Do you think that (adolescent’s name) has to work in order to negotiate (i.e., go between or make the differences work) different cultures and languages? What have you noticed?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
How does a student gain respect/admiration (coolness/social capital) at school among his/her peers?
What does a student need to do to gain respect among the adults at the high school?
Have you noticed the ways in which (adolescent’s name) is working to gain respect among her/his peers? What about the adults?

CONCLUSION
Is there anything else you can think of that might be important relating to (adolescent’s name) and how he/she uses language for self-expression, and how language and identity may impact future goals for this person?
Thank you very much for your time! Please remember that everything we have talked about and said in the interview will remain confidential.
Interview Protocol for ESL Specialist and Content Teacher II (Follow-up interview)

In our first interview, you said “(provide quotes from first interview).” Could you talk a little more about that? What changes have occurred since we talked about that? As the semester has progressed, have your initial impressions about (adolescent’s name) changed at all? If so, how have they changed? What have you noticed about changes in how (adolescent’s name) uses language in the classroom? Does he/she ever use a combination of Spanish and English?

CONCLUSION
Is there anything else you can think of that might be important relating to (adolescent’s name) and how he/she uses language for self-expression, and how language and identity may impact future goals for this person? Thank you very much for your time! Please remember that everything we have talked about and said in the interview will remain confidential.
APPENDIX G

BRISA’S POWER POINT™ SLIDE OF HER FAVORITE MUSICIANS
Brisa’s Power Point™ Slide of Her Favorite Musicians
APPENDIX H

KIMBERLY’S POWERPOINT™ SLIDE OF VERACRUZ
APPENDIX I

MARIPOSA’S GLOGSTER DIGITAL POSTER
Mariposa’s Glogster Digital Poster

The best love is God’s Love

…but if you look at me closely
you will see it in my eyes
this girl will always find her way

The best love is God’s Love