"Is Something Wrong with Me?":

Understanding the Identities of English Learners in Higher Education

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THESIS

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> *"Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life"* (Galatians 6:4-5).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Details
EL	English Learner
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
SNS	Social Networking Site
DWP	Developmental Writing Program

SUMMARY

In educational institutions, there are many ways students become marginalized or feel "othered." Some of these categories of marginalization include race, gender, skin color, and sexuality, but one category not often discussed, particularly in higher education, is by language. Each student comes to school with unique background experiences, cultural practices, and even attitudes toward learning. For ELLs (English language learners), one of their academic needs may be specialized language instruction, yet there exists several complications in the way they are placed into their English courses as well as the labeling of these students as they enter postsecondary institutions. Upon entering U.S. colleges and universities – institutions that have historically played a significant role in enforcing policies of monolingualism and English-only movements – many ELLs are viewed in deficit terms and attributed labels such as *difficult*, *underachieving*, and *deficient* (Gaffney, 1999; Harklau, 2000; Yoon, 2008). Ensuingly, ELLs in higher education become viewed as a single monolithic, homogenous group; more importantly, standard academic English continues to be the norm against which the linguistic "others" are measured.

Through a qualitative case study that employed an ethnographic data collection method (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003), this inquiry examined how six undergraduate students in a first-year writing course that is designated for ELLs see themselves and are seen by others in relation to the target language and culture of a U.S. postsecondary institution. Their experiences with learning English, relative closeness of the bond with their parents' cultural heritage and native language, episodes of language brokering, and prior enrollment in a bilingual or ESL program were important factors that intersect as they negotiate their identities as college students and understand certain terms like *ELL student, literate*, and *smart*.

The second focus of this research study examined identity and literacy practices on SNSs (social networking sites) by considering their use in context. As the world becomes increasingly more diverse with respect to language and technology, being literate, particularly in today's digital age, requires knowing how to use digital texts (e.g., images, videos, and hyperlinks) for navigating nontraditional spaces. There is an increasing number of students communicating online, each one of them reading and writing thousands of words online each week (Williams, 2008). Notably, the digital literacy practices of today's youths reflect the emerging reality that their social and academic lives are mediated by the ubiquitous presence of SNSs like Facebook, which has over 850 million daily active users on average and 1.35 billion monthly active users. Consequently, digitally-mediated forms of communication have become central to students' lives, and one of the more interesting developments in literacy research has been the ways that students construct and negotiate their identities through digital texts and fully disembodied-text mode that "reveals nothing about their physical characteristics" (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

The images, stereotypes, and identities that are manifested through institutional practices and policies can affect how students are socialized and how they negotiate classroom life and achievement. Findings from this study show that the deficit view and discourse of ELLs in higher education is commonly known and shared among ELLs, yet the *hidden curriculum of schooling* (Harklau, 2000; Auerbach, 1995) which perpetuates negative societal images of students of minority groups can be negotiated. As literacy practices evolve and shift from the page to the screen and from the classroom to digital space, ELLs have found that they can negotiate their identities through digital texts and different multimodal representations.

This study aligns with the extant literature that claim that the deficit views of ELLs do not rest entirely with the 'ELL' term itself. The 'ELL' term is descriptive in nature, as many of the

participants indicated that they self-identify as ELLs due to their linguistic proficiency and parents'

native language. According to researchers like Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) and Hinkel (2004), the

problem of the 'ELL' term stems from the ideological underpinnings, and more significantly, the

institutional identity attached to the term. The categorization and positioning of ELLs in U.S.

postsecondary institutions has led to the development of a subordinated social group and even social

identities. Participants in the study professed to having "problems" with English and how they

sounded (i.e., accents), yet most of the participants disassociated themselves and even dismissed the

institutionalized *ELL student* identity. They recognized that the *ELL student* identity is equated with

identity markers and certain negative images like *disabled*, *slow*, and *unemployed*. The findings of

this study build and extend on the literature by examining the 'offline' or real-world sociocultural

influences of the participants and the participants' positionality in institutions and classrooms. Just as

identities and the study of literacies are inextricably connected, institutional policies, educational

institutions, classroom practices, and cultural dynamics can play a significant role in the creation and

re-creation of labels and identities as students grapple with the lifelong question of, "Who am I?"

This analysis is particularly significant in today's rapidly-growing multilingual and multicultural

society.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fueled by high immigration levels and higher birth rates among minorities – which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as anyone who is not a single-race non-Hispanic White – the United States is undergoing a historic demographic shift. Between 2000 and 2010, there were over 14 million immigrants and refugees entering the United States. In 2010, the nation's Hispanic population surpassed the 50 million mark, growing 43% and accounting for more than half the national growth from 2000 to 2010. Evidently, Hispanics have become the nation's second largest race or ethnic group, and their population is projected to triple to 133 million and represent approximately 60% of the U.S. population by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The rise of racial minorities is also reflected by the growing populations of African Americans (second largest minority group in the United States) and Asian Americans (fastest growing ethnic group in 2012). By 2050 when the nation's population is expected to rise to 438 million, nearly one in five Americans will be foreign born. The burgeoning minority population is indicative of an impending historic shift in which United States will become a majority-minority nation.

As the ethnic, racial, and cultural composition of the United States continues to change, it becomes clear that our nation's schools will also experience the increasing diversity of our society. One salient indicator of the changing voices of our classrooms is the rise of non-native speakers of English. In 2010, there were more than 10 million students from immigrant households enrolled in public schools, and 78% of these students spoke a language other than English at home, according to the Center for Immigration Studies. These students whose native language is not English have been labeled with several terms that have overlapped and changed over the years, including ESL (English

as a second language) student, LEP (Limited English proficient) student, and EL (English learner). Regardless of how they are identified, these students are becoming increasingly present in all U.S. states. ELLs (English language learners) have become the fastest growing segment of the school-age population in the United States, and by 2025, one out of every four public school students will be an ELL (National Education Association, 2008).

Amidst the increase of diverse voices, several myths regarding the languages, backgrounds, and goals of these students began to surface and circulate among schools and even teachers. One popular myth regarding students from non-English-speaking backgrounds is that they all learn English in the same way. On the contrary, ELLs have been reported to be a highly complex group with different levels of immigration status, language proficiency, and educational needs. In addition, more than 75% of the elementary school population and more than half of secondary ELLs are native-born U.S. citizens (National Education Association, 2008). Many of these students may have immigrated to the United States recently or may come from families where only English is spoken. Given this diverse profile of ELLs, there can be no single approach or policy to meet the needs of these students.

What we know with certainty about ELLs is that as a group, they are less educated and more likely to live below the federal poverty line than the overall U.S. population, according to a 2013 report by the Migration Policy Institute on LEP population in the U.S. Whether ELL students were born in the United States or elsewhere, they are not achieving at the same rates as their English proficient peers. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, ELLs averaged 36 points less than non-ELL students in 2011 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment. Evidently, there is a sizable achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs, and research on ELLs at the secondary level show that they lag behind their English proficient peers in

all content areas; they are also more likely to be taught by teachers without appropriate teaching credentials (Abedi & Gandara, 2006; Garcia, 2009; Wolf, Herman, & Dietel, 2010). Meeting the learning needs of ELLs is a daunting task, and as the K-12 ELL population continues to rapidly rise, it becomes clear that educators can expect the same burgeoning presence of ELLs[1] in postsecondary institutions.

In education, there are many ways students are "othered" (Palfreyman, 2012; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, & Riazi, 2002; Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005; Sowa, 2009). For instance, the difference of abilities, attitude toward learning, and achievement can separate or distinguish students from each other. Some additional ways of being "othered" would be by race, gender, skin color, and sexuality. One way we do not talk about very often is being "othered" by language. Too often, educators hold deficit views of non-native speakers of English and these differential expectations have led to the marginalization of ELLs, particularly ELLs in postsecondary institutions. Surprisingly, there is little information about ELLs and their access, participation, and success in postsecondary education. Research on ELLs at the postsecondary level have traditionally focused on their academic writing, which leaves a clear gap in knowledge for the larger issues that ELLs may face in regards to their educational opportunities and participation in higher education (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). I argue that many ELLs – upon entering U.S. colleges and universities, institutions that have historically played a significant role in enforcing policies of monolingualism and English-only movements – are viewed in deficit terms and images such as *difficult*, *underachieving*, and *deficient* (Gaffney, 1999;

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[1] In K-12 settings, students who speak a different language than English are learning English are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. As a population, they are also referred to as 'LMS' or 'Language Minority Student.' The categorization of students as 'ELLs' was introduced to make a distinction between first-language English speakers and those acquiring English as an additional language. I use the 'ELL' term throughout this study to not only index the institutionally defined role 'English Language Learner,' but also to reiterate educators' intended use of conveying neutrality when referring this student population. Unlike the 'ELL' label, which also has its problems due to its emphasis on simply language and learning the code, the aforementioned 'LEP' and 'LMS' labels emphasize minority and limited status. Additionally, I use the acronym 'ELL' to focus primarily on students who went through U.S. schooling as well as international students who have a history of coming to the U.S. for higher education.

Harklau, 2000; Yoon, 2008). They are also viewed as a subordinated social group due to their placement in courses designated for ELLs. The institutional *ELL student* identity and the images associated with it has become a salient issue, particularly in the way ELLs view themselves and are viewed by others.

Purpose Statement

When the proportion of minority students and students from linguistic minority groups grow, schools need to evolve to accommodate the needs of the new student population. In the context of K-12, schools have become accountable to the academic progress of ELLs as a subgroup due to No Child Left Behind. What kind of forces or contextual factors – if any – are influencing what is happening at the postsecondary level? As the ELL population continues to grow, the social, academic, and linguistic norms must also change when a traditionally marginalized group grows significantly (Linton, 2004). However, I argue that ELLs are still overwhelmingly viewed as a homogenous group within higher education and are still assumed to possess the same low-level literacy skills, which in turn have led to the perpetuation of negative images and identities.

U.S. resident ELLs, in particular, have remained a more elusive group to study, according to Ortmeier-Hooper (2008). There are a growing number of ELLs in the U.S. who have completed most – if not, at least some – of their K-12 schooling in the U.S. and feel that that they *belong here* and have lived the *American* schooling experience. Yet when they graduate high school and are placed into low-level, undergraduate courses designated for ELLs, they are prescribed an institutional image that suggests that they require additional services and hold the status of someone who is still a novice in the English language (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). In addition, their placement in these courses can be seen as an iconizing marker of an individual who has yet to become socialized into the dominant linguistic practices of U.S. postsecondary institutions. Ultimately, they

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may feel that being identified as an ELL may make them feel delegitimized – or not "real" Americans. This population of students who are now attending postsecondary institutions in growing numbers is different, however, from the more common phenomenon of international students (i.e., those who lived outside the U.S. and have completed their K-12 schooling in other countries) immigrating to the U.S. purposefully for postsecondary education. These are two very unique populations within the ELL student population, and this study examines the former group and the ways they challenge the negative discourse and identities associated with the 'ELL' term.

It has recently become common to frame literacy experiences as "precursors to or producers of identities" (Hungerford-Kresser, 2010; Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street, 2009). Both what and how one reads and writes can impact how the learner constructs his or her identity, and in today's digitally-fueled environment, the ways the youth read and write have drastically altered. The centuries-long dominance of the medium of books has been replaced by the medium of screens (Kress, 2003), and the *digital youth* are reading and producing thousands of words, symbols, and videos online each week (Williams, 2008). Communication now takes place across a diversity of modes, and the pervasive consumption of digitally-mediated texts has led to an increasing amount of research studies devoted to understanding how students participate in online communities, particularly SNSs. SNSs, like Facebook, have permeated students' academic and social lives, and their participation in online communities has changed how they view themselves and interact with the world. Consequently, the digital literacy practices that have been embedded into students' lives significantly impact their experiences and identity formations not only in the classrooms as learners but also in digital space as members of online communities.

Scholars in many fields, ranging from psychiatry (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012), information science and technology (Zhang, Jiang, & Carroll, 2010; Nie & Sundar, 2013), and sociology (Zhao,

Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008), have examined the use of SNSs and its implication on identity performance and online community life. These studies have revealed, in particular, myriad ways that students use SNSs for articulating their ideal self-identity, fostering a sense of belonging, and constructing self-presentations. This research builds on this literature by examining the "offline" or real-world sociocultural influences of the participants and the participants' positionality in institutions and classrooms. Institutional policies, educational institutions, classroom practices, cultural dynamics, and even the classroom organization can play a significant role in the creation and re-creation of labels and identities as students grapple with the lifelong question of, "Who am I?" This analysis is particularly significant in today's rapidly-growing multicultural society.

Research Questions

To understand how ELLs are making sense of their institutional *ELL student* identity and how they are negotiating their identities in digital space, I will answer the following questions in a specific undergraduate, first-year writing course designated for ELLs:

1. How do ELLs' language-learning experiences inform their understanding of certain terms like *ELL student, literate,* and *smart*?

2. What social and academic identities do ELLs feel are made available to them in higher education?

3. How are higher education writing classrooms and digital spaces on Facebook similar and different regarding the production of identities for ELLs, and how do ELLs negotiate these multiple spaces and multiple identities?

As the fastest-growing group of students in the nation, not all ELLs share the same linguistic backgrounds or learning experiences. For instance, some may have started their schooling in a bilingual or ESL program, and some may have attended a school with a large ELL student

population. In either case, examining the various sociocultural context and instructional approaches by which ELLs learn English can provide a means to better understanding the relationship between language and identity. Moreover, listening to the voices of ELLs as they talk about the terminologies that have been used to describe them, the relationship between English fluency and U.S. citizenship, and what identities and discourses are present in higher education will offer insight into their lives as not only students but also as individuals.

To understand language and identity development of ELLs, I am now going to draw on a sociocultural theoretical framework which explains how language and identity development are intertwined with social and cultural contexts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will review the theories and research that provide the framework and conceptual basis for this study. First, I will focus on a sociocultural perspective of learning, multiple literacies, identity, and gaps and critiques. I employ a sociocultural perspective in this study because it provides insight into: how intellect and higher mental functions originate from social interactions between individuals, how literacy, language and identity are interconnected as well as socially and culturally constructed; and how the relationship between language, literacy, and identity cannot be understood apart from their specific sociocultural contexts.

Second, I will draw on literature that examines the relationship between literacy and identity in order to understand how identity or *identities* shape and are shaped by literacy practices. To first understand the significance of sociocultural theories of learning, I will review various theories of learning over the past two centuries.

Theories of Learning & Literacy

In the 19th century, the wealth of nations was determined by human capital (or physical capital). That is, machines, buildings, and natural resources encapsulated the conception of wealth. But at the turn of the century, the industrial nations (e.g., Great Britain, Germany, and United States) began to shift their attention away from technology toward people (Goldin, 2001). The belief that public education – schooling of the masses – can enhance economic production became increasingly popular. Ensuingly, major industrialized countries began to see that:

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Postliteracy training could make the ordinary office worker, bookkeeper, stenographer, retail

clerk, machinist, mechanic, shop-floor worker, and famer more productive, and that it could

make the difference between an economic leader and a laggard. (Goldin, 2001, p. 264)

Postliteracy training meant providing literacy education to illiterate adults and communities. As a

result, a new economy emerged and the 20th century was coined as the human-capital century. But

for a country to embrace the human-capital century, it required institutional changes in education,

particularly the way the government funded education and the way parents supported their children

to attend school. But what exactly would schooling entail? What would these children learn? And

what would their schooling experiences be like?

Quality human capital is developed from quality education. But when schools first began to

become a formidable institution, there was no "sustained study of how people learn" (Sawyer, 2006).

As a consequence, schooling took on a traditional and limited form known as instructionism.

Instructionism viewed learning as a passive activity and knowledge was regarded as a collection of

facts about the world as well as procedures for how to solve problems (Sawyer, 2006). From this

perspective, learning was centered on "filling the heads" of the students with facts and procedures by

relying on teachers who were supposed to "know knowledge" and know how to transmit them. To

determine the success of schooling, a student was tested on his or her ability to recall these facts and

procedures. However, this Fordist assembly-line model of learning that emphasized a student's

ability to recall and recreate existing structures was not enough for success.

Ideological debates about what education should look like continued to surge throughout the

century. In the 1970s, this debate led to a paradigm shift that revealed instructionism as deeply

flawed. After 20 years of research that involved research from psychology, sociology, and other

scientific disciplines, learning scientists discovered the restriction of instructionism and their

findings were published by the United States National Research Council (Sawyer, 2006). One of the most important findings was that students must gain deeper conceptual understanding rather than factual and procedural knowledge. Acquiring knowledge requires "deep learning" that engages students in authentic practices, and the "values and skills to be taught in school should mirror those encouraged in the home and the cultural community" (Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk, 2008). In other words, students must be taught to be reflective and demonstrate expert knowledge but not simply by "spitting out" the first thought that comes to mind. "They are to be taught how to gather data and size up a situation and to respond only after carefully thinking about a question and potential solutions" (Gaskins & Pressley, 2007). Consequently, schooling must embrace the notion of building on students' prior knowledge, and classrooms must learn to employ a culturally-responsive approach that aligns with the social, cultural, and economic aspirations of the community that it serves.

Later in the 1980s, cognitive scientists also discovered that students can retain material more effectively when they are taught how to apply their newly acquired knowledge in real-world social and practical settings (Sawyer, 2006). The idea that students learn "deeper knowledge" when engaged in real-world activities was reiterated and expounded on by Moje & Lewis (2007). They argued that learning requires participation in something and the best way to think about learning is by using discourse communities – a grouping of people that share ways of knowing, thinking, believing, acting, and communicating. And if we are to accept the notion that learning is always situated within discourse communities (e.g., home and school), we must also accept that learning is shaped by our social environment. Learning, then, takes place in a culture where people interact with each other and use various cultural materials. Consequently, our cognitive development and mental processes are determined by humanity's historically developing and culturally mediated activities.

Sociocultural Theory of Learning

A sociocultural theory of learning suggests that the world is constantly changing the individual. The way we think and act – and the ways we come to do so – are shaped by this dialectical relationship between the individual and social processes. This approach to learning and development was first created and applied by Russian developmental and educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978, 1981) viewed the work of psychologists of the time and argued against the fragmented schools of psychology and their reliance on one explanatory principle for the development of all psychological processes. One of the problems faced by these psychologists was that they believed human psychology could be based solely on the analysis of reflexes or sums of reflexes (Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky said this behavioristic reductionism attributed to the "crisis in psychology." The crisis was grounded on the absence of an unifying theoretical framework that could explain human psychology, so at a time when psychologists were attempting to provide simple explanations for human behavior, Vygotsky sought to resolve this crisis of fragmentation by integrating biological and sociocultural factors into a "new and unified theoretical framework" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

I am now going to highlight the four major concepts from Vygotsky's sociocultural theoretical framework, which are: mediated mind, genetic domains, social origins of development, and zone of proximal development.

Mediated Mind

One of the main concepts of the sociocultural theory is that cognitive functions like reasoning and voluntary attention are mediated mental activities. Vygotsky posited that we do not act directly on the physical world but instead rely on physical and symbolic/psychological tools and artifacts to control the physical environment and mediate our psychological activity. Physical tools, like a

hammer or a paint brush, are outwardly directed and allow us to control and change the physical world. Symbolic tools, like language, serve as "an auxiliary means to control and reorganize our biologically endowed psychological processes" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Vygotsky argued that language is the most powerful symbolic artifact that we possess to mediate our connection to the world and to each other. These tools are created by human culture and are generally modified and passed on from one generation to the next. From Vygotsky's view, the task of psychology should be to "understand how human social and mental activity is organized through culturally constructed artifacts" (Lantolf, 2000).

Genetic Domains

A second theme in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is his use of a genetic method. For Vygotsky, human behavior is inherently socially and culturally organized. And to understand human psychological functioning, Vygotsky argued that we must examine its origins and developmental transitions. In other words, human mental processes can only be understood by considering how and where they occur in growth (Wertsch, 1985). "We need to concentrate not on the product of development but on the very process by which higher forms are established" (Lucy & Wertsch, 1987). This method is predicated on the previously stated notion that we do not act directly on the world. We use tools to change the circumstances that we live in and to mediate our relationship with others. And it is also our tool-using ability that is a necessary condition for the development and governance of human thought. For example, language is the most powerful psychological tool that we rely on to transmit knowledge. It is also the most important tool for the mediation of higher level cognitive processes (e.g., thinking, memory, and directed attention) (Grabois, 2004). Because these tools are continually modified as they are passed down from generation to generation, Vygotsky argued that examining the process of development and higher mental functions requires a historical

approach, one that tracks human mental functioning through the developmental changes it has undergone.

Vygotsky listed four dynamic domains (see below Figure 1.) by which he extended he extended the concept of human development: phylogenesis, sociocultural history, ontogenesis, and microgenesis.

Phylogenesis (light years)
- Species-biological-characteristics of being human

Ontogenesis (centuries)
- Origin and development of the individual

Sociohistorical (decades)
- Language of the social structure in which culture is developed
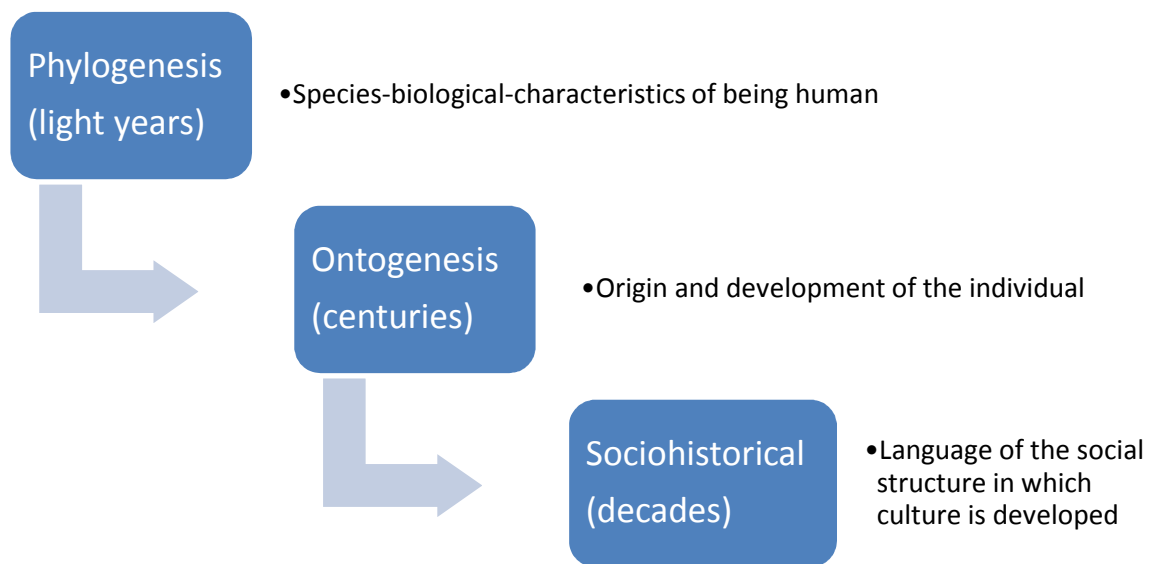
Figure 1. Vygotsky's Timeline of Cognitive Development

The phylogenetic domain is concerned with the changes and development in the evolution of the human species. Vygotsky believed that understanding a species' history can provide insight into an individual's development. It is only in humans that we find the emergence of culture. Unlike chimpanzees and gorillas, humans can engage in direct instruction that leads to learning. So the phylogenetic development is concerned with "how human mentation came to be distinguished from mental processes in other life forms through the integration of mediational means over the course of evolution" (Lantolf, 2000).

Most current educational research has focused on the ontogenetic and microgenetic domains. The former examines how abilities like voluntary memory and planning are formed through the

appropriation and integration of mediational means, primarily language. In a study by Wertsch (1998), adults were asked to multiply two sets of rather high-digit numbers. Most of us would be unable to solve difficult problems without the assistance of some external forms of assistance – mediational tools, like paper and pencil. This study demonstrated the developmental nature of mediation and how mediation improves performance.

The sociohistorical domain refers to the "changes that have occurred in one's culture and the values, norms, and technologies such a history has generated" (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). Essentially, this domain focuses on the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which human activity unfolds. Lastly, microgenetic domain focuses on the "reorganization and development of mediation over a relatively short span of time" (Khatib, 2011). Vygotsky argued for studying concepts and skills in the process of change. That is, he wanted to examine the changes as they occur within and across experimental sessions, and the microgenetic approach reveals "the steps and circumstances that precede a change, the change itself, and the generalization of the change beyond its initial contact" (Siegler & Crowley, 1991).

Social Origins of Development

Another major theme in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is the notion that individual development has its origins in social sources. Vygotsky did not separate individuals from their sociocultural settings, arguing that both biological and sociocultural factors – both nature and nurture – contribute to an individual's development. He believed that the mind is always changing due to this dialectical relationship of the world influencing the individual, and vice versa. In his view of development, he posited that cognitive development involves mental processes that are transformed from basic, biologically determined processes into higher psychological functions. We are endowed by nature with a "wide range of perceptual, attentional, and memory capacities, such as the capacity

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to perceive contrast and movement, the capacity for eidetic memory, and arousal/habituation responses to environmental stimuli, to name a few" (Diaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990). Consequently, Vygotsky argued that human cognition processes are inherently biological, but these rudimentary processes are gradually transformed into higher psychological function through mediated activity.

This transformation from basic to higher functions occurs first between people on the social, interpsychological plane. Because we are immersed in a sociocultural environment from birth, Vygotsky believed that social interaction and social learning preceded development. Higher psychological functions, like voluntary memory and selective attention, develop from mediated social and interpersonal activities between individuals using culturally constructed tools. "We are able to voluntarily and intentionally regulate our mental activity because of the internalization of culturally constructed mediating artifacts including" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Through use of psychological and symbolic tools, we are able to mediate with the social environment.

Through the process of internalization, a new plane of individual mental functioning is created. The intrapsychological or intramental plane is when the individual has internalized the auxiliary means to voluntarily control his own thinking. It is the transition from a material object-dependent activity (e.g., counting objects with a finger) to a material object-independent activity (e.g., counting objects without touching or seeing them). Both psychological and symbolic tools act as a bridge between the social and individual mental functioning. Over time, with the mediation of tools, lower-order mental processes are transformed into higher mental functions.

Zone of Proximal Development

The last concept that contributes to the notion that social interaction informs the development and character of mental processes is Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is the

site where social forms of mediation develop. Arguably his most famous and widely referenced notion, ZPD is not an actual physical space situated in time and space. ZPD is a "metaphor for observing and understanding how mediational means are appropriated and internalized" (Lantolf, 2000). Vygotsky defined ZPD as a the difference between what an individual can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else (i.e., someone more competent and knowledgeable) and/or cultural artifacts. Knowledge, then, is acquired and constructed through engagement and interaction with more experienced members of their society. Vygotsky also argued that a child can perform at a developmentally more advanced level under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers, so the actual "zone" can be explained as a "set of parameters that defines a learner's range of potential in a formal instructional relationship" (Smagorinsky, 2011, p. 50). In the relationship between the learner and the more capable individual, the novice is treated as a communicative being that does not merely repeats the expert's capabilities. Instead, the novice transforms what the expert offers and appropriates it. Thus, the learner develops agency and self-regulation, which is the ability to accomplish activities with minimal or no external support. Consequently, Vygotsky viewed people as active agents with the capacity to transform knowledge as they participate in social practices.

Sociocultural Theory of Language & Literacy

In the previous section, I highlighted the traditional theories of learning in which knowledge was thought to have been acquired through a process of transmission. Teachers were the ones who were responsible for transmitting facts and procedures to students, who were then expected to practice and memorize this information. A "smart student" was someone who would be able to successfully recall and recite this information. A sociocultural perspective provided an alternative theory of development by focusing on students' prior knowledge and diverse background.

Knowledge was to be constructed rather than transmitted from one individual to another. From this perspective, knowledge and intellect is rooted in culture or society, and an individual's development is predicated on interpersonal interactions. That is, knowledge is constructed through engagement and interaction rather than as individuals. Vygotsky also highlighted the significance of psychological and symbolic tools, which we are to use to mediate our interaction and relationship with the social environment. Vygotsky notably singled out language as a mediational tool that serves as the vehicle of learning. Language is also a *cognitive* tool which individuals come to use to process knowledge, a *cultural* tool for sharing knowledge, and a *pedagogical* tool which individuals can use to provide intellectual guidance to another (Mercer, 1995; Mercer, Wegerif, & Dawes, 1999).

Language Ideologies

Language ideologies can be defined as the way we make sense of language, our ideas about the nature of language itself, our rationalization of certain language structures, and the way that specific linguistic codes are connected to identities and stances (De Costa, 2011; Silverstein, 1979). These sets of beliefs are developed through social practices of a given community, and they can be understood as properties that emerge from society activity. Gee (2008) argues that "in socially situated language use, one must simultaneously say the 'right' thing, do the 'right' thing, and in such saying and doing also express the 'right' beliefs, values, and attitudes." So *how* things are said is as important as *what* is said in varying contexts.

All language has an indexical quality. Three semiotic processes that map out the language ideologies of people can be found in the work by Silverstein (1979) and Irvine and Gal (2000): iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. Iconization is the process by which linguistic features or varieties index social groups. It is the process of interpreting the indexical relationship between the linguistic features and the social group's characteristics to become essential, becoming iconic

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representations of them. It is the "attribution of cause and immediate necessity to a connection (between linguistic and social groups) that may only be historical, contingent, or conventional" (Andronis, 2004). Recursivity is the projection of an opposition, salient at one level of a relationship, onto some other level. The same oppositions that distinguish and separate one group from the "other" can also be found within those groups. "Operating on various levels, fractal recursivity can both create an identity for a given group and further divide it" (Andronis, 2004). Erasure is the process by which these distinctions are created and maintained. It describes how ideology makes some person, group, or activity invisible. "Ideological outliers, then, are either discounted as being anomalous or disregarded altogether or ignored" (Andronis, 2004).

Language ideologies as a framework is important for this study because it provides insight into the attitude and beliefs about language that students bring to the classroom. "It is an effective process in which the beliefs and views held by a group of people underlies the actions and behaviours of that social group" (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2012). In this particular study, which examines ELL's language learning experiences, their attitude toward learning English, and their identity as English learners, a language ideological inquiry can explain the relationship between language, identity, and power.

In this study, I also examine the role of language and race as part of the construct of *self-concept*. Language ideologies can evoke racial categories such that certain language use and linguistic features can challenge or confirm our beliefs about race:

Public discourse surrounding the use of non-standard varieties of English and non-English languages in the United States, for example, is *racialized* – that is, expressed with indirect or direct reference to racial categories or using rhetorical patterns most often associated with

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discussions of race and ethnicity, so that an undercurrent of racial distinctions runs through

discourse about linguistic difference. (Shuck, 2006, p. 259-260)

Studies like those of Lippi-Green (1997), Woolard (1989) and Pimentel (2011) have shown that

discrimination on linguistic grounds is publically acceptable and demonstrations of linguistic

differences can be tied to ethnic and class differences (Milroy & Milroy, 2012). For example, an

accent – a cultural phenomenon as well as a cultural dimension of speech – can signify failures of

linguistic order (Hill, 1998). In other words, accents can be a defining negative feature on which

racism is standardized and institutionalized.

Defining Literacy

If one of primary aims of education is to induct children into ways of using language for

seeking, sharing, and constructing knowledge, literacy, then, entails knowing how to take in

information from the world and being able to express them. From a sociocultural perspective,

literacy is not just limited to events that involve simply reading and writing. The standard view of

literacy, however, worked from the assumption that "literacy in itself – autonomously – will have

effects on other social and cognitive practices" (Street, 1995). Starting from the late 1970s and early

1980s, literacy researchers began to challenge this "autonomous model" of literacy which associated

with consequences that have no relation to the social situations in which it is embedded (Evans,

2005). Researchers like Gee (2008) and Street (1995) argued that literacy is not simply a "technical

skill" or "mental operation" independent of social context. Ensuingly, they proposed an "ideological

model" of literacy which focuses on the social practices of reading and writing. This perspective also

reflects a more culturally sensitive view of literacy as they vary from one context to another. This

social definition of literacy stressed that literacy should not just be talked about as a simple matter of

knowing how to encode and decode a particular kind of text. This reconceptualization of literacy as a

social practice also reflects the concept of "multiliteracies," which embraces the notion that reading and writing vary across cultural time and space. We now see literacy as a social and cultural phenomenon that must be understood within context; moreover, literacy must be understood as an interactive and interpretative process that is used differently in different practices by different social and cultural groups.

Digital Literacy

The digital demands of the 21st century require both teachers and students to know that text is now multimodal, which draws on "visual, gestural, audio, and spatial, as well as linguistic, meaning-making systems" (Jacobs, 2006). Yet the changes in communication technologies have not affected the national policies and state standards, which focus almost exclusively on foundational literacies like decoding and reading comprehension (Skinner & Hagood, 2008). The literacy practices of today's adolescents involve engagements such as those with digital technologies (e.g., instant messaging, online social networks, and fanfiction) and popular culture. Essentially, technology has dramatically changed the ways young people communicate.

These emerging literacy practices associated with the digital age and the growing diversity of culture and language force us to recognize that what literacy means today has evolved. According to Lanham (1995), literacy has extended its semantic reach from having the ability to read and write to having the ability to understand information however it is presented. This new concept of "new literacies" or "multiliteracies" (Gee, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) requires that researchers and educators recognize the diversity of communication modes, which include traditional print text as well as digital text – texts which can include spoken, written, visual, aural, and interactive aspects. Kress (2003) echoed this notion of multimodality, arguing that "we can no longer treat literacy – or 'language' – as the sole, the main, let alone the major means for representation and communication."

We now live in a digital age that encompasses the multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, Kalantzis, Kress, Luke, Luke, Michaels, & Nakata, 1996). That is, we are now able to see the imagined realities of others through different multimodal representations, including images and videos. We have moved from the century-long dominance of the medium of books to the medium of screens. And we are now able to write back, change, and alter what is written, thus the flow of information has shifted from unidirectional to bidirectional.

To be literate in today's digital age is to know how to engage in literacy through non-print-based formats like blogs, discussion forms, and SNSs. Still, texts are an integral component and are used in these various digital spaces as part of "lived, talked, enacted, value-and-belief-laden practices carried out in specific places and at specific times" (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). A sociocultural approach to examining literacy would be to examine how an individual acquires the ability to read a particular kind of text in a particular way by emphasizing apprenticeship to social practices.

Research on Identity & Literacy

Literacy theory and research over the past three decades have examined the literacy practices of people, but there has also been a shift in the attention to the roles of text and literacy practices as "tools or media for constructing, narrating, mediating, enacting, performing, enlisting, or exploring identities" (Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street, 2009). Ensuingly, there has been a growing interest among theorists and researchers in language and identity in the field of language learning. They have found that language learning engages the identities of learners because "we perform who are we by (among other things) using varieties of language" (Pennycook, 2003). The work of Bourdieu and

Passeron (1977) and other poststructuralists have drawn on different sources and methodologies and found a mutually constitutive effective between language and identity.

The study of identities, however, is regarded as quite complicated because of the multiple ways of conceptualizing identity. For instance, Moje and Luke (2009) identified five metaphors for identity that have been used in identity literature: difference, sense of self, mind, narrative, and position. Gee (2001) also talks about identity in multiple ways: natural (identity originates from natural world), institutional (identity forms from the place or role within an institution), discursive (identity is revealed in social interactions), and affinity (identity forms through shared experiences). Razfar and Rumenapp (2014) add to Gee's four identities by including the 'learner identity,' which they state as moving from "one of novice to a more competent person in the moment-to-moment instances of activities." I would also add 'digital identity' to the list of identity metaphors. Digital identity is grounded in online platforms, created by the presence of digitally-mediated text, and maintained through disembodied activities.

There exists a seemingly complex connection between literacy practices and identity construction. If literacy is a social practice and not simply a technical and neutral skill to be obtained, then literacy practices vary from one context to another. Consequently, we are then shaped by our historical and cultural environments, and we must rely on social interactions and culturally constructed tools, particularly language, to form the way we think and act on the world. Essentially, it is through language that we are able to express *who* we are and *what* we believe in, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – opportunities to: speak, understand his or her relationship to the world, and construct his or her identity. In this study, I draw from the perspective that literacy is a broader system of written language that transcends individuals and local contexts, a social practice in which individuals engage, and a socially evolved and

patterned activity (Reder & Davila, 2005; Scriber & Cole, 1981). Moreover, I build on the notion

that identities are locally understood and are negotiated – and re-negotiated – in social relationships.

English Language Learners in Higher Education

From 1997 to 2007, there has been a 26% increase in the enrollment of non-native English

speaking students in both undergraduate and graduate programs, according to the U.S. Department

of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2009). The rise of the multilingual and

multicultural presence in colleges and universities has not been this significant since the early 1900s

when a flood of non-English speaking immigrants poured into the United States. Particularly during

the 1960s and 1980s, thousands of students were admitted into colleges and universities due to in

response to open admissions policies (e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1964) and government funding (e.g.,

Higher Education Act of 1965). Among the influx of these incoming students entering postsecondary

education were non-native speakers of English.

Surprisingly, too little is known about ELLs at the postsecondary level. Research on

traditionally underrepresented students in higher education, like ELLs, has tended to focus

exclusively on categories such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and undocumented students

(Kao & Thompson, 2003; Percy Calaff, 2008; Arbona & Nora; 2007; Morales, Herrerra, & Murry,

2009). Remarkably, ELLs have typically been subsumed under one or more of these categories

(Kanno & Varghese, 2010) and have not been studied as a unique population of their own. There are,

however, an overwhelming number of studies that reveal that ELLs tend to lag far behind their

English-speaking peers and English-proficient linguistic minority students in college access and

attainment (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Nunez & Sparks, 2012; Klein, Bugarin, Beltranena, &

McArthur, 2004). Moreover, ELLs at the postsecondary level are at a considerable economic and

educational disadvantage compared to their English-speaking peers. They are more likely to live in a

low-income household, are less likely to have a parent with a two-year or four-year college degree, and have higher dropout rates (Garcia, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009). These facts are particularly problematic for ELLs in higher education because according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2006), approximately two-thirds of the 18.9 million new jobs created between 2004 and 2014 are projected to be filled by those with at least a bachelor's degree (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Now, while it is important that we researchers continue to identify and highlight the socioeconomic disadvantages and linguistic barriers that ELLs may face, it is as important – if not more – to explore other barriers and perhaps institutional structures that my inhibit ELLs' access and graduation within postsecondary institutions.

To accommodate to the surge of minority students and students from minority language groups in the early 20th century, U.S. colleges and universities began to provide more compensatory education for students below average in reading, writing, and arithmetic skills (Payne & Lyman, 1998, p. 68). At the postsecondary level, by way of entrance exams like the language proficiency test, many of these students are placed or *pushed* into "remedial" education programs, also referred to as "developmental education" and "college prep." Studies have shown that ELLs are disproportionately placed into these low-level courses, which in turn can lead to lower academic achievement and reduced opportunities to take college courses (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010). Studies have also shown that ELLs also graduate from four-year institutions at a much lower rate than their English-proficient peers, with only 12% of ELLs attaining a bachelor's degree (Kanno & Grosik, 2012). As ELLs negotiate the academic and linguistic demands of higher education, they soon come to realize that they may be positioned differently from their English-speaking peers. As a matter of fact, much of the scholarly discourse surrounding ELLs positions them as educational *problems* (Mitchell, 2013; Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006). Due to their perceived differences in language and

culture, ELLs are perceived to be linguistically *deficient*. This deficit perspective persists at the postsecondary level, where deficit-oriented descriptors can complicate ELLs' academic and social lives.

Identity Development of English Language Learners

As previously stated, too little is known about the growing population of young adult ELLs who are entering higher education, and it is this lack of research that has provided the impetus for this study. The *ELL student* institutional label and the institutionalized images attached to it can influence how ELLs perceive themselves or are positioned by others. For this study, I examine identity as part of the construct of *self-concept*. According to Rosenberg (1986), self-concept is the "totality of a person's thoughts and feelings in reference to oneself as an object" and identity is that part of the self. An individual's self-concept can develop over the course of his or her lifetime, but more importantly, the individual alone does not have control over the construction of their self. Identity work is a public process that requires both "identity announcement" and "identity placement." That is, the identity an individual claims must be endorsed by others, and only when there is a "coincidence of placements and announcements" can an identity be established (Stone, 1981).

Examining the identity development for ELLs requires that we first understand the complexity of their linguistic and sociocultural learning experiences. For instance, these students may discover that their non-English native language may prove to be a disadvantage or perhaps even inhibit their ability to socialize with their classmates and navigate through school success. This may further complicate what it means to be an ELL. In their study of American-born children of immigrant parents, Chiang and Schmida (1999) found that these students' understanding of the institutional label "linguistic minority" as such that they were expected to "stumble over" and never

fully own the English language because it is not their native language. This example illustrates the implications that institutionalized labels have on ELLs as they develop their concept of self and identities as students.

The social turn of literacy theory and research has shifted the attention toward the role of text and literacy practices as tools for constructing and performing identities. In U.S. higher education, English is the language by which teachers instruct, and it also serves as the primary linguistic system that students use to native through their interactions, classrooms, and the larger institutional structures. ELLs may be unable to escape and negotiate their prescribed institutional identities due to their placement in courses designated for ELLs. Correspondingly, the level of identification by ELLs is informed by their attitude and perception toward their environment. In other words, if they internalize the common expectation of ELLs – that they are not fully comfortable writing and speaking in English and cannot fully integrate in to the mainstream culture of their classrooms – they may align themselves with the deficit images and identities that they are the "others."

Theories of Language Learning for English Language Learners

Learning a new language can be difficult as it requires acquiring new conceptual knowledge as well as modifying existing knowledge as a way of re-mediating one's interaction with the world (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). According to van Esch and St. John (2004), we mediate our learning – including language learning – on an intrapersonal level, but we do it in ways that reflect our interpersonal experiences as sanctioned by our sociocultural environment. In a classroom, for example, there are certain values, behaviors, and shared beliefs among the students that reflect not only their culture but also the larger school and community. More importantly, the linguistic conventions and cultural ideologies of the classroom can foster or hinder students' language learning as they seek to gain communicative competency as well as membership into the classroom.

Over the past several decades, researchers and educators alike have forged new understandings for how language should be learned and taught. Traditionally, there have been three theories that have dominated the discourse in second language acquisition (SLA): behaviorist, innatist, and interactionist. Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov was a classical behaviorist whose work investigated classical conditioning. Pavlov argued that all human behavior can be learned through a mechanical process of stimulus and proceeds by means of positive and negative reinforcement. From a behaviorist perspective, then, language is seen as a habit or as a form of habit (i.e., repetition of same sounds and patterns).

While classical behaviorists like Thorndike, Watson, and Skinner focused on observable behavior and believed that all learning can be scientifically studied, innatist (also referred to as nativist and rationalism) theorists like Chomsky criticized behaviorists for treating learning and language as a simple behavior that can be learned through imitation and conditioning. Innatists focused primarily on the forms of language, and according to Chomsky, we are born with linguistic structures and possess an innate mental capacity for language (Lenneberg, 1967). We are also uniquely disposed to adopt a certain grammar. In other words, any individual can learn a language if they are exposed to it.

In an interactionist model (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Gass, 2002), which I employ in this study, language learning is examined by how it is actually used in society. Language develops from biological, cognitive, and social influences. Interactionists believe that we have a strong biological disposition to acquire a language; moreover, reading, writing, and oral skills are considered socially situated practices, which align with Vygotsky's ZPD.

Another highly debated process of language learning that persists in the field of SLA is between conscious language *learning* and subconscious language *acquisition* (Halliday, 1978;

Krashen, 1981). There are several salient features that demarcate the differences in these two theories. In language *learning*, individuals actively investigate and learn the language through direct instruction in the rules of the target language. They develop awareness of forms and the functions, often through interactions with others. Moreover, individuals have a conscious knowledge of the language and their "success" can be influenced by their aptitude and ability. In language *acquisition*, language is treated as a "commodity," and individuals acquire language through a subconscious process. Specifically, language is acquired only through understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input (Halliday, 1978; Krashen, 1985).

There is a large body of research on second language instructional practices and second language assessment policies (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 2001). While some research has been done on ELLs and their educational experiences as they deal with learning a new language, managing content-area academics, and adjusting to a new institutional environment (i.e., transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education), there is still a need to investigate ELL students at the postsecondary level. "There is a significant lack of communication and articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions in the United States, and colleges are inconsistent in the data they collect and the policies they enact regarding ESL students who enter higher education by way of U.S. secondary schools" (Harklau, 2000, p. 36). The lack of research on the growing population of ELLs and their experiences in higher education provides the impetus for this exploratory study of examining ELLs and their identity formation across two spaces – classrooms that are designated for ELLs and digital space.

Role of Digital Technology in Mediating Language & Identity Development

For ELLs, moving between two environments can be a particularly difficult process. In addition to learning a new language, learners struggle to gain communicative competence,

membership, and legitimacy in a new community. Each community has its own specific linguistic norms, conventions, and pragmatics, and this is most evident in digital space. The literacy practices of today's adolescents involve engagements such as those with digital technologies (i.e., instant messaging, online social networks, and fanfiction) and popular culture. Technology has dramatically changed the ways young people communicate, yet the changes in communication technologies have not affected the national curriculum policies and state learning and assessment standards. These standards continue to focus almost exclusively on foundational literacies (Skinner & Hagood, 2008), like oral fluency with Standard English grammar, comprehension of print-based texts, and written composition of academic texts. From a social perspective of literacy, however, a "successful" student should have both foundational literacy skills as well fluency in digital literacy. The digital demands of the 21st century require for state standards and local mandates to recognize that literacy encompasses the multimodality (i.e., a plurality of text forms) of textbooks as well as the expanded range of modes (e.g., audio, visual, and gestural) for communicating.

These technologically-mediated environments have created a new mode of identity production for youths. They are learning how to enter a community and to socialize with others through their reading and writing. They are achieving this by: recognizing what kind of comments and writing are appropriate for context, establishing a convincing ethos, and understanding general textual convention and the context-specific customers of message and responses (Williams, 2008). Through multimodal compositions, which consist of media-centric forms of engagement, the youth are learning about "social life" and creating a virtual identity. This process of socialization takes place through interest-driven participation, guided discussions, and interactions focusing on social forces, like popular culture (Craig, 2011). We develop our sense of ourselves by developing a sense of "taste in popular culture," which is influenced by social constructions of identity. For example,

the decision "to put images of Orlando Bloom or Jessica Alba on MySpace pages or to list songs by hip-hop artists or teen pop bands shape the identities they [students] perform online and how those identities are read by others" (Williams, 2008). Examining the literacy practices of the *digital youth* may teach us about in what ways they are literate. In addition, the evolving online digital practices show us the importance of identity. We must consider how the youth are reading and writing with words, symbols, and images. More importantly, we must examine how they position themselves in "changing cultural contexts and how that influences their ability to communicate with others" (Williams, 2008). I will now highlight two studies that show how digital technologies afforded ELLs the opportunity to develop literacy and positive academic identities.

Identity Development in Online Communities

Before the late 1990s, there was little research on the construction of self (or identity formation) as it relates to the social context and literacy activities. But the growing number of linguistically and culturally diverse students has prompted researchers to accept the notion that teaching literacy unavoidably involves helping learners negotiate their identities and/or forge new identities (Choi, 2009). The move to study identity's relationship to literacy and literacy's relationship to identity was motivated by an interest in foregrounding the actor in social spaces (Moje & Luke, 2009), and with rapid development of online technologies and digitally-mediated text, researchers are once again re-examining and re-defining the literacy practices and social spaces of today's youth. In today's world of multiliteracies and digital spaces, individuals can create their online identities – or *digital self* – in ways different from the way they present themselves in their face-to-face encounters (Williams, 2008). For ELLs, the allowance of forging new identities in digital space, like SNSs, can be an opportunity to challenge their offline identities.

One of the researchers who contribute to the emerging literature on digital identities is Rebecca Black. Black (2005) examined how an ELL student developed English literacy skills and constructed her identity through online sites. Her study demonstrated how popular culture and online/virtual environment "converge to provide a context in which adolescent ELLs develop a powerful, transcultural identity" (Black, 2006). She focused on virtual spaces – particularly fanfiction – as a platform that crosses traditional cultural, linguistic, and geographic borders. Unlike school literacy, which is often based on traditional, print-based conception of text, literacy in online space can include a multitude of modalities, including images and videos. From this perspective of literacy as a social practice, text is anything that can be "read and comprehended or constructed to share meaning and includes reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing practices" (Skinner & Hagood, 2008). We now live in a digital age that recognizes literacy as much more bounded to print. Text is no longer viewed as just a sequence of alphabetic characters, and according to Skinner and Hagood (2008), text is now anything that can be comprehended or constructed to share meaning.

In Black's study (2005), Nanako, an ELL who emigrated from China to a large Canadian city, practiced with different genres and forms of writing in English through Fanfiction.net, an online site that archives fanfiction. Fanfiction is a type of fiction that is written using another author's characters from a particular TV series, books, etc. Black's study showed that Nanako was able to use her developing writing skills and interest in Japanese comic books to participate in an online, social environment, which allowed her to develop confidence in her identity as a writer. Her first, fictitious stories reflected her adjustment to life and school in a new country. Her early narratives were filled with her daily experiences as an immigrant adolescent. Initially, her focus was to work on her writing by experimenting with and practicing with new genres and forms of writing in English. As readers provided her with "gentle feedback," she became more confident and her writing and

language use gradually developed. Over the years, Nanako achieved the identity of a successful and popular author, thus she was not expected to "adhere to the identity of an immigrant, a Canadian, or a native Mandarin Chinese speaker, nor was she forced to choose between the languages in her linguistic repertoire" (Black, 2005).

Another study that views identity as constantly changing and as socioculturally constructed is a qualitative case study by Jayoung Choi. Choi's (2009) study examined the process of identity construction in an after-school literacy club that used several Asian multicultural literary texts. The four participants in the study, who were adolescent ELLs, responded to several short stories and poems and discussed the readings in face-to-face club meetings. In addition to the meetings, they wrote responses to the books on a private Wiki site, which is an online space where anyone can share his or her work and idea. Engaging with the text through these spoken and written formats to study identity is derived from Rosenblatt's (1938, 2004) transactional theory and model of reading. Rosenblatt suggests that reading is a "transaction" between the reader and text, and that text interpretation is contingent upon the reader's connections to personal experiences. That is, textual meaning does not reside in the work or the reader but evolves out of a transactional relationship between the text and the reader. Rosenblatt also suggests that reading literature aesthetically requires readers to make connections to personal experiences (Choi, 2009), which is an important part of identity building. The findings of Choi's study revealed that the literacy club offered opportunities to talk about where the participants positioned themselves academically, socially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically.

These two studies showed us that there is value in creating spaces for identity negotiations, and for ELLs in particular, establishing a safe and intimate environment can "inspire ELLs to talk about their lives and their feelings, which will in turn foster communicative competence and literacy

skills" (Choi, 2009). However, these studies did not show us how the identities made available in digital spaces, specifically SNSs, compare and contrast to the identities made available in academic spaces, specifically in postsecondary education. As classrooms become more diverse and as students' engagement in digital space become more ubiquitous, more research must be conducted on how ELLs negotiate their identities in digital space. We have all these theories about students having multiple literacies and students having identities in multiple contexts, but there are not enough studies that examine how these theories can be applied to ELLs in digital spaces, particularly SNSs. More importantly, there is little research on the comparison between ELLs in postsecondary education and digital spaces.

<center>**III. METHOD**</center>

Drawing on the theoretical framework discussed in the previous section, I will describe and justify the particular methods used in this study to better understand the following research questions:

1. How do ELLs' language-learning experiences inform their understanding of certain terms like *ELL student, literate,* and *smart*?

2. What social and academic identities do ELLs feel are made available to them in higher education?

3. How are higher education writing classrooms and digital spaces on Facebook similar and different regarding the production of identities for ELLs, and how do ELLs negotiate these multiple spaces and multiple identities?

I begin this chapter by outlining the case study design and methods (e.g., one-on-one interviews and Facebook observations as data sources) for capturing the complexity of six undergraduate ELLs' experiences of learning English and negotiating their identities. I will then explain in detail the data analysis techniques. Following this discussion, I will provide context to the research by describing the site and the participants.

Research Design: Ethnographic Research & Case Study

To answer my proposed research questions, this study employs a qualitative case study and uses ethnographic data collection methods (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Given my interest in how ELLs' perceptions of their lived experiences of learning English can inform how they *do* English and view themselves, a qualitative design best suited this study which would examine the literacy practices and identity work of ELLs in specific contexts. This study employs the conceptual framework of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and an understanding of literacy and identity as a social practice. As an ethnographic study, I collected data in place where literacy practices and

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identity work occur naturally in a sociocultural context by exploring the participants' "perceptions of their experiences and events from their own frames of reference and in as much complexity as possible" (Purcell-Gates, 2004; Israelite, Ower, & Goldstein, 2002). A qualitative approach allows for rich description of the context as a key feature (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Schulze, 2003). In addition, a qualitative approach allows for in-depth examination of the contextual factors that may shape how ELLs view and use English as well as how they shape and negotiate their identities in different spaces.

Moreover, an ethnographic study would allow me to understand the participants' lived experiences by exploring their social practices in a given context through in-depth participant observations, which would yield "rich" descriptions (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Schulze, 2003). These "rich" or "thick" descriptions of the object of study would then be used as a tool to organize data into patterns that arise during analysis. As an ethnographic study, I am seeking to "describe human behavior holistically" (Purcell-Gates, 2004, p. 92) by investigating phenomena in its natural setting in an attempt to identify attributes of it based on an observational basis. The point of ethnographic research is to document social life as a process, so this type of methodology calls for research questions that ask *why, what is happening,* and *how does it work.* In this study, I sought to understand what *how* undergraduate ELLs in a first-year English course understood the institutionalized *ELL student* identity, *what* academic and social identities were made available to them in higher education and in digital space, and *how* these identities were produced.

One form of ethnographic research is case study, which examines an in-depth single case of a larger phenomenon (Barone, 2004). Historically, case-study research have received little recognition and status despite its origins in multiple disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, clinical psychology, and even medicine. The first recorded use of case studies can be traced back to

Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician who was to write critically about superstitions and believed that diseases were caused by natural occurrences. Essentially, he introduced the concept of a disease through a series of case studies. From a more contemporary perspective, case studies were seen as appropriate for only exploratory purposes. Its lack of recognition and status was further perpetuated by the "domination in the post-World War II period by behaviorist psychology, with its tenet that only large-scale experimental studies conducted under ostensibly controlled and context-stripped conditions provided validity and generalizability of findings" (Birnbaum, Emig, & Fisher, 2003). However, case studies have proven to be instrumental in testing theories, producing contrasting results, and providing rich descriptions of the phenomena.

Case studies are an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Barone, 2004). For a research study to qualify as a case study, the data must be reflective of the larger phenomenon under investigation. Researchers, particularly social scientists and practitioners, have used case studies to examine contemporary real-life situations within its real-life context. A critical feature of a case study is the idea of "boundedness." Boundedness defines what is excluded and included in a study. That is, the case being studied is "fixed in time and place and have identifiable confines such as a program, an event, an activity, or an individual" (Birnbaum, Emig, & Fisher, 2003). For example, a ninth-grade classroom may be the focus of the study, so its adjacent classrooms and students are not part of the study. This notion of boundedness requires that the study focus on a particular person, situation or phenomena, the researcher to gather rich descriptions, the findings of the study to enrich a reader's understanding, and the data drive the understandings that emerge from the study (Barone, 2004).

Case studies are valuable today because they allow for the "human element" of research, and they have a rich history in literacy research. Early studies of children's language acquisition and

development included case studies of individual children, including researchers' own children as the source of data. For example, Bissex (1980) observed her son's written language development from the time he was four years old. Her study revealed that her son invented a spelling system and learned how to read by constructing words and messages in an unconventional manner. Her study helped literacy teachers understand how children learn to represent words and ideas in print. Another example of a case study that examined literacy development is the work of Calkins (1983) and her case study of how a teacher can support the writing development of students. She observed one child's writing samples for handwriting, spelling, punctuation, topic, structure, and flow. Her research objective was to observe one child's growth in writing and document the child's grasp of the revision process. She also highlighted the importance of case studies, positing that all students are case studies and that "by understanding the pathways one child has taken in learning to write, we may be able to discern and trust the pathways other children will take" (Calkins, 1983).

In the 1990s, case study research began to examine more explicitly children from marginalized populations, including "high-poverty, language-rich children in the complexity of classrooms" (Barone, 2004). For example, Purcell-Gates (1995) chronicled the literacy development of a White, urban Appalachian family to inform educators about the values and beliefs of the Appalachian people toward literacy learning. The focus of this qualitative, case study was to understand why a child struggled in school, and the findings revealed that phonemic instruction needs to be responsive to a child's knowledge. Because reading was not considered an important value by Appalachian lifestyle and culture, the child in the study did not benefit from formal literacy instruction. Another example was Dyson (1997), who spent two years observing second- and third-grade students and focused on how teachers support diverse student's integration of popular culture – superhero stories – into their reading and writing practices. Her findings revealed that

"incorporating superhero play in the nursery and classroom can have a powerful effect on children's motivation to engage in literacy practices" (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Her work highlights the importance of allowing children to reveal their literacy knowledge by exposing them to forms of literacy other than traditional, print literacy.

At one time, case-study research was a useful tool for only the preliminary, exploratory stage of a research project. Case studies were used to answer questions that begin with *how* or *why* (Barone, 2004). But now, case studies can be used for description, explanation, and exploration. To determine the quality of a case study, it must first use multiple sources of evidence (i.e., interviews, multiple observations, and artifacts). Using multiple data sources allows researchers to discover "a converging line of inquiry." Notably, a case study researcher seeks to establish a chain of evidence and analysis. They want to present the evidence in a linear fashion and explain how each piece of evidence contributes to the conclusion reached. Case study research also emphasizes detailed, contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships (Dooley, 2002). Unlike an experimental study that typically focuses on comparing two or more groups, a case study design is employed to focus on a single individual or phenomena – a single case.

To answer my first research question, I conducted the study in line with the tenets of ethnographic methods, which was to explore social practices in a given context through extended, in-depth participant observations in a particular setting. Over the span of a college semester (5 months), I observed six participants in a first-year, undergraduate English course that is designated for ELLs. While observing, I provided "thick descriptions" in my field notes to provide a portrait of the participants, the teacher, and the overall classroom structure, which later helped me re-examine the context-specific influences of literacy and identity practices.

While it was important to draw on my field notes and my own self-reflections throughout the study as a key feature for these "thick descriptions," this study was also phenomenological as I focused on the participants' lived experiences of *when*, *how*, and *under what circumstances* they learned and used English. Phenomenology research, which is a descriptive methodology of human science, not only explores how people describe experiences and what it means to them but also describes phenomenon as they present themselves in the lived world (van Manen, 1997; Schram, 2006). To adequately address the first research question, I needed to be accepted – or be granted access – as an insider to the participants' lives, which would allow me to listen to their stories of how they came to experience English and learn to see themselves as individuals. These stories included attitudes, feeling, and their beliefs about their English learning experience.

And lastly, an ethnographic methodology helped explore the final two research questions, which is rooted in the notion that identity and language are not only inextricably connected but also informed by institutional settings. This study employs a sociocultural approach to highlight the lives and experiences of ELLs as they learn to see themselves within a particular institutional context and negotiate their identities in digital space.

Case Selection: Research Setting & Target Population

This study took place in the 2013-14 academic year at a large, urban university in the Midwest region of the United States. Specifically, data collection occurred during the fall 2013 semester and the target population was a small number of undergraduate students who are enrolled in a first-year English composition course that is designated for ELLs. The reasons for choosing the setting for this research include: (1) required English course that is designated for ELLs, (2) researcher's familiarity with the structure and technologies of the institution, and (3) researcher's target participants come from the same institutional context. Recruitment of participants was

conducted through email solicitation and snowball sampling. Because having a smaller number of participants allows for a deeper, richer gathering and understanding of the participants' experiences, the study examined six undergraduate students. Criteria for selecting the participants included: (1) self-identifying as an individual who is learning English as a second language, (2) currently taking an English course designated for ELLs, (3) must have an active Facebook account and is an active user, and (4) age 18 or over.

First-Year Writing Program

All undergraduate students at the university research site are required to demonstrate proficiency in written English by earning passing grades in the two-semester series of first-year-writing courses: ENG 420 and ENG 421. A waiver for ENG 420 can be obtained for students who have:

1. Received a grade of 4 or 5 on the AP (Advanced Placement) English Language and Composition test

2. Received a SAT verbal score of 610 or higher or ACT English subscore of 27 or higher

3. Submitted and received approval for a writing portfolio that shows that the proficiency requirements of ENG 420 have been met through coursework at another institution

A waiver for ENG 421 can be obtained for students who have:

1. Submitted and received approval for a writing portfolio that shows that the proficiency requirements of ENG 421 have been met through coursework at another institution

These two courses require students to write multiple drafts and conduct independent research so that they understand producing text for a certain situation and audience. The department emphasizes that students be able to conceptualize and craft a response or an argument, a skill that they find crucial to a successful undergraduate education.

For students who do not place into ENG 420 or ENG 421 as a result of the Writing

Placement Exam, they are required to take preparatory courses: ENG 320 and ENG 321. The former

focuses on the needs of non-native speakers of English while the latter emphasizes developmental

writing in preparation of ENG 420. These courses, which do not count for graduation credits, must

be completed as a prerequisite to ENG 420. According to the university, about 20% of all incoming

freshman are placed into these developmental writing courses. Institutional data showed that

students who were placed in the developmental courses were less academically successful than their

peers, so in an effort to build new support systems, a writing instructor from the university re-

designed ENG 420 and ENG 421 to allow for a more flexible definition of good writing and a more

traditional academic writing course on research and writing. Funded by the AANAPISI (Asian

American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions) grant, the courses were

redesigned in fall 2012 to respond to the real demographics and needs of the student population,

according to the instructor.

University Writing Center

Most undergraduate classes are held on the east side of campus. There are four large, lecture

centers that seat up to 2,000 students, four residence halls that house up to 1,300 students, and the

Student Recreation Facility. With a student population of approximately 27,000, the university

encompasses more than 100 buildings and many of the student activities and events take place on the

east side due to multiple conference rooms inside Campus Center East and the large, centralized

outdoor space commonly referred as 'The Courtyard.'

The Writing Center is also located on the east side of campus and can be found on the first

floor of Frankfort Hall, one of three buildings on campus to have undergone a transition to green

architecture. According to the university, Frankfort Hall is a "model of energy efficiency" and is

among the first campus buildings that can maintain favorable room temperatures all year-round. Inside the Writing Center, students can find writing tutors who are also university students that have been trained to assist other students with language, organization, and clarity issues. All students – not just ENG 420 and ENG 421 students – can attend the Writing Center to seek one-on-one consultation for up to 50 minutes. There is also a Writing Center faculty present and they are responsible for training and supporting the tutors. I am highlighting the Writing Center for several reasons. First, the students in the classroom that I observed were required to attend the Writing Center and make an appointment with a tutor for their writing portfolio assignments. Second, a few of the classes were held in the Writing Center, which was located directly across the hall from where the ENG 420 'ELL' section met.

ENG 420 at Frankfort Hall

As the first required course in the first-year writing program, the university offered 80 sections of ENG 420: Academic Writing during the fall 2013 semester. Among the 40 teachers hired to teach the course was Professor Titus Sung[2], who has taught college-level English courses outside the university, DWP (Developmental Writing Program – summer course that allows incoming students enrolled in ENG 320 and ENG 321 the opportunity to improve their writing skills and possibly receive approval to advance to ENG 420), and several of the university's developmental courses. I was referred to Professor Sung by a senior lecturer at the Department of English, who informed me that Professor Sung was teaching a section of ENG 420 that was "specifically for ELL students." Interestingly, when I conducted an online search on the university's registration web site, I could not find any 'ELL' sections from the available 80 available sections of ENG 420. I contacted Professor Sung to ask how students are able to identify the 'ELL' and 'non-ELL' sections of ENG

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[2] Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants and instructor. Course titles and campus buildings/locations were also given alternate names. The pseudonyms were generated by the researcher and not self-selected.

420, and his response suggested that there is an informal process by which certain students are "targeted":

> The class is directly marketed to appropriate students. In the fall, we use information from [DWP] to target students with revised placements from 320 and 321. Their teachers let them know about the class. Depending on enrollment, there may also be an email to targeted students directly from [first-year writing program]. Students would be targeted according to their placement essay and response to questions that are part of the placement. In the spring, students coming from [ENG 320] and [ENG 321] are targeted. As with [DWP] students, this occurs through their instructors. There may be some word-of-mouth that I am not aware of as well.

> (interview with Professor Sung, September 5, 2013)

From my experience with accessing the registration web site and talking with Professor Sung, it was clear that students who have not been directly informed from instructors or staff members would only be informed of an 'ELL' section of ENG 420 by browsing through the university's English department web site. The institution seemingly makes a visible stance that all sections of ENG 420 are the same; however, the information listed on the university's English department web site indicates otherwise. Consequently, one could make the case that the position of the university is to mask the 'ELL' designation of certain ENG 420 sections.

Notably, some of the participants were unaware of the availability of different sections of ENG 420 and had unknowingly registered for Professor Sung's class. For instance, Grant recalled how he was informed of a class for "kids that spoke a different language first":

> A friend of mine that was in the class...I met him at orientation. And he was like, 'I'm going to be in this class. It's going to help me out.' And I was like, "What class is it? Maybe I'll take it too." Just because...I felt like it would be more...I feel more comfortable in the classroom.

> (interview with Grant, October 14, 2013)

While Grant expressed optimism about his class selection, Jordan believed that he should not have chosen Professor Sung's class, which he did not consider as "normal." "I didn't know it was an ELL section...I felt like I've kind of moved past that. I don't need that much help as the other students."

Jordan expressed an elevated status and social worth; moreover, he believed that he did not belong in

the classroom because he did not have an accent:

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I noticed that when the students are speaking...they would start speaking
and they have a really thick accent. You could tell that
they're...like...I'm not trying to be bogus about it or anything but you
could kind of tell that yea...that's the class for them. For me, I was
like...I dunno...do I really sound like I really this class?
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<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)</div>

In this narrative, we see that Jordan expresses the popular discourse of standard language ideology.

According to Lippi-Green (1994), the standard language ideology "extends as far as discrimination

against those whose accents differ from the norm, particularly those accents associated with racial,

ethnic or cultural minorities…the ultimate goal of such ideologies is the suppression of language

variation of all kinds." Jordan's self-assessment of his English proficiency separates him from his

classmates with accents, which can be emblematic of attributing those who do not possess the

standard variety of English as part of a subordinated group.

When I asked Professor Sung if he alters his instruction for an English class that has no

institutional mark indicating that it is intended for ELLs yet is still institutionally recognized as for

ELLs, he explained that he tries to emphasize critical thinking, organization, and rhetorical skills.

"While I do grammar in the classroom, my strategy really is to deal with that primarily as part of the

individual meetings I have with each paper. My students have a variety of backgrounds and their

grammar issues seem to vary more widely..." His explanation is also reflected in his course syllabus,

which does use the 'ESL' term, although not in the way as I had expected:

> This class is designed to recognize the benefits and advantages of bilingualism, and to serve
> the needs of bilingual and English language learning students. This is not an ESL class—
> instead, the class will explore global rhetoric, focus on the cultural norms of American
> Academic and public discourses, and help students find ways to express linguistic diversity
> while still communicating clearly and effectively with a chosen audience. We will examine
> both personal and public writing, and also examine how our language choices and forms
> change when moving in and out of different linguistic contexts. (ENG 420 course syllabus,
> fall 2013)

According to Professor Sung – who has taught college-level English courses since 2005, ranging from community based ESL classes at community colleges to mid-level ESL classes designated for recent U.S. immigrants – his section is not an ESL class, which would traditionally focus on developing grammar and vocabulary skills. He viewed his class as a composition class with a primary objective that mirrored that of the 'non-ELL' section. He crafted the course description and added "This is not an ESL class" as a preventive measure. That is, he feared that his students would equate his section or any of the other 'ELL' sections to a language assistance program. "The statement about ELL versus ESL is to show that it is a regular writing class for a select group of students, as opposed to a class that is teaching English," he clarified.

Professor Sung crafted his curriculum in a way that would allow for his students to improve their grammar skills and to have an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to essay organization, argumentative writing, and rhetorical awareness. The participants' narratives revealed, however, that despite what was explicitly written in the syllabus, several of them felt that their placement in Professor Sung's class would position them with the negative images and stereotypes associated the *ELL student* identity. I will explore this more in the following chapter.

Recruitment

In the summer before the fall of 2013 semester, I contacted two instructors who were scheduled to teach ENG 320 and 420 via email communication. The email provided an overview of the research (e.g., purpose statement, duration of study, and number of participants that I was seeking) and explained that I would be a participant-observer in their class for the entire semester. The first instructor, Meg Michaels, agreed to participate in the study and offered her ENG 320 as well as ENG 420 sections as potential research sites. She is also credited for recommending me to Professor Sung's section, which I later chose as the research site.

During the first week of the fall 2013 semester, I was able to observe all the class meeting days of Professor Michaels' sections of ENG 420 as well as Professor Sung's ENG 420 section. Both instructors allowed me to give an in-class recruitment announcement, and at the end of the week, they provided me with their students' contact information so I was able to email the students a recruitment script. By the third week of the academic semester, I received six signed consent forms from Professor Sung's ENG 420 'ELL' section.

Participants

Six students participated in the study. The participants met on the first floor in Lab 104 at Frankfort Hall three days per week, fifty minutes per day, for one semester from 10 am-10:50 am. All of the participants received a $50 Amazon.com gift card at the conclusion of the study.

The demographics of the participants varied across ethnicity, familiarity with bilingual education, and even birthplace (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1
Demographic of Participants

Participant	Gender	Place of Birth	Language(s) Spoken at Home	Classification
Alyssa	Female	United States	Spanish	Freshman
Cameron	Male	United States	Spanish	Freshman
Daisy	Female	United States	Korean	Freshman
Grant	Male	United States	Spanish	Freshman
Jordan	Male	United States	Spanish	Freshman
Morris	Male	Africa	Bambara, French	Sophomore (transfer student)

Table 2

Language Background of Participants

Participant	Enrolled in Elementary or Secondary ESL/Bilingual Program?	Initial ENG Placement	Enrolled in DWP
Alyssa	Elementary	ENG 320	Yes
Cameron	Elementary	ENG 420	No
Daisy	Elementary, Secondary (freshman year only)	ENG 320	No
Grant	Elementary	ENG 420	No
Jordan	Elementary, Secondary	ENG 320	Yes
Morris	No	ENG 420	No

All but one participant – Morris – had been enrolled in an ESL or bilingual programs during their elementary or secondary years. Despite having completed his primary and secondary schooling outside the U.S., I chose Morris as a participant because I believed that his language learning experience and recent exposure to English as well as American schooling would provide a different lens to analyze and make sense of the data. According to Razfar & Simon (2011), students like Morris – who have graduated high school and completed some college – may have "reading and writing skills in her or her own language but just need help with carrying these skills over to English" (p. 598). The addition of Morris as a participant served to highlight the similarities of the experiences of the other five, who were educated in the U.S. as designated ELLs, as well as understand what similarities they had with a student who was not designated as an ELL until he arrived to the U.S. for postsecondary schooling.

Data Sources

In accordance with a qualitative, ethnographic research design, data was collected from multiple sources through various methods that are humanistic and interactive. These methods

included interviews with the participants, participant observation of Professor Sung's classroom, field notes, and gathering relevant student-produced documents and observations of digital literacy practices. Table 3 details my data collection procedures over the semester-long study. I provide a detailed description of the data sources and the procedures in the sections below.

Table 3
Data Collection Timeline

Month	Data Collection
August	• Familiarized self with context (i.e., research site, learning context, instructor, and students) • Informal observations began
September	• Formal observation and data collection began • Chose six participants • Had informal meeting with the participants to collect consent form and provide overview of research study
October	• Continued formal data collection • Conducted Interview #1-3 • Conducted Facebook Observation #1
November	• Continued formal data collection • Conducted Interview #4-5
December	• Continued formal data collection • Conducted Interview #6 • Conducted Facebook Observation #2 • Collected student artifacts

Participant Observation

In carrying out this qualitative study, I attended and observed Professor Sung's ENG 420 class from August 2013 until December 2013, which is the period of the university's fall 2013 academic semester. As a participant-observer, I established membership in the classroom by attending every class, observing whole-class discussions and small-group work activities, and

interacting – when the opportunity presented itself – with the students. In essence, I familiarized myself with the classroom norms and practices.

On the first day of instruction, the professor identified me at the beginning of class and announced to the students that my role in the class is to observe them for research purposes. I immediately took the back corner table in the classroom because the vantage point from the corner left table allowed me to have a clear sight of all the students as well as the teacher's podium. And from where I sat at the table, I was able to identify the students as they entered the classroom. For the first two weeks, I behaved more like an observer by sitting quietly and taking notes of the students' behaviors and interactions as well as the instructor's instructional practices. Students no longer sat at my table starting the second week because they had relegated my table as *that guy's table* where only *that guy John* or students who arrive late to class can sit, according to the participants in the study. They also informed me that most of the students had believed that I was indeed a student at the university, yet they suspected that I did not share the same undergraduate status as them.

By early September, I had received six consent forms from the students and I began my formal classroom observations and data collection. I developed relationships with the students but always focused my attention on the participants. I spoke to the students – again, some more than others – before class and even after class. The conversations that I heard during class shifted between class-related topics (e.g., assignment due dates and asking each other on their progress) to out-of-school topics (e.g., latest Netflix shows, weekend party rumors, and fraternity and sorority events). As the semester progressed, I engaged in more conversations with the students, and often times they asked about the progress of my research. A few of the students were even apologetic about not participating in the study and explained that their class schedule would not permit them to

commit to my research study. I shifted in and out of the researcher and "peripheral membership" (Morita, 2004) roles over the semester, and although they never viewed me as someone with authority, my interactions with the participants – all of whom I observed to be the most active and participating students in the class – allowed me to gain a social and communicative membership as simply one of the students.

Field Notes

To become familiar with the classroom norms and practices, I recorded descriptive details about the classroom structure (e.g., table arrangements and instruction sequence), class discussions, and the small-group activities. As an ethnographic researcher, I wanted to preserve the experience close to the moment of occurrence by detailing the overall nature and interactional processes that occurred in the classroom. So at the start of each day, I recorded the class attendance, the number of students at each table, where my participants sat, and the daily class agenda. When class began, I typed observations and paid close attention to how my participants responded to the instructor's questions, the whole-class discussions, and small-group activities. I have field notes for all the classroom lessons (31 notes) with the exception of one missed class day to my illness.

Through the review of the field notes and the audio recorded interviews, I was able to bridge the participants' self perceptions of their participatory levels and how they viewed and felt they are viewed by their classmates. Field notes can reveal the verbal and nonverbal behavior and informal interactions among the students and the instructor; moreover, these observations were helpful in identifying themes that illustrate the ways identities can be constructed by everyday literacy practices, language use, and popular discourse of standard language (e.g., accent). According to Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw (1995), writing field notes encourages researchers to observe more systematically in order to observe the unspoken and spoken curriculum and practices in the

classroom. These field notes were pivotal in the ways I reflected as a researcher during the study and for crafting follow-up questions. It became clear during my data analysis that the field notes were a useful supplement to the taped interviews as they provided the "meaning and context" that Bogdan and Biklen (1982) refer to.

Interviews

The primary source of data was the one-on-one interviews. According to Seidman (1998), conducting interviews can help researchers understand the experience of other people and the meaning that they make of it. Moreover, the interviews will allow for an opportunity to get more explicit statements and in-depth responses from the participants. Through these interviews, which were audio recorded and ranged from 30 minutes to an hour, I sought to elicit information such as the participants' experiences of learning English, their language use patterns in difference domains, their attitudes towards English, how they understood the 'ELL' term, and in what ways they negotiated their identities in response to the institutionalized 'ELL' identity.

I spaced each of the six interviews at least two to three weeks apart, and the sixth and final interview was scheduled in the final week of instruction. In the first interview, I inquired about their background. Some of the questions that I asked related to their family's immigration status and journey, their first experiences of learning English, their initial impressions of college, and their English course placement. The second and fourth interviews (See Appendix B) delved into the participants' views and experiences of learning English, their placement into ENG 420, and how they view themselves. For instance, I asked how they introduced themselves to their classmates, their language use when interacting with their classmates, how they view their classmates, and how they self-identify in terms of not only their cultural and linguistic background but also their English proficiency. The questions in the fourth interview focused on how their initial reactions and response

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have changed as the semester progressed. For example, I asked questions like, "How has the way you viewed yourself changed?" and "How have your expectations for the course changed since the beginning of the semester?"

The third and fifth interviews were directed toward gathering information about the participants' Facebook use. Specifically, these interviews sought to understand how their digital literacy practices inform and affect their identity formation. These interviews examined what type of identity claims they make on Facebook, how they display their idealized *digital self*, and what type of literacy practices are valued or not valued. The final interview was an opportunity to ask any follow-up questions based on their responses to the previous five interviews.

These repeated interviews helped reveal the changes as well as the participants' journey as undergraduate students in an 'ELL' class. Because I am aiming for a more naturalistic conversation, I did not ask the same questions. Each subsequent interview was built on the previous interviews. Participants were informed that a pseudonym will be used to protect their identity, and they were reminded throughout each interview session that breaks are allowed whenever they feel the need to take one during the interview. I conducted each interview in a private office on campus where I worked as a research assistant for the university. I shared the office with three other officemates but I notified each of them to prevent disruptions and ensure privacy. I transcribed a total of 36 interviews (6 interviews per participant) and most of the interviews were transcribed immediately after or in the following day. Throughout this process, I learned to recognize the centrality of transcription in qualitative research and understood that my "thick" data would be found in these audiotaped, digital files (Poland, 2002; Agar, 1996).

Time-Use Diary

Another primary source of data will be the students' time-use diaries. Because I examined the multi-layered and overlapping spaces of interactions through SNSs in which identities are negotiated, this study included extensive descriptions of the participants' Facebook activities that they engage in on a daily basis. The time-use diary was used twice – once in October and once in November. The participants recorded their Facebook activities for three consecutive days of their choosing. The type of information that were recorded are: the frequency and duration of Facebook use, number of posts, type of posts, and content of posts.

Facebook Observations

All six participants met with me twice during the semester for Facebook observations. These observations were necessary to have a better contextual understanding of their actual Facebook activities. The participants were asked to bring their laptops for the observations, which lasted between 30-45 minutes.

As an "insider observer" (Creswell, 2008), I observed the participants *use Facebook* which included browsing through their News Feed, browsing through their friend's photos, commenting or 'Liking' a post, and updating their status. During the observation, I took notes and recorded their activities. As expected in the first Facebook observation, the participants felt compelled to ask for directions in regards to what type of Facebook activities they should engage. Some asked, "Do you want me to show you something in particular?" while others simply said, "That's pretty much all I do. What else do you want to see?" Their willingness to guide me through their Facebook profiles and even their private messages allowed me to explore in-depth how the participants create an online presentation of themselves by employing multimodal representations. During the observations, I also asked the participants to take screenshots of their profile information pages and certain distinct instances when they employed multimodal practices of communicating or displaying their identities.

Data Analysis

Before I discuss the data analysis, I present Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, which provides an overview of how my data sources and analyses connect to the research questions.

Table 4
Summary of Research Procedures, Research Question No. 1

Data Collection	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis
Interview #1	Appendix A	• Transcribe taped interview • Create coding scheme
Interview #6	Participants were asked follow-up questions based on their responses to Interview Protocols	

Table 5
Summary of Research Procedures, Research Question No. 2

Data Collection	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis
Interview #2	Appendix B	• Transcribe taped interview • Create coding scheme • Provide rich descriptions of data • Produce visual mapping of classroom
Interview #4	Based on Appendix B	
Interview #6	Participants were asked follow-up questions based on their responses to Interview Protocols	
Field notes	Appendix D	

Table 6
Summary of Research Procedures, Research Question No. 3

Data Collection	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis
Interview #3	Appendix C	• Transcribe taped interview • Create coding scheme • Provide rich descriptions of data • Gather screenshots of participants' profiles and relevant Facebook activities
Interview #5	Based on Appendix C	
Interview #6	Participants were asked follow-up questions based on their responses to Interview Protocols	
Field notes	Appendix D	

I sought to organize and analyze the data in a way that would allow me to see common patterns and themes, discover relationships, and develop explanations. According to Merriam (1998), data analysis is the process of "making sense out of the collected data" and is often an interactive and systematic process of arranging all of the materials collected in order to increase understanding of the research. Moreover, Merriam states that "the right way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection." So to "make sense of the data" and conduct analysis "the right way," I employed several stages for preparing, analyzing, interpreting, and triangulating the data.

To manage the data efficiently and in a timely manner, I organized each data files of each data set (e.g., digital audio files of the interviews, typed field notes, time-use diaries, Facebook screenshots, and classroom artifacts) to my laptop. All the data were converted into digital files and placed into the participant's digital folders, accordingly. All data sources were analyzed in the order in which they were obtained. I printed out the field notes and wrote comments of possible categories and themes of data. Next, I uploaded each interview file into InqScribe and transcribed all 36 interviews. Finally, I re-read all of the remaining data sources and identified instances and events in which opportunities for literacy and identity work seemed to occur.

There were two phases for analyzing and interpreting the data in the study (see Table 7). I present each of the phases in detail in the following section.

Table 7
Phases of Analyzing and Interpreting

Phase	Methods Used	Data Sources
1	Thematic analysis (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005) to examine themes related to literacy and identity; open coding of themes	Interview data, writing artifacts
2	Member checking	Field notes, researcher's memo

Phase One

      For the initial stage of analysis in my study, I employed a recursive process of coding and theme generation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Weber, 1984). I began my analysis with the data from the interviews, which I re-listened to and re-read several times to have a better understanding of the meanings and stories the participants shared. In particular, I was looking for connections between what I observed in the classroom, through the Facebook observations, and what the participants revealed during the interviews. Then, I open coded my data, which consisted of re-reading the interview transcriptions multiple times and writing down common concepts and phrases students talked about when discussing their experiences of language learning, language use, and identity-related issues (e.g., experience in ESL/bilingual programs, familiarity with terminology that describes English learners, and language use in Facebook). Notably, Interview #1 (background interview) and Interview #3 (after Facebook observation) set the foundation for the coding framework. For example, while reviewing Jordan's interview transcripts, I found the phrase "pretty smart" was stated several times throughout all six of his interview sessions. I also reviewed the field notes, which were used to build a "thick" description of the research site as well as to better understand the critical instances of social interactions and activities that reflected changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the participants as they engaged in classroom activities.

      Classroom artifacts were also collected for analysis. Some of the classroom's writing assignments, like the 'Profile' assignment, provided several rich text examples (e.g., cover letter that outlined what the student wished to accomplish in the essay, peer revisions, and feedback from the Writing Center tutor) to be analyzed. The content of this assignment also provided an opportunity to further analyze and understand the participants' background. For example, Grant shared with his interviewer-classmate the death of his grandfather and the impact it has had on his life. He also

focused on his commitment and involvement in soccer and his achievement as the first person in his family to attend college. During my analysis, I discovered that what they produced in class was not as relevant to study as *how* they talked about what they wrote. For instance, the question, *What did you share in the 'Profile' assignment?,* provided more insightful narratives regarding how they positioned and learned to see themselves in response to certain life events.

After coding the data sources, I looked for similarities and differences to determine how the codes could be grouped into one another. This process led me to identify multiple themes. I will provide a sample of the way the codes were categorized as well as the four overarching themes that the codes were folded into in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Participant Codes

Theme	Code	Interview Data
Sense of Belonging	Feeling comfortable/connected	"One thing for sure…I think I'm more comfortable being in 'ELL' class. Everyone's kind of like…me. They're like in my position. I can understand them and they can understand me" (Daisy)
	Linguistic features (e.g., accent) symbolize foreignness, un-American	"They definitely viewed me as dumb. They probably thought I was not from this country, but I was. They probably teased me, but I didn't understand them." (Cameron)
Academic Identity	How classmates/friends view them	"Yea, a lot of my friends [saw] me as smart…a lot of people were like, 'I know you're going to do big things. Good luck out there.' People don't see me as, 'Oh, you're dumb.' (Jordan)
	How teachers view them	"I dunno. I guess in high school I didn't feel comfortable talking a lot. I have...I have a stutter or like I'll repeat the same word. I say 'like' a lot. And I can't help it. I can just get stuck so I just felt like...I didn't really talk a lot. They probably thought I was just a little kid sitting in the back." (Grant)
Institutional Identity	Perceptions of others' language ideologies	"People will just see you like ignorant, the fact that you cannot talk like them. You have that strong accent. You don't behave like their expectations." (Morris)
	Feeling toward 'ELL' identity marker	"It sounds like…like a bad thing…like disabled…like, "Is something wrong with me?" Who wants to be called that? They'll see you differently like, "Oh, you have a problem." (Alyssa)
National Identity	Social pressures and expectations	"You have to speak English and you have to use English if you're living in the U.S." (Daisy)
	Desire/Purpose for learning English	"To have a job, you have to speak English." (Grant)

Phase Two

In describing my data, I attempt to see the situation from the participants' perspectives, so I engaged in member checks to improve the validity during the data collection process. During the classroom observations, I made detailed notes about the classroom dynamics, the teacher's method of facilitating classroom discussions and activities, and the table dynamics of the participants. These notes were included in Interview #6 (follow-up interview) to verify that the ways the participants identify themselves matches the way I had interpreted in my coding. For many of the participants, it was simple to know how they preferred to identify themselves as they gave me labels like "the soccer guy" or "the DJ." I also constantly discussed and reflected on my research while it was taking place. I continued to converse with the participants after my analysis about my progress and the findings.

Researcher Positionality

A qualitative researcher's role can be complex and multifaceted. For instance, the researcher must keep in mind the notion of "reflexivity" – the ability to self-reflect and be critical of the viewpoints that I develop and how they affect the study (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005). The researcher must also be cognizant of the research context and tolerant of the uncertain situations from the process of research design to data analysis (Merriam, 1998). My role as a researcher in the study was to be a co-learner, fellow student, and participant-observer.

From the onset of the study, I was designated the role of "student researcher" by Professor Sung; I was also referred to as *"that guy John"*. As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis for the study, my experience as an immigrant student who was once enrolled in an ESL program from 1st to 3rd grade helped me approach each participant and classroom engagement as both an insider and outsider. I was also positioned by the students as an insider-outsider by the

students because they knew I was a fellow student in a graduate program. A few of the students recognized me when I was studying in the library, walking around campus with clothing that displayed the university emblem, and talking to friends at local coffee shops near campus. On a few occasions, the students made small talk and asked about the status of my study or expressed regret in not participating. One student in particular said, "I was in ESL programs my whole life…I could have helped you out." The participants in the study, too, greeted me on campus when they recognized me, and they always insisted that I "write faster" so that they can read the "really long paper" that I am working on. On these occasions, I felt that they viewed me as a colleague.

I believe that my experience as a former ESL student served as a valuable resource in conducting the study since an empathetic understanding of the participants requires that the researcher reveal his experiences and insights as part of the data (Jacobs, 1999). I disclosed my background to the participants during our first interview session in hopes of establishing an open, safe line of communication.

IV. LINGUISTIC HISTORIES & INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In this chapter, I will recount the stories of six ELLs as they were situated in their academic and social worlds in and outside their undergraduate, first-year writing course. By drawing on multiple sources of data (e.g., classroom observations, one-on-one interviews, and field notes), I present a portrait of the participants' sociocultural experiences of language learning, their understanding of the 'ELL' term, and their negotiation of identities through digitally-mediated text. Their response to questions like "When was your first experience learning English?" and "How do you want to be viewed by your classmates?" were important to understanding their views and ideological stance of language, language use, and their positionality as ELLs.

To provide a thick description of these views, I first gathered information about their various family background, home language use, first experiences with learning English, and their placement into the 'for ELL' section of ENG 420. I also looked at their writing assignments in ENG 420 that were self-reflective, specifically focusing on what they wrote about and how the assignments allowed them to portray themselves as learners and individuals.

Lastly, I paid close attention to the ideological underpinning of how the 'ELL' term is used in higher education. I asked questions like, "What does the 'ELL' term mean to you?" and "How do you feel about your placement and positionality in a 'for ELL' course?" to gather insight into how the participants view themselves. The participants' narratives revealed a wide range of responses to how they came to learn and view English, identify as "smart" students, and develop ideologies toward what it means to be an 'ELL.'

Alyssa

Alyssa was born in the south side of a large Midwestern city and raised by parents who were both from Mexico. With only one parent who would later develop just "some English skills," Alyssa said the primary language at home has always been Spanish but admits to never having developed complete fluency. "I'm really bad in Spanish…that's what my parents say. I suck at Spanish [laughing]." Particularly among second-generation Hispanic immigrants, it is common for Spanish-use to decline as use of English rises, and as Smetana and Gaines (1999) found in their study of adolescent-parent conflict in middle-class African American families, children from particular ethnic groups abide to social conventions like their parents' native language and cultural traditions as a simple level of respect and obedience. Nonetheless, Alyssa said she "truly enjoys being a part of the Hispanic culture" and has always self-identified as a Hispanic rather than as an American because she was raised by the language, food, and tradition of her parents. However, she also made several explicit statements that indicated she sought to distance herself from the stereotypes and identities prescribed to her parents due to their linguistic and cultural background, particularly her mother's limited English proficiency:

> My mom, she's been here for 18 years and she **still hasn't** learned English.
> Sometimes, when we're in public, she'll ask me, "How do you say this?"
> People look at her like...like…very **dumb** and stuff. It's sad for people to
> see her as **low** just because she doesn't know English. The way people treat
> me isn't that**...low. I do know English,** but my pronunciation is a little
> off and sometimes when I try to express myself...it's like...it's
> cluttered around.

> (interview with Alyssa, September 26, 2013)

In the narrative above, we see how English fluency can symbolize privilege and act as a cultural tool for denigrating individuals whose first language is not English. Language tends to symbolize the status of the culture, and English has historically been identified by some as capitalism, colonialism, and even bourgeois values (Baker, 2006). For non-native speakers of English and minority language groups, then, access to English can mean access to valued forms of knowledge and prestigious social

and vocational positions. Alyssa's account of how she felt her mother was viewed and labeled by others with disparaging terms like "dumb" and "low" is an indication that English can still be used a cultural tool for not only oppressing minority languages but also preserving the power of English speakers over non-native speakers of English.

We also see in this narrative the practice of language brokering, which Eksner and Orellana (2012) define as the "myriad of ways in which children of immigrants use their knowledge of two languages to speak, read, write, listen as they do things for (and with) their families." Many child language brokers, like Alyssa, act as the "gatekeeper of information" and "socializing agent" to support and sustain their parents. Often times, these gatekeepers overstep generational boundaries by speaking for their parents often in public spaces, which is typically the domain for adults. According to Orellana (2009), they serve as language brokers because their families need their skills in order to accomplish the tasks of everyday life in their new linguistic and cultural context. This responsibility can understandably be burdensome for the child language brokers because they may feel embarrassed at their parents' limited English skills. Although Alyssa does not make any explicit statements that suggest she felt any of the aforementioned emotions, her reaction to how others viewed her mother's inability to speak English fluently – particularly when in public – indicates that she desires to disassociate herself from the status and image of a non-native English speaker.

"Just like everyone else…"

Alyssa's account of her experience in learning English for the very first time revealed that she neither experienced the polarizing effect of the 'ELL' term nor was exposed to the institutionally available identity of "disadvantaged second language speaker" that Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) refers to in her case study of immigrant, first-year students in mainstream composition classrooms. As a

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matter of fact, Alyssa said she never viewed herself as any different from her classmates, primarily

due to her placement into a "regular" classroom rather than a bilingual classroom:

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I was…when I started school in kindergarten, that's when English started.
My sister…she was in a bilingual class so she knows Spanish and English
nicely. For me, it's hard for me to…hard…well…hard for me to read and
write because I was never in a bilingual class…it was straight in English.
So, yea…yea, it was just English. I don't know…I feel like I did good
because it was all bilingual students. It was all Hispanics so no one
ever…like…thought of me as dumber I guess because everyone was bilingual.
No one knew their weakness I guess.
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<div align="right">(interview with Alyssa, September 26, 2013)</div>

Alyssa could not recall why she was never given the option to enroll in the bilingual track, which she

believed would have helped develop her Spanish fluency. Nevertheless, there were iconic features of

a bilingual classroom that were also in her "regular" classroom. Most notably, Alyssa's remembered

her kindergarten classroom consisting of primarily "all bilingual" Hispanics. And with classmates

who shared the same linguistic and racial background as she did, Alyssa began to see herself as part

of the in-group community who held a normative academic and social status. That is, she never felt

or was viewed by her classmates as being "dumber" or any different; her self-prescribed

positionality as "just a regular student" among her peers would have implications on the way she

would construct her identity, which I will explore in the following sections.

Alyssa's self-perception of having normative status and position among her classmates – who

have predominately been Hispanic – continued throughout her high school years. Alyssa attended a

charter high school, which regards itself as one of the nation's largest Hispanic charter school

systems that emphasize successful assimilation of their predominately Hispanic students into

American society. Alyssa stated that she was an active student all throughout high school,

participating in various extracurricular activities and volunteering at several city-wide events (e.g.,

school's soccer coach and city marathon volunteer). Like most students, she found the schoolwork

challenging due to an extensive, mandatory coursework. In addition to having to take mathematics

and six-credits of English classes, Alyssa was also required to take Spanish and Mandarin classes. When I asked if she found learning English to be difficult due to the school's language requirements, she responded simply, "Well I never thought that I was really bad in English or anything…" She revealed in our interview that she had taken several advanced courses including Honors English and AP (Advanced Placement) Language and Composition, yet she was indifferent about her academic achievements. Surprisingly, she described her overall grades as just average. "Everyone had different kinds of levels. I was in the middle or some people were lower than me." Again, she perceived herself as just an average student with average grade. In addition, the demographics of her school (i.e., predominately bilingual Hispanics) only reified her belief that she was "just like everyone else." It was during this time as a high school student when she began to identify as a "true American," and a "true American" could be identified by his or her fluency in English. As someone who was never in a bilingual classroom and had taken AP English courses in high school, Alyssa had come to believe that English – and not Spanish – was her first language. "I never realized that Spanish is my first language….I always thought that English was my first language." In the summer before her first semester in college, she would come to an understanding of what *Americanness* signifies and was reminded that English is, in fact, her second language – a language that she cannot speak "like the White people."

In her final year of high school, Alyssa applied for a sales position at a retail clothing store, and in the following sequence, we will see Alyssa recount her job interview with the store manager whose assumptions about her challenged her racial and linguistic identities:

> I applied to a job at Hollister. Well, they told me that I had an accent…that I was from Spain. They had assumptions or whatever. I said, "Oh wow." I never thought that I had accent and stuff. I never realized that until people from the outside told me that. This guy asked, "Is English your first language?"
>
> (interview with Alyssa, September 26, 2013)

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Alyssa, who up until this point of her life had never realized that she spoke English with an accent, struggled to make sense of the identity claims that the interviewer was making. As a student, Alyssa had excelled in her schoolwork, placed into the "normal" and often times AP classes, and had little difficulty making friends at her schools that have uniformly been comprised of bilingual, Hispanic students. Outside the academic space, however, Alyssa was informed that she was, indeed, not a native-English speaker due to her noticeable accent. This encounter with the store manager would not be the first time that Alyssa would learn that the way she self-identifies both as a student and individual conflicts with the assumptions and beliefs held not only by native-speakers of English but also her fellow Hispanics.

"Should I belong here?"

In the summer before her first semester in college, Alyssa said she suffered her first major academic disappointment when she "completely failed" her writing placement exam and was placed into ENG 320, a non-credit, preparatory course. Alyssa immediately enrolled in DWP with the hopes of advancing to ENG 420 for her first semester. After successfully completing the preparatory writing program, she recalled her professor – Professor Sung – announcing to the class about a section of ENG 420 that would be beneficial for some students. Specifically, she remembered being told that it was an "opportunity for bilingual students." Alyssa said she felt compelled to enroll in this section because she wanted to continue to improve her writing skills. "If I want to improve my grammar skills, I need to be in the class. I really want to do good in my writing…I kind of suck. Come on, I'm older now [laughing], so I should know my grammar." Excited about advancing to ENG 420, Alyssa prepared for the new challenges that awaited her. Like most incoming freshman, she thought about how she would adjust to having more independence, not having friends in her classes, and attending a large school with a much more diverse student population.

Wrong Class

Something was wrong from the very first day of class, Alyssa recalled. "At first, I felt like I

didn't belong there," she said after looking around her new class and talking to her tablemates. There

were several salient features of the students in Professor Sung's class that caused her to feel this way.

According to Alyssa, many of them were not native-born, and most had accents – just like her:

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I felt like...I shouldn't....have never been a part of it because everyone
came from a different country two years ago. I was born here. I felt weird
in a bad way. I felt like...I felt like I didn't belong there because
these kids knew English for just a short period of time. As for me, I was
born here. I was raised with English and Spanish. People expected me to
know more than them. And I shouldn't even be placed there. I should be
placed in a normal class because I was born here and raised here.
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(interview with Alyssa, October 10, 2013)

As someone who was just recently told about having an accent herself, Alyssa began to develop

deficit views of her classmates who shared the same linguistic feature as she did. We see in the

narrative above here that Alyssa was reluctant to adopt the same social or academic positions as her

classmates due to her U.S. birthright citizenship. For these two reasons alone, Alyssa believed that

she was in the wrong class.

When I asked how she introduced herself to her classmates in Professor Sung's class, she

stated, "Oh, I'm Hispanic! I speak Spanish!" She said it was important for her to signify to her new

classmates her ethnicity and fluency in Spanish because in the past, these two features were the

dominant characteristics of her school's student demographics. Yet inside Professor Sung's class,

she was told by her classmates, "You don't look Mexican. **You know Spanish?**" Alyssa would

discover that "dirty blonde hair" and "white skin" were conflicting and iconizing features of the

stereotypical looks of a Hispanic. There is a shared ideology and even an explicit attitude among

Hispanics that in order to claim membership as a Hispanic, you must *look* Hispanic. Just as the

Spanish language is racialized to be an iconic marker of the Latino and Hispanic ethnic identity,

certain phenotypic differences can also be implicitly associated with Hispanics and Spanish-speakers. This ideological stance is commonly present among Hispanics in the United States (Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, & Swanson, 2002) and can engender prejudices that can impact intragroup relations. Similar to how Alyssa could not associate herself to her classmates due to their assumed lower-level English skills, her Hispanic classmates challenged her racial identity as a Hispanic due to their assumptions based on her skin color and hair.

Alyssa was one of the few students who arrived to class early, and I could tell immediately that she was excited and anxious. Only a few minutes had passed before I noticed that she was talking to one of her classmate who was sitting at her table. She seemed to make conversation with her classmate with ease, and over the next several classes, she was talking to all of her tablemates, majority of whom were Hispanic. "They know me [laughing]," she said about her classmates at her table. "It's okay if I make a mistake. I'm very outgoing with them because I know who they are. I know what they're here for." It did not take long before she opened up to them about her family, goals in life, and her own struggles with English. It was clear to me that she no longer felt anxious about Professor Sung's class, yet during classroom activities that required participation (i.e., responding aloud to Professor Sung's questions, writing responses on the board), I seldom saw Alyssa raise her hand. I asked her if she felt comfortable to participate in the classroom discussions, and she slowly responded:

> Well in this class...I rarely participate. When it's in front of everyone
> and they don't know me and I make a mistake, they might judge me right off
> the bat because they don't know me. They'll say, "Oh that girl can't even
> say that word." If I do a bad thing, they're going to judge me.

> (interview with Alyssa, October 10, 2013)

According to Alyssa, some examples of "doing a bad thing" are saying the incorrect word out loud, giving a "dumb" answer, using the wrong word order, and mispronouncing "easy" words. Consequently, she dreaded the moment of "doing a bad thing' in class and feared the judgment and

ridicule that she would receive from her classmates. This fear is commonly experienced by all students, and although instructors are taught to recognize the formal structures of classrooms that may inhibit students' active involvement, there are also informal classroom structures that may cause constraints on participation. According to Weaver and Qi (2005), some examples of these structures that can shape students' behaviors in the classrooms are fear of peer disapproval (i.e., peers serving as powerful forces that define and enforce informal norms associated with classroom-related behaviors) and para-participation (i.e., a reluctance to participate too overtly in class due to fear or in observance of unwritten rules regarding open participation). In just a few weeks, Alyssa developed a close relationship with some of her peers at her table. They shared intimate details with each other and worked together on several in-class activities. Within this isolated group, Alyssa had no trouble in negotiating a "modicum of acceptance" (Weaver & Qi, 2005).

"What does it stand for?"

In our first formal introduction, I explained to Alyssa the purpose of my research study. When I discussed my interest in ELLs due to my own experience, she asked what the term 'ELL' stood for. She assumed it was somehow related to the 'ESL' term, but she had never heard of the 'ELL' term until seeing it on Professor Sung's syllabus on her first day in class. "When I first heard the abbreviation for that, I never even realized…I never took it into consideration until I went to this class." What's more, she did not realize that she was an ELL. She assumed that English – and not Spanish – was her first language. According to Alyssa, English was her first language because she "always sucked at Spanish." "I feel more comfortable with English," she explained. After I explained the multiple ways that students learning English as a second or additional language can be labeled (e.g., LEP and EL), I asked her what 'ELL' means to her. Her response reified the

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institutional discourse and aligned with the negative social and academic identities associated with the term:

> Well it just sounds off-the-bat bad. E-L…or whatever. What does it stand
> for [laughing]? I don't know, it's weird. I don't know. It sounds
> like…like a bad thing…like **disabled**…like, "Is something wrong with me?"
> Who wants to be called that? They'll see you differently like, "Oh, you
> have a **problem."**

(interview with Alyssa, November 5, 2013)

Alyssa's reaction to the 'ELL' term reinforces the commonly held belief that ELLs have "problems" and require "remedial" instruction. Her response also indicates that ELLs are viewed differently and hold marginalized status not just as learners but also as individuals. While she admitted to identifying as an ELL student, she felt that she could not identify with her peers who have not U.S. native-born. When asked I asked her how she would describe someone who's learning English for the first time, her response was, "Beginner…barely starting from the bottom…barely starting from the bottom…just learning the basics…that they barely came to the country." This statement is reflective of an ideological stance that some ELLs possess higher social or academic capital than other ELLs.

Summary

Alyssa's language learning experience indicated that she understood the importance of becoming proficient in English. Upon realizing that she did not place into the required first-year writing course, she enrolled into a summer college program to petition for a higher English course placement for her first semester in college. Once she was eligible for ENG 420, she registered for the 'ELL' section of ENG 420 that was designed to "serve the needs of bilingual and English language learning students." Her placement into advanced coursework in high school and her willingness to receive additional support suggest that she found developing fluency in English important, yet it was her encounter and experience outside the academic space that shaped her ideological stance

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regarding English use and the social capital attached to English proficiency. Her language brokering

experiences informed her desire to become American, or at the very least, more *Americanized* than

her parents. She learned early on that those who cannot speak English hold lower status and

positions in society. When she sought employment at a clothing retail store, she learned that she falls

into a minority group with denigrated status. These experiences could explain why she never

regarded Spanish as her first language and why she actively seeks to improve her English skills.

She revealed during our interview that she introduces herself to her classmates as a Hispanic,

but her responses to why English is important suggest that she wants to associate with the images

associated with 'American identity' more. She expressed that English is a necessary social capital

and that we must all known English if we are to live in the United States.

Cameron

Cameron is a second-generation immigrant who was born in a large Midwestern city. His

father and mother were 15 and 21, respectively, when they emigrated from Mexico. They had very

limited – if any – English skills and still do not speak any English even to this day, according to

Cameron. Inevitably, Cameron was raised in a monolingual home. "Growing up…I spoke Spanish.

My whole childhood I spoke Spanish. I didn't know English at all." Despite his U.S. birthright

citizenship, Cameron categorically self-identified as a Mexican because of his parents' cultural

heritage and was emphatically dismissive about wanting to self-identify as an American:

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I'm Mexican before anything…I'm just American because I live in the U.S.
and I was born here. Our culture...all of our traditions are Mexican
origin. The food that we eat...we eat tortillas with everything
[laughing]...like the stereotype...[laughing]...we listen to Mexican music.
Everything that Mexican people do, we do it because it's just how my
parents grew up. It's how they treated us. It's how we grew up. It's part
of who we are.
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                                                                    (interview with Cameron, October 8, 2013)

In the narrative above, we see that Cameron's primary discourse (Gee, 1990) is rooted in his parents' cultural practices. That is, Cameron's way of behaving, valuing, and thinking are influenced by the identities, language, and culture of his parents. According to Lankshear & Knobel (2007), we are "recruited" into a discourse as part of our "birthright" as social and cultural beings. We become identifiable and learn to be a particular type of person through our social engagement (e.g., enculturation and apprenticeship). We acquire the first – or primary discourse – typically in our home from our family members. In the case of Cameron, it is clear that his primary discourse is inextricably connected to his home language and the cultural practices of his parents.

From kindergarten to 2nd grade, Cameron was taught in Spanish instruction classrooms. He was eventually placed into a bilingual classroom in 3rd grade, but his first memory of "really learning English" was not until 4th grade, he said. "Learning English was hard. It was a whole new language for me. At times, I felt really dumb because I was born in the United States and I wasn't speaking the language of the country." To a lesser extent, being unable to speak the language of the classroom was frustrating for Cameron because he was unable to socialize with his classmates:

> Half of the students in the class...they only knew English and the other half were Spanish-learners. I mean, for me, it was hard to adapt and make new friends knowing that they didn't know Spanish and I knew Spanish...and they knew English and I didn't know English. They definitely viewed me as **dumb**. They probably thought I was not from this country, but I was. They probably teased me, but I didn't understand them.
>
> (interview with Cameron, October 8, 2013)

In this narrative, we see a portrait of what ELLs experience as they attempt to assimilate into the culture of bilingual classrooms as well as socialize with classmates with different linguistic backgrounds. Cameron's limited English proficiency hindered his ability to socialize with half of his classmates; moreover, some of his Spanish-speaking classmates mistakenly grouped him as part of the English-speaking group, he said. We also see in this narrative the common ideology held by native speakers of English that those who do not possess English fluency must be immigrants. For

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these reasons, Cameron felt inferior to his English-speaking classmates and believed that they viewed him in a denigrating way.

As mentioned previously, Cameron said learning English was a new and difficult experience, but he was motivated to learn English as quickly as possible for several reasons. First and foremost, he wanted to be able to talk to his classmates. Second, he felt a sense of duty and responsibility as a native-born American citizen to learn the language of his country. Lastly, he knew that developing his English skills would "open up doors" for him. So to advance his English skills, he tapped into his prior linguistic knowledge of Spanish. "A lot of English words are easily translated into Spanish, so I understood the meaning of it. There's a lot of big words that I don't understand and I just try to make sense of it in Spanish." Interestingly, while Cameron was gradually developing more fluency in English, he also began to develop an interest in other languages, like Portuguese. "It was similar to Spanish and English put together, so I just picked up a dictionary and started learning some words...started watching Portuguese movies and just learned by myself." By the start of his high school year, Cameron had become proficient and confident in his English skills, stating that he "finally felt at [he] was at everyone's level."

"…a smart, Hispanic student"

Cameron attended a 'College Prep,' charter school that was located in the downtown area of a large Midwestern city. The school is composed of approximately 900 students, among which 50% were Hispanic and approximately 40% were African American. Cameron said he was excited about the diversity of the high school's student population as well as the prospect of finally being able to make new friends using both Spanish and English. "[High school] was really, really awesome. I felt comfortable hanging out with everybody." According to Cameron, he excelled in his academics and found his classes to be "pretty easy," particularly the English classes. As a freshman and sophomore,

Cameron was placed into English 1 and Non-Fiction Literature, respectively. Through playful and interactive activities, he learned about the proper use of FANBOYS [acronym for 'For,' 'And,' 'Nor,' 'But,' 'Or,' 'Yet,' and 'So'] as well as rules of grammar, punctuation, and writing. "My English teacher would make songs to make us remember it. They were embarrassing for her...it would make us laugh but at the same time we would remember it so it was useful." Notably, he maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average for the first two years of high school, which made him eligible to take honors and AP courses. As a junior and senior, he enrolled in several AP courses like AP Language and Composition and AP Literature and Composition. When I asked how he felt he was viewed by his classmates and teacher in high school, he responded simply, "…that I was a smart, Hispanic student. My teachers probably thought the same thing, I guess."

Cameron was one of the three participants in the study eligible to immediately enroll in ENG 420 for fall semester. "The test wasn't hard," he said about the hour-long Writing Placement Exam. While combing through the ENG 420 sections, Cameron said that there were only two sections available for registration. "There was this one left [ELL section] and there was another one at 2:45 p.m. I was like…well…writings not my strongest subject so I'll choose [an] English second language one. That's how I grew up learning English so I thought it could probably help me more." Unlike Alyssa and Jordan, Cameron was aware that Professor Sung's course was designated for those who struggled with English and still chose to enroll in it. His explanation for choosing the 'ELL' section was that he had a positive language learning experience in his previous bilingual and ESL programs; moreover, he preferred to be in a class that he assumed would have students from diverse backgrounds:

> We're all from different parts of the world. I had an American Literature class [in high school]. I dropped out of that one into another one. I was the only Mexican and the only freshman in that class, so I felt uncomfortable because everyone was all smart. The big words that they were using…I wasn't…some of the words, I never even heard of. I was the only person that wasn't **'American-American.'** You know…**Caucasian.** I was the only

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other person in there. It was weird. I just felt like I didn't belong
there.
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In this narrative, Cameron recalled an incident from his high school years when he was in a class

that was comprised of "American-American" or "Caucasian" students. From the sentence alone, we

could assume that Cameron was simply characterizing the racial features of his classmates. However,

the subsequent sentence reveals that Cameron highlighted the demographics of the classroom to

signify that he felt disconnected – or perhaps excluded. His use of the term "other" does reveal that

he felt marginalized or "othered' by the seemingly monolithic, monocultural makeup of the

classroom. As a result of this experience, Cameron developed an affinity for classrooms that has

racial and linguistic diversity.

Cameron's indifference toward enrolling into a class that was designated for ELLs can also

be explained by his desire to improve his reading and writing skills – skills that he characterized as

"weak" and "still needs to work on." The title of the course did not matter as long as it was a credit-

course that would count for his graduation, he explained. "As long as it's at my level, it doesn't

matter what they call it or what it's called," he said. However, Cameron still recognized that by

choosing this class, he would be identified with negative features and stereotypes. For example, he

knew that students in 'ELL' classes are commonly viewed as "slow" and "dumb." He also

recognized that ELLs are typically assumed to be immigrants with a certain socioeconomic status:

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ELLs have…accent [laughing]…just learning English…strong accent. Normal
people see that's the main reason why people immigrated to the United
States…because they have no jobs in their home countries. They don't have
money. They're here to make money.
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In this narrative, we see that Cameron knew that he would be viewed as a "poor Mexican" by others

– the "normal people" who we can assume are those not in 'ELL' classes. However, his intentional

enrollment into a 'for ELL' course was a clear indication that he was not deterred by this institutional image. Interestingly, Cameron believed that he was part of a privileged group on campus, rather than a marginalized group. "If anything, [ELLs] have an advantage over people that are just born here and know just English." To Cameron, ELLs have an "advantage" over those who are born U.S. native born because they are monolingual rather than bilingual, a contrarion belief to the assimilationist ideology. Consequently, Cameron was apathetic in regards to the deficit positionality and prevalent institutional image of ELLs and 'for ELL' classes.

After six-weeks of instruction, Cameron said that Professor Sung's class was "just perfect" and "not harder or easer" than what he had anticipated. He felt that his high school English classes had adequately prepared him for college-level workload, and his continual study habit that he maintained since high school allowed him to "keep up" with all of his college assignments. Interestingly, when I asked how he felt his classmates viewed him, he gave the same response as he did about what his classmates in high school said:

> I think people see me as, "He knows what he's doing. He knows English. He's smart." Because not a lot of people participate in class. It makes me feel alright, but I mean…it makes me feel 'ok' but at the same time…I kind of feel bad at the same time because I'm the only one talking. No one else is really speaking up. I feel like I'm showing off, kind of.
>
> (interview with Cameron, October 8, 2013)

Cameron indicates here that his participation in class was often a source of discomfort due to his self-awareness of his classmates' participatory levels. He recognized that some of his classmates did not speak English perfectly, which caused him to be self-conscious about limiting or minimizing how much he displays his fluency. His recognition of the difference in skill level, however, did not hinder him from making friends with his classmates, particularly the ones who sat at his table. He quickly became friends with his seven tablemates, five of whom were Hispanic. "We're all comfortable talking to each other," he said. "We're always talking, actually. But we do our work as

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well." With his Hispanic tablemates, Cameron admitted to relying on Spanish more than English to socialize and talk about classwork. There were certain affordances of speaking Spanish to them, one of which was being able to express himself more directly, he said. "When I'm talking in English, I just say what I need to say. When I talk in Spanish, I go directly with what I was thinking in my head. It's who I am. It's the language that I was born with. When I speak English, it's different. I can't express myself directly." To Cameron, certain English words are emotionally restrictive and conditional. Consequently, he favored Spanish for its affective affordances and as a way of mediating his interaction with his classmates who were more comfortable socializing through Spanish.

Cameron had anticipated his college English class to be "really, really hard," but at the conclusion of his first semester, he described his experience in Professor Sung's class as simply, "easy." He expected longer writing assignments and more stringent rubrics, and admittedly the transition from the type of writing he was used to in his high school AP classes to the 'academic writing' was initially difficult, he said. However, having more time to submit assignments as well as mandatory the peer-review activities allowed Cameron to identify his writing mistakes and improve upon them quickly. According to Cameron, he never expected to succeed in all his classes right away. Cameron had just graduated 8th grade when his older and "really, really smart" brother dropped out after his first month in college. "I was thinking like, 'Man, this is going to be super, super hard for me.'" His older brother's experience prepared him that college would be difficult, but he also understood that the purpose of schooling is to learn. Accordingly, he never fully accepted or identified with the "smart" image given by his classmates in both high school and college. He recognized that just like everybody else, he had certain weaknesses and strengths which motivated him to study hard for the greater purpose of attaining a job upon graduation. For Cameron, how he

defined terms like "smart" and "literate," his responses indicated that his understanding of these terms extended beyond English and the classroom setting. A "literate" person is someone who can is "able to make sense of something that you're listening to or reading about, no matter what the language it is." He also added, "It's being able to apply what you learn in real life…like when you're trying to apply for a job. I'm going to succeed and have a career."

Summary

Cameron was a self-motivated student whose language learning experience suggested that he understood early on the importance of developing English fluency. As a U.S. native-born, second-generation immigrant whose parents spoke little to no English, Cameron relied on his fluency in Spanish to learn new vocabulary words and socialize with his classmates. He excelled in high school where his good academic standing allowed him to enroll in AP classes, and he was viewed among his friends and even teachers as a "smart" student. His older brother's college experience, however, was a reminder that being viewed as "smart" or having good grades does not always guarantee a successful postsecondary experience. This belief and attitude was one of the reasons Cameron enrolled in a non-ELL section of ENG 420. Cameron saw the 'ELL' section of ENG 420 as an opportunity to improve his writing, which he professed to be his weakest skill. In our discussions about what it meant for him to be in an 'ELL' classroom despite being eligible to enroll in 'non-ELL' sections, Cameron was quick to dismiss that it had any consequence or significance for him. He did admit, however, that he was aware of the institutional image associated with the 'ELL' term and said he would be cautious about identifying someone as an ELL. "I would never say it because you never know. It probably makes them feel uncomfortable." He also added that the term has a "negative aspect to it" and that "you can't say someone is smart if they're in ELL…you can't be smart if you're an ELL."

Daisy

Daisy was born in the United States but shortly after her 3rd birthday, she moved to Korea

with her family due to several reasons, including health and financial issues that she still does not

known for certain about even to this day. They remained in Korea for 10 years before returning to

the States in 2006 when Daisy was 12-years-old. As someone who spent her early childhood abroad

in her parents' homeland, Daisy said she found it difficult to identify as an American due to the

cultural practices of her family which seemingly reflected her Korean heritage:

> I grew up in Korea most of the time and I don't actually see myself as an
> American. I was only born here...that's all…I'm more comfortable eating
> Korean food and talking with Korean people in Korean. Also, I never see
> American TV shows. I never...I don't even know the commercials that people
> talk about. I only watch Korean shows and dramas. None of my family
> [speaks] English fluently, so they don't bother watching TV.
>
> (interview with Daisy, September 27, 2013)

As we have thematically seen in some of the other participants' narratives, Daisy's self-identity was

also rooted in her parents' native culture and traditions. For example, Daisy's admission of feeling

"more comfortable" eating Korean food and wanting to speak her parents' native language is similar

to Alyssa and her close ties to her parents' Mexican culture. However, Alyssa was also explicit about

wanting to be more *Americanized* than her parents. Daisy, on the other hand, clearly discards and

even trivializes her U.S. birthright citizenship and 'American identity.'

Daisy had just completed 5th grade when she emigrated from Korea with her family to live in

a large Midwestern city. As someone who had not received any formal English education, she was

immediately placed into the ESL program at her school – a national Blue Ribbon Awards recipient

with over 3,100 students. As one of the few Korean 6th grade students among the predominantly 70%

White student population. She said learning English for the first time was a "depressing" experience,

particularly because she felt that she had to work harder than her classmates. "I felt like I had to do

three more steps than any other typical student because... I had to read and translate and understand

and memorize. So I felt like I had to do so many more steps than other people." Learning how to spell correctly, in particular, was one of her biggest challenges. She recalled a regular classroom activity when her teacher would write a sentence on the board that contained several words with spelling errors. The teacher would then randomly select a student to correct the misspellings. "We were supposed to fix it and I would fix like the most **randomest** part. And everyone would look at me like, 'That's not right…what are you doing?'" Daisy quickly understood that becoming fluent in English would require her to spell at least the commonly used English words that are used in class, but she did not know yet that learning a second language would require much more than simply learning grammatical and spelling rules.

Daisy's initial attempts at negotiating the social and cultural norms of her classroom proved to be as challenging as learning how to spell her first English words. For example, she recalled an incident that occurred within the first few weeks of school when she realized that certain items could not be brought to school. One of the many stationary and writing tools that Daisy used as a student in Korea was a mini-knife. The mini-knife is similar to an X-ACTO knife and is commonly used by students in Korea for sharpening pencils and neatly carving out scratch papers that are often used as exam sheets to be turned into the teacher. Daisy carried one in her pencil case and continued to use it for stationary purposes at her new school, until one of her teachers discovered it and accosted and yelled at Daisy in front of the classroom. Another example of Daisy's first-hand experience with the unfamiliarity of the cultural norms of American classrooms was when she wore a shirt that displayed the 'Playboy' logo. "I used to wear 'Playboy' shirts…the one with the rabbit…I bought it [in] Korea at a street market and everyone was gossiping about me and I never understood why until my friend told me later. Stuff like [this] really gave me hard times." These aforementioned misunderstandings

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were resolved without further incident; however, there was one inextricable feature that was linked to her placement into the ESL program that would prevent her from "fitting in with everyone else."

Daisy was assigned a 'helper' to advance her English skills. This 'helper' accompanied Daisy to all of her classes (with the exception of mathematics) and read aloud the exam questions to her outside privately away from her classmates. Daisy professed that as much as she needed and depended on the "remedial" instruction for all of her studies (again, with the exception of mathematics), she also recognized that having the 'helper' added to the deficit discourse surrounding her positionality and the way she was viewed by others. "I guess I was never happy," she said about having the 'helper' around. "It was good getting all the help but…whenever I go out of the classroom, everyone in class would stare at me like it was so unfair for them." Having to constantly leave the classroom during examinations and walking to her classes with the 'helper' at her side were conspicuous markers that indicated to her classmates that she was not like them.

Still Feeling Different

Daisy's high school – located in the northern suburb of a large Midwestern city – is a multiple national Blue Ribbon Awards recipient with a student enrollment of just under 4,000. Regarded as one of the top high schools in the country, Daisy's high school required all incoming freshmen to complete a series of exams in English and mathematics. One of Daisy's priorities upon completing her elementary education was to place out of the 'ELL' track. "I wanted to get out so bad," she said. She wanted to enroll in what she described as the "regular" classes so she would no longer have to hide and be "ashamed" about having to take 'ESL' classes. Daisy finally had her opportunity to enroll in the "regular" English class after receiving a perfect score on the placement exam, but she was quickly discouraged to opt out of the 'ELL' track. "I was going to get out of ELL, but the head department of ELL program from high school came to my middle school and met up

with my mom. She encouraged me to stay in ELL telling me all the benefits I could get from being in ELL. My mom **forced me** to be in 'ELL' class." So at the insistence of her mother, who believed that the 'ELL' classes would give her daughter a greater chance at earning higher grades, Daisy reluctantly agreed but she was informed that she could opt out of 'ELL' at any time.

As she had expected, Daisy was unhappy in her 'ELL' classes, which she described as "a waste of time because the teachers underestimated us so much." After a year of sitting through lessons that she had already learned in middle school, Daisy said it was time to join her friends in the "regular classes." "Yes I was very happy to take **normal** classes. I could confidently tell my friends what classes I was taking. Not only that, but I could actually start learning things." As a sophomore and junior, Daisy enrolled in the "regular" English classes and took a 'College Prep' elective that focused on how to write research and persuasive papers. "It was so much fun learning and I still can't forget the feeling from when I got an 'A' on my term paper." She also appreciated the "love" that she felt from her teachers, most of whom were patient and accommodating to her English proficiency. "I never told the teachers that I was from ELL or…but I felt like they know…like they knew. They were nice…understandable." Her classmates, too, were encouraging and did not make her feel uncomfortable when she spoke with her accented English. "I think they were just like, 'Oh hey, that's cool!' [laughing]" Notably, Daisy said that the biggest change that she experienced as a result of opting out of the 'ELL' track was that she was able to make "real friends that [she] could hang out with outside of school."

It did not take long before Daisy no longer felt "just like a typical student." In the summer before her first semester in college, she discovered that she was not place into ENG 420. Unlike some of the other participants, Daisy chose not to take DWP. Instead, she registered for ENG 320. "I wanted to like…kill myself [laughing]," Daisy said about how she reacted to her placement into

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ENG 320, a non-credit course that she described as a "waste of money and waste of time…and stress." "I…yea…I cried a lot…I wanted to get out of it as soon as possible." To her surprise, she was informed by her ENG 320 instructor – Professor Sung – that she would be bumped to ENG 420 just after her first day of class. According to Daisy, Professor Sung made the recommendation after he had read her in-class writing assignment, which did not show any indication of preparatory-level writing.

Daisy felt like she immediately "blended in" with her classmates on her first day of class in Professor Sung's ENG 420. Initially, she was surprised that there was an 'ELL' section of ENG 420, but it did not matter to her because she felt "good and comfortable" being in a class with students who she assumed had similar English proficiency as she did. "One thing for sure…I think I'm more comfortable being in 'ELL' class. Everyone's kind of like…me. They're like in my position. I can understand them and they can understand me."

The FOB

Among 1.5 and 2nd generation Asian American immigrants, there exists pejorative terms that are used to identify individuals based on their acculturative trajectory as either too ethnic or too assimilated. The ubiquity of these terms has informed research on ethnic identity and acculturation, particularly on "how specific identities indicate assimilation to some segment of American society or the retention of ethnicity" (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Typically used by today's adolescents in Asian communities, the term 'FOB' was created and employed to reflect a sub-ethnic identity and enforce social boundaries and behavior. A FOB (pronounced as *fahb* which stands for "Fresh off the Boat") can be identified as newcomers to the United States who have not mastered English or adopted the ideological values of White, mainstream American culture. Their more culturally and linguistically forward counterparts are referred to as 'Twinkies.' The term is derived from the golden-colored

sponge cake, which is yellow on the outside and has white cream on the inside. 'Twinkies' are considered 'Whitewashed' individuals because they have Asian physical features yet they "evaluate themselves and construct identities in relation to the meanings and standards of the new society rather than the country of their parents' birth" (Pyke & Dang, 2003). These symbolic terms and identities reinforce a particular social behavior and categorize coethnic peers into groups that are marked as too "monolithically traditional" or groups that are have forgotten their roots. More importantly, they are reflective of the unspoken segregation and internalized racism among the 1.5 and second generation Asian Americans.

Daisy was first introduced to the 'FOB' term while attending a predominately Korean-American church just after she had returned to the States. She said that some of the congregation members immediately labeled her as a 'FOB' due to her recent arrival to the States as well as her fluency in Korean. Daisy accepted and internalized this term as part of her self-identity, and as a result, she was grouped and accepted by the 'FOB' community at her church that was known for socializing only through Korean. As a member of this community, she began to see the dichotomizing influence of language within her monocultural church, which she believed to be comprised of only English-speakers and Korean-speakers. However, she soon discovered that here were members of the congregation that could speak Korean but were not part of the 'FOB' community. These members were referred to as 'Twinkies' because their fluency in Korean was "not that good," which she believed to have been the reason that they were not accepted as part of the 'FOB' community. Interestingly, Daisy considered the 'Twinkies' to hold a lower status than the 'FOBs' despite the fact that most of the congregation members were English-speakers, the sermons were delivered in English, and the church was located in a predominately White neighborhood. Within the church itself, the 'FOB' community held a marginalized position among the dominant

English-speaking congregation and pastoral staff. Yet Daisy's understanding of the term, which was grounded in the cultural practices and ideological values of her parent's heritage, showed that her fluency in Korean was a marker of someone who holds a privileged position. "They would speak Korean to me because I wasn't that good in English. Their Korean is not that good [laughing]. It's **so funny** how they're not embarrassed of speaking Korean to me." Consequently, how Daisy came to understand what the 'FOB' term signified and the identities as well as stereotypes associated with the term did not reflect the commonly held deficit view that 'FOBs' are considered outsiders who cannot be accepted by the mainstream, White culture.

When I asked Daisy how she introduced herself to her classmates in Professor Sung's class, she indicated right away that she wanted them to know that she was a 'FOB.' For Daisy, a 'FOB' was someone who is simply "more comfortable speaking in Korean" and the co-ethnic identity associated with the term is not emblematic of someone's intelligence. Having internalized this attitude toward the 'FOB' identity, Daisy allowed herself to feel comfortable about using Korean as the preferred method communication. Daisy also believed that introducing herself as a 'FOB' was a way to protect herself from her classmates. "I just want people to know that I'm not that fluent in English. I always want them to know in advance. It's so they don't make fun of me from the inside…like, 'Oh, her speaking is so funny.'" As a new student in a new academic and social environment, she did not want her limited English proficiency to stifle her opportunity to present herself as "funny, smart, and helpful…someone they can talk to about life problems." Consequently, she found Professor Sung's class as a space where she could portray her idealized identity as a student and learner; interestingly, her hoped-for-possible identity embraced her 'FOB' identity. "I don't care [laughing] because it's true," she said about how she would respond to someone calling her a 'FOB.' "I speak Korean really well. I have something that I can speak fluently. It's not like I'm

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stupid in language, you know? I just don't get mad if someone calls me a 'FOB.'" In this narrative, we see a hierarchical positioning of language that does not recognize English as the global language that holds power and status over other languages. Yet in comparison to what she experienced as a struggling ELL during her middle school, Daisy's adoption of the 'FOB' identity and her strategy of forewarning her classmates of her limited English proficiency led her to view English simply as just another language rather than a cultural tool that could denigrate her identity as a student.

Daisy found Professor Sung's class to be helpful as she admitted to having improved her writing skills "a little by little" through the multiple essay assignments. She enjoyed the variation of the writing topics (e.g., memoir and film review) and also cited the absence of other Korean students in the class as a factor in her gradual development of English skills. That is, she was forced to socialize and interact with her English-speaking classmates through English but was admittedly still "not as confident" in her English speaking skills. Notably, she said she would never feel completely confident because no matter how much time she spent in her English studies, she would never be able to pronounce words as the "cool Americans" do. "I think American people, they have their cool ways of speaking that I can't explain. I really want to get that skill…like they use these cool words. I don't know…it's really complicated to explain." She said she would have to watch more American television shows and read more books to be able to say phrases she finds "so clever" and exclusive to native-speakers of English. More importantly, she recognized that her accented English is a source of embarrassment and an iconizing feature of someone who is not from the United States.

Summary

Daisy's understanding of the 'ELL' term was invested with her experience in ESL programs as well as her encounter with the 'FOB' identity at church. As an elementary school student, Daisy felt she had to work harder than her classmates as a result of having to translate words from English

to Korean then back to English. Her struggles with spelling were often visible to her classmates and their reactions positioned her as the "Other," someone who could never be just a "typical student." Outside the academic space, she finally found a community at her church where some of the congregation members shared a similar background as her, particularly an affinity toward Korean culture and Korean language use. Yet as much as this community valued and reinforced the social etiquette and practices associated with Korean culture, they also encouraged each other to feel comfortable to speak aloud in the language of his or her choosing. For Daisy, she was encouraged for the first time to be confident with her present English skills. "Why are you so embarrassed," they asked her. "You shouldn't be embarrassed." Before her acceptance and membership to the 'FOB' community, she had known about the 'FOB' identity and the negative stereotypes associated with the identity. She had accepted the image of 'FOBs' as poor English-speakers who have yet to or refuse to adapt to the local culture and society. As her involvement with this particular co-ethnic group and identity grew, she began to see 'FOBs' as something – or someone – else. The consumption and maintenance of Korean language and culture while living in the States are not always indicative or index of *foreignness* or someone who is *un-American*. For this reason, Daisy was finally able to find the comfort she sought as a struggling ELL who could not identify with the 'American' identity.

As a freshman who was initially placed into a non-credited, preparatory English course then quickly moved to the 'ELL' section of ENG 420, Daisy found the workload in Professor Sung's class to be surprisingly harder than what she had anticipated to be typical of an 'ELL' classroom. Although she felt that she belonged in Professor Sung's class and professed to feeling more comfortable, she struggled with having to reveal to her friends the nature of the class because she found the institutional 'ELL' marker to reflect features like, "non-American," "not fluent in English,"

and "shy." Over the course of the semester, she began to form close friendships with her classmates, which led her to no longer hide or *mask* her language proficiency behind the self-prescribed 'FOB' identity. She said the 'ELL' institutional identity began to matter less as she began to realize that "you have to speak English and you have to use English if you're living in the U.S." Her focus was on becoming completely fluent in English – what she described as "a basic thing you need to do anything in [United States]." More importantly, she said being an ELL did not hinder her ability to make friends or position herself in Professor Sung's class as someone who is smart. According to Daisy, someone who is not necessarily proficiency in English can still succeed in college. "Now more and more people are moving into the U.S. that have similar background as me. And you can become friends and study together. There's always groups of people hanging out…that's why ELL was created."

Grant

Grant was born in the southeast side of a large Midwestern city and was raised in a Spanish-speaking household despite having parents who were born in the States and fluent in English. Grant said his parents "worked a lot" so they relied on Grant's grandmother – who only knew how to speak in Spanish – to look after him while they worked. "I spoke more Spanish than English, especially around my grandma. She raised me. That's why I grew up speaking Spanish not English. I was always around my grandma." Grant did, however, have some exposure to English as a child due to his parents' frequent, alternate use of English and Spanish at home. Commonly observed in bilingual communities, code-switching is a verbal strategy and creative style of bilingual communication. Code-switching can occur when bilinguals "substitute a word or phrase from one language with a phrase or word from another language" (Heredia & Brown, 2005). For example, Grant said that his mother would ask him in Spanish to take out the trash, but she would say 'garbage' in English.

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Code-switching can also be considered a strategy to compensate for diminished language proficiency, and in the following sequence, we will see how it can also be used to reaffirm ties with one's community:

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My parents speak Spanish. They'll speak English, too, but they speak more
Spanish just so that my brothers don't lose it. It's so that we don't lose
the little bit of our culture. One of my younger brothers tried telling my
mom that he didn't know Spanish anymore…that he forgot. My mom was
really…she was mad. She was like, "You don't know Spanish? Alright, I'm
going to speak to you in Spanish only."
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<div align="right">(interview with Grant, October 14, 2013)</div>

Much like Jordan's parent, we see in the narrative above that Grant's parents desired for him to maintain his fluency in Spanish so that he would be able to communicate with his family members and relatives. The mother's reaction to her son's confession that he no longer can speak Spanish suggests that Spanish is must more than a tool for socializing. The narrative illustrates the tension that can exist between ideologies of language use. For instance, Grant indicated that English was a necessary tool to have to succeed in school and that it makes it "easier to get around." He expressed a similar attitude toward the role English has on job attainment, stating that, "To have a job, you have to speak English." Ensuingly, Grant, just like his young brother, may have relegated Spanish simply as a socializing tool.

"What are they talking about?"

Grant's first formal instruction in English began early in preschool. "The first couple of days, I was first in a regular class, and I wouldn't understand anything," he recalled. "They figured I knew English. They would talk and I'm just there like, 'What are they talking about?'" Grant said he would sit quietly in classroom where he felt "really lost and out of place." He was unaware of what was being said by the teacher and his classmates, who often said to him, "Are you stupid?" At home, he would stare blankly at his homework that he "just couldn't get." "My mom would try to help but since I knew more Spanish than English, she's like, 'This isn't going to work.'" Two weeks later,

Grant was eventually moved to a bilingual classroom, yet his struggles with classroom assignments continue to follow him:

> It was hard. At first, you saw words and if it didn't make sense sometimes, you would try to read it and you would just read it wrong, like 'race.' You didn't know that the 'a' was long because of the 'e.' [I] would try to sound it out and it would be **'r-ackay'** or something like that. You feel really stupid at first. You try to sound stuff out but you can't, and everyone's looking at you like, "It's 'race' dude. It's easy."
>
> (interview with Grant, October 14, 2013)

Our use of language can index our attitudes and beliefs about language as well as the differentiation of status among the speakers of the language (e.g., age, education level, and academic ability). In this sequence, we see that Grant's struggle to pronounce 'race' is a marker of not only his language abilities but also his intelligence. Grant indicated that he felt "stupid" among his classmates, who did not have the same difficulties in pronouncing the word as he did. Consequently, the more familiar we are with a language, the more we are set in our judgments. We develop a stance of the people who use it, and for Grant who did not possess the same linguistic forms (e.g., pronunciation, syntax-word order, and morphology) as his classmates, his inability to pronounce a word evoked a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy.

Grant stood apart from the other participants for several reasons, all of which can be characterized by his unique language learning and identity negotiation experiences. For instance, he was the only participant to have attended two rather different high schools. Grant described his first high school as an "all-White," all-boy Catholic high school where he felt "really uncomfortable" and was "looked at differently" by his classmates. Notably, he recalled witnessing his White classmates receive favoritism from the teachers while he felt as if he was "not part of anything," as we can see in the following narrative:

> There were assignments and stuff due...and I guess...this one time...this teacher, she only likes stuff in pen, but I didn't know that. I had my stuff in pencil. There were two or three kids that turned their stuff in pencil, so I was like, "Oh, I'm fine, too, then." So I would do my work in

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pencil. When our final paper was due, I handed in in pencil and she didn't
accept it. She gave it back to me and said, "I only accept stuff in pen."
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<div align="right">(interview with Grant, October 14, 2013)</div>

The "two or three kids" in the narrative above were White students, which caused him to feel that there were inequitable learning opportunities for him at his first school. "I felt like…not to be racist but some of the White students…the teachers liked them more." He attributed this feeling to not only his membership in a minority group but also his language minority status. To make matters worse, Grant felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities and discussions due to his stuttering, which caused him to repeat words such as 'like.' "I can just get stuck so I just felt like…I didn't really talk a lot. They probably thought I was just a little kid sitting in the back." Consequently, Grant said he was eager to transfer to a new high school where the teachers would "be fair with everybody."

After the completion of his freshman year, Grant transferred to the same high school that his mother had attended. Grant's new school, which had an 85% Hispanic and 90% low-income student population, was starkly opposite to his previous school. In addition to the diametric student demographic, Grant said he felt more comfortable to talk and did not feel judged by his classmates. "There were a lot of kids that…they were the same or worse than me. Their English was worse than mine so everybody was comfortable with each other." Surrounded by students who shared the same linguistic and cultural background as he did, Grant said he felt "wanted" rather than like an outsider. Moreover, he was acknowledged by his classmates to be a star athlete, an image that he would carry with him to college.

The Student-Athlete

Another unique trait that singled Grant out from the other participants was that he was a collegiate athlete on the university's soccer team. Grant was first introduced to the sport at the age of

six. It started as a recreational activity among his family members and relatives, but it quickly turned into the "biggest thing" in his life, he said. "We don't play another sport [laughing]. I've tried other sports but…it was always soccer." Grant played for his high school's soccer team as well as one of the city's soccer clubs, and he would inevitably be known among his classmates and peers as the "soccer guy." The commitment required to playing soccer for multiple teams throughout the city while attending school proved to be challenging, but he recognized that soccer was inextricably tied to his identity, claiming that "being an athlete takes up most of my life." He also recognized that soccer could be a vehicle to achieve something that no one in his family had done – attend college. After a successful year both on and off the field (e.g., voted to the All-City team and named to the city's All-Academic Team), Grant officially became a college student-athlete after signing the binding National Letter of Intent at the National Signing Day. "I'm the first one to make it to college," Grant said after the formal ceremony. Soon after, Grant said he began to feel the anticipation of college, particularly the more-intensive practice schedule and college-level courses. His teachers in high school assured him that college would be easier and that he would have freedom "to do whatever you want," but Grant knew he would have to maintain the same work ethic, attend all of his classes, and "stay up to date with all the assignments" to succeed in college.

Grant was the other participant – besides Cameron – who was eligible for ENG 420 as an incoming freshman. When I asked why he chose the 'ELL' section, he recounted what happened at the New Student Orientation, which is where he would meet Jordan for the first time:

> A friend of mine that was in the class...I met him at orientation. And he was like, "I'm going to be in this class. It's going to help me out." And I was like, "What class is it? Maybe I'll take it too." Just because...I felt like it would be more...I feel more comfortable in the classroom. He said that it was for kids that spoke a different language first like...that English is a second language. So when he said that, I was like…maybe it would be better for me and I would feel more comfortable in the classroom.

> (interview with Grant, October 14, 2013)

When Jordan informed Grant about a class that was for "kids that spoke a different language first," Grant was reminded of his previous classroom experiences with teachers who would "blow through stuff" and not allow students opportunities to ask questions about the material. "In a **regular** class, the teacher just goes through it and if you don't get it, then you don't get it." Although Grant admitted to feeling "really comfortable with writing" in English, he still felt catches himself saying words and phrases incorrectly. "The words won't come out right," he said. By enrolling in an 'ELL' classroom – a space where he assumed "big words" would not be thrown around – Grant believed that no one would make fun of each other because everyone should be treated equal in an 'ELL' classroom.

Contrary to the tendency of viewing ELLs and bilingual education as a "problem," some of the participants, like Grant, did not associate the 'ELL' term with any negative or deficit features or ideologies. Instead, Grant said he "really doesn't care" about the term and seems to disregard outright any possible ideological underpinning associated with term. He recognized that students on campus would ask: "Why is he in that 'ELL' class?" and "Why does he need help?" because he was eligible to enroll in the "regular" sections of ENG 420. Grant said he would respond to these questions by citing what his mother had once told him. "She always said, 'Don't ever worry about what people have to say about you. Don't worry about it. You just do what you have to do." Grant looked beyond the scope of one section of one course that he was required to take as a college student. He stated that students are not expected to be "perfect in everything," and to this point, he viewed all sections of ENG 420 to be designed to only help and benefit the students. "Whether it's ELL or regular class, we're all in the classroom. We're all taking the same stuff. It's all the same." While some of the other participants may have associated their placement in Professor Sung's class with feelings of frustration and even embarrassment, Grant chose not to think about how he would

be viewed by others on campus. It was clear, however, that Grant's affiliation with the university's soccer team, which was visibly shown through his clothing and the frequent topics of conversation surrounding the latest soccer-related news and events, superseded any other possible institutional identity that could be placed on him.

We can claim particular social identities through localized face-to-face interactions and personifying them in distinctive ways. While most of my analysis centers on understanding the participants' identities in Professor Sung's ENG 420 classroom, it is important to note that the concept of 'self' consists of multiple identities, each of which requires of us to intentionally, explicitly, and visibly perform a particular social role for a particular domain. Grant, for example, brought into Professor Sung's class the "soccer guy" identity that nullified and simply negated the 'ELL' identity. He enacted or played out the "soccer guy" identity and enacted this role through a number of explicit ways. For example, I observed Grant frequently wearing his team uniform to class, which clearly indexed his institutional affiliation to the university's soccer team. "Obviously, I come off as an athlete. I'm always wearing soccer gear. I mean, everyone pretty much knows that we're soccer players because we go around in soccer sweaters." Grant also sat in the table with two other collegiate athletes who also regularly wore their team uniforms as well. In addition to "performing" the "soccer guy" identity through his clothing choices, Grant's classroom literacy practices also indexed his interest and self-identity as the "soccer guy." On the occasions when Grant would arrive early to class, I observed Grant browsing through his Facebook account and searching for soccer-related memes, which are culturally-produced and often humorous piece of media (e.g., images, videos, and text) that is spread rapidly from person to person on the Internet. In addition, several of Grant's written classroom assignments included narratives of soccer and soccer-related experiences. "I talked about...the main focus of her essay of me was soccer," he said about the

'Profile Assignment.' "So I just focused about how I grew up playing it, how it led to me to college and to get a scholarship, how my brothers are doing, how I manage to get through school and practice...and balance everything out....and have a social life. That's pretty much what I focused about." Since he started playing soccer for his high school team, Grant has been positioned as a "soccer guy," an identity he chose to embrace.

Summary

Grant self-identifies as a Mexican due to his parent's Hispanic heritage and as a tribute to what his grandfather achieved as an immigrant who came to find work. "He literally came to the United States not knowing how to speak English or how to write," Grant said about his grandfather. "He didn't even know how to write in Spanish. Now, today, he makes $25 an hour. He fought to come here and make a better life." Grant recalled his grandfather telling him that as Hispanics, "we fight to get what we want." This attitude manifested in Grant as a student-athlete who would receive an athletic scholarship and become the first in his family to attend college.

To fulfill the university's English requirements, Grant had the opportunity to take what he described as the "regular" class, yet he chose instead to take a class designed for ELLs due to his previous learning experiences. For example, he assumed that all "regular" classes would have teachers who would "blow through stuff." He also assumed that Professor Sung's class would comprise of students who share the same racial and linguistic background as he does, which he admitted would make him feel more comfortable. Consequently, Grant never considered the implications of enrolling into a class that would position him as a first-year student in an 'ELL' level course.

When I asked Grant what the 'ELL' term means to him, he explained that the student population at the university is too culturally and linguistically diverse for ELLs and those in 'ELL'

classes to be viewed as the minority group on campus. "At colleges that aren't diverse, they'll probably pick them out to be the kids that are different or the weird ones." Outside the institutional context, however, the 'ELL' term is prescribed to individuals who are learning the language to fit in, like Mexicans who are "crossing the border to find a better life." Interestingly, Grant's understanding of the 'ELL' term is embedded within a particular ethnic population as well as a socioeconomic status that was reflective of his grandfather's background. So unlike the other participants in the study who sought to eliminate their accented speech or felt that their placement in Professor Sung's class would categorize them as a marginalized group on campus, Grant's affiliation with the university's soccer team superseded any inclination of viewing himself in deficit terms. "We all have our…our advantages but like…we all have the upper-hand somehow. I can look at myself one way and another student can look at themselves the same way as I do. We're all the same."

Jordan

Jordan was born and raised in the northwest suburbs of a large Midwestern city. His parents both emigrated from Mexico as adolescents and each faced unique situations upon their arrival. Jordan's father, the second oldest of 12 siblings, was only 14-years-old when he left Mexico to financially support his family. "My dad started working very young…basically when he could start walking. He worked in the fields that my grandpa owned. He picked the crops." Even as a newly arrived immigrant who spoke little to no English, Jordan's father quickly began to work several jobs (e.g., busboy and cook) and dutifully sent his paycheck to his family in Mexico. Jordan's father's formative years were in manual labor and service jobs, and for this reason he never had the opportunity to receive any formal schooling. Jordan's mother, on the other hand, was enrolled into high school upon her immediate arrival to the States. "She barely knew how to speak any English,"

Jordan said, "but she would still get A's and stuff, which I found it weird [laughing]." According to Jordan, his mother was able excel in her classes because some of the teachers instructed in Spanish as well as English. The ESL class was particularly helpful as she slowly began to learn how to write and speak in English, but her ESL placement proved to be fortuitous for other reasons beyond her second language development. According to Jordan, his mother became friends with a classmate who would later become her sister-in-law. A year later and months before and just a few months before graduation, Jordan's mother would drop out during her senior year upon discovering that she was pregnant with Jordan.

Jordan's mother did not return to complete her secondary education yet she "knows a lot more English than before," Jordan said. His father, too, had developed enough English proficiency over the years to comfortably converse with others in English:

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It's weird because my dad…my mom knows it better than he does, actually,
and she's shy to speak it because she says that she sounds dumb. But my
dad doesn't really care. He's the type…he'll be talking to the neighbor
for like an hour and my mom's like, "What are you talking about?" And my
dad's like, "I don't know, I'm just talking, you know?" It's weird because
I don't know if my dad actually understands him or if he just gets lost in
the conversation and keeps going with it [laughing].
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(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)
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Jordan admitted that his parents are "not the best English speakers," yet he attributed their willingness to still communicate with people – often times strangers – through their limited English skills as his own motivation to learn English.

As a second-generation immigrant, Jordan said he was raised in a strictly Spanish-speaking household. His parents spoke primarily Spanish at home, and to this day, his family members and relatives communicate only through Spanish. Although he no longer lives with his parents at home, he still follows the cultural practices and Spanish-only "rule" of his parents when he frequently

returns home on the weekends. When I asked how he would identify himself in terms of his cultural or ethnic background, Jordan responded simply, "I'm Mexican":

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Well...I'm Mexican. I think because I do things that most Mexicans do. I
don't consider myself...even though I was born here...I don't really
consider myself American because I don't have American ways, really…it's
the way I carry myself. You're just taught to respect people. Learn to
give respect back. As a kid, with anyone who's older than me, I never
talked back to them. I've had White friends, and I think they're kind of
snotty.
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<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, October 16, 2013)</div>

In this narrative, we see that Jordan iconizes the 'American identity' with certain negative features and behavior. For example, his experience with his White friends from his early childhood led him to believe that Whites – or Americans – are "snotty," which is a descriptive trait that is colloquially used to describe someone with a conceited or arrogant attitude. The recursive claim, then, can be made that Jordan views Mexicans as having the opposite iconic features of Americans. That is, he views himself and Mexicans to not hold or practice a discriminatory stance which assumes a self-evident superiority over other languages and races.

"Uh…what are you asking?"

Jordan's first exposure to English was in preschool, which he attended with his cousin who also had no prior schooling in English and was living with Jordan's family at the time. Jordan said his cousin was the one familiar face in a classroom that was composed of mostly White students. "We didn't feel so lost because we had each other," he recalled. Upon entering kindergarten, Jordan felt unprepared to face the impending challenges of losing his cousin and being placed into the ESL pull-out program. He did not understand why he was taken out of his mainstream classroom and was confused about having a 'helper,' who was responsible for assisting ESL student with classroom activities and assignments. "They didn't actually teach us a subject. It was more like…we would go there and ask questions." Having to negotiate the norms and culture of two classrooms as well as

working closely with an "unofficial teacher," Jordan said he tried his best to follow along with the

classroom activities by simply mirroring and mimicking the actions of his classmates. "I would

basically go off what I would see other kids do." One classroom activity, in particularly, came to

mind as he remembered the struggles of learning English:

> At the end of the day, they would play "cleanup." I would just sit there.
> I didn't know what was going on, but then you see the kids getting up and
> start singing the "clean-up" song. And they would start cleaning. So I was
> like, "Oh, I should probably clean." Yea, that's really what it was. If I
> wanted to do an activity, I would just sit there and then the teacher
> would come over to me and ask, "Do you want to do this?" But I would look
> at them and be like, "Uh, what are you asking?" I kind of knew, but at the
> same time, I didn't.

<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)</div>

Activities like the "cleanup" song that required English fluency to follow the activity as intended

were frequent occurrences, so Jordan was motivated to learn the language of the classroom as

quickly as possible. He said it did not take long for him to "catch on," and to this day, one of his

biggest academic achievements was learning how to count to 100 in English. "I remember going into

pre-k, I couldn't even count to...I could count probably to 10."

Jordan eventually placed out of the ESL program in 8th grade, which is when he finally began

to feel "normal." Then upon entering high school, Jordan began to feel comfortable due to the small

graduating class of 20 students. "I think we had probably 800 people total in the school. So it wasn't

very big at all. You basically knew everyone there." Jordan made friends with those who shared a

common interest as he did (e.g., sports and having school as a priority) and avoided the groups who

did have "bigger plans for their future." When I asked how he was viewed by his classmates, Jordan

replied straightly, "They probably saw me as pretty calm...intelligent." According to Jordan, he was

viewed as one of the "smart" students at school:

> Yea, a lot of my friends [saw] me as smart. Before I left for [university],
> I posted something on Facebook how it was time for me to move from that
> small town where I basically grew up in...and like to bigger things. A lot
> of people were like, "I know you're going to do big things. Good luck out

there." People don't see me as, "Oh, you're dumb." They see me as like, "You're going to a pretty good school. Good luck. You got in for a reason so make the best of it."

Jordan attributed his positive image in high school to his academic achievements. He indicated that high school was not difficult and claimed to have had better grades than his classmates. Even when he talked about the few classes that he struggled with, his narratives were qualified with statements like, "It wasn't **that difficult**" and "I was just lazy." However, he candidly admitted to having some difficulty with his English classes. For example, he struggled with run-ons and comma splices in his freshman Expository Writing class, and he "hated" the reading assignments in American Literature. "I don't like reading. That was my biggest pain with those classes." He also admitted to not knowing a lot of "fancy" and "big" vocabulary words, yet it did not deter his self-confidence or how his teachers viewed him as a student. "I actually saw a teacher after I graduated…a couple of months back…He said, 'I'm very proud of you. You're going to do great things.'" Jordan inevitably carried this self-confidence and was ready to live up to the expectations of his classmates and teachers, yet even before his first semester as a college student, Jordan would face a setback that reminded him of his past as an ELL student.

Like Alyssa, Jordan did not place into the first-year writing course, ENG 420. He knew what English courses were required for graduation (i.e., ENG 420, ENG 421), so he immediately enrolled in DWP in order to be eligible for ENG 420 for the fall semester. After the successful completion of the summer program, Jordan recalled combing through dozens of the available ENG 420 sections and said he randomly selected one that would fit with his preferred schedule. He would not realize until his first day in Professor Sung's class that he had enrolled into a section of ENG 420 that was designated for ELLs, a term and label that he believed no longer applied to him.

Nearly five years had passed since Jordan placed out of an ESL program, so when I asked

how felt about his placement into a course designated for ELLs, he responded:

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I didn't know it was an 'ELL' section. I didn't...I was indifferent. I was
like, I don't know if I should be here. I consider myself...yea, I did
learn the language. I learned English. But at the same time, I felt like
I've kind of moved past that. I don't need that much help as the other
students.
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<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)</div>

In this narrative, Jordan clearly indicated that he no longer needed "remedial" English instruction by

citing a salient linguistic feature of his classmates – the accented speech. After the first few classes,

Jordan recognized that unlike him, many of his classmates had "really thick" accents. It was clear to

Jordan that this was an iconic feature of someone who belongs in Professor Sung's class.

Surprisingly, Jordan never considered switching to another ENG 420 section. He said he

convinced himself that Professor Sung's class was no different than any of the other ENG 420

sections. Passing the class and advancing to ENG 421 were what was truly important, according to

Jordan. "It wouldn't hurt to be in the class," he said a few weeks into the semester. "I think I'm

pretty fluent, but I also have my trouble still. I'm not 100% in my English by any means." He turned

his attention away from being in a class he described as "not regular" and began to focus on the

benefits of receiving "remedial" instruction (e.g., developing vocabulary knowledge and improving

essay writing skills). What motivated this attitude change was his implicit understanding of the

cultural and social capital of having complete English fluency. That is, Jordan believed that if

"you're living in the U.S., you gotta know English."

As important as it was that he continue to build his English skills, it was just as important

that Jordan maintained his Spanish fluency. "Most people now, they're speaking English. Even

Hispanics…unless you know [that] the person knows Spanish, you're not going up to them and start

speaking in Spanish." All throughout high school, Jordan said he was motivated to work hard and

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become fluent in English because he wanted to develop bilingual fluency. Like Alyssa, Jordan acted

as a child language broker for his parents and continue to help them even to this day. "Growing up, I

was my parents' interpreter." It was a "normal thing to do" and he considered it a duty to his family.

More importantly, he knew that helping his parents with translation work would someday prove to

be helpful for finding employment:

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For me, I've always wanted to maintain that Spanish fluency because I knew
that my future is…it's going to better me. Going into a job and knowing a
second language, everything is better. There [are] better possibilities.
I've seen fliers where it's like they're hiring, but they prefer Spanish-
speaking employees so they have more preference towards people who speak
two languages.
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<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)</div>

There is an explicit belief among immigrant parents' and minority language communities that

bilingual education will facilitate their children's language development in both L1 and L2. Bi-

literacy, ultimately, has been regarded as a form of cultural and economic capital. Immigrant

children, like Jordan, believe that having bi-literacy will provide more job opportunities and

guarantee a better quality of life in the United States. "After all," Jordan said, "anywhere you go,

you will have to know English."

Over the course of the semester and study, Jordan's attitude and belief regarding the 'ELL'

term and the institutional image associated with 'ELL' classes remained the same. In some ways, he

expressed an unequal treatment and pedagogical approaches toward ELLs in higher education. At

the start of the semester, Jordan was initially adamant about expressing to me that he did not belong

in Professor Sung's class because many of his classmates had accents and were not U.S. native-born.

He wanted to distinguish himself and desired to inform his classmates that he was different from

them. For example, Jordan recalled a conversation that he had with a tablemate who immediately

recognized that he did not look or sound like he belonged in Professor Sung's class:

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Like the guy sitting at my table, the basketball player...he looked at me
like and was like, "Where are you from, a different country?" I was like,
"No, I'm from the U.S." He was like, "No wonder. You don't sound like you
should be in this class." I said, "Yea, I dunno, I kind of just chose it
because it fit with my schedule."
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<div style="text-align: right">(interview with Jordan, October 11, 2013)</div>

In this narrative, we see Jordan's classmate express an ideological stance that is emblematic of the monoglot standard ideology of English. Jordan, who does not speak English with an accent and was born in the U.S., is viewed and positioned differently by his classmate. This narrative also highlights Jordan's desire to distance – or separate – himself from his classmates who he viewed in deficit terms and having less privilege and status as he did.

Jordan did not want to be associated with the iconic features of ELLs because he knew the deficit labels and images associated with the 'ELL' term. When asked how he felt his peers who are not in Professor's Sung's class would respond to his enrollment in an 'ELL' class, he said, "…probably as if I'm dumb…as if I need help or something because I'm not smart enough to be in a **normal**, **'regular'** English class. It would make me mad because I'm sure I can type out a paper just as well as anyone who's in a 'regular' class." We see here the recursive discourse surrounding ELLs and courses marked or designated for ELLs. That is, Jordan believed that the institutional image of those in Professor Sung's class were associated with a negative terms like "dumb" and "not smart enough." Relatedly, he suggested that academic institutions should remove the 'ELL' term from their course titles because it further promotes the aforementioned terms in the discourse surrounding students who require "remedial" English instruction. "I don't think there should be a title. At the end of the day, [ELLs] are just a human being like everybody else. If people knew though, they would be like, 'What the fuck. Are you serious? You're in ELL [class]?'"

Jordan was explicit about his indifference toward his placement in Professor Sung's class, frequently stating throughout our interview that "it doesn't bother me that I'm in an 'ELL' class." He

attributed this feeling to his self-positioning in the class as holding a "privileged position" over his classmates. "I don't think anyone on campus would ever know that. I've told people, 'Yea…I'm in ELL English class.' That takes them by surprise because they wouldn't expect for me to be in one." Interestingly, while Jordan cites observable features of his classmates to justify his claim for how they are viewed and how he views them, he attributes his non-observable features as reasons for holding a privileged position. For example, he cites his high school English classes (e.g., earned grades and having taken "regular" English courses) and his self-evaluation of his English skills (e.g., grammatical knowledge and ability to write an essay) as recursive claims for reasons he should not be viewed as an ELL. Moreover, Jordan believes that the 'ELL' term carries a deficit image that describes not only students but also classes. According to Jordan, the 'ELL' term can be used and is used as an all-encompassing phrase or descriptor that demarcates difference from what is 'normal.' "I don't see myself **completely 'ELL'** to everything…just English." The 'ELL' term is noticeably equated and can be replaced with terms like: additional help, "remedial," and someone who requires additional assistance.

At the conclusion of the semester and study, I asked Jordan to reflect on his experience in Professor Sung's class and how his attitude toward the class and his placement into the section may have changed. He responded that at the beginning of the semester, he felt "indifferent" and "weird" about his placement in Professor Sung's class. In our final interview session, however, he expressed anger and even frustration as he began to reflect on the ways the class was taught. First, he compared the workload in Professor Sung's with his high school English classes:

> To be honest, [ENG 420] was easier. In high school, my research paper was 16 pages. We had to write 100 notecards with information and when we turned it in…you had to have a bibliography with it. That took about a month. The writing topics in [Professor Sung's class] were simpler and required less effort and time.
>
> (interview with Jordan, December 11, 2013)

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He also suggested that the pace of the classroom was too slow. "I wished I stayed in a 'regular' classroom and learn at the same pace as the other students. I think they make ELL students feel as if they're not capable of being able to be in the same classroom as the regular students." On the contrary, after a careful examination of the syllabus for the "regular students" which was also taught by Professor Sung, I discovered that both sections had the same number of assignments, the same four assignments with the same evaluation criteria, and the same required texts. Jordan was noticeably resentful about his placement in Professor Sung's class, stating on several occasions that 'ELL' classes should only be designated for international students or "people who haven't been living here until they got to college." In the narrative below, we see Jordan struggle with his attitude toward ELLs because he recognizes that holding negative views about them is in some ways tantamount to talking about himself:

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If I stereotype them... I don't think that some of the people should
be...labeled...I don't think people should really be labeled as that. I
dunno, it just feels like that you're kind of making them feel
like...they're different...like they need something...like they actually
need the help and maybe they just don't need the help. Maybe they just
have a barrier of the language and they're just as smart as any student
who speaks English as the first language. So...I dunno...I don't think
people should be categorized as ELL students, but I mean...they do. I mean,
they're getting help but at the same time, I feel like our class, any of
the students would do just fine being in a 'regular' English class.
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<div align="right">(interview with Jordan, December 11, 2013)</div>

Jordan disagrees with the institutional categorization of ELL students, although it should be noted that ELLs have typically been subsumed under one or more categories such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and undocumented students. He also expresses a belief that the institutional image and identity attached to the 'ELL' term are misleading, stating that a "barrier of the language" should not encapsulate a student's intelligence; interestingly, his narrative also indicates how he views himself in comparison to the students who are categorized as ELL students. That is, he maintains an attitude of superiority over those who do not possess certain citizenship status and other

Standard English linguistic features. "The kid that's in our class, he's from Germany. He's an international student. He just moved here. He knows English. He was saying that he has an 'A' in the class and I have a 'B.' I'm **clearly** a better English speaker than he is…"

Summary

As a second-generation immigration from a small-town of "mostly White people," Jordan admired his parents his father's work ethic and praised his mother's academic achievements, more so because both had little to no English skills. Jordan also prided himself as a Mexican and refused to identify with the values and practices of Americans, a group that he felt lacked respect for others. As a student, he wanted to "just keep up" with his classmates, but he said he was soon passing them and receiving better marks. He carried this self-confidence into college, where his social and academic identities were challenged by a term that he did not want to be associated with. According to Jordan, the 'ELL' term was only designated to individuals who were foreigners and have accents. He felt that others would view him as being dumb and as someone who is unable to learn at the same pace as 'normal' students. This institutional identity would be something that he would challenge and contest over the semester both inside and outside the classroom, but he also recognized the benefits of receiving "remedial" English education. Jordan foresaw his future being shaped by his ability to maintain and develop fluency in both Spanish and English, but it was clearly difficult for Jordan to be in a class marked for struggling English learners. But by the end of the semester and after interacting with his classmates, he admitted that "no one's perfect at everything." "We all need help in something."

Morris

Morris was born and raised in Mali – a landlocked country in West Africa – but also temporarily lived in France and Canada before moving to the States in 2010. He speaks fluent

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French, the official language of Mali which he started learning at the age of five, as well as Bambara (also known as Malinke), a widely spoken language in Guinea and Mali. Morris' first exposure to English was not until his teen years when he began to attend high school, which he had to commute to by foot for an hour each way. According to Morris, his high school required that all students enroll in an English class for one hour per week, but he was stubbornly apathetic about learning a language that he believed would serve no purpose in his life. "I used to skip English class," he recalled. "I said to myself, 'Why am I going to learn English? I'm not going anywhere where I would be speaking English.' Whenever there was English class, I used to go out and sleep." Morris carried this indifference toward learning English all throughout high school because he did not foresee requiring any English skills for what he wanted to do upon graduating, which was to move from his hometown and live in Europe.

Morris professed that his dream has always been to travel and study in Europe, particularly France because of his fluency in French. So, in his final year of high school, Morris submitted a visa application to study in France and began to make preparations to leave his hometown and family. But when he received a letter from the French embassy notifying him that his visa application was denied, Morris was forced to abandon his dream and chose instead to attend a postsecondary institution near his hometown. "I felt disappointed. To tell you the truth, I didn't have any other option. I was just more hopeless about my future." While completing his associate's degree in computer information, Morris said he began to recognize the first time the growing popularity of English. He began to understand that English was becoming the official language of education as well as "a global language…spoken everywhere." For this reason, he began to consider moving to the States for the purpose of learning English, a language he described not too long ago as "too difficult" to learn and "hated." "[When] I got my associate degree, I was like I was like, 'I'm gonna

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go to America and learn English at least for six months." So against his mother's wishes, Morris applied for and was quickly granted a U.S. visa. Shortly after arriving to the States as an immigrant with little to no English skills, Morris said he experienced what he described as a "life changing time."

By Morris' account, his first six months in the States was challenging due to several reasons. First, he was unable to attend school because he was still awaiting documentation approval from the Bureau of Consular Affairs. In the meantime, Morris said he worked at a nearby fried chicken restaurant as a cook. "I didn't need to speak English to work there because I was in the kitchen, just frying chicken." Second, Morris said he felt homesick almost immediately upon his arrival. Lastly, to make matters worse, he was unable to contact his family and friends in Mali. "I didn't have friends. I used to go work, home, work, home for six months. I didn't have Facebook. I didn't have a phone to call my phone back home." Morris said he was forced to "cut contact with everyone" from home and felt that he was starting a new life in a foreign land.

Sometime after the first six months, Morris' immigration documents were approved and he immediately enrolled into an ESL class at a community college. Morris said he continued to work at the fried chicken restaurant, which meant he would have to commute again for an hour to attend school:

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I registered for ESL class, which wasn't easy because I was working at
night time. At night, I worked from 12 to 7. And from 7...from 7, I have
to leave my job and go straight to school. We started at 8…between 8 to 12.
After 12, it took me an hour to go back home and eat some food. Sometimes
I slept like 4 hours…3 hours.
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<div align="right">(interview with Morris, October 10, 2013)</div>

The hour-long commute to school by public transportation meant that he was always late to class, and not getting enough sleep during the afternoon meant he was constantly tired at work, Morris added. Yet despite the strenuous work and class schedule, Morris said he successfully passed his

ESL class and was admittedly surprised at how much English skills he had retained from his high school English class, which he regularly skipped. "The one-hour class that I was supposed to take that I didn't like…I learned that I have some basic knowledge in English already. I knew how to count from 1 to 100…how to write paycheck…how to conjugate a verb in present tense and past tense." The six-month-long ESL class was easy, he added. He confessed that he was not focused at times, and during these moments his cousin's encouraging words reminded him what was at stake if he did not become proficient in English. "If you want to be in this country and [be] working, you need to learn English," Morris' cousin told him. Looking back on his first year in the States, Morris said he was "overwhelmed" about his new life and often regretted making the decision to leave Mali. He revealed, however, that he made a promise shortly after leaving Mali that he was determined to keep. "I left everything to come to America. So I cannot go back without speaking English or without any degree or without any money. It was something that I had to face."

"They're like me…"

After the completion of the ESL class at the community college, Morris registered for three additional English classes at a private university in the city's downtown area. By spring 2013, Morris had successfully completed his English coursework as well as all of the general education requirements. He transferred to a large, urban midwestern university to earn his bachelor's degree, which was an opportunity that he said he could not have achieved had he stayed in Mali. "It was hard for me to study in Mali. Even though you want to study...is a lot of political issues and problems. So I will say that U.S. gave me opportunity to study and to improve my…my knowledge in English...in everything." Prior to the start of his first semester at the university, Morris took the English placement exam, which he felt confident about from having previously taken college-level English courses like 'Writing in English' as well as a speech class. "I sometimes think that I speak

very well English because I know all the words. I know how to…I know all the tenses. I know if I'm saying something wrong." As he expected, Morris was eligible to enroll in ENG 420 and he chose to enroll in Professor Sung's section that was designated for ELLs. He said he chose the class because he expected his classmates to have similar English proficiency, cultural background, and needs as him. "I view them as **me**," he said about his classmates after the first few weeks of class. "Even though they have been in America before me or some of them came when they were five-years-old, I view them like **me** because we have the same life experiences." Morris soon realized, however, that his classmates were not like him. As the only international student in the study, Morris was indeed not like his classmates, but he suspected that there were other reasons that fueled this feeling inside of him.

On his first day of class, Morris immediately noticed several things that suggested he would stand out amongst his classmates. "I was the only [laughing]…the only Black person in class," Morris said about his first day in class. By Morris' account, the assumptions and stereotypes that his classmates made about him due to the color of his skin did not bother of him. As a matter of fact, he said he was "proud of myself" and viewed his exclusive status as the "only Black" student in class to reflect his hard work and intelligence. "I feel like…since I am the only Black person…sometimes I feel proud of myself to be consistent to study." His exclusive status in Professor Sung's classroom also reified the longstanding image of United States that he had always held – United States is a country full of diversity. "I like this class because you can see people from different background…people from different places who have different life experiences. So it shows the very good image of America where there is diversity." Morris also highlighted his accented speech in English as the one commonality that he shared with some of his classmates. Yet unlike his

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classmates, Morris believed that the color of his skin in conjunction with his accent marginalized his status and positionality.

In his first year living in the States, Morris encountered several forms of racism and discrimination that he said was caused by the way he looked and sounded to others. "They would be like, 'Where are you from? Are you from Jamaica? Caribbean?' I don't even know where those places are [laughing]." Morris recounted during one of our one-on-one interviews an incident that took place a few weeks he had arrived that taught him first-hand about "black profiling":

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I think in America, the 'black profiling' is something of an issue. I
think the image that black people give to themselves and the image that
society gives to them...is hard to identify which one. I experienced it,
but for me, it's different. If I go to store...at first if they see me
coming in the store, they'll be like...following you...everywhere.
Whenever they found that you're from a different country or that you have
an accent, they'll be more relaxed. They'll be like, "You're not black
[laughing]." They're like, "You're not from here [laughing]." That's why I
don't want people to call me African-American. That's why I want to be
called African [laughing].
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<div align="right">(interview with Morris, October 23, 2013)</div>

This narrative, along with many similar others were shared by Morris over the course of the research study, highlighted the anger and frustration that he felt in the first few months of living in the States. In this sequence, Morris recounts his first encounter with the negative stereotypes associated with African-Americans as well as the ideological underpinnings associated with the iconic accented English. Interestingly, we see Morris' desire to be identified as "African" rather than "African-American." In the short period of time that he had been living in the States, Morris quickly discerned the denigrating view and status that persist among African-Americans in his community. More importantly, he quickly recognized that no matter of English courses or degrees could change the way others viewed about him. Relatedly, he admitted to never being able to develop complete confidence to comfortably speaking English aloud due to his accent. "I have an accent…whenever you speak and you have an accent, some people just consider you as **ignorant**. They think that you

are **stupid** or that you don't know how to speak English." Morris understood that his accented

English speech would be a permanent, iconizing feature to others that he was "not from around here."

Ghosts and Vampires

Morris' response to how he would identify himself was much more layered and complex than

the other participants' response to how they viewed themselves in relation to their cultural or ethnic

background. That is, due to his roots in Africa, fluency in French, and recent immigration to the

States, Morris identity was multifaceted and fluid. "I have African traditions, French social

values…and when I moved to America, I have some American social values that I was exposed to."

On his first day of class, Morris recalled seeing the surprised look on his classmates' faces when he

introduced himself as African rather than as African-American. Morris had grown accustomed to

being identified as African-American ever since his arrival and had several encounters that informed

him of the stereotypes commonly associated with this ethnic identity. "I just made an assumption

that they think I'm African-American. That is what I get wherever I go. It's something that I don't

like…because I'm African." As mentioned in the previous sections, Morris experienced what he

referred to as "black profiling" and negative stereotypes commonly associated with the African-

American ethnic identity (e.g., "He must speak Ebonics English" and "He must be uneducated"). Yet

inside Professor Sung's classroom, Morris admitted to feeling comfortable, safe, and "accepted" due

to the cultural and linguistic diversity of his classmates as well as the 'ELL' marker of the classroom.

As I interviewed Morris over the course of a semester, I learned that the 'ELL' marker can be

viewed as an empowering term for students who struggle with English. For ELLs who may find

themselves in marginalized positions or feeling inferior to their English-proficient peers, a classroom

marked as 'for ELLs' can be a social and academic space where they would not be viewed by deficit

images. Morris, for instance, felt accepted by his classmates because he viewed them as possessing

the same level of English proficiency as he did. "I used to get that mindset that I cannot speak…I don't know how to speak English. That fact that I know some of them struggled a little bit like me in English…that gives me confidence." Morris' first moment of realization that he may have greater English proficiency than some of his classmates was when he used 'diaspora' in a writing assignment as well as in a group discussion. "My teacher [Professor Sung] said, 'A lot of people don't know the meaning of diaspora. So you want to say something easy for them to understand.'" Within Professor Sung's class, Morris no longer felt subjected to the "ignorant" deficit image that he was accustomed to experiencing. As a matter of fact, Morris felt that he "knew a lot of things that most people don't know," and for the first time since arriving to the States, he began to re-examine the reasons for feeling doubtful and unconfident in his abilities to speak English. For a brief moment, he understood that his "place in the background" – the feeling that he should not be speaking English out loud inside or outside the classroom – needed to change.

Just as Morris began to build confidence in his English skills and develop what he referred to as a "Western mindset," he was quickly reminded of the images and stereotypes that persisted outside Professor Sung's class. Outside the academic and social space of Professor Sung's class, Morris knew that he was viewed as a "foreigner" whose accented speech marked him as someone who would be "cut down":

> I feel like I am a **ghost** whenever I speak with my accent. And if I speak, people just look at me like, "You are not supposed to speak this way. You are supposed to speak like American or a **Black** African-American." The fact that you are so...it's like...people are not against you, but if you speak…they will be like, "This is not one of us." If you are not one of a group of people, how are you going to identify yourself? You will feel like a **ghost** or a **vampire** [laughing] some kind of way. People will just see you like **ignorant,** the fact that you cannot talk like them. You have that strong accent. You don't behave like their expectations. You feel like you're in the background. You feel like your place is always in the background. The one thing that is always in the background is a shadow [laughing].

> (interview with Morris, November 11, 2013)

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As someone who recently emigrated from Africa, Morris anticipated that he would be viewed as an outsider, which we can see through his self-description as a "ghost" and "vampire." According to Morris, his "strong accent" also reified his status as "not one of us" or the "Other," someone who is dissociated himself from the dominant image of students. More importantly, Morris understood that his peers did not recognize or acknowledge him as a legitimate speaker of English. Consequently, we see that within the linguistic community outside Professor Sung's classroom, Morris' accented speech conflicted with the community's norms and regularities for interaction. No amount of schooling through English courses or fluency in written and spoken English skills could grant Morris the tool to negotiate his identity and to find normalization among his peers. "If you can't speak English, you will be marginalized…excluded. And whenever they heard an accent on you, they will just give some kind of image or stereotype. That is hard."

Summary

In contrast to Alyssa's experience of being typecast as a non-native speaker of English due to her accent – even though she never viewed herself as someone who spoke English with an accent – Morris' experience – or rather, struggle – inside Professor Sung's class was different. Alyssa self-identified as an American because she felt comfortable and confident in her English-speaking skills, albeit she spoke with an accent that she was not aware of. Morris, on the other hand, knew he spoke with an accent before emigrating from Mali. As a matter of fact, Morris knew he was far removed from the image typically associated with "mainstream America" because he was only fluent in French and Bambara, had little interest in moving to the States, and refused to learn a language that he believed held little social capital. He recognized the growing popularity and use of English after completing his associate's degree, and upon immigrating to the States, he understood that his lack of English fluency would mark him with certain negative features like "ignorant" and "stupid." Living

away from home for the first time, he would also encounter discriminatory racial profiling within his community due to the color of his skin. He was often mistaken to have originated from Jamaica or the Caribbean Islands, places that he could not even identify on a map. Morris constantly battled these assumptions and stereotypes and would continue to face various forms of discriminatory practices even in the classroom, primarily due to his accent. According to Morris, his accented English speech was an indexical feature of someone who did not have the same "knowledge" as those who are U.S. native-born, and he believed that the students on campus could not view him as a "real person." As someone who felt like a "ghost" and "vampire" on campus, Morris said the "othering" that took place outside Professor Sung's class can be attributed to the 'ELL' marker. "It's kind of…puts some group of people inside…like differentiation. I don't like it. I don't' want to be like…identified as some kind of way. I should be called [an] 'English speaker.' I don't consider myself as English learner. That word hurts me."

Conclusion

These six undergraduates had similar experiences with how they were positioned by the university as English language learners. They all recognized that there were certain deficit perspectives surrounding the *ELL student* identity, and their narratives revealed how they dealt with and negotiated these images and identities. Morris, in particular, served as a contrast to the other five students, having grown up in Mali and arriving to the U.S. specifically to attend the university. His overall experience at the university suggests that institutional discourses and images surrounding ELLs can have a debilitating effect in the way students view themselves as learners and individuals. In the following chapter, I will contrast the experience of these students in their writing course with how they positioned themselves online in their regular Facebook posts and online writing.

V. ALLOWANCES OF DIGITAL IDENTITIES FOR ASSERTIVE POSITIONING

The second strand of this research was to extend the existing research on identity work and self-presentation in digital space, particularly within SNSs. Given how SNSs like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook have evolved and become a ubiquitous tool among today's youth for gathering information, expressing identities, and negotiating offline/online relationships, I chose Facebook – the world's largest social network – as the site for exploring identity construction in a nonymous, digital space. In this chapter, I will explore what literacy practices are valued, how identities are negotiated through media-centric texts, and how language socialization in digital space takes place through non-linear and non-textual forms of communication.

Created in 2004 by a Harvard University student in his dorm room, Facebook was initially called "thefacebook.com" and membership for the site was limited to Harvard University students. Gradually over time, Facebook expanded its membership to colleges in the Boston area, then to other Ivy League universities, and finally to high-school students and commercial organizations. Just over ten years later, Facebook now has more than 1 billion users and allows anyone aged 13 or older holding a valid e-mail address to create an account.

Like all SNSs, Facebook operates within digital space where users have opportunities to use digital texts to claim identities, share experiences and information to a wide and diverse audience, and develop and maintain relationships. Luke (2003) elaborates on the affordances of computer-mediated forms of communication by stating that texts in digital space have "mutated into complex hybrid system that have made new demands on reading and writing, viewing, social exchange, and communication." That is, today's textual landscape consists of images, sounds, and media-centric

texts that are an "integral part of today's online world" (Williams, 2008), and SNSs like Facebook

are at the center – if not the forefront – of these emerging literacy practices.

This research study examines, in particular, one of the ways in which the *digital youth* are

using digitally-mediated texts to design, re-conceptualize, and negotiate their images. According to

Kress (2003), "the world told is a different world to the world shown," and the *digital youth* are

finding ways to reflect their identities that does not necessarily have to be grounded in the traditional

conditions of identity construction or in their offline – or "real world" – identities. In other words,

"we are moving from rooted identities based on place, and toward hybrid and flexible forms of

identity" (Easthope, 2009). Within Facebook, users have opportunities and are provided with certain

affordances to employ new literacy practices for claiming a particular identity – or identities – that

can be referred to as the *digital self*. In this chapter, I will explore the participants' use of Facebook,

their literacy practices on Facebook as they recreate or negotiate their identities, and their use of

Facebook in relation to their grounded relationships and positionality as ELLs in higher education.

Part of the data collection for this study included two 'Facebook Time-Use Diary' and two

Facebook observations, which were conducted during the one-on-one interviews. The 'Facebook

Time-Use Diary' was to be completed over three consecutive days and was intended to provide a

one-dimensional understanding of the participants' Facebook use. The primary use of the diary was

to quantitatively determine the time participants spent on Facebook, the frequency of Facebook use,

the average duration of each Facebook log-in, and the type of Facebook activities they engaged in.

The Facebook observations, on the other hand, provided a more in-depth understanding as well as a

naturalistic view of how the participants accessed and used Facebook. The observations also

provided a better understanding of how and why participants chose digital text to display on their

Facebook. During the Facebook walkthroughs, the participants brought their personal laptop or

tablet, and they guided me through their usual Facebook routine – a virtual Facebook tour of what they do what they first log in. The participants were in control of what they accessed and wanted me to see. At first, I quietly observed them scroll through their 'News Feed,' check their profile pages, view other friend's profiles, and read and respond to posts on their 'Wall' and 'News Feed.' After a few minutes, all of the participants eventually turned to me and asked if there was a specific section of their Facebook account that I wished to view. It was at this point that I would ask them to go back to a previous screen that I found interesting.

During this observation, I asked the participants: What's the first thing you do when you log into Facebook? How often do you check Facebook? Do you look for particular type of posts or activities? How often would you comment? What's the most interesting thing about Facebook? How much of your profile have you completed? When do you usually access Facebook? I provide a brief sample of the participants' responses to these questions below:

Alyssa: "I use Facebook and Instagram. I had Twitter but I deactivated it. I don't know...I don't see no point. I don't want to hear other people's problems constantly. I don't know, I just stick with two right now…so for Facebook, I talk to my friends. It's better and its' private."

                "In my laptop at home...at night most of the time when I'm doing my homework, I want to do something else because I don't want to focus on this all the time. So I just open my account and see if anyone will talk to me or if someone posted something. I scroll down for pictures or something interesting that my friends post...pictures...people taking pictures of themselves or group pictures. I see how they are, I guess, and how they change. A lot of people change since I graduated with them."

                "Talking to friends...maybe we don't text, but we communicate through messaging. I don't put statuses up or comment. Well I might comment on pictures like, 'Oh, you look nice.' But I wouldn't put my whole opinion towards something."

Cameron: "I didn't want my family to read it so I made a whole another Facebook that same year...in freshman year. I still have it today, but I feel weird because I don't log onto it as much. I go on it once a month. If someone messages me, I wouldn't reply until three weeks later, which is bogus [laughing]."

"I use Facebook every day, for the most part. I don't really post
pictures that much but I do check it every day...just to check what
other people do [laughing]...just scrolling down News Feed, to see
if there's anything interesting...something different. I know
everybody always post food and family and stuff."

Daisy: "Every time I pick up my phone. Probably 50 to 100 times a day."

"Yea...I don't poke people. I comment on people, like my friend's
status. And when I post something, my friend would comment on it and
I would reply."

Grant: "Everybody left MySpace and went to Facebook [laughing]. So I just
went with the crowd and went over to Facebook."

"Well I have family members from Mexico on my Facebook, so I'll
communicate with them sometimes. I'll just go down the 'Wall' and
look at soccer stuff most of the time...like videos...a lot of times
just pictures and memes and videos."

Jordan: "Facebook and Instagram are kind of basically the same. I made my
Facebook when I was a freshman in high school. That was...yea...for
me I think I got it pretty late. A lot of my friends had it even
before middle school. I was always told that Facebook is for adults
so I used MySpace. I noticed that people weren't getting on MySpace
anymore so I just switched to Facebook. So I made a Facebook account
freshman year of high school."

"I use it pretty often, especially with the smartphones. I'm
constantly checking but before when I had a little flip phone, I
still found a way to get on Facebook on my flip phone. I would use
my iPod a lot. Everywhere I could fine Wi-Fi, I was on
Facebook...especially back in the day when I still didn't have
Twitter or Instagram."

Morris: "Right now I use Facebook once or twice per day."

"My main purpose for using Facebook is that I have all my friends on
it. The fact that I'm living in different country, I can see their
activities...what's going on in their lives."

At the conclusion of these observations, I asked the participants to take screenshots of particular

Facebook activities. For instance, I asked for screenshots of their Facebook profiles as well as

particular comment exchanges that incorporated digital literacy practices (e.g., responding to friend's

comments with emoticons), posting pictures, sharing other users' posts). Using a discourse analytical

approach, I considered how the participants used traditional text as well as complex and multiple

semiotic modes into integrative expression for communicating with other users and performing

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identity work. That is, I considered all the possible items and features that Facebook permitted for users to show their *digital self.* I looked at patterns within their literacy practices that reflected the ways in which they saw themselves and how they displayed their identities and relationships in relation to their offline identities and relationships. The Facebook observations were a great opportunity for a more accurate analysis as they showed and talked me through their activities, specifically their motive and intent in wanting to display a particular identity.

In the following section, I will describe how the six ELLs used Facebook to re-create and negotiate their *digital self.* But before I explore what social and academic identities the participants sought to portray, I will provide the multiple reasons they cited for using Facebook, the limitations and affordances of Facebook in its ability to build and maintain relationships as well as identities, and how their Facebook relationships are grounded in their offline relationships. And finally, I will uncover the linguistic norms and social practices of digital space that they recognize and adhered to in order to achieve their idealized personas or identities.

Facebook for Learning

The changes in the ways students read and write through computed-mediated forms of text in a "fast, multitasking, and multiliterate" (Williams, 2008) digital world has raised the issue of not only how students should be taught fundamental literacy skills but also how students construct their identities outside traditional, academic spaces. This digital world can be an unfamiliar space for parents and teachers, which may cause them to feel overwhelmed by the multimodal literacy practices that their children and students seem to use effortlessly. That is, the digital texts they embed into their everyday social practices in digital space have become increasingly intuitive. While it is important that we continue to examine the information they produce and how it is produced, it is

clear that we must explore the type of information the *digital youth* are exposed to, which may shape

their attitudes and beliefs toward what it means to be *smart* or *literate*.

In Facebook, users are able to see a list of stories (e.g., pictures, status updates, videos, 'likes'

from people, and hyperlinks) on their 'News Feed.' The 'News Feed' is most commonly the first

place that users access when they first log into Facebook, as I was able to witness first-hand during

my Facebook observations. The stories that are published can be updated with comments from other

users and may even be shared. These stories can consist of links that direct users to other sites as

well as simple notifications of upcoming birthday events. And just as a Facebook user's list of

friends is managed and updated, each user's 'News Feed' can be managed by blocking certain

stories or even a particular user altogether. The 'News Feed' can be an overwhelming space for both

new and experienced users as it can be flooded with a variety of multimodal content, but all six

participants have suggested that they have learned to filter through the items to find what they are

looking for. For example, Alyssa stated that when she first logs into her Facebook account, her first

action is to scan through her 'News Feed' and look specifically for pictures that have been posted by

her friends. Daisy, too, stated that her first Facebook activity is to find pictures and video of her

friends from preschool, high school, and even in Korea to find out "what they are up to." The other

four participants' initial Facebook activities indicated that they also looked for specific items from

specific friends or groups that they are part of.

The participants also reported that by scanning and "looking through" their 'News Feed,'

they have become more knowledgeable about the world. That is, they become exposed to the other

people's lives and the world they live in. The following examples illustrate how and what they learn

about the world through their Facebook use:

Alyssa: "A lot of people post about the weather, about the Bulls game, or
          yea...anything. A lot of friends posted about the government
          shutdown. They inform us about it...my friends are like, 'Oh guys,

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calm down. It's nothing big.' I learn about it because people post. I rarely see the news. So sometimes when I go into Facebook, something pops out and I learn about it."

Jordan: "Yesterday on Facebook, I saw a documentary on New York's police department and how they frisk and search randomly. This 17-year-old, they did that to him. They had stopped him earlier before. He saw them coming back to them again, so he decided to record them with his iPod to get them on tape. They were abusing him for no reason. They were calling him things like 'mutt' and all these things just because he was African-American. He wasn't White. More than likely the cops were White. I don't think anyone from the same race would discriminate each other using words like that. They were threatening to break his arm. That's something I would have never known if I never stumbled across it on Facebook. You see a lot of cool things, like documentaries. People just 'Like' random things and it just pops up on your 'News Feed.'"

Cameron: "Before I used to read CNN articles and New York Times. But that got boring, so now I get on Facebook and people are talking about Syria this and Iraq this. I get informed through that. I don't want to read the New York Times anymore."

Grant: "I feel like when I go on Facebook sometimes, people post things that I normally wouldn't search for. And I read it and I'm like, 'Damn, now I know something else.' I wouldn't search for it but now that I've read it, I'm interested. And maybe it's something that I'll continue to search for. The stuff that happened in the Philippines…I didn't really know about it and somebody posted a link about it. I had heard about it because of social media. Everything gets out. But I hadn't really seen anything on TV yet because we [roommates] normally don't go through the news or anything. I went on Facebook and somebody posted a link about it, and I opened it. I was like, 'Oh shit.' I didn't know all of this had happened. It was really crazy. You can also follow those pages [CNN, Yahoo News] so even if you don't watch the TV or news normally, you don't even have to go to the news web site if you follow their pages on Facebook. Everything is up there. It all comes out. So if you're not up-to-date with anything, go on Facebook and it'll put you up-to-date."

Morris: "Someone might say in New York that this happened. Facebook is entertaining you, but at the same time, you are learning. You're going to be informed by the environment around you. Your friend in New York that this happened, or someone in Canada will be saying something else. It's connection, communication, information, and everything together combined."

While Facebook primarily serves as a "social lubricant" (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2010) to supplement offline (or pre-existing) relationships and to meet new people, we see in these narratives that Facebook is also considered as a reliable, and often times, the preferred news source. Alyssa, for

example, stated that she recently learned about the 2013 government shutdown from reading one of her friend's posts on her 'News Feed.' As someone who professed to "rarely" seeing the news, Alyssa said she learns about current events and national news when she scrolls down for "pictures or something interesting that [her] friends post." Jordan, too, admitted that the "things you see on Facebook" can consist of "a lot of dumb things but also a lot of cool things." His example of a "cool" thing on Facebook was a documentary about the New York police department, which he was only made aware of through the 'News Feed.' He also talked about watching a news clip that was posted by his friend about the "knockout game," a hate crime that he was unfamiliar with. "You heard about that?" he asked me during the interview. "People are getting killed for that. Why is anyone doing this? I never heard about that until that person brought it up. And it wasn't here in Illinois." Jordan's reaction to both of these events, which resonated throughout the nation due to the captured footage of the violent attacks, revealed his involvement and interest in following current events and national news.

Majority of the participants also stated that by logging into Facebook, they are constantly exposed to not only local but also international news and events because of their friends' posts that has links to popular news service sites like CNN and Yahoo News. The participants indicated that they learn about topics that are not typically discussed among their classmates or even at home, like religions, culture, and even natural disasters. What I find important about these findings is that while it can be argued that the main primary purpose of Facebook is to develop and maintain online/offline relationships, the facilities provided by Facebook (e.g., 'Like,' commenting, and sharing) allow users to have access to news and events that they themselves would not have had found on their own. Consequently, the participants' advertent and inadvertent use and participation in Facebook exposes

them to new information and world events that may have implications for not only the way they view the world but also how they see themselves in a larger, global context.

Facebook as a New Literacy Practice

Facebook is much like any social space where individuals can gather to share their lives and communicate with each other in digital communities. And just like any social space or community, there exists normative, appropriate uses of literacy practices as well as linguistic conventions in Facebook that mediate users' identities. Participating in new discourse communities, even in digital space, requires using language (or multimodal languages) appropriately as recognized and valued by other members. Duff (2010) offers an example of how language socialization theory is employed in traditional classroom settings:

> For example, students in classrooms are often socialized into and through discourses of (showing) respect (and self-control, decorum) to teachers, to one another, and to the subject matter itself (e.g., Howard & Lo, 2009; Talmy, 2009); that is, they are not just socialized into the pragmatics or sociolinguistics of showing respect but also into ideologies of respect, including aspects of social stratification, ranks, roles, and values – which they, in turn, may either internalize or, rather, challenge or resist. In elementary school classrooms, classroom discourse can provide clear evidence of other types of ideologies, too, such as the need for autonomous and independent academic work versus collaboration and shared knowledge production and ownership (e.g., Toohey, 1998). In bilingual, diglossic, or multilingual contexts, the language or code used in classrooms, and the norms related to whether, when, and with whom other linguistic codes are allowed are themselves important aspects of socialization. (p. 173)

While Duff's example provides example of how language socialization theory is represented in communities rooted in academic discourse and norms, there are very few studies that examine how students language and literacy practices in SNSs like Facebook.

According to the participants in the study, there are certain explicit as well as implicit text-based interactivities on Facebook that are viewed as normative literacy practices. Alyssa, for example, stated that she would log into Facebook for only a few minutes each time and talk to her friends. "Sometimes, I don't even say 'bye' to them. I'll just log off and do my own thing.

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Sometimes, I just stop the conversation and later on continue it." We see here that the conventional socialization etiquette of greeting is often dismissed and not valued among Facebook users, particularly those who socialize with friends who they have a pre-existing relationship with.

Another general social media etiquette that I discovered through the participants' narratives is that Standard English or 'Academic English' is not necessary to be an effective communicator. Cameron, for example, revealed that "A lot of people, including myself, on Facebook use slang to communicate because grammar is not important." Morris, too, indicated that "You don't need to use proper grammar. We have our own language to communicate to each other." The "own language" that Morris refers to are the multimodal representations, like emoticons and Internet slangs (e.g., 'LOL' and 'WTF'), and compositions. In digitally-mediated spaces like Facebook, the traditional approach to communicating (i.e., using print-based texts) is no longer adequate given our shift to a visual culture of social media. The affordance of digital space allows for users to use multimodal content and a plurality of text forms for the purpose of better expressing themselves.

For Daisy, one of the key affordances of communicating in digital space is she is able to display her idealized identity due to the language support and certain features of Facebook. In Facebook, she is able to display her *digital self* – or what she refers to as the "good side" – by composting posts in Korean. In the following narratives, we will see that Daisy composes her Facebook posts in Korean more frequently than in English as a way of mediating her interaction with other users and mediating her own psychological and emotional functioning. "I'm never sure of what I'm typing…whether it's right or not…like if it's 100% right or not. So I just change it to Korean." We see here that Daisy does not feel that she is able to fully express her thoughts and emotions accurately in English, which in turn causes her to believe that those who read her posts will judge

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her for any grammatical errors. Even in digital space, English can be stifling and a restrictive language for Daisy.

Daisy's language use on Facebook also reflects identity work as well as a certain literacy practice that is exclusive to Facebook:

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When I'm uploading a picture sometimes, I try to write the caption in
English because people who see my photos...if they don't understand my
caption, they're not gonna like my photo. There is a difference, actually.
Only Korean people like Korean captions…because if I write in English, a
lot of my Chinese people 'Like' it...my Vietnamese friends. For them
[Facebook users who use English] to understand better. I mean...it's good
to get a lot of 'Likes.' Just to show them what I think is so pretty
and...I take a lot of pictures of a pretty sky...yea...yea, maybe for the
'Likes.'
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                                              (interview with Daisy, October 25, 2013)
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By adding English captions to the photos that she uploads, Daisy is able to reach a wider audience and is able to position herself to be receive 'Likes' from more Facebook users. According to Daisy, receiving 'Likes' equates to receiving approval from other Facebook users that she is indeed liked and accepted by the Facebook community.

The norms of socialization that take place in Facebook also extend beyond how language is used among users. As mentioned previously, keeping conversations brief and ending them abruptly only to resume at a later time are considered socially acceptable in Facebook. According to Jordan, there exists another "unspoken rule" – or implicit understanding – among Facebook users regarding how often users should post. "If you post too many posts on Facebook, people find you **annoying**. Have you ever heard of that? They'll be like, 'That's for Twitter.' You can 'tweet' 100 times in one day and people find it socially acceptable." Twitter, which competes with Facebook along with Instagram as the most used SNS, also allows users to post multimodal content. Yet unlike Facebook, Twitter is limited to text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as 'tweets,' which is an expression of a moment or idea, typically shared in the form of texts, photos, and videos. Grant

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echoed Jordan's belief regarding acceptable practices on Facebook, adding that Facebook is not the appropriate platform for individual to post frequently and haphazardly. According to Grant, he made the transition to Twitter because it was the "next big thing" and has accumulated over 19,000 'tweets.' He indicated that he uses Facebook and Twitter for varying purposes, but only one of these SNSs is the ideal place for users to express their "moment or idea" in large dosages. "I used to have a lot of people that got annoying with what they posed and the pictures they posted. And now they can do that [on Twitter] without being annoying."

Another implicit understanding shared by the participants in the study is the type of posts or information users share that are considered useful or relevant. In other words, there are certain topics or types of information that are valued by Facebook users, and it is important to note that this belief is predicated on each individual user. For Cameron, his primary use of Facebook is to promote his music and the events where he works as a DJ. He also relies on Facebook to communicate with other DJs in the Chicagoland area. "I'm a DJ. I post my music on SoundCloud, but I repost it on Facebook." SoundCloud is another SNS where users can promote, distribute, and explore trending music and audio. Cameron relies heavily on this music sharing platform to upload his music to his followers, but he also relies on Facebook to increase his online and offline presence as DJ. "I have like 600 followers on SoundCloud so when I post something…when I post a mix or a song on there and I don't post it on Facebook, it doesn't get as many plays as it does when I repost it," Cameron said.

Some other noteworthy literacy practices that take place on Facebook involve the frequency of certain Facebook activities rather than the content itself. For instance, Daisy explained that 'poking' someone too often on Facebook can be annoying. A "poke," according to Facebook, is a communicative function that allows users to indicate an interest or intent to speak with another

Facebook user. Commenting on other people's statuses too frequently can also be considered annoying, according to Grant. "On Facebook, you don't really want to be annoying. You don't want to be posting stuff every other minute. It shouldn't take up that much of your life…" Another example of a valued literacy practice is the prevalent use of non-traditional texts as the preferred method of communicating. Several of the participants indicated that they relied on emoticons, emojis (digital image used to express an idea or emotion), images, videos, and hyperlinks as the preferred method of communication. Moreover, the participants' socialization on Facebook suggests that Facebook users communicate as well as maintain relationships with their Facebook users seldom through direct messages. That is, Facebook users comment on or 'Like' other users' posts, like status updates and photos as preferred methods of maintain online relationships.

Facebook for Creating the 'Digital Self'

The aforementioned literacy practices that take place in Facebook and what the users inadvertently or advertently learn through their participation in this space reflect the multiplicity of ways Facebook is used and lived. Facebook users design, create, and negotiate identities as an indirect or direct result of how they use Facebook. These identities often reflect or augment their idealized personas that they cannot experience in their offline – or real-world – lives. In this section, I will highlight the specific ways the participants used Facebook to portray their *digital self* that I found to be either grounded or limited by their offline identities.

In contrast to completely anonymous digital environments like Bulletin Boards and chatrooms (e.g., Speeka and StrangerMeetup.com) where users can communicate and "play act" with random strangers through different identities and personas, less anonymous sites like Facebook provoke its users to reveal personal, identifiable information. As a matter of fact, research on SNSs indicate that users make public "identity statements" – typically characterized as either employ

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explicit (i.e., autobiographic descriptions) or implicit (i.e., photos) forms – that often reflect a more honest and idealized selves. An analysis conducted by Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin (2008) revealed a continuum of strategies and the aforementioned "identity statements" that users employed to display their "hoped for possible self." The three modes of identity construction were identified and coded as: self as social actor, self as consumer, and first person self. These can also be referred to as the visual, enumerative, and narrative, respectively. The most implicit identity claims are visual, which is commonly reflected through the user's profile photos, photo albums, status updates, and digital texts on their 'Wall.'

These aforementioned "identity statements" are employed by users to create their idealized personas or identities. It is a way to "show" rather than to "tell" their identities (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Users achieve this by uploading photos of themselves. Alyssa, for example, said she only uploads photos of herself that would signal to other Facebook users that she is "clean, fashionable, pretty, and athletic." Her profile photo during our first Facebook observation was a photo of herself and her friend both volunteering at the Chicago marathon:

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We took a picture and we're just smiling and saying cheese to the camera.
You can see that I'm helping my community with my friends. People that
don't know me…if they see me…they'll see me with a smile. They'll say, "Oh
yea, she's kind."
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<div align="right">(interview with Alyssa, October 22, 2013)</div>

Alyssa's intent on using this particular photo was to display certain positive qualities and characteristics that she wants other Facebook users to embrace as her offline – or "real life" – identity.

Similarly, Daisy also indicated that she uploads photo that reflect traits like "pretty and hardworking." "I think **pretty** is the biggest thing," Daisy said about the photos she chooses to upload as her profile picture. "I like...[laughing]...I upload really edited pictures for my profile

picture. I...I never upload pictures that look bad." Grant, too, expressed that his Facebook posts

relate to his offline identity, emphasizing in particular that he does not "lie about anything" with

what he chooses to post and share on Facebook. "My profile is basically a reflection of me," Grant

said. "It shows that I'm an athlete. It has pictures of my family…where I grew up...pictures of my

neighborhood...friends…my girlfriend…So it's most of my life." When I asked what impression

others would have of him if they were to look through his Facebook page, his response echoed a

similar purpose and intention to that of Daisy and Alyssa: "Athletic, smart…I guess dressy in a way?"

Consequently, these narratives support the notion that the visual, implicit identity claims Facebook

users make to generate desired impressions.

For some, Facebook is just an avenue to talk about and share what is important in their lives.

Cameron, for instance, almost exclusively uses Facebook to reinforce his passion for DJing. "Most

of the stuff that I put on there is stuff that I've done that's important to me. So like places and venues

that I've DJed at. I post stuff like, 'Yea, I was 17 when I started DJing at bars.' There's not a lot of

people that do that." Here, we see that Cameron views himself in relation to his success as a DJ.

When I asked him what other life events or achievements he has shared on Facebook, he talked his

academic achievements:

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A lot people from my high school said that they're going to a big
university and ended up in a community college. From my high school...the
community college of [large midwestern city], they're not viewed as great
schools. So when they see that I'm enrolled at [university] and that I'm
still here, they know that I'm going to do good things. When I got
accepted...I got a scholarship...posted my acceptance letter and
folders...acceptance folders from other schools. I applied to 25 schools
and I got accepted to 23 of them.
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<div align="right">(interview with Cameron, October 21, 2013)</div>

Cameron was aware that the dominant image that his classmates and friends have of him focused on

what he accomplished as a student, but he admitted to never wanting to accept this prescribed

identity. Rather, Cameron wanted to be viewed not simply as a "smart student" but also a DJ – a

<div align="center">130</div>

successful DJ who was accepted into 23 schools and now attends a state university. "I want to show people that I'm **mature** and **prepared** for the real world." This excerpt from our first Facebook observation, particularly his emphasis on being prepared for the "real world," is reflective of his belief that being a "smart" individual requires much more than having taken AP classes. Grant, too, indicated that his Facebook posts relate to what he does in the "real world" and not simply in the classroom. "My profile is basically a reflection of me," he said. "A lot of my profile, it has to do with soccer….me being a student athlete…that I'm in a relationship…that I come from a big family." In our one-on-one interviews, Grant stressed that the "biggest thing" in his life is soccer, and that his peers view him simply as the "soccer guy." A quick glance at his Facebook profile indicates clearly that soccer-related issues are the primary reasons for his Facebook use, and the "student-athlete" identity – which he embraces as his offline identity – is what he seeks to display to the Facebook community.

Through my analysis, I discovered that the participants displayed their idealized identities like "the soccer guy" and the "DJ" through posting pictures and commenting on specific posts that related to their interest. Interestingly, I also found that they achieved these identities by *not posting* certain information. For example, Jordan said he "never posted anything stupid" because he did not want his family members and friends to associate him with the unfavorable or "stupid things" that he sees his friends post on Facebook:

> There's so many kids at my school...they would post the **stupidest things** like, "Party this weekend! I'm trying to turn up!" That means to get drunk and to party. So many people say those things, and if your mom saw that, they probably would be ashamed of you for saying that. They'll post pictures of drinking or smoking...stupid stuff like that. I don't post anything like that. They won't see me drunk. **I'm not like that**. I want them to see me as a smart person. Probably just...I'm a pretty focused person. I have goals for myself. I came to [university] to achieve those goals so I don't want anyone to think that I came out here to get away from my family and do whatever I want and just go out and party.

> (interview with Jordan, October 24, 2013)

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In this sequence, Jordan reproves of posts that display images partying or drinking, stating that these type of posts would not be lauded or accepted by his family members. He also added, "I don't have anything that would give off a **bad vibe**…like this guy is some partier. I don't want to be associated with it." In the previous chapter, we saw that Jordan believed his classmates and teachers viewed him as "calm," "intelligent," and as one of the "smart" students. I found during the Facebook observation that his activities reflect this prescribed, offline image. Jordan's intentionality of not posting pictures and status updates of "partying and doing stupid thing" suggest that how he comports himself on Facebook – or enacts his *digital self* – is a way of reinforcing his offline identity. I will further explore the relationship between the online and offline identities in the following section.

While many of the participants indicated that their Facebook profiles are created and maintained to exhibit positive qualities (e.g., pretty, hardworking, and motivated) and to dissociate themselves from certain negative qualities and relationships (e.g., "partier"), Morris' reasons for using Facebook reflected other larger discourses, like national identity. Similar to the other participants, Morris indicated that Facebook allows him to present a "good image" of himself. And again like the other participants, Morris relies on using primarily photo to create his *digital self*, which he hopes it embodies traits like "hardworking" and "studying hard." These positive characteristics, which have been mentioned several times in the other participants' narratives, are commonly expressed among studies that have investigated self-presentation in SNSs. What is less commonly seen, however, is how SNS users adopt behaviors and belief systems to conform to not only their online communities but also their offline communities and relationships. For Morris, a recently arrived immigrant from Mali, Facebook was an opportunity and a platform for him to be a "part of the group." In the previous chapter, we witnessed Morris recall incidents when he was

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mistaken as someone who originated from Jamaica and the Caribbean. Upon starting his postsecondary education, Morris recalled feeling like the outsider even among a classroom full of students that he believed shared similar life experiences and English proficiency as he did. Regrettably, he quickly realized that he was not like them because of the way he looked and sounded. This reality of "othering" was clear noticeable for Morris, as he recalled feeling like a "ghost," "shadow" and even a "vampire" due to his skin color and accented speech.

For minority individuals and groups, like Morris, Facebook has become a platform to enforce, challenge, and re-establish their identities – often times their racial identities. A study by Tynes, Reynolds, & Greenfield (2004) found that groups previously underrepresented and marginalized are now a strong presence or "strong online" force, but just like any other SNS user, they still seek to enact and display positive images of themselves to others. Morris, whose self-prescribed offline and prescribed institutional identity can be marked as an ELL, "ghost," or the "only Black student," said he is finally able to present a "good image" of himself. Interestingly, though, his *digital self* is embedded in his newly established roots and new-found patriotism for America:

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I didn't realize that I was posting my image. I wasn't paying attention. I
used to go to the nice places of downtown...take pictures and post it. I
didn't know why [laughing] I was doing that. Now I realize that I was
giving the good image of America...the fact that I love this country…I
think the fact that I love this country, I...I do that. I think it's
important for people to see America and know that I'm in America.
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                                        (interview with Morris, October 23, 2013)
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Morris' implicit identity statements of posting pictures of America and American cities reflects desire associate himself with the images and traits associated with the *American identity*.

Morris' Facebook profile picture also illustrates the way he negotiates his *digital self* in relation to his racial identity and the way he feels that he is viewed by others on campus:

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It's one picture that I took here with my friend. We were at a meeting.
One of my friends took my picture and put the image on black and white. My
profile picture is that. My friend took that picture when I wasn't paying
attention, and it come out to be a nice picture. And the fact that it's
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black and white...I don't have any skin color in it. I'm just
blank...mysterious and 'me' at the same time. Because the picture is black
and white, you can't identify if I'm Black or White in the picture. The
fact that my place was always in the background...this picture doesn't
have any color in it. The fact that I was always in the background,
struggling...trying to identify myself...the picture is…blank, so that's
why I love it. It's like me. People do not...the fact that they put you
outside and say that you don't speak English...that you are
ignorant...that's why I love that picture. It shows the reality going on
in my life where I always feel in the background...isolated…excluded.
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<div align="right">(interview with Morris, October 23, 2013)</div>

In this sequence, we see the way Morris' desire to be portrayed and identified on Facebook is inextricably tied to his offline identity, particularly his racial identity. By applying a 'black and white' filter for his Facebook profile picture, Morris believes that his skin color will not be recognized and that his Facebook profile will not be signified by his race or ethnicity. His intention, as explained in the narrative, is that the picture as black and white will grant him equal status at someone who is not in the "background," can speak English, and certainly not "ignorant." Moreover, Morris provides an ancillary purpose for his use of the black and white photograph by stating that the "blank" attribute of the photograph exemplifies the "reality" of his life. In other words, the filter not only removes the racial identity marker but also accurately depict his offline identity – or "reality" – or feeling "isolated" and "excluded." We see here two different yet larger implicit identity claims of his idealized identity that is subsumed by a reality he recognizes that he cannot escape.

Conclusion

It has becoming increasingly evident that digital spaces are providing an avenue for individuals to build and maintain relationships, learn about the world, and use new communicative methods (e.g., emoticons and emojis) that do not necessarily reflect the traditional or offline literacy practices. We see in the narratives of the six participants in this study that SNSs like Facebook serve not only as an arena for socializing and learning but also as a tool for performing particular identities. For instance, the participants shared their preference for using Facebook as a source for gathering

information, particularly local and international news. However, they also admitted to not always actively searching for news. The participants' narratives regarding how they communicate in Facebook revealed that there is an *unconventional* linguistic convention. 'Liking' and 'poking' someone are considered acceptable ways of greeting as is abruptly logging off Facebook in the middle of an online chat. For one participant, Facebook's support for other languages allows her to express her thoughts and feelings more accurately without having to concern herself with the standard English rules of grammar and punctuation. And finally, the findings from the second strand of the research have shown that Facebook is used to reflect or augment their idealized personas and identities. While some of the participants focused on building upon their offline identities and life events to create their *digital self*, some used Facebook as an opportunity to challenge their offline identities. By way of commenting or not commenting, 'Liking' a post or not 'Liking' a post, as well as posting information or not posting information, it is clear that there are deliberate and intentional actions behind the literacy and identity practices that take place on Facebook.

We must also not make the mistake of idealizing digital spaces and conceiving them as liberating, open spaces in comparison to the more deficit and limiting space of official classrooms. The findings of this study iterate the notion that each are limiting and liberating in different ways. For instance, classrooms provide opportunities for face-to-face to interactions and collaborative work that could lead to developing new relationships and interpersonal skills. What is important is that we continue to examine and discuss the literacy and identity work of various digital platforms in which students engage, how they write or read in them, and what they learn about the world and themselves through them.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Jungwoo Lee sits quietly in his first-grade classroom at Rolling Hills Elementary. It is his first day of school, and he fears he will not survive. His ears only hear muffled sounds of murmurs, his eyes only see twists and turns of white lines on the chalkboard, and his fingers feel numb from trembling against the waxy top of his desk. He is the new kid in Mrs. Johnson's class and having enrolled two weeks late does not help – neither do his neon orange shorts, black hair, nor pale skin. He tries his best to avoid the stares of his classmates, who throw curious glances toward the back left corner of the classroom where he sits alone in a two-seater desk. He is terrified of them but is jealous that they understand this foreign language – English. He will spend the rest of the day alone and confused. He will spend the rest of the week struggling to communicate to the teacher if he can use the restroom. And his fear of not being able to catch up to his classmates inside Room 13 would never quite disappear.

I open this concluding chapter with my first exposure to English in my first U.S. classroom. I was a six-year-old ESL student from Korea and one of millions of Asians who immigrated to America for a better life. My father believed we would find it in California, a place he described as the land of bigger opportunities, bigger adventures, and bigger houses. But for me, America was too big, too unfamiliar, and too far from my real home. As a 1.5 generation immigrant, I had the opportunity to adopt a new culture while retaining my own. But looking back, I believe that my parents had always hoped that I would be Korean-American rather than American-Korean. This was evident when they enrolled me into first grade using my Korean name phonetically translated into English. So, I had a name my teachers could not pronounce, wore Korean brand clothes that my classmates teased me about, and carried a lunch box that smelled like radish and garlic. I wanted to fit in. I wanted to learn the language. I wanted to become an American. To fit in, I knew I had to change my name. I chose John, the most commonly used American name in the English lesson books in Korea. Learning the language and becoming an American, however, were not as quick and easy.

The memory of feeling completely helpless and lost faded over the years as I gained fluency in English, yet the feeling that I would always be different – or at least, viewed differently – would last several more years. It was this lasting feeling, which originated in Mrs. Johnson's class, which has led me to pursue this research study.

In the previous two chapters, I have presented my findings from an ethnographic case study of six students who are ELLs in an undergraduate, English course that is designated for ELLs and bilingual students. By listening to their stories over the span of a semester, I have attempted to answer three major questions: (1) *What are the language learning experiences of ELLs?* (2) *What academic and social identities are made available to ELLs in higher education?* and (3) *How do they negotiate these multiple spaces and multiple identities*? These questions were based on the need for more research regarding the growing population of ELLs entering postsecondary institutions and the insistent use of the 'ELL' term that I believe marginalizes and denigrates the status of these students. This study, therefore, provided a case study of ELLs and to hear their stories about their immigration journey, their first experience learning English, their experiences in ESL or bilingual programs, and how they make sense of the 'ELL' term and how it informs the way they view themselves. The final question was derived in response to the increasing number of students communicating online. This study explores the growing use of digitally-mediated texts for designing, displaying, and re-negotiating of identities. For ELL students, I believe it is their English proficiency that their classmates, teachers, and the institution regard as visible, public evidence of their competence and status as individuals. With this digital shift in literacy practices, one of the more interesting developments in literacy research has been on the ways that youths construct and negotiate their identities in a digital environment.

In this concluding chapter, I will revisit the research questions that guided this study. I will present a review of the findings, consider the implications of the study, and propose potential areas for further research.

Review of Research Questions

The first question was a narrative inquiry into six ELLs' English learning experience, which revealed several salient themes as they began to recount their family's immigration journey, episodes of language brokering, and the multiple ways they came to identify themselves with respect to their parents' heritage as well as their experiences in bilingual classrooms. These narratives provided a roadmap for understanding how they began to view terms like *ELL student* and *literate* as well as what features (i.e., racial and linguistic) they considered as iconic of the *American identity*.

The second question examined what academic and social identities are made available to ELLs in higher education. First, I sought to explore the participants' understanding of the institutional 'ELL' marker, which I proposed as a problematic term due to the ideological assumptions that invokes deficit views, stereotypes, and negative identities among students, teachers, and even the larger institutions. It is a common practice among teachers to assume that any student who still struggles with English or is still in the process of learning English should be placed in an 'ELL' class or on an 'ELL' track. In this regard, the term is simply used for descriptive purposes as a way of describing and identifying students who require "remedial" or additional services. However, I re-emphasize the claim made by Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) that the terms 'ESL' or 'ELL' are linked to a student's institutional experience with the term. The findings in my study support the findings of Blanton (1999) that when ELLs reach college, they feel strongly against placing differently from their friends, and in particular, being placed back on the ELL track. I argue that the institutionalized

'ELL' label pigeonholes students into identifying themselves with certain identity markers like *slow¸ disabled,* and *stupid.*

The final question examined how ELLs see themselves and are seen by others in relation to the target language and culture of postsecondary institutions and digital space. Moreover, how do they negotiate these multiple spaces and identities given the difference of specific institutional and sociocultural contexts? All six participants' narratives indicated that the 'ELL' was an identity that did not carry any symbolic capital and was in fact an institutionalized identity that projected images like *disabled* and *shadows.* How are ELLs, then, renegotiating their identities through SNSs that allow users to design and maintain a variety of texts, personas, and identities for a variety of different audiences? Moreover, how are their online identities – or *digital self* – reinforcing or challenging their offline identities? Consistent with previous research that examined reasons why college students use Facebook, the findings of this study indicate that Facebook is still very much an everyday experience for students and is used to primarily communicate and stay in touch with friends. In addition, Facebook has also become an additional space for being (Davies, 2012). That is, Facebook users employ different modes identity claims and use multimodal features (e.g., status updates and 'Like') to perform a range of social acts, including constructing their hoped-for possible selves. And although certain social acts on Facebook are anchored in either offline relationships or communities, identity work on Facebook does not necessarily have to mirror the user's corporeal body or their offline identity. For this reason, this study sought to explore how ELLs, given their prescribed institutional status and identity who require "remedial" or additional services in English, engage in identity construction on Facebook using both traditional and digital texts.

RE-negotiating the 'ELL' Identity in Digital Space

Through data collection and analysis, I have discovered that the ELL student population is far more nuanced and complicated when you examine the various terminologies used to describe learners of English. 'Learners of English as a foreign language' (EFL) was the first term used to describe and label those who were learning English in their non-English-speaking home countries. Then as more immigrants began to arrive, terms like ESL student, LEP, and EAL ('learners of English as an additional language) began to emerge. While the term itself may have evolved to account for the growing cultural and linguistic diversity of students, the unintended – or intended – consequences of the use of the term remained the same. That is, the terms used to describe learners of English have historically grouped these students into one, singular category. I have found that this is not reflective of today's multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Although ELLs in the United States have historically had lower academic achievement rates, disproportionately lower graduation rates, high drop-out rates, and low college completion rates, I have highlighted in the previous chapters that not all ELLs represent these list of figures. We cannot assume that all ELLs have the same level of English proficiency, same citizenship status, or even same the schooling experience. For example, five of the six participants fell into the category of 'U.S. resident ELLs' – Generation 1.5 or 2 students who have completed at least some if not all of their secondary education in the United States. Two of the six participants were enrolled in AP or Honors courses in high school and half of the participants were actually eligible to take what they referred to as the "regular" ENG 420. As I grew know these participants' over the semester, I began to understand the full range and complex realities of ELLs in higher education. The stories of participants in the study have challenged my own assumptions about what it means to be identified as an ELL in today's highly multicultural, multilingual, and often digitally-mediated classrooms of the 21st century.

The narratives of these six participants revealed one salient finding: how ELLs understand *what* it means to be a student in an ELL program and *when* they will no longer qualify as an ELL can be complicated due to institutional placement procedures and classroom policies. Grant, for example, felt that he needed to be placed into a bilingual program from the first day of preschool, yet he remained in the "regular" classroom until his mother – not the teacher – finally noticed several weeks into the school-year that he was having difficulty with his schoolwork. Similarly, Alyssa felt resentful about missing out on the opportunity to learn in a bilingual classroom. Student likes Grant and Alyssa welcomed and insisted on receiving "remedial" instruction, yet they made no indication during the study that they identified themselves as ELLs. They were simply students who needed additional help with their English. Jordan and Daisy, on the other hand, did not share the same experience as Grant and Alyssa. Their ESL programs required that all ESL students be accompanied into their classrooms with a 'helper' to assist them with activities, assignments, and even exams. This 'helper' was a visible marker that signaled to their classmates that they were different, they said.

Some other factors that informed how these participants understood the 'ELL' term was their school's student demographics. For some of the participants like Alyssa, Jordan, and Grant, their cultural and linguistic background represented the majority of their school's student demographics. Alyssa, for example, attended the nation's largest Hispanic charter school systems, and Grant graduated from a high school that consisted of 85% Hispanic students. These participants had no reason to believe or suspect that they were part of a marginalized, subordinated group. For them, their social and academic identities were not informed by their English proficiency but rather their academic achievements and extra-curricular activities. Daisy identified herself by her involvement in her school's extracurricular activities and community volunteer work. Grant was the "soccer guy,"

and Alyssa was the 'FOB.' Consequently, I found that these self-prescribed offline identities took precedence over the institutionalized 'ELL' label.

In the following section, I will highlight how the participants used Facebook not only as a way of escaping from their offline identities but also to talk about issues surrounding their lives, learn about the world, and build or maintain social relationships.

Alyssa: ″I guess if people are shy and they don't want to speak out, they could do it online. And no one would know how they really talk or how they act. They could hide it. Well I like talking to people face-to-face. I don't know. I'm different.″

For Alyssa, Facebook is a space for "isolated" individuals to connect with others and to freely express themselves. In fact, she designates Facebook as a "comfort zone" for individuals who have difficulty socializing with others or who have been "hurt" in their relationships. In the narrative above, she refers to ELLs as "they," which suggests that she may simply be dissociating herself from the ELLs who rely on Facebook to "speak out" *or* she may be dissociating herself from the ELL student population group altogether. She stated that she equates the 'ELL' term with the image of a "disabled person," and as someone who spent the majority of her schooling among fellow Hispanics and was once enrolled in honors courses, we can begin to understand why she would say, "I'm different." Moreover, she indicates that she does not have expressing herself in person, alluding to the bigger picture that she has no difficult with making friends. Her response also suggests that Facebook is a near-debilitating platform that conflicts with the way she wants to connect with others. "People know me but they don't really know the full me," she said about those who view her Facebook profile. "They don't' know the full picture. They know a little bit. In Facebook, you're able to know everyone what you have done and who you are through pictures." Her response to the aforementioned question reveals, then, that her Facebook profile does not accurately portray her because she is unable to "see expressions" and others are unable to see her "smiling and stuff." She

said, "You need facial expressions to see how they are," which signifies that her identity work on Facebook is not as invested as those who view Facebook as an opportunity to show their "real" selves.

As I compared her previous narratives regarding how she viewed herself as a first-year student in Professor Sung's class, I recalled Alyssa's primary reason for enrolling in the 'ELL' track of ENG 420 was to improve her writing skills. She professed it was her weakest English skill. When I indicated to her about the glaring absence of any explicit, text-based identity claims she makes on Facebook, she replied, "I am scared of sometimes writing because I always make mistakes. It's my weakness…if I spell something wrong or have the phrase wrong, they're gonna be like, 'She doesn't even know how to write.'" Accordingly, her self-identity as a "bad writer" extended into her identity work on Facebook, a platform that she designated for "isolated" individuals to express themselves. Her reliance and prolific use of photographs rather than traditional texts or any digitally-mediated texts indicate that Facebook is really not just for the "isolated" individuals but for those who find communicating through Standard English difficult. This claim can be supported by her previous responses to how she communicates with others on Facebook and the type of *digital self* she desire to portray. Specifically, she claimed to not express her "whole opinion toward something" on Facebook, to rarely update her status, and comment on friends' posts. As a matter of fact, she indicated that her primary Facebook activity is to scroll for pictures, specifically "people taking pictures of themselves or group pictures." A salient and visible feature of someone who is institutionally marked as an ELL is their course placement. The inconspicuous institutional markers can be their writing and speech, which can often only be seen in the classrooms. We have seen through Alyssa's narratives that when ELLs have the opportunity to not reveal any indications that they are not completely fluent in English – which could indicate to others that their English is not

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their first language – they will rely on other computer-mediated forms of communications and even denigrate the use and users of Facebook.

Cameron: "Not entirely because Facebook isn't...I'm talking for people my age...it's not...even my profile isn't focused on education or the jobs that I've had. It just takes the perspective of my hobby, my free time, and my social life instead of my professional life or business life. A lot of the friends that I have on there aren't going to college or didn't finish high school. I don't want to type out my success, the jobs that I've had, my education, or what I'm currently doing. I feel bad for the people that didn't have the opportunity to finish high school. I don't want to brag about how I'm at [university] or that I have straight 'As.' A lot of my friends from high school do the same. For me, Facebook is like an addition to yourself. It's not that serious [laughing]. It's not a part of me."

Cameron's response does not suggest that he seeks to project a self that is socially desirable. As a matter of fact, Cameron chooses to avoid projecting a self on Facebook that is socially desirable because he feels "bad for the people" who did not have the same opportunity as he did. For this reason, Cameron views an attempt to show one's academic and non-academic accomplishments on Facebook as "bragging" and would rather not "type out" his success. This sentiment reflects his attitude regarding his placement into Professor Sung's class and how he perceives ELL students are viewed and treated. Similar to Jordan, Cameron excelled in high school and his academic achievements earned him the image as a "smart" student." Upon entering college, he had the option to enroll in the non-ELL section of ENG 420 because he anticipated the 'remedial' instruction would help improve his writing skills. As someone who was eligible for the non-ELL section, Cameron exercised caution in identifying or referring to someone as an ELL because he was aware of the institutional image that is coupled with the term. Cameron described his experience in Professor Sung's class as "just perfect" and indicated that his classmates viewed him as someone who "knows what he's doing." Consequently, Cameron held a privileged status among his classmates yet he chose to not showcase his English skills in order to avoid showing off. In the previous chapter, Cameron expressed that he would feel "bad" because he felt that he was one of the few students who

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would participate or speak up in class. We this similar attitude with the way he portrays himself on Facebook. As a high school student, Cameron excelled in his classes and worked at several events as an up-and-coming DJ. Cameron found success both in and out of the classroom, and like he indicated in the narrative above, Facebook was not a place where he felt compelled to "act up or play-act at being someone else" (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Facebook is not a part of him, and his self-identity as a student and individual is not predicated on it.

Daisy: "Honestly, it's not that important. I'm not desperate to use Facebook. I can live without it...but it just helps me to socialize with people out of the country by Facebook messaging…I don't see people judging me through Facebook activities. I don't know. It's not like I care about other people like, 'If I write like **this**, people are going to think that...' You can't have accents while typing. Unless you tell them that you're an ELL, they wouldn't know. They're not going to know that I'm an ELL. They're not going to look at me like, 'She's in ELL.' They're just gonna treat me like anyone else…like normal, American people that speak English well."

Despite her U.S. born citizenship, Daisy struggled to embrace the culture and traditions of America due to her formative years living in Korea with her family. Through most of the middle school years, she recalled struggling with English and never quite finding a community of close friends at school. It was not until her encounter with the FOB community at her church and her confrontation with the assumptions she held regarding the FOBs at church that she no longer felt viewed herself in relation to her English proficiency. That is, she no longer felt stifled or marginalized by her English skills. These experiences inevitably shaped how she would learn to present herself to her classmates as a first-year college student. For example, on her first day in Professor Sung's class, she introduced herself to classmates as a FOB who was not too fluent in English. She made sure to make these explicit identity claims as a way of protecting herself, and in a way, encouraging her students from saying such comments like, "Oh, her speaking is so funny." Initially enrolled in ENG 320, Daisy was not aware of the 'ELL' designation of her class due to her excitement of moving from a preparatory-level course to a required, credit-earning course; however,

her response to what being an ELL student in college and what her placement into an 'ELL' English class would indicate to her classmates suggested that she knew the discourse surrounding the 'ELL' term. She indicated that ELLs would feel "uncomfortable" if other students knew about the institutional marker they carry by their placement into classes like Professor Sung's ENG 420. She added that there's a "negative aspect" to the term and that it is not possible to be associated as a "smart" as long as they are designated as ELLs.

Daisy's initial reason for creating an account was "because everyone was doing it." She insists that she only maintains an active account so that she can "keep up with friends" and to watch Korean, funny videos as well as Vines. "I'm not that addicted to Facebook," she said. As a matter of fact, she often finds Facebook a distraction when she needs to complete schoolwork and recalled deactivating her account on several occasions. Clearly, as she stated in the narrative above, Facebook is not that important for her. "I even deactivate my account for some reasons...like not a lot, but once a year. One time, I think I had finals. One time, I got into a fight with my boyfriend and I didn't want him to see me. I wanted to be invisible." She also insists that her Facebook activities are minimal, while emphasizing that she uploads photos for her profile photo. Despite her insistence that she can "live without it," her responses to what her *digital self* should portray to others reveal that even with minimal Facebook use and maintenance, users still display identity work that can reinforce or challenge their offline identities. For Daisy – who always felt that her image and identity was debilitated by her limited English proficiency, accent, and her preference toward communicating in Korean and "watching Korean videos" – Facebook was a place where she can display features like "pretty" and "hardworking" through pictures rather than through her writing. Notably, she states that "you can't have accents while typing" and other users would not be able to identify her as an ELL, both statements which reveal perhaps the real reason for her insistence that her Facebook activities

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only consist of photo uploads. For students who may struggle to find ways to adequately express their experiences in their classrooms and their overall schooling experience, digital space can provide certain communicative affordances that allows these students to socialize and build relationships. Daisy even admitted, "There are a lot more ways of expressing myself on Facebook. I think it is a good thing…even with the people that you don't talk to a lot…you would still 'Like their posts just to say that you still care about them…that you're not far away." Consequently, while Daisy's may express an indifferent attitude regarding Facebook and its capacity to reveal who she is, her statements that she can simply make herself "invisible" and that she can maintain relationships with people with the simple click of the 'Like' button suggest that she may rely on Facebook to display her idealized identity more than she will care to admit.

Grant: "I guess...a good image in a way. I don't have any bad pictures of myself. I wouldn't post anything that I wouldn't want my parents to see, and they even Facebook accounts. So my Facebook is clean [laughing]. I don't have pictures...if I were go out to a party, I don't have pictures of beers in my hands or anything. NCAA too...we can't have pictures with cups or partying...we get in trouble. Our coaches go through our stuff…they have people here I think who go through our social media stuff. So they told us to watch what we 'tweet' and what we post on Facebook. I looked at my stuff and I never have anything bad. A lot of times, it's just pictures of myself, with family, my girlfriend, or soccer."

Grant's life-long involvement with soccer provided him with several unique opportunities that the other participants did not have. For instance, he was able to attend college on an athletic scholarship and his stringent schedule as a collegiate athlete resulted in missing several classes, which were always cleared up beforehand with the instructors. Naturally, his classmates have always viewed him simply as the "soccer guy" ever since he first made the soccer team in high school. And just as his social and academic life as a first-year college student was dictated by the rigors of practice and team travel schedule, Grant explains in the narrative above that the way he uses his Facebook and portrays himself in digital space must align with the guidelines of the university's

social media policy. Grant follows the guidelines by not making certain implicit claims. Like Jordan, he knows not to upload photos of himself that indicate partying or drinking alcohol. His Facebook activities are also motivated by his parents and family, most of whom have Facebook accounts. According to Grant, his primary use for Facebook is to simply follow soccer-related news and entertainment. "I guess for me, the soccer stuff keeps me interested. I'll just go down the 'Wall' and look at soccer stuff most of the time…like videos…a lot of times just pictures and memes and videos."

Seemingly, Grant's *digital self* noticeably reflects his offline self-identification and prescribed identity as a "soccer guy." He stated in the previous chapter that he would mostly post pictures of his family, girlfriend, and soccer-related events. Yet regardless of the ostensibly available identity that Grant has quickly accepted and internalized since high school and the restrictive social media policies of the university, Grant's *digital self* is intentionally informed by more than his one-dimensional interest and limited view of himself. "Well I…I guess I show myself as the athlete instead of being a student. For the most part, it's just me being an athlete. It's the image that I've always wanted people to see because a lot of my profile pictures are of soccer." Here, we see that Grant purposefully avoids "showing" or even "telling" his life as a student. He avoids displaying any academic-related markers because they would conflict with his purposefully designed *digital self* that he maintains on Facebook. Just as he can wear the university's soccer team uniforms to class to indicate to his classmates his unique positionality on campus, Grant uses Facebook exclusively to reinforce his offline identity. His institutional designation as an ELL student, then, has minimal value and implications for the way he portrays himself in the classroom and in digital space. In other words, Grant's involvement in soccer overshadows and shuts out any possibilities for him to be identified and self-identify as anything else except as the "soccer guy."

Jordan: "You can set a different image. For me, my Facebook isn't...people
                don't view me as dumb. They'll probably see me as pretty smart. I've
                had people compliment me like, 'You're going to do good things.
                You're going to a pretty good school.' They see me differently. They
                see me as a smart person. I don't consider myself as stupid because
                I'm in an 'ELL' class. I'm still the same person to everyone. I
                don't set a whole different image of myself on Facebook. People
                don't know that I'm in an 'ELL' class. I think they just see me as a
                regular student."

In contrast to Alyssa, Jordan recognizes Facebook as a place where users can display new

identities or a "different image." Yet on his Facebook, he purports that his Facebook activities

should exemplify a clear, distinct image of someone who is "pretty smart" and attending a "pretty

good school." In the previous response to questions relating to how he is viewed by his classmates

and how he views himself as a first-year student at a university, Jordan explained that he has carried

and internalized his prescribed identity – which he said was given to him in high school by his

classmates and teachers – as an individual who is "pretty calm" and "intelligent." Seemingly,

Jordan's idealized *digital self* on Facebook is inextricably tied to how he is viewed and desires to be

viewed in the offline world.

Displaying and maintain this identity requires using different strategies, and according to

Jordan, he maintains his positive image by avoiding certain implicit or explicit identity statements.

For example, he said, "I don't have anything that would give off a bad vibe…like this guy is some

partier." He later clarified, "I don't post statuses that I'm going to get **so drunk** this week or like, 'I

know of a party this weekend so hit me up.'" According to Jordan, many of his Facebook friends are

guilty of posting information, which gives credence to his belief that users who view his Facebook

profile would view him "differently."

Lastly, we see the reification of Jordan's belief that ELLs and 'for ELL' courses should not

signify levels of intelligence. He makes several explicit statements to reinforce his image as a "smart

person" and was protective of maintain this image despite what other users may think of his

placement into an ELL course. While Jordan may have expressed in the previous section his attitude

toward 'ELL' classes – mainly that he is indifferent toward the institutional marker – he still

acknowledged that deficit view that persists among his classmate and the larger student population.

He was also aware of the denigrating status ELLs have among the more English proficient student

population, yet his experience in Professor Sung's class as well as his responses during this study

suggest that he does not accept the same status or institutional marker. That is, he consciously both

defends and ignores the 'ELL' marker as something innocuous and irrelevant to him. Even a

purposeful rejection of the institutional ELL marker and the deficit image that it carries is an

indication that students – regardless of their intentional or unintentional enrollment into an 'ELL'

class – want to avoid in their offline and online lives.

Morris: "In Facebook, I try to be...I try to give a good image of myself by posting **nice picture**...by showing them that I'm **educated**, that I'm going to one of the biggest university…Since I don't have the opportunity to fight against that stereotype...the stereotype that is against my accent, my English knowledge, and my skin color...I don't have the opportunity to fight that at school, so I will go to Facebook and give a good image of myself. On Facebook, I have an opportunity to post nice places, nice pictures...to show that I'm going to school. I'm working. I have my good image…It represents me 75%. I didn't post all my information. But I think whenever you check on my Facebook account, the pictures that I posted are the very good moments that I went through or...the some difficult time or...some of my feelings. Whenever someone check my profile on Facebook, you're gonna learn at least 75% about me…I wouldn't say on Facebook that I am an ELL student because the fact that all my friends think now that I passed this stage to be considered as a very good speaker of English. So I wouldn't say that I'm still in 'ELL' classes. I would just say that I'm going to college [laughing] because I don't want to compromise that image that I give to myself on Facebook. So I would just keep quiet about that, you know [laughing].

Morris never anticipated he would ever have to learn English. He never once considered that

he would be living in a country that would require him to know any other languages than French or

Bambara. All of this quickly changed when his visa application to attend a university in Europe was

denied and the only foreseeable option to study abroad was to apply for a U.S. visa. Upon his arrival

to the States, he experienced what he described as a "life changing time" due to his language background and certain racial features. For instance, he felt that his accented speech was an iconizing feature of a foreigner. Moreover, his skin color and limited English proficiency marked him as someone who is "ignorant" and "stupid," he said. Even after completing several college-level ESL courses in community colleges, Morris experienced the same deficit views after transferring to a university. Interestingly, Morris soon felt that the 'ELL' term no longer applied to him after a few months in Professor Sung's class because he felt that his "English was good now." Regardless how he felt about his competency in English or his ability to produce well-written papers, Morris' felt he may never be able to rid the images and feelings associated with being a "ghost."

Morris finally had the opportunity to display his hope-for-possible self through Facebook, which he initially did not have access to when he arrived to the States. He stated that his main purpose for creating an account was for staying connected with his friends in Mali, but he later discovered that it was the ideal platform where he could display a "good image" of himself. He wanted to show that he was "educated," "literate," "ambitious," and simply, the "best of me," he said. He relied on primarily photos to make these identity claims, none of which suggest that he is an ELL. Revealing his institutional status as an ELL would "compromise" the identity that he desires to portray. In relation to the other participants' use of Facebook and how they design or create their *digital self*, Morris' identity work on Facebook suggests that students whose academic and social identities are confined to the 'ELL' discourse due to more conspicuous features (e.g., accented speech, ethnicity, and skin color) view Facebook as an opportunity to confront and negotiate their offline identities.

Revisiting the Themes

After collecting and reviewing the data, I discovered that four salient themes had emerged from my iterative coding process: Sense of Belonging, Academic Identity, Institutional Identity, and National Identity. In this section, I will explain how each theme emerged and looked across the six participants' narratives.

Sense of Belonging

Throughout this study, the participants provided their experiences with and understanding of the 'ELL' term. Alyssa, for instance, said she identifies with her parent's native culture and language, but she also witnessed how those with limited English proficiency – like her mother – can be treated and viewed. It was from Alyssa's account of her mother's experience with the colonizing, and often times, oppressive power of English that this theme of 'Sense of Belonging' first emerged. Many of the participants stated that living in the United States requires having complete fluency in English. Moreover, some even stated that you must "sound" like an American and "look" like an American. In this study, I wanted to explore and problematize how the participants' enrollment in an 'ELL' section of an undergraduate English course compromised their identities as students and members in society.

Alyssa said she initially felt out of place in Professor Sung's class because she was born in the United States while some of her classmates immigrated here as shortly as two years ago. However, after talking to her classmates and learning about their histories, she realized that they all shared the same weaknesses and strengths as she did.

Daisy and Jordan stated that they felt "embarrassed" and "weird," respectively, about their placement in Professor Sung's class. Daisy was afraid that her friends would find out that she was placed back into the 'ELL' track after finally opting out of the 'ELL' track in high school during her sophomore year. Yet like Alyssa, she eventually admitted to feeling more comfortable being in an

'ELL' class because she felt that her classmates were like her and shared the same "position." "One thing for sure…I think I'm more comfortable being in 'ELL' class. Everyone's kind of like…me."

Jordan felt it was by mere chance (specifically, a scheduling convenience) that he was in an 'ELL' class, but it would still "bother" him if the other students outside of Professor Sung's class discovered he was in the class. "They would think that by college, you should be smart enough to do things on your own and not need any special help."

Grant maintained a positive attitude toward his placement, believing that "nobody is better than anybody" in the class. For Grant, a class is simply a place to learn and develop new skills. Cameron also echoed Grant's indifference toward the institutional marker attached to the course title, stating that "As long as it's at my level, it doesn't matter what they call it or what it's called."

Morris was one of the three participants to enroll in any section of ENG 420, but he chose Professor Sung's class because he felt that he would feel more comfortable learning English with classmates who shared the same linguistic background as he did. "I view them as **me**," he said.

Academic Identity

In this study, the participants were asked to consider how their classmates and teachers viewed them. Many of the participants had internalized these prescribed images and personas, most of which included positive markers and traits like "hard worker" and "smart." For participants like Alyssa and Cameron who took honors or AP classes in high school – as well as Daisy, who attended one of the top high schools in the country – their understanding of the 'ELL' institutional marker did not represent or inform how they viewed themselves as students. Alyssa, Cameron, and Daisy viewed themselves as "regular" students who were taking an 'ELL' class, rather than as ELL student taking a 'non-regular' English class. In other words, their academic identities were not defined by one class.

Jordan said his friends viewed him as the "smart" student who was going to "do big things." He professed that most people would not suspect him of being placed into an 'ELL' student and felt that 'ELL' sections should be designated exclusively for international students. He understood the 'ELL' term to equate with certain features like "not capable," yet he fought against this identity marker by reiterating several times in our interview that he chose Professor Sung's class without knowing the 'ELL' designation. We can find in Jordan's narratives that ELLs can know about and hold deficit views regarding the 'ELL' institutional marker without having to accept it as their own. Grant, for example, only identifies as the "soccer guy." He recounted several instances in high school when his stutter and uneasiness to speak up in class that may have informed how he identified as a student. But upon joining the soccer team and earning a soccer scholarship to attend college, his 'student-athlete' identity took precedence over other possible implicit and explicit identity markers, including that of someone who is a student in an 'ELL' class.

As an international student who did not attend primary or secondary school in the U.S., Morris shared a different schooling experience altogether in comparison to the other participants. He briefly talked about this high school English course (which he skipped regularly) and informed me of his coursework at the community college. As a transfer student at the university, Morris suspected he would stand out for several reasons, yet he never expressed during this study that his limited English proficiency was considered my others to be indicative of his academic abilities. For Morris, his experience inside and outside Professor Sung's class and the narratives that he shared were more closely related to other identity discourses, specifically that of racial identity and national identities.

Institutional Identity

The institutional 'ELL' identity was overwhelmingly viewed in deficit terms by the participants. In describing how what the 'ELL' term means to them, the participants listed words,

images, and phrases like: a disabled person, strong accent, no money, unemployed, embarrassing, foreigner, and hurtful. With the exception of Grant – who argued that the term 'ELL' simply describes someone who is trying to learn and fit in – the participants' responses revealed that there is indeed a negative image and stereotypes regarding ELLs and these identities persist even at the postsecondary level. Interestingly, all of the participants, with the exception of Morris, denied that the 'ELL' image and stereotypes do not apply to them. They embraced the 'ELL' as a descriptor to describe their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, but chose to outright reject the identities commonly associated with ELL students.

National Identity

Many of the participants' reasons for learning English and what they think about the English language revealed that English is a cultural and symbolic capital that they need to attain in order to communicate with others, navigate through school, and find employment. To be able to recognized or linked to the 'American identity' as well as the pursuit of becoming *Americanized* start and conclude with mastery of English, according to the participants' narratives.

Implications

The case studies of Alyssa, Cameron, Daisy, Grant, Jordan, and Morris reflect the diversity of language and culture as well as the complex realities of ELLs in higher education. In this study, I argue that the 'ELL' institutional marker and label can be problematic for students who are non-native speakers of English, yet the stories of participants in the study have challenged my own assumptions about what it means to be identified as an ELL in today's highly multicultural, multilingual, and often digitally-mediated classrooms of the 21st century.

ELLs in the United States have historically had lower academic achievement rates, not to mention disproportionately lower graduation rates, high drop-out rates, and low college completion

rates. These academic findings have led to the creation as well as perpetuation of several assumptions regarding ELLs. Moreover, all ELLs are assumed to be immigrants, have had little exposure to formal English instruction, and that most ELLs have learned English by the completion of their secondary education. Yet as I have highlighted in my findings, not all ELLs fit the typical picture of an ELL. For example, five of the six participants in the study were born in the United States. Three of the participants were eligible to take what they referred to as the "regular" ENG 420 yet they voluntarily chose to 'ELL' section for various academic- and non-academic-related reasons. Most indicated that they received top grades in high school, and many considered themselves as "popular" or likeable due to their academic achievements.

Navigating college as a first-year student can be challenging, and students may often find themselves in the shuffle of making new friends, finding new social groups, and even finding the location of their classes. Through their interaction with their classmates and teachers, students discover that there exist certain norms, values, and practices of each community they enter. It is only through conforming to these expectations that the student can show that he or she is a legitimate member. Subsequently, they will be positioned or prescribed identity markers like "competent" and "regular." Relatedly, having anonymity or "not standing out" can be advantageous because it gives a change for the student to recreate his identity. In other words, they can "start over" or "re-imagine" themselves as someone different. Given these circumstances, what can teachers do in the classroom to ensure that their ELL students do not feel trapped in the ELL identity category? "Whether consciously or not, teachers have temporary control over the social positions of their students, and their power influences both the dynamics of and social relations within a classroom community" (Yamakawa, Forman, & Ansell, 2005). How can teacher help ELLs navigate their academic and

social identities in higher education? Moreover, in what ways can teachers present opportunities for ELLs to share and explore their identities as they develop as students and individuals?

Teacher Education

There has been an increasing call for schools to be more active in recognizing their students' cultural and linguistic background, which have led to institutions becoming more culturally responsive. According to Olneck (1995), schools are arenas where texts, curricula, and face-to-face interactions with teachers and classmates can shape how students' make sense of the societal notions of race, language, and identity. At the forefront of this stage are the teachers who must be able to reach out to their students and instill a culture within the classroom that values not only second languages but also second cultures. And as the demographics of the classrooms in the U.S. continue to diversify in ethnicity, languages, and culture, how are institutional policies and classroom practices reflecting and enforcing an educational goal to be inclusive and to value students' cultural and linguistic diversity?

Teachers who work with ELLs must be ready to examine their own classroom practices. What are their own assumptions and beliefs regarding language, power, and literacy? How have they challenged the monolingual perspectives on language and reshaped their classrooms to improve the learning environment for ELLs? And what are teachers doing to confront the societal discrimination and stereotyping of the 'ELL' identity? As the population of non-native speakers of English rise, teachers must recognize students' identities in relation to English are what Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) describes as "meshing and messy." In other words, ELLs are learning about themselves through their participation and interaction in the classrooms, so teachers should celebrate each student's various linguistic and cultural forms of capital that they bring to the classroom. The singular and static identities assumed by teachers and institutions regarding ELLs only essentializes their linguistic

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status, but if ELLs have the opportunity to view their differences as symbolic capital, they may learn

to see themselves as "full-fledged" members of their classroom rather than as the "Others."

Another important implication that emerged from this study is that teachers must examine the

social constraints on their classroom curricula and practices. As I have highlighted in this study, it is

often the unspoken elements and the hidden culture within the classroom that "others" students. That

is, teachers must be aware of the asymmetrical power relations that may exist in their classrooms

because as ELLs negotiate their interactions between their English-dominant students, between

students of color and White students, faculty and staff, they may see themselves as marginalized and

on the margins of the social hierarchy on campus.

Instructional Technology

Communication now takes place across a diversity of modes, and the pervasive consumption

of digitally-mediated texts has led to an increasing amount of research studies devoted to

understanding how students participate in online communities. SNSs, like Facebook, have permeated

students' academic and social lives, and their participation in online communities has changed how

they view themselves and interact with the world. Consequently, the digital literacy practices that

have been embedded into students' lives significantly impact their experiences and identity

formations not only in the classrooms as learners but also in virtual environments as members of

online communities. Scholars in many fields, ranging from psychiatry (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012),

information science and technology (Zhang, Jiang, & Carroll, 2010; Nie & Sundar, 2013), and

sociology (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008), have examined the use of SNSs and the forging of

online identities, and these studies have revealed myriad ways that students use digital space for

articulating their ideal self-identity, fostering a sense of belonging, and constructing self-

presentations. However, there needs to be more research that examines the "offline" or real-world

sociocultural influences of the participants and the participants' positionality in institutions and classrooms.

Further Directions for Research

This research study contributes to the limited number of studies focused on ELLs in postsecondary settings. The qualitative nature of this project allows the voices of students who have been marginalized due to their linguistic experience to be heard and documented. In order to build on these findings and determine the extent that these experiences are shared by other ELLs in postsecondary settings, a future study could increase the number of students studied – perhaps taking a look at an entire classroom – or employ a mixed-methods approach, to include surveying a large portion of the ELL population at a similar institution of higher education. This study also predominantly focused on the perspectives of six students, but gathering the stories and listening to the voices of other key actors involved in the institutional experiences of ELLs (e.g., teachers, Writing Center faculty, and family members) could lead to a more complete picture of how the deficit discourse surrounding ELLs and the negative identities associated with the 'ELL' term are constituted or challenged.

Future studies could build on the findings from this study by exploring other SNSs besides Facebook for the use of identity work among ELLs. The digital world is ever-changing and moves at a rapid pace, in addition to the preferences of young people. Many of the participants indicated that they started to migrate away from Facebook use when their family members, particularly their parents, began to also use Facebook. SNSs like Instagram and Twitter are rapidly growing in use and prevalence among the *digital youth*, so future studies should explore other venues where students are expressing themselves and interacting with one another.

Conclusion

The findings of this dissertation indicate that ELLs are indeed a complex group of students with unique language learning experiences. Not all ELLs learn English in the same academic space nor do they use English in the same manner. Some may act at child language brokers who are responsible for assisting their parents in their day-to-day living, while some may struggle to find the confidence to speak up, which may lead them to develop an affinity toward their native language. As the population of ELLs continues to rise in U.S. postsecondary institutions, educators must account for these varying language learning experiences. Moreover, they must consider the influence of learner identities of ELLs. The notion that ELLs possess a monolithic and stable ethnolinguistic identity is no longer favored (Harklau, 2007), and the ways they are asserting themselves as students and individuals are highly informed by their out-of-school literacy practices. Through media-centric texts, students are reading and writing in a space where their identities can be shaped and shaped again with a click of a mouse. The central issue that I raise in this study, then, is that in our discussion of ELLs in higher education, we need to move away from having a singular view of what it means to be an ELL in today's digitally-mediated way of learning and living.

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Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Questions (background information)

1. When did you come to the United States?

2. Did you learn English before coming to the United States? What was your first language? What languages did you speak at home?

3. When was your first experience learning English?

4. What is it like to learn English? Do you think it's important to learn English? Why?

5. What was high school like? What did you like about it? What didn't you like?

   a. Did you feel that you were placed in different courses because of your language?

   b. Did they treat you differently because of your language?

6. Now that you're here, what is your first experience in college like? How do your experiences in high school compare to what you've experienced so far in college?

7. How did you get placed into your current English class? How do you feel about that?

8. When you think of someone who's learning English, what do you think that person is called? How do you feel about that title?

9. Do you have friends in other English classes? How does that make you feel?

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (after classroom observations)

1. How would you describe yourself in terms of your cultural or ethnic background?

   a. What do these labels mean to you?

2. If you were to describe yourself to someone in the classroom, how would you do that?

3. Can you describe how you are treated in this class? What do you like? What don't you like?

4. How do you view others in this class?

5. How would you describe your ability to communicate in class?

6. Do you feel comfortable with being able to communicate and to express yourself?

7. Can you describe a moment when you felt uncomfortable in the classroom?

8. Do you feel that this class is helpful? Does this class help you for your other classes?

APPENDIX C
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (after online observation)

1. How often do you use social networking sites? Which ones do you use?

2. What is your main purpose for using it?

3. How do you want people to see you online?

    a. What are the most important qualities and traits that you want people to see by looking at your profile?

4. Do you post information (i.e., pictures, links) with a certain audience in mind?

5. Who are you friends with? Who is in your social network?

    a. Do you know all of your social networks?

6. Why did you write [reference specific detail in his/her profile]? Why did you post [refer to an example]? Do you normally post this type of information?

    a. What was your process in selecting your current profile picture?

7. How do you think others view you on social networking sites?

    a. Do you feel that your virtual profile accurately reflects your identity?

8. How does communicating through social networking sites differ from the way you communicate in your class?

9. What can you do in social networking sites that you can't do in your classrooms?

Date:

Site:

Activity:

Participant(s):

Length of observation:

Summary (descriptive):
Write a one paragraph of the day's events.

Narrative (reflective):
Write a detailed narrative of what you observed

Questions/Things to follow up with:

Sample Field Note

Date
August 26, 2013

Site
ENG 420 (ELL)

Activity
Introduction
1 page writing assignment

Participant(s)
15

Length of observation
50 minutes

Teacher

Table 1: 5

Table 5: 6

Table 2*: 4

Table 3: 2

Table 4: 2

* my table

Summary (descriptive)
Write *a paragraph of the day's events*

First day of class, students were given a handout that asked for a 1 page/3-4 paragraph essay based on a reading about creating market place for a product. The assignment asked for: author's main point and why you agree or disagree. Students were given 10 minutes to read and create an outline, and another 15 minutes to write the essay.

Announcement of syllabus quiz.

Ways to contact him. How they should organize their course documents. How to do the reading journal. Recommended English language learner dictionary. Talked about how the class has a vocabulary deficiency compared to those who grew up speaking the English language.

Narrative (reflective):
Write a detailed narrative of what you observed

As it is for all first day of class, students were hesitant and anxious. But as the instructor went over the syllabus and the assignments, he made references to pop culture that made the students more comfortable. There was more participation and at times, group participation/response to questions.

Instructor said that "we all have problems…knowing where you're going to fail…is going to be very beneficial…"

Questions/Things to follow up with:

How does hearing about their "deficiency" make them feel? How does this statement position them? How does the teacher's reference to "TMZ" and "Brittney Spears not wearing underwear" make you feel? Do these references aim to bridge the cultural gap for the students?
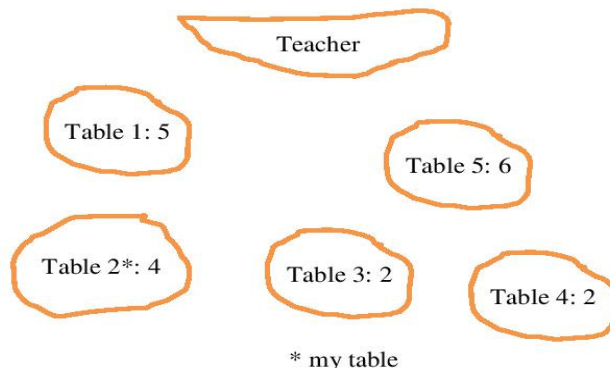
Transcript Conventions

BOLD   emphasized, stressed speech

…   pause

APPENDIX G
Time-Use Diary Template

1. Total amount of time spent using Facebook

2. Total number of Facebook log-ins

3. Type of Facebook activities and frequency of activity

Activity Performed	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Checking for notifications				
Checking for messages				
Checking for messages				
Checking for event invites				
Updating status				
Changing profile picture				
Checking friend's profile (including status, photos, posts)				
Liking or commenting on own status, pictures, videos, or links				
Liking or commenting on other's status, pictures, videos, or links				
Uploading photos or videos				
Sending/checking friend requests				
Creating events				
Creating groups				

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EDUCATION

2015	**University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)** ǀ Chicago, IL

Ph.D. in Literacy, Language, and Culture

Dissertation: "Is Something Wrong with Me?": Understanding the Identities of English Learners in Higher Education

Chair, Advisor: P. Zitlali Morales

Co-Advisor: Kevin Kumashiro

2009   **Emerson College** ǀ Boston, MA

M.A. in Print & Multimedia Journalism

2007   **University of California, Riverside (UCR)** ǀ Riverside, CA

B.A. in Sociology

Dean's List 2005-2007

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Jan 2013 –
May 2015   **UIC Asian American & Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution Initiative** – Principal Investigator: Kevin Kumashiro, Karen Su

Research Assistant

Supervise the institutional data collection of a $4 million grant that funds recruitment, academic and writing skills development, and career advancement of Asian American and Pacific Islander students. Prepare IRB application and supporting documents, assist with the recruitment and evaluation of interviewees, and coordinate university-wide outreach initiatives and recruitment events.

Aug 2011 –
June 2012   **GlobalEd 2** – Principal Investigator: Kimberly Lawless

Research Assistant

Created a coding manual to analyze qualitative data for a curriculum design project that aims to increase the instructional time devoted to science and persuasive writing in 8th grade classrooms. Performed statistical analysis and maintained online data files.

| Fall 2011 | **UIC Office of Career Services** |
| | *Graduate Assistant* |

Conducted individualized career development sessions, administered mock interviews, edited resumes, and hosted career-related workshops.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2013	**UIC College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**
	Asian American Studies 125: Introduction to Asian American Studies
	Co-Instructor

Fall 2012	**UIC College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**
	Asian American Studies 125: Introduction to Asian American Studies
	Teaching Assistant

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

| 2009 – 2010 | **New Song Community Corporation** | New York, NY |
| | *Program Coordinator* |

Coordinated English, math, and science enrichment activities at an after-school center for 40, K-8 students. Mentored teen counselors through PSAT/SAT tutoring, college entrance preparation workshop, and career and financial management seminars. Taught basic to intermediate ESL instruction to Harlem residents at the free, adult education classes.

| Summer 2007 | **Gracious Ark School** | Los Angeles, CA |
| | *Program Coordinator* |

Taught secondary English and math to more than 30 children of low-income, single-parent families in the Korean community. Developed and coordinated community outreach programs designed to strengthen and promote the services of Ark School.

| Summer 2007, 2009 | **Vocabulitis** | Fullerton, CA |
| | *Private Tutor* |

Directed SAT prep initiative (in addition to teaching middle-level English and math to ESL students) for over 15 students – average SAT scores rose by 200 points.

2008 – 2010	**Aqua Pulse / Urban Metro / DV8 / D.E.A.L.**	
	Freelance Magazine Writer	
2008 – 2009	**Community Newspaper Company** | Boston, MA	
	News Correspondent	
2006 – 2007	**UCR Ford Foundation, Department of Sociology** | Riverside, CA	
	Undergraduate Research Assistant	
2006 – 2007	**UCR Highlander Newspaper** | Riverside, CA	
	News Editor	
2006 – 2007	**UCR Office of Strategic Communications** | Riverside, CA	
	Writing Intern	

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Lee, J., Sleeter, C. E., & Kumashiro, K. Interrogating identity and social contexts through "critical family theory", *Multicultural Perspectives*.

In Press   Lee, J. A sociocultural perspective on literacy and identity in the digital age. In C. P. Gause (Ed.), *Leadership, Equity, and Social Justice in American Higher Education Essays for Academic and Student Affairs Professionals from the Field*.

In Progress   Lee, J. English language learners in higher education: Digitally Mediated literacy and identity, *Equity & Excellence in Education*.

NEWS PUBLICATIONS

Lee, J. (2008, April 30). Legislators fight to keep homeowners off the streets. *Wicked Local.*

Lee, J. (2008, March 5). Flaherty seeks green light on green project. *Wicked Local*.

Lee, J. (2008, March 5). Presentation school gala to honor Galvin. *Wicked Local*.

Lee, J. (2008, February 21). And where's the train? *Wicked Local*.

Lee, J. (2008, February 20). Cartoonist draws kids back into class. *Wicked Local*.

CONFERENCES

2013   **National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)**
Invited Session

2013, 2014   **Korean Association for Multicultural Education (KAME)**
Paper Session

2013   **Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education**
Roundtable

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Educational Research Association / LRA / NAME / KAME

Graduate Reviewer for Multicultural Education Review