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Understanding How Emergent Bilinguals Bridge Belonging and Languages in Dual Language Immersion Settings

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UNDERSTANDING HOW EMERGENT BILINGUALS BRIDGE BELONGING AND LANGUAGES IN DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION SETTINGS

by

Marialuisa Di Stefano

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Education

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Logan, Utah

2017
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ABSTRACT

Understanding How Emergent Bilinguals Bridge Belonging and Languages in Dual Language Immersion Settings

by

Marialuisa Di Stefano, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Steven P. Camicia, Ph.D.
Department: School of Teacher Education and Leadership

This dissertation covers the purpose, findings, and implication of a 10-week ethnographic research study in a dual language immersion (DLI) third-grade classroom in the northeastern U.S. The purpose was to promote a better understanding of the processes and products of identity development in a DLI setting. Sense of belonging and language practices were considered as the two main contributors toward development of fluid and hybrid identities. I developed this work through observation, interviews, and artifacts collection. The theoretical framework was constructed upon the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy and community of practice. This allowed me to identify within-group cultural practices and common cross-ground cultural practices in a DLI class, while documenting their contribution to the development of students’ identities.

Using deductive and inductive thematic analysis, I found that students’ sense of belonging and practices of languages are connected to their identity through multiple
cultural features. These can include food, family, music, dance, and other skills acquired in a specific heritage group. The data also identified several relevant factors, which intersect with the identity and culturally sustaining pedagogy, including the teacher as a role model and migration issues. Identity development and culturally sustaining pedagogy practices are mediated by the teacher in her function as role model for her students.

I provided examples and explained how these interconnections—based on culture, food, family, teacher as a role model, and migration—evolve in the DLI setting. Continual documentation occurred for the process that promoted these interconnections and how identity development was enhanced. Subsequently, I provided evidence of products that originated from this system. My study has the potential to inspire DLI teachers, policy makers, and educational stakeholders to scrutinize the impact of their decisions when teaching and developing the DLI curriculum. In particular, the implications of this study contribute to the implementation of instructional practices that may aid students in investigating their fluid and hybrid identity through a more inclusive learning environment. Recommendations for further longitudinal study in terms of identity development in the early elementary grades were addressed in the study.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Understanding How Emergent Bilinguals Bridge Belonging and Languages in Dual Language Immersion Settings

Marialuisa Di Stefano

The purpose of this study was to understand how young children bridge belonging and language in a dual language immersion (DLI) setting. I developed a 10-week ethnographic study in a Spanish-English third-grade class in the Northeast of the U.S. where data was collected in the form of field notes, interviews, and artifacts. Here I explored the way language instruction and student participation influenced the development of the teacher and students’ multiple identities. The findings of this study suggest that emergent bilinguals’ identity development derives from the process built through multiple dialogic classroom instruction and practices. The products of this process emphasize the sense of belonging and language practices as main components of students’ hybrid and fluid identities. This research contributes to the field of identity development and DLI studies in terms of knowledge, policy, and practices. In particular, the findings of this study: (a) increase our knowledge of students’ multiple identities development in DLI settings; (b) impact policy implementation in elementary schools; and (c) reveal classroom strategies and successful instructions in elementary education.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my committee members, Drs. Steven Camicia, Ryan Knowles, Sylvia Read, María Luisa Spicer-Escalante, and Karin DeJonge-Kannan, for their time, support, and guidance throughout this process. I also need to extend my gratitude to Drs. Spencer Clark, Sue Kasun, and Cinthya Saavedra, who guided me in the early stage of this dissertation project. Thanks to Drs. Beth MacDonald and Idalis Villanueva, who broadened my perspectives and expanded my research beyond my imagination. I also sincerely thank the copy editor, Hallett Sargent, who provided detailed and thorough feedback, and ensured that my research message was distinct and clear, despite the considerable time pressure. My most heartfelt thanks goes to my chair, Dr. Steven Camicia. I truly appreciate your availability to answer questions in a timely manner, your interest in my work and inclinations, and your ability to provide structure while at the same time allowing me to explore different possibilities in the qualitative research field.

I give special thanks to Drs. Martha Whitaker, who inspired me to pursue a career in education, Martha Dever, who welcomed me into the TEAL family in Logan, and Emma Maughan, who shared her wisdom with me daily and taught me the essential sense of humor about life and academia. To my U.S. and international family at Utah State University who taught me the true value of diversity and was always there when I needed it the most, thank you! I could not achieve this goal without all of you.

I also need to say thank you to the teacher and the students who participated in the study, and to the school district and the city, for welcoming me and allowing me to learn
from them. In this sense, special thanks go to Mike and Laura Andriolo, who have been the vital connection with such a vibrant school community. Through their eyes and heart, I was able to understand the multiple experiences that characterize the lives of the people in this community.

Here is to my Italian and Puerto Rican families who always supported me in a land that is very different from what they call home. They encouraged me to pursue every educational opportunity possible, even when it was beyond their human understanding. This often meant sacrificing the time they spent with me and my family when they could have been doing something else. Thank you for your patience and encouragement.

Finally, a most special thank you to my family, Manuel and Sara. You fill my day with love and joy. Manuel, you constantly reminded me this dissertation research was doable no matter how demanding the balance between home and work, and the relocation across the country could be. Most important, you ensured I would always remember that being a good scholar was not a betrayal of my role as a mother, but a further confirmation of it. I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, who motivates me to continue believing in the power of education.

Marialuisa Di Stefano
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT, PROBLEM, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

“Somos cincuenta y cincuenta, somos de allí y de acá también” ¹

Valeria is a third grader at South Whaterbridge Community School, born in the northeastern U.S. from Salvadorian parents. On my last day at her school, I was saying goodbye to all the students, with a certain bittersweet feeling on both sides. In a farewell speech, I summarized the reasons I was in their class for ten weeks and expressed my gratitude. They had helped me begin to understand what it means to be a transnational student in a dual language immersion (DLI) Spanish-English class in the northeast U.S.

After my brief talk, Valeria came to me and said:

Yo entendí lo que usted quería decir. Yo sé que somos cincuenta y cincuenta, somos de allí [El Salvador] y de acá [de EE.UU.] también. Porque me gustan las pupusas,² pero también esta escuela donde estudiamos inglés y español³

(Field Notes, week 10, recorded November 14-18, 2016)

With these words, Valeria was conveying her thoughts after our discussion of the places her family comes from and the languages she speaks among family and friends. She was appreciative of both the culture of her heritage (the pupusas) and her present community practice (studying at a DLI school). Her comment carries multiple meanings that should

¹ “We are fifty-fifty, we are from there and from here as well.” My translation.

² Pupusas are a traditional Salvadoran dish made of a thick, handmade corn tortilla with a variety of fillings based on a blend of cheese, pork, and refried beans.

³ “I understood what you wanted to say. I know that we are fifty-fifty, we are from there [El Salvador] and from here also [the U.S.]. Because I like pupusas but also this school where I learn in English and Spanish” My translation.
be considered by both educators and legislators.

This along with other examples will be discussed throughout my ethnographic study on identity development in a third-grade DLI school residing within the Northeastern U.S. The study took place in the fall of 2016 for ten weeks. It included classroom observation, artifact collection, and interviews of the Spanish teacher along with her students. I looked at the DLI setting through the culturally sustaining pedagogy lens (Paris & Alim, 2014), in an attempt to expand the original culturally relevant pedagogy theory of Ladson-Billings (1994). In this way, I intended to incorporate “the multiplicity of identities and cultures” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82) to help students understand who they are. Pupils from Latin American heritage languages and cultures were the most prominent group of this DLI class. Nevertheless, I strived to consider students’ identity in a global dimension, encouraging all students to inquire about themselves, including White students and students whose first language was neither Spanish nor English. Therefore, instead of focusing on singular racial or ethnic group identities, I promoted a cultural paradigm that could challenge the issues of power and equity tacitly established between dominant and marginalized groups.

This chapter will introduce the study and explore how the third graders in this DLI program understand their sense of belonging to disparate places, their language practices, and how these meanings are connected with their identity development in a DLI class. I will present a brief history of bilingual and DLI programs in the U.S. along with a synopsis for the evolution of bilingual programs in a predominantly Latino community in the Northeast. Specific attention will be placed on the DLI model
developed at South Whaterbridge Community School. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the remaining chapters.

**Problem Statement**

**Key Terminology Used in this Dissertation Manuscript**

Speakers of languages other than English have been historically categorized through different labels in the U.S. education system, such as Limited English Speaking Ability (LESA), Limited English Proficient students (LEP), English Language Learners (ELLs), and English Learners (ELs). These different labels are based on a *deficit-oriented approach*, interpreting cultural and racial difference as a deficiency (Harry & Klingner, 2007). Therefore, Gutiérrez, Zepeda, and Castro (2010), and Morales (2010) encouraged the use of the terminology *dual language learner*, “referring specifically to young learners acquiring two languages simultaneously or who are developing their primary language as they learn a second language” (Morales, 2010, pp. 26). On the same topic, Morrison (2016) asserted that “Dual Language Learner/Emergent Bilingual Student/English Learner” all have been use to refer to “a student who is learning and communicating through two languages” (p. 150). To clarify the distinction between these three definitions, Morrison explained that “‘English Learner’ is the most predominant legal term. ‘Dual Language Learner’ is in use in Early Childhood literature. ‘Emergent Bilingual’ is in use in Bilingual Education literature” (p. 150). For the purpose of this dissertation I will use the two definitions *dual language learners* and *emergent bilinguals*, when referring to the third graders in the DLI programs who were the
participants of this study. Nevertheless, I argue the definition *emergent bilinguals* is more empowering, especially when referring to the experience of students from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin American, who are attending a DLI Spanish-English program in the U.S.

In addition, I need to clarify the use of the word Latin@s in this manuscript. Spanish nouns have genders, meaning that when referring to students with Latin American roots, Spanish grammatical rules require the use of the plural masculine nouns *Latinos*, instead of the feminine *Latinas*.

To get around this, a growing number of activists, academics and bloggers have taken to employing the webby appellation “Latin@,” which includes both the masculine “o” and the feminine “a,” as a way to describe people with Latin American roots. (Demby, 2013)

Thus, I will use the name Latin@ in this dissertation to describe Latinas and Latinos students with Latin American roots.

**The Sense of Belonging and Language Practices**

One of the main themes of this dissertation is the border, as the place in which multiple senses of belonging, cultural and linguistic practices happen every day for dual language learners. Reflecting on the meaning of the border, Behar (1996) wrote:

> I am here because I am a woman of the border: between places, between identities, between languages, between cultures, between longings and illusions, one foot in the academy and one foot out. (p. 162)

I began to understand what it means to live between geographical and imaginary borders as an adult after immigrating to the U.S. 7 years ago. Since that moment, I began to study the experiences of immigrant students and the children of immigrant families in this
country.

   I am a language learner and a language teacher. I live, walk, learn, and work between physical and imaginary spaces, crossing borders every day in my personal and academic life. The languages I speak are the primary vehicle that allows me to travel between diverse cultural communities. I grew up in a conservative catholic patriarchal society in Sicily, Italy, where I was encouraged to adhere to a traditional female model. Diversity was tolerated only as long it was left outside the home. In my Sicilian society, I strived to find a respectful and traditional role, yet often felt out of place. Immigrating to the U.S. opened new perspectives and put me in contact with a hybridization of cultures for the first time. At 27 years old, I embraced an ongoing postcolonial journey of recognition and reconsideration of my positionality; something I quickly began to share with my undergraduate students while serving as a graduate instructor at Utah State University (USU).

   Positionality means recognizing my position in relation to the others, in terms of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and class, along with other aspects of identity (Maher & Tetreault, 1993; Villaverde, 2008). I was already an adult when I relocated to a new continent and learned to communicate in both English and Spanish. Here I began to understand living on the border was not only possible but the preferred situation for me. This acquired consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1999) granted me the opportunity to be a Sicilian, a Latina, and an American in tandem. A person from there and from here.

   The languages I speak—Sicilian, Italian, Spanish, and English—combined with
the places I feel I belong—Sicily, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Northwest—continually grow more relevant when I reflect upon who I am. It took me seven years to understand my identity is not explicitly established by my birth certificate and skin color. Rather it is the meaning I attribute to race, ethnicity, languages, and belonging. What would my experience be if I learned the multiple meanings of place and language when I was a child? Would I look at the world through a different lens if my society had offered a broader range of multicultural possibilities at the onset of elementary education?

These questions became fundamental for me as a preservice elementary teacher educator but also as a mother. My now almost 2-year-old daughter was born in the Northwest, is currently learning three languages, and has already traveled twice to Sicily and Puerto Rico while visiting her grandparents. In my professional and personal life, I embraced a sense of belonging and practice of different languages as essential elements of identity development. I began to explore the role of belonging and languages in the early elementary grades, particularly in language immersion settings where languages were an instrument to discuss places and learn the content of different subjects such as math and science. I started inquiring about the different pedagogical approaches that teachers adopt in their classes. Do teachers reinforce traditional cultural models? Or do they sustain within cultural practices while simultaneously promoting cross-cultural practices? As a consequence, how do students understand who they are? What are the processes that lead to identity development? And what are the products of these processes in terms of student participation within the school community?

On one hand, the questions and motivation for this study originated from my
personal journey. However, this inquiry is also substantially supported by the exponential growth in popularity that language immersion programs (and specifically dual language immersion) in the U.S. have demonstrated in recent years. Dual language immersion programs provide content instruction in two languages (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007) and promotes academic achievement, bilingualism and biculturalism, and cross-cultural relationship among all students (Fortune, 2012; Spicer-Escalante, Wade, & Leite, 2015).

In 2000, there were an estimated 260 dual language programs in the U.S., while in 2011 there were at least 2,000 (Gross, 2016). Accountability for dual-language schools is difficult to reach because of the inconsistency of terminology used by the State Department of Education. In fact,

…[T]he States’ definitions of dual-language programs reflect the inconsistent use of multiple program terms in the dual-language education field. Few states prescribe a particular model, leaving program design decisions to the local level. (Department of Education, 2015, p. x)

What cannot be doubted is the wide rising interest in bilingual programs throughout the U.S. in the last decades (Department of Education, 2015; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015; Spicer-Escalante, in press). “In 2014–15, most states (46) provided additional funding for ELs, which could be used to support dual language programs that serve ELs” (Department of Education, 2015, p. 93). A substantial corpus of literature documents how such programs are becoming a model of successful instruction concerning dual language learners and a resource to close the opportunity and achievement gap (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015) and promote intergroup relationships (Wright & Tropp, 2005).

A considerable amount of scientifically based and sound research in the field of
dual language education has documented the multiple benefits that additive bilingualism can promote (Spicer-Escalante, in press), at academic (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Fortune & Tedick, 2008; Johnson & Swain, 1994; Leite & Watzinger-Tharp, 2016; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2003; Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2016), cognitive (Bialystok, 2016; Bialystok, Craik, Klein, & Viswanathan, 2004; Bialystok & Viswanathan, 2009; Cloud et al., 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Fortune, 2012; Fortune & Menke, 2010; Stewart, 2012; Yang, Yang, & Lust, 2011), sociocultural (Cloud et al., 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2007; Stewart, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2012), and economic (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Gándara, 2016b; Genesee, 2008; Roberts, Suddreth, & Dickson, 2016) levels. Such benefits do not only target students who speak languages other than English at home, but all students enrolled in dual language education programs (Gándara, 2016).

Dual language education supports the additive bilingualism model, in which speaking multiple languages is considered a resource instead of a problem to fix. In this type of setting, English Learners can perform equal to or better than English native speakers, but they can also garner additional benefits. For these reasons, there is a need to expand research studies on immersion programs, especially in early grades, and to explore the processes currently in place to facilitate students’ identities development alongside the product that emerges as a result.

With this premise in mind, the purpose of my research was to explore how a sense of belonging and practice of language influences the development of students’ multiple
identities in a DLI classroom. My focus for this research was both on the process and the product of identity development. First, the process is prompted when teachers introduce instructional practices that lead students to reflect on the places of their belonging and the languages they speak. Second, the product is the students’ practical work and response in an attempt to understand who they are based on these feelings of affinity and linguistic background.

Each student enters the classroom with different background knowledge. Yet students are sometimes unaware that their language and sense of belonging are a vital portion of this knowledge. They may not see how each part contributes to the development of their multiple identities until they are guided to make sense of them. The objective of this research was twofold: first, I investigated how students recognize the places they belong and which constitute their community of practices; second, I examined the role of Spanish as an instructional language and as a common practice and communicative tool in the students’ community. The recognition of places of belonging and the use of languages to communicate in the community contribute to the development of identity. The DLI setting was chosen because languages are not studied as part of the curriculum, as is the case with a traditional foreign language approach, but languages serve as a tool for the acquisition of subject contents. In this sense, DLI teachers are content teachers (literacy, math, and science teachers, for example), which substantially differentiates DLI programs from other bilingual programs or sheltered language instruction programs.

DLI programs aim to teach both the contents and the language associated with
them in tandem (Howard et al, 2007). Languages are the practice needed to share, decode, and acquire information. Participating in the same core of information creates a classroom community, which was exactly the type of learning environment I intended to explore. In this scenario, students would develop their identity, considering the meaning they attribute to the membership they feel in their community and the practices of languages in which they engage daily.

**Research Purposes**

In the last two decades, multiple studies examined identity development in DLI classes (DeNisco, 2015; Lee, Hill-Bonnet & Illispie, 2008, 2011; Lee & Jeong, 2013; López-Robertson & Schramm-Pate, 2013; Palmer, 2007; Potowski, 2004, 2007). For example, Potowski (2007) considered the struggle of bilingual students who want to maintain their bilingual identity in an English dominant community, using mainly second language acquisition theories. She conducted a longitudinal study in which she interviewed and observed fifth- and eighth-grade bilingual speakers. Her findings indicated that the students’ Spanish proficiency was less developed than their English proficiency. “Given the dominance of English at all levels of U.S. society, it is hardly surprising that students’ English systems would be stronger” (Potowski, 2007, p. 201). One of the factors promoting English proficiency in students at the expenses of their Spanish arises when the majority of entertainment sources valued by the students, such as music and TV, operate in English.

In another study, Palmer (2007) used a Bakhtinian perspective on discourse and
built upon Bourdieu’s concept of linguistic capital to explore a 90/10 two-way immersion program. First, Palmer (2007) considered that individuals construct a sense of identity and group members on the basis of multiple dialogues with the people around them (Bakhtin, 1998). Second, she evaluated the role of linguistic capital as a factor that shifts the power balance in such dialogues between individuals (Bourdieu, 1991). Palmer (2007) observed that the DLI program she investigated had reoriented the school’s community toward an enrichment view of linguistic and cultural diversity. However, she concluded this program failed to serve language minority students and to appreciate their language and culture. In other words, this 90/10 two-way immersion program called attention to the economic and social benefits of learning other languages and cultures but did not place enough value on the diversity of students in the program. This finding was corroborated by a later study, using critical race theory, in which Palmer (2010) argued African American and Latin@ students do not have equal access to strong bilingual education. Despite the original intent, DLI programs tend to serve White students more often than minority students (Palmer, 2008, 2010).

In the same vein, a study on bilingual first-grade teachers in a two-way DLI school (Korean-English) by Lee and Jeong (2013) observed that

…[A]lthough parents and children recognized the potential of the program to develop bilingualism and biculturalism and foster stronger ethnic identity, they also perceived inequities in the ways in which the program was organized and instruction was executed. (p. 89)

Speakers from heritage groups were often considered to be translators. This result confirmed the recommendation Lee et al. (2011) advanced in a previous study in which they encouraged language-brokering events to “create interactional and interpersonal
spaces where knowledge is shared and identities get formed and negotiated” (p. 323). In this way, speakers from heritage groups are not simply translators who facilitate second language acquisition for their English speaker peers, but also cultural brokers who bolster cross-cultural relations and contribute to the development of fluid and hybrid identity.

These studies document how dual language learners from different races and ethnicities often suffer the consequences of an unequal distribution of power and resources that place them at a disadvantage in DLI programs even though such arrangements were technically developed to close the opportunity and achievement gap while promoting inclusion. In terms of economic and governmental structure, middle-class and White communities are in power and thus dictate the development of bilingual DLI programs (Palmer, 2010), determining complex issues of power that need to be scrutinized in DLI settings (Palmer, 2008). This means if DLI intends to be an opportunity to grant more equity of access to education for Latin@ and language-minority students, educators need to consider power distribution in the classroom as well society (Palmer, 2008).

With this study, I intended to observe how the development of a DLI program in a predominantly Latin@ community acted as a resource to empower students and gave them a more equal access to educational resources, or perpetuated the power relations and privilege system prevalently based on race and socioeconomic status. Examples of different distributions of power could be the type of Spanish used in the classroom, which may be either a rich variety of registers according to the different students’ heritage experiences or a kind of simplified Spanish to meet the needs of English native speakers.
(Palmer, 2008). Another example could be the expectation on students, where English is a basic requirement that needs to be met by all Latin@ students while Spanish is an enrichment for White students (Palmer, 2008). This means even if Latin@s participate in bilingual programs, they are not considered a resource in terms of diversity, but rather the participants in language programs that can bring the economic and social benefits of second/foreign language acquisition (Palmer, 2007). All of these elements contribute to delineate the quality of the DLI program itself and the possibility of students from language-minority groups to access strong DLI programs. Hence, this confirms that the simple fact that using Spanish as a language of instruction is not enough to promote bilingualism, biculturalism, and cross-cultural relationships.

This study intended to contribute toward the tradition of research surrounding identity development of dual language learners and advocate more equal access to educational resources for all students. Therefore, the framework that guided this study focused on the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy, which I describe as both the source and result of the construction of hybrid and fluid identities in a DLI setting. Culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) attempts to expand the culturally relevant pedagogy lens (Ladson-Billings, 1994) by incorporating students’ multiplicity of identities and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

With the culturally sustaining pedagogy perspective in mind, I focused on the development of cross-cultural competences among the students in the DLI class I observed. As Fortune (2012) claimed, the ABCs of DLI programs are: academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and cross-cultural competences for all students.
Although I recognize these three goals, largely shared in the DLI community, I advocate for the expansion of the third dimension: cross-cultural competences. This can occur if students begin recognizing their fluid and hybrid identities, considering their sense of belonging and language practices as integral measures of their identities.

I argue DLI goals can be achieved through the consideration of situated knowledge (Tochon, 2000) in a learning environment that: (a) encourages the development of a socially constructed idea of citizenship in terms of belonging (Shinew, 2006); and (b) presents language as a practice (Pennycook, 2010) and facilitates the development of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991/2006). Recognizing hybrid identities means to legitimate them, give voice to marginalized groups in our society, empower the students, and grant more equal access to educational resources.

Framing my research in the culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) context, I intended to observe how classroom activities and environment can foster relevant practices that connect students’ home cultures with their school experience while concurrently serving as a bridge to cultural assumptions created by minority and majority student groups. Using a clear conceptual perspective, deeply rooted in culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), I explore the rationale for everyday practices in the DLI programs. Going beyond the use of culturally relevant materials in the classroom, I intended to observe if the DLI program can sustain students’ multiple identities. I also aimed to consider how a culturally sustaining pedagogy can support—sustain—the ABCs of DLI and reinforce them through daily community practices.
Study Context

Classification of Bilingual and Dual Language Immersion Programs

The terms bilingual and dual language immersion have often been improperly used interchangeably to primarily refer to transitional programs that promote the acquisition of a dominant language by native speakers of a minority language. Although bilingual and dual language immersion programs share common standpoints, they respond to the needs of varying student populations and are developed in disparate learning contexts. To better describe the differences between bilingual and language immersion programs, it is useful to step back and consider one macro level categorization between nonbilingual programs and bilingual programs.

Nonbilingual programs target English Learners through immersion programs and transitional programs, including Sheltered Instruction. They use English as the only instructional language and promote the transition from the minority language to English. Bilingual programs embrace the maintenance and enrichment of multiple languages simultaneously and employ the use of multiple languages (May, 2008). For this reason, non-bilingual programs are defined as subtractive, which means students gradually shift from minority language to a greater use of the dominant language, whereas bilingual programs are considered additive because they strive to achieve bilingualism and biliteracy for their students (May, 2008). These definitions position DLI programs as a type of additive bilingual program, which can be considered the overarching category for the different type of DLI programs.
Once I have established how DLI operated as the setting for my research, I show how this program differentiates from similar language immersion programs. In my research, I focused on the way bilingual and bicultural speakers act in the DLI program, elaborate on the meaning of places and languages, and make sense of them. English and Spanish in this case are not simply two languages of instruction but common practices for the members that belong to this community.

The DLI approach, as it is known today, started in Canada during the 1960s and has been implemented in the U.S., among other countries throughout the world. In the 1970s, the U.S. introduced foreign language immersion programs in predominantly monolingual regions where native English-speaking students learned academic subjects through classroom instruction in a second language (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). These programs promoted intensive second language education in elementary schools and were not directly related to the promotion of an intercultural exchange through the native speakers of different languages. The success of this type of foreign language immersion program became evident when considering a student’s ability to master sophisticated subjects, such as high school mathematics or history, and at the same time acquire foreign language skills appropriate for their grade level (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Genesee, 1999).

Bilingual education has been increasing and evolving during the past forty years, in terms of number of programs available in the U.S. and variations to the original model. Considering the major variations in student populations, Christian (2011) identified four major types of bilingual programs: (a) developmental bilingual programs, (b) foreign
language immersion (or one-way immersion), (c) heritage language immersion, and (d) two-way immersion. Table 1.1 illustrates the different types of bilingual additive programs considering the type of learners, the language of instruction, and the time of language instruction as summarized in Christian (2011) and Casesa (2015), and further analyzed in Cloud et al. (2000), Crawford (2003), Genesee (2008), and May (2008). All of these bilingual additive programs use two languages as means of instruction.

Table 1.1

**Bilingual or Additive Programs Strand Models**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>Type of learners</th>
<th>Languages used for contents instructions</th>
<th>Time for instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Bilingual Program</td>
<td>All students are native speakers of the minority language.</td>
<td>English + minority language.</td>
<td>90/10 In the early grades, students spend 90% of their instructional time in the minority language (variations of this model are the 80/20 and the 70/30 models, in which students spend 70-80% of instructional time in the minority language to gradually shift to English).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous language immersion</td>
<td>All students are from the language minority community but have little or no proficiency.</td>
<td>English + a heritage/indigenous language.</td>
<td>50/50 Throughout the program, students spend 50% of their instructional time in the minority language and 50% of their instructional time in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language immersion or one-way immersion</td>
<td>English native speaker students who wanted to learn a foreign language.</td>
<td>English + a foreign language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-way model or dual language immersion model</td>
<td>Approximately one third of native speakers of the minority language and half English native speakers.</td>
<td>English + the language spoken by the minority group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students move toward two directions (two-way): acquire another language, while reinforcing their first language.</td>
<td>Minority Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I chose a two-way immersion model, or a dual language immersion model, because observing how speakers from Latin@ heritage groups and speakers from mostly U.S. and English-speaking groups (which I call dual language learners) elaborate their sense of belonging to their community of practice and use language to communicate. All the language immersion programs I described in Table 1.1 share the same foundation principle, where content lessons function concurrently as language lessons (Met, 2008). However, I argue the two-way model maintains the strongest potential for promoting cross-cultural exchange between students due to the actual presence of speakers from heritage groups, which was fundamental in the design of this research.

**Purposes of Dual Language Immersion Programs**

As introduced above, two-way DLI programs target three main objectives: academic achievement across all subject areas, bilingual and bicultural competence, and cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding (Fortune, 2012; Spicer-Escalante et al., 2015). Two-way DLI programs set the premise to renegotiate physical and imaginary boundaries between cultures and languages, while developing hybrid and fluid identities. In this sense, the Hebrew-Arabic program in Israel and the Schleswig-Holstein program in Germany are emblematic examples of two-way immersion programs aimed toward the development of hybrid and fluid systems of identity and encouragement of cross-cultural exchanges. In the first Hebrew-Arabic program example, children from Jewish origin learn Arabic, and Palestinian children study Hebrew. In this way, the program intends to promote mutual understanding, transforming the DLI class to negotiate peace beginning
from early childhood (Baker, 2011; Bekerman, 2009). The second example is the Schleswig-Holstein bilingual program in Germany, which integrates German and Danish languages and cultures. The main goal of this program is to create a school system accepted and legally recognized by both the German and Danish Education Departments to proffer mutual ideological and cultural understanding (Søndergaard, 1993; Wode, 1999). It also exemplifies the transition and migration of students between the German and Danish school systems.

As these two examples suggest, the DLI programs have potential to connect with the development of common community practices, respond to specific needs of the student population, and encourage growth of a more inclusive society. For these reasons, I examined how a two-way DLI school in the U.S. can connect the experience of minority and majority groups while responding to the needs of Latin@ students in terms of identity development. The school I chose is an example of this life-long process.

Development of Bilingual and Dual Language Immersion Programs in the U.S.

The school I chose for this study is South Whaterbridge Community School, which is a two-way 50/50 DLI school that serves a predominantly Latin@ student population in the Northeast of the U.S. More than 70% of the students at this school are Hispanic and about 30% of the students are English Learners. Hispanic is the term officially adopted by the U.S. Census Bureau to classify students who are from Latin American roots. I argue this is an imposed definition, based on the use of Spanish as primary language of communication. For this reason, the terms Latinas/Latinos and
Latin@s better describe heritage students from Latin American roots.

South Whaterbridge Community School is also a Title I school, determined on the fact that 83% of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The establishment of a DLI program at South Whaterbridge Community School is an attempt to consider the students’ sociocultural background and their local-global dimension, embracing differences and responding to the historical achievement gap between English Learners (ELs) from marginalized groups and students from the dominant language and culture. It also attempts to evolve from past failing approaches with ELs and develop a new format for learning. Above all, it is the effort to look at this community of learners from a culturally sustaining lens (Paris, 2012) instead of a deficit approach and culturally assimilating approach.

To better understand the setting of this study it is necessary to consider the struggle for the development of additive bilingual programs not only in this area of the U.S. but in the entire country. Looking at the national policy helped me understand the tenets that provided the basis for development of the Camaradas program at South Whaterbridge Community School, which were at the center of this study.

The struggle of the minority communities in U.S. public schools led to the establishment of transitional bilingual education programs in many states in the 1970s. The Bilingual Education Act (BEA), passed in 1968 was the first legislation to acknowledge the special needs of students who speak languages different than English at home, which were defined as students with Limited English Speaking Ability (LESA).

The BEA act was passed during a lengthy period of very low immigration and
addressed what, at that time, was considered a minor isolated issue, occurring primarily in places like Texas (Gándara, 2016). Following the bilingual movement initiated by the BEA, Massachusetts established the first state-mandated program in 1969 to address the education of minorities, mostly Latin@s in public schools (Uriarte & Chavez, 2000). This program also called for the desegregation of public schools. In theory, this type of language instruction claimed to support Latin@ students while they shift from Spanish to English. Later transitional models like the Massachusetts program were also considered to fulfill the recommendations established by the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974 (Nieto, 2009). This court decision demanded *education on equal terms* be provided. Such a result recalled the standard as it had been established in a previous Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Crawford, 1995).

Providing education on equal terms was interpreted as ensuring all Latin@ students acquired English, even if this came at the expense of Spanish. Hence, this model was revealed to be mostly subtractive, teaching English and depriving Latin@ students of an essential part of their identity, in this case their language.

In the Northeast, which is where my research took place, both Latin@ and White parents resisted the 1960s-1970s transitional language initiatives (Nieto, 2009a). Parents from both sides intended to protect their children from such a racially polarized system. The initiative was based on a *deficit ideology* (Gorsky, 2010), in which assimilation of Latin@ ELs into the White Anglo speakers’ community claimed to contribute toward efficient language acquisition and a more open multicultural society. Under this deficit ideology lens, the achievement gap between ELs and other students was explained and
justified by the supposed linguistic and cultural deficiencies within marginalized individuals and communities (Gorsky, 2010). Consequently, students who spoke languages other than English at home were expected to lose their languages and cultures if they wanted to succeed in the U.S. schools (Paris, 2012). These types of *subtractive* (meaning acquire English and loose other languages) federal and state bilingual laws were in place over two decades. On the one hand, they opened discussions concerning the education and *place* of Latin@ students in schools. Yet they did not contribute to a significant narrowing of the achievement gap, nor did it promote cultural pluralism.

In the 1990s, Latin@s in transitional programs remained the school population with the highest dropout rate and lowest score in the official and primary state assessment tests meant to assess student achievement (Nieto, 2009b). The success gap between different student populations and the accountability movement were the most relevant triggers of the new antibilingual reaction and the English-only initiatives adopted in California in 1992, in Arizona in 2000, and in Massachusetts in 2002. By 2001 the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandated high-stakes testing in a move which only further aggravated the situation and encouraged schools “to abandon native-language instruction in favor of all-English approaches” (Crawford, 2007, p. 33). As a result of the antibilingual programs regulation, many additive bilingual programs in the country were dismantled. In the most positive scenarios bilingual programs were replaced by sheltered English immersion programs. Among the worst cases, bilingual programs were transformed into subtractive non-bilingual programs “to teach English as rapidly and effectively as possible” (Nieto, 2009b, p. 66).
The NCLB employed the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, first used in the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Lau v. Nichols*, confirming a deficit perspective of heritage speaker children (Morales, 2010). Devaluing students’ native languages, the English-only movement substantially reduced the relevance of students’ linguistic practices in their communities and diminished the contribution of their cultural background in school communities. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law December 2015, the terminology shifted to English Learners (ELs), which, as Morales (2010) pointed out, can be considered an improvement from the previous terms (e.g., LESA and LEP) but still defines heritage speakers by the lack of linguistic skills (Morales, 2010). On the contrary, in this study, I adopted the term *dual language learner* (Gutiérrez et al.; Morales, 2010) to refer to young leaners who are simultaneously acquiring two languages and for this reason are equally contributing to the development of their community of practices.

Despite its extensive diffusion, the English-only policy in support of high-stakes testing did not help close the achievement gap, mainly because in this model educators are asking ELs to prove academic proficiency before obtaining linguistic proficiency. “The belief that the more time students spend in a second language context the quicker they learn a second language does not have empirical support” (Nieto, 2009b). In this sense, there are two critical factors that need to be considered. First, to become academically proficient in a second language students need between four and six years of practice in authentic contexts (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Nieto, 2009b; Pray & MacSwan, 2002). Second, mastering
basic literacy skills in the primary language facilitates the transfer of academic skills to a second language (Crawford, 1995; Cummins, 1991). Based on these fundamental principles “a number of longitudinal studies have estimated that those students placed in bilingual programs perform better in content instruction classes than those in other programs” (Nieto, 2009b, p. 66). Dual language immersion programs can contribute to the reduction of the achievement gap in the long run, at least six years (Howard et al., 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2003) and validate linguistic practices within the entire student community (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Nieto, 2009b).

The consideration of these last points supports the new wave of bilingual programs that is gradually overturning the English-only approach and sustaining new legislative initiatives. One example of this new wave of language opportunity for students is the development of the Seal of Biliteracy (Californians Together, 2016). This initiative is a state seal on a high school diploma to recognize high school graduates who speak, read, and write in two languages. The Seal of Biliteracy was developed by Californians Together in 2008 and it is now adopted by 16 states (Californians Together, 2016). Other initiatives, at the state level, are the proposal of bills including those recently approved in California (see Proposition 58 of 2016, repealing the English-only Proposition 227 of 1998) and currently under approval in Massachusetts (see LOOK Bill). These promote the diffusion of DLI programs, recognize the value of bilingualism, and encourage more flexibility in bilingual programming without the need for parental or school waivers.

Supporting bilingualism and biculturalism, DLI programs have shown the potential to produce social, economic and cognitive benefits and support emergent
bilinguals (Gándara, 2016; Morrison, 2016). In this way, dual language learners can be exposed to wider opportunities to reflect on their places of origin and their language practices while developing a hybrid and fluid identity. South Whaterbridge Community School is one of the settings in which this identity development process can take place.

**DLI Model at South Whaterbridge Community School**

The first time I set foot at South Whaterbridge Community School was in June of 2016. I rang the bell with a folder in one hand and a wrapped poster in the other; checking, as I waited, to ensure my USU badge was hanging visibly from my neck. My goal was to draw the principal’s attention to the potential for exploring student identity development in their new DLI program. I wanted to offer my experience both as an insider, in my capacity of language learner and teacher, and outsider, as an international graduate student approaching a study on a Latin@ community in the Northeast.

My previous pilot study and research were grounded in identity development in the 50/50 Utah DLI model. I was motived to study South Whaterbridge Community School because it was a brand-new school, inaugurated in 2013 to serve the local Latin@ community in one of the Northeast cities recognized as a “safe sanctuary for vulnerable people.” The proximity to an expansive metropolitan area, presence of a large Latin@ community, and development of a variation of the 50/50 two-way model motivated my decision.

Between 2014 and 2015 I conducted a pilot study at an elementary school in a medium sized suburban area in Utah (Di Stefano, in press). While there, I observed a
first-grade class in a DLI program with a White Spanish teacher. The purpose of this one-year ethnographic pilot study was to identify whether the two-way DLI class setting would contribute to the construction of a third space of learning and connect the transnational experiences of students with their hybridized local and global world. The research findings indicated there was an initial recognition of the possibility to expand the learning environment to a third space, in which transnational students’ experiences could be valued. However, evident limitations emerged in the methods used by the teacher involved in the co-construction of this transnational third space. I observed few instructional practices that could lead to a basic establishment of mutual cultural and language enrichment exchanges between Latin@ and White students. The practices I witnessed needed to be further encouraged by the teacher throughout the curriculum and classroom instruction. Most of the cultural initiatives I examined would typically develop from the teacher’s perspective instead of being elicited by the students’ home cultures. These actions tended to re-inscribe White culture on Latin@ students (Kitching, 2013). An example of these practices is the assumption used to prepare the Latin@ cultural day. Types of food, music selection, and children’s games were set a priori by the teacher instead of elaborated through cooperation with the students’ heritage families and community members. The cultural day was constructed as a White product of a school that happened to use Spanish as language of instruction.

The limitations that emerged from the pilot study prompted me to continue the research, locating a fresh DLI setting and sharpening the conceptual perspective. Theorizing the observation of a transnational third space in a substantially homogenous
background during the Utah study led me to stretch the theoretical paradigm. For this reason, I selected a school located in one of the most diverse and densely populated incorporated municipality in the country. Here exists a greater number of heritage speakers and Spanish classes that are generally taught by heritage speakers as well. My aim was to substantiate if the problematic phenomena I observed in my pilot study also occurred in such a diverse environment or if more limitation or varying challenges would arise from this school. In addition, I focused on the tenets of the transnationalism approach and the nuances of culturally relevant pedagogy. I identified a paradigm based on community of practice (Wenger, 1999) and the culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) to inform this study, where language is one of the methods students can employ to demonstrate their sense of belonging.

Another reason I intended to develop my study at South Whaterbridge Community School was the particular 50/50 DLI model called Camaradas (pseudonym). This program is a variant of the two-way models survived by the English-only wave that, starting in 2002, dismantled most of the bilingual programs in the Northeast. The Utah 50/50 DLI model is structured on a daily basis: students spend half their school day in the target language and half in English. One teacher instructs exclusively in the target language, while a second teacher instructs only in English. The Camaradas program at South Whaterbridge Community School is articulated on a weekly basis: students attend lessons in a target language every other week. Similar to Utah, one teacher instructs in English while the other in Spanish, alternating two cohorts of students. The other dissimilarity is related to the curriculum for the grades one to three. The Utah
An instructional model for the third grade requires literacy, math, and content areas subjects to be taught in both languages throughout the school year (Figure 1.1). The Camaradas instructional model, instead, requires alternation throughout the school year: math and literacy has to be communicated entirely in English or in Spanish every other week; Social Studies and Science alternate by semester (e.g., Social Studies is taught entirely in English during the fall semester and in Spanish during the spring; Science is taught in Spanish during fall and in English during spring); and P.E., Art, Health, and Music are always taught in English (Figure 1.2).

The peculiarity of the Camaradas program had potential to open multiple reflections on the sense of belonging and language practices, which indeed appeared from the beginning of the observation and were confirmed toward the end of my study.

![Pie Chart](image)

*Figure 1.1. Utah 50/50 model: Immersion time in third-grade. Adapted from Utah Dual Language Immersion (2016).*
Language acquisition theories emphasize the importance of exposure to the language as a key factor in motivating children to acquire a second language (Garibaldi Stefánsson 2013). “By being actively involved in the learning environment, the learner is constantly in contact with the target language through normal daily routines” (Garibaldi Stefánsson 2013, p. 2).

It is not merely the total number of hours students spend learning a language but also how this time is articulated on a daily routine to expose students to authentic and natural language practices opportunities. The combination of quality instruction and daily practice can be a crucial motivating factor for language acquisition and can directly affect the development of community practice in which students develop their sense of

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*This pie chart was created on the basis of my field observation.
**Social Studies and Science will switch in the spring.
belonging.

Besides the consideration of the language acquisition tenets (e.g., use of Spanish as the language of instruction, provide opportunity for real communication to happen, etc.), the Camaradas DLI model was a relevant setting for my study because of the implications of its alternating subjects program. Learning Social Studies and Science in one language at a time may affect the connection students make between the curricular topics and their own life experiences. One example of this particular dynamic emerged in a class discussion during the school mock presidential campaign and the real 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. These students’ real-world experiences showed the presence or the lack of connections between what they study in school and how they live. Specifically, the third-grade social studies curriculum included themes surrounding the need for communities to have government, the definition of taxes and their purposes, the state history and geography along with its contribution to the development of the Northeastern region of the country. Some of these themes remained at the center of the last presidential campaign. However, the fact that students acquired them in English but not in Spanish may have modified the nature of the classroom discussion right after election day.

The example I just cited is one of the rationales that supports the choice of the community of practice as one of the guiding principles for this study. Considering the school DLI model and the relevance of the social aspect of the presidential campaign in a multicultural setting, the community of practices guided me to conceive how the sense of belonging and the language practices would emerge in the students’ daily class
discussions and activities considering the alternate week model.

I reflected upon language as one of the most relevant ways to express the sense of belonging to a community of practices. What are the consequences for students if they are not encouraged to use their language practices in official places, like a third-grade classroom, on a daily basis but instead on a weekly basis? Does this model produce a discontinuity in the development of such communities? Does it imply a consideration for the dynamics of power and its related issues?

These questions brought me to develop this study in which I observed a DLI school as a potential setting where the sense of belonging expressed through student language practices could provide the foundation for a development of an integrated community of practice founded on culturally sustaining pedagogy. I argue that the bilingual programs cannot be considered a panacea for inclusion, just a basis of the use of Spanish or other languages to teach. The DLI program facilitated in the school has to ensure multiple resources of a quality education driven by solid academic, linguistic, and sociocultural principles to close the opportunity gap (Carter & Welner, 2013; Gorsky, 2013). As Linda Darling-Hammond postulated, “the opportunity to learn—the necessary resources, the curriculum opportunities, the quality teachers—that affluent students have, is what determines what people can do in life” (Coutts & LaFleur, 2011). Learning in Spanish constitutes one of these resources offered to Latin@ students that must be complemented by a curriculum of learning opportunities.
Research Questions

Founded on the communicative learning approach and a pluralistic vision of
education, dual language immersion programs, as described above, value diversity in the
classroom, consider each student’s identity as a resource, and promote the development
of a global and local community of linguistic and cultural practices. In this way, students
can demonstrate “positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors” while acquiring self-
efficacy and self-esteem for their origins (Christian, 1994). Two-way bilingual programs
can be successful in the project of expanding language resources of a country by
improving English language acquisition and conserving native language skills (Christian,
1994; Met, 2008). This is increasingly required for functional citizens in a global world.
For these reasons, a two-way DLI setting seemed the ideal context to develop my study
guided by one main research question and two subquestions.

1. How do students’ understandings of their sense of belonging and their
   language practices influence their understanding of their identities?
   
   a. Process: How do third-grade students interact with classroom instruction
      that leads them to the consideration of the places to which they belong and
      the languages they speak as part of their hybrid and fluid identity?
   
   b. Product: What is the nature of third graders’ response in terms of class
      participation, homework, and artifacts production?

The intent of this study was to glean a better understanding of the relationship
between the sense of belonging and language practices, as well as student constructs of
multiple identities. The process and the product of language instruction that fosters the
development of fluid and hybrid identities in a two-way DLI classroom remained the
focus of this investigation. I examined the processes through which a third-grade Spanish
teacher developed classroom instruction that encouraged students to consider places and languages as part of who they are. Consequently, I analyzed how students reacted to these strategies and the nature of their response through classroom participations, artifacts, and interviews.

**Kind of Study**

I used ethnographic methodology because it allowed me to view the dynamics in which the teacher and students were included every day. I recognize that “ethnography is both a process and a product” (Tedlock, 2000, p. 455). The ethnographic study, a process and a product at once, intertwined with the process of classroom instruction and with the product of students’ participation and assignments.

I focused on both the process and the product generated in a DLI classroom. I inquired how students interact with teacher instruction (the *process*) and what kind of products they established based on classroom instruction and homework assignments (the *product*). In this study, I maintain that these processes and products can work as contributing aspects to the development of children’s identities. For example, are children encouraged during curricular activities to consider the community in which they live as determined by multiple geographic coordinates and imagined places? Are children encouraged to reflect on their languages as practices developed as a vital communicative tool inside their communities? In what ways are these factors considered crucial components of a student’s fluid and hybrid identity? Are students encouraged to ponder alternative ways to build or imagine other types of communities?
These and many other queries can be useful to explore the process that makes the DLI setting a community for developing a sense of belonging and language practices. Nevertheless, the fertile DLI environment by itself is not enough to enforce and mandate such practices toward the progress of bilingual and bicultural students. On this topic, Howard et al. (2007) proposed seven strands to ensure that the implementation of a DLI program is not just based on the use of a language other than English as a medium for the instruction, but rather that the program provides ample evidence of its focus on equity, advocacy, and cultural inclusivity. As Lee et al. (2008) reasoned, “simply ‘learning in two languages’ may not necessarily lead to interactional spaces that foster the development of bilingual speakers” (p. 75). Using sociolinguistic analysis of interactional spaces, Lee et al. focused on teacher and children’s language use in a kindergarten and concluded “strict enforcement of the instructional separation of the two languages may emphasize a division of interactional spaces and language groups where only Spanish or English is used” (p. 75). Hence, what is often prioritized in DLI is the instrumental value of languages (such as in business, politics, and law) and the opportunity for linguistic-minority students to obtain a solid education in their first language (Valdés, 1998). In this context, languages are seen as skills and not as community practices as I proposed in this study.

I recognize the importance of the acquisition of languages skills in a globalized world, overturning the deficit ideology, and responding to the issues of power and equity in education. With these ideas in mind, in this study I intended to emphasize the relevance that language instruction represents as a practice to reflect upon the multiple
components of students’ complex identities. Thus, the next chapter will provide a review of the literature that afforded the origin to develop my theoretical framework and advance my research. I will follow with a description of the methodology, the findings, the discussion, the conclusion, and the implication of this study.

Chapter Structure

There are five chapters in this dissertation, each beginning with a brief introduction and ending with a summary of the chapter. In every chapter, I will succinctly recall the main purpose of the study, my positionality as researcher, and the ways this research contributed to the expansion in terms of knowledge, policy, and practice of dual language learners’ education.

Chapter 1 provides essential information concerning the history of bilingual education and the progress of the DLI model. In this chapter, I introduce the main research questions encompassing the sense of belonging and the language practices of dual language learners. In addition, I describe the ethnographic study I conducted in a DLI third grade class in the Northeast of the U.S.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of this study. I detail how the guiding principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy and community of practice can shed some light on the expansion of this program in a prevalently Latin@ community in the Northeast. In this chapter, I explain my understanding of identity as a fluid and hybrid construct, and I analyze two particular components of identity. These are the sense of belonging and practice of languages. I review the literature surrounding my theoretical
framework and clarify my positionality as researcher in this study.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology used to explore the development of such fluid and hybrid identity construction in the third-grade class I observed. Theoretical or purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2011) guided my efforts to select the school in which this study was conducted. For the purpose of this research, I collected data in the form of field notes from participant observation and informal interviewing in the field, the teacher and students’ semi-structured interviews, and the children’s homework and artifacts, such as journal entries and work sheets. I chose to combine deductive and inductive thematic analysis to ensure a rigorous data analysis process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Chapter 4 reports the findings of my study. In this chapter, I document the within culture practices and cross-cultural practices as defined under the culturally sustaining pedagogy lens, which I observed in the classroom. I describe student motivation and engagement in these practices and the consequent results in terms of identity development. I discuss how these practices provide a valid alternative and contribute to decreasing the opportunity gap.

Chapter 5 documents the processes and the products of the identity development in which the third graders of a DLI school are engaged, and how the sense of belonging and the language practices took part in these processes and emerged from these products.

Chapter 6 adds concluding remarks and the implications of this study. I explain how the consideration of student language and community can become a key factor in the implementation of DLI models. This offers reflections for DLI teachers’ professional development and implementations policy makers and other educational stakeholders.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described how I developed this dissertation document that reports my research study. The problem statement was based on the lack of opportunities for dual language learners in U.S. public schools. The purpose of this study was to promote a better understanding of the process and product of identity development in a DLI setting. I considered sense of belonging and language practices as the two main contributors of the development of fluid and hybrid identities.

This work is based on the ethnographic study of a third grade DLI school in the Northeast of the U.S., and was developed through observation, interviews, and artifacts collection. I constructed the theoretical framework of this study upon the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy and community of practice. This conceptual framework allowed me to identify within culture practices and the cross-cultural practices in a DLI class while documenting their contribution in the development of students’ identities. My study has the potential to inspire DLI teachers, policy makers, and educational stakeholders to scrutinize the impact of their decisions when teaching and developing the DLI curriculum. Such elements may be included in teacher training sessions. In particular, the implications of this study may contribute to the implementation of instructional practices that may aid students in developing their fluid and hybrid identity through a more inclusive learning environment.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The research on educating emergent bilingual students is extensive and wide reaching (to consult some of the latest work that discusses emergent bilingual education see Bassetti & Nicoladis, 2016; Burke, Morita-Mullaney & Singh, 2016; Hickey, 2016; Kim & Viesca, 2016; Morrison, 2016). Through different approaches, this corpus of research studies confirms that dual language learners and immigrant students are resilient, optimistic, and cooperative learners (Gándara, 2016). To support emergent bilinguals (Gándara, 2016), close the opportunity gap, and consequently, the achievement gap in U.S. public schools, it is essential to promote research guided by a robust theoretical framework. This chapter explains how I established my study considering the tradition of educational approaches and launched an inquiry into theories supporting the development of dual language learners’ identities through their sense of belonging and language practices.

First, I present the conceptual model (Figure 2.1) developed as a guide for my research. My conceptual model is based on the following three main assumptions: (a) a fluid hybrid identity is both the origin and result of culturally sustaining pedagogy; (b) a sense of belonging and the language practices are two main aspects that contribute to development of identity; and (c) a culturally sustaining pedagogy is the outcome of within-group cultural practices and common cross-ground cultural practices. After
Figure 2.1. Culturally sustaining pedagogy conceptual model. This model illustrates the interconnection between culturally sustaining pedagogy and hybrid and fluid identity. Culturally sustaining pedagogy is a result of identity and it is needed to support identity.

detailing the cultural sustaining pedagogy conceptual model, I explain my understanding of the key terms: hybrid and fluid identity, sense of belonging, and language practices. These are central to my primary research question of the study. Subsequently, I locate myself in the research, clarifying how I personally find the practice of language to be a way of expressing my membership in communities. This premise establishes the theoretical framework I chose for my study, which was guided by the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy and imagined community. I will also explain how these approaches were formulated and developed through the last decades. Finally, I conclude the culturally sustaining pedagogy conceptual model aids in development of identity by promoting the mechanism through which third graders develop their self in a DLI setting.
The product of this process is analyzed in terms of participation, homework, and artifacts production.

**Conceptual Context and Theoretical Orientation**

My study is entrenched within the corpus of scholarship dedicated to extending the education of historically marginalized youth. I chose to frame my study with one of multiple counter-hegemonic approaches to the U.S. education system (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), which is an attempt to question and dismantle the hegemonic power, through the analysis of identity development in a DLI programs.

The theoretical framework behind my study is based on principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012) as a way to understand how young students live their language and belonging, and as a consequence navigate their identity. The concepts of community of practices (Wenger, 1999) and imagined community (Anderson, 1991/2006) are drawn upon to explain the multiple meanings that a sense of belonging and language practices can have in the students’ *glocal* (Robertson, 1995) community.

To better contextualize my study setting, it is important to note the term “glocalization” (Robertson, 1995) is a direct result of the 1980s-cultural debate on globalization (Hemer & Tufte, 2005). It refers to the convergence of local and global spaces in a new entity. Glocalization entails a variety of elements related to the discourse of global and international education, such as citizenship education and student language
and culture. The contribution of glocalization in developing a student’s sense of belonging in imagined communities is significant and thus exists as a key concept in my theoretical framework. Students, as world citizens, experience the intangible but strong connections with cultural elements that contribute to their identity construction. This development takes place in a hybrid space fractionally attributable to a single set of geographic coordinates. Dual language learners construct their identities while moving between national, global, and local dimensions, meaning an increasing percentage of youth “grow up global” (Katz, 2004). For this reason, the glocal dimension of student experience acquires a special meaning related to a sense of belonging practice, which is a crucial component of the hybrid and fluid identity development process.

Another essential element for the sense of belonging is the practice of languages. In this study, I observed the instructional process through which students were engaged in building a community based on the practice of their languages. Subsequently, I analyzed the products of these processes that developed in the DLI class. I approached this study from a culturally sustaining pedagogy standpoint because I intended to observe how both within-group practices and common cross-ground cultural practices, which support culturally sustaining pedagogy, may contribute to the development of fluid and hybrid identities.

To guide my research, I developed a conceptual model (Figure 2.1) in which I envision culturally sustaining pedagogy as a teaching-learning practice generated on the basis of fluid and hybrid identity for both students and teachers. At the same time, culturally sustaining pedagogy supports the development of identity, which is determined
by belonging and language. In this context, I present belonging as the recognition of place and community alongside language as the common practice within this community. Culturally sustaining pedagogy depicts common within-group and cross-ground cultural practices, which encourage the development of fluid and hybrid identity.

I acknowledge that the process of identity development can be presented from many varying angles. However, the theories and models I will present in the next section focus on the elements of belonging and language under the culturally sustaining pedagogy lens. Hence, I will consider the roles identity, belonging, and language played in the development of my conceptual model.

**Identity as a Fluid and Hybrid Construction**

Identity, in its etymological sense, refers to the concept of being the same (from Latin *idem* = the same). Following this basic definition all individuals who present the same characteristics will share the same identity. In this sense, the concept of identity is often used as a “catch-all label for biological characteristics, psychological dispositions, and/or socio-demographic positions” (Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011, p. 1). This suggests identity is an all-inclusive concept that automatically embraces the complete sphere of experiences in the life of an individual.

Under this definition, I can provide some analogies. For example, if socio-demographic positions determine identity, it could be argued that being born in the U.S. assigns a U.S. national identity. Similarly, biological characteristics, such as having brown skin, include a person in a specific ethnic identity community (e.g., African American, Latin@, Black, Indian, etc.). Though these classifications can be partially
accurate, along with Schwartz et al. (2011), I argue “characteristics such as these only become part of identity to the extent that they are interpreted and infused with personal and social meaning” (Schwartz et al., 2011, p. 1). Although being born in the U.S. does assign U.S. citizenship to a person, it is the communion with U.S. values and beliefs that make a person share part of the complex and multiform U.S. national identity. Moreover, these values and beliefs are not immutable. Rather they exist in constant evolution according to the particular socio-historical context where an individual resides. In the same way, skin color may be characteristic of certain ethnic communities, yet it is the sharing of values and beliefs that makes someone belong to or separate from that community.

The stereotypical cases I just mentioned provide examples of some of the limitations that have emerged in two of the studies I conducted over the past. These include the research I performed on intercultural relationships with immigrants in Sicily, Italy, and the investigation of third space construction in a DLI class in Utah. For example, based on a series of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic assumptions, I assigned the immigrants in Sicily, and transnational students in Utah, a fixed identity. I did not consider that the identity of immigrants and their children can change due to the sense of belonging and language practices they develop in their glocal community.

Challenging the all-inclusive definition, I now understand identity as a hybrid construction of the personal and social meanings attributed to individual and social life events of a person. Identity expounds on the meanings attributed to the singular events that occur in someone’s life, to socio-historical circumstances and evolutions in one’s
capacity of interpretation. Drawing upon a well-established collection of identity studies (Bhabha, 1990, 1994; Chuang, 2004; Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996; Lemke, 2008; McCarthey & Moje, 2002; Nasir & Saxe, 2003; Rampton, 2007), Lee and Anderson (2009) asserted that “identity is a fluid, socially constituted achievement that is constructed across micro-social (individual) and macro-social (cultural/institutional) timescales” (p. 185). In this sense, identity is a hybrid construction of individual and social life events in a constant becoming, which depends on a specific understanding of them. Consequently, the process through which children comprehend who they are is in constant change and is determined by their diverse learning experiences.

Hall (1990) defined identities as “the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (p. 394). The ways I interpret experiences and the narratives I produce make me who I am; a hybrid product of languages and places. The hybridity of my identity develops from the liminal connections between the languages I speak and the places to which I belong. Hybrid identities “emerge in the interstices between different cultures” (Asher, 2008, p. 13), in those overlapping and indistinct boundaries between languages and places. Moreover, identities are in constant development and evolution. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) “understand ‘identity’ as the ever-changing configuration of interpretations that individuals attach to themselves, as related to the activities [emphasis added] that they participate in” (p. 423). In this study, I focused on two of these particular activities or practices, which are the sense of belonging and the use of language, under culturally sustaining pedagogy. The way students interact through these activities contributes to
their identity and locates their positionality.

Identity and positionality are interconnected. Not only do I identify the essential components of my identity but I interpret them and position myself according to them. I understand my interpretation of identity as a hybrid construction in response to my Western glocalized positionality. Positionality is recognizing my position in relation to the others, specifically in terms of sense of belonging and language practices—for the purpose of this study—but also in terms of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, class, along with other aspects of identity. These facets not only define who I am, but also describe where I stand in comparison to others. Considering this relation between identity aspects and positions Maher and Tetreault (1993) argued that:

Gender, race, class, and other aspects of our identities knowledge are markers of relational positions [emphasis added] rather than essential qualities. Knowledge is valid when it includes an acknowledgment of the knower’s specific position in any context, because changing contextual and relational factors are crucial for defining identities and our knowledge in any given situation. (p. 118)

Marking the relational positions with other people, the aspects of my personal identity define my positionality. Yet positionalities are not fixed and given once and for all.

With these essential definitions of identity and positionality in mind, through this study, I have explored the identity development process of third grade students, considering how their sense of belonging and language practices define their positionalities. I considered how the majority of students in the study come from diverse races, ethnicities, languages and socioeconomic statuses. Then I reflected on the personal and social meanings they attributed to their biological characteristics, psychological dispositions, and sociodemographic positions as it emerged from their interviews and
artifacts production. I also acknowledged the influence learning in a DLI setting can have on identity and positionality development.

While engaging in the data analysis I considered that race, language, ethnicity, belonging, alongside cultural ways of being and knowing, are not unidirectional. Rather they function as the result of heritage and community practices (Paris & Alim, 2014). The approach children use to reflect on these elements results from the messages they receive both from their heritage cultures and the present orientation of community cultures. This study performed a simultaneous analysis of the experiences students chose to share with me to better apprehend this duality. I examined how the elements they marked as an essential part of their identity were also an intrinsic portion of their immigrant parents’ past-oriented heritage practice. Questions were then posed concerning which markers of identity positions are simultaneously part of their hybridized glocal present-oriented community practices (Paris & Alim, 2014).

Multiple aspects emerged from the interviews. In many cases students mentioned elements that revealed the impact of socio-cultural traditions (e.g., food, music, religious ceremonies, social events, etc.) alongside technology and social media (e.g., tablets, smart phones, television shows, sports channels, etc.) in their lives. Among the multiplicity of elements that define heritage and community practices, I elected to focus on those aspects that reveal how sense of belonging and practice of language develop. For this, the specific student population and setting of this study had to be considered.

In the following section, I will explain my understanding of belonging as the recognition of place and community. This definition is the result of analysis of different
educational approaches. Through the last decades, these methods have strived to interpret
the presence of students from different cultural backgrounds in U.S. schools and propose
alternatives to increase their inclusion. I briefly describe the evolution among
assimilation, multiculturalism, and transnationalism perspectives. The transnationalism
perspective opens to consideration of the physical and virtual boundaries crossed every
day by students from heritage families in their travels to and from school. This concept
introduces the model of imagined community as the place in which these transnational
students can build interconnected places with each other and their instructors. They
construct boundaries that bolster their sense of membership and belonging.

Social Belonging as Recognition of Place
and Community for Transnational Students

Three out of four students at South Whaterbridge Community School⁴ come from
a Latino family, 83% of the students are from a low-socio-economic status family, and
30% are enrolled in ELs programs. Some of these characteristics can be partially
attributed to the evolving international immigration and globalization era, which
determined the development of different instructional approaches and educational
policies. Throughout the last century, scholars have approached these phenomena from
different stances: cultural assimilation, multiculturalism, and transnationalism (Nelson &
Hiemstra, 2008) are among the most popular.

The assimilationist approach offers a description of the diverse student body in

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⁴ South Whaterbridge Community School is a pseudonym. All names referring to the school, the teacher,
the students, and the location used in this dissertation manuscript are pseudonyms.
U.S. schools from a stereotypical victory stories standpoint. Successful students are those who are able to assimilate into mainstream U.S. culture (Di Stefano, in press; Gans, 1997; Massey & Denton, 1993; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Olsen, 1997). “Schools assumed that assimilation into the mainstream culture was required for citizenship and national belonging and that students could and should surrender commitments to other communities, cultures, and nations” (Banks, 2008, p. 134). In this context, the sense of belonging was perceived as recognition and protection of national borders. Under the assimilation philosophy students were encouraged to give up their cultural and linguistic practice. This posed extreme consequences on their identity while individuals worked to exhibit their commitment to their new country and adhere to the imagined characteristics of an ideal citizen.

In contrast with the assimilation perspective, multicultural educators were inspired by the 1960s’ civil rights movement to advocate for a “transformation of the school so that students from both genders and from diverse culture, language, and ethnic groups will have an equal chance to experience school success” (Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 25). Multicultural educators called for a transformation of both the immigrant culture and the host structure, in order to promote inclusion and mutual enrichment. One example of this approach is the introduction of culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994) materials in the curriculum to provide visual representation of diverse cultures.

However, these good intentions often became “good school-based tasks that have no beyond-school application” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 76). Hence, other scholars (Marden & Mercer, 1998; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008) interpreted this approach as lacking
the necessary recognition of power relations *between cultures* and *within cultures*, and consideration of the students’ ever-evolving identities. Identities of minority students would become fragmented and disconnected, restricted by a limited range of opportunities, and ultimately dictated by educational stakeholders from the majority culture. The culturally relevant pedagogy approach had the merit of intensifying the debate on the necessity of closing the opportunity gap as a means to promote academic achievement for all students.

Overturning the cultural assimilation and multicultural approaches, transnationalism considers that “immigrants live their lives across borders and maintain their ties to home, even when their countries of origin and settlement are geographically distant” (Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p. ix). The use of the term transnational has gone through a long historical process. It is derived from the Latin root “trans” which means “beyond” (Saunier, 2009). Immigrant students go beyond the delimitation of national boundaries and negotiate meanings during their everyday experience. Immigrants create cross-border lives (Wessendorf, 2013) and develop citizenship identities between boundaries (Smith & Bakker, 2008). These aspects are particularly relevant for transnational immigrants, who are interconnected and define their identities according to multiple transnational social relations (Bash, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Schiller et al. 1992). Here identity becomes fluid and hybrid; it fluctuates between the delineated perimeters and reflects the socio-historical-cultural changes that affect those bounds.

The majority of students at South Whaterbridge Community School are born in
the U.S. from transnational immigrant families. Questions and data ascertaining the legal status of students in this study and/or their parents would have been in violation of the IRB protocol. Therefore, such sensitive information was not collected through the study. Yet at least two considerations led me to affirm the majority of students at South Whaterbridge Community School were born in the U.S. from transnational immigrant families. First, during semi-structured interviews, I asked the students to explain what they wrote in their journals when they were asked to talk about a recent trip they made with their families. Numerous students chose to talk about a trip to their parent’s country to meet a part of their family they had never met before, as they were born in the U.S.

Second, a close analysis of the data from the U.S. Census of Bureau (2010), confirmed a certain region of the U.S., such as the northeast region as well as some southern states (e.g., California, Nevada, Texas, and Florida), present a large percentage of foreign born population.

The students at South Whaterbridge Community School occasionally cross the physical border between the U.S. and Latin American countries by visiting the country of origin for their parents. Every day, they transverse abstract frames between their home and school culture. Even families that become firmly rooted in their new country can maintain multiple linkages through expansive social networks and conducting life activities such as political or economic operations with their homeland (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Schiller et al. 1995). These connections often emerged in the students’ journals, which were analyzed throughout the course of this study.

With this premise on the development on transnationalism, I traced the
background on which I can now explain how the sense of belonging exists in the experience of second generation Latin@ students. Drawing from Nelson and Hiemstra (2008) and Trudeau (2006), I define belonging as the feeling of interconnection with a place that represents a specific community and promotes a sense of shared membership. The meaning of belonging is constantly negotiated between places and symbols, which can be part of the students’ experience and their families’ memories.

The Imagined Communities of Students at South Whaterbridge Community School

In this context, the concept of family functions as an imagined and idealized element. It serves as “an ideological construct to demonstrate ethnic particularity and difference” (Wessendorf, 2013, p. 40). Families are a central element in the development of a sense of community. Most Latin@ students at South Whaterbridge Community School live between close and extended family members in the U.S. and their parents’ origin countries. Students build upon their meaning of family and develop the feeling of belonging to an imagined community, in which they share common practices, like the language, even if they often never meet with most members of that community.

When Anderson (1991/2006) theorized the concept of imagined communities, he intended to offer an interpretation for the spread of nationalism as a phenomenon linked to the concept of national communities. Nations are imagined political communities in terms of limits. Each is demarcated by their boundaries and sovereignty, but remains constructed independently from hierarchical and spiritual descendants. Anderson (1991/2006) viewed the creation of nation-states as imagined communities because “the
members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Some of the third-grade Latin@ students I observed had never visited their parents’ origin country. Regardless, they built a sense of communion among the people with whom they share that part of their heritage. This becomes real in the actual linguistic and cultural practices.

I use the concept of imagined community to explore the learning space the teacher and students in the study built together. This qualifies as an imagined community because it includes the memories, experiences, and knowledge of varying places and cultures in the world. Often, the Spanish teacher mentioned her experience being born and raised in Colombia along with her academic and life experience in the U.S. Interviews with the students frequently brought up references to the places they lived with their families or traveled to when visiting their relatives. Prevalent examples included El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and some U.S. states (e.g., California, Oregon, and Florida). All of these were not described merely as touristic visits but instead as places where they acquired a meaningful experience. The students recounted their time spent practicing a language, constructing a sense of belonging to the place, and building a feeling of membership with the people who reside in those places.

In their school community, students comprehend the value these places have in their life and learn to be open to the meanings other students share. I understand imagined communities as places where teachers and students can develop a sense of belonging and practice the language that contradistinguish these places, contributing to the
establishment of their identity and consequently their positionality. These imagined communities offer students the opportunity to reflect on the languages they use to communicate. Moreover, imagined communities built around the classroom allow students to develop a sense of belonging while they learn about states and nations within the curriculum.

In this study, I refer to imagined communities to explain how students expand their fluid and hybrid identities. Transnational students cultivate a sense of identity based on individual experiences and social interactions through the common practice of language. Places and languages are linked together under the transnational outlook. Yet even before the development of the transnational educational wave in the last twenty years, languages were often seen as more than the sum of symbols and codes. George Curtius wrote these visionary words in the 1868 edition of the *Princeton Review*: “Every language is fundamentally something transnational” (Saunier, 2009; Snyder, 2013). In his perspective, language can be considered a continual evolution of codes and communication agreements between people who are moving “betwixt and between” borders for a certain period of their life (Turner, 1964, p. 1). The sense of belonging and the practice of language create imagined communities of learners, which are at the same time the cause and the consequence of the fluid and hybrid transformation of identities.

**Languages as Heritage and Community Practices**

I understand languages as practice in a local and global context. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) studied the creative practice and mixing of languages in urban
contexts, which transcend established socio-cultural and historical categories, and
develop on overlapping boundaries between identities and ideologies. Otsuji and
Pennycook drew upon the notion of metroethnicity, to propose the concept of
**metrolingualism**, which entails “creative linguistic practices across borders of culture,
history and politics” (p. 240).

Using the concept of metrolingualism in this study would imply a broader
analysis of students’ language repertoire that was not the purpose of this research.
However, Otsuji and Pennycook’s (2010) study is particularly relevant to my research
because they documented that: (a) languages are not fixed codes but responses to the
communicative needs of people in a specific context; and (b) languages are determinant
in the construction of people’s identities and ideologies. As Pennycook and Otsuji (2016)
argue, “language practices and identity are formed in a constant push and pull between
fixity and fluidity” (p. 270). In this sense, languages are an essential practice that
characterize places to which we develop a specific sense of belonging and, as a
consequence, imply a particular identity construction.

In the DLI setting, interpreting language as practice means to go beyond a
conception of bilingualism as mastery of two independent codes and to move toward an
idea of language as an “interplay of practices with identities for bilingual speakers”
(Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014, p. 759). Hence students are active
participants in building a community of multilingual speakers. For most of the Latin@
students in the study, speaking Spanish is part of both their immigrant parents’ past-
oriented heritage practices and their school present-oriented community practices. Their
use of Spanish evolves constantly according to the target hybridization with English and other linguistic codes, and connections with social media. A classroom is only one of the possible communities where they can practice their language. Students produce and share contents in this community; they imagine themselves in it and develop a sense of belonging to it. At the same time, each participates in other communities with their family and friends outside of school. Language as practice is a constant element for all of these “imagined communities” (Pavlenko, 2003).

Seeing students as producers and active participants of these communities means shifting to a broader interpretation of bilingual programs. Students in bilingual programs cannot be viewed as individuals attempting to become competent monolinguals because they belong to two separate, often conflicting, communities (Dagenais, 2003; Kanno, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003). Instead they are “part of an imagined community of worthy multilingual speakers” (Baker, 2011, p. 135). These multilingual speakers practice languages in contexts that have been crafted for them—the classroom—and that will develop in a multilingual society. Such students live in a world where being multilingual would not be an exception but a commonality. They are already producing and acting in imagined communities that will grow and change with them. Learning languages helps construct a sense of belonging to these communities and becoming an integrant part of them (Wenger, 1999).

To explain how learning occurs in the communities of practice, Wenger (1999) referred to the concept of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). He described learning as an activity that takes place in a specific context and
applies in that setting. It is important to remember that in DLI settings, language is not a subject. Instead it is the tool that permits students and teachers to acquire information about a content subject; the language has to be applied to the content subject to negotiate meanings and foster communication.

Building upon the Vygotsky’s notion of learning through social development, Lave and Wenger (1991) argued learning is situated within authentic activities, the context, and the cultures in which students are engaged. This definition helped me to better illustrate the learning process in the DLI class and guided me through the data for this study. In light of Lave and Wenger’s theory, the bilingual classroom becomes a place where students learn about languages but it is also where they apply knowledge and discover how to communicate. For example, students in the bilingual classroom are educated about vocabulary and sentence construction, but also how they need to use vocabulary and sentence construction to communicate with their peers and their teacher. In this sense, language is the practice that makes communication happen among the members of the community.

Relying on situated learning theory, Wenger (1999) expanded the concept of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991/2006) and described them as communities of practice. There are multiple types of communities in which learners attempt to enter. In this sense, acquiring languages is a social and situated act for learners to try and become part of different communities. Students are learning how to foster a sense of belonging within existing communities and communities created in the future.

In the previous paragraphs, I explained my understanding of language as practices
that entail students to become part of imagined communities. By speaking the language of the community, students are identified as active members within it. For these reasons, I consider language a critical aspect of identity development, as I indicated in my conceptual model. Along with languages, the sense of belonging is a crucial component of identity when it comes to the recognition of places and communities.

The sense of belonging to an imagined community where language practices are a crucial element has become a pivotal concept in my study as well as in my personal journey as teacher and researcher. To understand what belonging and language mean for the students and teacher in my study, I needed to define what they are for me. In the next section I offer an analysis of my positionality as student researcher, language learner and teacher. This reflection allows me to connect the meanings that belonging and language have in identity development and how they can be integrated into the classroom instructional strategy through culturally sustaining pedagogy.

My Positionality in Terms of Sense of Belonging and Language Practices

The sense of belonging and languages are intertwined dimensions that define my fluid and hybrid identity. I grew up in Sicily, Italy, before moving to the U.S. when I was 27 years old. While discussing identity with the students in this study, I asked them to begin with the consideration of a practical example. I told them I believe parts of my identity include my birth in Italy and my transition to the U.S. 7 years ago. Even if I live in the U.S. now, speaking Spanish and English while in school, I always use Spanish, Italian, and Sicilian to communicate with my family and friends.
After this example, one of the students said he classifies me as 7% American. He listed three main reasons for this: (a) I was not born here, (b) I have been in the U.S. for seven years, and (c) I often use Spanish as my primary form of communication with students. This unexpected statement caused me to reflect deeper on the places to which I feel I belong and on the languages I employ to express my belonging, an intrinsic facet of my identity. It also urged me to explicitly recognize my positionality in this study before proceeding with the data analysis.

While I consider the places I physically come from and those with which I developed a feeling of belonging, memories in different languages come back to my mind. When I recall my childhood, original family, and first professional experiences in Italy, my memories are in Italian, enriched by a certain flavor of Sicilian dialect. The translation of these memories into English would not be as culturally rich and would not recreate the same emotions. When I analyze my experience as a graduate student in the U.S., my thoughts are formed in English. Reflecting on the emotional bond with my husband, daughter, and friends (who are predominantly of Latin American and Caribbean origin) my sentiments are expressed in Spanish. My husband, originally from Puerto Rico, and I keep a reflective journal to document how our two years old daughter is learning Italian, Spanish, and English in tandem through us, her daycare environment, media exposure, and the social relations with family and friends.

I grew up in a middle-class Catholic family that taught hard work, humility, and respect toward elders. Living in a Eurocentric, patriarchal, heteronormative society meant a women’s self-determination rights were only recognized as long as they complied with
their role as wives and mothers. The single exception was those who joined religious organizations. Family was sacred, ruled every decision, and established what was good for me.

On one hand, family provided a special nurturing environment where I learned to cherish the time spent together and value our mutual support. This element provided me with the basis of cultural understanding for some Latin American perspectives later acquired through friends. On the other hand, my family’s rigid decisional structure created anxiety or doubt every time I would lean toward a non-canonical direction according to “the family” perspective (e.g., study abroad, move to a different country, quit an ordinary but secure job to look for more challenging and rewarding work, etc.). This aspect often generated a disconnect when I related my experience to the background of undergraduate students at Washington State University, Utah State University, and the K-12 U.S. public school system. All of them were raised in a more independent way—at least under my perception.

I was part of the last cohort of students who, in Italy, could obtain an elementary and early childhood teaching license through an accredited secondary education institution via AP classes. I attended a Catholic Salesian school, committed to continue Don Bosco’s mission of nurturing good Christians and honest citizens, and earned my teaching degree. As a young student-teacher in the Italian Catholic elementary school system, I knew to guide children through the Salesian Preventive System with a center on reason, religion, and loving-kindness. The complexity of the Italian public school’s national and centralized recruiting system brought me to consider my passion for literacy
and writing. Ultimately it prompted me to seek a new career in journalism. Until I moved to the U.S. I majored in Communication with a specialization in journalism and mass media. For 5 years, I worked within this field.

As an exchange student, visiting scholar, graduate student, and eventual graduate instructor, moving to the U.S. allowed me to engage in a critical postcolonial journey. It unveiled a completely different perspective on recognition for me. I looked back at my work as an educator with students from minority groups and as a journalist writing about migration in Italy. Ultimately, it led me to realize my perspective was deeply founded in the assimilationist point of view, where successful students and migrants were able to share Italians habits and culture, all while embracing Italians values and faith. After moving to the U.S., I became part of the minority and acquired a fresh perspective. At the same time, I began to share the privilege of academia that constantly inspired me to encourage students to recognize their positionality and advocate for inclusion in our education system.

Looking at the role of education and my experiences, I have learned the languages I speak are not just a vehicle of communication but also carry my cultural identity (Hall, 1990). I understand my positionality is culturally and politically defined and that it is embedded in my teaching and researching style, because “in every classroom, each student and teacher has a unique positionality” (Camicia & Di Stefano, 2015, p. 282). My positionality emerges as I create images of the world (Wenger, 1999) in which I live and I connect through time and space with my own past experiences, such as my graduate studies in two U.S. higher education institutions.
As this section shows, the main research question of this study originated from my personal experience as an immigrant to the U.S. and as a language learner and teacher (in Italian, Spanish, and ESL). It has also been inspired by my experience as a college graduate instructor of an educational foundations course, a social studies method course, and a second language acquisition class in an undergraduate elementary education program. Sharing my perspective with the Spanish third-grade teacher in my study unveiled hidden messages in our interview process. This introspective procedure also enabled us to observe our positionality as researcher and teacher and ultimately consider how they influence our research and teaching.

I recognize myself as a hybrid adult transnational (Kasun & Saavedra, 2013) product of the cultures and languages I acquired growing up in Sicily, Italy, studying in the Northwest of the U.S., and interacting with my Caribbean family and Latin American friends. I recognize languages are not absorbed in a social vacuum (Gass & Glew, 2008; P. Gray, 2002, Portolés Falomir, 2015), disconnected from their historical and sociocultural background, and that they contribute to the development of cultural identities. This cultural hybridity provides both the inside and outside perspective, or the “halfie,” as an ethnographic observer in the field (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Foley, Levinson, & Hurtig, 2001; Narayan 1993). I use the term “halfie” to refer to a product that is not simply the sum of two parts. “Two halves cannot adequately account for the complexity of an identity in which multiple countries, regions, religions, and classes may come together” (Narayan, 1993, p. 673). As a language learner and immigrant to the U.S., I identify myself with the “other” (Abu-Lughod, 1991). However, as part of an elite
immigrant group—the Italians—I am an insider, because I am afforded Western-European privilege, granted on the basis of my Italian origin and work in the academic setting.

Reflecting on my positionality became a preliminary step for this research considering the current socio-political climate. What concerns me the most are the multiple movements of alleged resistance, reconquest, and regeneration of the Eurocentric Westernization of the U.S., based on pseudo evolutionary perspectives on culture, developmental psychology, personality theory, and ethnic group relations strategies (Herbst & Gelman, 2017). I interpret my European heritage not as a sign of purity, rather as a result of the diverse mosaic of cultures, derived through the coexistence of divergent populations throughout the centuries (e.g., prehistoric Indo-Europeans and Non-Indo-Europeans, Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Germanics, Ottoman Turks, Normans, etc.). Even if I spent my childhood in a primarily homogenous cultural background, I recognize my professional and personal life has exposed me to a myriad of experiences that inevitably shaped and further hybridized my identity. For this reason, I approached this study while acknowledging the privilege granted by my European heritage and at the same time recognizing my immigrant insider position alongside students from historically marginalized groups.

During my ongoing journey of recognition, I strived to unlearn and re-learn. As Freire (2005) reasoned: “Teachers first learn how to teach, but they learn how to teach as they teach something that is relearned as it is being taught” (p. 32). I had to unlearn the concept of space and boundary. Otherwise, I would have been incapable of research on
transnational students from Latin@ heritage culture. Exploring their spaces, boundaries, and connections with their communities and with their practices would not have been wholly possible otherwise. The approach that guided me in this unlearning and relearning journey is based upon the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Through this lens, I approached exploration of the communities, the practices of dual language learners in a DLI setting, along with their belonging and languages which live between boundaries and produce hybrid and fluid identities. In the next subsection, I will explore in greater depth the rationales behind my theoretical framework choice.

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as a Development of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

DLI educators are encouraged to incorporate students’ cultures regularly in their classroom instruction, as it emerges in multiple handbooks and resources such as the “Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education” (Howard et al., 2007), and the “Resources for Language Immersion Education” website (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2017), just to name two of the most cited organizations in the field of dual language education. But how can teachers facilitate the acquisition of cultural competences among students in the DLI program and promote the development of hybrid and fluid identity? I worked to answer this question through exploration within my study from a culturally sustaining pedagogy lens.

“Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). This approach seeks to provide responses to the demographic and
social change of U.S. schools (Paris & Alim, 2014). Applied to the DLI setting, culturally sustaining pedagogy offers teachers the possibility to preserve and develop Latin@ students’ identities through both traditional and evolving ways when considering the global life experience of dual language learners. In this study, I analyzed instructional strategies used in a Spanish DLI classroom and the students’ responses to them. These methods uphold the past-oriented heritage dimension and the present-oriented community dimension. For example, the students and Spanish teacher in the DLI class revealed how their participation in Latin@ cultural practices, passed down from the elders of their ethnic communities, and how they are simultaneously involved in other ethnic cultural practices.

The two basic tenets of the culturally sustaining pedagogy approach are “the plural and evolving nature of youth identity and cultural practices and a commitment to embracing youth culture’s counter-hegemonic potential while maintaining a clear-eyed critique of the ways in which youth culture can also reproduce systemic inequalities” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 85). These two founding principles provide the groundwork to consider the plural and evolving nature of Latin@ identities in DLI setting, their potential to enact counter-hegemonic narratives, and their risk to reproduce colonizer privilege toward other minorities. Applying this strand of analysis to my research, I do not intend to find prescriptive solutions to the systemic inequalities perpetuated in our society and education system (Ladson-Billing, 2014). Yet offering a tentative interpretation of the process by which dual language learners’ identities are formed is a feasible result with direct knowledge of how they can be established in the DLI setting. This particular
approach can open perspectives on how dual language learners develop a sense of belonging to their large community, the role of languages as practices in this community, the willingness of the community members to use such languages, and how to utilize them to communicate and establish membership.

Paris (2012) grounded his work on the previous findings from culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), and social language and literacy works (Cazden & Leggett, 1976; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Moll, 1992; Smitherman, 1977). Underling the relevance of previous case studies, Paris (2012) also critiqued the ways culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy has been converted into practice through the last two decades. He expressed the need to push the boundaries of previous approaches and to respond to the demographic and social changes of U.S. K-12 schools.

Some statistics can help situate the need for such pedagogical approach. According to the latest available American Community Survey, released in 2016, approximately 62 million people, 21% of the entire U.S. population, speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), 9 million more than in 2009. Almost half of them are not immigrants. In fact, 44% were born in the U.S., meaning on a national level more than one in five school-age children (ages 5-17) speak a foreign language at home. Among the hundreds of languages vocalized in U.S. homes, Spanish is spoken by 73% of EL homes. The U.S. Census Bureau (2013) uses the definition Limited English Proficient (LEP) and calculated there are more than 25 million people with LEP in the U.S. (Census Bureau, 2013). This number has been continually increasing since 2000 with an average rate of increase of 8 percent per year.
I argue the use of LEP to define students whose first language is not English is perpetuating the 1960s and 1970s *deficit-oriented approach*, interpreting cultural and racial difference as a deficiency (Harry & Klingner, 2007). Morales (2010) similarly observed the inappropriate categorization of English Learners and how it has been evident in federal policy where the definition itself “essentially groups students together because of something they lack, i.e., proficiency in English, making this by definition a deficit frame” (p. 27). Indeed, their diverse languages, literacies, and cultural conducts have long been considered “deficiencies to be overcome in learning the demanded and legitimized dominant language, literacy, and cultural ways of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 93). Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, the *difference approach* interpreted the cultural and linguistic varieties of minority students as equal but different from the mainstream culture and language, and for this reason not deserving attention (Paris, 2012). The difference approach held some slight improvement on the deficit-oriented approach, but it was still far from recognizing immigrant students as a positive influence in U.S. schools. Evolving from these earlier approaches to diversity, many schools and educators are working toward a more integrated approach to diversity. To mention some examples, educators are: encouraging a view of diversity as an asset in classrooms (Walters, 2017); raising awareness and changing attitudes, instruction, and assessment towards dual language learners (Hamayan, n.d.); and interpreting the fact that Millennials are growing up in a more racially diverse society as a call for developing more integrated schools (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016).

Considering the labels attributed to speakers of other languages, along with
Gutiérrez et al. (2010), Morales (2010) encouraged use of the terminology *dual language learner*, “referring specifically to young learners acquiring two languages simultaneously or who are developing their primary language as they learn a second language” (p. 26). This definition connects with the culturally sustaining approach because it considers languages as resources, and overturns the *deficit* and *difference* approaches. Gándara (2016) promoted the use of the term *emergent bilinguals* to emphasize their first language as what makes them emerge and rise in the learning environment.

Debates and contradictions continue to exist while working with students from different cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds and provides an example of the results from both the 1960s and 1970s *deficit approach* along with the subsequent 1970s and 1980s *difference approach*. “The result of both deficit and difference approaches was the explicit (with deficit) and implicit (with difference) expected outcome that students would lose their heritage and community cultural and linguistic practices if they were to succeed in American schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 94). In this vision, bilingual instruction could only be transitional and would use the heritage language solely until English proficiency was achieved and students could transfer into an English only curriculum (Gándara, 2016). Unfortunately, there is no evidence this approach was successful due to the lack of a robust longitudinal study (Gándara, 2016).

However, research demonstrates that students who are educated in both their heritage language and English can master sophisticated subjects, such as high school mathematics or history, while acquiring language skills appropriate for their grade level (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Genesee, 1999). In the long run, dual language immersion
programs can contribute to the reduction of the achievement gap (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Nieto, 2009b). They also validate linguistic practices in the students’ community (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2016). Dual language learners can perform equal to or better than English native speakers, but they can also garner additional benefits. Emergent bilinguals are resilient, optimistic, and cooperative learners who can effectively hold multiple perspectives (Gándara, 2016).

Under this conceptual lens, Paris (2012) formulated the theory of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Considering languages from a culturally sustaining pedagogy standpoint shows multiple languages as an enriching factor for the development of dual language learners and as one potential strategy that can contribute to narrowing the opportunity gap in our schools. Despite unceasing and inspiring efforts critical educators have produced in the last decades, the need for a more vigorous approach to social justice and inequalities continues to emerge from scholarship (Domínguez, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Morales, 2010; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Ladson-Billings (2014) encouraged Paris and Alim’s (2014) call to “incorporate the multiplicity of identities and cultures that help formulate today’s youth culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). Ladson-Billings pushed the need to expand the base of culturally relevant pedagogy and the main variations produced during the last two decades. The same research also prompts consideration of students’ global identities instead of focusing on singular racial or ethnic group identities. In this sense, I believe culturally sustaining pedagogy guided me to explore Latin@ identities in this study as the result of multiple elaborations of their heritage and acquired cultures. Paris and Alim’s
work pointed to “the shifts of identity that now move us toward a hybridity, fluidity, and complexity never before considered in schools and classrooms” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). Building my study upon this central concept, I considered the hybrid and fluid nature of dual language learners as the result of two main components that I defined as sense of belonging and practice of languages.

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as a Guiding Principle to Explore the DLI Class**

Engaging in the fundamental considerations presented by Paris and Alim (2014), I acknowledge that dual language learners’ identities can manifest under multiple forms. For this reason, I elected to focus specifically on the aspects of belonging and languages. The significance of belonging and languages is something I became familiar with during my personal and professional experience as an immigrant language learner and teacher in the U.S. following Paris and Alim’s perspective, I strive to push the culturally sustaining pedagogy paradigm further than the *relevance*—from the culturally *relevant* pedagogy paradigm—to the *sustaining* phase (Paris, 2009, 2011, 2012). Discussing culturally *relevant* and not *sustaining* pedagogy would be considered insufficient for the present historical moment (Domínguez, 2015). Particularly during an anti-immigration era, opened with the 2016 presidential campaign, there is a need to *sustain* cultural pluralism in schools and not merely to make it visible or relevant. In this way, interviews with the teacher and students were pressed beyond the significance of their identity, to engage in a fuller analysis of what could sustain their identities.

I engaged in this study while considering two major points Paris and Alim (2014)
make in departure from the culturally relevant pedagogy. These are: (a) the consideration of a constantly evolving youth cultural paradigm; and (b) the potential for this youth cultural paradigm to act either as a counter-hegemonic agency or as affirmation of systemic inequalities.

These two essential ideas brought me to multiple reflections. First, I considered that my knowledge and familiarity with Latin@ culture was based on interactions I had in the last seven years with family and friends from the Caribbean and Latin American countries. Even though they all proudly represent their heritage cultures as first-generation immigrants in the U.S., their exposure to their heritage culture would be radically different from the exposure of the third graders I observed and interviewed in my study. This social disparity is present chiefly because the students were born in the U.S. during the information age of digital technology. Also, generational differences may influence how the Spanish teacher from Colombia, the third graders raised in the U.S. Northeast, and I, born and raised in Sicily, perceive Latin@ cultures. Lastly, because digital technology has the potential to virtually connect people in different places across the globe, I have to ponder the different nature of cultural and linguistic input to which these students have been exposed.

The three fundamental considerations I introduced above have aided my understanding in which ways required use of the culturally sustaining pedagogy to guide my research. Once I established that culturally sustaining pedagogy promotes both heritage and community practices, I also had to discern how to recognize these heritage and community practices within the data set. For this reason, I looked at my main
research question and determined that heritage and community practices would be explored as a means to develop identities. In this context identities are not given once and with permanence, but are instead fluid and hybrid. They are characterized by the sense of belonging and language practices.

Review of the Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework I established for my research is based on the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). This approach sustains the development of fluid and hybrid identities in dual language learners as the result of integration between the sense of belonging and practice of language. Reviewing multiple research studies on the effectiveness of bilingual education, Gándara (2016) affirmed there are social, psychological, cognitive, educational and economic benefits in raising bilingual and biliterate children. Unfortunately, English learners have been framed as remedial or lacking for a long time, instead of being considered an asset for our society. Through culturally sustaining pedagogy, I argue dual language learners can be endorsed as successful emergent bilinguals who are capable of developing stronger identities and a greater sense of self-worth, which in turn affects motivation (Gándara, 2016).

I situated my research upon the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy because, along with Paris and Alim (2014) and Ladson-Billings (2014), I share the need to push the boundaries of culturally relevant pedagogy to respond to the increasingly diverse demographics and social changes of public schools in the U.S. The “children of immigrants represent all of the growth in the K-12 population nationally” (Gándara,
2016). These students require the opportunity to cultivate their language and culture, and to elaborate the sense of place and belonging between geographical and imaginary borders. In this way, dual language learners can become bridge builders to promote a more inclusive learning environment and society.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I developed a framework to guide my research study. My outline is based on the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy and is informed by the concepts of imagined communities. These have provided the basis for explaining the meaning of fluid and hybrid identity along with sense of belonging and language practices. This structure facilitated my identification of the process through which third graders develop their identity in a DLI setting along with the product of this process in terms of participation, homework, and artifacts production. I explored two main components of identity, which are the sense of belonging and language practices. Sense of belonging can be understood as a social construct in recognition of the places and communities for transnational students. At the same time, I view languages as heritage and community practices. Through this stance I have been able to reflect on my own identity and positionality while scrutinizing sense of belonging and languages practice. Under these considerations I approached this study on identity development of a Spanish teacher and her third-grade students in a DLI class.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study focused on a two-way dual language immersion school environment because it offered the ideal setting to explore how young students work on their sense of belonging and language practices. Engaging dual language learners from predominantly Latin@ and White cultures, the two-way dual language classroom aimed to accomplish three primary goals: academic achievement, bilingual and bicultural competency, and cross-cultural relations among all students while using Spanish as the instructional language. In this study, I argue the use of Spanish instruction is not simply a tool but a shared practice that contributes to the construction of a sense of belonging to an imagined community. I assert the need to observe this overall process through which a third-grade Spanish teacher and her two groups of students shared language practices. Hence language should be viewed as a shared practice in the community of dual language learners. They were able to build on a sense of belonging to the community and later produced a product of this process in terms of identity development. From this perspective, I developed an ethnographic study with characteristics that are discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter.

Description of Research Setting and Social Context

South Whaterbridge Community School is a Title 1, K-8 public school located in
an urbanized landscape, in the vicinity of a metropolitan city in the Northeast of the U.S. According to official data gathered by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2015), 83% of students at South Whaterbridge Community School are enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Demographics of the student body are as follows: 72.4% of the students are Hispanic, 16.7% White, 6.1% Black, 3.4% Asian, 1.1% two or more races, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian/Hawaiian/Another Pacific Islander. From the data, it also arises that 30.1% of the students are considered Limited English Proficiency and 17.3% of the students are enrolled in the Disability IDEA and Section 504 program.

The city of Whaterbridge was established in the seventeenth century and served as an active participant in the historical events connected with the American Revolution. With almost 76 thousand residents in approximately 4 square miles, the city of Whaterbridge is one of the most densely populated communities in the Northeast and one of the most ethnically diverse in the U.S. The city hosts a mix of working class families, young professionals, college students, and recent immigrants from different countries. El Salvador, Haiti, and Brazil are prominent among others. About fifty languages are spoken throughout the schools in Whaterbridge District.

In such a multicultural neighborhood, the School District and the city decided to rebuild the school that was destroyed by fire in 2007. The new South Whaterbridge Community School was inaugurated in September of 2013 as the result of broad community effort. There are two courtyards, each of which functions as a learning space for science, agricultural, and nutrition programs. Each had been, in part, implemented by
means of local universities and non-profit organizations. The school also has a 330-capacity auditorium, library and media center, a rotunda for the after-school activities entrance, an expansive gymnasium with a multicultural mosaic, and a cafeteria. This new building became the symbol of wider city effort to turn toward a model of efficiency, innovation, and inclusion. The implementation of the Camaradas Spanish program is one example of these extensive efforts.

Camaradas is a two-way 50/50 DLI model that involves a predominantly Latin@ population. Its foundation in the bilingual programs was originally developed in the Northeast during the 1970s-1980s. To accurately understand the tenets of the Camaradas program, it is necessary to look briefly at the national and regional bilingual education context. Between 1998 and 2006 different English-only state initiatives raised multiple social, cultural, and ethical issues on the implementation of restrictive Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) among ELs. At the same time, these initiatives gave a new impetus for the reformation of bilingual programs with the expansion of one-way and two-way language immersion programs (Nieto, 2009a). Years later this new wave inside the bilingual education instruction field brought the development of the Seal of Biliteracy; a gold seal on the high school diploma of those students who have achieved proficiency in two or more languages and thereby satisfied state educational standards. The first Seal of Biliteracy became effective in 2012 in California, meaning schools and their students could begin working toward this achievement as early as 2008 (Californians Together, 2016). Multiple states in the Northeast are currently at different stages of the Seal of Biliteracy implementation process. The Camaradas program endeavors to provide a basis
for students in K-8 classes to continue their education in a dual language immersion school and obtain the Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma.

When it was first implemented, the Camaradas program was established on the 50/50 model so students spend half their school day in the target language and half in English. One teacher instructs exclusively in the target language while a second teacher educates only in English. In 2013, after the inauguration of the new school building and the integration of elements from others similar immersion programs in the area, the Camaradas program switched from a daily structure to a weekly structure. The current program calls for students to attend classes in Spanish every other week, meaning each content class is at the same time a language class. This instructional model requires that each week students learn math and literacy in the language of the week. Though Art, Health, Music, and P.E. are always taught in English regardless of the week’s language. During the fall semester (August–December), Science is taught in Spanish while Social Studies is conducted in English; they switch in spring.

In this study, I did not focus on the analysis of the convenience and effectiveness of the weekly structure in comparison with the daily structure. However, I need to make a necessary consideration and clarify how the characteristics of this site align with my research design and objectives. The weekly timeframe allows students to concentrate on the language of communication and continue with it throughout the day. Yet it creates an unnatural setting, particularly for Latin@ students who are generally used to switching between English and Spanish codes in a range of seconds. Also, when knowledge of Science and Social Studies is not promptly reinforced in the other language, a gap may be
formed between the fall and spring semester.

Despite the many technical and conceptual differences that characterize the weekly and the daily structure, both models align with the requirements of the DLI programs. South Whaterbridge Community School and Camaradas are a bilingual additive program because they strive to achieve bilingualism and biliteracy for their students (May, 2008) through use of a weekly structure. The purpose of my study was to understand what type of process is in place in a bilingual additive program to lead emergent bilingual students to reflect on their sense of belonging and their language practices, and ultimately describe their identities. In addition, I wanted to explore how the students interacted with this process and the type of products they developed during their classroom activities and as an elaboration of their home assignments. For these reasons, an ethnographic study seemed the most appropriate design.

**Type of Study**

The ethnographic methodology seemed most appropriate because it allowed me to observe a predominantly Latin@ ELs student population learning subject contents via Spanish instruction in one of the most predominant English-speaking countries. In such an environment, I built a trustworthy relationship with the Spanish teacher, Ms. Ramírez (pseudonym), who was a participant but at the same time the essential liaison between the ethnographer and student participants.

Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (2013) suggested “good ethnographers like to ‘make the ordinary new’ and ‘make the new ordinary’” (p. 1). As I learned about the U.S.
primary grade school education from an academic and outsider point of view and become more familiar with Latin@ cultural through my personal life experience, ethnographic observations provided the methodological approach I needed. “Doing ethnographic fieldwork, involves alternating between the insider and outsider experience, and having both simultaneously” (Spradley, 1980, p. 57). Ethnography is not simply objective observation of the classroom instruction. The ethnographic study I conducted was at the same time a process and a product because it included my own interpretation of the events I observed. Here I considered how my positionality as a multilingual and multicultural observer connected to the experiences of the participants I interacted with. It thus becomes more accurate to talk about “observation of participation” instead of participant observation (Tedlok, 2000).

I acknowledge that the interviews I conducted with the teacher were not a “neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 116). Both the teacher’s and my own cultural assumptions of the educational field, the students, and of each other influenced our conversations (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I used semistructured interview questions as “attempts to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 129). I remained cognizant of how my own biases and expectations could influence the interview process and I continued to consider this aspect while analyzing and interpreting the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The ethnographic design is aligned with the objectives of my study because I intended to understand how the values of belonging and language can shape the EL’s
knowledge of their identities. In addition, I wanted to situate my research in a specific social context, which was a DLI classroom with a predominant Latin@ student population. To explore the teacher and the students’ understanding of their identities, I had to spend considerable time interacting with them in the classroom, observing their regular teaching and learning activities, and recording them through field notes and interviews. This ethnographic design helped me consider the power differences between Latin@ and White students. It also contributed to discover the ways in which a better understanding of hybrid and fluid identity development can be favorable for democratizing relationships and institutions.

**Sampling Strategies**

The participants in this study were one third grade Spanish teacher in a DLI school and 42 third-grade students. Theoretical or purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2011) guided my efforts to select the school in which I conducted my study. Two main criteria directed me in the selection of the school: (a) use of Spanish as target language; (b) implementation of the two-way DLI model where at least 30% of the population are heritage speakers. South Whaterbridge Community School satisfied these criteria and stressed an aim to develop learning in a diverse and inclusive community. After obtaining permission from the superintendent and principal, a request of participation was sent to all Spanish teachers in K-3 Camaradas program. Ms. Ramírez was the first to reply and for this reason was selected for the study.

Ms. Ramírez is an experienced elementary teacher originally from Colombia, who
has lived in the U.S. for 25 years. She is a passionate educator, committed to teaching language and culture together, as it emerged from the interviews and field notes I collected while gathering information at the school. Her bright and positive attitude is an integral part of her teaching style and clearly characterizes her instructional strategy.

The third-grade class in the Camaradas program is composed of two groups of students who alternate weekly and to which I assigned the name red class and blue class. All students in the two cohorts were invited to participate in the study. Of the 42 students (22 females and 20 males), 38 returned permission forms (90.47% response rate). Four students did not return permission forms, and, therefore, were not included in the study: one student opted not to participate, and three students lost the permission forms. Reasonable attempts were made to allow the students who lost the permission forms to complete them at different time, before excluding them from the study. Of the 38 students (20 females and 18 males), 28 students came from families in which Spanish was the primary language, and 10 students came from families in which either English (8 students) or Portuguese (2 students) were the primary language at home. Of the 38 students, 12 students were identified as English Learners, and therefore participated in the Sheltered English Instruction program at the school. Consequently, they were taken from regular class every day (during both the English and the Spanish week) for about 40 minutes to receive additional special instruction in English.

Data Collection Techniques

For the purpose of this research I compiled data in the form of notes from
participant observation, informal interviewing in the field, teacher and student semistructured interviews, and the children’s homework along with other artifacts.

Students were not required to perform any particular activity outside their regular instruction. I observed during their usual school activities in the Spanish section and asked them to comment on the task they were completing in class. I initially thought to limit my presence in the class to observations, however the students became familiar with me and saw me as a resource to whom they could reach out for help to complete in-class tasks. Therefore, it became common to provide encouragement in their tasks, rather than avoiding interference with their pursuits. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the data collected through this study and is disaggregated by type and format.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types and sources of data collected</th>
<th>Week 1 Sept 12-16</th>
<th>Week 2 Sept 19-23</th>
<th>Week 3 Sept 26-30</th>
<th>Week 4 Oct 3-7</th>
<th>Week 5 Oct 10-14</th>
<th>Week 6 Oct 17-21</th>
<th>Week 7 Oct 24-28</th>
<th>Week 8 Oct 31-Nov 4</th>
<th>Week 9 Nov 7-11</th>
<th>Week 10 Nov 14-18</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom materials PDF files</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom materials JPG files</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes AUDIO files</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes DOCX files</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ artifacts JPG files</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ artifacts PDF files</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ interviews AUDIO files</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s interviews AUDIO files</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Field Notes

The field notes I collected are based primarily on observation of classroom instruction, informal interviews with the teacher, and relevant teaching materials (e.g., picture books, charts, worksheets, etc.) used during classroom activities. Both descriptive information of the classroom activities—the “raw data”—and my early interpretation of them—the “partly cooked data”—are included as described in Schensul et al. (2013):

Field notes, then, are kept as close to ‘raw’ as possible, while still capturing clearly the situation within the photographic frame in all its detail at that particular point. Field notes that ‘go beyond mere description’ have been written, rewritten, and written over, so that they have ceased to be entirely ‘raw’ data and are already at least partly ‘cooked’ – at least to the extent that as many blanks as possible have been filled in and a tentative theoretical framework has begun to emerge. (p. 78)

While taking field notes, I paid close attention to separating “the observations themselves” from my inferences and interpretations of them (Pelto & Pelto, 1978, p. 71). Notepad pages were divided into two vertical sections (Appendix A). On the left “raw” field notes were inscribed, while the right included any “inferences, and personal observations, reflections hunches, and emotional reactions” related to that corresponding observation (Schensul et al., 2013, p. 109).

I observed the third-grade class for 5 hours, 3 times a week, for 10 weeks (approximately 150 hours). During my time there, I noticed how students interacted with the teacher when she used within-group and common cross-ground cultural practices based on culturally sustaining pedagogy principles. Examples included use of world maps in the classroom to elicit students’ responses on belonging, inclusion of picture books that inquire about students’ practice of languages, and the assignment of homework in which
the students identified cultural artifacts or shared memories of family trips. Field notes were organized around students’ use of languages and to their sense of belonging, which are key concepts in the development of this study. In certain cases, my field notes included brief but significant transcriptions concerning the interaction between the teacher and students, writing down verbatim dialogue between them (Schensul et al., 2013). These recordings of classroom dialogue contained the teacher and the students’ pseudonyms. Early data analysis was conducted while in the field, using the memoing function of Maxqda 12, data management program for qualitative data analysis.

**Spanish Teacher’s Semistructured Interviews**

I conducted semistructured interviews with the third-grade Spanish teacher about twice a week for 15 minutes over a duration of ten weeks (total of approximately 5 hours). These interviews were conducted both in English and Spanish. The teacher primarily used Spanish when referring to the cultural elements she integrated into the classroom instruction. At the same time, she often used English while discussing the DLI curriculum and requirements as mandated by the State Department of Education. I followed the teacher’s discourse and conducted interviews in the way she demonstrated to be most comfortable.

Semistructured interviews to further clarified the central domains and factors in this study, which relate to the use of languages and places during student class participation. Interviews were also drawn upon to operationalize factors into variables and to further expand my preliminary hypotheses. “Semistructured interviews combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and
agenda of the survey instrument” (Schensul et al., 2013, p. 174). The first weekly interview typically occurred on Tuesday morning. In this interview, I asked the teacher to describe the lesson plans she crafted for the week and the activities related to the integration of Second Step, the social studies curriculum, the use of language, and reference to the acquisition of special elements into the students’ daily routine. Second Step is a program implemented in the school district to foster social-emotional learning, prevent bullying, and emphasize child protection (Committee for Children, 2017). The second weekly interview typically occurred on Thursday afternoon where I would ask the teacher to comment on student participation to the planned lessons and activities as indicated in the interview protocol (Appendix B). This included if she believed students achieved the learning objectives and how classroom instruction could be improved. Examples of questions meant to begin the conversation are included in Appendix C.

**Students’ Artifacts**

I pursued triangulation and sought confirmation of apparent findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000) through the collection of documents and artifacts in the form of student work. I gathered all assignments after the third-grade teacher graded them and ensured they were no longer attributable to particular students. During the ten weeks of study I collected artifacts on five separate occasions. Informed by Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural perspectives, I consider these artifacts as mediations of student activities in response to classroom instruction. In particular, artifacts were assembled that respond to the students’ elaboration of places of belonging and language practices. These artifacts typically correspond to two main categories: iconic artifacts (children’s’ drawings,
writing webs, and Venn diagrams), and literacy artifacts (journal logs and tests work sheets; Braswell, 2015). I observed when the teacher assigned homework in which students had to produce an artifact, she engaged in both “explicit mediation (mainly by instructing children how to make crafts or asking about children’s drawings) and implicit mediation (mainly in the form of demonstrating how to make crafts)” (Braswell, 2015, p. 139). I considered the teacher’s mediation while accumulating children’s artifacts in order to understand the process that led students to consider language practices and places of belonging when working on their school assignments and homework.

**Students’ Semistructured Interviews**

I conducted semistructured interviews with students for a few minutes each day concerning the classroom activities they had completed, which targeted identity development. I always opened interviews in Spanish to respect the class language of instruction. In some cases, students asked to continue in English because of the vocabulary choices they wanted to use. I allowed them to switch back and forth, and to use interlanguage any time they wanted. I made sure to maintain a positive, encouraging, and natural environment through the use of both English and Spanish.

Semistructured interviews with the students was an essential tool for understanding the language use and cultural implications of the students, as well as to gain trust while establishing a rapport with the students (Fontana & Frey, 2008). I asked them to walk me through the steps they followed in order to complete a task assigned by their teacher (e.g., describe a trip you did with your family, draw a typical family activity, create a writing map and add the elements that help you explain who you are).
Semistructured interviewing allowed me to access students’ funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) based on oral history (Fontana & Frey, 2008). The answers to these semistructured interviews functioned as students’ forms of testimonios (Kasun & Saavedra, 2013; Saavedra, 2011), which are counter-narrative products against adult-western hegemony (Gutiérrez, 2015; Smith, 2005). Students can negotiate meaning in their lives and share the skills they learn from their families and communities. The practice of testimonios empowers students because it is a political act of remembering (Gutiérrez, 2008; Kasun & Saavedra, 2013; Saavedra, 2011; Smith, 2005). Examples of questions used to initiate semistructured interviews with students are located in Appendix D.

Data Analysis Procedures

I chose to combine deductive and inductive thematic analysis to ensure a rigorous data analysis process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis is the identification of verbal or visual patterns in raw data to develop appropriate codes (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis entails the ability to recognize patterns, to plan and think systematically, to know the field in which the research took place, and to be open and flexible to perceive patterns (Boyatzis, 1998). Because of these intrinsic characteristics of thematic analysis, I preferred this method as the most suitable way to conduct my ethnographic research.

Deductive thematic analysis proceeded mainly from the research questions and theoretical framework I chose for this research. An a priori template of codes was
developed (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) to launch data analysis. I illustrate some examples of codes developed a priori in the following template (Table 3.2), adapted by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006).

Inductive thematic analysis advances from the raw data, and for this reason, it is also called a data-driven method. This method is based on the development of meaningful codes: “A good thematic code is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31). In this way, I was able to capture not only those themes I anticipated in the study through my conceptual framework and the deductive analysis, but also those unexpected results which emerged through the qualitative richness of the DLI setting.

Proceeding from the main data collection sources and format, I organized all data according to five main groups: classroom materials (MS docx, PDF and JPG files), field notes (audio and MS docx files), student artifacts (JPG and PDF files), student interviews (audio files) and teacher interviews (audio files; Saldaña, 2009). Before proceeding with the analysis, I took analytic memos (Delyser, 2008) with comments and reflection on each a priori code. These memos served to describe the meaning of each code and to reflect on the positionality I established in relation to the data.

The first cycle of coding proceeded primarily from the initial research questions and theoretical framework to develop a template of a priori codes (see Table 3.2). I used deductive thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) to identify the prevalent thematic and descriptive statements (Saldaña, 2009) guided from participant stories. I placed a particular focus on the section of data where statements were observed in
Table 3.2

*Template for A Priori Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code number</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Teacher and students’ self-definition.</td>
<td>Teacher and students comment and use statements to define themselves. How students and teachers show their understanding of who they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Culturally sustaining pedagogy</td>
<td>Support young students in sustaining their cultural and linguistic competence.</td>
<td>Teacher uses instructional strategy in line with culturally sustaining pedagogy. Students respond to this strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Within-group culture practices</td>
<td>Use of practices that reinforce heritage cultures.</td>
<td>Students bring their home experiences to class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Common cross-ground culture practices</td>
<td>Use of practices that promote exchange between cultures</td>
<td>Students exchange information about their different cultures. Students share what cultures mean for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Belonging as form of membership</td>
<td>Refer to places as connected to family and friends, developing a sense of membership.</td>
<td>Students make references to places; they describe if/how they are familiar with places and the people who share the same place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Languages as practice to share membership</td>
<td>Reference to languages as the possibility to engage in communication with other people in the same community.</td>
<td>Students make references to the languages they speak; they describe if/how they are important for them; they describe the relations with the other people who speak the same languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

relation to the students’ hybrid and fluid identities as well as how this identity relates to the development of their sense of belonging, the practice of languages, and the teacher’s use of culturally sustaining pedagogy strategies.

The data inventory matrix in Table 3.3, adapted from Schensul et al. (2013), summarizes the types of data sources I used. The table also summarized the amount of
Table 3.3

Data Inventory Matrix. Adapted from Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Conceptual rationale</th>
<th>Data type/source</th>
<th>Data format</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do students’ understandings of their sense of belonging and their language practices influence their understanding of identities?</td>
<td>Focus on student identity constructions, considering the sense of belonging they develop as membership of a community and the language practices they act as an expression of their membership.</td>
<td>Teacher and students’ semistructured interviews; Field notes during participant observations; Students’ artifacts.</td>
<td>Audio files of teacher and students’ interviews; typed field notes of classroom observation; JPG and PDF files of students’ artifacts.</td>
<td>Deductive thematic analysis (using research questions) (Crabtree &amp; Miller, 1999) and inductive thematic analysis (using framework) (Boyatzis, 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process:</strong> how do third-grade students interact with classroom instruction that leads them to the consideration of the places they belong and the languages they speak as part of their hybrid and fluid identity?</td>
<td>Explore classroom instruction that may facilitate student considerations of places and languages as part of who they are (e.g. teacher’s lesson plan and reflection on guided practices; classroom materials used during instruction, such as maps, picture books, web sites, charts, working sheets, etc.)</td>
<td>Participant observation, field notes.</td>
<td>Audio files teachers’ interviews, typed field notes of classroom observations, JPG and PDF files of classroom materials.</td>
<td>Read the text literally, reflexively and interpretively (Miller &amp; Crabtree, 1999). 1. Carefully read all entries. 2. Look for student use of languages (e.g., students switch or mix languages when communicating with the teacher and their peers, students avoid participation in Spanish/English; students mention places they visited and/or will visit; students point to maps; students connect family experiences with places, etc.) 3. Analyze how student participation occurs: do these contributions occur spontaneously? Are they encouraged or restrained by the teachers? How do they influence students’ performance in class?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research questions**

*Product:* what is the nature of third graders’ response in terms of class participation, homework and artifacts production?

**Conceptual rationale**

Explore the nature of third graders’ response or products in terms of class participation, homework and artifact production, which reflect their understanding of who they are (e.g., teacher’s prompt for in-class writing workshop; drawing of maps of places the students visited; connection between the languages spoken in the places students visited or want to visit; consideration of the languages they speak as a practice to communicate with people during their daily activities, phone/Skype conversations, social media interactions and during their real or imaginary trips; etc.).

**Data type/source**

Students’ interviews, iconic artifacts, literacy artifacts, replica toys, cultural artifacts.

**Data format**

Audio files of students’ interviews, JPEG pictures and PDF files

**Analysis**

Read the text literally, reflexively and interpretively (Miller & Crabtree, 1999).

1. Classify children’s products, look for recurrent themes and for correlations with themes.
2. Verify if children include references to languages and places in their products / children never consider languages and places in their products.

---

**Total documents collected:** 145 files.

**Type of files collected:**

- 47 audio files;
- 41 PDF files;
- 47 JPG files;
- 10 DOCX files.
data I collected and how they fulfilled the purposes of this research. Because of the nature of ethnographic research, the research questions established during the preliminary research proposal were reassessed during the study to ensure coherence with the nature of the data from the field (Schensul et al., 2013). This matrix enabled me to organize and catalog data, create an order for the data, and ensure data answered my research questions.

I used inductive and deductive thematic analysis during the different stages of the research, from preliminary organization of data in categories, according to the topic and file format, to the interpretation of codes and their relations. For this reason, I kept in mind my analytical strategies throughout the analysis stages, identified in Marshall and Rossman (2011). Consequently, I proceeded to: (a) organize the data; (b) immerse myself in the data; (c) code the data through memoing and general codes; (d) write categories according to the deductive and inductive data analysis process; (e) analyze the data through Maxqda 12 data management program; (f) offer interpretations; (g) search for alternative understanding; (h) and compose the report.

For the second cycle, I used inductive thematic analysis. Proceeding from the raw data, I identified verbal and visual patterns to develop appropriate additional codes (Boyatzis, 1998) and grouped the coded segments in categories. This served to reduce the number of different codes for data analysis and subsequently introduced a higher level of categorization for identifying major emerging themes.
Validity

Consideration of Possible Ethical Issues

The teacher who participated in this research may have occasionally felt uncomfortable sharing her teaching methods. She could exercise her right to refrain from answering at any time, but that never became the case as I strived to make accommodations that would provide a pleasant and positive interview setting. Any loss of confidentiality, anonymity, economic, social, psychological or physical harm was avoided at all cost. No sensitive data was ever collected or kept, and pseudonyms were used throughout the inquiry. Research was reported to my doctoral committee chair at the end of each observation session (3 days of observation per session, one session per week), as we had established weekly meetings over Skype and phone calls.

Potential Validity Threats

I examined how identities are formed and transformed in a two-way dual language immersion third-grade class in an urbanized area in the Northeast. Hence, these results are specific to this context, where the teacher and most of the students are from the heritage language and culture. Findings are only transferable as instructional strategies that may be used when preparing Spanish speaking or English language teachers to work in a similar context. Nevertheless, as underlined through the conceptual framework, identity is a fluid and hybrid concept that emerged in this case from the participants to one dual immersion program at a specific moment in time. Generalization concerning identity development that transverses heritage speakers from variant
geographical areas, language varieties, and generational characteristics may be incongruent with the results of this study.

Other considerations involve the length of study and the presence of the research observer in the classroom. A short-term study can document the process and product of student identity development but cannot predict the long-term results of this progression, which I hope could lead to a more inclusive learning environment and open opportunities for historically marginalized minority students. In addition, my presence in the class, as recognized in the section of this study where I acknowledge my positionality as researcher, may have affected part of the results of this study.

**How I Dealt with the Potential Validity Threats**

To deal with the potential validity threats identified in the selection of the school, length of data collection, and subjectivity, I used secondary data and acknowledge my positionality and bias as a researcher. Throughout this study, I reflected on the possibility of incurring conflicts regarding the accuracy of my methods and interpretation. To use Lincoln and Guba’s (2000) words, “are we interpretively rigorous? Can our cocreated constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on some important human phenomenon?” (p. 179). Guba and Lincoln (2005) proposed three main authenticity criteria to evaluate a valid phenomenological inquiry. These standards are: fairness, ontological and educative authenticity, and catalytic and tactical authenticity. Relying on Guba and Lincoln’s criteria, I intended to ensure rigor within this study.

**Fairness.** First, the study aimed to lend a voice to the Latin@ population in a dual language immersion class. Nevertheless, I ensured all voices in the inquiry could be
heard and represented in this study. I reached out to all students’ parents in order to offer information concerning the study and give them the opportunity to sign consent forms. All students had adequate occasions to be interviewed and to contribute via their artifacts to the development of this study.

**Ontological and educative authenticity.** On the final observation day, I shared what I learned through observation with the students and teacher. I summarized the purpose of my study and provided examples of the most meaningful class activities I witnessed and later asked the students and teacher to share their thoughts. It became clear students began to recognize the vocabulary related to belonging, language, and identity which they have learned in class as they demonstrated an increased awareness of the process of individual identity.

**Catalytic and tactical authenticities.** In many informal conversations and official interviews, the Spanish teacher confirmed that she consistently encouraged class discussions around places of belonging and language practices as fundamental elements of student identity. However, she did not know the rationale on which such practices were developed and to which results they were aimed. She was eager to read about the theoretical framework used for this study and asked me to keep our professional and personal relation after the study conclusion in order to contribute with social and political action to expand knowledge within colleagues on this topic.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I detailed the research methodology used to explore the
development of fluid and hybrid identity construction in a third-grade DLI class. The purpose of this ethnographic study was to focus both on the process and product generated in a DLI classroom. Theoretical or purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2011) guided my efforts to select the school in which I conducted my study. For the purpose of this research, I collected data in the form of field notes from participant observation, informal interviewing in the field, teacher and student semistructured interviews, and the children’s homework and artifacts. I chose to combine deductive and inductive thematic analysis to ensure a rigorous data analysis process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).
CHAPTER 4
FIRST SET OF FINDINGS: HOW STUDENTS CONNECT WITH BELONGING AND LANGUAGE

Introduction

The findings of my study are offered in Chapters 4 and 5, and are organized around my posed research questions. This chapter will focus on presenting how the understanding of students’ identities develops from their comprehension of the sense of belonging and language practices, as presented by the analysis of emerging themes. In addition, I will detail the use of within-group and common cross-ground cultural practices as defined under the culturally sustaining pedagogy lens, which I observed in the classroom. In terms of identity development, I explore student motivation through engagement in these practices along with the consequent results. I discuss the manner in which these practices provide a valid alternative and contribute to decreasing the opportunity gap in a DLI setting.

Deductive and inductive thematic analysis was used to examine the four sets of collected data (field notes, teacher interviews, students’ interviews, and students’ artifacts). I systematically linked the emergence of the main themes (categories, codes, and subcodes) in the data with their central/core category (Saldaña, 2009). Using the basis of this information, I confronted the intersections and relations between categories and codes with the culturally sustaining pedagogy conceptual model provided in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.1). The initial model (Figure 2.1) was then integrated with results from
the deductive and inductive analysis (see Figure 4.1 later in this chapter) for which I provide visual representation (see Tables 4.1-4.3, each are described and show separately below) and interpretation.

**Overview of Emergent Themes**

Before delving into an ethnographic representation of the data and explanation of how student identity intertwines with sense of belonging and language practice within these results, I first provide an overview of the emergent themes and explain the rationale used in determining connection between the three essential elements of my study: identity, belonging, and languages. After providing an overview of the main themes, I relocate them according to my conceptual framework and provide an interpretation of the findings. Both the most emergent and the least emergent themes are considered in terms of their answer to the research questions established for this study.

I examined the data through deductive and inductive thematic analysis, assigned codes, developed correspondent categories to group codes, and explored the correlation between categories and codes. Table 4.1 presents a compilation of all documents collected, categories and codes developed, coded segments identified, and the resultant correlations between different categories and codes.

This table serves as a guideline to document the findings presented in this chapter and chapter five. I introduce the source of central themes developed from the analysis of both the most and least emergent categories, along with the most and least relevant intersections between categories and codes. Particular attention is given to all codes
Table 4.1

Summary of Documents, Categories, Codes, Coded Segments, and Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>No. per item in the code system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total documents collected</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total categories and codes developed</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total document segments coded</td>
<td>1,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total correlation between categories and codes</td>
<td>3,674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

developed from the research which informed my initial proposal, and at the same time raised interrogatives about the initial prospectus.

Proceeding from the main data collection sources and format, I organized all data according to categories and codes as illustrated in Table 4.2. For each category and code, I provide the descriptive memo used as a guide in this study. Six main categories are indicated with bold font; the hierarchy between categories and codes is also represented through indentation. Categories and codes are displayed in the table according to the number of document segments coded, from the highest to lowest frequency. I provided a partial sum of the segments coded for each individual code-label and an overall sum for the total number of segments coded within all category groups.

Table 4.2 presents the relevance and frequency of each category and code according to the number of document segments corresponding to each code-label. This table shows that the categories established through deductive thematic analysis (text in bold) were expanded and complemented by further codes as they emerged through thematic inductive analysis. Codes proceeding from the identity, belonging, and language categories represent the answers participants used more often when they had to explain
Table 4.2

*Overview of Code System via Categories, Codes, Subcodes, Memos and Number of Document Segments Coded*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories, codes and subcodes</th>
<th>Memos</th>
<th>No. of document segments coded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Location of family origins, places that make sense to students.</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Students mention elements of their cultures and some skills/talents valued in both their heritage and U.S. cultures.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Students comment on food from their heritage culture.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Dance/Skills</td>
<td>Reference to heritage music and dance.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Elements of diversity in the teacher’s and/or the students’ discourse which influence the sense of belonging.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Race/ethnicity as elements that define the sense of belonging.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories</td>
<td>Students define a foundation for their sense of belonging according to memories acquired through their parents.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Students mentioning God and/or religion as part of their sense of belonging and identity.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-definition</td>
<td>How students (and their teacher) define themselves (e.g., I am Latina, I am Colombian, I am bilingual, I am from El Salvador, etc.). How students and teachers show their understanding of who they are.</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family as identity element.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally sustaining pedagogy</td>
<td></td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s pedagogy</td>
<td>Explicit reference to teaching methods by the teacher.</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as Role model</td>
<td>Teacher as a role model of bilingualism and biculturalism for students.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining/support teachers’ needs</td>
<td>Culturally sustaining pedagogy as a teaching method that can support teachers to be more prepared to respond to diverse student needs and support those from marginalized groups.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Concientización</em> = Awareness-raising</td>
<td>Teacher mentions the act of <em>Concientización</em>; her role as facilitator in raising awareness for both students and parents.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories, codes and subcodes</th>
<th>Memos</th>
<th>No. of document segments coded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity issues</td>
<td>Students mention issues of power (the type of students “who count more”) and money (the “rich kids”) as a source of inequity. Teacher commentary on the need for equal access to education.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confianza = Trust</td>
<td>Teacher reference to the class as a safe environment for each student: “You can trust your teacher. Your voice will be heard.”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/Empathy</td>
<td>Teacher showing care for the students.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common cross-ground cultural practices</td>
<td>Teaching features that offer access to the dominant culture.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging teaching practices</td>
<td>Connection with migration issues. Students make reference to their parents, mostly from other countries.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>Connections/lack of connections between learning about the U.S. Constitution as part of the third-grade curriculum and the 2016 presidential election.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Constitution</td>
<td>Teacher reference to the parental desire to see their children assimilate to the culture of the majority group in order to be accepted. Student reference to the majority group culture in acquiring a higher status.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Gaps between home and school culture; between heritage culture and local culture; between students’ journals and interviews. Use of they vs. we when discussing heritage cultures.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnection</td>
<td>Language as practiced in the community, way to express the membership to the community. Use of language and country of origin interchangeably (e.g., Yo soy Portugués, literally translated as “I am Portuguese,” however the student’s intention was to say “I am from Brazil because I speak Portuguese”).</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Use of Spanish and English in the same sentence. Reference to translation.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language uses and references (Spanish, English, and Portuguese)</td>
<td>Teaching features that sustain the cultural and linguistic competence of students from marginalized groups.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlanguage</td>
<td>Materials and strategies to close the opportunity gap (vs. achievement gap) and to develop culturally relevant teaching (vs. test preparation).</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-group cultural practices</td>
<td>Overall for all categories, codes and subcodes</td>
<td>1,211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their understanding of identity, belonging, and language. Codes proceeding from the culturally sustaining pedagogy strategies, common cross-ground cultural practices, and within-group cultural practices represent the most recurrent examples of instructional strategies and practices via class observation, field notes, and teacher interviews. These categories and the codes are the results of the 10-week ethnographic observation of the class and developed gradually as I became more familiar with the instructor’s teaching philosophy and while I engaged with the students through interviews.

**How Student Identity Connects with Belonging and Languages**

The students’ sense of belonging and the practice of languages are connected to student identity through multiple cultural features. These include places, food, family, music, dance, and skills acquired in a specific heritage group. In particular, the codes culture and family, along with subcodes food and music/dance/skills, must be observed more actively. Through different groups of documents, it became apparent that students made explicit references to places, language used, and cultural aspects when they attempted to explain their sense of belonging to a community and the practice of languages within that community. Specifically, they refer to the places their families come from, the languages they use, and typical food or cooking experiences. This process also became evident when participants exhibited family values as a relevant element to describe who they are.

At the same time, these results indicated there are other interesting, though less recurrent, cases that established an interconnection between belonging and languages in
the process of self-definition. Some examples of these connections are religion, the memories acquired through families and friends, the processes that entails raising awareness and developing trust, the discussion of equity issues, different types of disconnection, and the uses of interlanguage. These less recurrent themes deserve equal attention, as I will explain in greater detail throughout the following sections of this chapter and chapter five.

To analyze the intersections between the main categories and codes I illustrated in Table 4.2, and which emerged because of their high or low frequency in the coded document segments, I used the code relation browser function of Maxqda 12 software. The large table provided in Appendix E represents intersections of all categories, codes, and subcodes throughout the totality of my data files. This table aided in the answer of the main research question on how student identity connects with sense of belonging and language practices, which I address in this chapter. I located the connections between codes so I could more fully explore these relationships while I developed a proposed interpretation of them. Table 4.3 describes the findings as a section within the larger table in Appendix E. This summarizes the most relevant intersections between categories, codes, and subcodes.

The results of multiple analyses conducted on the relations between categories and codes are shown in Table 4.3. I analyzed relations and co-occurrences of the categories and codes through three tools in Maxqda 12: (a) the code matrix browser, to visualize the number of segments coded with each code for each document; (b) the code co-occurrence model, to display the data segments with overlapping code; and (c) the
### Table 4.3

**Summary of Intersections Between Categories and Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Self-definition</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Teacher’s pedagogy</th>
<th>Bridging cultural practices</th>
<th>Lang. Uses &amp; References</th>
<th>Latin@ cultural practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Place</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Food</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Dance/Skills</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-definition</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy</td>
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<td>Teacher’s Pedagogy</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Teacher as Role model</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustaining/support teachers’ needs</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concientización= Awareness-raising</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Equity</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confianza=Trust</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring/Empathy</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Cross-Ground Cultural Practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridging Cultural Practices</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Constitution</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnection</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Lang. Uses &amp; References</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
code relation browser, to create a visualization of the intersections of codes in all the data files within the Document System. These instruments allowed for verification of relations existing between codes, confirmation of their significance, and an interpretation of their meanings.

Table 4.3 documents the interconnection between categories and codes. The rows denote all categories and codes from the study while the columns display a selected list of codes with the greatest occurrence (e.g., place, teacher’s pedagogy, language uses, culture, food, family, etc.) and lowest occurrence (e.g., diversity, race/ethnicity, memories, religion, etc.) in terms of interconnection with identity development for number of document segments coded. The individual quantities represent the number of times categories and codes co-occurred or intersected in the data. Highlights in gray mark the most relevant areas of intersections between categories and codes. I emphasized the highest frequency with black solid line boxes and the smallest frequency with black
dashed line boxes.

Intersecting areas suggest the growth of hybrid and fluid identities is connected with development of sense of belonging and language practice as they materialize through culturally sustaining pedagogy strategies in the classroom. In addition, the data suggests the most relevant interception points between identity, belonging, and language are culture, food, and family as emphasized with gray line boxes. The data also proposes the relationship with diversity, race/ethnicity, memories, religion, support of teacher’s needs, awareness-raising, equity, trust, disconnection, use of interlanguages, and culturally sustaining students and families, are less present in the student’s self-definition process. Therefore, in comparison with elements related to places and language uses, these aspects contribute toward a minor portion of the identity development process for the teacher and third-graders in this study.

I confronted the intersections and relations between categories and codes, as presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, with the culturally sustaining pedagogy conceptual model provided in Chapter II (see Figure 2.1). On the basis of the emergent categories, I integrated the initial model (Figure 2.1) with the results from the deductive and inductive analysis (Figure 4.1). Figure 4.1 is a visual interpretation of the results documented through Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

In Figure 4.1, black arrows represent the connections as they were established in the theoretical framework of this study (see Figure 2.1). Dashed connectors convey the direct intersections between contrasting factors that were not originally hypothesized in my framework. All of these connections help to explain how student understanding of
identity is connected to their consideration of belonging and languages.

Deviating from the initial framework, I altered the black arrows to reflect a different frequency of connections between the main elements, as they emerged through the co-occurrence function in Maxqda 12. Considering thickness of the arrows, data confirmed the existence of a strong relation between the sense of belonging to imagined communities, language practices in this community, along with development of hybrid and fluid identity. These results corroborated a vision of culturally sustaining pedagogy as a teaching-learning practice, generated on the basis of fluid and hybrid identities. Culturally sustaining pedagogy also supports the development of identity as determined by belonging and language. It is important to remember that, in this context, I presented
belonging as the recognition of place and community while languages are the common practice within this community. Within-group and common cross-ground cultural practices contribute to the establishment of culturally sustaining pedagogy practices that encourage development of fluid and hybrid identity.

My initial research question inquired into the connection between identity development, the sense of belonging, and language practices. The data described in Figure 4.1 show this connection is achieved by the sense of place, the use of language (Spanish, English, and in certain cases Portuguese and other Romance languages mentioned by the students), and cultural features such as food and family. It is additionally confirmed that the development of a student’s identity is supported by culturally sustaining pedagogy instructional practices through the teacher’s instruction.

Results suggest that relevant factors intersect with the identity and culturally sustaining pedagogy, as the dashed connectors show in the diagram. Culture features represent the main intersections between identity, belonging, and languages. More specifically, the main cultural expressions linking the sense of belonging to the development of identity are experiences related to heritage food and family traditions. Identity development and culturally sustaining pedagogy practices are mediated by the teacher in her function as role model for her students. Common cross-ground cultural practices are often connected with the immigration traditions of students’ heritage families, which have to be acknowledged and valued in the development of culturally sustaining pedagogy practices.

In the following sections, I will provide examples and explain how these
interconnections—based on place, languages, food, family, teacher as a role model, and immigration—occur in the DLI setting. I will also explore the rationale behind less emergent codes, such as disconnection and culturally sustaining students and families to close the opportunity gap. I will provide an interpretation of them on the basis of my theoretical framework. These preliminary descriptions of the interconnections constitute the basis to specifically address (Chapter 5) the process that makes such interconnections occur alongside its enhancements to identity development. Subsequently, I will provide evidence of the products that originate from this process.

I replaced names of the school, teacher, students and any other individuals mentioned in this study with pseudonyms when reporting data from field notes, interviews, and artifacts. Because this study focuses on the influence of the sense of belonging to develop hybrid and fluid identities, all references made by participants to their heritage countries and/or family origin are kept as mentioned by the participants in the initial data source. To protect the participants’ identities, all references to the U.S. cities and states in which participants and their families currently live have been replaced by a more generic indication of the geographic area (e.g., a city in the Northeast of the U.S.; a state in the Northeast of the U.S.).

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy to Sustain Hybrid and Fluid Identity**

**The Classroom Environment: ¡Buenos Días Amigos! [Good Morning Little Friends!]**

South Whaterbridge Community School is the result of a wide community effort, dedicated to bridging cultural differences through childhood education. The school
reopened in 2013 and reaffirmed the identity of a self-defined sanctuary community for vulnerable people. The entire environment, from physical classrooms to teachers and staff, reflects this sense of unity and pride. I spent the first week of my ethnographic research study reading local newspapers and researching archives on the story of the city of Whaterbridge and its schools. I asked teachers, school assistants, staff members, PTA representatives and students about their experience at South Whaterbridge Community School, their feelings concerning this learning space, and their impression of the city in which the school is located. Even if all this information from the people living in this learning community were not included in the official data, they contributed to developing in myself, as a researcher and observer, a sense of this place with which I intimately engaged for ten weeks. I took extensive field notes within the classroom environment, which appeared to encourage cooperative learning at different levels.

Ms. Ramírez’ third-grade classroom is located all the way down the building, past the front office, earlier grade classrooms, gardening plots in the central courtyard, and the computer lab. In her third-grade classroom, two expansive windows comprise nearly the entire surface of the exterior wall, while the interior walls are painted in varying shades of blue. There are multiple maple wood bookcases filled by curriculum textbooks and picture books of popular Latin American children stories (e.g., stories inspired to popular nursery rhymes, educational fairytales, children outdoor games, the alternation of seasons, etc.), historical and contemporary Latin American famous characters (e.g., the first Latina astronaut Ellen Ochoa, the musician Tito Puente, the writer Juana Inés de la Cruz, etc.), Latin American archeological and natural sites (e.g., the Inca citadel Machu
Picchu, the Andes mountains, etc.), and world civil rights and peace movement leaders (e.g., Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, etc.).

Two particular elements garnered my attention in the classroom. First, the “diversity wall” (Figure 4.2). This is a wall of artifacts Ms. Ramírez collected through her trips or received as small gifts from her students. Second, the “positive thinking” poster (Figure 4.3), which is a class poster made by the teacher and her students. The goal is to encourage students to contemplate positively and assume a problem-solving attitude throughout their daily activities and life events.

On the diversity wall, two signs remind students to appreciate different cultures (Figure 4.2). The first one says “Hooray for diversity!” and the second one reads “Here, we share different cultures” (My translations of the signs reported in Figure 4.2). Figure 4.3 is a compilation of positive messages (e.g., I think positive, I help my mom, I like playing with my brother; etc.) brought by the students as an example of the multiple ways in which they can contribute toward building a positive learning environment.

Other examples in which the teacher visually transmits a positive message include the classroom rules—set cooperatively by the teacher and students and subsequently placed on the back of the door—along with the weekly daily objectives written on the white board every Monday morning.

Ms. Ramírez teaches a cohort of 21 students, alternating on a weekly basis between the red and the blue groups. Chairs and tables occupy the back of the room and are arranged for students to sit in clusters of four. In the front portion of the room there is a carpet with a graphic representation of the solar system model, where the students stand
Figure 4.2. The Diversity Wall in the third-grade classroom. (Field notes, JPG file 05, Viva la diversidad, recorded on Sept 27, 2016).
Figure 4.3. “Positive Thinking” classroom poster. (Field notes, JPG file 13, teaching philosophy, recorded on Sept 27, 2016).
or sit in circle during discussion times. This area also serves to allow for students to sit in rows in front of the whiteboard during the few official lecturing times of the day. It is in this area that students begin their morning routine with a song (Field notes, week 9).

Before reporting excerpts from the data, I need to clarify that I took field notes and recorded interviews in English and Spanish that were later adapted with respect to the grammatical and syntax system of the language in which they were written. Students’ journals have been transcribed as they appear in the original document, including grammatical errors, in order to maintain their original meaning. Accuracy, or lack of, with the Spanish text does not prevent its comprehension. However grammatical and spelling errors have been corrected in the English translation to provide a better sense of the texts. The purpose of this study does not include the observation of correctly utilized language features. For example, the excerpt below is from my field notes and, consequently, has been edited in order to be grammatically correct both in English and in Spanish. All English translations are my own.

Spanish
Estudiantes: “Buenos días amiguitos ¿cómo están? Muy bien. Es este el salón de la amistad. ¡Qué bien! Haremos lo posible para hacernos más amigos. Buenos días amiguitos ¿cómo están? ¡Muy bien! Mi carita redondita tiene ojos y nariz, y también tiene una boquita para cantar y sonreír. Con mis ojos veo todo, con mi nariz hago ¡achís!, con mi boca como ricas, galletas de maíz. Sol, solecito, caliéntame un poquito por hoy para mañana por toda la semana. Luna Lunera, cascabelera. Caracol, caracol, a la una sale el sol.”

Ms. Ramírez: “¿Empezamos el día?”

Estudiantes: “¡Positivos!”

English translation
Students: “Good morning, little friends, how are you? Very good. This is the classroom of friendship. So good! We will do our best to become friends. Good morning little friends, how are you? Very good! My round face has eyes and a nose, and also has a mouth to sing and smile. With my eyes, I see everything, with my nose I do Achis! With my mouth, I eat delicious corn crackers. Sun, little sun warm me up a little today and the whole week. Moon, nice moon, and silly. Snail, snail, at one o’clock the sun rises.”

Ms. Ramírez: “How do we begin our day?”

Students: “Optimistic/Positive!”

(Field notes, week 9, recorded on Nov 7-11, 2016)
This song, adapted from multiple Spanish nursery rhymes, set the tone of the entire day. Even if the English translation loses the musicality created by the rhythm and alliteration in the Spanish version, it clearly describes the teacher’s invitation to establish a positive, optimistic, and friendly environment. The teacher addresses her students with the Spanish formal third person pronouns usted (formal you, singular) and ustedes (formal you all, plural), and invite them to call each other as amiguitos (little friends). This element contributes to generate a learning environment where students are considered active participants and fellow classmates; they all share the responsibility to contribute to one another’s academic, cultural, and emotional development.

Elements provided in this section contribute to the definition of the classroom environment, in which the students negotiate the meanings of languages and belonging while building their identities. Students position themselves in this environment and make sense of it. Positionality is recognizing one’s position in relation to others. In this context, students understand that wherever they stand in comparison with others, they have to maintain a positive and friendly attitude. The classroom materials, learning philosophy, and practices encourage students to value diversity in a positive and constructive way, which contributes to the development of cross-ground cultural practices that enhance hybrid and fluid identity. In this process, the teacher is the primary example of cultural hybridity, serving as a model for her students.

**The Teacher as a Role Model in the Migration Experience**

In this excerpt from the field notes (shown below), Ms. Ramírez encouraged
students to try different types of food and to keep an open attitude toward new cultural experiences. Ms. Ramírez intended to promote healthy nutrition habits while motivating the students toward familiarity with different food traditions. As introduced through the frequency tables at the beginning of this chapter, food is one of the interconnecting points between belonging and languages. In this case, the reference to different types of food encourages common cross-ground cultural practices while sustaining within-group cultural practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ustedes tienen que tener mente abierta para probar cosas nuevas. Si alguien no ha comido zucchini nunca, hoy lo va a comer. Yo quiero verlos a todos comiendo vegetales. Ms. Ramírez come vegetales todos los días, todos los días, y ensalada también.</td>
<td>You have to be open-minded to try new things. If someone has not eaten zucchini ever, today he/she will eat it. I want to see you all eating vegetables. Ms. Ramírez eats vegetables every day, every day, and salad as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(Field notes, file 03, Teacher snack time, recorded on Sept 21, 2016, n.p.)

Identity development and culturally sustaining pedagogy practices are mediated by the teacher in her function as role model. In addition, common cross-ground cultural practices are often connected with the immigrant experience of students’ heritage families, which needs to be considered and valued in the development of culturally sustaining pedagogy practices. Under numerous circumstances Ms. Ramírez made references to teaching methods and philosophy that pertains to the spheres of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Even if she did not explicitly name it, she clearly stated in her own words the needs to go beyond the assimilation of Latin@s into the main culture. She voiced the importance of sustaining cultural and linguistic competences that proceed from students and their entire immigrant communities. She also placed additional
emphasis on offering access to the dominant culture competence, as she affirmed in this interview:

**Spanish**

Los papás tratan al máximo de americanizar a sus niñitos. Y caen en este capitalismo de este país. ¿En qué sentido? En que los niños tienen que ir todos los fines de semana a comer a un restaurante porque todo el mundo lo hace. En que el niño tiene que ir a [la tienda] a comprar ropa porque todo el mundo lo hace. Que tienen que ser los zapatos de la marca que el amiguito usa porque es lo que todos hacen. Y muchos papás no pueden con eso. Económicamente no les alcanza, pero lo hacen hasta lo imposible, porque no quieren que su hijo se vea menos que los otros. […] Y los niños están en una sociedad capitalista. Ellos no quieren ser menos que el otro. […]

Y muchos niños, el motivo que no les gusta hablar español, también, es para no verse discriminados. Ellos quieren aparentar que son americanitos. Y esa no es la verdad. […]

Por un lado, nosotros como profesores tenemos que educar a los niños, pero por el otro lado también tenemos que educar a los papás, y hacerles ver que existe la otra cara de la moneda. Si a un niño no se le enseña a ser responsable ¿cuándo va a aprender? Y la tarea de nosotros como padres y como profesores es enseñarles a ellos a ser responsable.

---

**English Translation**

Parents try their best to Americanize their young children. And they fall into this capitalism of this country. In what sense? In which children have to go every weekend to eat at a restaurant because everyone does it. In that, the child has to go to [the store] to buy clothes because everyone does it. That the shoes have to be the brand their young friend uses because it is what everyone does. And many parents cannot do that. The do not have the economic resources, but they do it to an impossible degree because they do not want their child to look less than the others. […] And the children are in a capitalist society. They do not want to be less than the other. […]

And many children, the reason they do not like to speak Spanish, too, is not to be discriminated against. They want to pretend they are americanitos. And this is not the truth. […] It is a part of us as teachers to educate children, but also [educate] the parents, and make them see that there is the other side of the coin. If a child is not taught to be responsible, when will he learn? And the task of us as parents and as teachers is to teach them to be responsible.

(Teacher’s interview, file 20, recorded on November 14, 2016, min. 8:46-15:40)

Ms. Ramírez is a strong and cheerful teacher, with a determined attitude and extremely optimistic personality, which inherently becomes an integral part of her curriculum. She is cognizant of how her personality can produce a positive effect and shape student habits. As the passage above documents, she demonstrated her commitment to making a difference in her students’ lives and their community, not just teaching academics. The teacher reinforced a positive and optimistic model of learning
throughout the school day and firmly incorporated it in her teaching philosophy. Ms. Ramírez would say to her students: “No se preocupen, para todo hay una solución [Don’t worry, everything comes with a solution]” (Field notes, week 8, p. 2). Her students are taught to begin the day with an optimistic attitude. She models optimism and healthy eating habits that encourage students to take care of themselves. Moreover, she bolsters student appreciation for the bilingual school they attend and the multiple complementary learning opportunities (e.g., music and nutrition lessons, computer lab access, seasonal access to the local swimming pool, outdoor programs, etc.) they have on top of the regular grade curriculum.

One of the class discussions that acquired a particularly symbolic meaning for the students was a conversation which took place after the presidential election on November 8, 2016. On the day following the election students were discussing the results when their teacher decided to address the topic instead of following the regular class course. She asked for everyone to gather in a circle on the carpet, close their eyes, think about what they heard about the new president elect, and share their thoughts with the rest of the class. All students took turns in offering their ideas. Most concerns were due to the announced restrictive immigration policy and threat of deportation. In this excerpt from my field notes, I described how the teacher concluded the conversation with students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Ramírez: “Yo sé que esta es una noticia muy fuerte. Yo quiero que cada uno mantenga una mentalidad positiva. Aunque Donald Trump quiera pasar una ley necesita que otra gente la apruebe. Sus padres tienen muchos años aquí […] Quiero que estén positivo que les digan a sus papas que su vida va a seguir común y corriente.”</td>
<td>Ms. Ramírez: “I know this is a very strong news. I want everyone to maintain a positive mindset. Although Donald Trump wants to pass a law, he needs other people to approve it. Your parents have been here for many years […] I want you to be positive, to tell your parents that their life will continue exactly as it has been until now.”</td>
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(Field note, week 9, page 3)
Ms. Ramírez is cognizant of her role as educator of children from immigrant families in a DLI setting, promoting empathy among all students in the classroom. She is an immigrant herself and feels the struggle of being between countries. She sustains “cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95) and encourages dialogue on critical issues. The encouraging message she sent through this class exchange targets Latin@ students but reaches out to White students as well. She did not polarize the students in the classroom against each other. She encouraged all students, from Latin@ and White heritage cultures, to speak up against what was perceived as an expression of social injustice. At the same time, she prompted students to maintain a constructive attitude and engage in civic action like monitoring the legislators. This type of dialogue provides groundwork to reflect upon the plural and evolving nature of Latin@ identities in a DLI setting, their potential to enact counter-hegemonic narratives, and avoid the risk of reproducing colonizer privilege toward other minorities, in this case other immigrants in the U.S.

In such an anti-immigrant era, students are the most at risk of misleading judgment between those immigrants that already crossed the border and those who still aspire to immigrate to this country, between those who assimilated to the mainstream culture and those who resisted to it. Students are exposed to blame and untruths that can sadden or frighten. The message has to be clear: children of immigrant families, along with their communities, can believe in the promise of this country while at the same time remaining fiercely proud of their own culture and language. There is nothing incompatible about the two.
In this controversial context, the teacher stepped forth as a role model for her students and engaged in issues of migration from a postcolonial standpoint. The passages from my field notes and the teacher’s interviews revealed how Ms. Ramírez expressed her vibrant and hybrid Latina identity in the new socio-political environment. The teacher as a role model element is also supported by two additional strong topics that emerged from the study. I used the codes *concientización* (awareness-raising) and *confianza* (trust) to refer to these two themes.

Even though I did not assign a high number of document segments to the codes *concientización* (awareness-raising) and *confianza* (trust), it is important to briefly address how these two codes intersected with the teacher’s self-definition and her role model dimension. The codes refer to the data segments in which the teacher positioned herself as facilitator in the awareness-raising process for both students and parents. In these segments, the teacher encouraged her students to view the classroom a safe environment where their voice could be heard. For example, during the conversation on the presidential election, Ms. Ramírez reminded students that any information they would share in the classroom would be strictly confidential.

She also offered the instruments to provide Latin@ students with more opportunities to access educational resources beyond academic proficiency. For instance, she reached out to the parents who did not enroll their children in the curricular and extracurricular activities (e.g., string music instruments practice, outdoor games, fitness, after school club, etc.), provided translation of the fliers and the forms, and support in understanding the benefits these activities would bring to their children. In this way, she
intended to empower Latin@ students, encouraging them to look at their sense of
belonging and language practices as a resource.

**Culturally Sustaining Students and Families**

As stated in the previous section, codes such as *awareness-raising* and *trust* were
less common in the data segments. Nevertheless, it is important to remain cognizant of
the ways such codes support the teacher’s effort to become a role model, culturally
sustain students and their families, and close the opportunity gap. “Researchers have long
recognized that much can be learned from qualitative data by what is not mentioned”
(Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 92). Or, in this situation, from what is not mentioned enough.
This is the case of the code “culturally sustaining students and family,” which I used to
identify the materials and the strategies used to develop culturally relevant teaching
opportunities. An example of these materials and strategies is the Second Step program,
which was integrated with the social studies curriculum.

The school district adopted Second Step to foster social-emotional learning,
prevent bullying, and emphasize child protection (Committee for Children, 2017). The
district required educators to integrate Second Step into the curriculum, teach at least one
lesson per week, and reinforce the skills introduced in the lesson throughout the day. The
goal is to facilitate students in acquiring problem solving skills to use at school and home.

Let’s imagine that two third graders are fighting over a stuffed animal. They
finally find a mutual agreement and decide to share it. This is an example of
problem solving steps. In English: name the problem, think about some solutions,
consider the consequences (good and bad), come up with a plan. What was the
best choice to pick? It is so important to encourage parents to try to use this set at
home with kids. When kids get out of control and get loud, our instinct as parents
is to yell back. Instead, the quieter and calmer you keep yourself, the more likely
you are that your child will also calm down with you. Second step is all about learning to deescalate problems, instead of escalating by getting louder, and getting bigger. It is important as the adults that are modeling with the calming down steps for them, which is not always easy.

(Field notes, file 06, Second step meeting, recorded on October 4, 2016)

In this passage, I paraphrased an informal interview with Ms. Ramírez, which occurred during teacher preparation time. Second Step targeted the students, their families, and their communities in tandem. The intent was to communicate problem-solving skills that can benefit individuals in deescalating controversies and reaching a win-win situation. Second Step included 22 lesson plans, a teacher textbook, and multiple explanatory cardboards, all in English. At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, Ms. Ramírez received the first Second Step posters in Spanish (Figure 4.4) that she hung on one of the classroom closet doors.

The Spanish version helped shift the Second Step curriculum closer to Latin@ students, even if the literal translation is not always completely accurate. I will add an example, as discussed with the teacher, to better explain this point. “Use self-talk” has been translated with “habla contigo mismo,” which in English would be closer to the expression “talk to yourself.” Also, the literally cultural translation of “talk to yourself” would be considered a sign of mental illness: in Latin American culture, someone who talks to her/himself is considered crazy. Self-talk, in the U.S. culture, commonly refers to the positive and therapeutic act of introspection with oneself to promote self-esteem and contribute toward decision-making. The expression “talk to yourself” in Spanish is less common and does not contain quite the same accuracy in meaning as “use self-talk.”
Figure 4.4. Second Step posters in the third-grade classroom. (Field notes, JPG file 03, Second Step posters, recorded on September 27, 2016).
Employing the phrase “talk to yourself” in Spanish does not convey the significance held in English. The expressions need to be culturally adapted to the Latin@ community, instead of simply translated. In fact, the use of self-talk as a thinking strategy is not as commonly promoted in the Latin@ community as it is in the White community. Latin American cultures live in a more collective and shared dimension. In the song “Latino América” the Puerto Rican band Calle Trece argues “Aquí se comparte, lo mío es tuyo” [Here we share, what is mine is yours]. Sharing is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Latin American culture. Therefore, rather than talking to oneself, a Latin@ would share his/her thoughts with someone else, talk it through, and find a solution.

It follows that in order to promote the content of the Second Step curriculum, the teacher has to culturally adapt each teaching to her classroom, as she explained in this interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pero sí, definitivamente tú tienes que conectar el niño con la vida real, con la que ellos están viviendo. El currículo no es hecho así. El currículo tiene algo totalmente diferente. Yo lo hago en español, pero yo ya esto lo voy a aplicar de una manera distinta. Y lo importante es esto. Lo importante es eso, es que ellos puedan alcanzar el objetivo de lo que están viendo de la clase.</td>
<td>But yes, you definitely have to connect the child with the real life in which they are living. This curriculum is not done like this. This curriculum has something totally different. I do it in Spanish, but I’m going to apply it in a different way. And the important thing is this. The important thing is that they can reach the goal of what they are seeing in the classroom.</td>
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(Teacher’s interview, audio file 02, transcription section 10, recorded on September 22, 2016).

The Second Step program has the potential to offer Latin@ students those hidden parts of the curriculum that can contribute to closing the opportunity gap with access to problem-solving strategies that can be applied to different academic situations and social
life events. However, to become accessible to the minority groups, the Second Step content needs to be culturally adapted. For this reason, the interconnection between elements like the Second Step curriculum and the identity development theme were not as strong as other codes (e.g., belonging and language). Yet they still need to be considered with the same attention in order to offer the most complete interpretation of the data and results of this study.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter was structured to answer the main research question. I documented how the deductive and inductive analysis process led to the development of major themes and categories. Findings were based upon my analysis of the four sets of data I collected (field notes, teacher interviews, student interviews, and student artifacts). I discussed the categories and codes developed from the data and I provided interpretations on the intersection between categories and codes. The outcomes of this study suggest the students’ sense of belonging and practice of language are connected to their identity through places, languages, and multiple cultural features. These can include food, family, music, dance, and other skills acquired in a specific heritage group.

I detailed the characteristics of the research setting and teacher along with how these two key elements contributed to the student identity development process. I explored the meaning of the most relevant categories and the least recurrent ones, in order to portray a complete scenario of the teaching-learning environment in the DLI third-grade classroom I observed. The data indicated relevant factors that intersect with
identity and culturally sustaining pedagogy, such as the teacher as a role model and migration issues. Identity development and culturally sustaining pedagogy practices are mediated by the teacher in her function as role model for her students. I provided examples and explained how these interconnections occur in the DLI setting.

This chapter established that students’ understanding of their identities develops from their comprehension of their sense of belonging and language practices. In the next chapter, I will document the process that facilitated this awareness of identities and the consequent products which emerged from the students’ interaction with the classroom instruction.
CHAPTER 5
SECOND SET OF FINDINGS: THE PROCESS AND THE PRODUCT OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Two subquestions of this study are answered by building upon the frequency tables and data introduced in chapter four. Through a combination of field notes alongside teacher and student interviews, I document the processes that enhance identity development in the observed third-grade DLI setting. Subsequently I report the products in terms of student responses to the identity development process, as demonstrated in their journals and interviews.

A Process to Enhance Identity Development

Ms. Ramírez (pseudonym) prevalently used a dialogical approach, guiding her students to reflect on their sense of belonging and language practices through open discussions. The third-grade students interacted with their teacher and classmates during classroom discussions concerning identity and culture. Picture books, music, and dance practices were used by the teacher to gather student attention and encourage them to reflect on their identities while participating in the process developed through class. The students joined class discussions, negotiated meanings, and contributed with their personal experiences. Rather than simply instructing students on the construction of languages, Ms. Ramírez facilitated their use in the daily practice of social action and in
the articulation of knowledge and power. Students were provided with a list of sentences to prompt a dialogue in the classroom. This came along with questions to discuss the story they read or listened to and rules to learn how to take turns. For example, students were encouraged to participate in the discussion, using expressions such as: I believe that…, I do not understand…, I think…, I am not sure about…, I agree/disagree with…, etc. Students were advised to raise their hands before speaking, wait for their classmates to complete their piece before speaking, respect the ideas of others, and to pay attention to the person talking. One of the most relevant samples of this dialogical approach is the lesson concerning identity which Mr. Ramírez introduced to her class.

Identity and Culture in the Classroom

Discussions with Latin@ and White Students

“¿Qué es identidad? ¿Qué es cultura?” [What is identity? What is culture?] These are two of the most recurrent questions that arose during this study whenever students were pushed to reflect on who they are. These questions were often linked and led to some dependent themes (e.g., places, food, family, music, dance, etc.), which became strong connectors between identity, belonging, and languages (Figure 4.1). Toward the end of the school year, Ms. Ramírez frequently assigns a class project on identity and cultures. Students are required to prepare a poster that is presented during an after-school event attended by the two third-grade groups and their families. As part of the assignment, students must interview their families concerning their cultures. “What is culture?” was the first question students asked when Ms. Ramírez introduced the assignment. Because of the complexity that concepts of identity and culture can hold, Ms.
Ramírez prepared students for their final presentation throughout the school year. She incorporated lessons on cultural diversity and identity in her curriculum in October and November when I was observing the class. In the excerpt below, I document how Ms. Ramírez introduced the students to the term “identity,” to its connection with varying cultural features, and how the students participated in the class discussion as reported by my field notes (File 14, October 13, 2016).

PRIMERA PARTE

Ms. Ramírez: ¿Uno, dos, tres?
Estudiantes: ¡Ojos a usted!

Ms. Ramírez: ¿Cuál es su identidad? ¿De dónde es usted? ¿Qué es que la define a usted como persona? ¿Qué creen que yo le contestaría? Si me preguntan a mí yo digo: yo soy colombiana. ¿Pero qué quieres decir cuando dices que eres colombiana? Yo le contestaría: “Miren, yo soy colombiana porque yo hablo español; porque en mi casa celebramos todas las fiestas de los colombianos, como, por ejemplo, el día de la madre, el día del padre, y otras más. También celebramos la Navidad, celebramos nuestros cumpleaños… todas las personas celebran su cumpleaños. También, la comida colombiana que me identifica es los frijoles con arroz, pescado, pollo o carne, ensalada y… no tomamos soda, tomamos jugo de frutas naturales. Cogemos las moras, le ponemos agua y azúcar, las ponemos en la licuadora, y hacemos un jugo de mora, o de manzana o de cualquier otra cosa. En la cultura colombiana nos encanta el baile. Bailamos siempre. Y otra cosa de nuestra cultura es que somos personas muy felices. Siempre estamos sonriendo, cantando y somos muy afectivos. ¿Qué quiere decir afectivos? Quiero decir que, por ejemplo, cuando yo veo unos amigos en la calle le digo “hola, ¿cómo están? ¿Cómo está la familia?” y les doy abrazos y les doy un beso en el cachete. Y siempre movemos las manos mientras estamos hablando.

Ariel: ¡Si mi mamá también hace así!

PART 1

Ms. Ramírez: One, two, three?
Students: Eyes to you!

Ms. Ramírez: Attention! Look here at how I wrote the word *identity*. If you ask Ms. Ramírez, what is your identity? Where are you from? What defines you as a person? What do you believe in? What is it that makes you the person you are? If they ask me, I would say: I am Colombian. What do you mean when you say that you are you Colombian? I would say, look, I say that I’m Colombian because I speak Spanish; in my house, we celebrate all the Colombian festivities, such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and so on; we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate our birthdays… everybody celebrates their birthday. Also, the Colombian food that identifies me is beans with rice, fish, chicken or meat, salad, and… we do not drink soda, we drink natural fruit juice. For example, we take the blackberry, add water and sugar, put it in the blender, and make a juice of blackberry, or apple or anything else you want. In Colombian culture, we love dancing. We always dance. And another thing about our culture is that we are very happy people. We are always smiling and singing, and we are very affectionate people. What do I mean with that? I mean that when I meet friends, I say “hello, how are you? How is your family?” And I hug them and give them a kiss on their cheek. And we always use our hands when we talk.

Ariel: Oh yes, my mom does that too! [She uses her hands when she talks]

Ms. Ramírez: Oh, really? Your mom too? Where is your mom from?
Ms. Ramírez: ¿Ah si tu mamá también? ¿De dónde es tu mamá?

Ariel: ¡De Brasil!

Ms. Ramírez: Oh, y también mueven las manos en Brasil mientras están hablando? ¡Wow! De todos modos, miren, también una persona se puede identificar con más culturas no solamente con una. Por ejemplo, en Colombia nosotros no comemos pupusas (comida típica del Centro América), pero a mí me encantan las pupusas de chicharrón.

SEGUNDA PARTE

Ms. Ramírez: Les voy a dar otro ejemplo. [Tengo un amigo, Carlos]...bueno su papá es de Guatemala y su mamá es de Honduras, parte de su identidad es de Guatemala y parte de Honduras. Él vino a los Estados Unidos cuando tenía ocho años y aprendió a hablar inglés aquí. Ahora yo tengo una pregunta para ustedes: ¿mi amigo Carlos es americano?

Maciel: Sí, porque vivió mucho tiempo aquí, se acostumbró aquí y aprendió inglés.

Ms. Ramírez: ¿Y yo soy americana?

Todos los estudiantes: ¡Sí!

Ms. Ramírez: Pero yo era mucho mayor que mi amigo cuando yo vine aquí.

Kilian: Bueno... ¿cuántos años tenía usted?

Ms. Ramírez: No le voy a decir, pero les digo que vine después de que sacara dos carreras en la universidad en Colombia, después vine aquí y llevo muchos años aquí. Mejoré el inglés y fui a la universidad para ser profesora.

Kilian: Bueno, entonces usted es un por ciento americana.

Ms. Ramírez: ¿Y que tal nuestra amiga Ms. Di Stefano? Ella vino a los Estados Unidos hace siete años. ¿Ella es americana?

Todos: ¡Sí!

Ms. Ramírez: Atención, ella no vino cuando tenía siete años. Ella vino hace siete años, cuando tenía veintiséis años.

Ariel: Brazil

Ms. Ramírez: Oh, and do they also use their hands in Brazil [when they talk]? Wow! Hey, look, a person can identify with more cultures, not just with one. For example, in Colombia, we do not eat pupusas (a thick corn tortilla, very popular in some regions of Central America), but I love pupusas with chicharrón (fried pork belly and rinds).

PART II

Ms. Ramírez: I will give you another example. [I have a friend, Carlos] ... well, his parents are from Guatemala and his mother is from Honduras, therefore part of his identity is from Guatemala and part is from Honduras. He came to the United States when he was eight and learned to speak English here. Now I have a question for you: is my friend Carlos American?

Maciel: Yes, because he lived here for a long time, he became accustomed to America and learned English here.

Ms. Ramírez: And, am I American?

All students: Yes!

Ms. Ramírez: But I was much older than my friend when I came here.

Kilian: Well ... how old were you?

Ms. Ramírez: I’m not going to tell you, but I will tell you that I arrived after I got two degrees at the University in Colombia, then I came here and I have been living here for many years. I improved my English and went to university to become a teacher.

Kilian: Well, then you’re one percent American.

Ms. Ramírez: And how about our friend Ms. Di Stefano? She came to America seven years ago. Is she American?

All: Yes!

Ms. Ramírez: Pay attention, she did not come when she was seven years old. She came seven years ago when she was twenty-six years old.
Kilian: Bueno, entonces ella es siete porciento americana.
Ms. Ramírez: ¿Y ustedes son americanos?
Todos: Pues sí, ¡claro!
Francis: 100%!
Kilian: Yo soy americano porque nací aquí.
Ariel: Yo soy cincuenta y cincuenta, yo soy americano y portugués, porque yo nací aquí, pero también mis papas son de Brasil.
Ms. Ramírez: ¿Quieres decir que eres brasileño? ¿Qué eres mitad americano y mitad brasileño?
Ariel: Sí, Brasil.
Kali: Yo [soy] de El Salvador, porque, porque... yo no sé por qué.
Ms. Ramírez: ¿Por qué? Dinos, ¿te sientes americana, te sientes de El Salvador o la combinación de las dos?
Kali: Me siento como una parte del inglés y la otra del español.
Ms. Ramírez: OK! ¿Tú qué piensas? ¿Cómo te sientes tú? ¿Cuál es tu identidad?
Emma: Bueno, mi identidad es de Maryland, yo me siento americana de Maryland.
Ms. Ramírez: ¿Por qué?
Emma: Porque mis papás están allí.
Gabina: Es que somos los dos, somos Latinos americanos.

(Field notes, audio file 14, Teaching about identity, transcription section I and II, October 13, 2016)

I literally translated “Latinos Americanos” with “Latin Americans,” even though the English expression does not entirely interpret the meaning of Gabina’s Spanish expression, which I further explain in the text. There are at least three relevant factors that emerged from this classroom discussion through a dialogic approach: (a) the teacher,
Ms. Ramírez used cultural features (e.g., places, countries of origin, languages, food, music, family traditions, etc.) to explain the meaning of identity (Field notes 14, part I). Through her examples students learn that in order to define who they are, they need to look back at their heritage cultures, to the places their families come from and to which they belong, to the languages they speak, to the food they eat, and to their familial traditions. In this process, all students—from Spanish speaking communities, English speaking communities, and communities in which other languages (e.g., Portuguese, Italian) are commonly used—began to consider their language practices and their participation in the DLI class as part of their evolving identity. For instance, following the example Ms. Ramírez used, Ariel asserted that he feels half American and half Brazilian.

Ms. Ramírez employed her own experience to describe how she established her
identity most substantially on her Colombian cultural heritage. At the same time, she expanded her heritage culture with elements from other Latin American traditions (e.g., she likes pupusas, which are a traditional Salvadorian dish) and from the U.S. (she improved her English, lived in the U.S. for many years, went to college, and became a teacher). In this way, Ms. Ramírez provided an example incorporating diverse cultures to describe her identity and aided students in formulating their own cultural identities. As Ladson-Billings (2014) argued, teachers are called on to “incorporate the multiplicity of identities and cultures that help formulate today’s youth culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). In this case, following the teacher’s model, youth culture seems to proceed from the places they were born, their families’ country of origin, and their languages. Hence, the teacher modeled this activity for students. She offered her understanding of identity and encouraged students to name the cultural elements that define their identity.

**Identity as Sense of Belonging and Language Practices in the Teacher’s Interviews**

As introduced above through data excerpts, Ms. Ramírez and the students used multiple occasions to reflect on their sense of belonging and language practices. This particular example shows how sense of belonging is developed as the interconnection with a place that represents a specific community and promotes a sense of shared membership. The meaning of belonging is constantly negotiated between places and symbols, which can be part of the students’ experience and their families’ memories. Language can acquire a particular significance in determining member participation within that unique community.
To better explain the meaning of identity and its interconnection with sense of belonging and language, the teacher discussed some examples with her students (Field notes 14, part II). She mentioned a friend, whose parents are from Honduras and Guatemala, and also referred to my own experience (Ms. Di Stefano) while I was observing the class. As the excerpt shows, part of the sense of belonging to a place is described as growing up in that specific location and being able to speak the language of that community. This means students often match the country with the language spoken by the majority of its inhabitants. For example, Killian sees himself as “Portuguese,” because his parents are from Brazil and speak Portuguese; Kali identifies herself through both Spanish and English, reflecting on her Salvadorian and U.S. sense of belonging.

In the students’ vision, identity and culture are determined by the place in which they were born and raised along with the language they speak (Field notes 14, part II). Killian identified himself as an American, because he was born in the U.S. Emma argued she feels as though she belongs to Maryland because her parents currently live there. Their teacher provided some biographical information about herself (her experiences in Colombia and within the U.S.), her friend Carlos (who moved to the U.S. when he was eight years old), and myself, a guest observing their class (who moved to the U.S. as an adult). Students were asked to attribute “Americanness” to us and judge if we could be considered Americans or not. The students answered that Carlos is definitely American because he moved to the U.S. when he was a child, learned English and grew used to the U.S. culture. According to the students, Ms. Ramírez is only 1% American because she moved to the U.S. after graduating from college in Colombia and improved her English
while in the U.S. and I, Ms. Di Stefano, am only 7% American because I moved to the U.S. 7 years ago and did not speak English as a child. From the students’ perspective, being born and raised outside the U.S. and acquiring English as adults make Ms. Ramírez and I less American than Carlos, and definitely less American than themselves.

This equation between languages spoken, places of birth, places in which one has been raised, and “Americanness” was commonly shared by the entire class community. All students (Latin@, White, and other races present in the third grade) agreed that if a person speaks English and was born in the U.S. is definitely American. It is not clear what one has to do in order to become American, and it would be interesting to explore more in future research.

An important note should be addressed concerning the use of the term American as a synonym for U.S. citizenship. Ms. Ramírez asked the students if they were Americans, implying American denotes belonging to the U.S. The students applied this concept to the example provided and determined who was American and who was not by their own assessment. Gabina, along with other students whose parents were born in Central America, felt she belonged to both the U.S. and Latin America. She expressed this concept saying: “Es que somos los dos, somos Latinos Americanos,” which I translate as, “It’s that we are both, we are Latin Americans.” However, the literal translation does not transmit the exact meaning of her words. Gabina’s meaning implies that she, along with other students in a similar situation to herself, are Latin@s (an acknowledgement of their Latin American heritage) and Americans (recognizing their U.S. culture). Americanness is used to indicate the U.S. country instead of the entire
continent. Gabina and the other Latin@ students are, indeed, Americans because of their Latin American heritage, and additionally because of their U.S. citizenship, acquired by birth. Nevertheless, the term American is commonly used to define the sense of belonging to the U.S. instead of to the entire continent.

On this last point, the teacher and I continued the conversation concerning identity, belonging, and language as I illustrate in the following excerpt from the teacher’s interviews.

**Spanish**


**English Translation**

I think it is very important that we, as educators, give importance to this vital part of the students’ culture, understanding and remembering the places they come from, which are not just related to the language they speak. It entails, for example, their family celebrations, the food they prepare, and the differences they perceive with the food from the U.S. traditions and all other countries tradition they may experience in the States, and so on. For example: “I do eat pupusas. Do you like it?” “Oh, yes I like pupusas too.” “Well, no, I prefer taquitos.” “I eat flautas instead.” What country does this type of food come from? You saw that those few times we had the opportunity to have this kind of conversations how enriching they were. The students realize that... for example, today, they realized that if someone’s mom is from El Salvador, then that person is half American and half Salvadorian. Then Gabina said, “No, we’re Latin Americans.” So, when you hear this “we are Latin Americans,” you realize that Latin culture is prevailing. She did not say Americans Latinos, she said Latin Americans.

(Teacher’s interview, audio file 20, recorded on November 14 2016, min 2:32 – 3:35)

The teacher argued that use of “Latinos Americanos” by Gabina implies a recognition of her Latin American roots in conjunction with her U.S. identity. From Ms. Ramírez’s perspective, what Gabina really meant to say is that they—the students with
Latin American heritage born in the U.S.—share both the Latin@s and U.S. sense of belonging while giving more emphasis to their Latin@s tradition. Gabina is already American because her parents were born on the American continent. However, following the generally accepted meaning, which the adjective American has acquired in our society, she understands American as being from the U.S.

As the students’ comments during their class discussion demonstrated, belonging to the U.S. also means being able to speak English. There is an instinctive sense of identity tied to the languages students speak, in the same way their names identify the person they are and create a sense of reciprocal belonging. Languages are the vehicle allowing students to develop a sense of belonging within their community. They produce and share contents in this community, creating rich conversation and class discussions, as Ms. Ramírez pointed out in her interview. Through this process, students imagine situating themselves in this community and develop a sense of belonging to it. At the same time, each participates in other communities with their family and friends outside school. Languages as practice are a constant element for all of these “imagined communities” (Pavlenko, 2003).

The DLI setting is the place where the language practices become an indispensable tool to acquire academics and communicate with other community members. In this context, students are not simply learning proficiency in two languages, rather they explore how to succeed as emergent bilinguals while developing bicultural competency. As Ms. Ramírez claimed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yo siempre le he enfatizado mucho a mis</td>
<td>I have always emphasized to my students the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
estudiantes la importancia de los dos idiomas y porque es importante. Siempre les he dicho las ventajas que ellos van a tener para trabajos, para viajar, para conocer otras culturas, para interactuar con personas de otras culturas, y aprender de la cultura de otras personas. Entonces yo creo de una manera u otra ellos están tomando conciencia poco a poco. Y desafortunadamente somos entre las únicas personas que podemos hablar con ellos de esto porque, como te dije antes, los papás están muy ocupados.

(Teacher’s interview, audio file 20, recorded on November 14 2016, min. 3:35 – 3:55)

Once again, languages link students to different cultures and communities. If this argument is not enough to convince students to become bilingual, Ms. Ramírez would play the marketability card. She underlined on different occasions how Spanish is one of the elements that makes her Colombian. Yet, as it surfaces from this excerpt, students are often motivated to become multilingual because of the benefits speaking other languages would generate in terms of their accessibility to the job market. As the teacher said, “one way or the other, they are gradually becoming aware [of their language ability].” The classroom discussion and instructional strategies are the processes by which students elaborate their sense of belonging and language practices, developing their own fluid and hybrid identity.

The Products of Identity Development

Identity and Culture in the Students Journals and Interviews

Students engaged in the identity development process, facilitated by the teacher, and responded through their journals and the stories they narrated in interviews. Ms. Ramírez used cultural features (e.g., country of origin, language, food, music, family
traditions, etc.) to explain the meaning of identity (Field notes 14). Through her examples, the students understand that in order to define who they are, they need to look back at their heritage cultures. One of the most relevant cultural expressions that emerged from this study is the meaning heritage food and family recipes assumes in defining identity. In a passage from the field notes, Ms. Ramírez explained: “the Colombian food that identifies me ... it’s beans with rice, fish, chicken or meat, salad, and we do not drink soda, we drink natural fruit juice” (Field notes 14). Food is linked to the students’ life experience and characterized by their family celebrations. In the excerpts below, María Elena talks about her brother’s birthday dinner (Figure 5.1).

![Journal Entry](image)

**Spanish**

10/3/2016 Que hiciste el fin de semana? El fin de semana yo fui donde mi hermana. Y ella le preparo a mi hermanito una cena porque era su cumpleaños. Y había pupusas de chicharrón, pollo campeño, arroz, ensalada y de bebida había Soda, Agua, Jugo.

**English Translation**

10/3/2016 What did you do on the weekend? During the weekend, I went to my sister’s place. She prepared a dinner for my brother because it was his birthday. There were pupusas with chicharrón, campeño chicken, rice, salad and we had soda, water, and juice to drink.

*Figure 5.1.* María Elena’s journal October 3, 2016. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 6, journal, recorded on October 5, 2016).
Figure 5.1 is an excerpt from a daily writing workshop activity. Ms. Ramírez wrote a prompt on the board and the students then answered the question in their journal. In this scenario students had to narrate their weekend. Ms. Ramírez usually encourages students to add details concerning their meals and family activities and here María Elena’s journal is an example of the presence of food as a main cultural expression in the students’ personal experiences.

I interviewed María Elena and asked her to tell me more about the food she likes. Her face lit up as she began to recount many events in which she was cooking with her mother and friends. The excerpt below is from one of our interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: ¿Dónde aprendiste a hacer pupusas?</td>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: Where did you learn to make pupusas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Elena: Mi mami me enseñó. Yo intentaba cuando tenía dos añitos.</td>
<td>María Elena: My mom taught me. I learned when I was two years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: ¡Wow!</td>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: Wow!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Elena: Ya sé hacer tortillas porque desde los tres años aprendí…</td>
<td>María Elena: I have been making tortillas since I was three years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: ¡Wow!</td>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: Wow!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Elena: Pero las hacía con caritas felices.</td>
<td>María Elena: I used to make smiling faces with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: ¡Que chistoso! ¿Y las pupusas son comida de aquí, de este lugar en Estados Unidos?</td>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: How funny! Are the pupusas a popular type of food here in the United States?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Elena: No</td>
<td>María Elena: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: ¿Pues, de dónde entonces?</td>
<td>Ms. Di Stefano: Where does this recipe come from, then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Elena: Del Salvador.</td>
<td>María Elena: From El Salvador.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Students’ interviews, audio file 11, November 8, 2016, min. 1:08-1:46)

María Elena’s words show food preparation as a rite of passage between
generations. She feels proud of having learned to make pupusas dough when she was two and now being able to complete the process by herself. This activity establishes a particular bond with her mother, connects them with their heritage culture, and cements them as members of the same community. In another activity, students were asked to consider a trip they did with their family. Once again, María Elena elected to discuss a trip to her best friend’s house where they made pupusas. Other students talked about excursions with their families and provided many details on the food they ate and the preparation process.

To better explain my interpretation of the meaning food has in the segments concerning experiences of the teacher and students, I will use an excerpt from Esmeralda Santiago’s (1994) memoir, *When I was Puerto Rican:*

[Dad,] If we eat all that American food they give us at the centro comunal, will we become *Americanos*? He banged a nail hard into the wall then turned to me, and, with a broad smile on his face said, ‘Only if you like it better than our Puerto Rican food. (p. 169)

In this passage, Santiago refers to the 1960s U.S. cultural colonization of Puerto Rico. A U.S. official visited Esmeralda’s school to teach good health, hygiene, and nutrition habits while distributing food at the city hall. Esmeralda wondered if eating the offered food would make Puerto Ricans more like people from the U.S. Her dad replies that to become *Americanos* she has to like that food more than her traditional rice and beans. Esmeralda’s identity, as in the case of Ms. Ramírez, María Elena, and other students, is socially constructed and enables them to locate themselves as members of the community that still practices traditional eating habits even in varying geographical locations. Ms. Ramírez and María Elena do not simply make a list of foods they usually eat but
recognize them as part of their way to be Colombian (Ms. Ramírez) and to celebrate family events like birthday parties (María Elena).

Identity as Sense of Belonging and Language Practices in the Writing Workshop

Following up the identity lesson, Ms. Ramírez guided a writing workshop in which students had to reflect on their identity and cultures. The identity lesson functioned as an introduction to the poster presentation which students had to complete for the end of the year. Before proceeding to their journal assignment, students drew a spider map and organized their ideas. They had been introduced to graphic organizers during previous science and social studies lessons. In this case, the students had to write their name in the center circle and add which elements helped them define their identities on the different extending branches. The teacher modeled the activity on the white board and developed her personal spider map first (Figure 5.2). After a dialogue with the students and an introduction to the term “identity,” the teacher graphically showed students that her identity is defined by: (beginning with “Mi Identidad Colombia” and moving counter-clockwise) being born and raised in Colombia, considering family as her first priority, eating healthy food, speaking Spanish and English, attending university, being a teacher, dancing salsa, drinking home-made fruit juices, eating rice with beans, and exercising.

Following Ms. Ramírez’s example, the students worked on their spider map. In the next subsections, I include examples of their final maps, specifying how Latin@ students and non-Latin@ students responded to this identity activity. The most recurrent elements that helped students to define their identities was shown to be their sense of
belonging within both their local community and their parents’ origin country. This included the languages spoken in these communities, the family traditions respected in these communities with particular emphasis on the food and music that characterizes the most important annual events, holidays and celebrations, as well as daily life in the community.
Latin@ Students Responding to the Writing Workshop: Graphic Organizers, Journals, and Interviews

Jorge took the assignment very seriously and referred to himself as “El Señor Jorge Perez” [Mr. Jorge Perez] (Figure 5.3). Mr. Jorge Perez is one of the most evident examples of hybrid and fluid identity among Latin@ students. He argues El Salvador and Guatemala are integrant portions of his identity but that his country is America, where he refers to the U.S. as a country (not to the American continent as mentioned earlier in the findings). Jorge speaks three languages and enjoys pupusas, while his music interest expands from vallenato and salsa (typical of Colombia) to bachata (typical of the Dominican Republic, as well as the signer he mentioned). To protect Jorge’s identity, I replaced his name on the left page and the name of the school on the right page. I did not alter his choice to write “El Señor Jorge Perez” on the left page, instead of just using his first name as the other students did. The school’s name and reference to the school’s city (page to the right) have been replaced with pseudonyms congruent throughout this study.

Another example is the spider map and journal Serena wrote (Figure 5.4.). She indicated the most relevant parts of her identity are a sense of belonging to both Guatemala and the U.S., having good teachers, eating pupusas with chicharrón, listening to any type of music, and speaking both English and Spanish (Figure 5.4). To protect student identity, throughout this chapter I replaced the first name in central circle and the U.S. to which she indicated to belong.

Based on the information presented in the graphic organizer (Figure 5.4), students had to write a paragraph following the writing prompt: “What are the parts of your
Página a la izquierda:


Página a la derecha:

Mi identidad. Parte de mi identidad es... ser El Salvadoreño, Guatemalteco, Hablar Español, me gusta bailar música colombiana, me gusta cantar bachata la persona es Frank reyes es el que canta la bachata, mi país es America, mi escuela favorita es el South Whaterbridge Community School.

Page to the left:


Page to the right:

My identity. Part of my identity is being Salvadorian and Guatemalan, and speaking Spanish. I like dancing Colombian music, I like singing bachata; the singer I like is Frank Reyes; [he] is the one who sings bachata. My country is America; my favorite school is South Whaterbridge Community School.

*Figure 5.3. Jorge’s journal on identity, October 13, 2016. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 22, journal, recorded on October 14, 2016).*
Spanish

Serena: (Comenzando con “Guatemala” y moviéndose hacia la derecha). Guatemala/Estados Unidos; me gusta mis maestras; a mi me gusta las pupusas de chicharrón; a mi me gusta mis maestras; lenguaje español inglés.

English Translation

Serena: (Beginning with “Guatemala” and moving clockwise) Guatemala/United States; I like my teachers; I like the pupusas with chicharrón; I like my teachers; [I like] any music; [I speak] Spanish and English.

Figure 5.4. Serena’s spider map, October 13, 2016. (Students’ artifact, PDF file 11, recorded on October 14, 2016, part 1).

identity? A part of my identity is…” (Figure 5.5). Serena explained her identity is composed by many different parts, such as belonging to Guatemala and the U.S., having a loving and caring family, being supported by good teachers, eating food that is typical of her heritage culture, and celebrating her birthday. Some of Serena’s identity lays in the eating habits she developed in her heritage culture which contributed to developing a sense of belonging within that community. In this context, food is not an individual action, but a way to share membership with and belong to a community. To protect this student’s identity, I replaced the date of birth she indicated in her journal.

Figure 5.5. Serena’s Journal, October 13, 2016. (Students’ artifact, PDF file 11, recorded on October 14, 2016, part 2).
Ms. Ramírez usually asks students to write at least in two complete sentences in their journals, using the subject-verb structure. Once students have completed their journals, each has permission to draw a picture, which will graphically illustrate what they already wrote. For example, Edwin explained part of his identity comes from belonging to the city where he currently lives, in the northeast of the U.S. (Figure 5.6). Part of his identity is also related to Mexico because it is where his father was born.

The visual representation of identity through a map—as in Edwin’s journal (Figure 5.6)—is part of the follow up activity Ms. Ramírez assigned after introducing the term “identity.” According to Edwin, his identity is principally determined by his current hometown and his language. This type of vision is shared by other students, as the artifacts reported in this section demonstrate. Student journals demonstrate Spanish is more than the language of instruction for them because of how it represents the link with heritage culture as the necessary instrument to communicate amongst family and friends. During the writing workshop on identity, Mackenzie explained: “Parte de mi identidad es como hablar español porque sino no puedo platicar con mi mama” [Part of my identity is like speaking Spanish because otherwise I cannot talk to my mom.] (Field notes, file 13 “Sharing and writing about identity,” recorded on October 12, 2016). After reading her journal, I asked Mackenzie to comment on what she wrote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie: Parte de mi identidad son mis amigos, porque juego con mis amigos y me tratan bien, y yo [los trato bien] también. La comida salvadoreña también es mi favorita, porque es parte de mi cultura. Y me gustan mucho las pupusas. Y mi familia más que todo, porque es mi identidad, es especial para mí.</td>
<td>Mackenzie: Part of my identity are my friends, because I play with my friends and they treat me nicely, and so do I. Salvadorian food is also my favorite because it is part of my culture. And I really like pupusas. [I love] my family more than anything, because it’s my identity, it’s special to me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
¿Cuales son las partes de tu edentidad? Parte de mi identidad es de donde vengo de yo vengo de [una ciudad en el norte de Estados Unidos]. Yo abla en la casa español porque mi papa es de mexico.

English Translation

What are the parts of your identity? Part of my identity is where I come from. I come from a city in the Northeast of the United States. I speak Spanish at home because my dad is from Mexico.

Figure 5.6. Edwin’s journal and map on identity. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 16, recorded on Oct 14 2016).
Ms. Di Stefano: ¿Y a qué te refieres aquí donde escribiste] de inglés, de español y de Latina?


Ms. Di Stefano: What do you refer over here where you wrote English, Spanish, and Latina?

Mackenzie: [I wrote] Latina because I can speak Spanish. I’m bilingual because I speak English and Spanish. And [I wrote] Latina because I like to eat food, as a Latina would do. And my life is Latina, my whole family is Latina

(Students’ interview, audio file 8, recorded on October 26, 2016, min 1:11 - 2:27)

For Mackenzie, being “Latina” means belonging to the specific cultural community in which Spanish is one of the most important practices that determines membership. Yet she recognizes being bilingual has become an essential characteristic of her identity. Mackenzie, like many other students, enters the classroom with different background knowledge. Sometimes she is unaware that her language and sense of belonging are a vital portion of this knowledge. Through the classroom dialogue on identity and this assignment she was guided to make sense of her knowledge and skills, sense of belonging, and language practices.

Mackenzie along with Ariel, Maciel, Kilian, Kali, Gabina, Emma, María Elena, Jorge, Serena, and Edwin are all examples of Latin@ DLI students who walked through the process of identity development enhanced by Ms. Ramírez. The products of this process—artifacts and interviews—suggest they understand who they are through the places they belong and the languages they speak, among other cultural features. I reported their works in this session to document examples of the emergent interconnection between the developed categories described as self-definition, place, Spanish-English, and in some cases Portuguese, language use, and the codes defined as culture, food, family, and teacher pedagogy.
White Students Responding to the Writing Workshop: Graphic Organizers and Journals

After reporting on the response of Latin@ students to the writing workshop centered around identity development, I will describe how White students (10 out of 38 students, less than 30% of the classes) responded to the writing workshop. In this section, I will document their contribution and participation from their graphic organizers and journals.

Sylvia’s dad was one of the first enthusiastic parents to sign up his child for participation in this study. After presenting my research plan at the PT conference near the beginning of the school year, he greeted me in Italian and suggested that after concluding this study I could perhaps replicate it in an Italian-English DLI school community. He would be curious to know the results and compare them. Following the assignment guidelines, Sylvia reflected on her identity and recognized the multiple places and languages that make her experience unique (Figure 5.7). She sees herself as the hybrid construction of her parents’ places of origins and culture experiences, plus the development of Spanish language and Latin American cultures with which she is becoming familiar through her experience at South Whaterbridge Community School. She also added that she enjoys dancing, reading, and singing. Sylvia participated often in classroom discussions, volunteered for school services, and helped her peers with assignments even though Spanish is not her first language.

The teacher modeled the use of a graphic organizer as a method to collect ideas before composing an identity paragraph. Cassandra followed a different path, instead
Página a la izquierda:

(Empezando con la segunda pregunta) ¿Cuáles son tus partes de tu identidad? 10/12/16 Pate de mi identidad es yo legusta bilar. un otro parte de mi identidad es yo legusta a lerr. Un otro parte de mi identidad es pintar con mis Richard. un otro parte de mi identidad.

cuentanos que paso en la historia qu leste. Yo leer la panbera y los anillos.

Página la derecha:

(Empezando con “yo es bilingüe” y moviéndose hacia la derecha) yo es Bilingüe, yo suy italeano, yo suy una vicing, yo suy Gresia, yo es 9 años, yo sabe 6 (lenguas), legusta Bilar, saves Español, saves etaleano, saves Igles, saves gresia, legusta cantar, yo legusta cabir, yo legusta Bilar, yo legusta leer.


Figure 5.7. Sylvia’s journal and map on identity. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 25, recorded on Oct 14 2016).
opting to write the paragraph first (Figure 5.8) and later represent what she wrote through a pictorial map (Figure 5.9) and a graphic organizer (Figure 5.10). Despite Spanish not being her first language, Cassandra’s writing sample is one of the most complete and accurate, considering the use of grammar, syntax, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Figure 5.8. Cassandra’s journal. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 14, recorded on Oct 14 2016).
From the left and going clockwise: ballet costume, shoes, and hair accessory, “Hello and/y Hola,” pizza, a piano, a violin, a pet, South Whaterbridge Community School.

Figure 5.9. Cassandra’s pictorial map identity. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 14, recorded on Oct 14 2016).
She only mentioned South Whaterbridge Community School as a place of belonging and indicated both Spanish and English as important parts of her identity.

Cassandra often participated in classroom discussions and activities. In particular, I recall her participation with the group discussion after the November election. In my
field notes I reported that she commented on the election of Donald Trump by saying:

“Mi mamá dice que todo lo que él quiere es atención” [My mom said that all he wants is attention] (Field notes, Week 9). Here Cassandra listened to the conversation about the election, which her family had at home, and used it to contribute to the class discussion.

As discussed in the previous section, the presidential election produced disappointment and frustration among students, especially the Latin@ students, who started to fear the consequences in terms of deportation for some members of their families and communities. Cassandra demonstrated empathy toward her Latin@ classmates and actively engaged in the conversation. Sharing the language of her classmates not only is becoming part of her identity, but an element to begin considering different points of view and eventually issues related to race, equity, and levels of privilege.

**Cultural Disconnections: The Cases of Olivia and Whitney**

Reading students’ journals and looking at their artifacts over and over, I found multiple examples that explained the interconnection between identity, belonging, and languages, as I proposed at the beginning of my research study and documented throughout the findings. These types of interconnections emerged from the Latin@ students (who primarily speak Spanish at home and come from Latin American heritage families), as well as White students (who primarily communicate using English at home) and other ethnically diverse students (who converse via a combination of English and other languages at home, such as Portuguese and Italian).

However, if “salient themes are clearly visible and can be quickly and readily
marked with highlighters,” there are multiple other relevant pieces of information that remain unmarked and guide “the search for new and less obvious themes in the second pass” (Ryan & Bernard 2003, p. 93). Therefore, I analyzed the raw data, looked back at the table of frequencies (Table 4.3.), and explored the areas with the lowest frequency of intersections.

In particular, I focused on the code identified as “disconnection” and at how it related to the most recurrent codes (self-definition, place, language uses, and bridging practices). With the code disconnection, I referred mainly to cultural gaps between home and school culture, and heritage culture and local culture. The results indicated that, in general, bridging instructional practices valued Spanish language and Latin@ cultures in the development of hybrid and fluid identities. However, for some the instructional practices lead to a slightly divergent result. For example, there are a few students in the study who do not consider Latin@ places of belonging and language practices as significant elements of their identity. In certain cases, they positioned themselves according to different cultural coordinates. These are the cases of Olivia and Whitney, which I will explore in this section.

Olivia. Olivia is a Latina and Indian third grade student. Her mother is originally from Puerto Rico while her father hails from India. She has beautiful russet eyes nearly as dark as the black hair that curls in long spirals around her face, its color coordinating with deep and intensely brown skin. Sometimes I would sit next to her for about an hour even as she became distracted easily and often engaged in other activities. Ms. Ramírez asked if I could help her focus on the spider map assignment (Figure 5.7), which took her about
a week to complete.

I worked one-on-one with Olivia for 3 days, in order to assist her with the spider map and journal assignment (Figure 5.11). She seemed to appreciate the help and always appeared positive in her interactions with me. When she was finally done, Olivia said she did not see the point of studying Spanish, nor any other concepts in that class. I followed up on the conversation during an interview, starting with a question from the assignment, as I document through the transcript that follows.

Ms. Di Stefano: Te quiero preguntar algo. ¿Te quiere sentar aquí? Aquí dice: “Mi mamá es de Puerto Rico también, mi papá es de India.” [I want to ask you something. Do you want to sit here? Here it says: “My mother is from Puerto Rico, also my dad is from India.”]

[Long pause]

Ms. Di Stefano: So, is your mom from Puerto Rico?

Olivia: Yes.

Ms. Di Stefano: What language does she speak?

[Long pause]

Ms. Di Stefano: Why don’t you like Spanish?

Olivia: Because it doesn’t work out for me. Because I don’t understand it.

Ms. Di Stefano: It’s strange because when I talk to you in Spanish you understand me.

Olivia: Sometimes I don’t.

Ms. Di Stefano: But I can repeat in other words. Do you hear any Spanish at home?

Olivia: Sometimes.

Ms. Di Stefano: And what do you think about that?

Olivia: Bleah!

Ms. Di Stefano: Do you like it? You don’t like it? I don’t know. What do you think?
(Beginning with “a city” and moving clockwise)


Figure 5.11. Olivia’s spider map and journal. (Students’ artifacts, PDF file 24, recorded on October 14, 2016).
Olivia: It sounds pretty even if I don’t know what people are saying. I only want to sleep all day.

Ms. Di Stefano: So, then the problem is not Spanish?

Olivia: It’s Math.

Ms. Di Stefano: So, you don’t like Math.

Olivia: It’s not my hobby.

[The nutrition instructor approached the classroom. Olivia instantly lighted up when she saw the nutrition instructor, who is a tall blond young white lady, with a big smile on her face].

Ms. Di Stefano: So, you like this.

Olivia: That’s nutrition!

Ms. Di Stefano: And you liked it. So, the problem is with Spanish and Math, but not with the other things?

[Long pause]

(Students’ interviews, audio file 05, 1:00-4:05, recorded on October 25, 2016)

I began the conversation in Spanish as I did with the other students, but I had to transition to English. The intent of the interview was to obtain confirmation of the data collected through the participant observation and the student’s journal. Here Olivia indicated a disconnection with her heritage culture. The places that contributed to building a sense of belonging and identity are the city in which she is currently living and the school she is attending. She mentioned food items (ice cream, eggs, strawberry, whip cream, and milk) and playing with friends and pets as elements that define who she is, and that appear to be related with her experiences in the U.S. She did mention that her parents are originally from Puerto Rico and from India, but did not specify how this
connects with her.

I argue that she included her parents’ countries of origin because she followed the example provided by the teacher on the white board. Olivia’s journal represents a disconnection between heritage and local culture in terms of identity development. It became apparent that when asked to reflect on who she is, Olivia tends to more often consider the elements of local culture rather than those proceeding from her family heritage culture.

**Whitney.** Whitney is an African American third-grade student. Whitney’s parents are originally from the U.S. and travelled frequently because of their jobs, both in the U.S. and abroad. Her appearance is comprised of lengthy blond coils, light skin, and a pair of curious ochre eyes. Whitney’s mother was the most enthusiastic parent in her wish to sign up her daughter for my research study. In my field notes, I recorded her support at the PT conference presentation of my research project and her curiosity about the way Whitney would have answered eventual questions about identity.

Using the spider map to describe her identity, Whitney mentioned only two elements: places and languages (Figure 5.12, left side). She wrote that she comes from Montana, but that she developed a sense of belonging to Japan. She also indicated her proficiency in English, Spanish, and a little Japanese. The page on the right refers to a show-and-tell activity that the students complete every Friday. Once a week, students are asked to bring an object from home, which cannot be expensive and has to be significant for them. The teacher usually asks students to describe the object to a friend and to explain why it is significant. Finally, they have to write a paragraph in their journal.
Whitney decided to share a Japanese “talking book toy,” with drawings and buttons to listen to nursery songs in Japanese (Figure 5.12, right side). Following the journal, I provide the interview transcription in which Whitney commented on her writing piece.
Ms. Di Stefano: Whitney, me parece muy interesante lo que escribiste en tu diario. ¿Te gustaría comentarme más de lo que hiciste? [Whitney, I find what you wrote on your journal very interesting. Would you like to tell me more about what you did?]

Whitney: I feel like I am from Japan but I am actually from Montana. I went to Japan when I was one. So, I actually first thought I was from Japan but I wasn’t. Sometimes, I told my best friend I was from Japan and I wasn’t.

Ms. Di Stefano: You told your best friend there in Japan that you were from Japan? Or did you tell that to your best friend here?

Whitney: Back in Wisconsin.

Ms. Di Stefano: Do you like about being from different places all together?

Whitney: I just like Japan. Do you know what? In this book, [Whitney shows me the book she is reading] they are researching about America and she [the character in the book] thought it was cool because they don’t care much about the environment. My mom always says that Japan cares more about the environment than America. And mommy says that China is the worst because it is more where the environment is not taken care of. Mommy is from a place they all care more about the environment. Actually, she is not, she was born when America didn’t care much about the environment

Ms. Di Stefano: Who, your mom?

Whitney: Yeah!

Ms. Di Stefano: We should do something then; we should care more. We should do more recycling, for example.

Whitney: Yeah, Japan does a lot of recycling and the… [Whitney added a Word in Japanese that I wasn’t able to transcribe. Off records, Whitney explained me that it referred to some Japanese environmental policies].

Ms. Di Stefano: Pero tú también sabes escribir en español. ¿Te sientes de Latino América porque escribes en español? [But, you also know how to write in Spanish. Do you feel from Latin America because you can write in Spanish?]

Whitney: Nah!

(Students interviews, audio file 06, 00:24-3:35 min., recorded on October 25, 2016)
Whitney answered my question in English, therefore we continued the interview in English. Through classroom observation, I noticed that Whitney’s use of Spanish is confident enough to ensure she frequently engages in class discussions and activities, holding fluent conversations with her native Spanish speaker classmates. Hence, even though her Spanish speaking was not error free, she was able to proficiently communicate with the teacher and her peers. For these reasons, I argue that the use of English in this interview is not simply due to the lack of fluency in Spanish, but rather to a more evident proximity of the topics addressed with the English language. She developed a sense of belonging to the places in which she lived before moving back to the Northeastern region of the U.S. In addition, her understanding of identity is connected to the languages (English and Japanese) spoken in the places she was raised. Whitney’s hybrid identity develops from the liminal connections between the places she belongs to and the language practices in those places. These places and language practices are disconnected from the Latin@ community with which she engages every day and from the practice of Spanish in this community of learners.

The experiences of Olivia and Whitney confirm that places and languages are inextricably tied and contribute to the development of hybrid and fluid identities. However, this connection cannot be artificially constructed. Participating in the DLI classroom, learning about Spanish and Latin American cultures in school, is not enough to generate a significant connection with students’ identities. To build this relation, it is necessary to bridge the home and the school experience.

The reasons leading me to focus upon the experiences of Olivia and Whitney
were guided by the need to inquire into less recurrent themes within the research. These themes revealed a disconnect between the students’ identity development and the use of Spanish as practices in the Latin American heritage school community. Nevertheless, these findings do sustain the influence that certain places and language practices have in the development of students’ identities. In fact, Olivia established her identity on the connection with her local northeastern community and the use of English language among her family and friends. Whitney valued her experience both in the U.S. and in Japan, and the practice of English and Japanese as part of who she is. What remained unsolved in these two specific cases is the possibility to direct this identity development to sustain counter-hegemonic narratives. It also limits the forms in which Latin@ identities are recognized and practiced.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was structured to answer the two subquestions established for this study, which inquired into the process of enhancing identity development and its products in the DLI setting. The process that prevalently encourages students to develop a hybrid and fluid identity is characterized by a dialogical approach. Students reflect on their sense of belonging and language practices through open discussions and classroom materials that promote a culturally sustaining environment. They engaged in the identity development process, facilitated by the teacher, and responded through their journal and the stories they narrated in interviews.

The findings of this study suggest the students’ sense of belonging and practice of
language are connected to their identity through multiple cultural features. These can include places, languages, food, family, music, dance, and other skills acquired in a specific heritage group. I provided examples and explained how these interconnections—based on places, cultures, food, and family—occur in the DLI setting. I documented the process that grows these interconnections and how identity development is enhanced. Subsequently, evidence of the products that originate from this process was provided.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

My study explored how student identity connects with belonging and language. In particular, I observed the processes currently in place to facilitate student identity development alongside the products that emerge as a result of these processes. I used deductive and inductive thematic analysis to answer the main research question and the two sub-questions for this study. In the findings chapters (Chapter 4 and 5), I documented the processes and the products of the identity development in which the third graders of a DLI school are engaged, and how the sense of belonging and the language practices took part in these processes and emerged from these products.

This chapter discusses the implications of my study and adds concluding remarks as to why DLI settings favor the development of emergent bilinguals’ hybrid and fluid identities while consequently offering a more efficient education model. At the same time, I address the limitations of my study and the issues of power and equity that emerged from the development of this specific DLI model. Moreover, I explain how the consideration of students’ sense of belonging and language practices can become a key factor in the implementation of DLI models. This offers reflection for professional development of DLI teachers and implementations directed toward the consideration of policy makers and other educational stakeholders.
Revisiting Questions of Identity, Belonging, and Languages

My main research question inquired into the relations between identity, sense of belonging, and language practices. By looking across the processes developed through classroom instruction and their relative products of identity formation in the DLI classroom, I documented the three main findings of this study. First, the students’ sense of belonging and their practices of languages are connected to identity through multiple cultural features (e.g., places, speaking English and Spanish, food, family, music, dance, and skills acquired in a specific heritage group). Second, the processes the teacher used to guide students in reflection on their sense of belonging and language practices are prevalently based on a dialogical approach (e.g., open classroom discussions, guided reading and comprehension activities), the use of picture books, music, and dance practice. Third, the products of these processes emerged through student class participation, their journals, and the stories they narrated in interviews (e.g., spider map, written paragraphs, short stories built upon family memories, etc.). These findings reinforced the potential of the DLI programs to offer multiple opportunities to the Latin@ students. At the same time these results also identified certain contradictions, issues of power and equity, that demand attention as they intervene in the implementation of such a program in support of ELs, all of which will be investigated further in the following sections.

Identity and Belonging: One Country for Multiple Languages

Schwartz et al. (2011) claimed certain biological, psychological, and socio-
demographic positions, such as the sense of belonging and the practice of languages considered in my study, can become part of identity according to the way people interpret them and attribute personal or social meaning to them; my study supports their theory. Viewed from the culturally sustaining pedagogy conceptual model I developed, students come to know their identity on the interpretation of their sense of belonging and language practices. This broad understanding both influences and is supported by within-group and common cross-ground cultural practices, such as open classroom discussions and the writing workshop where the teacher guided students to reflect on their daily use of English and Spanish.

One of the most relevant activities to which students participated entailed the exploration of the components of their identities during a writing workshop. In order to accomplish this task, the teacher explained the term “identity” through the consideration of its multiple constituents and modelled the task for students. Locations of family origins (places that make sense to students) and the languages Spanish and English (which are the most practiced languages in their community) were demonstrated to be the greatest common factors. Following the teacher’s example, students selected the places of their family origins and the languages spoken in those communities as significant elements of their identities. In addition, students often used languages and countries of origin interchangeably (e.g., Yo soy Portugués, literally translated as “I am Portuguese,” however, the student’s intention was to say “I am from Brazil because I speak Portuguese”). In this way, the students underlined the entangled connections between places and languages.
This result leads to an essential consideration of the process that contributes to the development of the sense of membership and belonging on the basis of spoken language. Latin@ students associate the practice of Spanish with their families’ countries of origins, because their families speak Spanish and recognize it as the *national language*. This means Spanish is spoken and written by the majority of people in their countries, it is recognized and adopted by its government, and is commonly used by the masses and social media. For similar reasons, students from Brazilian cultural heritage associated Portuguese with their families’ countries of origins. Spanish and Portuguese are also the *official languages* (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013) of all those Latin American countries indicated by the third-graders as their families’ countries of origin (e.g., Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Chile, Colombia, Brazil). This one-to-one relation (e.g., Guatemala-Spanish; Brazil-Portuguese; etc.) is not valid in the case of the U.S., which is considered a multilingual country. This aspect is also confirmed by the data collected among some of the White students, primarily from English speaking families. As well as Latin@ students, White students began to recognize their bilingualism (and multilingualism in certain cases) as a crucial part of their identity. This could contribute toward the dismantling of a “one-to-one” relation between English and the U.S., which usually exacerbate discourse based on xenophobia and intolerance.

Hence, in terms of defining official and/or national language, it is important to note that “the U.S. has no *official national language*, but English has acquired *official status* in 31 of the 50 states [emphasis added]” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013).
Analyzing the multiple initiatives that have been promoting the institution of English as the U.S. official language and the court decisions related to this topic, Baron (1990) concluded that:

Although English may be the common, national language of the United States de facto – it is, after all, the language of the Constitution, laws, and government operations – it is not and has never been the exclusive language of the country. Besides the pre-Columbian languages of the Native Americans, now greatly reduced in numbers of speakers through deliberate policies of forced extermination and assimilation, and languages such as Spanish, French, Dutch, Hawaiian, and Russian, which coexisted with English in New World territories that eventually formed or were added to the United States, we find in the United States the many languages of those who immigrated or were brought under duress to its shores. (p. 3)

English is the most commonly spoken language in the U.S., even considering relevant exceptions in certain states and territories (e.g., Hawaii, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands). Students largely recognize the importance of learning English in the U.S. However, all third-graders involved in this study do not view English as an exclusive practice to assert their membership and belonging to their local community. Both English and Spanish—along with Portuguese and other languages in some specific cases—are integrated language practices through which the third-graders understand their sense of belonging and therefore their identities as multilingual and multicultural individuals. Latin@ students are not simply proficient speakers of English and Spanish, they are emergent bilinguals and cultural brokers who bolster cross-cultural relations and contribute to the development of fluid and hybrid identities.

As Schwartz et al. (2011) argued, elements such as language can become part of personal identities according to the meaning individuals attribute to them. Languages, as community practices, are part of the multiple students’ identities. Such identities that
develop from this model are open to more global meaning. Speaking different languages can connect students with practices occurring within different communities throughout the world and create global citizens. This finding reinforces the potential of DLI programs to nurture cross-cultural relations between people from different heritage cultures, countries of origins and language practices. On the other hand, this is contradicted by certain patterns and school practices I previously introduced in the results chapters and will further discuss in the next section.

**The Standardized Test Season: “Now the Fun is Over”**

I conducted this study between September and November of 2016. Toward the end of my observation period, I documented a relevant change in the classroom climate. Under the demands of the upcoming standardized tests, Ms. Ramírez geared her classroom instruction and learning objectives toward the review of mathematics and language arts, which the students would find in their tests. As she told me during one of the interviews: “Now the fun is over.” She was referring to the fact that her Spanish instruction would have to be changed and reduced to allow for extra test preparation time. Because both cohorts needed to take the state simulation tests at the same time, Ms. Ramírez had to suspend the Spanish section of regular instruction and administer the tests in English, creating some contradictions in terms of DLI model implementation, language status, and expectations on students (Palmer, 2008, 2010)

For example, the first reading comprehension test was on the U.S. Constitution, which is one of the topics that students learned during their social studies class in
English. Because social studies contents were taught in English only during the first semester, the students did not have the opportunity to transfer those concepts to Spanish. As a consequence, the test practice resulted in a disconnection with both the contents and language of the Spanish class. Learning about the U.S. Constitution in Spanish would have supported the acquisition of this content in English, creating a continuum of intents between the two classes.

In the results chapters, I documented how Ms. Ramírez addressed the presidential election, which occurred on November 8, 2016, and offered the students a safe place for discussion. During the classroom discussion, the Spanish teacher reminded her students that “although Donald Trump wants to pass a law, he needs other people to approve it.” The teacher implicitly alluded to the three branches of the U.S. government, the division of powers, and the institution of the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court.

Students learned this content about three weeks before the election and took a test in English on this topic at the end of October, during their Spanish class. However, they never addressed the topic in Spanish. I argue that if the students were offered the opportunity to learn about the U.S. Constitution in Spanish they could have built upon that concept with a more comprehensive perception, established a better understanding, and connected the U.S. Constitution with their identities and real-life experiences as children of immigrants in the U.S.

Research shows (Fortune, 2012; Genesee, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001, 2011; Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001; Watzinger-Tharp et al. 2016) that students enrolled in DLI programs are “capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-
immersion peers on standardized measures of reading and math” (Fortune, 2012, p. 1). Nevertheless, such results are connected to the way DLI programs are organized and instruction is executed. The disconnection between Spanish and English may create an unequal expectation on linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) and self-contain the development of bilingual and bicultural identities.

For this reason, Palmer (2007) argued that despite the original intent, DLI programs tend to serve White students more often than minority students. The example of the U.S. Constitution offered a clear example in this sense. Although the presidential election presented a real platform where students could have applied the same knowledge they needed to pass their English test, they were unfortunately not offered the same opportunity in Spanish. DLI programs were technically developed to close the opportunity and achievement gap while promoting inclusion. Yet heritage speakers from different races and ethnicities often suffer the consequences of an unequal distribution of resources. Such recurrent issues of power and equity place ELs and students of color at a disadvantage in DLI programs and open the eternal debate on which method—English only or DLI—leads to the best results for students from marginalized groups.

The Debate Over Bilingual Education: An Issue of Power and Equity

Framing my research in the culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) context, I intended to observe how classroom activities and environment can foster relevant practices that connect students’ home cultures with their school experience while concurrently serving as a bridge to cultural assumptions created by minority and majority
student groups. Using a clear conceptual perspective deeply rooted in culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), I could explore the rationale for everyday practices in DLI programs. It was also my aim to consider how a culturally sustaining pedagogy could sustain and support the ABCs of DLI and reinforce them through daily community practices.

I discovered how DLI programs create opportunities for the students to explore their sense of belonging and language practices, on which basis they can develop hybrid and fluid identities. Such opportunities are often left to single teacher initiatives and are not properly integrated into the curriculum, thus eliminating the discussion around program implementation. A substantial corpus of literature documents how these programs are becoming a model of successful instruction concerning dual language learners and a resource to close the opportunity and achievement gap (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015) while promoting intergroup relationships (Wright & Tropp, 2005). In her presentation for the “AERA Centennial Lecture Series” in Brooklyn, December 2016, Gándara (2016) argued:

The debates over which method is superior, bilingual or immersion in English only, can now be put to rest. It turns out that the political compromise that was so often struck, where bilingual instruction was offered at all—if they were willing to do it—it had to be transitional, only until English was acquired. The real payoff comes from developing truly bilingual individuals and welcoming and fostering the assets that the children of immigrants bring to us. I cannot imagine anything that is more of a win-win for the children of immigration and for the country as a whole than this.

Bilingual education programs can provide emerged bilinguals with the basic infrastructure on which they can truly accomplish academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and develop cross-cultural competences. These goals cannot be obtained
without a profound consideration of the students’ hybrid and fluid identities. Use of Spanish as the language for instruction supports Latin@ students’ language development and connects them with their heritage culture. This is only the starting point to consider the multiple assets children of immigrants bring to us. One potential benefit educators should strive to cultivate in immigrant children is an open disposition to diversity, which develops from an understanding of their hybrid and fluid identities.

In this perspective, DLI programs are not simply an instrument to facilitate Latin@ students in their acquisition of English, but rather a twofold opportunity for Latin@ students to nurture their community language and culture, and for White students to embrace that community and develop a sense of belonging and membership through the language. DLI programs can become a counter-hegemonic instrument because they dismantle power relations based on race and socioeconomic status, among other elements. The use of Spanish as the language of instruction is not enough to develop a suitable DLI program. Students need a culturally sustaining practice that allows all to engage in conversations, where minority groups can have their voices heard and students from the majority group can advocate for a more equal distribution of resources.

The DLI Program in an Anti-Immigrant Era

As I described in the previous chapters, the new anti-immigrant wave has been exacerbated during the 2016 presidential campaign and the first month of the Trump administration. In the month following the election of President Trump, 172 hate incidents were reported on college campuses across the nation (CNN, 2017). The anti-immigrant resentment has not only aggravated the relationship between the most
extremist portion of the population and historically marginalized groups of immigrants, but also undermined relations between newcomers and earlier generations of immigrants who were already well established in the country. This type of discrimination is intolerable but can be addressed, in part, through the education of the new generations.

As a young scholar, born and raised in Sicily, Italy, who is attempting to find access within U.S. academia, I am astonished by the current socio-political climate. What concerns me most are the multiple movements of alleged resistance, re-conquest, and regeneration of the Eurocentric Westernization of the U.S., based on pseudo evolutionary perspectives on culture, developmental psychology, personality theory, and ethnic group relations strategies (Herbst & Gelman, 2017). I interpret my European heritage not as a sign of purity, rather as a result of the mosaic of cultures, derived through the coexistence of divergent populations throughout the centuries (e.g., prehistoric Indo-Europeans and Non-Indo-Europeans, Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Germanics, Ottoman Turks, Normans, etc.). Even if I spent my childhood in a primarily homogenous cultural background, I recognize my professional and personal life has exposed me to a myriad of experiences that inevitably shaped and further hybridized my identity. For this reason, I approached the study while acknowledging the privilege granted by my European heritage and at the same time recognizing my immigrant insider position alongside students from historically marginalized groups.

Cognizant of the new sociopolitical climate, with this dissertation I intended to address the multiple issues of power that intertwine between old and new generations of immigrants. For this reason, I explored the hybrid and fluid identity development of
Latin@ students in DLI settings from a clearly stated epistemological lens (Paris & Alim, 2014), while trying to support inclusion and enact counter-hegemonic narratives. If Latin@ students understand their identities proceed from their sense of belonging and language practices, they would be more inclined to consider the fundamental role belonging and language represents for all individuals. In this way, they could embrace inclusion and avoid reproducing colonizer privilege toward other minorities.

Through this research, I addressed belonging and languages as the main components of hybrid and fluid identities, and consequently as constantly evolving parameters. Belonging embraces the multiple places and communities that shape the individual and the collective identities, and the various languages practiced in these communities. Using a framework based on a counter-hegemonic approach to the U.S. education system (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), I attempted to question and dismantle the hegemonic power through analysis of identity development in a DLI programs. For instance, building upon this critical theory foundation, The Civil Rights Project at UCLA aims to renew the Civil Rights Movement, focusing on immigration initiatives and language policy (The Civil Rights Project, 2007). In the same vein, the BUENO (Bilinguals United for Education and New Opportunities) Center at University of Colorado Boulder, is “committed to facilitating equal educational opportunities for cultural and language minority students” (Bueno Center for Multicultural Education, 2017). These are only some examples of the many initiatives that see educators working to achieve racial and ethnic equity in U.S. public schools.

As a result of the multiple issues of power and equity that intervene in the
development of the DLI program I examined, I considered my positionality as a researcher at the beginning of this study. My analysis of the results brought me to a reconsideration of this in light of new perspectives. An altered understanding of the sociopolitical climate I examined contributes to the development of such reflection as part of my ethnographic study.

At the beginning of my study I inquired: What would my experience be if I learned the multiple meanings of places and languages when I was a child? Would I look at the world through a different lens if my society had offered a broader range of multicultural possibilities at the onset of elementary education? With these questions in mind I explored the experiences of the third graders. I found that students became familiar with the concept of hybrid and fluid identity, and began to observe themselves and their peers from a more inclusive perspective. A sense of fluid identity was more likely to develop for those students whose first language was Spanish, represented by 73% of the participants. However, it clearly emerged that some students from predominantly White and English-speaking communities engaged in complex identity development, considering the Spanish language and experiences built in the Latin@ community as an integrant part of their identity. This serves as the first step toward a more equitable learning environment.

Ultimately, the goal of this research was to encourage students to look at their cultural places of belonging and at their languages as instruments to exercise their sense of membership, and act them out in their local community. Thus, I conducted interviews with the intent to offer students an opportunity for reflection on the mutable dimension of
their sense of membership, assuming an opening disposition to the multiple experiences and people who could further expand them. This path of recognition they have begun in the earlier elementary grades could offer them that broader range of multicultural possibilities similar to those that impacted my adult life, but were missing in my childhood.

**Implications**

To consider the implications of this study, it is necessary to ponder the rationales on which it was based. Identity is a hybrid and fluid construction because it is founded on individual and social life events and entails a specific understanding of them. Hybrid identities “emerge in the interstices between different cultures” (Asher, 2008, p. 13), at those overlapping and indistinct boundaries between places and languages. Integrating this concept in their culturally sustaining pedagogy theory, Paris and Alim (2014) pointed to “the shifts of identity that now move us toward a hybridity, fluidity, and complexity never before considered in schools and classrooms” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). Built on this rationale, my study indicates students’ identities are in constant development and evolution. It confirms identities are the “ever-changing configuration of interpretations that individuals attach to themselves, as related to the activities [emphasis added] that they participate in” (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005, p. 423). Two of these particular activities or practices are sense of belonging and practice of language, which inspire student interactions, determine their identities, and locate their positionalities. A series of cultural features such as food, family, music, dance, and skills acquired in a specific heritage
group connect the sense of belonging and language practice. This establishes relations between identity, belonging, and languages through multiple cultural features that contribute to the expansion of knowledge, policy, and practices in the DLI setting. In the next sections, I will discuss the implications of these findings in terms of knowledge, policies, and practices.

**Knowledge: The Ongoing Story of the Self**

Numerous studies have described the relationship between the English and Spanish language and its effects on proficiency and identity formation. However, the interrelationship between the sense of belonging and language practices in DLI early grades has not been addressed from clearly stated epistemological lenses and has not received much attention in the literature. Addressing identity formation in a DLI setting from the culturally sustaining pedagogy lens allowed this study to challenge “the traditional being ontology with notions of a becoming orientation and the limitations of truth-seeking” (D. E. Gray, 2014, p. 20). Students’ identities are in a constant becoming and are influenced by evolving cultural practices. This knowledge can influence the way identity formation is addressed in schools.

Identity of the children of migrants is often addressed according to a corpus of knowledge educators have acquired through previous experiences with other students, personal travels, readings, and commonly shared stereotypes. Though in certain cases this type of knowledge may be partially accurate for certain communities, they cannot define the experience of all children from a specific heritage culture. Latin@ students from Central America differ from those of South America and the Caribbean. Such
dissimilarities are not set once and for all. Generational gaps and the increasing use of technology in a continually more globalized world influences the evolution of cultural aspects.

The concept of emergent bilinguals as individuals who are in a constant “becoming” process is vital for students and their educators. Learners will discover their identity is not found in a single behavior; rather that it is the result of a particular narrative within their lives (Giddens, 1991). In order to answer the self-identity question, individuals “must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing ‘story’ about the self” (Giddens, 1991, p. 56). In other words, we must understand who we are becoming. Here the role of the educators is to help students in setting their trajectory to a hybrid and fluid identity.

**Implications for Policymakers and Practitioners**

The Spanish teacher in this study offered multiple opportunities for students to explore their sense of becoming and their path to the development of a fluid and hybrid identity. Such comprehension of the complexity of students’ multiple identities has the potential to impact both policy and implementation in elementary schools. If DLI programs can contribute toward closing the opportunity gap and consequently forming strong academically oriented identities, why not implement DLI programs with greater frequency, particularly in those areas with the highest concentration of dual language learners, native and/or heritage bilingual communities? As documented in this study, implementing DLI programs may present various challenges, including the consideration of certain issues of power and equity. However, DLI programs have shown potential to
offer positive answers to such issues while promoting diversity and examining the dominant discourse.

Another aspect policymakers should ponder is the consideration of which types of programs would be most beneficial for emergent bilinguals. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, released a document entitled “Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices.” This document refers to the different state policies on dual language education programs, state and district level eligibility and exit criteria in dual language programs, the assessment and accountability for states and districts related to dual language programming, along with professional development specific to dual language programming. What it neglects to consider is the implementation of the two-way DLI programs according to the daily basis model (students spend half their school day in the target language and half in English) and weekly basis model (students attend lessons in a target language every other week). Further analysis in this sense may contribute to the establishment of a coherent and successful 50/50 model around the nation.

Implementations of new policies is strictly connected to the observation of instructional practices in the third-grade DLI class that was at the center of this study. The ethnographic observations and participations related to the classroom I examined can provide examples of successful practices for educators in DLI settings. Specifically, this study contributed to the development of guidelines that may be used in DLI teacher preparations. Examples of the instructional practices observed in this study and described in this dissertation include but are not limited to: the use of graphic organizers, writing
workshops, open classroom discussions, pictures books, projects on diversity with poster preparation and oral presentation, artifacts collection (e.g., diversity wall), classroom poster (e.g., positive thinking poster), integration of the Second Step curriculum, and so on.

Though this study is based on Spanish language instruction and Latin@ culture, some implications can be transferred to less commonly taught languages in bilingual programs, with the appropriate consideration concerning characteristics of the local heritage community. DLI curricula play out in the everyday practices of teachers and students in schools. Here there exists potential to provide suggestions and recommendations for broadening the curricular and pedagogical practices for teacher preparation and educators of bilingual learners.

Limitations

The following are possible limitations of this study: the findings are not generalizable to all dual language immersion programs that use teacher education strategies and classroom activities, regardless of the target language chosen, the weekly basis model, and specific setting in which the program was implemented. This study is specific to a two-way immersion program in Spanish and English, targeting the Latin@ population in an urbanized area. Hence the suggested interventions arise as the result of interactions with Latin@ students, families, and community members. In this sense, only under certain circumstances might the findings be transferable as teacher education strategies which can or might be used when preparing Spanish or English language
teachers in two-way immersion settings. This will be on the condition that these interventions are in line with the generally accepted values of the targeted linguistic and cultural group. It is significant that I studied a positive program for emerging bilinguals’ identities development, even if I found much to critically examine and critique, as arose in the analysis of cultural disconnection and curricular choices.

**Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research**

The main goal of this study was to expand the knowledge and understanding of policies and practices in DLI elementary schools as a method to advocate for a linguistically and culturally diverse learning environment. Rapidly changing demographics of U.S. schools demands a deeper reflection on the contents and instructional practices which aim to develop hybrid and fluid identities in dual language immersion settings. Sense of belonging and language practices are essential components of children’s identity discovery and should be considered as such in the implementation of future school policies. The results of this study will contribute to the increasing field of identity development in early elementary DLI settings in terms of knowledge, policy, and practices.

First, this study increases our knowledge of students’ multiple identities development in DLI settings. An abundance of prior research has described the relationship between the English and Spanish language alongside its effects on proficiency and identity formation. Yet the interrelationship between the sense of belonging and language practices as part of imagined communities in DLI early grades
has not been addressed from a clearly stated epistemological perspective and has not received much attention in the literature.

Second, a heightened knowledge of the complexity of students’ multiple identities can impact policy implementation in elementary schools. In particular, I refer to the necessity of linking the consideration of places and belonging as strictly connected with two-way DLI programs in local communities. This study advocates for a change in both policy and public opinion. It calls for educators to share responsibility on two fronts; teachers should offer children the opportunity to develop strong academic oriented identities while educators must work with colleagues, community members, and institutions to promote diversity while examining the dominant discourse.

Finally, ethnographic observations within the classroom will provide successful practices for educators in DLI settings. The development of guidelines that can be used in elementary teachers’ preparation is something this study contributes to. While my research is based on Spanish language instruction and Latin@ culture, its implications can be transferred to less commonly taught languages in bilingual programs. DLI curricula arise in everyday practices of teachers and students in schools.

In conclusion, I would like to provide suggestions and recommendations for future research that could broaden the curricular and pedagogical practices for teacher preparation and educators of dual language learners. As I completed the ten-week ethnographic study, a bittersweet feeling accompanied me out of the school. I have since returned to visit the students and will be attending their diversity presentation at the end of the school year in June 2017. Multiple questions remain in my mind: what paths lay
ahead for these students? Will they obtain a seal of biliteracy on their high school
diplomas? Would it be merely a symbol or could it connect deeper to their bilingual and
bicultural identity? Would they be aware of their hybrid and fluid identity? The
implementation of a longitudinal study may yet contribute answers to some of these
questions.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the findings of my ethnographic research study as
presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. I explored how student identity connects with
belonging and languages, at the processes currently in place to facilitate student identity
development alongside the products that develop as a result of these processes. The
limitations of my study have been laid out alongside issues of power surfacing from the
development of this specific DLI model. Last, I discussed the implications of my study in
terms of knowledge, policy, and practices. Concluding remarks examine the reasons a
DLI setting favors the development of emergent bilinguals’ hybrid and fluid identity and
consequently offers a more efficient education model.
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Appendix A

Observation Protocol
Observation Protocol

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Assessment: 

Questions/Thoughts/ Points to follow up during next interview with teacher: 

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for the Teacher
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Follow up questions for next interview:
Appendix C

Sample of Questions for Teacher’s Semistructured Interviews
Sample of Questions for Teacher’s Semistructured Interviews

1. What are the contents that you are planning to teach this week?

2. How did you plan your lesson?

3. What are the main learning objectives? Did students achieve the learning objectives?

4. What are the main language objectives? Did students achieve the language objectives?

5. What are the instruments you will use?

6. How do you plan to assess the students?

7. How do you address individual differences of learners?

8. What would you do differently next time?

9. Have you noticed code-switching episodes in the classroom? What is your position toward that? Would you encourage it or not? Why?
Appendix D

Sample of Questions for Students Semistructured Interviews
Sample of Questions for Students Semistructured Interviews

1. What did you draw here? Why? How come?
2. What did you write here? Why? How come?
3. What is your favorite food? Why?
4. What do you like doing during your free time?
5. What is your favorite game?
6. Would you like to tell me about your last trip with your family?
7. How do you usually celebrate holidays?
8. Where would you like to go on vacation?
Appendix E

Code Relation Browser for Categories, Codes, and Subcodes
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Appendix F

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Document
Institutional Review Board
USU Assurance: FWA#0000308

Expedite #7
Letter of Approval

FROM:
Melanie Domenech Rodriguez, IRB Chair
Nicole Vouvalis, IRB Administrator

To: Steven Camicia, Mariatulisa Di Stefano
Date: August 15, 2016
Protocol #: 7336
Title: Understanding How Young Children Bridge Language And Belonging in Dual Language Immersion Settings.
Risk: Minimal risk

Your proposal has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and is approved under expedite procedure #7 (based on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human research subjects, 45 CFR Part 46, as amended to include provisions of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, November 9, 1988).

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. This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file for the period of one year. If your study extends beyond this approval period, you must contact this office to request an annual review of this research. Any change affecting human subjects must be approved by the Board prior to implementation. Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file for the period of one year. If your study extends beyond this approval period, you must contact this office to request an annual review of this research. Any change affecting human subjects must be approved by the Board prior to implementation. Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

Prior to involving human subjects, properly executed informed consent must be obtained from each subject or from an authorized representative, and documentation of informed consent must be kept on file for at least three years after the project ends. Each subject must be furnished with a copy of the informed consent document for their personal records.
Appendix G

Informed Consent Form for the Teacher
INFORMED CONSENT

Understanding how young children bridge language and belonging in dual language immersion settings.

Introduction. Dr. Steven Camcia and Marialuisa Di Stefano in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about young children's understanding of languages and belonging in dual language immersion settings. You have been asked to take part because you are a Spanish teacher at a dual language immersion school. There will be approximately 1 teacher participant who will be interviewed in this research. There will be approximately 50 students who will be interviewed in this research.

Procedures. If you agree to be in this research study, you give permission to Marialuisa Di Stefano to visit your classroom three times a week between August 22, 2018 and December 14, 2018 for about four hours to observe the class activities, interview you for a maximum of 30 min per week, interview your students and collect documents with your permission. This will include asking you to deidentify student work so that the researchers may use it in this study.

Risks. Participation in this research study involves only minimal risks or discomforts, such as making time to meet with Marialuisa, experiencing uncomfortable feelings about sharing teaching methods, and possible loss of confidentiality. There is a slight risk of losing confidentiality but the researchers will follow procedures for minimizing this risk and take precautions to protect against loss of confidentiality, anonymity, or economic, social, or psychological or physical harm. In order to moderate as much as possible these concerns, interviews will not take longer than 30 minutes and will not be done more than twice a week. You can skip any questions at any time. Researchers will not collect any sensitive data at any time during the research and will use pseudonyms throughout the research.

Benefits. Information gained from this study may benefit teachers, principal(s), and the school district in acquiring more knowledge related to dual language immersion programs, as findings will be shared with those involved. Future children in the dual language immersion programs might benefit from the information learned through this study.

Explanation & offer to answer questions. Marialuisa has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have further questions or research-related problems, you may reach Dr. Steven Camcia at (801) 518-3193 or steven.camcia@usu.edu

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence. Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

Confidentiality. Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the principal investigator Dr. Steven Camcia and the student researcher Marialuisa Di Stefano will have access to the data which will be kept in a restricted access folder in Box.com. USU’s encrypted, cloud-based storage system, and it will only be accessible by the research team. To protect your privacy, personal, identifiable information will be removed from study documents and replaced with a study identifier. All assignments and artifacts will be gathered by the researcher after you, the
INFORMED CONSENT

Understanding how young children bridge language and belonging in dual language immersion settings.

Spanish teacher, has graded them and de-identified the student. No sensitive data will be collected at any point of the study. The data collection process involve audio recording only during the teacher's interview sessions.

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury and would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Director at (435) 797-6567 or email irb@usu.edu to obtain information or to offer input.

Investigator Statement "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks, and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Steven Cancicia
Principal Investigator
(801) 518-3193
steven.cancicia@usu.edu

Maria Luisa Di Stefano
Student Researcher
(787) 506-2110
marialuisa.distefano@appemail.usu.edu

Signature of Participant By signing below, I agree to participate.

Participant’s signature ___________________________ Participant Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Appendix H

Informed Consent Form for the Parents/Guardians (English)
INFORMED CONSENT

Understanding how young children bridge language and belonging in dual language immersion settings

Introduction Dr. Steven Camicia and Marialuisa Di Stefano in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about young children’s understanding of languages and belonging in dual language immersion settings. We are contacting you because you are the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child enrolled in the Spanish class at the selected school. There are approximately 50 total students in your child class, who are the children interviewed and observed in this research study.

Procedures If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign this form and send it to your child’s Spanish teacher. Marialuisa Di Stefano will interview your child for two to three minutes about once a week between August 22, 2016 and December 14, 2016. You also give permission to Marialuisa Di Stefano to include observations of your child’s class activities in her study, and to collect your child’s homework after the Spanish teacher deletes his/her name from the homework. Marialuisa Di Stefano will not interfere with the classroom instruction, take pictures, or video/audio record your child’s activities in the classroom at any time.

Risks There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. We will not use your child’s name in transcripts or any other related documents used in the analysis of possible future dissemination opportunities such as journal articles, or conference presentations. There is a slight risk of losing confidentiality but the researchers will follow procedures for minimizing this risk and will avoid at any cost any loss of confidentiality, anonymity, economic, social, or psychological or physical harm. Researchers will not collect any sensitive data at any time during the research and will use pseudonyms throughout the research.

Benefits Neither you nor your child will receive any known direct or indirect benefits from being in our study. No promises or guarantees of personal benefits will be made to you or to your child to encourage you or your child to participate. Information gained from this study may benefit teachers, principals, and the school district in acquiring more knowledge related to dual language immersion programs, as findings will be shared with those involved. Future children in the dual language immersion program might benefit from the information learned through this study.

Explanation & offer to answer questions Marialuisa has explained this research study to you through this form, and answered any questions you may have asked. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Marialuisa Di Stefano and talk to her in person, via email (marialuisa.distefano@aggiemail.usu.edu) or phone (787-509-2110), or contact Dr. Steven Camicia at (801) 518-3193 or steven.camicia@usu.edu.

Voluntary nature of participation & right to withdraw Your child’s participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your child may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

Confidentiality Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the principal investigator Dr. Steven Camicia and the student researcher Marialuisa Di Stefano will have access to the data which will be kept in a restricted access folder in Box.com, USD’s encrypted,
INFORMED CONSENT

Understanding how young children bridge language and belonging in dual language immersion settings

cloud-based storage system, and it will only be accessible by the research team. To protect your privacy, personal, identifiable information will be removed from study documents and replaced with a study identifier. All assignments and artifacts will be gathered by the researcher after the first grade teacher has graded them and de-identified the student. No sensitive data will be collected at any point of the study. The data collection process does not involve any video nor audio recording.

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury and would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Director at (435) 797-0567 or irb@usu.edu to obtain information or offer input.

Copy of consent You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and keep one copy for your files.

Investigator Statement I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions raised have been answered.

Dr. Steven Camicia
Principal Investigator
(801) 518-3193, steven.camicia@usu.edu

Mariahuisa Di Stefano
Student Researcher
(787) 509-2110, mariahuisa.distefano@aggiemail.usu.edu

Parental Consent
I give my child (child’s name) permission to participate in this study.

Parent(s)/Guardian Signature Date Relationship to child

(This next section is where I will ask your child permission for her or him to be part of this study.)

Child Assent: I understand that my parent(s) or guardian(s) are aware of this research study and that they have given permission for me to participate. I understand that it is up to me to participate even if they say yes. If I do not want to be in this study, I do not have to and no one will be upset if I don’t want to participate or if I change my mind later and want to stop. I can ask any questions that I have about this study now or later. By signing below, I agree to participate.

Name/Signature Date
Appendix I

Informed Consent Form for the Parents/Guardians (Spanish)
CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

*De cómo los niños en los primeros grados, dentro del contexto de un programa de aprendizaje de idiomas por inmersión, conectan los idiomas y la pertenencia a un lugar.*

**Introducción/Objetivo:** El Dr. Steven Camcic y la estudiante graduada Marialuisa Di Stefano de la Escuela de Educación y Liderazgo para Docentes (School of Teacher Education and Leadership) de Utah State University están llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación para conocer más sobre cómo los niños interpretan el uso de los idiomas y el sentido de pertenencia a los lugares mientras participan en un programa de inmersión de idioma en la escuela primaria. La(s) estás contactando porque usted(es) es/son el padre, la madre o el tutor de un(a) estudiante que está matriculado/a en la clase de español en la escuela que ha sido seleccionada por este estudio. En la clase se su hijo/hija hay aproximadamente 50 niñas que serán entrevistadas y observadas en esta investigación.

**Procedimientos:** Si usted está de acuerdo con este estudio de investigación, firme este formulario de autorización de padres y envíe dicho formulario al/a la maestro/a de español de su hijo/a. Si está de acuerdo con este estudio, usted le da el permiso a la estudiante graduada Marialuisa Di Stefano a que entreviste a su hijo/a, incluya en su estudio observaciones de las actividades que su hijo/a hace en la clase y también le da permiso a que recolecte algunas tareas de su hijo/a después de que el/la maestro/a de español ha cancelado el nombre de su hijo/a de la tarea. Marialuisa tomará entre dos y tres minutos una vez por semana desde el 22 de agosto de 2016 y el 14 de diciembre de 2016 para hacer preguntas a su hijo/a acerca de las actividades que hacen en la clase. Marialuisa no interferirá con el normal curso de actividades didácticas. Marialuisa no tomará fotos ni grabará videos de su hijo/a y de sus actividades en el salón de clase.

**Riesgos:** Participar en esta investigación no implica ningún riesgo más allá de los experimentados en la vida cotidiana. No usaremos el nombre de su hijo/a en transcripciones ni en ningún otro documento relacionado que se utilice en el análisis de posibles oportunidades futuras de difusión, como artículos en periódicos o presentaciones en conferencias. Hay una pequeña posibilidad que ocurra una pérdida de confidencialidad, pero los investigadores seguirán todas los procedimientos y los métodos necesarios para minimizar este riesgo y harán todo lo posible para evitar a cualquier costo las pérdidas de confidencialidad, anónimidad, económicas, sociales o psicológicas o daño físico. Los investigadores no recolectarán ninguna información relacionada con el personal acerca de su hijo/a en ningún momento en el curso de este estudio de investigación.

**Beneficios:** Si usted ni su hijo/a recibirán beneficios directos ni indirectos por participar en nuestro estudio. No se realizarán promesas, ni se ofrecerán garantías de beneficio personales para usted ni para su hijo/a para motivar su participación. Esperamos que al trabajar con usted, podamos ayudar a que otros docentes e investigadores conozcan más acerca de los programas de inmersión de idiomas. Compartiremos los resultados de este estudio de investigación con los que están involucrados en el estudio mismo. Esperamos que los niños que participen en programas de inmersión de idioma en escuelas primarias puedan beneficiar de los conocimientos que se obtendrán gracias a este estudio.

**Explicación y ofrecimiento para responder preguntas:** Marialuisa Di Stefano le ha explicado este estudio de investigación y ha contestado a todas sus preguntas. Puede hacerme cualquier otra pregunta.
CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

De cómo los niños en los primeros grados, dentro del contexto de su programa de aprendizaje de idiomas por inmersión, conocen los idiomas y la pertenencia a un lugar.

que tenga sobre esta investigación comunicándose conmigo, la estudiante graduada, Marialuisa Di Stefano, en persona, por correo electrónico (marialuisa.distefano@aggiemail.usu.edu), por teléfono o por mensaje de texto (787-509-2110) en cualquier momento. Si quiere contactar al investigador principal, el doctor Steven Camicia, la estudiante graduada Marialuisa Di Stefano puede asistirle en la traducción y un encuentro en persona con el investigador principal.

Participación de naturaleza voluntaria y derecho a retirarse sin consecuencias: Su participación y la de su hijo/a en esta investigación es totalmente voluntaria. Su hijo/a puede negarse a participar o retirarse en cualquier momento sin consecuencia alguna, ni pérdida de beneficios.

Confidencialidad: Los registros de la investigación se mantendrán en forma confidencial, en cumplimiento con las reglamentaciones federales y estatales. Los datos se guardarán en una carpeta de acceso restringido en Box.com, y sólo serán accesible por el equipo de investigación. Box.com es el sistema de almacenamiento de datos cifrados y basado en la nube que utiliza USU. Para proteger su privacidad, su información personal que permite identificarlo será eliminada de los documentos del estudio y se reemplazará por un identificador del estudio. La información que permite identificarlo se almacenará en forma separada de los datos, y se guardará en un archivo con llave durante diez años.

Declaración de aprobación del IRB: El Comité institucional de revisión (Institutional Review Board, IRB) para la protección de los participantes humanos de Utah State University aprobó este estudio de investigación. Si tiene preguntas o inquietudes sobre sus derechos o datos relacionados con la investigación, desee comunicarse con alguien fuera del equipo de investigación, puede comunicarse con el director del IRB al (435) 797-0567 o por correo electrónico a irb@usu.edu para obtener información o para darnos sus aportes.

Copias del consentimiento: Usted ha recibido dos copias de este consentimiento informado. Por favor, firme ambas copias y guarde una para su registro.

Declaración de los Investigadores: "Certifico que, yo o el personal de la investigación, hemos explicado el estudio de investigación a cada persona, y que cada persona comprende la naturaleza y el objetivo, los posibles riesgos y los beneficios asociados con la participación en este estudio de investigación. Se han respondido todas las preguntas al respecto."

Dr. Steven Camicia
Investigador principal
(801) 518-3193
steven.camicia@usu.edu

Marialuisa Di Stefano
Estudiante graduada
(787) 509-2110
marialuisa.distefano@aggiemail.usu.edu

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CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

De cómo los niños en los primeros grados, dentro del contexto de un programa de aprendizaje de idiomas por inmersión, conocen los idiomas y la experiencia a un lugar.

Consentimiento de los padres o de los tutores

Doy permiso a mi hijo/hija __________________________ para participar a este estudio.  
(nombre en imprenta del alumno/a)

Firma de los padres o de los tutores Fecha

Relación con el alumno/a: __________________________

(En esta sección a continuación, solicitaré la autorización de su hijo para que participe en este estudio.)

Guía de consentimiento para niños/jóvenes: Tu(s) padre(s) o tutor(es) están al tanto de este estudio de investigación y han brindado su autorización para que participes. Comprendes que participar depende de ti, aun cuando ellos hayan dicho que sí. Si no quieres participar en este estudio, no tienes que hacerlo y nadie se enfadará si no lo quieres hacer o si cambias de opinión más tarde y quieres dejarlo. Puedes hacer las preguntas que quieras sobre este estudio, ahora o más tarde. Al decir que “sí” oralmente, accedes a participar.

Firma del alumno/a Fecha

El contacto para preguntas: Marialuisa Di Stefano, 787-500-2110
CURRICULUM VITAE

MARIALUISA DI STEFANO

(787) 509-2110
marialuisa.distefano@aggiemail.usu.edu

EDUCATION

Utah State University, Logan, UT, 2017
School of Teacher Education and Leadership
Ph.D., Education
Specialization: Curriculum and Instruction
Emphasis: Cultural Studies and Bilingual Education
Dissertation: Understanding how emergent bilinguals bridge belonging and languages in dual language immersion settings.
Doctoral Committee Chair: Steven P. Camicia, Ph.D.

Washington State University, Pullman, WA, 2012
M.A., Foreign Languages and Cultures
Committee Chair: Ana María Rodriguez-Vivaldi, Ph.D.

University of Messina, Messina, Italy, 2006.
M.A. in Humanities
Areas of Concentration: Journalism and Communication.
Thesis: Meeting Places and Social Spaces of Intercultural Relationships.

University of Messina, Messina, Italy, 2004.
B.A. in Humanities
Areas of Concentration: Journalism and Communication.

CURRENT POSITION

RESEARCH

Refereed Journal Publications


Conference proceedings


Book Chapters


**Di Stefano, M.** (2008). Modelli culturali ed influenze dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa italiani: luoghi di incontro e spazi sociali per le relazioni interculturali a Messina. [Cultural patterns and influences from Italian mass-media: meeting social places of intercultural relationships in Messina]. In S. Taviano (Ed.) *Migrazione e Identità culturali* (pp. 239-252). [Migration and cultural identity]. Messina, Italy: Mesogea. [Invited]

**Manuscripts in progress**


Gelles, L., Villanueva, I., **Di Stefano, M.** (In Preparation). Ethical Mentoring and Tokenism: Perspectives and Responses of Science and Engineering Female Graduate Students and Faculty Under Intersectionality Lens.


**Refereed Conference Presentations**


Di Stefano, M. (2014). The Dual Language Immersion Class as a Third Space in the Co-construction of Global Awareness. Fifth International Conference of Language Immersion Education, Salt Lake City, UT.


National Presentation (Invited)


Research Projects

Postdoctoral Research Fellow – Working on STEM Education, Inclusion, and Policy, as part of a NSF CAREER Grant. Principal Investigator: Idalis Villanueva, Ph.D.

Co-Investigator with Steven Camicia, Ph.D. – An ethnographic study on identity development in a dual language immersion class. 2016-2017.

Research Associate and Data Analyst – Women graduate students and faculty in Science and Engineering: A case study on ethical mentoring. Principal Investigator: Idalis Villanueva, Ph.D. Funded by the Center for Women and Gender at Utah State University. 2016-2017.

Co-Investigator with Idalis Villanueva, Ph.D. – A narrative ethnography study on the education of high school blind and visually impaired students in engineering. 2016-2017. Funded by the National Science Foundation.

Co-Investigator with Beth MacDonald, Ph.D. – A mix-method case study on a mathematics intervention on an elementary Latino English Language Learner.

**Research Assistant** – Meeting to facilitate research using data from the IEA International Civic and Citizenship study. 2015. Principal Investigator: Ryan Knowles, Ph.D., Funded by Spencer Foundation.

**Co-Investigator with Sherry Marx, Ph.D., and Sue G. Kasun, Ph.D.** – An ethnographic study on global education and language acquisition in a Spanish dual language immersion class. 2014-2016.

**Research Grants Under Development**

**Principal Investigator** – Improving Cooperation and Partnership Between Teachers and Parents of Dual Language Learners (under review, $2,500).

**Principal Investigator** – Closing the Opportunity Gap: Enhancing Partnership Between TESOL Teachers and Families in Dual Language Education Settings. (under review, $2,500).

**Awards & Professional Recognition**

*Graduate Enhancement Award 2016,* Utah State University, $4,000.

*Best Presentation,* Student Research Symposium 2015, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services for project entitled, “Culture Bags and Latin@ Popular Culture: Integrating Critical Pedagogy in a Dual Language Immersion Setting,” Utah State University.

*Frederick Q. Lawson Fellowship 2015 from the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services,* Utah State University, $5,000.

*Frederick Q. Lawson Fellowship 2014 from the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services,* Utah State University, $5,000.

*Outstanding Graduate Student in Spanish,* 2012, Washington State University.

*Friends of FarmHouse Fraternity Award,* 2011. Washington State University.


**Bonino-Pulejo Foundation Scholarship**, 2008, for the project entitled “Mass media and multimedia convergence and synergy,” University of Messina, $6,000.

**Mario Francese award**, 2006, for the project entitled “Meeting Places and Social Spaces of Intercultural Relationships,” Italian Journalists Association of Sicily, $1,000.

**Italian Movement for Life award**, 2001 for the project entitled “A compass for science.” Award: visit to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, France.
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate and Undergraduate Courses

Utah State University, 2013-2016

**ELED 3000: Introduction to the historical, social, and cultural foundations of education and Practicum Level II.** Undergraduate course on the interdependence of school and society, along with the influence of that interdependence on curricular and instructional practices in early childhood, elementary, and middle-level classrooms.

**ELED 4050: Teaching Social Studies and Practicum Level III.** Undergraduate course on curriculum and methods of instruction for social studies education in primary and elementary grades. Democratic education and perspective consciousness are central themes.

**TEAL 4745/5745: Second Language/Literacy Acquisition and Development.** Co-teacher. Graduate and Undergraduate course that emphasizes the role in which languages, culture, power, and the educator play in the second/third language/literacy acquisition in the classroom. Additional requirements for graduate students.

**ESOL 1050: Academic Reading. English as Second or Other Language.** Undergraduate course designed to provide general strategies for improving reading skills for academic course work. Includes critical reading, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Also, encompasses skills in taking notes, preparing for exams, and interpreting visual aids.

Washington State University, 2010-2012

**SPANISH 204: Continued practice in spoken and written language.** Undergraduate course on Spanish language with selected texts and experiences in a cultural context.

**SPANISH 205: Undergraduate course on Spanish Intermediate Conversation I.** Intermediate-level conversation practice on Latin American and Caribbean culture and texts in small groups with a near-native speaker.

**ITALIAN 105: Italian Elementary Conversation.** Elementary-level conversation practice on Italian culture and texts in small groups with a native speaker.
International Service


Advising and University Service

Co-Facilitator of International Student Teaching Program in Italy, 2014-2016. Assistance in the establishment of this new students teaching program in partnership with the Italian Department of Education, Regional District of Lombardy, Milan, Italy. Utah State University.

Co-Facilitator of Elementary Preservice Teachers’ Seminars, 2014-2016. Assistance in the organization of seminar on diversity inclusion, issues of poverty, ethnicity, religion, and gender in education, along with learning differences, including those related to the historic marginalization of underrepresented groups in our society. Utah State University.

Student Teachers Supervisor, 2014-2016. Supervision of student teachers in elementary grades during their Level II and Level III field experience. Utah State University.

Dominican Student Association Member, 2013-2016. Serve as member of the association, providing leadership guidance and support in the organization of main events in order to promote a multicultural and inclusive culture on campus and in the community.


Multicultural Club President, 2012-2013. Leadership and supervision of undergraduate students’ club members to promote diversity through cultures and languages throughout the campus and the local community.

FarmHouse Fraternity Live-in advisor, 2010-2012. Serve as a non-member, advisory voice during regular meetings, act as a confidant and counselor, assist individual members in finding professional help when need be, model leadership, assist in management of emergency situations. Washington State University.

**Other Teaching Experience**

**Education Assistant**, first grade Dual Language Immersion class (Spanish-English), Logan, Utah, 2013-2016.

**ESOL instructor**, taught English as Second or Other Language for Global Academy English Program at Utah State University, undergraduate English immersion program for international students, 2014.

**Spanish Instructor**, taught Spanish language and culture for high-school students in the Upward Bound program at Utah State University Eastern, 2013.


**CERTIFICATIONS**

Dual Language Immersion and English as Second Language Endorsement.

K-6 Teaching License, Italian Ministry of Public Education.


**CONTINUOUS LEARNING & SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

**Professional Affiliations**

**ACTFL** (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign languages) 2016-present (Immersion SIG).

MABE (Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education) 2017.

MaFLA (Massachusetts Foreign Language Association) 2017.

NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education) 2017.

TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) International Association 2017.

Self-Selected Professional Development

Fulbright Grants for Postdoctoral and Early Career Webinar, online May 2017.

AERA Centennial Lecture Series, online and in person, from November 2016 to April 2017. Conference presentations and debates about bilingual education, early education and the brain, supporting college students’ success, early child care and education, issues of power and poverty in education, school discipline.

Graduate Training Workshop Series, workshops on grant proposal writing, poster and slide design, data services management, IRB data security, graphs and data plots design, Utah State University, Logan, UT, October 2013-May 2016.

Research Week Presentations, Utah State University, Logan, UT, April 2015.

Brown Bag presentations and LGBTQA Outspoken panel presentations, Access and Diversity Center, Utah State University, Fall 2014 – Spring 2016.

First Annual USU Inclusive Excellence Symposium, Utah State University, Logan, UT, October 2013.