DECONSTRUCTING PERSISTENCE IN ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AMONG

SECOND-GENERATION LATINOS:

HOW DO SECOND-GENERATION LATINO LANGUAGE MINORITY

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ALTER THEIR ACADEMIC

TRAJECTORIES?

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Jose and Genoveva De La Riva, who instilled in me a love for learning and a desire to serve others. By example, they have taught me the value of hard work and sacrifice. Their wisdom gives me strength, and their love has inspired me to grow. To my husband and partner in life, Don Zengierski, who has been with me every step of the way. Together we have embraced life's greatest adventures. I am most grateful for his unrelenting support and countless hours of editing. Through his eyes, I found humor in fatigue, intrigue in uncertainty, and joy in the exploring life's big questions. To the kids in my life: You inspire and motivate me to seek answers. My work is undoubtedly for you. And, lastly, to my dissertation chair, Dr. Rey Baca, who has transformed my thinking. I will forever remember our conversations and the care with which he shared his knowledge and cultivated my own.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine persistence toward transfer among second-generation Latino language minority community college students. Using qualitative methodology, I explored the academic trajectories of students who began their education in quick exit or English immersion programs in the k–12 setting and placed into precollegiate English coursework at the community college. Language theory, Ogbu's (1987) cultural-ecological framework and social capital theory were used to examine individual, group, and institutional factors that shape academic language development.

This study targeted second-generation Latinos, an understudied and unique minority subgroup, who represent a growing population in our nation's schools. A preliminary survey was used to identify students who met the study's criteria and a two- part semistructured interview was used to generate data. The students who participated in the study were currently enrolled or had completed English 100 and had indicated a desire to transfer to a four-year university. All participants were second-generation Latinos, raised in Spanish-speaking homes, and instructed predominantly in English in the k–12 setting.

The four overlapping findings that emerged from the data support the work of educational scholars cited in this study. The first finding suggested that the participants embraced a strong sense of individualism. Individual effort was associated with all aspects of persistence and success. Second, stability, rather than change, was evident in

the participants' educational trajectories; persistence emerged from a strong learner identity cultivated at an early age. Third, individual academic attainment obscured the participants' ability to discriminate between English fluency and academic achievement. The last finding indicated that participants' academic success was supported by a sociocultural context that enabled them to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Implications for practice evince the value of institutional support and the impact of real-life experiences on a student's academic orientations. Educators are reminded to consider the ideological barriers that interfere with help-seeking behavior. Staff involved with educational programming is asked to consider the benefits of programs that tie educational experiences to employment. Recommendations for future research involve looking beyond group homogeneity, developing a uniform definition of academic language, and further examining the critical transition between secondary and postsecondary education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Questions of diversity have challenged great philosophers (Garcia, 2002) and

remain problematic among culturally and socially heterogeneous societies facing the

paradox of equity and class stratification (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The formal study of

diversity has given birth to the principles of cultural pluralism, a framework that

embraces equity, social justice, and an individual's right to retain his or her language and

culture (Bennet, 2001). In the United States, where diversity and democracy coexist, the

promise of educational equity continues to illude language minority students, who must

negotiate inequitable learning conditions that deter their social mobility. When compared

to their White, middle-class peers, Latino language minority students are more likely to

attend segregated schools with poor facilities, inadequate materials, and fewer trained

teachers (Gandara & Rumberger, 2004, as cited in Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). They

are compelled to learn English and content simultaneously, are assessed with measures

that distort their ability, and are tracked into basic and/or remedial courses (Gandara &

Rumberger, 2004, as cited in Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Louie, 2009). Poverty, low

levels of parental education, and limited community resources intersect with personal

characteristics and make learning problematic. Embedded in an ecological system that

constricts language minorities' academic potential, individual, group, and institutional

factors compromise their academic success and alter their ability to improve their quality

of life. This study delves into the journey of second-generation Latino language minority

students educated in the California k–12 public school system who enter community colleges lacking the academic literacy skills that promote their retention and success in higher education. By drawing on the perspectives of second-generation community college students, I will tell the stories of students who have surpassed linguistic barriers and are working their way toward transfer to four-year universities.

Background of the Problem

According to a 2009 report by the Institute for Language and Educational Policy, two-thirds of the nation's English Language Lerner's (ELLs) in grades k–12 were second-generation immigrants, and 75% of them came from Spanish-speaking homes. Latinos represent more than 71% of the k–12 student population in Los Angeles (Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004), and they are the fastest growing ethnic group in California (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). With their growing presence, their opportunities for mobility reflect our democratic values (Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004), and their prosperity is essential to our country's economic advancement. Contrary to other immigrant groups who have enjoyed the bounty of a job market that rewarded manual labor and a high school diploma, our current economic structure has become more competitive and less open to a blue-collar skill set. A high school diploma no longer guarantees a job or working class status, and medical insurance, homeownership, and job security are luxuries of the past. Thus, Latinos at risk for school failure have become increasingly vulnerable to lifelong outcomes that extend beyond the educational realm. Susceptible to a fate of social stagnation, social factors shape Latinos' early educational experiences, and trigger a chain of events that have lasting individual and generational effects. The

following section traces the path of Latino language minority students who enter our public schools as non-native English speakers.

The standard experience for Latino language minority students entering the k–12 school system begins with a home language survey and language proficiency testing in English and Spanish. Upon enrollment schools categorize them, as English Language Learners (ELLs) and often place them in English-Only Programs, currently in favor with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). State law requires that school districts administer the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) every year to all students whose primary language is not English until the student is reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). The CELDT measures a student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing ability and renders a descriptive category. Although one among several measures of academic competence, California public schools use the CELDT as the primary criterion for their reclassification process.

The reclassification label weighs heavily on students' educational trajectories, and they do not easily acquire it. Parrish and others (2006) found that the average English Language Learner had a 40% chance of reclassifying as fluent in English after 10 years in California schools (as cited in Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Similarly, Callahan (2005) has noted that California policies have made it difficult for students to shed the ELL label. Although students who reclassify in elementary school may have fewer hurdles to overcome, those who transition to secondary education as ELLs suffer serious programmatic consequences. Tracked into less academically rigorous instruction, they are locked out of mainstream content, enrichment, and college preparatory courses.

Students who escape these "ESL ghettos" (Valdes, 2001, p.145) remain vulnerable to instructional practices and settings that fail to prepare them adequately for postsecondary education. Segregated learning environments, grade inflation, and watered down instruction prove costly to students whose goals exceed meeting an A-G requirement. Within this context, being a non-native English speaker becomes a liability, bound to an ambiguous line between language and academic proficiency. Overlapping issues related to instruction and linguistic diversity make Latino students unlikely candidates for higher education and render them underprepared to succeed.

The transition from high school to a community college is a critical period for Latino language minority students, especially those who aspire to transfer to a four-year university and who have not yet mastered standard academic English (Bunch, 2008). Thus, the degree of academic language proficiency students have acquired in the k–12 school system becomes a form of capital that can either facilitate or deter their academic success. Upon enrollment at a community college, students must take an English placement exam. This exam determines their academic proficiency level in English and establishes the sequence of the coursework they will follow. Ambiguous and imperfect, this placement process carries high-stakes consequences for Latino language minority students' instruction, development, and mobility (Bunch, 2008). Gray, Rolph, and Melamid (1996) found that English literacy represents the most significant obstacle for the retention and success of immigrant students in community colleges and four-year universities (as cited in Bunch, 2008). Similarly, Suarez (2003) has confirmed that Latino students attending community colleges perceived the lack of English language

proficiency to be a "major barrier" for transfer (p. 102). Thus, institutional practices in the k-12 and the community college systems that strive to remediate linguistic differences often marginalize Latino language minority students and create lost opportunities for learning and social mobility (Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Valdes, 1999).

Latinos as a group remain associated with disadvantage, locked in a cycle of poverty and low educational attainment. At the onset of their educational careers, issues related to linguistic diversity, poverty, residential segregation, and low levels of parental education predispose them to school failure. Latinos enter the k–12 system with varying levels of literacy exposure, English language proficiency, and preschool preparation (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006). Nationally, Latino kindergarten students are at a higher risk for school failure compared to their White and Asian peers. It is no surprise that, in elementary school, less than 20% of Latinos score proficient on national measures of reading and math (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Tracking further complicates matters at the secondary level. Sorted into classes based on their language proficiency, many students are systematically excluded from mainstream curriculum (Callahan, 2005). Thus, at these early junctures, sociocultural factors shape Latino language minority students' academic experiences and dictate their opportunities and access to higher education. Compared to their middle-class American peers, Latinos are less likely to enroll in college preparatory coursework, complete CSU and UC high school course requirements, and earn a high school diploma (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004). Gandara and Cepeda (2004) found that Latino students enrolled in the

nine campuses of the Los Angeles Community College District had "lower high school grades, and were less likely to have taken college algebra, trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, chemistry or physics in high school or college"(p. 203). Underprepared and over-represented in basic skills and ESL precollegiate courses, Latinos are unlikely candidates for college retention, and their odds of transferring to a four-year university are lower than those of other students with similar course-taking patterns (Sengupta & Jensen, 2006). With limited academic literacy presenting a major obstacle for these students, community colleges play a critical role in their academic preparation and success in postsecondary education (Bunch, 2008; Hagedorn, Maxwell, Chen, Sypers, & Moon, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Valdes (1999) has asserted that language development is a lifelong endeavor developed through education and life experiences. Similarly, Krashen (1995) and Cummins (2006) have affirmed that time and meaning are essential to second language acquisition. Conversational language emerges first and, with appropriate supports and instruction, content-specific language follows (Cummins, 2006). Although the simplicity of this perspective may appear obvious—and its application benign—current educational policies continue to favor short-sighted outcomes that reproduce the existing class structure. Instructional practices that focus on expediting the process of acquiring English prove costly to Latinos' ability to master content-specific language. Thus, Latinos continue to fall short in measures of academic language and literacy despite years of being "immersed" in English instruction (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Standardized

assessments that confound English language proficiency with academic ability render them "non-proficient" in their command of oral and written language. As a result, Latino language minorities become subject to remedial, test prep, and basic skills coursework that is counterproductive to developing cognitively and linguistically complex language (Cummins, 2000) or higher-order thinking skills necessary for their advancement in postsecondary education. Faced with the dual task of learning academic content and language, they often excel at neither and their "imperfect" or non-native like English skills places them on an educational trajectory that undermines their success.

Community colleges have historically embodied our country's democratic values by welcoming diverse student populations through their open admission practices and low tuition rates (Dowd, 2003; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). Thus, they are often the institution of choice for language minority students who leave the k–12 setting with varying levels of language proficiency and academic preparation seeking a second chance at educational attainment. In California, 75% of Latino first-time college students enroll at a community college (Bunch, 2008). Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) (Hagedorn et al., 2002) and their enrollment continues to grow (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006). Despite their appeal, community colleges remain part of an imperfect educational system, whose democratic luster is dulled by statistics of disenfranchised minority students with high attrition and low transfer rates (Dowd, 2003). Community college Latinos are less likely than students who begin their postsecondary education at a four-year university to earn a bachelor's degree (Dowd, 2003; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). Nearly

one-third of Latinos begin their California postsecondary education in a community college, yet only 3.4% transfer to four-year public universities (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). They are overrepresented in basic skills coursework (Sengupta & Jensen, 2006), and the number of Latinos who earn a college degree has remained stagnant for the past two decades (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Although some scholars argue that community colleges open doors and offer pathways, others contend that those doors lead to working-class jobs and not to four-year universities (Dowd, 2003; Rhodes & Valadez, 1996). How community colleges address the needs of Latinos who begin their postsecondary education on their campuses and place into precollegiate English coursework is yet to be resolved. Nevertheless, their ability to do so carries significant implications for this group's social mobility and success in higher education.

It is unlikely that changes in postsecondary education alone can rescue the country's Latino population from a fate of social stagnation. Nevertheless, much remains to be explored to fully understand what helps second-generation Latino community colleges students overcome linguistic barriers and achieve educational equity. Clearly, literacy skills are related to resilience; thus, understanding how language and literacy develop from a k–16 perspective is essential. This dissertation traces the path of academic language proficiency through the k–12 and community college settings. As such, I examine what is known about our country's disjointed educational system and draw attention to the systemic practices undermining the social mobility of the nation's largest growing minority population (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). If education is to perform its equalizing effect, our country's educational system will need to discern the meaning of

equal access and outcomes for all of its groups (Dowd, 2003) and explore what factors create resilience among a minority group so often associated with failure. Mapping an alternative route for these students is essential to achieving academic parity for this underserved population. Their triumph over language is the subject of my dissertation.

Rationale for the Study

Latinos are expected to embrace the American ethos of hard work and trust in a meritocracy that delivers rewards justly; yet, they remain one of the country's least educated groups (Hagedorn & Lester, 2006) and seem destined to low levels of school performance at the outset of their schooling (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Hagedorn & Lester, 2006). If our society is committed to the principles of democracy, it must challenge the flawed sense of equality in our educational system. Language minority students must demonstrate academic language proficiency in English equal to their same-aged monolingual English peers in order to succeed in mainstream education (Valdes, 2004). Their success and mobility hinges on their ability to adapt to the linguistic, academic, and cultural demands of our American public schools and relies on several factors aligning in their favor. This study seeks to understand the success of second-generation Latino language minority students who believe in the American dream and are able to transcend linguistic barriers to access higher education. It examines the social realm of language by exploring cultural and institutional factors that create a context for learning and influence resilience. Whereas many studies focus on literacy development from a k–12 or a postsecondary perspective, this study offers a unified view of the lifelong endeavor of language development and its impact on school

attainment across educational settings. By examining students' educational histories and their transition from high school to the community college, I hope to draw attention to the process of becoming transfer ready rather than reporting measures of static outcomes that obscure the dynamic process of learning.

Research Questions

Research has amply confirmed that Latinos enter postsecondary education lacking college-level literacy skills and that they suffer from low community college–to-four-year college transfer rates (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Hagedorn & Lester, 2006; Suarez, 2003). Because academic language proficiency is essential to their success, it is important to understand how Latinos who place into precollegiate English coursework alter their academic trajectories and become transfer ready. Using qualitative methodology, this study examines Latino language minorities' persistence in developing academic language at the community-college level. With educational policy as a backdrop, three bodies of literature shape the direction of this study: language theory, Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, and social capital theory. The following questions explore individual, group, and institutional dynamics that shape the experiences of Latino language minority students who place below college-level English and persist through remedial coursework to meet transfer criteria. This study asks:

1. How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement?

2. How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology?

3. What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress towards transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved?

Significance of the Study

In the current economy, the financial incentives to attend a community college have grown as other options for higher education have narrowed. Yet, educational institutions at every level continue to counter a comorbid budget cut crisis that demands that schools do more with less. With decreasing resources and ever-increasing needs, schools face the monumental task of preparing a diverse student population for a tenuous labor market. Whereas educational institutions have historically incorporated minority groups into the social and economic fabric of society (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009), their ability to do so in an equitable manner is now more critical than ever. Community colleges are a vital point of entry into higher education for Latinos, yet their transfer rates remain abominably low (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). Without change to the current system, our higher education institutions will continue to funnel Latinos out of a postsecondary education and lock them into cycle of social stagnation. Thus, how we conceptualize and address Latino underachievement is an ethical and institutional dilemma that cannot be ignored. It is critical that educational leaders and researchers add a new understanding of this phenomenon to the existing body of literature examining

Latino community college students' persistence toward transfer. By acknowledging the diversity of this group and tapping into student perspectives to tell their stories, researchers may glean new information.

This study looks to examine second-generation Latinos, an understudied and unique minority subgroup that accounts for a large percentage of the school-aged population. Although research is most familiar with quantitative measures of Latino school failure, my focus is process and success oriented. By drawing on resilient students' perspectives, I hope to bring optimism to a body of literature in dire of need of an alternative to failure. My hope is that this study will contribute to a unified discussion of language and literacy that bridges student experiences in the k–12 and community college settings. By using a tiered theoretical approach, this study offers a multidimensional perspective of student success and educational attainment, and paints a comprehensive picture of factors that affect persistence. Most importantly, I strive to draw attention to the unique educational experiences of second-generation Latinos who find themselves wedged between cultures. In doing so, this study counters existing ideologies that foster the belief that a factory approach to learning, which offers fragmented, one-dimensional or band-aid interventions, will produce equitable educational outcomes for these students.

Definition of Terms

Academic language proficiency as defined by Cummins (2006) refers to the "degree of expertise or an ability to use and understand classroom specific language required for academic tasks" (p. 66). In contrast to conversational language skills used in informal

settings, academic language proficiency is content specific and is essential to academic attainment (Valdes, 2004).

Basic skills coursework refers to precollegiate-level courses designed to prepare students for "degree or certificate applicable college level classes" (Anonymous College Catalog, 2009–10, p. 28).

College literacy refers to reading and writing skills essential to learning course concepts at the postsecondary level (Roberge, 2009).

Developmental English/communication coursework refers to remedial reading or writing courses designed for native English speakers.

English 52 is the Brooke Community College introduction to college composition course. This course is nontransfer bearing and is designed to "develop the student's ability to write clearly, effectively, and correctly by guiding students through the writing process" (Anonymous College Catalog, 2009–10, p. 288). It is a prerequisite course for English 100.

English 100 is the freshman composition course at Brooke Community College. . It satisfies transfer requirements at CSU and UC institutions and is designed to "guide the student through the writing process to develop expository prose with an emphasis on effective organization and correctness" (Anonymous College Catalog, p. 289).

English Language Learner is a language category for students in the k–12 school system identified as having limited English proficiency.

Fluent English proficient is a language category used in the k–12 school system for students previously classified as ELLs, who have met the district criteria for redesignation and display sufficient fluency to access mainstream academic content.

Fossilization refers to the retention of learner-like characteristics that become incorporated into an individual's second language production and relate to exposure to contact varieties of English (Valdes, 1999).

Functional bilinguals as defined by Valdes (1999) are individuals who have achieved English fluency and are well versed in the dominant culture, but retain non-native-like linguistic or learner-like features in their second language production.

Incipient bilinguals are individuals in the initial stages of learning a second language and culture (Valdes, 1999).

Native-like fluency "is a native speaker's ability to produce fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse" (Yorio, 1989, p. 66, as cited in Valdes, 1999).

Non-native English speakers are individuals whose primary language is not English.

Nonphonological accent refers to features that linger in an individual's second language production that are understood in communication, but are distinct from conventional or native English norms (Valdes, 1999).

Reclassification is a process used in the k–12 system for students initially identified as English Language Learners. Reclassification is achieved when a student is redesignated as fluent in English and is able to perform academic tasks commensurate with her/his English-speaking peers.

Second-Generation Latino Language Minority refers to individuals born in this country whose parents are of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and South or Central American origin. As described by Bunch (2008), language minorities are individuals who "speak another language other than English and have been identified as requiring English language development support during their schooling" (p. 1). Spanish was the primary language of all the participants in this study.

Organization of Study

The first chapter introduces the reader to the broad issues of diversity and equity that surround language and learning for Latino language minority students in our American public schools. This chapter draws a connection between academic language and educational advancement, and describes the institutional barriers that deter Latinos educational attainment. By examining this group's growing presence at community colleges and their low transfer rates, I argue that it is critical that we understand what factors contribute to their persistence and resilience. Chapter Two outlines the frameworks that shaped the direction of the study and informed the study's conceptualization of language and learning. Language theory, cultural-ecological theory, and social capital theory are used as a lens to explore Latino educational attainment. Chapter Three outlines the process of carrying out the study and describes its rationale, sampling procedures, instrumentation, and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Biographical sketches for each of the participant and the study's findings are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five concludes the study with an analysis of my findings and implications for practice and research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Latino achievement gap is a familiar topic of conversation often centered around issues of school reform and accountability (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Although failure is prominent in these discussions, dialogue is also often politically and ideologically charged (Crawford, 2004; Goldenberg, 2010) and fragmented among professional communities (Valdez, 2004). Gandara and Contreras (2009) have described the "Latino education crisis" as urgent, pervasive, and requiring resources beyond the educational realm to solve (p. 5). Despite divided perspectives and concomitant circumstances of poverty, segregation, and limited community resources, scholars and practitioners generally agree that Latinos must acquire academic English to succeed in education (Bunch, 2008; Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2006; Valdez, 2004). This study examines academic English and the persistence and success of second-generation Latino language minority community college students. The premise that multiple factors shape language and learning and that internal and external circumstances summon change guides my literature review.

This chapter explores three theoretical constructs that explain individual, group, and institutional factors related to language. It begins by describing the sociopolitical context of learning English in our American schools and examining policy issues that affect instruction. Linguistic ideologies are introduced as a way of exploring the progression of ideas and beliefs that shape students' opportunities to learn. To draw

attention to the subtleties of language (Goldberg, 2010; Valdez, 2004), I use the work of

Cummins (1986), Krashen (1995), and Crawford (2004) to explain the process of

learning English and to draw connections among language development, second language

acquisition, and literacy. Moving from individual to group factors, I use Ogbu's cultural-

ecological theory as a platform to explore the social realm of language and its role in

identity development and academic variability. I conclude this chapter with a review of

social capital theory. Following the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997), I explore the role of

institutional support and its impact on educational outcomes.

The Politics of Language

Language encompasses thought, meaning, and communication. It is inherently

social and reciprocal in nature and is subject to normative expectations (Collins, 1988;

Lerner, 2000; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Structurally, researchers study language as a rule-

governed and self-contained homogeneous system. Examined as a social construct,

language is heterogeneous and diverse. It is defined by the purpose, attitude, and

motivations of a speech community (Collins, 1988). Whereas linguists support the

equality of all languages (Wiley & Lukes, 1996), Noam Chomsky has asserted that

"questions of language are basically questions of power" (as cited in Crawford, 2004, p.

65). Language ideologies, policies, and practices mirror the sociopolitical climate and

power structure in which they exist (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). The following section will

explore how power and politics permeate language policy and shape the educational

opportunities of language minority students. It explains the progression from ideology to

policy and educational reform.

Linguistic and ethnic diversity is a global reality that challenges teaching and learning. Although cultural variations abound, research asserts a universal truth that students who do not speak the "school's language" experience educational challenges (Valdes, 1998). Linguistic diversity raises complex questions about how schools should teach language minority students, what level of support they require, and how our institutions should incorporate them into the fabric of society (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Valdes, 1998). Ethnolinguistic diversity has led the United States government to question its role and responsibility in educating and assimilating immigrants (Valdes, 1998). The exponential growth of language minority students has resulted in reactive measures that subject students to a world of categories that delineate difference, challenge identity, and reproduce group membership. Media-driven and ill-informed assumptions produce linguistic folk theory, or commonly held beliefs about language, that—in turn—shape policy and practice (Crawford, 2004). This understanding of diversity—and a desire to maintain the status quo—inevitably alters the instructional access and educational life chances of language minority students.

From Ideologies to Policy

The notion of power relations related to bilingualism is largely associated with a dominant ideology that views language minorities as deficient in language skills rather than linguistically advantaged by their diversity (Crawford, 2004). Ruiz's (1984) orientation in language planning framework explains this phenomenon by describing language diversity as a social problem or burden to solve (as cited in Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Within the language-as-a-problem orientation, limited English

proficiency becomes associated with disadvantage, remediation, compensation, and cultural deprivation (Crawford, 2004). This perspective ultimately results in subtractive bilingualism, or policies that stress linguistic assimilation and ethnocentric values (as cited in Crawford, 2004). Orientations and assumptions lead to language hierarchies that mediate power. The dominant class establishes norms and assigns privilege and status to its own language variety or communication style; thus, language becomes a form of social capital that pays off in educational, institutional, and economic gains (McDonough & Nuñez, 2007; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Embedded within a wide social structure, linguistic discontinuities between a minority community and an educational setting create disadvantage (Collins, 1988) and impact students' educational life chances. Cultural and linguistic diversity overlap with factors associated with class status and further complicates issues of access and equity.

Whereas public opinion in the United States has swayed educational policy in favor of English-Only and Standard English ideologies, questions about the educational variability of language minority students remain unanswered—and nested in politics (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). During the past two decades, language policy debates in the United States have centered on issues related to bilingualism (Wiley & Lukes, 1996) and immigration (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Within this context, linguistic diversity becomes a threat to national unity, an "import" (Wiley & Lukes, 1996, p. 519), and an unwelcome result of immigration (Crawford, 2004; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Valdes, 1998). Contributing to the language-as-a-problem perspective, and an anti-immigrant sentiment, the nation's most recent wave of educational reform has associated

language diversity with poor academic performance (Crawford, 2006). Standardized assessment measures result in low Academic Performance Index (API) rankings for schools, which can lead to a school's restructuring. As such, schools serving large numbers of language minorities often face punitive consequences for their students' underachievement.

Wiley and Lukes (1996) have asserted that English-Only and Standard English ideologies in the United States result in contradictions in public opinion of what it means to be bilingual. They draw attention to how language ideology becomes an instrument of social stratification that benefits one part of the population and discriminates against another (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Ideologies influence policies that shape instruction and opportunities for learning (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). By examining educational policy targeted at different student populations, Wiley and Lukes (1996) offered an example of how these ideologies unfold. Language minority students must negotiate submersion, immersion, or quick exit programs that stress learning English, and reject their own culture and native language. In contrast, foreign language programs designed for English monolingual college-bound students offer the benefit of resources and time, and stress the value of bilingualism and language development (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Inherent in this contradiction are class implications that extend beyond the educational setting (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Similarly, Crawford (2006) surmises that "group bilingualism has come to be associated with low status, nonwhite, impoverished minorities, while individual bilingualism [has been associated] with affluence, privilege, and dominant culture" (p. 65).

Coexisting with this bilingual contradiction is a monolingual ideology linked to feelings of patriotism and longing for a uniform American identity (Willey & Lukes, 1996). Over the past 10 years, language policy has rescinded support for linguistic diversity by adopting legislation that embraces monolingual values. In 1998, Proposition 227 mandated sheltered English instruction and restricted native language support (Crawford, 1994). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act dropped the term *bilingual* from its legislation and programs and adopted a new ethos focused on developing English proficiency (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Our society perceives language minority students as foreigners or guests who must surrender their native tongue to fully integrate into American culture. Subject to misunderstood notions of diversity and anti-immigrant/bilingual sentiment, they are blamed for their underachievement (Crawford, 1997). Under the guise of meritocracy, individualistic ideologies blur the lines of social responsibility, communicative reciprocity, and linguistic equality (Willey & Lukes, 1996). Hence, limited English proficiency and poor academic achievement is viewed as an individual—rather than a systemic—problem (Wiley & Lukes, 1996).

Educational Reform

Under the auspice of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), accountability measures intended to improve student performance have created an educational environment that confounds linguistic competency with academic proficiency and creates stratified instructional programs. Facing punitive consequences, urban school districts with language minority students have succumbed to a narrowed curriculum that de-emphasizes critical literacy skills and have embraced standardized test scores as proxies for

achievement and ability (Rueda, 2005; Solórzano, 2008). Standardized assessments have become "de-facto language measures" for language minority students and perform a gate-keeping role for opportunities and social mobility (Rueda, 2005, p. 195). "Educational equity is reduced to equalizing test scores," and high stakes decisions for English Language Learners, their teachers, and schools come to rely heavily on these questionable measures (Crawford, 2006, p. 2; Solórzano, 2008). Impoverished through substandard education, language minority students are subject to economic, social, and institutional barriers that limit opportunities beyond the educational setting (Callahan, 2005).

In summary, monolingual and individualistic ideologies have gained favor among the American public, resulting in institutional practices that affect teaching and learning English in our schools (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). A longing for a homogenous national identity, as well as educational reform measures, have narrowed curricula by confusing English fluency with loyalty (Wiley & Lukes, 1996) and language proficiency with academic achievement (Crawford, 2006; Solórzano, 2008). Crawford (2004) has asserted that viewing language diversity as a problem reinforces a deficit ideology that focuses on remediation and compensation, ethnocentric values, and subtractive bilingualism. When manifested in the classroom setting, these ideologies communicate inadequacy, validate stereotypes, reinforce power relations, and reproduce the existing social order (Cummins, 1986).

Latino language minorities who enter the school system with varying levels of English language proficiency face linguistic barriers at the onset of their educational

carriers. To advance academically, they must learn language and content simultaneously within a political and ideological context that views their native language and cultural diversity as a deficit. Upon enrollment, Latino language minority students become suspect for school failure. Confused as a monolithic group, schools misunderstand their needs. Furthermore, policies mistakenly misrepresent them as temporary visitors in the United States, and disenfranchise them from learning. An estimated 75% of language minority students enrolled in k–12 schools are U.S. citizens (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009), yet the public's embrace of the foreigner stereotype results in instructional practices that impact their ability to develop academic language and literacy (Cummins, 2006). The following section of this paper will review the theoretical constructs that explain the relationship among language development, second language acquisition, and literacy. It makes a distinction between language and learning, traces the path of academic language proficiency from its inception, and draws attention to early experiences that shape students' educational trajectories.

Language Development

Contemporary linguistic frameworks have evolved from a myriad of grammar-translation, audiolingual, and behavioral approaches to its current form via Chomskyan theory (Crawford, 2004). Chomsky's theory forms the foundation for understanding basic principles in language development, asserting that humans have a biological language faculty and, thus, are hardwired to acquire and process language. MacSwan and Rolstad (2003) have further explained that "all normal children achieve linguistically [and that] most of the morphological and syntactical rules of language are mastered by the time a

child enters school" (p. 333). Relevant to linguistic diversity, Chomsky's theory

established language acquisition as an independent discipline separate from general

learning theory. His work gave birth to the concepts of universal grammar and natural

order in language acquisition and emphasized the difference between linguistic

competence and linguistic performance (Crawford, 2004). Chomsky's principle of

universal grammar proposes that all languages share a fundamental structure that allows

the mind to organize and understand language (Crawford, 2004). Environmental

stimuli—or an individual's social context—trigger the mind to form grammatical rules.

Chomsky explains that "*linguistic registers*, or variations in communication styles," exist

among social groups and situations and can become problematic when manifested in

incongruent language contexts (Crawford, 2004, p. 186). Thus, language minorities who

have developed linguistic registers that differ from that of the dominant culture must gain

access to academic registers to succeed in school (Cummins, 2006). Chomsky defined

linguistic competence as an underlying knowledge of language, and linguistic

performance as the application of language. In this distinction, linguistic competence

stems from the internal processes that facilitate language production, whereas linguistic

performance is more directly related to the social context in which a language is used

(Crawford, 2004). Irrespective of this distinction, contemporary research has asserted that

an individual's sociocultural context shapes both linguistic performance and competence

(Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The following section provides a brief overview of Stephan

Krashen's framework on second language acquisition and adds depth to Chomsky's

distinction between language and learning.

Second Language Acquisition

Although empirical research has tested and confirmed many of Chomsky's hypotheses, his theory left pedagogical questions unanswered. Educators questioned their role in teaching language and wondered about the extent to which they could teach language (Crawford, 2004). As different approaches to teaching language evolved from Chomsky's emphasis on rule formation, researchers found that varying teaching practices produced similar results. They also found that the rate of second language proficiency remained unexplained by individual learning differences (Crawford, 2004). It became clear that quality of instruction was an important factor related to second language acquisition that warranted consideration (Crawford, 2004, p.188). Stephan Krashen's (1995) theory of second language acquisition emerged from the need to align practice and research with theory.

Building on Chomsky, Krashen (1995) formulated a theory based on five hypotheses addressing questions of educational methodology. His first and most basic principle asserts that language is acquired rather than learned (Krashen, 1995); hence, second language acquisition is a subconscious process that emerges in a slow and subtle manner—in contrast to learning that can be fast and obvious (Krashen, 1995). Crawford (2004) has explained that just as infants do not require dictionaries to acquire language, humans best acquire language by "communicative practice in real situations" (p. 189). Similar to Chomsky's work, Krashen's (1995) natural order hypothesis emphasizes the predictable progression of grammatical structures in second language acquisition. It stresses the value of quality instruction over amount of exposure (Krashen, 1995). The

monitor hypothesis revisits the acquisition-learning distinction and explains the role of

formal rules in language performance. Krashen (1995) has asserted that acquisition is

related to fluency and language production. In contrast, learning, or the conscious

processes of language, allows individuals to edit and modify the utterances they produce.

Although learned language rules are secondary to acquisition, optimal use of the monitor

augments language production.

Krashen's two remaining hypotheses focus specifically on the process of second

language acquisition. Building on Chomsky's theory of an innate language faculty,

Krashen's input hypothesis contends that humans are biologically predisposed to acquire

language through *comprehensible input*, or messages that are understood (Crawford,

2004, p. 189). Krashen's (1995) acquisition equation mirrors Vygotsky's zone of

proximal development (ZPD) (Santrock, 2009). A key principle in the social

constructivist approach, ZPD refers to an optimal stage in learning in which children are

able to perform a difficult task with the assistance of a more skilled adult or peer

(Santrock, 2009). Similarly, Krashen's input hypothesis suggests that language is

acquired "when we understand messages that contain structures that are slightly beyond

our current level of competency" (Krashen, 1995, p. 21). Context, culture, and nonverbal

input further enhance comprehension and facilitate acquisition. In contrast to teaching

strategies that emphasize structure before meaning, the input hypothesis asserts that

acquisition is facilitated by meaning and that grammatical structures inevitably follow

(Krashen, 1995).

Lastly, Krashen (1995) described internal characteristics that influence an individual's ability to process messages as part of the affective filter hypothesis. Factors related to motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety can either facilitate or block input by strengthening or weakening the filter. Deep language processing related to acquisition occurs when access to comprehensible input is high and anxiety is low. In contrast, fossilized or learner-like linguistic features remain when only surface comprehension is achieved. As such, optimal instruction involves access to comprehensible input in an environment that increases motivation and self-confidence and reduces anxiety (Crawford, 2004).

In sum, Krashen's (1995) theory of second language acquisition offers important insights into English language teaching and learning. Of utmost importance, Krashen (1995) identified comprehensible input and the concept of an affective filter as the two variables that best explain the acquisition of language. Following his perspective, instruction is accessible to non-native speakers when comprehensible input is provided within an educational context that values language and fosters positive attitudes toward learning. Although Krashen's critics have argued that his views are simplistic and that second language acquisition develops differently from an individual's native language, Krashen's comprehensible input and affective filter principles have withstood even their critiques (Crawford, 2004). The implications of Krashen's theory weigh heavily on issues related to instructional methodology, assessment procedures, and skill-based curricula widely embraced by k–12 school districts consumed by efforts to raise test scores (Crawford, 2004). Relevant to students' long-term academic trajectories, it is easy to

understand why deep language processing at an early age is fundamental to helping

students develop academic language proficiency. Evidence of learner-like linguistic

features described by Krashen (1995) are widely apparent in the academic achievement

levels of Latino language minority community college students who have been immersed

in English instruction in the k–12 setting and are unable to place into college level

English. Although a single factor seldom causes low achievement levels, it is clear that

our nation's current focus on expediting the process of learning English has compromised

the academic advancement and quality of instruction for Latino language minority

students. Moving from language acquisition, the following section will explore the

relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement.

Language and Literacy

Cummins brought depth to the study of language acquisition by exploring the

relationship between an individual's first language (L1), second language acquisition

(L2), and academic achievement (Crawford, 2004, p. 192). His "dual iceberg" metaphor

identifies a common underlying proficiency (CUP) among languages, characterized by

shared foundational skills with differing surface characteristics (Crawford, 2004;

Cummins, 1984). This common underlying proficiency bridges linguistic competency

with deeper conceptual understanding of academic skills and facilitates the transfer of

knowledge and literacy between languages (Cummins, 1984). Cummins's (1984)

interdependence hypothesis asserts that linguistic competence and cognitive/academic

skills inherent in a primary language are conduits to deeper conceptual and linguistic

competence in a second language. Therefore, Krashen's (1995) input hypothesis builds

on Cummins's (1984, 2006) premise of a central processing system or common underlying proficiency nourished by language that is comprehensible and facilitates transfer.

Cummins has described language development on a continuum, with basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) at one end and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) at the other (Cummins, 1984, 2000). Although not dichotomous, Cummins has emphasized that BICS and CALP, are conceptually distinct and develop at different rates. He asserted that BICS facilitate conversational skills, usually evolve over a two-year period, are supported by contextual cues, and depend on a limited range of vocabulary and syntax (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2006). Corson's (1993, 1995, 1997) lexical analysis has suggested that conversational language often consists of one- to two-syllable words of Anglo-Saxon origin that cannot be deconstructed into meaningful parts (as cited in Cummins, 2006). In contrast, CALP commensurate with grade-level norms can be achieved over a five- to seven-year period (Cummins, 1984). Crawford (2004) has described CALP as classroom English and literacy related. Whereas CALP is not literacy specific, Crawford has acknowledged that it often develops "through the written word" (p. 196). CALP includes abstract comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation often within a decontextualized context (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1984, 2006). Compared to conversational language, CALP relies heavily on Greco-Latin vocabulary, which consists of three- to four-syllable, discipline-specific words less likely to be encountered in conversation (Corson, 1993, 1995, 1997; as cited in Cummins, 2006).

Thus, developing academic language bears a strong relationship to literacy (Cummins, 2006).

Relevant to instruction, Cummins (1984) designed a conceptual matrix based on his CALP and BICS distinction that matches cognitive demands to necessary contextual supports that maximize linguistic, cognitive, and academic growth (Crawford, 2004). His model consists of two intersecting axes that form four distinct quadrants. Each quadrant characterizes a task according to its level of accessibility based on its cognitive demands and contextual supports. Cummins (2006) proposed that his matrix be used to dissect and organize instruction. Using this framework, Cummins (1984) described how language proficiency and instruction intersect. He emphasized the value of understanding students' skill level, the context of learning, and the curricular content to maximize opportunities for learning. Cummins's (1984) threshold hypothesis explains that a minimum threshold level of proficiency, or CALP, is required for students to achieve academically in a second language (Crawford, 2004). When CALP in a students' native language is interrupted, language minorities face cognitive disadvantages (Corson, 2000; Crawford, 2004). With adequate conversational skills and less-developed cognitive academic language skills in both languages, language minorities face the inevitable fate of partial bilingualism and school underachievement (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1984).

In summary, Cummins asserted that BICS and CALP develop distinctly and weigh differently on instruction. BICS serves an interpersonal function, evolves quickly, and is dependent on context-embedded vocabulary; in contrast, CALP is essential to developing higher-order thinking skills and typically develops over a five- to seven-year

period. BICS and CALP are both served by a common underlying proficiency that bridges conceptual understanding between languages and facilitates transfer and learning. Consequently, language minority students who fail to develop CALP are left with superficial language skills that are detrimental to their academic advancement.

Conclusion to Language Development

Chomsky, Krashen, and Cummins's language theories have drawn attention to key principles that underscore language development and impact second language acquisition and literacy. Collectively, they have proposed a language framework that offers compelling dialogic insights and forces us to re-examine the complexities of language diversity and its implications for instruction. From Chomsky (Crawford, 2004) comes the underlying principle that all humans are biologically predisposed to acquire language through innate principles of "Universal Grammar" (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2005, p. 655). MacSwan and Rolstad (2005) have held that all humans, irrespective of cultural differences, acquire language. They define language as "a set of expressions generated by grammar, which map sound to meaning," and characterize language proficiency, as a state of linguistic maturity (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2003, 2005 p. 656). Extending these fundamental principles, Krashen (1995) concluded that language acquisition follows a natural order through comprehensible input supported by positive affective factors. Cummins (1984, 2006) offered the theory of common underlying proficiency, the distinction between BICS and CALP, and—most importantly—the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement. In essence, all typical human beings are not only biologically equipped to acquire a first language, but can also use this universal

knowledge to acquire a second language. Central to this reasoning is the tenet that all languages are rich in meaning and of equal value. Therefore, when provided time and meaning, language will follow.

By explaining the natural progression of language development and second language acquisition, these theoretical principles offer a contrasting perspective to the language policies and political ideologies that currently govern instruction. Proponents of English-Only and Standard English ideologies argue that to succeed academically, language minorities must be immersed in English instruction and become proficient in English as quickly as possible. Native language is viewed as an obstacle to academic progress and irrelevant to educational gain (Crawford, 2004). From this perspective, Latino school failure is understood in terms of deficits and remediation, as opposed to a matter of educational equity. Latino achievement levels give reason to question these assumptions (Goldenberg, 2010) and to challenge educational policies that dismiss the complexity of learning content and English simultaneously. The theoretical concepts proposed by Chomsky (Crawford, 2004), Krashen (1995), and Cummins (1984, 2006) are fundamental to understanding the relationship between early language development and instruction and long-term educational attainment. Relevant to discussing persistence among Latino language minority community college students, these frameworks make an important distinction between conversational language and academic language proficiency. Together, they offer a base from which to examine how language shapes opportunity and sets forth educational trajectories. Educational equity for language

minority students will be achieved when theory and practice are aligned and used to inform educational policy (Cummins, 2006).

Although the inherent value of understanding the relationship between language development and instruction cannot be underestimated, from this perspective alone educational variability is often misconstrued as an autonomous phenomenon solely related to instruction and ability. Moving from language as an individual process that exists within a political climate, the next section explores the relationship between minority identity and school performance. Contrary to approaches that stress a group's shared traits, Ogbu's (1987, 1998) cultural-ecological theory examines intragroup differences and offers insight into the social aspects of language. Ogbu has asserted that neither minority status nor individual factors alone can fully account for school performance (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Thus, the following section introduces Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory (1987, 1998), explaining his perspective on identity, status, and intergroup relations and their impact on minority school attainment.

Cultural-Ecological Theory

Using a cultural-ecological approach, Ogbu (1987) introduced a conceptual framework that explains educational variability among minority students. Ogbu (1987) delved into the layers of group status that shape a minority group's relationship with the dominant culture and influences their ability to cross cultural, linguistic, and opportunity boundaries. With an emphasis in power relationships, his model examines social interactions among groups and their effects on academic and social adjustment. This next section will summarize Ogbu's (1987) conceptual framework, including his minority

typology, the role of social and community forces in minority group adaptation, and differing cultural models. Also in this review are two studies that examine the social context of learning and test components of Ogbu's thesis of minority adaptation. Although Ogbu's theory does not stem from a pedagogical perspective, his work gleans insight on educational interventions for minority students. By calling attention to issues associated with class, race, culture, and power, he offers an alternative explanation for the academic underachievement of minority students.

Amid the different types of anthropological research that include both solution-oriented and comparative approaches, Ogbu (1987) has defined his own work as the latter. Seeking to understand the nature of educational variability among minority students, Ogbu (1987) examined domestic and foreign studies that suggested uneven academic performance among groups of minority students with shared characteristics. He found prevailing explanations for minority school underperformance to be inadequate, including cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and interactional differences. He began his own search for a better explanation. Underscoring stylistic differences previously noted, Ogbu (1987) designed a model for exploring educational variability resting on factors related to a minority group's history, subordination, exploitation, and its response to its social status. Citing intergroup and intragroup differences in school performance, Ogbu (1987) set up the premise for his research.

Understanding *why* some minority students succeed in school and others fail requires an examination of the social forces influencing learning (Ogbu 1987). Although Ogbu (1987) asserted that minority groups play an active rather than passive role in their

educational trajectories, he posited the existence of a dynamic relationship among social, school, and community forces and group behavior. Social forces that act as a purveyor of access create a structure of inequality that diverts minority students' social mobility through disparate educational and employment opportunities. Underprepared by inferior schooling, minorities enter the job market less equipped to perform higher paying jobs. Minorities who bypass this challenge must then negotiate a job ceiling that fails to offer commensurate rewards. School and classroom forces compound these problems through lowered expectations and deficit ideologies that foster stereotypes and segregation. Differences in levels of achievement are pathologized into a collective identity that perpetuates a cycle of failure. According to Ogbu (1987), internal forces originating from within a community further demarcate variability in school performance and create a platform for exploring different types of minority status. The following sections examine Ogbu's minority typology and the sociocultural forces that shape educational attainment. Matute-Bianchi's (1986) application of Ogbu's framework follows, with insight into cultural identity and school performance. Lastly, we look at how Ogbu and Simmons (1998) explained minority school performance based on differing forms of minority adaptation.

Minority Typology

Ogbu (1987) proposed a minority classification system, describing groups based on their mode of incorporation, distinctive features, folk theory of success (FTS), social identity, and degree of trust in the dominant culture. Although autonomous groups such as Jews and Mormons are part of his classification system, Ogbu (1987) recognized that

they do not typically experience low school performance and are therefore not discussed further in his work. Of primary relevance to his conceptual framework are voluntary and involuntary minorities who must negotiate societal, school, and community forces as they establish a relationship to the dominant culture.

Immigrant or voluntary minorities are individuals who have left their country of origin by choice in search of improved opportunities. Ogbu (1987) characterized them by primary cultural differences, or differences in content that existed *before* they met the dominant population. Their folk theory of success relies on the notion that a U.S. education is an improvement over the resources in their country of origin and that they have the option of returning to their homeland. Using a dual frame of reference that compares their current circumstances to those of their country of origin allows them to interpret cultural differences and challenges as temporary barriers. They perceive learning as an additive process that does not challenge their identity, but rather augments their skills and helps them attain their long-term goals (Ogbu, 1987).

Castelike or involuntary minorities include people who have entered the United States originally against their own will through slavery, colonization, or conquest (Ogbu, 1987). Ogbu (1987) has distinguished them by secondary cultural differences, or differences that result *after* a minority group has come into contact with the dominant group over an extended period. Involuntary minorities experience cultural inversion, a sorting of behaviors, symbols, and events based on its association with the dominant culture. This cultural inversion results in two opposing frames of reference that guide behavior and define the group's collective identity. Barriers to success are reminders of

permanent inequalities that limit the group's mobility. Dissuaded by education, involuntary minorities develop alternate coping strategies to evade rather than overcome their circumstances. They distrust public institutions such as schools. They see education as a threat to their own cultural identity and as a means to maintain the status quo. As such, involuntary minorities develop an oppositional identity that is counterproductive to advancing their education.

In sum, Ogbu (1987) has developed a minority typology that explains educational variability based on intragroup differences. He has asserted that voluntary and involuntary minorities will develop perceptions, responses, and adaptations to the dominant culture based on how society incorporates them. This mode of incorporation will impact whether school problems become permanent barriers or hurdles to overcome. He has suggested three important factors as critical determinants for minority students' success in school: (a) equal access to education and to the rewards it brings, (b) an educational model that does not negate a minority group's cultural and social identity, and (c) school practices that generate trust. The following section explains how sociocultural forces impact the educational outcomes of minority students.

Social Forces and Educational Attitudes

Building on Ogbu's work on underachieving Black students, Mickelson (1990) explored the attitude achievement paradox among this group. Her study explained the ambiguous relationship between the positive educational attitudes Blacks report and their persistent failure in school. Mickelson (1990) compared abstract attitudes, global beliefs that conform to the dominant ideology, to concrete attitudes that stem from situation-

specific, reality-based experiences. Applying this two-dimensional conceptual

understanding, she studied the relationship between the job opportunity structure and the

educational outcomes of high school students. Similar to Ogbu's (1987) conclusions, her

findings suggested that social forces related to race and class create uneven job

opportunities that influence the value students place on education. Without concrete

examples, Black students failed to view education as a bridge to adult opportunities.

When examined this way, Mickelson (1990) revealed that Black students' concrete

attitudes do, in fact, mirror their school achievement. Both she and Ogbu (1992) argued

that without changes to the job opportunity structure, concrete attitudes will continue to

undermine educational reform efforts that attempt to address minority school

achievement.

Cultural Forces and Learning

Shifting his attention from societal and school forces, Ogbu (1992) turned his

focus to the internal cultural forces that shape learning. Within the context of school

reform, Ogbu (1992) used his minority typology to explain how cultural forces impact

minority school performance. Ogbu (1992) asserted that pluralistic and uniform

curriculum models represent two ends of an educational reform continuum that fall short

in differentiating minority student needs and promoting their success. While content-

based instruction ignores diversity and multicultural education embraces it, absent in both

models is an awareness of why minorities relate differently to the dominant culture and

how this relationship impacts their ability to cross cultural boundaries. Although he

acknowledged that social, economic, and historical factors influence learning, the center

of Ogbu's (1992) discussion rests on how cultural forces orient students toward academic success or failure.

Undergirding a minority group's status are a group's distinctive features, which form the basis of their social and cultural identities and shape their relationship with the dominant culture. Ogbu (1992) dispelled the notion that minority school underperformance can be explored as a common phenomenon without attention to these distinctive features. Relevant to immigrant and caste-like minorities are primary or secondary cultural differences that shape how each group crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries. Ogbu's (1992) framework applied these differences to explain the educational variability of minority students and to examine possible solutions for ameliorating minorities' academic and social difficulties.

When and how differences between a minority and dominant group manifest is an important distinction that affects a minority group's identity formation. Primary cultural differences exist before two groups interact. More often associated with voluntary minorities, these differences do not represent a threat to their identity, but rather are viewed as temporary obstacles to overcome. As such, the group may adapt to mainstream cultural demands without surrendering its identity or feeling forced into linear assimilation. Voluntary minorities embrace education as a vehicle for prosperity, and pressure its members to succeed. In contrast, secondary cultural differences arise after two groups come into contact, and the dominant group subordinates them through institutions it controls. Stylistic differences stemming from group efforts to cope with oppressive circumstances distinguish involuntary minorities. To preserve a sense of

collective identity, involuntary minorities associate school success with "acting White" and may develop an oppositional identity that is counterproductive to school success (Ogbu, 1992).

Cultural Identity and School Performance

Seeking to identify educational patterns among students commonly grouped, Matute-Bianchi (1986) applied Ogbu's cultural-ecological framework to explore educational variability among Mexican American and Japanese American high school students. Her study examined how ethnicity, minority status, and ethnic identity shaped students' views of educational rewards and influenced their academic achievement. Similar to Ogbu (1992) and Mickelson (1990), Matute-Bianchi (1986) emphasized the relationship between a student's social context and the value he or she places on education.

Whereas all of the Japanese Americans students in Matute-Bianchi's (1986) study were successful, academic success varied among Mexican American students. Grouped according to their mode of incorporation, she found that Mexican American students' ethnic identities played a decisive role in influencing their level of success in school. When compared to their Japanese American counterparts, Mexican American students were less likely to have access to the types of real-life experiences that contribute to concrete educational attitudes of success, as described by Mickelson (1990). Access to models, knowledge of academic curriculum and its relationship to job opportunities, and a student identity aligned with the dominant culture were defining characteristics among Japanese American students that contributed to their school success. In contrast, Mexican

American students negotiated their cultural discontinuities in different manners, which led to varying levels of school success.

As explained by Matute-Bianchi (1986), students' view of education as a vehicle of social mobility was dependent on what Ogbu (1987) has described as defining features, or primary and secondary cultural differences. Mexican American students who saw the school's culture as a threat to their identity were more likely to disengage from instruction than those who believed cultural differences were hurdles to overcome. Thus, students' self-perceptions shaped their identities and constrained their willingness to cross cultural boundaries. Matute-Bianchi's (1986) profiles of Mexican American and Japanese American students illustrated how Ogbu's (1983) minority typology can be used to explain educational variability among minority students.

In sum, Ogbu (1992) advised schools and communities to be aware of the sociocultural forces that shape minorities' social identity and influence their school performance. Mickelson's (1990) study supported Ogbu's (1983) premise and confirmed a relationship between the educational outcomes of Black students and the job opportunity structure. Similarly, Matute-Bianchi (1986) found that primary and secondary cultural differences accounted for variance in the educational outcomes of Mexican American and Japanese American students. Both studies emphasized the relationship between sociocultural forces and educational attainment, drawing attention to how students perceive, adapt, and respond to cultural and linguistic discontinuities. Ogbu (1992) suggested that crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries involves the ability to maintain a dual frame of reference that is neutral rather than subtractive in nature; thus,

students must be able to view education as a process that involves alternating between cultural and linguistic identities that are equal in value—as opposed to a subtractive process that strips them of their culture, language, and identity. In sum, minorities must learn to separate success in education without submitting to the dominant culture and surrendering their own identity. The following section offers an overview of Ogbu's framework.

Differing Forms of Minority Adaptations

Ogbu and Simmons (1998) provided a retrospective examination of Ogbu's conceptual framework. Offering a comprehensive review of Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, they summarized how his research has explained minority school performance. Key concepts are clarified and implications for education are drawn out.

Two periods of research define Ogbu's focus on societal and community forces and their impact on minority school performance. By summarizing his efforts, Ogbu and Simmons (1998) provided a nearly operational definition of Ogbu's theory. Ogbu's overall findings asserted that genetic, linguistic, and/or cultural differences do not predispose a minority group to success or failure. Critical to a group's academic success and social adjustment is the group's history of incorporation and its response to that history. Ogbu and Simmons (1998) asserted that cultural-ecological theory rests on a dynamic relationship between systemic societal forces that act as structural barriers and community forces that limit how minorities perceive and respond to their circumstances. Building on this premise, Ogbu based his minority classification system on power relationships that are fluid rather than dichotomous. Ogbu and Simmons (1998) explained

that minority status is not about a group's numerical or racial representation, but rather about how a group's beliefs and behaviors influence its achievement.

Ogbu and Simmons (1998) described cultural models, or patterns of adaptations, by reviewing familiar terms and clarifying how groups understand their world and behave in it. They discussed variations among minorities' status frame of reference, folk theory of success, symbolic response and collective identity, and trust in White institutions within the context of sociocultural adaptation and the role it plays in school achievement. Differences in how voluntary and involuntary minorities develop a cultural model of adaptation characterize patterns of success and failure. A dual frame of reference, a folk theory of success that incorporates education as a bridge to opportunities, "pragmatic trust," and assimilation through accommodation all support voluntary minorities in their pursuit of education (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998, p. 174). The pairing of community forces that reflect positive attitudes and a commitment to school learning positions them to overcome academic and social challenges. In contrast, Ogbu characterized involuntary minorities by their negative frame of reference, a folk theory of success centered on coping with or challenging discrimination, distrust of White institutions and an oppositional collective identity that defines them by their differences. Community forces foster ambivalent attitudes toward education and a protective stance in holding on to their culture. As such, involuntary minorities face unique educational challenges not experienced by others.

Although Ogbu and Simmons (1998) confirmed that Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory does not address teaching strategies, they concluded their article by offering

pedagogical implications. They cautioned educators against setting up expectations for learning based on group membership. They stressed building trust, utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy, addressing students' oppositional identities, and developing inclusive practices that form partnerships with parents and communities. Lastly, Ogbu and Simmons (1998) questioned whether educational reform alone could adequately address the needs of involuntary minority students.

Ogbu (1987, 1992, 1998) has proposed a framework that examines educational variability among minority students. His model counters common explanations that focus on minorities' stylistic differences and looks instead at group interactions based on power relations formed by class, race, and cultural distinctions. Ogbu (1987, 1992, 1998) emphasized the value of understanding a group's history and its relationship with the dominant culture, challenging the reader to see beyond common homogeneous groupings. Moreover, Ogbu compelled the reader to look deeper into the intricate differences among groups and the social, school, and community forces shaping minority adaptation to mainstream culture. Beyond exploring how these differences manifested, he explained how these factors impacted minorities' ability to cross cultural, linguistic, and opportunity boundaries that, in turn, influenced their academic success (Ogbu, 1987, 1992). Ogbu concluded by offering insight into the role of social change in promoting educational reform.

Conclusion to Cultural-Ecological Theory

Ogbu's (1987, 1992, 1998) cultural-ecological theory raises pertinent issues relevant to second-generation Latino language minority students. Wedged between

cultures, these students do not fit neatly into Ogbu's (1987) minority typology; they are neither foreign born nor neophytes of American culture, yet their social and linguistic features make them different from their monolingual native-born peers and their immigrant parents. This group represents a hybrid culture with unique experiences and perspectives. How they navigate these differences is relevant to their cultural identity and their educational attainment. Just as Matute-Bianchi (1986) used Ogbu's framework to explore the school performance of Mexican American students, further application of his construct may increase our understanding of this growing subgroup of Latinos. My study is a modest effort in this direction. Key elements identified by Ogbu (1987) related to a minorities' mode of incorporation, folk theory of success, distinctive features, and degree of trust in the dominant culture are relevant to a group's social identity. Examining what bearing these issues have on second-generation Latino language minorities' persistence is essential to understanding their underachievement.

C. Wright Mills has stated that "the life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without reference to the institutions within which his biography is enacted" (Lareau, 2003, p.14). Thus, the study of educational attainment inevitably leads to questions surrounding the structure and function of educational institutions. Building on second language acquisition and cultural-ecological theory, the final section of this chapter examines how language minorities navigate social and institutional contexts and their ability to develop institutional support (Lareau, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Social capital theory will be used to examine how power relations permeate education and shape the economy and exchange of valued resources. The following section will bring closure

to a cyclical process that begins and ends with our educational institutions and the individuals who work in them.

Social Capital

Social capital has drawn much attention among educational researchers. Weighing in on factors such as family structure and issues of access, researchers have linked social capital to educational life chances. Although social capital has a history of indiscriminate application in educational literature, current researchers show promise in developing a more refined understanding and utility of its tenets (Dika & Singh, 2002). This section will examine the origin of social capital theory, review its use in educational literature, and examine the study of institutional agents within a social capital framework.

Origins and History of Social Capital

Dika and Singh (2002) outlined and critiqued the body of literature that links social capital to educational outcomes and tested the empirical data that supports this relationship. Their review traced the origin and definition of social capital to the work of Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman. Whereas Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) both accepted the role of relationships in accumulating social capital, their conceptual models differ in many respects, and scholars have used them to different ends. Bourdieu's (1986) work stemmed from theories of social reproduction and power and focused on the structural constraints that legitimize inequality. He placed a heavy emphasis on the quantity and quality of relationships that facilitate access to power and reproduce social class. Less used in early educational literature, Bourdieu's work appears to be having a greater impact on contemporary research. Structural functionalism was at the root of

Coleman's (1988) perspective on social capital. From his perspective, social capital is a positive form of social control, which families transmit through norms that enhance individual outcomes. Although Coleman ignored issues of access, his attention to family structure and adult networks made his theory more attractive to educational scholars.

Wading through a barrage of conceptual and measurement issues, Dika and Singh (2002) studied the trends of social capital in the educational literature. Despite recognizing a positive association between variables measuring social capital and educational outcomes, their findings questioned the scope and uniform utility of the term and the directionality of the construct. Limited by the convenience of accessible data, Dika and Singh (2002) suggested that much of the literature offered a tapered understanding of social capital or a vague representation of the term that confounded its meaning. They argued that a strong theoretical foundation that explained the role of social capital in education had yet to be established. With issues related to race and class remaining unexplained, resources and outcomes described in a circular manner, and a lack of focus on adolescent agency, the application of social capital theory, they felt, was, ambiguous at best. Nevertheless, Dika and Singh (2002) hoped that future research would follow the lead of Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001) and Lareau (1989) and further explore social capital by examining issues of access and inequality. They voiced the expectation that a growing number of qualitative studies would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of social capital.

Perspectives on Social Capital and Educational Inequality

Linking Coleman's (1988) model of social capital to minority and immigrant populations, Kao (2004) illustrated conceptual gaps in applying his framework to explain the educational stratification of disenfranchised groups. Kao's (2004) commentary highlighted how race, ethnicity, and immigrant status offered perspective to Coleman's narrow view of socialization. As defined by Coleman (1988), social capital is an intangible form of currency that manifests in relationships and provides access to desired resources. Relevant to minorities, three forms of social capital are influenced by their status: (a) obligations and expectations, (b) information channels, and (c) social norms (Kao, 2004). Kao (2004) explained how an individual's immigrant status narrows or blocks these conduits and results in differential access to resources. She suggested that alienation creates reduced opportunities for the exchange of resources through obligations and expectations. Limited language and cultural fluency limit minorities' access to information and their ability to pass on knowledge. Finally, the benefits of social control gained through group membership are less meaningful to immigrants, because they may be free from common or shared expectations of behavior.

Following themes in the educational literature suggested by Dika and Singh (2002), Kao's (2004) work described the conceptualization of social capital as "murky" and its application as loose (p. 172). Whereas she acknowledged the link between social capital and educational outcomes, Kao suggested that future research should focus on issues of access related specifically to racial and ethnic minorities. A more inclusive analysis of social capital that integrates social stratification with Coleman's benevolent

perspective may offer insight into the possibility of counterproductive forms of capital. In calling for a more precise definition, Kao also asserted that the potential of positive or negative forms of social capital, and the intensity of ties, are factors that should be examined when exploring the educational outcomes of immigrant students. Her work aligned with Dika and Singh (2002) in calling for more refinement in conceptualizing social capital and its application in educational research.

With a focus on educational inequality, McDonough and Nuñez (2007) offered a Bourdieuian perspective that explained how educational institutions reproduce and legitimize social class. Relevant to minorities and immigrant populations, the authors summarize Bourdieu's framework by explaining key tenets fundamental to his theory. Bourdieu asserted that implicit, subtle actions form codes of distinction that, in turn, shape power relations and mask oppression under the guise of meritocracy. Important to understanding Bourdieu's work is the relationship and exchange between individuals and institutions. By melding structure with culture, Bourdieu explained how interactions among groups form the basis of educational institutions and recreate the existing social order.

According to Bourdieu, individuals are constantly involved in the exchange of different types of capital for the purpose of maximizing social profit. Within his theory, capital refers to a "relationship, attribute, characteristic or possession that can be exchanged for goods, services or esteem" (McDonough & Nuñez, 2007, p. 143). Specifically, Bourdieu described four forms of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic, all four of which can be both accumulated and converted. Economic capital is

simply explained as financial wealth or an individual's assets. Cultural capital is defined as attitudes and behaviors valued by society and passed on by the privileged class to its children. Examples of cultural capital include language, information, knowledge, and credentials. Social capital refers to relationships or networks that garner access to resources. Lastly, symbolic capital represents the power to decide what is valued in society (McDonough & Nuñez, 2007, p. 145–148). Bourdieu equated the drive to accumulate capital to the pursuit of power and status.

To explain educational outcomes beyond socioeconomic factors, Bourdieu expanded his framework by developing the concepts of cultural and social capital. While he described cultural capital as attitudes, behavior, and knowledge that facilitate school success, he defined social capital as networks and relationships that facilitate the flow of information and help individuals navigate systems of status. Bourdieu explained how individuals utilize their acquired habitus, their disposition/socialization, and perceptions to convert and maximize their cultural capital within the social space that they inhabit. Taken together, Bourdieu's work offered a platform from which to explore social reproduction and educational inequality.

In sum, the social capital framework has evolved from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and James Colemen (1988), giving insight to issues of educational access and minority underachievement. Although past applications of this construct lacked uniformity, current research has become more focused and refined (Dika & Singh, 2002). The following section introduces the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997), whose emphasis on institutional support has brought clarity to the educational experiences of

minority youth. Whereas the reader will find his discussion of linguistic and cultural borders complementary to Ogbu's framework, Stanton-Salazar extends the social capital construct beyond its familiar applications. By emphasizing the role of agents and their impact on school success and status attainment, he draws attention to key forms of support essential to accessing valued resources within the school system.

Institutional Agents and Networks of Support

Building upon components of Bourdieu's and Coleman's models of social capital, Stanton-Salazar's (1997) conceptual framework integrated social capital with institutional support. Citing Bourdieu (1986), he applied the principles of economic exchange to the context of education, where capital is accumulated and converted through social ties and networks. Inherent in the structure of these relationships is what Coleman (1988) has described as obligations and expectations that facilitate opportunities to convert ties into resources. Departing from mainstream individualistic approaches, Stanton-Salazar (1997) explored social and ideological forces that expand and constrain these opportunities. He used a social highway metaphor to explain how social networking pathways used by the dominant culture are characteristically different for minority students. Functioning within the context of class, race, and gender hierarchies, institutional agents act as gatekeepers, or instrumental and supportive agents who control the distribution and transmission of capital. Stanton-Salazar's (1997) framework seeks to explain how institutional forces that favor the dominant class take on an exclusionary role for minority students and contribute to their school failure.

Stanton-Salazar (1997) asserted that institutional support provides continuity to healthy human development. It extends an individual's opportunity to develop instrumental relationships beyond his or her home setting. While amassed social capital may be in place, instrumental action, or converting social capital into institutional support, requires successful interactions with agents. Examples of this capital include knowledge, bridging, advocacy, role modeling, mentoring, and emotional or moral assistance. Among the different forms of knowledge that foster educational attainment, Stanton-Salazar (1997) contended, differences between primary and secondary discourses among minority youth make it difficult for them to engage powerful adults, problem solve, and decode the institutional culture. Contrary to their middles-class peers—and without direct instruction on how best to manage these circumstances—minority youth must learn to negotiate academic and politically laden contexts to access support.

Conflicted by uneven power relations and institutionalized dependency, minority youth struggle to form supportive relationships with institutional agents. Policies and practices, tension among groups in the surrounding community, and the conflicting and conditional roles of school staff foster distrust and disengagement from the educational system. Borders and barriers defining cultural perimeters are erected, and minority youth must develop skills for entering and crossing. Because minority youth grow up within a context of differing cultural, economic, linguistic, and structural worlds, their ability to overcome barriers rests on their capacity to negotiate support through personal and social agency. Minority youth must see beyond the myths of meritocracy and fair competition and learn to recognize the exclusionary forces that stem from an individualistic ideology

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that permeates our educational system (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Decoding the system, or deciphering the culture of power within a school setting, is a precursor to negotiating the power relations that lead to access to resources and promote mobility. Successful socialization of minority youth will depend on their ability to develop a bicultural network orientation that allows them to cross cultural borders, and insulates them from the ambivalence of competing cultural norms. Stanton-Salazar (1997) concluded by encouraging educational reform to move beyond interventions that socially reproduce the existing structure and to channel efforts into network orientation models that alter the culture of power within schools.

Empowerment Agents

Within the realm of social capital, Stanton-Salazar (1997) introduced a framework that explores the role of institutional agents as conduits of support. In his current work, he delved deeper into empowerment and added specificity to familiar terms and ideas. Citing an array of research, Stanton-Salazar (2010) has remained focused on explicating the value of nonkin relationships in fostering the prosocial development of youth. Specifically, his work concerned low status youth's differential access to agents and the capital they impart. Stanton-Salazar (2010) clearly distinguished between adults who function as protective agents or are able to offer support and nonkin adults who contribute to an individual's social mobility. Because adolescent development exists within the context of social stratification based on class, gender, and race hierarchies, he asserted that access to channels of institutional support is systematically different for low-status and middle-class youth. Stanton-Salazar (2010) affirmed that healthy development

and socialization hinge on instrumental relationships with institutional agents, and that the process for accessing these relationships is complex for low-status youth. He introduced the concept of "countervailing forces," which he described as fundamental to youth's empowerment (Stanton-Salazar, 2010, p. 11).

Refining existing terms, Stanton-Salazar (2010) painted a landscape of actors, agents, networks, structure, and capital. He explained that an institutional agent is an individual who holds a position of status and applies his or her own sources of capital on behalf of another to transmit or negotiate the exchange of institutional support. Found within a wide array of networks, both personal and social factors influence how institutional agents perceive and perform their roles. Ranging from transmission to maintenance, the capital they pass on will vary according to the social structure and stratification system in which they exist. Stanton-Salazar (2010) revisited the challenges faced by low-status youth that impair their ability to form supportive ties. In contrast to their middle-class peers, minority youth must navigate a social maze characterized by structural forces that are antithetical to generating trust and solidarity. Wedged within this context of inequality, institutional agents emerge and "counter" the exclusionary forces that reproduce the existing social structure.

Grounded in the work of Freire (1993) and critical social work, Stanton-Salazar (2010) directed his attention toward empowering students through a social support system that calls on agents to enable low-status youth to decode the system of power. He described the decoding process as one that involves competencies that must be taught. Minority youth must learn that goal attainment can be achieved through the resources of

others who act as agents. Students must learn how to identify these key players and purveyors of capital, and tap into them for support. Also essential to academic prosperity is the ability to manage the politics of networks and to activate multiple funds of knowledge. Mastering these funds of knowledge, which involve understanding the implicit and explicit codes specific to the institutional context, is critical to student mobility. Going beyond the institutional agent, Stanton-Salazar (2010) introduced the concept of an "empowering agent," an actor who seeks to transform the consciousness of the students he/she serves, while challenging and changing the world in which they exist (p. 24). From this perspective, his framework addressed social change through relationships that confront oppression through "empowerment social capital" (Stanton-Salazar, 2010, p. 28). As such, he made clear the following distinction: institutional agents offer meaningful access to students; empowering agents change students' lives.

In sum, agents act within the limits of their own personal and professional resources and the networks that are accessible to them. They can fulfill multiple roles for the same student. Stanton-Salazar (2010) has suggested that an agent's ability to impart capital rests on his/her own level of awareness and the structure of his/her social network. Agents who adhere to a network orientation, endorse empowerment through others and skillfully collaborate with agents who can facilitate the needs of their students. Both the diversity of an agent's network and its size are important structural characteristics that allow an agent to access resources across disciplinary and organizational boundaries. Finally, access is multiplied when an agent functions as a bridge and broker. Whereas

bridging may offer a resource of quality, the span of a broker may offer diversity and opportunities.

Conclusion to Social Capital

The literature reviewed in this last section has followed the evolution of social capital framework in educational research. Despite past problems with its conceptualization, measurement, and utility, social capital remains a useful lens through which to examine the educational outcomes of minority youth. Educational scholars are moving past vague interpretations, making meaningful contributions to this body of literature (Dika & Sing, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2010). Integrating the work of Coleman and Bourdieu, Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2010) developed a network analytic approach that explains minority school performance. Consistent throughout his work are the themes of negotiation and border crossing and a focus on the role of institutional agents in facilitating or obstructing access to support. Stanton-Salazar (2010) calls on institutional agents to transcend their roles by challenging the existing social order and empowering students to change their lives.

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Summary of the Literature

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Despite the nation's ongoing educational reform efforts, disproportionate numbers of Latinos remain locked in a cycle of poverty and low educational attainment. Undergirding this perpetual "achievement gap" is a misconstrued understanding of the subtleties of language among the general public (Valdes, 2004) and a lack of consensus regarding "the extent and nature of support that second language learners require to achieve academically" (Cummins, 2006, p. 57). Long-term outcomes often become lost

in dominant ideologies that overlook the obvious challenge of learning content and language simultaneously. Thus, the public's focus on accountability measures and short-term solutions has proven to be counterproductive in helping Latino language minority students acquire a conceptual foundation that is essential to their academic language proficiency and their preparation for higher education (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2006; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Second-generation Latino language minority students often display the characteristics that Valdes (1999) has associated with *functional bilinguals,* and that Cummins (2006) has observed in partial bilingualism. They acquire the surface features of language, but struggle with complex grammatical structures and abstractions necessary for their academic advancement. While failed approaches endure and models of success appear scarce, questions pertaining to persistence remain unanswered. The literature reviewed in this chapter draws connections among individual, group, and institutional factors that impact persistence in higher education. This chapter concludes by reviewing key points drawn out in the literature.

Second-generation Latino students are often raised in homes where Spanish is the dominant language, and they begin school with varying levels of English language fluency. With language policy and theory as a backdrop, my first research question explores how second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing this has on their academic advancement. By tapping into the participants' language histories and educational programming, I examined individual and sociopolitical factors that impact persistence. Wiley and Lukes (1996) have asserted that monolingual and individualistic ideologies

have won favor among the American public and created an educational structure that views language diversity as a problem. Thus, students must become proficient in English as fast as possible and master academic content simultaneously. Their inability to do so reinforces deficit ideology and places them at risk for school failure (Crawford, 2004). Chomsky (Crawford, 2004), Krashen (1995), and Cummins (2006) asserted that language is both an internal cognitive function and a social construct. Their work explained the distinction between language and learning, and draws a connection to social factors that influence how language is acquired and used. Their frameworks were used as a foundation to explore the relationship between academic language and persistence in higher education. Although there is little consensus regarding what constitutes academic language (Valdes, 2004)—and how best to achieve it—the ability to understand classroom instruction and textbook language (Valdes, 1998) and to use this language in a cognitively demanding manner is inextricably linked to academic success. Thus, academic language in its intangible and abstract form represents a lifeline that is critical to educational attainment.

Wedged between cultures, second-generation Latino language minority students must learn to cross cultural bridges and come to terms with who they are in society. My second research question asks: How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology? Given the influx of Latino language minority students within our educational system, educators face growing numbers of English speakers whose instructional needs do not fit neatly into categories. The image of who

Latino language minority students are continues to unfold with the country's changing demographics and its political identity. Mirroring this diversity, students attending community colleges enter with different language proficiency skills, cultural experiences, and educational backgrounds (Harklau, 1999). Although public discourse often speaks of Latino language minority students as a homogenous group, descriptive categories that capture the unique linguistic and cultural attributes of second-generation Latino language minority students are beginning to emerge and warrant further study and understanding. Ogbu's (1987) minority typology drew attention to the social and cultural forces that impact learning and offered an alternative explanation for minority underachievement. He explained cultural identity by examining a group's distinctive features, mode of incorporation, folk theory of success, and their relationship with the dominant culture. Although second-generation Latino language minority students do not fit neatly into Ogbu's model, my second research question explores the unique attributes of this group. Using Mickelson (1990) and Matute-Bianchi (1986) as models, my study examines academic advancement by testing components of Ogbu's framework.

Standard English is a form of institutionally sanctioned discourse essential to decoding the system of power within schools and negotiating relationships that garner resources (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). It can denote status and bestow—or deny—privilege (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). As low-status youth, Latino language minorities must navigate social networks and ties that favor the dominant culture and not their own. Following this rationale, my third research question asks: What social networks support second-generation Latino language community college minority students' progress toward

transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved? Stanton-Salazar (1997) has asserted that educational resources negotiated through social networks and relationships are instrumental to Latinos' educational advancement (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Using a social highway metaphor, he (1997), explained that the pathways used by the dominant class are different for minority students and often take on an exclusionary function. The literature reviewed in this chapter confirms that Latino educational advancement is contingent on their ability to manage the politics of networks and to activate multiple funds of knowledge. My last research question examines how Latino language minority students forge relationships, and what impact these relationships have on their educational trajectories.

Political rhetoric and ideological discussions existing within separate planes and educational disciplines continue to detract attention from the institutional practices within our school system that create barriers for language minority students (Valdes, 2004). At the center of this discussion are questions about literacy and academic language. Within the body of literature reviewed in this chapter, a uniform definition of academic language remains problematic, and attention to Latino intragroup differences is just beginning to emerge. Second-generation Latino language minorities are a unique subgroup with distinct cultural and linguistic characteristics, and their growing presence in our schools cannot be ignored. As low-status youth, they must navigate social and institutional contexts and how they do so shapes their ability to develop institutional support (Lareau, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Additional research that focuses on understanding their unique features and needs is warranted if discussions pertaining to their achievement are

to extend beyond gaps and short-term solutions. This study looks to generate new

knowledge relevant to the success of this understudied group.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methodology

Latinos represent the nation's fastest growing minority population, yet the number of Latinos who earn a college degree has remained stagnant during the past two decades (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Transitioning from a k–12 system in need of reform, Latino language minority students pursuing higher education are often underprepared for college-level literacy demands (Bunch, 2009). These students—referred to as "settlers," "partial," or "functional bilinguals"—are immersed in English instruction in the k–12 setting and most often are not literate in Spanish. They quickly develop conversational fluency in English, but they struggle with the cognitive academic language demands of content instruction (Bunch, 2008; Cummins, 1984; Ogbu 1987; Valdes, 1999). With minimal options for postsecondary education, they enter community colleges ailed by low transfer rates and enter a black hole of nontransfer-bearing coursework. Statistics paint a bleak picture of Latino success in this setting. Overrepresented in basic skills courses (Sengupta & Jensen, 2006), their progress toward transfer is jeopardized by a disjointed educational system that has failed to adequately address their needs. While politics and ideology continue to obscure a solution through fragmented approaches and public opinion, educational and economic equity will continue to elude these students. This applied qualitative study explores the academic trajectory of second-generation Latino language minority students who have been instructed in English immersion

programs in the k–12 setting and placed into precollegiate English coursework at the community college. This chapter outlines the study's methodology and offers a synopsis of the theoretical frameworks that informed the interview protocol used for data collection.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore how second-generation Latino language minority students persist through linguistic barriers, develop academic language proficiency, and pave a path toward higher education. Thus, the overarching goal of this study is to understand how these students alter their academic trajectories. Contrary to quantitative approaches that obscure Latinos' heterogeneity or rely on numerical data to account for their experiences, this study focuses specifically on second-generation Latino community college students and elicits their perspectives on matters of educational success. Using a semistructured interview format, I examined individual, group, and institutional factors that foster persistence toward transfer. Hagedorn and Lester (2006) have defined transfer as a "dichotomous event and transfer readiness as a continuous variable or process" (p. 835). Although I acknowledge the value of transfer as a notable objective, the focus of my study was to explore factors that foster persistence and build transfer readiness; hence, transfer readiness represents a unifying strand across all of my research questions.

My research questions were informed by the three conceptual frameworks presented in the previous chapter. The first research question asks, How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning

English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement? Language theory was used as a lens through which to examine individual characteristics and/or circumstances that helped the participants develop academic language. Chomsky's (Crawford, 2004) language development, Krashen's (1995) second language acquisition, and Cummins's (1984) language and literacy frameworks were used to explore key principles that underscore language and learning. The second research question asks, How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology? This question used cultural-ecological theory to examine how a group's distinctive features shape their ability to cross linguistic and cultural barriers. By examining the participants' folk theory of success, status frame of reference, and their relationship with the dominant culture, I explored how second-generation Latino language minorities fit Ogbu's minority typology. The last research question was informed by social capital theory; it asks, What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress towards transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved? Following the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997), this last question examined the role of institutional agents and explored how others were involved in the transmission and maintenance of social capital. Combined, these frameworks provided a tiered perspective from which to examine student persistence. The following section describes the sampling procedures used for the study.

Sample Population

The first step in developing my sample was to locate community colleges with a large Latino demographic that could help facilitate my study. Because Latinos represent 50% of the "La Loma Community College District (LLCCD) in Los Angeles," which educates "approximately three times as many Latino students as all UC campuses" (Bunch, 2010), my goal was to conduct my study at one of its colleges. English department chairs at several of the LLCCD colleges with the highest percentage of Hispanic students were contacted via phone and email and were invited to participate in the study. At the same time, contact was made with the English department chair at Brooke Community College, a one-campus district outside of the LLCCD but also in the Los Angeles area and with a high representation of Latino students. Although one of the LLCCD campuses welcomed the study, logistical factors impeded the investigator from recruiting student participants and carrying out the study as planned; thus, Brooke Community College was the single site selected for the study.

Brooke Community College is a comprehensive public institution. Serving over 20,000 students, it is one of the five largest community colleges in Los Angeles County. In the fall of 2011, Hispanic students accounted for 55% of its total enrollment and constituted the largest ethnic group on the campus. At the time the study was conducted, Brooke Community College offered academic, transfer, and occupational programs and served a diverse population from the surrounding communities. Similar to other community colleges that shared its student demographic, a large percentage of its students must advance through precollegiate coursework in order to meet transfer criteria.

The Brooke Community College Office of Research and Planning reported that only 14.9% of its fall 2010 enrollment placed into college-level English, and 7.7% placed into college-level math. More than two-thirds of its students attended school on a part-time basis and more than half of its students were between the ages of 19 and 24. Taken together, these facts confirmed that Brooke College was an optimal site to recruit students for my study.

After I made initial contact with Mr. Davidson, the Brooke Community College English Department chair, I obtained permission to proceed with the study from the Office of Research and Planning. Facilitation of the study required permission to distribute a preliminary survey in all sections of English 100,101, 102, and 103 courses, willingness from staff to be interviewed, access to space to conduct the interviews, and student consent to participate in the study. A purposeful sample would be developed based on student responses to the preliminary survey. The questions on the survey delineated the specific characteristics I sought in my sample and requested the students' voluntary participation and contact information. Latino students were recruited based on the following criteria: second-generation status, Spanish used within the home, instruction in English immersion or quick exit programs in the k–12 setting, placement below English 100, current enrollment or completion of English 100, and a transfer objective. One thousand nine hundred and sixty eight preliminary surveys were prepared for distribution in 62 English classes. Twenty-eight completed packets were returned to the investigator by the assigned deadline. The preliminary surveys were first sorted by students who agreed to volunteer for the study, next by the study's participation criteria,

and last by gender. Forty-two students met all of the study's criteria and were willing to participate in the study. The surveys were arranged in random order and numbered. Following a numerical sequence, students were contacted by phone and or email and asked to schedule an interview. Surveys with incorrect contact information were set aside. Contact was discontinued with students who did not return calls or show up for their scheduled interview dates. Alternate students were selected following a random numerical order.

My sample consisted of nine participants: five female and four male Latino second-generation community college students. All of the participants were instructed in English immersion or quick exit programs in the k–12 public school system, over the age of 18, born in the United States, and raised in Spanish-speaking homes. Two of the students were of Central American descent, and seven were of Mexican ancestry. All of the students indicated transfer as their educational objective, and eight out of the nine students placed one level below English 100. Six participants were full-time students, and three attended school on a part-time basis. Three students were unemployed at the time of the interview, three students held part-time jobs, and three students worked full time. Several students had the opportunity to enroll in honors line or Advanced Placement English coursework in high school, and four of the participants reported having done so. Two participants attended honors line English, and two others completed AP English. These nine students served as my unit of analysis.

Instrumentation

Information discussed in the first chapter was used to generate a student profile for my study. I developed a preliminary survey with questions pertaining to language and academic advancement that matched the characteristics of second-generation Latino language minority students at risk for attrition and underachievement. I sought students who reported non-native English language proficiency, second-generation status, instruction in English immersion programs, placement in precollegiate English coursework at the community college, and a desire to transfer to a four-year university. Because my study examined change, I wanted to include students who met the at risk criteria, but also represented the average community college student working toward transfer; as such, I purposely chose not recruit students from special programs on campus.

The preliminary survey asked 12 demographic questions pertaining to the student's minority status, language and educational history, language fluency, class enrollment, and plans for transfer. It consisted of yes/no and a few fill in the blank questions and a five-item Likert scale pertaining to the student's literacy skills. The survey took an average of five minutes to complete. It was used to confirm adult status, ask for consent to participate in the study, and obtain the student's contact information. The preliminary survey was field tested with five adult volunteers who met most of the study's criteria. It was revised for clarity and breadth with my dissertation chair prior to beginning the study. The survey was distributed to students enrolled in English 100, 101, 102 and 103 classes. Although it was used primarily as a way to recruit students and

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identify a sample pool, the survey also provided background information used as a starting point for the student interviews.

The interview protocol used to generate data was also developed by the principal investigator. It consisted of 32 questions that stemmed from three bodies of literature: language theory, Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, and social capital theory. With educational policy as a backdrop, the questions explored individual, relational, and institutional factors that had helped students navigate pathways to success. The interview protocol was designed to be administered in a semistructured interview format over the course of two sessions. It was field tested with four adult volunteers who met most of the study's criteria. Questions were revised for clarity and depth, under the guidance of my dissertation chair, prior to beginning the study and were grouped by theoretical construct.

The first 13 questions delved into the student's language history, language proficiency, and instruction. By first examining the participant's language development and programming in the k–12 setting, these questions tapped into how early experiences shaped students' future educational opportunities and mobility. Thus, my first research question asked, How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement? Using language theory, I developed a strand of questions based on language constructs outlined by Cummins (1984, 2000), Krashen (1995), and Crawford (2006). These questions were guided by Cummins's (1984, 2000) language development continuum, which emphasizes the difference between basic interpersonal language skills and more cognitively complex forms of language used in school. I asked

participants to self-assess their academic language skills, describe the quality of their instruction, and identify instructional practices, or study skills that made a difference in their learning. Questions pertaining to the social context of language were informed by the work of Krashen (1995) and Crawford (2004) and were designed to frame the students' experiences. With these questions, I sought to explore factors related to teaching and learning and institutional and individual responsibility. Responses pertaining to the students' linguistic and educational ideologies emerged unexpectedly and offered insight into their political acumen. Overall, the questions in this strand were designed to explore the progression of developing academic language proficiency in English. The questions tapped the participant's understanding of academic language and how it relates to learning.

The next 10 questions explored the relationship between cultural identity and school attainment and were derived from Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory (1987). Hence, this set of questions was developed to address my second research question, How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology? Ogbu (1987) offered a lens through which to examine educational variability and student persistence. By tapping into the participants' mode of incorporation, folk theory of success, social identity, and degree of trust in the dominant culture, these questions examined the participants' propensity to conform to Ogbu's (1987) minority typology and its bearing on educational attainment. Ogbu (1987) asserted that language is inherently linked to identity and is part of a group's distinctive features.

Weighing in on these ideas, I sought to explore how additive or subtractive experiences, language categories, and generational status related to the participants' cultural identity and enhanced or limited their educational growth. It is generally accepted that identity development is fluid in nature; thus, these questions explored the possibility and conditions for change.

The last set of questions examined language as a form of currency within the social capital framework. Using Stanton-Salazar's (1997) work on institutional agents, these questions explored the students' access to social networks, funds of knowledge, and school resources. Thus, my last research question asked, What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress toward transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved? Using the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997) as a base, these questions examined how second-generation Latino language minority students decipher the system of power within our educational institutions. By inquiring about the students' educational history and background, these questions first delved into why students enrolled at the community college and who helped them get there. The questions also explored the students' current forms of social capital and inquired about new and old relationships that have supported their pursuit of higher education. Because persistence involves maintenance and is not simply a static transmission of capital, these questions investigated what relationships have been instrumental to the participants and why.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved collaboration with the English Department, distribution of a preliminary survey, email, and phone contact with students, two individual interview sessions with each participant, interviews with college staff, and a request for school records. As the primary and sole researcher, I developed the preliminary survey and interview protocol. I conducted and transcribed the interviews, and maintained the confidentiality of all data obtained. Initial contact was made with Mr. Davidson to discuss the logistics and facilitation of the study. Permission to conduct research on the school's campus was granted by the Brooke Community College Office of Research and Planning. The office of the Dean of Academic Affairs arranged for office space to conduct the interviews. The Director of Career and Assessment Services and the Interim Language Center Director provided information about student support services and the English placement test.

The first phase in the data collection process involved distribution of the preliminary survey. All professors teaching sections of English 100, 101, 102, and 103 were asked for their voluntary participation. Individual packets were prepared for 38 instructors teaching a total of 62 sections of English. The study was introduced to staff via an email from Mr. Davidson, the English Department chair, and packets were distributed to the professors during a staff meeting. Each packet contained preliminary surveys, an informational handout about the study, and a cover letter explaining the distribution and return process for the surveys. The English instructors were asked to distribute the surveys during the third week of the semester and have the students

complete the survey during class time. Twenty-eight packets were returned to the English Department chair, and were then forwarded to the principal investigator.

The second phase involved developing a sample pool. The preliminary surveys were sorted first by volunteer status, next by the study's participation criteria, and last by gender. Preliminary surveys were chosen randomly, and students were contacted by phone and/or email. Using a script, the principal investigator explained the purpose of the study, confirmed the participation criteria, requested high school transcripts, and asked to schedule an interview time. Reimbursement for the cost of obtaining school records was offered to all of the students. Email reminders were sent to each student two days before his or her scheduled appointment.

Prior to conducting the student interviews, the principal investigator reviewed the college course catalog, interviewed college staff, and familiarized herself with the campus. The Director of Career and Assessment Services provided information about the English placement process, exam, and outcomes. The Interim Director of the Language Center described the support services offered to students and the forthcoming changes to the new Student Success Center.

The last phase involved interviewing the participants. The interviews were conducted in a dean's vacant office in the humanities and social science building. Each interview began with a few rapport-building questions about the student's background and interests. The participants were then offered an informational fact sheet. Issues related to confidentiality, voluntary participation, consent to audiotape, and the two-part interview process were explained, and students were given the opportunity to ask

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questions. The interviews began with questions pertaining to language development and then addressed themes related to cultural identity and social capital. Although a standard sequence was typically followed, the students' responses often dictated the order in which questions were presented. The first interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes long, depending on the student's time availability and response style. The goal of the first session was to establish rapport and to cover as many of the protocol questions as possible. A second interview was scheduled at the end of the first session, and reminder emails were sent two days prior to the agreed upon date. During the second interview, the remaining protocol questions were presented and elaboration and clarification on previous responses was obtained. All interview sessions were audiotaped and transcribed. The duration of the interviews ranged from 95 to 219 minutes long, and all of the participants returned for a second interview. School records were requested of all of the students, yet only one student provided high school transcripts.

Data Analysis

The first phase of data analysis involved developing individual student records. Information gleaned from the preliminary surveys, taped transcriptions, and field notes was organized in a case study format. Using this information, I developed a biographical sketch of each participant. To maintain confidentiality, each student was assigned a pseudonym. Interviews were reviewed on tape and in transcript form before I began formal analysis.

Next, interview transcripts were color coded and numbered to match the protocol questions. Student responses were transferred to Excel worksheets and formatted into a

table. Data was organized in numerical order by construct and gender. This first step provided a general overview of the student responses and offered an abbreviated reference that helped me locate and confirm information. Using the student narratives and Excel worksheets, I analyzed the data for themes and patterns. A deductive approach was used to generate themes associated with language theory, Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, and social capital theory. Transcripts were read and color coded by construct. I examined individual student transcripts and then looked across cases for similarities and differences. The frequency and pervasiveness of recurring content was used to identify patterns and to assign meaning and significance. Using an inductive approach, I examined response patterns that reflected organic ideas emerging from the students. Following the format described above, student narratives were color coded, compared, and examined for meaning.

This study asked the following questions:

1. How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement?

2. How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology?

3. What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress toward transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved?

Limitations

The major limitation I encountered in my study was the need for data triangulation. High school transcripts and community college educational plans were requested from the students, but were not established as a requirement for the study. Although the participants appeared amenable to sharing this information, only one student complied with this request. It was clear that the time and logistics involved in obtaining these documents interfered with the participants willingness to follow through. Perhaps other forms of accessing records should have been considered. I proceeded without school records and relied on the participants' verbal reports as the sole source of my information. I acknowledge that relying on participants' self-reports can pose questions of validity and impact the accuracy of a study's findings.

Delimitations

Because transfer is most often measured as a discrete outcome, I chose to concentrate on students engaged in the transfer process and accepted this criteria as a delimitation of my study. Due to the parameters of a dissertation, I focused on language and literacy and did not formally consider other transfer requirements or the participants' long-term transfer outcomes. Thus, for the purposes of my study, enrollment or successful completion of college-level English was viewed as an important benchmark in acquiring academic language proficiency. Although I acknowledge the value of this important feat, I recognize that language and literacy are lifelong endeavors (Valdes, 1999) and that passing a college-level English course does not guarantee student success in higher education. A comprehensive longitudinal study focused on the progression of

language development from a k–16 perspective and its correlation with transfer outcomes might better address pertinent issues related to this study.

A second delimitation was the small sample size of the study. Nine students were recruited to participate. The investigator's intention was to focus on depth rather than breadth; thus, the interview protocol sought to explore and understand student resilience from a holistic perspective. Due to time constraints, the investigator's and the site's available resources, and students' availability, interviewing more students was not feasible. Including additional participants in the study would have been ideal. Yet, the primary distinction of qualitative work is that it generates new knowledge and offers propositions that can be tested with larger samples to confirm the generalization of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

KEY FINDINGS

Introduction to Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine persistence toward transfer among second-generation Latino language minority community college students. Using qualitative methodology, I explored individual, cultural, and institutional factors that foster academic language development and promote transfer readiness in minority community college students. The study followed the educational trajectories of nine participants who had placed below college-level English after transitioning from the k–12 school system. The participants were currently enrolled or had completed English 100, the freshmen expository writing composition course. Because it is a transfer requirement, English 100 was used as both a marker of academic language proficiency and progress towards transfer.

The study was conducted at Brooke Community College, a one-campus district in the Los Angeles area. Relevant to the study's focus, the campus served a large percentage of Latino students who placed below college-level English and math. At the time the study was conducted, more than half of their students were Hispanic, under the age of 24, and attended school on a part-time basis. Students in English 100, 101, 102, and 103 classes completed a preliminary survey that asked 12 demographic questions. Latino students were recruited based on the following criteria: second-generation status, Spanish used within the home, instruction in English immersion in the k–12 setting, placement

below English 100, current enrollment or completion of English 100, and a transfer objective. Nine subjects: five female and four male, Latino second-generation community college students participated in the study. Each participant was interviewed twice using a semistructured interview protocol developed by the investigator. The following section provides individual profiles of each of the students. Pseudonyms are used throughout the chapter to secure the anonymity of the participants and the institutions they attended.

Biographical Sketches and Student Characteristics

Eddie was 19-years-old and lived with his father and sister in a predominantly Latino and African American neighborhood. He identified himself as Mexican American and embraced his Mexican culture. Both of his parents were born in Mexico, and he grew up in a Spanish-speaking home. Eddie's mother had passed away when he was in middle school. She had encouraged him when he was a child to excel in school and instilled in him a desire to succeed. Eddie's sister attended a private university. She had earned a bachelor's degree and was working on completing her teaching credential. Eddie had attended high school in the Catella Unified School District, where he thrived in math and worked through honors and AP English courses. He had attended Brooke College on a full-time basis since his enrollment, but was currently carrying a part-time load due to problems with class availability. Eddie wanted to major in mechanical engineering or dentistry. He worked part time in customer service and seldom spent time on campus. Eddie placed into English 20 and passed his English 100 course with a B. He was making steady progress in English 103 and had passed the transfer-level math course. Eddie's

interests included music and sports. He hoped to complete his transfer requirements in the up-coming two semesters.

David was 21-years-old and lived with his mother and two brothers. His mother was from Cuba, and his father was from El Salvador. Although his parents were currently divorced, David was raised in a dual-parent household. Both of his parents pursued schooling after immigrating to the U.S., and became fluent in English. Thus, David and his siblings quickly transitioned from speaking Spanish to speaking English in the home. David had attended high school in the Dallas Unified School District. Although his overall high school experience had been positive, with ample opportunities to enroll in Advanced Placement courses, David lamented not having worked harder in school. After taking a semester off to travel, he enrolled in La Tuna City Community College in the Los Angeles area and was the first of his siblings to attend college. David worked two jobs while attending La Tuna City College. He had difficulty coordinating his work and school schedule and transferred to Brooke College, which was closer to his home. David had attended Brooke College for the past three semesters on a part-time basis and worked full-time as a supervisor at a grocery store. He placed into English 52 and was currently enrolled in English 100. David had not taken the math placement test, but planned to do so soon. He first enrolled at La Tuna City College and was interested in pursuing a degree in music, but had since changed his mind and was undecided about his major. David had considered teaching English and had thought about working abroad. His interests included music and travel. He hoped to transfer in a few semesters.

Ernest was 21-years-old and lived with his parents and two younger siblings. He grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood and at the time of the interview resided close to school. Although both of his parents were now conversationally fluent in English, he was raised in a Spanish-speaking home. Ernest's parents were born in Mexico and had a large extended family with whom they maintained regular contact. Despite the family's financially impoverished upbringing, Ernest's maternal uncle and aunts had all attended college in Mexico and were now working professionals who enjoyed frequent family vacations. Ernest attended high school in the La Vista Unified School District in Los Angeles County. He participated in the business academy and excelled in Advanced Placement math and science courses. Ernest had been accepted to several private and state universities, but opted to attend a community college due to his financial circumstances. He enrolled at Brooke in the fall of 2008. Ernest attended school full time and worked 38 to 50 hours a week at a tax office. Upon enrollment, he had placed into English 52. Ernest passed his English 100 course and was making good progress in his English 103 class. He had met the math transfer requirement and planned to enroll at Cal State, Los Angeles in the fall of 2011 to pursue a degree in political science.

Antonio was 21-years-old and resided with his parents and his three younger brothers. His parents were both Mexican immigrants, and he had been raised in a Spanish-speaking home in a Latino neighborhood. Antonio had attended high school in the White Water Unified School District in Los Angeles County. He participated in the architecture academy, excelled in math, and worked his way through precalculus. Antonio attended high school through the 12th-grade, but did not earn a diploma. As a

child, he had struggled with a speech impairment, and public speaking was a challenge for him—thus, he had failed to meet the panel presentation requirement for his senior project. With increased confidence and practice in oral presentations, he looked back with regret and wished he could have done better in his English classes. Antonio enrolled at the local adult school and earned his GED in six months. He enrolled at Brooke College in the fall of 2009, after having received an ultimatum from his girlfriend and considering the auto mechanic program at a neighboring college. Antonio was the first in his family to attend college. He worked 35 hours a week and attended school on part-time basis. Antonio placed into English 52 and was currently enrolled in English 100. He occasionally spent time at the library, but was typically on campus only to attend class. Antonio hoped to complete his transfer requirements within the next 12 to 18 months and was interested in majoring in architecture or pursuing a culinary arts program. His interests included music and dance.

Victoria was 19-years-old and resided with her parents and two younger sisters in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. Both of her parents were born in Mexico, and she grew up in a Spanish-speaking home. Shortly after immigrating to the U.S., Victoria's mother earned her GED and pursued a vocational program as a dental hygienist, earning extended certification from a UCLA program. Although Victoria's father became conversationally fluent in English, Spanish remained the dominant language at home. Frequent visits to the library prepared Victoria for school and had her reading before she entered preschool. Victoria had attended high school in the Dallas Unified School District, where her love of literature grew. She took an AP English course in 11th-grade

and participated in the Careers in Education, Regional Occupational Program. After earning less-than-desirable ACT/ SAT scores, Victoria decided to enroll at Brooke Community College and began taking courses in the fall of 2009. Victoria placed into English 52. She earned an "A" in her English 100 course and was thriving in her English 101 and 103 classes. Victoria was a full-time student and, at the time of the interview, was not employed. She was on campus on a daily basis and visited social and recreational areas between classes. Victoria needed to take prerequisite math classes prior to enrolling in the math transfer requirement. She was the first in her family to attend college, and she hoped to transfer to a UC campus in a year. Her interests included literature and dance.

Maria was 19-years-old and resided with her mother in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. She was the youngest of four siblings and was raised by a single parent in a Spanish-speaking home. Because Maria's mother worked as a teacher's assistant, Maria attended preschool at an early age and was exposed to English at the age of two. Although she and her siblings communicated in English, Maria continued to speak to her mother in Spanish. Maria had attended high school in the Light House Unified School District, where she participated in the health academy and took Advanced Placement Spanish and history classes. After considering state schools, Maria opted to enroll at a community college for financial reasons. She chose Brooke Community College because of its "Teacher Track" program and began taking courses in the fall of 2009. Maria had maintained full-time enrollment for the past two years and, at the time of the interview, was not employed. She was on campus every day and had a long bus commute. Maria spent time with friends and used the library on a regular basis. She had placed into

English 52 and was making good progress in her English 100 course. Maria had taken several math prerequisite courses and planned to take the required transfer math course the following semester. She hoped to transfer in two semesters and planned on majoring in child development. Maria was the first in her family to pursue a four-year degree.

Monica was 18-years-old and resided with her mother in Dallas, a predominantly White neighborhood. She was the youngest of three siblings and was raised by a single parent in a Spanish-speaking home. Monica had attended high school in the Dallas Unified School District, where she participated in the Careers in Education, Regional Occupational Program. She placed in Honors English during her freshman year and participated in the AVID program in middle school. Because of her interest in teaching and her involvement with the ROP program, Monica enrolled in the Urban Teacher Fellowship program at Brooke Community College. She began taking courses in the summer of 2010 and was placed in a cohort with whom she attended classes on a full-time basis. Monica placed in English 52. She earned an "A" in her English 100 course and was making good progress in her English 103 course. Monica was on campus on a regular basis and used the library and computer lab between classes. She did not drive and was not employed. At the time of the interview, Monica was enrolled in the required transfer math course and was making good progress. She hoped to transfer to a state school in a year to pursue a degree in education. Monica was the first in her family to attend college.

Cindy was 18-years-old and resided with her mother. She was the youngest of five siblings and was raised by a single parent in a Spanish-speaking home. Although

Cindy came from a large close family, she had grown apart from her siblings due their large age difference. She and her family maintained close connections with their family in Mexico and visited on a yearly basis. Cindy had attended high school in the La Vista Unified School District, where she placed in Honors English, took Advanced Placement Spanish, history, and government classes and participated in extracurricular activities. She had been accepted to several state universities, but reconsidered that option when she weighed moving away from her mother. Cindy decided to enroll at Brooke Community College because of its proximity to home and her uncertainty about her major. She had maintained full-time status since her enrollment in the fall of 2010. Cindy placed into English 52 and was making good progress in her Honors English 100 class. She was currently enrolled in a prerequisite math course and planned to take the required transfer math course the next semester. Cindy hoped to transfer in a year and a half and to major in broadcasting or pursue a degree in dental hygiene. She worked part time in her family's restaurant and did not spend time on campus outside of class. Cindy's interests included music and dance.

Karina was 24-years-old and resided with her parents and three siblings. Her father was born in Guatemala and raised in San Salvador. He had earned a teaching degree in El Salvador and taught math before emigrating to the United States. Karina's mother was born and raised in San Salvador and held a cosmetology license. Karina was raised in a Spanish-speaking home where typical gender norms were not the rule and literacy in both languages was encouraged. At the age of six, her mother used the phone book and the Bible to teach her how to read in Spanish. Karina had attended high school

in the Los Canales Unified School District, where she took Advanced Placement courses and graduated with honors. She had been accepted to UC and state campuses but decided to enroll at a state college because of its proximity to home. Karina had placed into English 95, a subcollegiate course and took the class twice before passing it. She placed into subcollegiate math, and was unable to pass the required sequence of courses. Karina took a leave of absence from school to address personal issues that were interfering with her progress. She enrolled at Brooke Community College on a trial basis to complete the prerequisite math courses that were preventing her from returning to the state campus. After a total of six attempts, she passed the math class and completed English 100 at Brooke College. At the time of the interview, Karina worked part time as a professor's assistant in the humanities and social science department. She had overcome personal and academic obstacles and had formed relationships with college staff. Karina hoped to transfer in two semesters and planned to major in business. Her interests included music, art, and writing.

Aside from satisfying the criteria to participate in the study, the nine participants shared traits in common that proved relevant to the focus of the study. Eight of the nine students were the first in their family to attend college or pursue a degree, had early aspirations of attending college, and had placed one level below college-level English. All of the students had attended high school in Los Angeles County and had taken AP or honors line coursework in high school. In contrast to the average or academically ambivalent students I had hoped to recruit, the preliminary survey drew a sample of

students whose drive to succeed had been cultivated at an early age. Table 1 below offers a summary of the student's characteristics.

Table 1

Summary of Student Characteristics

Participants	Age	Current English Placement	School Enrollment Status	Work Status
		Females		
Karina	24	Completed 100	FT	PT
Victoria	19	Completed 100	FT	UE
Monica	18	Completed 100	FT	UE
Cindy	18	Enrolled 100	FT	PT
Maria	19	Enrolled 100	FT	UE
		Males		
Antonio	21	Enrolled 100	PT	FT
David	21	Enrolled 100	PT	FT
Eddie	19	Completed 100	PT	PT
Ernest	21	Completed 100	FT	FT

Note. FT= Full Time, PT = Part Time, UE = Unemployed

Several interrelated themes emerged from my interviews. Some were expected and confirmed hypotheses that conformed with the existing literature; other themes developed organically from the student narratives. The most prevalent themes that emerged from the data were consistent across gender. The most prominent among them were found within the cultural identity strand. The student narratives suggested that participants' educational attitudes were shaped by the concrete experiences of others. A hybrid form of cultural adaptation, characterized by voluntary and involuntary features, was also evident. Recurring comments pertaining to individualism and self-sufficiency drew a relationship among the remaining themes. Next in prominence were themes related to language development. Among the participants, early English fluency was associated with academic achievement. They reported a strong learner identity and belief in academic meritocracy. Within the social capital strand, the data confirmed that the participants' academic orientation had been cultivated by others. Native-like English fluency was perceived as yielding status and providing access to resources and was inherent to their academic achievement. Following the strands in my literature review, I will first introduce the themes that pertain to the process and context of learning English. I will then present my findings on cultural identity and end with my observations on social capital and institutional support.

Learning English: Ideology and Theory

Results Research Question 1

How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement?

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two outlines key concepts surrounding issues pertaining to linguistic diversity. It explains the prevailing ideology that shapes the educational experiences of non-native English speaking students and the inherent relationship between academic language proficiency and educational prosperity. Over the past decade, monolingual and individualistic ideologies have won the support of public opinion and have permeated educational reform (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Media coverage centered on issues of immigration and a troubled economy has promoted a foreigner stereotype among language minority students and an antibilingual sentiment amid voters. Political rhetoric has advanced an English-Only crusade (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009) that views linguistic diversity as a problem to solve rather than an asset to cultivate (Crawford, 2004). These ideologies have created an educational climate that has abandoned the fundamental principles of language and learning.

Contrary to theoretical underpinnings described by Cummins (1984, 2006), Krashen (1995), and Crawford (2004), language minority students are expected to acquire English and simultaneously learn academic content as quickly as possible in

order to advance academically. Lost in current policy and practice are the concepts of natural order, comprehensible input, positive affective filter, common underlying proficiency, and the distinction between basic interpersonal communication and academic language proficiency. Issues related to poverty, segregation, ill-equipped facilities, teacher training, school funding, and low levels of parental education, which alone can create a less-than-optimal climate for learning, have become secondary to the English-Only ethos embraced by our schools. Language minority students are perceived as deficient when they fail to prosper under these conditions. Unrelenting statistics paint a picture of failure, place blame on students, and reinforce meritocratic ideologies that echo the American dream. This current educational model and single-minded drive toward English proficiency leaves many students underprepared to enter and succeed in higher education. Latino language minority students entering community colleges are more likely than their peers to place into remedial coursework, and their transfer rates remain consistently low (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). This first research question strives to understand resilience by comparing the participants' educational experiences and ideas pertaining to language and instruction to language ideology, policy, and theory. It was designed to tap into individual and sociopolitical conditions that shape learning and to elicit student perspectives on educational persistence.

The first theme to emerge from the narratives reflected a strong association among academic achievement, early English fluency, and individual motivation. The participants reported being fluent in English at a young age, and they made little-to-no distinction between becoming proficient in English and achieving academically. For the

purpose of the study, fluency involved accessing grade-level content. Consistent with linguistic folk theory, most students considered themselves fluent within a year or so of English immersion instruction. The participants' knowledge of language development appeared to align with the public perception that language is best acquired through immersion with individual effort and ability. Although a few of the female participants described early literacy exposure in English and Spanish, ultimately they credited their academic advancement to their individual effort and innate ability to learn. For the participants, the process of learning involved immersion in English with minimal amounts of instruction in their primary language. Becoming fluent in English appeared to be embedded in a meritocratic academic orientation cultivated by family and school staff. The students were often situated in community and learning contexts that reinforced the belief that English is essential and inseparable from learning. Although the participants valued bilingualism and at times acknowledged the burden of learning language and instructional content simultaneously, they generally applauded the virtues of English immersion programs.

The following excerpts describe how the participants learned to speak English and the language loss that followed immersion in English-Only programs. Embedded in these descriptions are both subtle and direct insights into the participants' ideological perspectives and the context in which they learned English. The participants often spoke of individual effort and self-determination. Although some of the participants acknowledged that speaking Spanish at home made learning at school challenging, they typically described this scenario as an individual obstacle—as opposed to a systemic by-

product of their instructional programming. Speaking English was viewed as a valued

academic and economic asset.

Maria, who was raised by a single mother and came from a close family, spoke

about her school history with pride. Although she recalled some difficulty transitioning

between languages, Maria asserted that speaking Spanish at home and learning English at

school made no difference in her education. Her comments illustrated the prevailing

belief that English can be acquired quickly. She recalled being fluent in English at the age

of three, describing the process as follows:

> I honestly don't know, but what I do know is that I have been going to
> school since I was two years old because my mom worked with my
> professors before I entered preschool. She would actually take me when
> she was an assistant. So I would be in school already learning Spanish and
> the English all at the same time . . . My mom said by the time I entered
> preschool they actually counted me in preschool. I already knew how to
> read perfectly in English. So I would say between two and three, I learned
> good English.

Although Maria presented herself as a confident student, she later admitted that she

sometimes felt that she was "not fluent in Spanish or English." Similar to some of the

males, she acknowledged language loss, or word-finding difficulties in both languages.

Maria indicated that she occasionally "has to translate back to the other language to

rephrase what she has to say." Her comments noted the personal and economic value she

associated with language:

> [My mother] thought that we had to speak both cause in this country you
> had to speak both languages to succeed. Because she doesn't speak
> English and for her it has been a struggle not to speak English. . . . Being
> bilingual because most jobs actually offer to pay more when you are
> bilingual.

Although Maria was encouraged to be bilingual by her mother and teachers,

becoming bilingual was viewed as an individual endeavor, not an educational one.

Here Maria commented on the additive nature of retaining her culture:

> Well in high school, it was my Spanish teacher. And in elementary it was
> my fifth and sixth grade teacher that would always tell me "No matter
> what, you always try, you need to keep with…where you come from and
> what you really are. Don't lose that culture you have inside of you."
> Which was my Spanish culture. . . . It just made me stronger because I
> realize that even though I'm here, [and] not in Mexico, I can still be me
> and have that culture.

When asked to compare her educational experiences to that of a monolingual English

speaker, Maria appeared to avoid the comparison by describing the experience of other

students who enter middle school not speaking English. She explained that they are

separated from students who are fluent in English and often do not advance beyond high

school. For Maria, academic advancement was a matter of individual effort and

motivation. She acknowledged individual differences in learning, but not systemic ones.

When the question was clarified, she answered as follows:

> I think there is no difference. It just depends on how different you make it.
> . . . Like for example, if I decide to make different choices within my
> education, my education is going to be different than somebody else who
> takes a different path in their education. And it depends on the way I am
> able to learn, the way that person is able to learn.

Maria's sense of self-reliance and individual motivation came through in the

following comment:

> Well, all of my choices I've been doing since I can remember is always
> try my best no matter what happens. If something goes wrong, try again
> and keep doing it until you feel comfortable in what you are doing and
> what you are learning . . . Motivating yourself and really wanting to
> succeed. And then what's with me. It's just that if you can't help yourself

move forward then who will? You know? You need to help yourself first in order to help somebody else.

Cindy, who was also raised by a single mother and came from a close family, recalled learning English by the end of 1st-grade. She shared the sense of independence and self-reliance described by Maria and several of the male participants, but also remembered the challenges of learning English and content simultaneously and transitioning between languages at home and at school. Cindy described how her sense of self-determination helped her advance in school. She recalled first learning English in preschool and having to translate for her mother at the age of four. She reported being fluent by the end of 1st-grade:

> I remember I was like four when my mom would take me to a ballet class and I was trying to speak to the lady because my mom only speaks Spanish. I was trying to be the interpreter, but some of my words wouldn't come out right because I didn't comprehend. Then again, I was four.

Although Cindy was discouraged from speaking Spanish at school, her teachers and mother both valued bilingualism. She received a contrasting message about language from her older sister, who felt that Cindy might develop an accent if she became proficient in Spanish first:

> My sister hated the fact that I learned Spanish before English . . . But my mom, she loved it. That I learned Spanish before English. So they were like the opposite from one another, but my mom was happy because all of the teachers, when I was growing up, they would tell my mom that was really good. So then I would have more opportunities when I grew up, just the fact that I was able to speak two languages and understand them very well.

Cindy's sister's ideas about language offer an example of linguistic folk theory. They reflect the language-as-a-problem perspective of second language acquisition; she explained:

> . . . my sister saw it in a completely different way. She saw it that in the way that if I spoke Spanish before English . . . . I was going to have an accent no matter what because English wasn't my first language. So that's how she saw it. And now that she has her kids, they don't know Spanish. So their first language is English. So I guess that's opposite.

Although school staff acknowledged the benefits of being bilingual, Cindy was discouraged from speaking Spanish at school; thus, Spanish was to be learned individually and not at school: "I remember when I was in elementary . . . And whenever the principal would hear us talking in Spanish, he would tell us to talk in English. So it was the opposite [of being encouraged to communicate in Spanish]." When asked to elaborate on the challenges of being a non-native English speaker, Cindy described having to be self-reliant. Her sisters and mother could not provide academic support, so she had to push herself to master content at school. Her comments exemplified a sense individualism embraced by many of the participants:

> I'm guessing it would be the fact that I had to do all my work by myself because my sisters were so much older than I was and they lived in their house separately... So they had their own family. So it was not that I could call them to ask for help. And my mom. The language barrier. So no help from that side either. So I had to depend on myself. So that was another reason that I pushed myself to learning, actually learning how to do everything in class.

Like Maria, Cindy described word-finding difficulties when transitioning between languages. She found it difficult to learn content while not fully proficient in English, but ultimately viewed this situation as an individual issue, as opposed to an instructional one.

She explained her educational challenges as stemming from an inability to practice. When asked if it was difficult to transition between speaking English at school and speaking Spanish at home, she stated:

> At times it was. Because I think even to this day, sometimes it's difficult when I'm trying to speak Spanish or English because even today I get English words mixed up with Spanish or it just gets me tongue twisted when I'm trying to say something in English and thinking about it in Spanish. Or I know the definition of a word in Spanish, but I can't figure it out in English . . . When I was younger, it was extremely difficult because I was learning and English and trying to speak something that I wasn't really clear about or I wouldn't use it at home. So it wasn't like I had that much practice at it. It was only at school. So it would make it difficult.

When asked if students were equally prepared to succeed in school, Cindy initially acknowledged that sociocultural factors may have impacted her own learning. Nevertheless, as she proceeded to answer the question, Cindy concluded that learning English and school success depend on the individual and their motivation to succeed. Following her previous statement, one can infer that Cindy believed that English is essential to learning and, that if an individual strives for academic success, then he/she must do what it takes to achieve it:

> No, no. And I think it really depends not just on them, but it could also, I don't think you could even blame the family because like for example, with me I didn't have anyone to help me when I was small. And then so even if, I could always think anybody could come up with an excuse and say it's all this persons fault, but in reality the only person who is going to achieve or fail is going to be you. So I don't think that could be an excuse, like family or anything like that . . . I think it really depends on the instructor and the on how much the person really works for what they want, because even if the instructor is bad, you could always go to tutoring. And then it really depends on you, how bad it is that you want to achieve something.

David grew up speaking Spanish at home until the age of five. Both of his parents were fluent in English and Spanish and had earned postsecondary degrees. Compared to the other participants, David was, at the time of the interview, the least fluent in Spanish. The following excerpt illustrated his experience learning English at school and the language loss that followed:

> I spoke Spanish, only Spanish until I was four or five when we started going to school and everyone spoke English, and we were not the only ones really, and I guess we just were like "Oh Spanish, what's that?" everybody speaks English. And then from there we all just lost it. I can speak it and understand it but it's really broken.

When asked to elaborate, David clarified that he spoke English prior to beginning school. At school, he and his peers communicated predominantly in English. Over the years, he and his siblings started speaking less and less Spanish because they went to school with "English speaking people." David remembered feeling fluent in English at the age of seven. He offered the following description of life after his move to a predominantly Caucasian community:

> I don't remember speaking Spanish from middle school, elementary school, none of that. And when I went to high school and I met more Spanish speaking people, it was hard to go back. I barely understand it now.

> [My parents] They wish I spoke more Spanish, definitely kept that in our roots. That is, we are Hispanic. We should know. I think everybody should know Spanish if you are Hispanic. You know? And even now to this day, I get my grandparents and my tias [aunts], my uncles, "Why don't you know Spanish?" in Spanish and I will say "No entiendo." Don't know nothing. I'll start to say it and then catch myself and then just mumble it out so like it doesn't sound as bad. But they definitely, they definitely, all even I wish I spoke more Spanish fluently so I can carry a conversation instead of what? ¿Que? [What?] I took Spanish three years in high school and I took it a year at La Tuna City College and I could just never get it back.

Although David was encouraged by family to maintain his Spanish language skills, he described his language loss as irreversible. David did not feel encouraged by school staff to remain proficient in Spanish. When asked why he thought that was the case, he explained that English was the language used in his community and at school. His comments offer an example of the prevailing monolingual ideology that exists in our society today:

> I never had any Hispanic or Latino teachers . . . I just, I'm assuming maybe we are in Dallas and most of the people don't speak Spanish. It's all English. They wanted to keep it that way. I'm not saying they are racist or anything, but that could have been it.

Ernest, who grew up in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood and was raised in a traditional Mexican household, credited his mother for helping him to escape the fate of a bilingual program. Although he clearly valued the Spanish language, he believed that primary language instruction was counterproductive to learning English fluently. Ernest's comments were consistent with linguistic folk theory. He suggested that being bilingual was an individual endeavor and that English can—and should—be learned quickly:

> But when I was going to the Eastside they still had that bilingual thing, not ESL, where you can do bilingual in lower classes. But my mom didn't want me in there because a lot of the people she knew who did that with their kids spoke horrible English. Not horrible, but they've been here since they were small and they still have a thick accent. So she put me into all English, so kindergarten was learning English. I had six months to catch up. I don't know how long before I actually started speaking English. English became primary then I forgot some of my Spanish. Not until I started going to Mexico every summer, I started to pick up my Spanish again.

Ernest reported learning English in four months and feeling fluent by the end of kindergarten. Although he described English immersion as "sink or swim," he acknowledged his ability to learn English quickly:

> Basically that whole sink or swim kind of thing. I went into elementary school speaking all Spanish. And in kindergarten I was in all English and they spoke all English and I picked it up. And also my baby-sitters kids they spoke English, so I was talking with them and watching mostly English television. I learned up like that.

Ernest commented on the language loss that followed his acquisition of English. Similar to the other participants, he viewed bilingualism as an individual endeavor to pursue, rather than one supported by the school system; hence, Ernest taught himself how to write in Spanish. He stated the following about transitioning between languages:

> It's pretty much been the same except when I was young when I was picking up English I got to a point where I was losing a lot of Spanish. A lot of the words, like "What is mustard called? What is hot dog called? I remember . . . when I was small and I was in Mexico and I would go back and forth "How do you say this in Spanish?" . . . I was just going back and forth asking "What is this called?" when I was trying to order something. Yeah, so I had, uh losing it basically. And I don't like that anymore. I'll ask. I'll try to stay with both. I want to keep it up. Then I taught myself how to write in Spanish somewhat.

Ernest identified English as the "school's language" and Spanish as a cultural marker; his comment illustrated this point:

> Speaking English because I need it for school, then speaking Spanish because it is rude, it's more of a cultural thing. It is rude to talk to older people in English. It looks bad. "Tienen el nopal en la frente y no hablan español." [They bear their Mexicanness on their skin and don't speak Spanish] . . .You hear that a lot. It's kind of rude and sometimes it's embarrassing for the parents to have a kid that's just second-generation, not speak Spanish. So it is important to them as much as it is to me.

Participating in the business academy and working at a tax office that served a

predominantly Spanish-speaking demographic, Ernest was well aware of the

opportunities that came from being bilingual. When asked about whether teachers and

staff encouraged him to maintain his Spanish, he replied:

> Yeah, mostly because I did business academy in high school. Yeah they
> did. It is better on your resume and then a lot of teachers, even though they
> were white they'd say "Keep your culture." It helps keep your culture
> alive.

Following a short discussion on becoming proficient in reading and writing, Ernest was

asked how he thought schools should help students like himself. Given the context of the

conversation, the question asked him to comment about non-native English speaking

students. Ernest first asked for clarification on what the investigator meant by the term

"like himself." He then acknowledged that schools needed to place more emphasis on

reading and writing and offered personal examples. Ernest spoke of expectations,

individual effort, and mental "barriers." Based on his own experiences, he concluded that

education should foster independence and self-reliance:

> Also they shouldn't handicap the kids so much, like you learned Spanish,
> you might not know this. I hated that crap. Handicapping the kids
> themselves usually builds a mental barrier. I can't do this because I
> learned Spanish first, so I will be bad at this. Let them figure it out.
> It's happened right now. I have a little brother and that is why it gets me
> mad. He is not dumb. He's "huevon" he's lazy. Schools need to
> distinguish between that. I think schools baby us too much.

Ernest felt that schools confused bad work habits with limited English proficiency and

made excuses for the low achievement of non-native English speakers. Consistent with

the language-as-a-problem perspective, he viewed minority underachievement as an

individual problem. Ernest reiterated the value of independence and self-reliance. Despite

his AP coursework, he found himself having to relearn skills at the community college:

> And between transitioning from high school to Brooke College even
> though it is a community college, like I had to relearn all of this stuff I
> learned in high school. High school teaches you the basics. Luckily I took
> AP class[es] and honors because a lot of high school classes here are not
> more difficult, but the more you have to be on it yourself. Like in high
> school it is like . . . Here, if you don't turn it in nobody will help you out.
> They will enable you. [referring to high schools] . . .

Eddie received bilingual instruction in kindergarten through 1st-grade. He

transitioned to English immersion in 2nd-grade and, with the help of his older sister, was

reading and fluent in English by the end of the school year. His comment reflected the

commonly held belief that English fluency is developed quickly: "My sister kinda helped

me learn how to read. If it wasn't for her I don't think I would have learned right away.

Because by second grade, I learned how to read English so in one year I learned how to

read." Eddie's parents emphasized the importance of learning English, but were also

proud of his Spanish fluency. Eddie described the language loss that followed after

becoming fluent in English:

> Yeah it was easy. [transitioning between English and Spanish] I don't
> know I was always good in Spanish, but little by little I started losing it
> more and more. Like it was once I started going to Mexico from sixth
> grade on I would be like I'd go up there and I felt like I don't know how to
> speak Spanish, but the more I went to Mexico the more I got used to it. It
> seems I went from knowing too much Spanish and not knowing nothing
> English, to knowing a lot of English and not knowing nothing in Spanish.
> You know because I stopped using it little by little.

Eddie echoed Ernest's, Maria's, and Cindy's sentiment about effort and the meritocratic

nature of learning. He offered his thoughts on college preparation and comments on

individual responsibility: "I always think it is on the person, not how much you can do. I

think it's if the person wants to do it or not . . . if they want to prepare then they will do it." The first theme noted a strong association among academic achievement, early English fluency, and individual motivation. The second theme built on the first, drawing a relationship between a strong learner identity and a belief in academic meritocracy. Becoming fluent in English, as described by the participants, was embedded in a meritocratic academic orientation cultivated by family and school staff. The participants' academic orientation appeared to coexist with a belief that goals could be achieved through individual effort and self-sufficiency. This study sought to understand change and persistence among average students, who may not have been oriented toward college, but who were working their way through precollegiate coursework. Rather than finding the ambivalent students I thought I might encounter, my study drew goal-oriented students who aspired to attend college at an early age. Their meritocratic academic orientation had been cultivated through academic success and/or recognition and grounded in a strong learner identity. Eight of the nine participants were the first in their family to attend college. The participants were either at the top of their class in high school, had been recognized by others as high achievers, and/or had progressed easily through high school curriculum. They often described situations or people who had validated their academic competence and reinforced their positive scholastic attitudes. Their stories offered insight into their academic strengths and indirectly acknowledged agents who had cultivated their skills and reinforced their effort—as if the participants bore a cloak of confidence that had been developed prior to their enrollment at the community college. Because many of the participants had not initially planned to attend a

community college, they viewed their time at Brooke as temporary in nature. Six of the nine participants described attending a community college as a compromise made for financial reasons or to maintain proximity to their families. Two participants reported having been accepted to private and UC campuses, and four of the participants indicated that they had been accepted to state universities. All of the female participants expressed certainty about transfer and their degree objective, and three of the five spoke of pursuing advanced degrees. Two of the four male participants were the closest to meeting transfer requirements. The two other males managed a work schedule that impacted class scheduling. Although they expressed similar transfer goals, they were less certain about what degree they would pursue or how much longer they would remain at the community college.

I begin by providing a summary of the students' rationale for attending a community college. For some of the participants, attending Brooke College was a financial compromise; others saw it as an investment or a long-term guarantee for transfer. Overall, the comments suggested a strong learner identity. It was evident that the students considered themselves college bound and that they had invested time and effort in college preparatory programs and curriculum. Generally, the participants referred to Brooke College as a stepping stone. The following excerpts explain the students' rationales for attending a community college.

Cindy, who lived with her disabled mother, felt it important to attend college close to home. Although she had been accepted to several state universities, she opted to attend Brooke while she decided on a major:

Well, I was actually not even planning on coming to Brooke Community College. I was planning to go to straight into a Cal State or UC . . . When I was in high school, I did all of the research and I had applied to like four Cal States and I got accepted to most of them. I think it was only one that didn't accept me, but I chose not to go because I was for one afraid of leaving my mom. Two, I wasn't sure that was really what I wanted. So I just didn't want to go and waste a lot more money and then not be sure.

Raised by a single mother, Maria wanted to attend college close to home. At the time of the interview, she had a long bus commute but was happy to spend her time on campus. Her decision to attend Brooke was financial, as she explained:

Well I first was going to transfer straight from high school. I was going to go to Northridge. But, then we went through some little economic issues and I said "No," I want to go to Brooke College first and then transfer somewhere else . . . And once I realized that they had a better program here at Brooke that would transfer me out automatically to a certain college university afterwards, I was like I'm better off at Brooke.

Victoria's family treated college enrollment as a ticket to the "adult table" at Christmas. She had high aspirations of attending a UC campus, but was diverted by "low" SAT scores. Despite Victoria's 3.7 GPA and her teachers' encouragement to consider a state school, she enrolled at Brooke College because of its Teacher Track program. She saw it as a guarantee to transfer:

My ROP teacher told me about the teacher track program here at Brooke where you do two years here and then you get guaranteed a spot at Cal State Long Beach and then you graduate with your little degree and then you know you can be a teacher. But as soon as she said you don't have to take your SAT to get to Brooke, I was like . . . gone that's what I'm doing. So I actually think a lot of my teachers were shocked that I came to a community college. I had one teacher who…she ended up graduating from like USC. And she told me about the English department at Cal State Fullerton . . . She really thought I was going to at least apply to Fullerton. But I didn't . . . Cause that SAT it wasn't that bad, but to have that SAT score combined with like a three point seven was bad . . . But here is a guarantee. You see? So it was easy to get in and then if I worked hard

enough I was guaranteed a spot like for sure. And I think that's what sold me.

Monica recalled wanting to go to college at an early age. Similar to Victoria, she was in the Teacher Track program at Brooke and saw it as a guarantee for transfer:

> Because at a young age, I already knew that in order to be successful, you had to go to college to get a good job. Because like the jobs would look at your education and college students would be more inclined to get a better job . . .

> In high school when I was a senior, I entered an ROP program. It was about careers and education. I was interested in becoming a teacher and some representative of the fellowship program came and talked with to us and they asked us if we were interested to sign up. So I tried and I signed up and I got into the group and the program is to get into Brooke for two years and then transfer to Cal State Long Beach.

Ernest had been accepted to several private universities. Although interested in their engineering programs, he decided on Brooke College due to financial reasons:

> Monetary, no money for the other colleges . . . I got accepted to Carnegie Mellon. I got accepted there for their engineering program but there it's like thirty grand. Florida Tech accepted me out of state. Some school up north. I don't know why San Francisco accepted me. I used FASTFA and a lot of them are free applications. And all these schools, I just applied everywhere and all these schools accepted me, but their tuition was ridiculous. I got accepted to Cal State Fullerton, but I just didn't want to go there.

Eddie explained how he had received his letter of acceptance to Cal Poly Pomona while he was in Mexico and missed the enrollment deadline. Eddie lamented that, unlike his peers who had moved onto UC and CSU campuses, he was unable to do so as a result of his mistake. He asserted that his time at Brooke College was only temporary and that, in the long run, it was a more cost efficient option:

> I wasn't supposed to be here. I was supposed to be at Cal Poly Pomona . . . So I was in Mexico. I was supposed to turn in ACT/SAT scores which I

never submitted because I never knew I was accepted . . . Broke my heart. I know. But then I see, in the long run I got to save money . . . People feel like you just go to the community college but I don't feel like that. You know what I'm saying? I was like you know I'm at that level. I probably could have been at the UC, Cal State level. So, I know there are other students that say, "I got into Cal State." Presumen mas. [They show off] . . . I'm doing what I gotta do. I could have transferred already, but I didn't for the same reason. I started taking more calculus classes and all of this stuff so I might as well as take it here . . .

When asked if he had applied to other universities, Eddie stated the following: "I was also accepted to UC Santa Barbara. I didn't go there because of my father. I didn't want to leave him by himself. . . . I feel kind of bad leaving him"

The participants' confidence and competence in learning appeared to stem from self-appraisal and feedback from others. Positive school experiences fostered their belief in meritocracy. Many of the students recalled school successes and/or academic recognition. Thus, their motivation to meet transfer requirements appeared to be naturally embedded in their aptitude for learning and in early experiences that had cultivated their academic orientation. These next excerpts speak to the participants' educational accomplishments and the recognition they received from others.

Karina was the oldest participant and had been in school for the longest amount of time. She expressed frustration about being at the top of her class in high school and not being prepared for English and math coursework at the community college. She had initially attended a state university and enrolled at Brooke College after several failed attempts to pass a math prerequisite course. Although Karina had taken several AP courses and saw herself as a strong student, the transition to postsecondary education had been difficult for her:

Well I was in honor role . . . principal's list . . . and just getting medals and certificates and all of these recommendations and feeling like wow, you know I'm smart! I know what I'm doing and almost feeling like this self-confidence. Well for me it wasn't cocky, but it was confidence that I knew I could do anything I wanted, but when I started Cal State Long Beach I quickly learned that I was about to enter a new stage of my life, I was no way prepared for.

Karina's cloak of confidence stemmed from her success in high school. Regrettably, she found that her skills did not transfer well to higher education. Even with a 3.9 GPA and several AP courses, she found herself struggling in precollegiate courses:

I wish somebody would have taken their time, a counselor would have taken time, a teacher would have said you know this is what you have and this is what you need. And you know be realistic with me and not just say you have a three point nine GPA, you're great. Don't worry about it.

Maria participated in the health academy in high school and worked diligently to earn her health certification. The academy provided access to job shadowing and mentorships, and helped her prepare for college. Maria was a strong high school student. Her academic success made her strive to do well in college. Maria methodically rewrote notes and reviewed texts several times to ensure comprehension. The following described her academic standards: "It's probably cause all of my life it has to be a 'B' or above . . . So it is more like OK, if I can do 'A's' in high school I know I can do 'A's' in [a] college class."

At the time of the interview, Victoria was not employed. She acknowledged that everyone had "options" and that many of her friends had to work for financial reasons. Her decision not to work reflected the value she placed on academic attainment: "It has to be worth it . . . for me, my school is too important to just sacrifice even a little bit for something that's not really worth my time." Victoria had established friendships with her

English teachers in high school and took pride in her writing ability. She excelled in reading and writing in elementary and middle school, and felt that English just came naturally to her. Victoria entered into writing competitions at Brooke and was later hired as a writing tutor for the learning center. She described herself as a scholar, and considered herself an accomplished writer: "I became really good friends with my high school English teachers. I've always been good at English . . .It's always been something I like. It's come naturally to me."

Eddie was one of three participants who had satisfied both the English and math transfer requirements. Although he was the only participant to place two levels below college-level English, he had completed all prerequisite classes his first semester at Brooke. Eddie was strategic in scheduling classes. He was careful to balance classes with labs and had completed several math and science engineering courses. Although he did not identify himself as a good writer, he recalled others having given him good feedback on his papers and reported good progress in his English classes at Brooke. Eddie described himself as a "really good student in high school" and was proud of his 3.8 GPA. He modestly acknowledged his class standing and shared memories of his mother encouraging him to be a good student:

> Yeah my school was not the greatest school. It was . . . Unified. I could say only like fifteen people went to Cal States, no more. The UC system only ten people qualified. I could have gone. I was number fifteen in the whole school . . . I was performing in school. [referring to middle school] I'm doing really good you know and even in high school. I was a little nerd. I knew I had a future for me. I just have to try my hardest and then being with peers like with the smartest students. We all grew up with the mindset, we are all going to college. We are all doing this and that . . . A lot of times I keep up with them. They are at UCLA and Cal Poly at all these schools and I keep them . . . and . . . they are very proud of me.

David recalled impressing his teachers with his writing assignments. Early childhood experiences confirmed his innate ability. Writing seemed to come naturally to him. Although he had opportunities to enroll in AP courses, he avoided doing so for fear of failing. David acknowledged that he could have been more ambitious in high school and that schoolwork came easily for him. The following comments illustrated the feedback and recognition he received for his writing:

> I remember actually when I was seven I went to school in G. Park . . . I was in somewhat of a mixture between eight year olds and seven year olds . . . and I remember being invited to join them because I was above the class.
> . . . I remember one of the assignments they would do was a journal . . . Some people would have just a sentence, a paragraph and I would just write and write and write.
>
> And it [writing] comes naturally to me. I think I've always never really had a problem with writing. I just, once I feel it, I just start typing and go. I do enjoy writing. I actually do . . . I actually remember . . . I took creative writing [in high school]. I actually enjoyed it a lot . . . I actually wrote a poem and it made the teacher cry. I felt really good . . . Yeah it moved her. I remember I wrote it and . . . she read it out loud in front of everybody. And I was like, I felt embarrassed, but I was like wow!

When asked what motivated him to get through his English coursework, David confirmed that recognition from others had built his confidence and continued to motivate him to push himself:

> I think you know with my past, seeing that I've done good writing and teachers recognize me. I guess that's just pushed me to keep going. You know it feels good to be recognized sometimes by your work. . . . When someone tells you like "Wow!" your paper was really well and you presented it well and it came out really great, good job. I guess that's what pushes me a lot . . .

Ernest described himself as a critical thinker and as someone who enjoyed interacting and asking questions in high school. He admitted not earning the best grades, but carried himself with confidence. Ernest had taken several AP courses and was transferring to a state university in the fall. He made the following observation about students who engaged in learning and those who work hard:

> [some students are] "engaged in learning and [others] are just good workers . . . They work hard, they read, and they study and everything but they don't retain the information or they don't think critically. They just think what they are told.

He described his honors coursework as follows:

> Like half of my teachers, we would not use the textbook, we would use outside sources because they didn't feel that they'd actually hit the point. A lot of teachers in the honors program, I feel like they were a lot more blunt than in regular classes. Like in regular classes they were babied. I would see their work like and I'd go into other classes and the interaction was different . . .

Discussion of Research Question 1

As accomplished students, the participants did not find fault in their language programming. Rather, they credited their academic success to learning English quickly and indirectly to their innate ability to do so. Despite having to take prerequisite English course(s), the participants' self-reports generally reflected strong literacy skills in English. All of the participants rated their writing skills at or above a four on a 1–5 Likert scale. The six students who were only instructed in structured English immersion reported fluency in English within six months to two years. The three other participants who had received bilingual instruction in kindergarten through 1st- or 2nd-grade reported becoming fluent in English after their first year in a structured English immersion

classroom. Feelings of pride and self-sufficiency resonated as the participants described their educational trajectories and asserted their identity as accomplished students. Related to this pride was a subtle uneasiness about identifying themselves as non-native English speakers. The participants appeared to associate the term with other students—not themselves. Embedded in the notion that they had acquired language quickly was perhaps a desire to disidentify with a label that is often associated with negative educational attributes. Although most of the participants reported some level of language loss in Spanish, all described learning English as an additive process inseparable—and/or essential—to their academic advancement. They valued bilingualism but viewed it as an individual endeavor.

The second theme suggested a strong learner identity among the participants, cultivated by family and/or their k–12 experiences. Given their confidence and accomplishments, persistence through English coursework was inherent in their determination to achieve their goals. Seven of the nine participants conveyed certainty about meeting transfer requirements. They spoke with conviction and described their plans in a stepwise fashion. Change was not apparent in their narratives. Instead, their time at Brooke College had provided a realistic experience of higher education and reaffirmed their identity as committed and accomplished transfer candidates. These students had had professional aspirations from an early age, and prerequisites courses did not deter to their persistence. Although the two males who were less certain about their majors expressed some ambivalence about how soon they would transfer, they, too, conveyed their resolve to earn a four-year degree.

Cultural-Ecological Theory

Results Research Question 2

How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's minority typology?

Using Ogbu's minority typology as a base, this question explored identity among second-generation Latino language minority students by examining generational and linguistic features that shape a student's academic orientation. The purpose was to understand the heterogeneous nature of minority group status and its impact on persistence. Relevant to the participants' academic orientation, I examined their relationship to the dominant culture, status frame of reference, and instrumental response to education. Specifically, I wanted to know how second-generation language minority students conformed to Ogbu's classification system and whether their cultural adaptation had a positive or negative impact on their learning. Because identity is malleable and develops over time, I sought to understand the ecology and progression of the participants' perspectives on language and learning. The following themes emerged from the narratives.

With regard to Ogbu's minority typology, the first theme suggested that the participants represented a hybrid from of cultural adaptation characterized by overlapping voluntary and involuntary features. Gender differences were not apparent. The participants' status frame of reference was broad. It often included models at both ends of a spectrum and members of the nondominant group. Linguistically and academically, this

perspective afforded many of the participants a sense of status within a minority

hierarchy characterized by socioeconomic, cultural, and/or educational advantage.

Contrary to voluntary minorities, the participants comfortably asserted their similarities

to the dominant culture and distanced themselves from a collective identity of "non-

native speakers." Because of their immigrant background, they embraced the privilege of

citizenship and displayed no evidence of a tourist mentality. Most students reported a folk

theory of success that mirrored their parents' experience as voluntary minorities and

mainstream values. With regard to their own academic setbacks, the participants often

described attending a community college, having to take precollegiate course work,

repeating a class, or poor performance on an assignment as temporary detours to success

as opposed to failure. Ultimately, they perceived education as an additive process

essential to their prosperity.

The following excerpts offered examples of the participants' status frame of

reference, their folk theory of success, and their attitudes toward education. Their

comments illustrated the temporary nature of barriers and their embrace of mainstream

values.

Victoria had attended middle school in a predominantly low socioeconomic

Latino neighborhood. Her comments below illustrated how she contrasted her own

student identity to those of her public school peers. She felt teachers saw her differently

than others. Victoria distanced herself from a collective identity of apathetic students

whom she used as her status frame of reference:

> I think the label they [teachers] put on me was eager to learn. I've always
> been like curious and wanting knowledge. I've never been like apathetic

about reading or you know? I've always cared, is what I'm saying and I think teachers don't see that very often, especially in public schools . . . I think in public school, I think a lot of students feel that they're there because they have to be. So they're really just there just to pass time.

Victoria remembered being bored and frustrated in school. Learning came easily to her, particularly when compared to her first-generation peers. Although Victoria was able to empathize with teachers having to meet diverse student needs, she lamented not being challenged in class. Her comment illustrated how she used first-generation peers as her status frame of reference for learning:

> We definitely had a lot of people, a lot of kids who came from other countries who came from other countries from Mexico and stuff and they were struggling to get things, and I was staring back counting the holes in the ceiling. And then I would get a ninety-eight out of one hundred and they would be struggling and getting like a forty-eight.

Victoria was grateful for having the opportunity to pursue higher education and for the value that her parents placed on school. She recalled moving to an "upper middle class" "mostly white" neighborhood and getting a fresh start in high school after a rough middle school experience. Friends from her previous neighborhood faired differently. They were now busy parenting as opposed to attending school. Her comments contrasted her folk theory of success, or belief in education as a vehicle for mobility, to her peers' less fortunate circumstances:

> I think if I had gone to W [high school] there is no telling where I would be right now. I could be at home with a baby . . . I grew up in apartments . . . and there was a cluster of kids . . . all of our girls . . . with the exception of me and my cousin, they all got their babies . . . I think a lot of girls got bored and started sleeping with their boyfriends, but we never had time for that. Me and her have always been involved in school . . . My mom has always been pro education. It's like education is so important you have to do it. And I think it's true. I think education, definitely a higher degree of education definitely equates to a better quality of life.

None of Victoria's childhood friends were in college now. Although she was very social and had made friends at Brooke Community College, she seldom studied with others. Victoria acknowledged that working with friends can be counterproductive and implied that other community college students did not share her work ethic. Thus, she felt, not all community college students took school seriously. She explained why she preferred to study alone:

> I don't like to because people are flaky. . . . I would love to have a group and as soon as I find someone who'll actually keep a schedule and not forget or not be like "Oh well, I have a baby shower to go to." . . . if people weren't so flaky I wouldn't mind.

Victoria clearly identified education as a vehicle for mobility. Her comments reflected the temporary nature of obstacles. She asserted that failure was part of learning. She offered the following advice to prospective community college students:

> They need to know that failure is part of the process. You are not just going to fall into it. It's hard work. It's falling on your face and getting back up again . . . you know success isn't doing something perfectly. It's doing something not quite getting it and still finding the motivation to push forward. Cause if you're a natural at school, as many people in honors classes are, it can kind of [be] difficult to learn because you know so much already. So, you know, you need to find the meaning in stuff.

The following comment illustrated Cindy's status frame of reference and her folk theory of success. Cindy compared her own life circumstances to those of first-generation immigrants and described how her cultural background had influenced her academic orientation. Being part of the "Hispanic culture" or being Mexican allowed Cindy to appreciate the benefits of being a citizen:

> A lot of people when they come here to the United States in order to succeed, many of those people come looking for jobs, being the hardest

part because they either have to work for low wages just to succeed and send money back home or stay here to survive for themselves or to feed their children . . . So because of that, because of the fact that we come here, our ancestors came here . . . kind of like pushes me . . . since I'm here and I'm a U.S. citizen. Why not try and why not try to succeed in something? . . . why shouldn't we take the opportunity of looking for something better? . . . And since like now in days . . . the only way that you could really have a promising future is through education.

Karina grew up in a low socioeconomic, mixed-minority neighborhood. In middle school, she had had the opportunity to attend a "very prestigious high school," but declined because her parents were concerned about the school's distance from her home. Karina's status frame of reference included peers in her AP classes as well as her noncollege bound friends. Her desire to leave her impoverished neighborhood offered insight into her folk theory of success. Karina described her community as follows:

It's a horrible, horrible place and it keeps getting worse. So it is something that definitely motivated me, something that definitely encouraged me. Just because I grew up in a very poor neighborhood, that doesn't mean that this is where I am going to end up. And it's been a struggle for me. So far, I'm the only one who has continued a college education.

Karina had had friends on the ESL track in high school. Although she herself did not see them this way, she felt that they had been "stigmatized" by others as being "slow." Given the context of her community, Karina knew that she was better off than her friends and that her English fluency made her school situation better. She commented on the differences in curriculum between AP and ESL classes:

I remember being in a government, U.S. government class. I was learning all sorts of stuff and they were still learning like things I learned in elementary school . . . we had the same English class, same level, but they were still on prepositions and what's a predicate? and what's a subject? and parts of [an]essay and what's a thesis? None of my friends were reading Shakespeare, . . . none of them were reading about history in literature . . . None . . . my ESL friends were in AP classes.

Although Karina often expressed frustration about the quality of instruction she had received in high school, she expressed pride in her school achievement and acknowledged that other students were less fortunate than she. She later made an analogy, comparing the school to an obstacle course. Her perspective exemplified the temporary nature of barriers described by Ogbu, but also contrasted her own experience to others who got through the obstacle course without setbacks. Karina had faced many educational and personal challenges. She was twenty-four at the time of the interview and was working diligently toward meeting transfer requirements:

> I see college as an obstacle course and some people run through it and get to the finish line and they don't remember the second obstacle, they don't remember the third one. But some people like me go through it and they stumble through it and they get to the finish line and they can tell you by memory exactly where they fell, where they tripped, . . . how hard it was, each step the ladder had, and how rusty the rope was and gain much more experience through it because they literally endured through it . . .

Karina had struggled to get through precollegiate math coursework and felt tremendous relief when she was able to place into transfer-level math. She described this experience as an obstacle—as opposed to a barrier—and commented on the insight she had gained:

> I used to look at those math classes as failures and now I see them as an experience. They were certainly a very humbling experience. They were an awakening to my life. I thought of myself as an overachiever. I would never fail something. I would always be an A student and to me it was a humbling process . . .Yes, I know I still have a long way to go . . . But, I know for sure where to go to. What classes to take, who to ask for help . . . I know that there is help out there. That there are [people] who care . . .

Similar to Victoria, Karina explained that failure is part of learning and being successful in school; in essence, she reiterated that obstacles are temporary rather than permanent in nature:

Knowing that you might make a fool of yourself, but you are willing to learn and that it's okay to fail. It's okay, if anything failing gets us closer to success. It's accepting failure not as defeat, but as victory. Because you know that if you really paid attention to that failure you are going to learn from it.

Eddie acknowledged that all students are not equally prepared to succeed in college. Over the course of the interviews, he often spoke of his friends who were pursuing math and science degrees at state and UC campuses. His status frame of reference was broad and included students at both ends of a spectrum. Similar to Victoria, he noted that not all community college students shared his work ethic:

I don't know; being a student, I see other students that don't, who come here to come to school and don't put in that strong effort that they need to. They don't put in the study time. They come, and [they think] I don't have to do the homework then. If you really don't do the homework, how can you expect to pass the test?

Eddie asserted that he was different from students who make a career out of attending a community college. His comments illustrated how he disidentified with that population of students:

You see a lot of disparity, like students that try hard and a lot of students . . . that are registered in classes but really just [end up] dropping out. So there is definitely like just that little small percent transferring and a lot staying here, a lot . . . That's why when I came here, I'm not going to do three years. I'm not going to do four years. Two years and I'm out . . .

The following comment was an example of Eddie's status frame of reference. After encountering less motivated students in his early coursework, Eddie found that other engineering majors shared his work ethic and academic interests. Although he expressed mixed feelings about attending a community college, he found comfort in taking lessons

from older students who had not worked at his pace and remained at the community

college:

> Little by little I've been taking my engineering classes and I've been
> meeting people more like me now . . . So you find things to talk [about]
> and we know we are looking for something better . . . Yeah, I study with
> them a lot . . . But the other ones . . . when I was in English twenty and
> fifty two, I kind of felt like high school . . . with these little classes,
> chemistry and stuff, I see people are trying much harder now. They are
> older and I see them like they've wasted a lot of time before and now we
> are getting to it and working hard . . . that is why they like me, you are
> young, you are doing smart and doing good . . .

The following comment illustrated Eddie's folk theory of success and his status frame of

reference. He lamented that others in his community had bypassed education for a job.

He believed that education leads to mobility:

> And since I am coming out of a bad community, I see it a lot . . . I see
> sometimes the students that don't go to college and I'm like wow! "What
> are you doing?" "I'm working" and I say "That is good." But, I feel sad
> for them because they are going to be working for their whole life. You
> know?

Eddie frequently described having a "mindset" to succeed that involved persevering

through challenges. He talked about short- and long-term goals and often looked ahead as

he monitored his progress. During Eddie's first semester at Brooke College, he registered

for all of his English and reading prerequisite coursework and carried 18 units. It was a

difficult semester, but he did not want prerequisite courses to delay his transfer. English

was not Eddie's forte, but he viewed these courses as temporary hurdles to overcome:

> I know people [that say], I'm not good at that subject, I'm just going to
> leave it behind. Me . . . I know I'm not strong in it, but I still have to try
> my hardest. At least to get it out of the way . . . the teacher's here they say
> "I'm not strong in math, that's why I'm an English teacher." But the same
> way, I'm strong in math. I will always try my hardest . . . You have to
> have like the mindset that you're ready . . . You have to have your goal

and a future to look upon . . . whether the goal is just to finish English, because I don't know how to write.

Unlike the other participants, Antonio had dropped out of high school and earned his GED before enrolling at Brooke. He described that, after meeting his girlfriend, he had a "midlife crisis" and ended up "changing [his] mind about school." He associated education with having a future, earning respect from others, and being a role model. Antonio's status frame of reference included his parents and his peers who were not in college. His folk theory of success involved earning a degree, but also being a role model for his peers:

> At nineteen, I really didn't think about school that much after I didn't finish high school . . . Once she [my girlfriend] pushed me . . . I did put my all . . . I wanted to be successful after hearing what you can do, what you can be…You don't want to be like your parents and struggle. So I did put myself in that mental position . . . I decided, because I want to be something now . . . I wanted to be perfect in college . . . I want to be successful . . . I want to be that Chicano . . . [A] model to my peers who are not in college, or my brothers, my family . . . They know we [Latinos] have struggled a lot and I want to push and say that we can do it.

Although among the participants David was the least fluent in Spanish, his father's immigrant experience influenced his academic orientation and drive to succeed. Using his father's experience as his status frame of reference, he commented on the linguistic and social advantages he'd had. His comments illustrated an additive perspective toward schooling and a folk theory of success that viewed education as a vehicle for mobility:

> Well my dad he always pushed me to go to college. He said work is important, but with an education you can do what you love instead of doing what you have to do. And I see that now . . . I think he is the first to get his degree in his family among his brothers and sisters . . . I think it encouraged me just to see my dad. I didn't have any problems growing up.

He lived in El Salvador. He came here when he was fifteen without a dollar in his pocket and no English . . . and you know because of what he did and his thought of mind to go to school and become a better man to provide for his family, I think that is definitely what pushes me.

The second theme that emerged within the cultural-ecological framework suggested that the participants' academic attitudes were shaped by the concrete experiences of others. This strand of questions drew support for Mickelson's (1990) and Matute-Bianchi's (1986) application of Ogbu's framework and their discussion of real life experiences and abstract ideological beliefs. As previously indicated, the participants accepted and adopted their parent's voluntary minority folk theory of success. To a great extent, they observed situations in which hard work had been compensated with a good life, economic mobility, self-sufficiency, and career advancement. Consistent with this rationale was a sense that the educational and economic opportunities available to them in this country far exceeded those that had been available to their parents in their country of origin. Several of the students had parents or family members who had achieved the American dream. The participants were able to draw on concrete experiences to explain their attitudes toward education and success, and many had had direct contact with models of hard work compensated with prosperity. Thus, economic advancement was tangible, through both their parent's experiences and their own.

Victoria often spoke with admiration of her mother's accomplishments. Her mother inspired her to pursue higher education. After immigrating to the United States, her mother became fluent in English, attended a dental program at UCLA, and helped her family move out of a low socioeconomic neighborhood. Victoria's detailed description of her mother's accomplishments was a concrete example the American dream:

My mom came over. She became a citizen. She actually went to adult school and got her high school diploma and from there she went on into dental stuff, so became a DA . . . She actually continued in her education. Now she's an RDA-EF2 . . . it's registered dental assistant with extended functions two. But basically what it is like, if it's like the dentist is Batman, she's Robin. So she actually did that at UCLA, at the UCLA dental school, which is huge! You know it's pretty hard to get in there you know . . . Her patients don't know that she comes from another country… She's pretty cool, amazing actually.

Victoria spoke of her mother's financial gain, but also of the hard work and compromises that came with getting through the program. Her mother modeled persistence through obstacles. She endured short-term sacrifices for long-term gain:

At that time she was earning more money than anyone in our neighborhood . . . She moved us out of LA. We went to D . . . and when I was in high school she began her RDA-EF at UCLA . . . I'm really proud of her . . . You know when she was in UCLA, it was designed for people who had a career already . . . so it was for the weekends, eight in the morning til eight at night . . . And that really took a toll on our family . . . So we did, we did struggle with that for a year . . . But if you push through the difficulties, you'll get where you want to be. You can't let things get in the way. You have to push forward. . . . So even though things seem bleak, you have to do what you can to get ahead.

Cindy described wanting to be an independent woman and offered examples of role models she has had in her life. Her sisters owned a chain of successful Mexican restaurants, and her mother had raised a large family on her own. Cindy's sisters were first-generation immigrants and had not attended college. She acknowledged how hard they and her mother worked. Cindy believed that an education could help her find success and allow her to be a role model for her nieces and nephews:

But I mean they're thankfully, they [my sisters] are successful in their own way, but they never attended college . . . They're successful because they were smart at what they do, but not because they actually have a diploma in something. I wanted to be the role model for my little nieces and nephews, but not just that, I [want to] have a future for myself because I

am a woman . . . I guess being an independent woman kind of came from my mom because that's how she raised me. But the fact that I actually wanted to reach a career is to make it easier for myself. Because my mom had to suffer more. She had to work. She had to be both a mom and a dad and yet she was successful . . .

Karina's father had earned a teaching degree in math prior to emigrating to the U.S., and her mother held a license in cosmetology. Her parents had encouraged her to excel in school and pursue higher education. Karina's father's hard work was rewarded with good jobs and his own business. Nevertheless, he felt that if he had earned a college degree in the United States, his life could have been easier. "My father never went to college and he got his GED and he started his own business and he has two really good jobs."

Eddie explained that his deceased mother had influenced his attitude toward education and motivated him to do well in school. He contrasted his father's feelings about education to the message his mother had conveyed. The following comment offered an example that countered his father's argument for bypassing a college education. Eddie's extended family provided concrete examples of the compensation that comes from earning a vocational certificate, as opposed to a professional degree. He reiterated his drive to succeed:

> My dad ahh! My dad he just feels like you just have to finish school and start paying bills. That's his idea. No, I'm like your wrong! My dad has the mindset . . . just to go to UEI college, 8 months like your cousin. Like yeah dad, but that's a twelve dollar job for my whole life . . . So that's his mindset, so I don't go to him. I feel like that's every Latin's way . . . Since we are known as hard workers . . . we just work, that is the mindset . . . My mom . . . was the one that always pushed me. Whatever I do it's going to be for her. I want to finish school cause of her. That was her goal for me, to be a success.

Eddie described mixed feelings about an older cousin who had influenced his interest in

engineering. Although he no longer considered him a personal role model, Eddie

acknowledged his cousin's professional accomplishments and the class privileges that

had come with his engineering career. His cousin was a concrete example of how

education led to professional success and social mobility:

> One of my cousins used to be my role model. He used to live with me in
> my house . . . he's [an] engineer. That is what made me want to be an
> engineer . . . he has a nice house and everything . . . but he is like the [kind
> of] people that don't want to be around the family and try to avoid it . . . If
> you are from a low class family, you need the education to move up, but
> the people that are already up there, just sometimes inherit from parents
> and they keep staying there . . .

Ernest described his parents as being "upper middle class." They had investments and

owned homes. Ernest had many concrete examples in his immediate and extended family

of hard work being compensated by financial stability. Ernest frequently spoke about

family vacations/reunions and travel in Mexico. He commented on his mother's and

uncles' success. It was clear that his family's hard work and their investment in education

had been compensated with financial reward. Their example had oriented him toward

higher education:

> [My mother] She did the whole American dream thing. Came over an
> immigrant and moved up in a company . . . She is really like a diligent
> worker. She works more than she has to sometimes, but she is also there
> for us . . . she has fifteen brothers and sisters . . . and they were poor and
> they all got an education. They all are lawyers, have businesses and she
> wants that from us. She tells us that our inheritance is our education.

David's parents both became fluent in English after emigrating to the United

States. His father earned a degree in theology, and his mother was employed as a

preschool/kindergarten teacher. David's family moved from a predominantly minority

community to a middle-class neighborhood. Similar to Ernest's, David's parents were a tangible example of the American dream. David expressed admiration for his parents and their many accomplishments:

> I've learned very much from my dad. He came to this country when he was fifteen. No English and he gave me and my brother and sisters a good life. Built his company from the ground up and still going . . . So my mom, she's a teacher as well. She teaches kindergarten in LA . . . She got her AA. He [My father] got his degree . . . was a pastor for almost ten years . . . and stopped doing that and went into insurance.

David's comments illustrated how his father's educational and work experiences had shaped his educational attitudes:

> Well my dad he always pushed me to go to college. He said work is important but with an education you can do what you love instead of doing what you have to do. And I see that now . . . I think he is the first to get his degree in his family among his brothers and sisters . . . and you know because of what he did and his thought of mind to go to school and become a better man to provide for his family, I think that is definitely what pushes me.

Discussion of Research Question 2

Prevalent themes that emerged relevant to Ogbu's minority typology conveyed a hybrid form of cultural adaptation and access to concrete models of success. In contrast to involuntary minorities—whose secondary cultural features draw opposition to the dominant culture—the participants embraced American values and experienced the rewards of hard work and academic merit. Education was associated with privilege—as opposed to oppression. Within their minority community, the participants accessed programs and curricula that led to their school advancement. Thus, education was viewed as additive and as a vehicle for mobility. Inherent in the participants' folk theory of success were long-term goals achieved through education and hard work. Barriers were

perceived as temporary in nature. The participants' status frame of reference included their immigrant parents and peers as well as others in their community. Examples of success and social stagnation were ample and reinforced the participants' school orientation. By comparison, they found themselves better off than first-generation immigrants or other second-generation peers who lacked their English proficiency or academic orientation. The participants confirmed Mickelson's (1990) findings; their academic attitudes appeared to stem from situation-specific experiences with others. Many had family members who fulfilled the American dream through educational, career, and professional advancement. Social mobility was feasible and concrete.

Despite the participants' sense of autonomy, their stories exposed the role of others who were implicitly or directly involved in their educational advancement. The following section addresses the themes related to social capital and looks to explain the types of currency and agents that shaped the participants' academic persistence and buffered them from the educational detours so commonly associated with minority youth.

Social Capital Theory

Results Research Question 3

What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress towards transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved?

Stanton-Salazar (1997) has asserted that valuable resources essential to school success are accessed through social networks and ties that favor the dominant culture. Similar to an economic market where goods are accumulated, converted, and exchanged,

educational resources are accessed through pathways rooted in ideological forces that breed exclusion for minority students. Within this context, institutional agents perform a gate-keeping role and determine who merits opportunity. They control the transmission of capital, give or withhold knowledge, and/or position students in resource-intensive networks. It is through relationships with agents that minority youth can develop capital and learn how to use it instrumentally for their advancement. Purposeful decoding is essential in this process and involves deciphering the system of power and becoming fluent in institutional discourse, or Standard English. For language minority youth, institutional discourse is a prerequisite to accessing networks and developing competencies valued by the dominant culture. The last set of questions examined the types of personal connections that supported student progress toward transfer. In essence, I wanted to know to how—and to what extent—relationships were instrumental to the participants' school advancement. I began by exploring the participants' early education and worked my way through their secondary and postsecondary experiences. Although my questions were more focused on institutional agents, the student narratives drew attention to the heterogeneous nature of dominant discourse as a form of capital and its implications for status attainment. The themes that emerged from this strand overlapped with each other as well as with themes pertaining to language development and status frame of reference.

The first theme that emerged within the social capital framework suggested that English fluency is associated with status and access. It aligned with earlier findings pertaining to the participants' strong learner identity and explained how the students

forged relationships with others. Stanton-Salazar (1997) contended that various funds of knowledge are essential to decoding the system of power and to establishing ties with institutional agents. These ties depend on minorities' ability to adopt institutionally sanctioned language and behavior and to meld with mainstream middle-class culture. Comments related to the students' scholastic ability often aligned with being culturally and linguistically competent in dominant discourse. Thus, English proficiency was an important element used to access resources and support. The term "non-native English speaker" drew attention to the heterogeneity of speakers of English and to the capital ascribed to native-like fluency and different language varieties. Despite clarification, the term was mistakenly associated with students in the earlier stages of language acquisition, as opposed to fluent English speakers like themselves. Although none of the interview questions inquired directly about accents, this topic often surfaced. Several of the participants made reference to accented English being a disadvantage in school and/or being associated with learning difficulties. Most of the participants credited their academic advancement to their ability to learn English quickly, and others used those with accented English as a status frame of reference when speaking of their own opportunities. Inherent in several of the participants' strong learner identities was a sense of language currency that stemmed from their own nonaccented English or their level of English competency. This capital allowed them access to dominant discourse and legitimized their status in a minority intragroup hierarchy. As strong, accomplished students, they disidentified with the attributes of less fluent minority students and a non-

native English speaker collective identity. Thus, they viewed their English fluency as instrumental to their academic orientation and advancement.

The following excerpts illustrate the participants' awareness of intragroup linguistic differences and the corresponding status they assigned to different English varieties and varying levels of English fluency. Indirectly, they revealed the benefits of becoming proficient in institutional discourse and of adopting the language and behavior of the school community as their own. Their comments clearly suggested that the participants did not consider the results of the English placement test to be a marker of their English competence.

Maria recalled being exposed to English at a young age and acknowledged that this experience had helped her to become fluent in English and to develop school readiness skills. Because of her mother's job as a teacher's assistant, Maria had had access to institutional discourse at the age of two. Thus, her mother's relationship with the teacher was an initial network that favored Maria's educational standing. Maria conveyed commitment and confidence in her academic endeavors and described success in her high school experience. Her early English fluency and literacy skills functioned as a form of capital that led to academic and leadership opportunities and shaped her orientation toward school:

> I have been going to school since I was two years old because my mom worked with my professor. Before I entered preschool she would actually take me when she was an assistant so I would be in school . . . My mom said by the time I entered preschool . . . I already knew how to read perfectly in English. So I would say between two and three, I learned good English.

During the first part of the interview Maria was asked to compare her educational

experiences to that of a monolingual English speaker. Maria first avoided the comparison

and described the experience of other students who entered middle school not speaking

English. She explained that these students are separated from students who are fluent in

English and often do not advance beyond high school. When the question was clarified

and reiterated, she emphasized differences in learning style and personal responsibility

without directly addressing linguistic differences. Maria asserted that her education was

no different from her monolingual peers. At the same time, she indicated that her

educational experiences had included opportunities not available to less fluent English

speakers:

> I think there is no difference. It just depends on how different you make it
> . . . Like for example, if I decide to make different choices within my
> education, my education is going to be different than somebody else who
> takes a different path in their education. And it depends on the way I am
> able to learn, the way that person is able to learn.

I later asked Maria about being a non-native speaker at the community college and how

this might impact her experience. Again the question made a comparison to native

English speakers. Although Maria confirmed that being a non-native English speaker

made no difference to her, she acknowledged that others with accented English might

fare differently. Her comment illustrated the inherent advantage or status associated with

native-like fluency:

> I think it just depends where you come from . . . Not just Mexico, but
> some other place in the world that you have a strong accent that maybe
> would be hard for you to be here and studying and knowing if you are
> speaking English correctly. Or if your accent is still strong enough, it
> maybe depends how strong you have your English.

When asked why she thought she had placed into precollegiate English, Maria offered an explanation that referenced her test-taking skills and confirmed her English competence. She asserted her strong learner identity by challenging the association between having to take precollegiate coursework and intellect. "Maybe that's just the level the test made me be in because some people are not good at test taking. Which doesn't mean you are not smart at English, you just don't know how to take tests."

Similar to Maria, Victoria had benefited from early literacy experiences at a young age. Alongside her mother, she had learned to read in English by the time she entered preschool and was fluent in English by the end of 1st-grade. Victoria's time at the library had helped her access literacy skills, which converted into academic capital that gave her a head start over her peers. Her interest in reading blossomed into a palpable enthusiasm for literature and a career interest in teaching English:

> Well I was at home for five years you know before you start preschool . . .
> [My mom] She was at home with me so we would go to the library and we
> would read. So we were always at the library . . . And the librarian there,
> Mrs. G, she's retired now. She fostered my love for reading. She would
> get brand new books and she'll be like "Look I just got this one!" So by
> the time I went to preschool, and I went early because I was born in
> November . . . I actually knew how to read. And you know in preschool
> they're teaching you your alphabet and I'm like reading words like
> astronaut . . .

At home, Victoria's family combined English and Spanish when interacting with each other. Within the social context of her community, code switching was accepted in interpersonal communication. Victoria realized that this language variety was specific to her community when her family moved to an affluent, predominantly White neighborhood. Although conflicted by feelings of guilt, Victoria was aware that she

needed to modify her own language variety to match the dominant discourse at school.

She found this shift awkward, but not difficult, as she had the skills and the awareness to

do it:

> I think English at school is pretty easy. It is easy to turn off the Spanish.
> But it's harder to turn off the English. [About transitioning between the
> two languages] I don't think I was conscious of it until I got to high school
> when I got to D . . . High and it was at that time, it was mostly white and
> Asian and I realized "Oh my God!" Like you never notice it. Cause, when
> I went to K. [Elementary] and then I went on to E [Middle school] I spoke
> that way, my friends spoke that way, teachers even spoke that way. So it
> wasn't something that you realized until you go somewhere else and it's
> straight English all of the time, nothing else. So I didn't have trouble with
> it, but it was really weird to get used to. I felt fake for a little bit, I felt
> unauthentic. It's like I don't know, like I felt maybe I was a little ashamed
> and I felt guilty for feeling that I had to hide stuff. You know because at
> that time . . . D [High] was mostly white. So I felt guilty for having to tone
> down a lot of things.

Similar to most of the participants, Victoria attributed not placing into English 100 to her

approach to the test. She had benefited from English 52, and she was proud of her

excellent progress in all of her English classes. Victoria was enrolled in the honors

English 101 course and had passed all of her English classes with an "A." She was

confident in her writing ability and shared several of her writing assignments with the

investigator. Victoria was later hired by the campus learning center as a writing tutor.

Similar to Maria, she asserted her competence in English:

> [About placing into English 52] Because I'm a jerk and don't care about
> standardized testing and I just totally bombed it. I actually missed it by
> three points so I think that if I had tried a little more I definitely would
> have been in English 100. But I don't regret it. Because it was a good
> thing that I got into fifty two, because I had Dr. M and he was so stringent
> about MLA.

In contrast to Maria's and Victoria's situation, Cindy's academic readiness came exclusively from school. Although she described her mother as a protective agent, Cindy's mother was not able to help her with school work. Over the course of the interviews, Cindy commented on language and its social implications. Articulate and confident, Cindy considered herself fully bilingual. Through individual effort and hard work, she had converted her English fluency into academic capital. The following comments conveyed Cindy's experiences with different language varieties and the status ascribed to each. The inherent status of native-like fluency was reflected in her sister's comments on speaking accented English. Cindy's comment about her sister's language fluency was suggestive of a language hierarchy:

> My sister hated the fact that I learned Spanish before English . . . She saw it that in the way that if I spoke Spanish before English . . . I was going to have an accent no matter what because English wasn't my first language. So that's how she saw it. And now that she has her kids, they don't know Spanish. So their first language is English. So I guess that's opposite . . . So she [her sister who has recently started ESL classes] wants to practice English with them. She sounds like a street biker.

Cindy associated language with educational status. She understood the value of adopting the dominant discourse and had the following to say about academic language:

> Like I couldn't picture a teacher or an instructor or a professor speaking a kind of, a very--knowing the fact they've gone to school and they're educated, highly educated and have them speak in a certain way that makes them seem as they're not. I wouldn't like to see that. So therefore, I kind of like talking to people who are educated so I kind of get their words and speak like I'm educated even if I'm not completely educated.

Cindy was part of the Scholars Honors program at Brooke. She had earned an "A" in her English 52 class and was currently making good progress in the Honors English 100 course. Although the English 52 class had come easily to her, she acknowledged that it

"opened her eyes to a lot of mistakes" that she did not know were errors. When asked

why she thought she had not placed into the college-level English course, she initially

cited grammar as the issue, but ultimately concluded that it had to do with the testing

conditions and her approach to the test; thus, similar to the other participants, Cindy

asserted her competence in English:

> So I don't know if it was just the fact that I wanted to go, that I probably
> went through it quickly and really didn't look at it . . . I think it was
> because I probably did do that and then I just went through the grammar
> and punctuation and most of the questions like probably "Oh that sounds
> good" click. So I don't think I really put a lot of effort into the questions
> or really looked at what it is that they were asking for . . . I don't think I
> really took it seriously.

Karina conveyed frustration with instructors who pass judgment on students who

speak less-than-perfect English and would like to transfer to a four-year university. Her

comment illustrated the status ascribed to accented English and the negative attributes

that are associated with it. She offered the following advice to instructors:

> Don't underestimate them. I would say don't underestimate them because
> of the way they sound . . . I would say you know, just because they sound
> because they speak . . . broken English or because their accent is thick or
> because their English is very slow, doesn't mean they think that way! We
> don't think with an accent! We don't think slowly! And there is for the
> most part a group of us that really desire to learn as much from the
> instructor and to learn from us as well. Don't think that just because you
> know we just got out of an ESL class or lower division English, we've
> never read a novel or don't understand how to interpret Shakespeare, you
> know?

Similar to the females, the male participants valued their English language

fluency and viewed it as a source of capital. Danny, who considered himself English

dominant, "lost" his Spanish after being immersed in English instruction. In preschool,

all of his classmates were Latino, but they all spoke English. His mother was a teacher at

the preschool he had attended and both of his parents were, at the point of this interview, fluent in English. Danny had moved to Dallas, an affluent predominantly Caucasian community, where Standard English was the norm. Danny progressed easily through his high school curriculum and conveyed confidence and pride in his writing ability. When asked about placing below English 100, he explained that he had not taken any writing classes in two years. Similar to the female participants, he asserted his competence in English:

> [About placing into English 52] Well like I said I didn't practice any English writing skills nothing whatsoever for almost two years. And then I had taken the placement test and I don't remember it being hard but I actually was off by one point to place in the hundred [English 100] . . . I was really close and I was pretty mad that by one point, really I have to take a prerequisite . . . But I mean when I got in I still learned a lot so it was still helpful . . .

Danny found Spanish obsolete in Dallas. He adapted to his new language community and consequently "lost" his Spanish. His comment illustrated the power and status of dominant discourse. "Most of the people don't speak Spanish [in D . . .] it's all English and they wanted to keep it that way. I'm not saying that they are racist or anything, but that could have been it." Danny was asked to compare the community college experience of non-native and native English speakers. Danny's comments illustrated the status associated with accented and Standard English.

> [Non-native English speakers would be] intimidated maybe. I've actually you know in classes, I've seen that if you know a lot more Spanish than you do English you know it's a little broken. It's hard for them to participate. I'm sure . . . they struggle trying to answer questions, they can't get it out.

[Monolingual English speakers] I think they are a lot more dominant. They feel they understand texts and thoughts and opinions and they can understand when they read a book a lot more clearer. I think that's how they feel. A lot more confident I guess.

Antonio conveyed similar responses to questions comparing native and non-native English speakers. A highly determined student, he regretted that his speech impairment had made him uneasy about oral presentations and caused him not to graduate from high school. When compared to the other participants, Antonio had faced added obstacles in developing language, but considered himself triumphant nevertheless. Antonio had overcome what he described as "stage fright" and had resolved to become a successful "Chicano role model." His confidence came not only from his English fluency, but also from his language fluency. He understood that Standard English was a convertible form of capital that had earned—and would continue to earn—him respect and mobility. His comments illustrated the status he associated with Standard English:

English speaking people are looked at differently, are seen differently. I guess it's an advantage . . .You feel like they know a lot . . . Like they're comfortable . . .

[Native English speakers] They had the advantage of learning English . . . they're not that shy about talking English. So they have the advantage of speaking and understanding and not being shy to ask the professors about anything.

Antonio's comment spoke to his understanding of academic language and dominant discourse. He said the following about transitioning between English at home and at school:

Well, I don't try to use some words . . . I really don't talk slang. I don't really like it, but I do talk a little more professional, try to use advanced words when I talk to a teacher because I know students won't understand them . . . I usually prefer to talk more academically.

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Ernest described himself as a critical thinker. He had taken several AP courses in high school, had many interests, and was confident in his ability to grasp concepts and express his ideas. Ernest embraced a bicultural perspective and valued bilingualism, but felt that bilingual programs in school were detrimental to students. He felt that they conveyed lower expectations and "babied" students. Ernest was grateful that his mother had placed him in an English immersion program and had spared him the fate of developing an accent:

> But my mom didn't want me in there because a lot of the people she knew did that with their kids [and they] spoke horrible English. Not horrible, but they've been here since they were small and they still have a thick accent. So she put me in all English. So I went into all English without knowing English . . . I had six months to catch up. English became primary. Then I forgot some of my Spanish.

The following comment illustrated the status Ernest associated with accented English. In response to how his education might have been different if he had started school in a bilingual program, he added:

> I probably would have struggled with presentations and presenting in front of people. And I see that they are very shy about their accents and they need to take a lot of speech classes and [practice] on presentations for them to actually feel comfortable again or at all.

Similar to the other participants, Ernest asserted his competence in English. He felt that his approach to the English placement test was what had caused him to place into English 52:

> I don't know, I don't think I really paid much attention to the test. I just took it. Luckily I did well enough that I didn't have to take reading. Some native speakers, some people, I knew they had to take reading . . . 40 . . . It [the test] was like sixty questions. It was too long. I got annoyed. Seriously, I was tired of

taking placement tests like high school standardized testing . . . I'm glad I took English 52 . . .

The previous theme spoke to English fluency as a form of institutional discourse that yields status and access. As was made largely evident in the remarks, the participants perceived English proficiency as a vehicle for learning. Many of the students spoke of academic strengths and described themselves as experienced problem solvers. The participants took pride in being self-sufficient and highlighted the role of ability and effort in school. Overall, they endorsed the individualism sanctioned by our school system and its corresponding explanation for success.

The last theme countered recurring ideas related to individualism and painted a slightly different picture of the participants' academic advancement. Despite the participants' ideological beliefs, the narratives confirmed that institutional agents were involved in helping the participants secure access to higher education and/or influencing their academic orientation. Although all of the students no doubt had relied on their own individual strengths to acquire important funds of knowledge, they appeared less aware of how this knowledge had drawn the support of others and impacted their learning trajectories. Programs, and the ties and/or resources that come with them, were a part of their grooming and had helped to cultivate their academic orientation and prepare them for higher education. Talk of mentors and/or role models involved probing and, at times, occurred serendipitously. Although the female participants were more likely to identify community college staff as role models, a few of the males spoke of peer networks. Both the female and male participants spoke of programs and, indirectly, of the ties that came with them. They offered examples of teachers and agents who had imparted essential

knowledge and/or facilitated their progress. Often this bond had involved an adult reaching out to them, or on their behalf, as opposed to the participants seeking their support. Whether tacitly or directly, these ties were instrumental to shaping their attitudes toward persistence and success. Educational programming worked in their favor and helped them become college ready. The following excerpts provide a retrospective review of how the participants accumulated capital and how relationships with agents were embedded in programs or circumstances that involved selective membership and knowledge.

Monica described herself as extremely shy and quiet. In 2nd-grade, she had moved to Dallas, a predominantly White and affluent neighborhood. She recalled immersing herself in reading as a way of avoiding social interactions. In middle school, she was invited to participate in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program. When asked if the program had been helpful to her, she initially indicated that it "didn't really help" and was "just a lot of extra work." Upon further inquiry, she described how the program had situated her in a social network with college-bound peers and had helped her acquire technical knowledge, such as note taking and critical questioning skills, which she used in her community college courses:

> I took it two years in middle school [and] chose not to continue [in 9th-grade]. They helped me be more social. I met a lot of my close friends there. They taught me how to take Cornell notes and how to do critical questions and how to not only just ask what is this? What is that? But they taught me to ask, "what is the effect of this? and how has it affected the future?"

Monica's comment illustrated how, at the time of the interview, she used skills that she had acquired in the AVID program. "Yeah, in Critical English that's what we're doing

today. A lot of it is think outside of the box and question everything . . . [It] prepared

me." In high school Monica had opted not to continue in AVID; instead, she participated

in the Regional Occupational Program, which had helped her prepare for college and

connected her with the Urban Teacher Fellowship Program at Brooke:

> In high school when I was a senior, I entered the ROP program. It was about careers and education. I was interested in becoming a teacher and some representatives of the fellowship [Brooke Urban Teacher Fellowship] program came and talked to us and they asked if we were interested to sign up. So I tried it, and I signed up, and I got into the group and the program is to be at Brooke for two years and then transfer to Cal State Long Beach.

Monica often described being very shy and had slowly come out her shell with the help

of teachers and friends. Her comment illustrated the meaningful relationship she had

forged with her English teacher. Mr. Rodarte had done more than teach Monica English,

he had taught her about life and was an "empowering agent":

> I had an English teacher, Mr. Rodarte. He lectured to us and told us to think for ourselves, to question everything. Even the teachers and he was a teacher, mentor and a friend at the same time…In class we were able to express ourselves, how we felt. And we [just] didn't learn about English or grammar or read stories. But, we talked about life and we would get off subject sometimes and talk about his experiences in life. He tied it to us and it worked . . . I could say he was one of my inspirations. He opened my mind and I took his other class.

A progression of programs and relationships connected Monica to the UTF program at

Brooke, where she had met her student support specialist. Monica's comments illustrated

the support she received from peers in the program, but most importantly from the

student support specialist who provided assistance—likely beyond the scope of her job

description:

Right now I'm in the UTF program. We get first priority in everything. We already have our classes set for the next two years here at the college, and they tell us what we need. They give us the classes that we need. They give us support because we're in a cohort. So a group of girls together. So if we need, we can ask one another instead to ask the professors and we have a student support specialist. So she helps a lot . . . She takes notes. She tells us to pay attention. If we're having trouble with something we don't understand, she helps us understand . . . if we have trouble at home, we can talk to her and try to fix things, if we need rides, she says to contact her and she could try to help us.

When asked about mentors at the community college, Monica had more to say about the student support specialist, Norma. She was the first person Monica went to for help. If Norma was not available, Monica would go to another staff member, whom she described as "up there in the Teacher Track and UTF program." Thus, Monica was clearly situated in a UTF support network. Monica described Norma as a surrogate mother who provided personal and academic support and was readily available to help;

[Norma] . . . she helps us and she's always on top of us to make sure that we're doing what we're supposed to do be doing. She's like a friend, but a mother figure. She's really nice and open and encourages us to like come to her if we need help.

Among the participants, Karina's college experience was unique. At twenty-four-years-old, she had been in school longer than all of the other participants and had encountered numerous personal and educational challenges. Nevertheless, Karina remained resolved to transfer and earn a degree. At the time of the interview, she was employed at Brooke College as a professor's assistant and was considering a job offer in a different department. Karina was well connected with professors and staff and had many friends at Brooke. Similar to Monica, she described feeling "at home" at Brooke

and spent a lot of her time on campus. More so than the other participants, Karina readily

identified agents who supported her progress and the institutional barriers that deterred it.

The following comment illustrated how she was inspired by her 9th-grade English

teacher, who had encouraged her to "connect with her Spanish" in writing. Karina's

relationship with her teacher had helped her develop her writing skills and cultivated her

interest in the subject. Karina later earned recognition for her writing ability and

identified it as an area of strength:

> [About Ms. R] . . . she kind of connected with the passion I have in writing
> and literature. She was my English teacher. And she would come into
> class and she was just full of energy and full, like you just saw the passion
> in her eyes…And she would say "Grab your journals and write, forget
> about rules, forget about language, forget about the time. Just write . . ." I
> remember that it was during the time, I was like discovering myself . . . in
> creative writing. And she just helped me like to open those gates . . . And
> the way she would just digest the book made me realize that this is what I
> wanted to do. I want to write . . . the thing that impacted me the most: the
> fact that ever since before her class all I heard was English…she would
> say, "How do you say that in Spanish? How does it make you feel when
> you say that? . . . Okay, then write that . . ." to this day I take a lot of what
> she taught in that class to consideration.

After multiple attempts to pass a precollegiate math course, Karina met with her math

instructor and expressed her frustration about failing the class again. She had exhausted

her ideas and resources and needed direction. The Brooke math professor asked her to

enroll in the class one last time. This initial contact led to a relationship that helped her

get through the class. She recalled that conversation:

> And he said come back next semester and I will do anything I can to help
> you. I will bend over backwards to help you get this, but come back. Even
> if the class is packed, I will help you get in . . . Sure enough everyday he
> would say "Karina how do you do this?" He'd bring me to the board and
> I'd do it. And it was around this time that family problems were rising at

home. So I remember him just being there for me, and surprisingly I was
doing good on my exams.

Karina passed the class after seven attempts. She could then register for the transfer-level

math course and return to Cal State Long Beach, because passing the class was a

requirement for her readmittance. Karina encountered some personal challenges upon her

return to CSULB and faced a mandatory leave of absence. She expressed gratitude to a

professor who reassured her and offered direction. Karina acknowledged that her

instructor's advice proved to be critical to her well-being and her subsequent re-

enrollment at Brooke.

> She said "I really care for you. I have grown to know who you are . . . as a
> person and care a lot about you and I see you and I see someone going
> somewhere and I see someone who is not going to give up and someone
> who is going to be very successful and this is not going to get in your way
> . . . I really want you to take some time off and just be you."

Karina described her college experience as "humbling." She learned that it is okay to ask

for help. Karina returned to Brooke College and was, at the time of the interview, only a

few classes away from transferring. Karina described feeling comfortable with her

professors. Because she worked on campus, she had embedded herself in a supportive

network that included peers, professors, and administrative staff:

> Professor Shea is fabulous! I love her . . . and I feel very comfortable
> going up to her . . . [Professor Ronald] I took him last semester and I felt
> at home with him . . . Never shied away from trying to help me figure out
> how to make the paper look better or the presentation or whatever it was . .
> . For the most part, professors here I am very comfortable with.

When seeking transfer information, Karina found her colleagues working on her behalf.

For help with school, she reported feeling most comfortable seeking advice from her

boss, the department secretary. The following comment illustrated the unsolicited help

she had received from professors and office staff, who had helped her find a counselor

and register for classes:

> Professor Osmond, who I work for knows him [counselor] very closely.
> And he tried calling him several times . . . Ann who is the secretary of the
> division also emailed him and called him . . . there has been other
> professors here in the department who have recommended me to several
> people . . . if something is going on at school I go to Ann, she's the
> division secretary. I feel completely comfortable with her about anything .
> . . For example, she is actually helping me get classes for the fall already
> and the schedule isn't out. So yeah, I just go to her.

Karina saw many of her professors as role models, but expressed particular admiration

for two professors who shared their own educational challenges with her. Their

experiences motivated her to persevere:

> I most definitely see my econ professor as a role model. I think she's
> inspiring . . . she talks a little bit about what she's been through and the
> fact that she started off as a political science instructor and now is an econ
> professor. It kind of . . . encourages me, to know that I don't have to just
> stick with business. I can always change my mind. I also find Professor
> Amber somehow motivating . . . she shared a story with me once where it
> took her ten years to get a bachelors and she didn't give up. And that
> touched me…and it's just kind of a reminder that I can get/be there one
> day. I can be someone who can say, I went through that [and] I just kept
> going.

Although Victoria excelled academically and learned easily, her experiences in

the k–12 setting were mixed. At Brooke, she found herself in her element, excelling in

classes, growing intellectually, and motivated to succeed. Victoria was on campus on a

daily basis and was later hired as a writing tutor at the campus learning center. When

asked to comment generally about her success at the community college, Victoria drew

attention to sociocultural forces that governed opportunities to learn, but asserted that

language barriers could be overcome. Ultimately, she concluded that it was teachers who

make the difference. Reflecting on her experiences, one can see how she arrived at this

conclusion:

> I think the one thing that I can say about my experience as a Spanish
> speaker [and] English, we learn the way our world works early on. And
> we might not even notice it, but a child learns things through observational
> learning. If they notice things, if they see things, they start to form self-
> definitions. And children, like the one thing that I've noticed cross-
> culturally is that children meet expectations. If you think that your
> students aren't going to do much in life they won't . . . [About Latino and
> Hispanic kids] If their teachers believe in them, they can push through the
> language barriers. No problem. They can push through the social
> awkwardness of coming from another culture. But if their teachers don't
> believe in them, they don't see the point.

Victoria had had many teachers in her life who had influenced her learning and created

opportunities for her to succeed. At the age of two, the local librarian had fostered her

love for reading by introducing her to new books. "She would get brand new books and

she'll be like 'Look I just got this one!' So by the time I went to preschool . . . I actually

knew how to read." She recalled a teacher from elementary school "straightening her

out" and making her a stronger student: "He was very noble in his teaching method. He

really didn't . . . take excuses . . . His expectations were much higher than a lot of the

other teachers." In high school, Victoria became "really good friends" with her high

school English teachers. These relationships cultivated her interest in writing and helped

her refine her skills in this area. She said the following about her 10th-grade English

teacher:

> . . . I was friends with her. And I got to know her and I saw . . . I grew a lot
> that year as far as my writing and my English skills. I really picked up on
> a lot of stuff I think other teachers assumed that we knew, but didn't tell
> us…she worked us hard, but I think we walked away with a lot from that
> class.

Like Monica, Victoria had participated in the Regional Occupational Program in high school. The program had helped her prepare for college, and connected her with the UTF program at Brooke.

> Actually ROP really helped a lot with that [preparing for college]. In fact they not only helped with college, they also helped us with our resumes . . . we even started a career portfolio in class . . .They really taught us how to, they had a whole section on how to find a job. They taught us how to network. They really prepared us . . . My ROP teacher told me about the Teacher Track Program here at Brooke where you do two years here and then you get guaranteed a spot at Cal State Long Beach and then you can graduate with your little degree, and then you know, you can be a teacher.

Victoria acknowledged the benefits that came with being on campus on a regular basis. She noted the importance of meeting deadlines and appreciated that one of her English professors had required that they open Tele Net accounts. Unlike other students, she did not experience problems with staying informed:

> I'm here on campus Monday through Friday and I've signed up for all of those things that they offer. They have like text message alerts . . . emails and newsletters . . . Doctor Houser made us do [it] . . . It was kind of like part of the assignment. So that was good.

In general, Victoria saw her professors as role models, but she had a special relationship with one of her teachers; their commonalities inspired her to persevere:

> I feel like if I was older I'd be a lot like her. I really see myself in her. Cause she was in, she did the whole community college bit for about ten years. And she's mentioned a lot of things that I'm like, yeah!!! . . . She teaches my English 103 class. I really admire her . . . It's like seeing an older version of yourself, who's got it together, you know? I think she's pointed out that . . . I'm sometimes too hard on myself.

> As a whole, most of male participants did not report having relationships with community college staff. When asked about role models and mentors, they often spoke instinctively about peers and family members who exemplified strong character. With

further questioning came examples of peer networks, agents, school programs, or instruction that had helped shape their educational careers and prepare them for higher education.

In high school, Ernest had participated in the social justice, history, film, AP, debate, and ping pong clubs. He took AP history, physics, and calculus classes and played on the school's volleyball team. Ernest described himself as a "critical thinker" who valued curiosity and knowledge over rote memorization and good grades. He became involved with the business academy and recalled being approached to participate in a special project. His participation led to opportunities and skill development:

> I took business law my freshman year. I liked it. And the teacher approached me about joining the club and that was freshman year. They take trips up north to Bakersfield and he asked me if I wanted to join the club and then I joined the club and he got me a seat to go up north with the seniors and we went to Bakersfield and did the whole competition. So you build, so [the] business club is a four year program and you take different classes, business law, economy and other stuff and web design and eventually you create a business . . . You build catalogs and websites, mission statements, portfolios and all of that stuff.

When asked directly, Ernest did not identify teachers as agents. Nevertheless, over the course of the interview, he spoke of honors and AP classes that had encouraged discussion and inquiry and had taught him to think critically. The following comment illustrated the distinction he made between students who regurgitate information and others like himself. Indirectly, he explained that this awareness stemmed from experiences he had in his classes:

> Like you notice children that engage in learning and the ones that are just like good workers, like "A's." Like the ones that work hard. They read and they study and everything, but they don't retain the information, or they don't think critically. They just think what they are told . . .

Ernest acknowledged a special relationship he had with his teacher. Because he was an

athlete, he felt his teacher, who was also a coach, was more invested in him as a student:

> Like I had a teacher pull me off to the side and it was my physics teacher .
> . . It was cool because I played volleyball and he was the wrestling coach.
> So, I feel they cared about their students more.

Eddie had many social ties with family and friends. As a top student in his high

school, he had been tracked with a cohort of similarly performing students and had

excelled in AP coursework. He described himself as "a little nerd" and someone who was

good with numbers. Although he did not identify a mentor or role model at Brooke, he

maintained strong connections with friends whom he visited at UC and state colleges.

The following comment illustrated the peer network that Eddie had established in his AP

classes:

> I knew I had a future for me. I just have to try my hardest and then being
> with peers like with the smartest students. We all grew up with the
> mindset, we are all going to college and we are all doing this and that. And
> we've all gone so far . . . And a lot of times I keep up with them. They are
> at UCLA and Cal Poly . . . and I see them on weekends and stuff and we
> always socialize . . . they are very proud of me . . . I've been on those
> campuses . . . I'm like wow! . . . I always talk to people like my friend
> that's at UCLA . . . And I am always socializing with people.

Eddie considered his high school math teacher a mentor. He had offered advice and

friendship and encouraged him to do well in school. Eddie's description suggested that

he may have acted as an empowering agent:

> He was my calculus, pre-calculus and statistics teacher. [I had him] for
> two years, but I had him for three classes. He was a much older man
> already, but he gave me a lot of advice. Like the same thing, try your
> hardest and stuff. [He gave me advice] about math, college, and [my]
> future. Yeah [we talked outside of class]. Yeah, we always used to

socialize about sports and from there we became close friends and he is still there teaching.

Antonio was the only participant who had not graduated from high school. He, too, had performed well in high school, but dropped out of school toward the end of his senior year. Antonio was part of the architecture academy and the high school band. In elementary school, he had received speech and language services to help improve his articulation of sounds. Oral presentations made him nervous, and Antonio had not completed the required panel presentation for his senior project. He earned his GED in six months at an adult school and enrolled at Brooke College ready to overcome his fear of oral presentations. At the time of the interview, speaking in front of a group was no longer an obstacle for him. Unlike the other male participants, Antonio identified several agents who offered support and imparted knowledge. At the community college, he networked and found mentorship in a relationship with an older peer. Antonio was one of 33 students selected to participate in the architecture academy. He felt that the architecture academy had helped him prepare for college and had placed him in a cohort of peers with similar interests. "The academy, well it did [help me prepare for college], like I said, they keep us together for a full year, but not just in that class…we were stuck together all high school year." Antonio felt supported by his architecture teacher. His counselor frequently reached out and tried to help him with his senior project:

> [About his teacher] . . . he was one of my encouragers back in high school. I did have a counselor back in high school that was always on top of me [to finish my senior project] . . . she kept telling me, "You need some help? Come with me and I'll help you." She was motivating, but I didn't pay attention as well.

Antonio attended a community research center, where he received help with homework and learned computer skills in 5th- through 9th-grade. He expressed admiration for the counselor who worked in the program and considered her a role model. His comments illustrated how she had imparted knowledge and helped him improve his skills:

> There's one person that I admire. She's like a counselor for children with problems and she works at a community research center. I used to take this class . . . to do my homework, to help students improve themselves . . . I met her there and her job was to help kids . . .

When asked about how schools can help non-native English speakers succeed in school, Antonio spoke of his Chicano Studies teacher at Brooke and described him as role model and mentor. He characterized his teacher as an empowering agent who imparted knowledge but who also challenged him to see the world differently:

> He opened our eyes . . . we learned that there was not much in expectancy of Latinos graduating and doing well. So he's the one that motivated me and told us [about] all of these programs and [about] past events . . . So he was the one that opened my mind . . . He's a Chicano Studies teacher here . . . I find him fascinating that he knows so much about our history . . . I do look up to him because he's one of us. He's got his Ph.D.

Discussion of Research Question 3

The student narratives corroborated Stanton-Salazar's perspective on institutional support. He asserted that institutionally sanctioned discourse is a "key ingredient" for navigating networks that facilitate academic advancement (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The participants consistently associated their English fluency with their academic prosperity. Incidental and direct comparisons to others less fluent than they, gave them a sense of status that contributed to their confidence and/or positioned them in resource-rich networks. All of the participants asserted their English competence. Poor test-taking

skills or a haphazard approach to the English placement test was how they explained

placing below English 100. As students with a strong academic orientation, they used

their English proficiency to decode the school culture and to legitimize their status within

a minority hierarchy. The participants often appeared empathic toward first-generation

immigrants, but they also seemed unwilling to be confused for one. At this point in their

educational careers, they were more likely to identify linguistically with native English

speakers than with students who spoke accented or less fluent English. Status was

attained from English proficiency and academic-specific knowledge; with this status

came opportunities for mobility.

The last the theme traced social capital through knowledge, programming, and

ties that yield status and bestow privilege. It offered unanticipated insights into the

students' educational backgrounds and their perspectives on academic attainment. Early

cultivation of English fluency was valued and common among the participants. It set the

tone for how they approached learning and how they, in turn, were incorporated into the

school system. Most participants were college bound and identified as such by others at

an early age. Academic knowledge and English fluency, paired with mainstream values,

earned them distinction within a minority hierarchy and gained them access to college

preparatory programming and support. Their goal of attending a four-year university was

briefly on hold during their time at Brooke College—but it was never in doubt. With

varying levels of self-awareness, the participants described programming, relationships,

and knowledge that had situated them in a network of high-achieving peers with a

common purpose and agents who imparted knowledge. These sometimes-invisible networks had offered opportunities and reinforced the participants' sense of status.

Summary of Key Findings

Linguistic, cultural, and institutional factors working in unison propel second-generation minority community college students toward transfer. Overlapping issues related to the participants' individualistic ideologies, their desire to preserve an earned identity and status within a minority hierarchy, and an emerging sense of the obscure nature of social capital surfaced throughout the interviews. The purpose of this study was to understand persistence and to explore how Latino community college students alter their educational trajectories. Compromise rather than change was what emerged from the student narratives. To varying degrees, the participants had been cultivated to ascend the academic ladder. They acknowledged detours and consistently found alternate routes to barriers. Their stories bring hope and success to a body of literature that paints a broad picture of failure among a growing minority population.

The following chapter discusses the study's findings. It begins with brief review of the questions this study sought to answer as well as the practical and theoretical considerations that shaped my analysis of the problem. Findings are presented next. The chapter concludes by drawing implications for practice and research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Background and Purpose

Findings from the Institute for Language and Educational Policy (2009) have indicated that two-thirds of the nation's English Language Learners in grades k–12 are second-generation immigrants and 75% of them come from Spanish-speaking homes. As a group, Latinos are among the country's most undereducated population, and they remain locked in a cycle of poverty and underachievement (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Educational reform measures centered on increasing test scores have resulted in instructional programming that is detrimental to their learning (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Thus, Latinos remain underserved in a k–12 system that fails to adequately prepare them for postsecondary education (Bunch, 2008; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Hagedorn & Lester, 2006). Underprepared to succeed, college-level literacy demands represent a major obstacle for these students (Bunch, 2009). In California, one-third of Latinos begin their postsecondary education at community colleges, yet only 3.4 % transfer to four-year public institutions (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). Although statistics suggest an increase in their college enrollment, their retention, transfer, and completion rates remain problematically low (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Sengupta & Jensen, 2006). Latinos are the largest language minority population in the U.S. (Goldenberg, 2010) and are often viewed as a monolithic group. Though bound by a common

language, they are characterized by racial, socioeconomic, and generational differences that impact their learning (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Their educational attainment weighs heavily on their life chances, and their academic advancement will require that educators acknowledge their unique cultural and linguistic needs.

The topic of my study stemmed from larger issues of equity and diversity, and focused on language and persistence. It examined the educational trajectories of second-generation Latino language minority community college students educated in our k–12 public school system who placed below college-level English. By design, the subjects recruited for the study represented the characteristics most common among minority students in our California public schools. Thus, second-generation students raised in Spanish-speaking homes were my target population. The purpose of the study was to explore individual, social, and institutional factors that shaped their persistence and prepared them for transfer. Using qualitative methodology, three bodies of literature informed the direction of my study: language theory, cultural-ecological theory, and social capital theory. A preliminary survey was used to recruit students who met the study's participation criteria. Nine subjects were selected for the study and were interviewed individually using a semistructured protocol designed by the principal examiner. Student narratives were coded and analyzed for themes.

This final chapter begins by reviewing key theoretical principles that shaped the direction of the study and by answering the research questions. Findings are presented next. The chapter concludes with implications for practice and research.

Research Questions

Language Theory and Politics

Both an internal and social process, language is a distinct cognitive function separate from learning (Collins, 1988; Lerner, 1992; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). As a social construct, language is governed by politics and power and develops within a community of speakers (Crawford, 2004; Collins, 1988). My first research question examined both aspects of language and their impact on student learning. Due to current educational reform efforts, language programming for English Language Learners often involves structured English immersion, or quick exit programs (Crawford, 2004; Wiley& Lukes, 1996). To capture the impact of language policy on learning, instruction in English was a requirement for participating in the study. Most of the participants were instructed exclusively in English, and three had participated in quick exit programs.

Using the frameworks of Chomsky (Crawford, 2004), Krashen (1995), and Cummins (1984, 2000), I explored the individual progression of developing a first language, and becoming literate in a second. The work of Crawford (2004) and others was used to explore the social realm of language. Together, they have explained the prevailing English-Only, Standard English, and language as a problem ideologies that shape language policy in our country (Crawford 2004; Cummins, 2006; Wiley and Lukes, 1996). Gandara and Rumberger (2009) completed this discussion by explaining how language policy shapes opportunities for learning. In order to succeed academically, language minorities must develop academic language fluency in English commensurate with their monolingual peers (Valdes, 1998). Thus, I felt it necessary to explore how

second-generation Latino language minorities managed linguistic discontinuities between their home and school environments. The first question asked: How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English, and what bearing does this have on their academic advancement?

Overall, participants described the process of learning English as fast and expedient. The participants confirmed that they spoke Spanish at home and learned English at school. Several of the students described early literacy experiences and school success. Some of the participants found learning content and language simultaneously a challenge, but most made little distinction between English language fluency and academic achievement. Although varying levels of language loss in Spanish was also noted, the participants viewed learning English as an additive process. The participants reported being fluent in English, or being able to access grade-level content, within a year of English instruction. Generally, they favored their instructional programming and found it effective.

An English-Only ethos present in our American public schools defined the social context of learning English. The participants described language ideology that echoed across settings and stressed English fluency. English fluency was embedded in their academic orientation and cultivated by family and school staff, who endorsed English as the language of prosperity. Consistent with linguistic folk theory, schools fostered the belief that English fluency could and should be developed quickly and that language is acquired through individual effort. Spanish was perceived as a cultural marker to be

preserved within the home and community. Bilingualism was valued by family and school agents, but viewed as an individual endeavor.

It is easy to conclude that the participants' school orientation and their additive perspective of language served them academically. To a large extent, the participants represent the outliers in statistics typically associated with Latino students. They had advanced through high school curriculum, adopted mainstream values of success, and were making steady progress toward transfer. From an access and retention point of view, the participants had profited from their individual circumstances and educational experiences. Instructional programming, peer networks, and family support had shaped their perspectives on persistence and worked in their favor. Although the participants' individual accounts illustrated a positive response to the process and context of learning English, it is difficult to ascertain what long-term language or group outcomes might be associated with their advancement.

Cultural-Ecological Theory

Cultural identity is characterized by beliefs that govern behavior and shape how we see the world (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Language is part of an individual's cultural identity and defines the space we inhabit. My second research question explored group factors related to language and the impact they had on persistence. Because Latinos represent a diverse group, my study focused specifically on the unique characteristics of second-generation Latinos. Ogbu (1987) has asserted that educational variability among minority students rests on a group's history, mode of incorporation, and how they relate to the dominant culture. He devised a minority typology that explains patterns of school

success and failure based on a group's social status. Ogbu's (1987) classification system distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary characteristics. Using Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, I examined the participants' folk theory of success, status frame of reference, and collective identity and explored how these features influence school achievement. My second research question asked: How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How does their cultural identity conform to Ogbu's minority typology?

The data has suggested that the participants did not readily associate themselves with a collective identity of non-native English speakers. As accomplished students, early English fluency was embedded in a strong learner identity. During the interviews, the participants more readily identified their own language skills with native fluency. The participants valued bilingualism. They viewed Spanish as a cultural marker and recognized English as a vehicle for mobility. Several participants had parents who had become fluent in English and all had family who endorsed English fluency as a valuable asset. Overall, their English competency supported a student identity that aligned with the dominant culture and fortified their status within a minority hierarchy.

As second-generation minorities, the participants represented a hybrid form of cultural adaptation characterized by voluntary and involuntary features. Their status frame of reference involved first-generation immigrants, second-generation peers, and members of the dominant group. In contrast to involuntary minorities, they did not perceive education as subtractive. Their academic orientation was framed by their parents' immigrant perspective, but also by the experiences of underachieving or socially

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stagnant peers who likely fit Ogbu's involuntary minority classification. The participants adopted a voluntary minority folk theory of success. They viewed obstacles as temporary and believed in merit and hard work. In contrast to involuntary minorities, they displayed no signs of an oppositional identity.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital is often linked to educational outcomes (Dika & Singh, 2002) and is defined as an intangible form of currency that manifests through relationships and provides access to desired resources (Coleman, 1988). Relevant to the study of diversity, current research has used social capital theory to draw attention to issues of access and equity (Dika & Singh, 2002). Stanton-Salazar (1997) has extended social capital theory to explore institutional support and its impact on low-status minority youth. Stanton-Salazar (1997) has asserted that institutional networks favoring the dominant culture are characteristically different for minorities. Furthermore, linguistic discontinuities between the home and school environment make it difficult for minorities to engage high-status adults and to decode the system of power within a school. Conflicted by institutionalized dependency and uneven power relationships, institutional forces constrain their ability to form social ties that favor mobility. My third research question used Stanton-Salazar's framework to examine persistence. Building on the premise that language is used to bridge relationships and to navigate the politics of support, my last research question asked: What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress toward transfer? How are relationships forged, and who are the agents involved?

The participants' educational histories suggested the presence of protective agents who endorsed a strong academic orientation. Early literacy among a few of the participants was supported through community resources such as libraries and learning centers, employers and/or family members. In high school, honors and AP courses situated the participants in peer networks with students who shared common academic goals and attitudes. Programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), the Regional Occupational Program (ROP), Puente, and school learning academies also involved cohorts of peers and provided access to agents. Thus, through coursework and programs, the participants found themselves immersed in staff and peer networks that supported their academic advancement. Networks at the community college involved peers, professors, and staff working with special programs.

Due to the participants' strong learner identities, the discussion of agents and support often involved probing. They asserted self-sufficiency and conveyed varying levels of awareness about how others had helped them advance academically. Relationships with agents often involved school staff reaching out to the participants—or on their behalves—within the context of instruction or programs. The participants described connecting with teachers who taught a preferred subject or an area of interest. Personal relationships evolved from shared interests or an agent acting beyond their job requirement. On a practical level, institutional agents imparted knowledge, and cultivated skills. Tacitly, they helped build the participants' confidence and inspired them to pursue new interests or ideas. Although teachers were most often identified as agents, support from librarians, counselors, coaches, and clergy was also evident.

Summary of Findings

My study has drawn four salient points relevant to the persistence of second-generation Latino language minority community college students: (a) Woven throughout each of the participants' narratives is a staunch sense of individualism that colored all aspects of their learning; (b) stability, rather than change, was evident in the participants' educational trajectories; their persistence emerged from a strong learner identity that had been cultivated at an early age; (c) individual academic attainment obscures the differences between English fluency and academic achievement; (d) the participants' academic success was supported by a sociocultural context that enabled them to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. These findings frame the remainder of this chapter.

Finding 1

Overlapping data from the different strands of literature derived a common theme among the participants and form the basis of my first finding; individual effort was associated with all aspects of persistence and success. Students often described adept problem-solving skills. They took pride in being self-sufficient and—whether by choice or chance—the onus of academic advancement was perceived as their own. The participants valued individual determination and believed that hard work was rewarded with success. As accomplished students, their educational trajectories reinforced a heroic mindset that de-emphasized the nature of social capital and the ecology of learning. This finding illustrates the individualist tradition described by Stanton-Salazar (1997) that stresses choice and responsibility and supports Wiley and Lukes's (1996) discussion of ideologies that shape learning. Whereas the participants' innate ability and effort cannot

be denied, Stanton-Salazar (1997) has warned that a stoic sense of individualism can undermine help-seeking behavior and be counterproductive to the long-term success of minority youth.

Finding 2

The second finding indicated stability, rather than change, in the participants' educational trajectories; persistence emerged from a strong learner identity cultivated at an early age. Several of the participants described early literacy experiences and/or an interest in reading supported by family and school staff. Early success in school led to access to mainstream, honors line, and/or Advanced Placement coursework in high school. As suggested by social capital theory, language was used as a convertible form of currency that bestowed access to resources (Bourdieu, 1986). The role of institutional support described by Stanton-Salazar (1997) was evident in participants' school networks. From the participants' perspective, relationships with high-status adults appeared to evolve organically and were typically accessed through programs and instruction. They perceived themselves as different from other students and felt that agents did as well. Agents imparted knowledge and skills and helped them to decode the system of power within the school. For many of the participants, attending a community college was an alternative option for higher education. Parental values echoed the school's and encouraged their advancement.

Finding 3

The third finding suggested that individual academic attainment obscures the differences between English fluency and academic achievement. The participants'

perspectives on language and literacy counter language frameworks proposed by Krashen (1995) and Cummins (1984), which emphasize time and meaning over immersion or quick exit programs. The participants described learning English quickly and associated early English fluency with academic advancement. English competence afforded them access to mainstream, honors, and AP coursework and prepared them for postsecondary education. Spanish was viewed as a cultural marker and English as the language of prosperity. Dialogue pertaining to language often led to the topic of accented English and language varieties. Within this context, the participants subtly drew attention to a language hierarchy that denoted privilege to native-like fluency, such as their own. This distinction drew support and recognition from others and leveled their status with agents. From Bourdieu's perspective, this finding explains the power and politics of language stratification (McDonough & Nuñez, 2007). Lost is a critical awareness of group implications of language and learning, common among language minority students. Consistent with the findings of Crawford (2004) and Wiley and Lukes (1996), this perspective absolves the school system of linguistic reciprocity, reinforces the status quo, and supports ethnocentric ideologies that associate early English fluency with advancement and privilege, and limited English fluency with underachievement (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Consequently, issues of equity and access that undergird social change remain misrepresented by this surface understanding of language.

Finding 4

Stanton-Salazar (1997), Ogbu (1987), and Cummins (2006) have stressed the relationship between a bicultural identity and positive educational outcomes among

minority youth. The last finding confirms that the participants' academic success was supported by a sociocultural context that enabled them to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. Consistent with Ogbu's (1992) findings on minority status and school success, most of the participants reported a dual frame of reference that was neutral rather than subtractive. They conveyed pride in their parents' cultural background and readily identified with American mainstream culture. Bilingualism was valued, yet viewed as an individual endeavor. Education was not perceived as a threat to their identity, but rather as a part of it. The participants viewed their English fluency and academic competence as important cultural markers that brought distinction. In contrast to involuntary minorities in Ogbu's (1987) typology, the participants disidentified with a collective identity of underachieving minority peers. They embraced citizenship and conveyed no evidence of an oppositional identity. Overall, cultural boundaries appeared permeable and not oppressive.

Also critical to the participants' academic advancement were school and community forces that supported the participants' school orientation. As Mickelson (1990) found in her study of Black high school students, the participants' academic attitudes were shaped by the concrete experiences of their parents and community members. The participants' immigrant parents modeled hard work, which was compensated with social mobility and/or financial rewards. Their instructional context situated them among peers who shared their academic orientation and programs that drew the support of agents. The participants believed that they had equal access to education and to the rewards that it brings. They viewed the opportunity structure as fair and

associated their generational differences with advantage and privilege. This finding illustrated the positive impact of institutional support on educational outcomes described by Stanton-Salazar (1997). It also speaks to Matute-Bianchi's (1986) findings on the role of community forces in the academic attitudes of minority youth.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to understand persistence through the experiences of second-generation Latino community college students. It drew participants who represented select characteristics relevant to the focus of the study. In examining a study's findings, a researcher must acknowledge design constraints that should be considered in its analysis. Although the participants were selected randomly, the findings reflect the experiences of students who volunteered to participate. This self-imposed limitation may have drawn a group of participants who do not represent the typical community college student. The students' socioeconomic status was not a focus of the study, yet this information at times emerged spontaneously in our discussions. Because some participants volunteered this contextual background and others did not, I did not use it as part of my analysis.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study draw implications for practice relevant to k–12 and community college educators and stakeholders involved in educational programming and design. The first implication focuses on institutional support; the second relates to models of success. Combined, they reinforce an additive perspective of learning that supports positive educational and social outcomes.

Relevant to institutional support, the participants described agents reaching out to them or acting on their behalf. Whereas they embraced these relationships and, indeed, benefited from them, the participants' sense of individualism appeared to preclude them from seeking the help of others. Educators working with minority youth need not confuse reluctance to ask for help with indifference or self-assuredness. Many of the students described teachers as roles models and mentors; others described them as empowering agents. Although the knowledge they imparted was essential, the participants most often noted the personal connections they made with staff. At the community college, many of the participants found comfort in their professors' personal stories of having overcome adversity and their simple advice on college life. As evident in the study's findings, the social context of learning played a key role in their advancement.

Mickelson (1990) and Matute-Bianchi (1986) have asserted that real-life experiences have a positive influence on the value that students place on education. Many of the participants had parents who modeled the American dream and cultivated their commitment to learning. Although the job opportunity structure makes this scenario inaccessible to all students, stakeholders involved in educational design and programming may want to consider introducing concrete models of success through mentor programs, apprenticeships, or fieldwork opportunities. Two of the participants who had participated in the Regional Occupational Program spoke of the occupational knowledge and experiences they gained. Others spoke of work-related information they accessed through different learning academy activities. In several instances, programs and role models had shaped the students' interests in professional opportunities. Real-life

experiences that expose youth to careers and bridge employment with education may help counter abstract ideologies that simply rely on students to trust in the benefits of education.

Implications for Research

Research has confirmed that language and literacy are essential to Latinos' academic advancement and that community colleges play a vital role in preparing Latinos for postsecondary education (Bunch, 2008; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Valdez, 2004). The results of this study point to three areas of research that warrant further exploration.

This study examined persistence among second-generation Latino community colleges students educated in our California k–12 public school system who place below college-level English. My sample drew college-bound, goal-oriented students. Many had placed in honors line and Advanced Placement coursework in high school and had been accepted to four-year universities. Eight of the nine participants placed one level below college-level English. Because these characteristics are generally associated with positive educational outcomes, it is unclear whether the students sampled represent the experience of the average second-generation Latino community college student. Further research that explores the unique features of this growing community college student population may bring clarity to issues of access, retention, and degree completion.

Valdes (2004) has asserted that dialogue surrounding academic language is fragmented *within* professional communities and *between* the scholarly and public spheres. Although language theory guided the direction of this study, the study's findings draw attention to the ambiguous nature of academic language noted by Valdes. The

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participants accepted their language programming without question, and their understanding of language and literacy mirrored public perception. It is unclear what impact this perspective may have had on their literacy skills. Although this point is beyond the scope of this study, it echoes Valdes's (2004) appeal for a uniform definition of academic language. Further research into the conceptualization of academic language would bring consistency to a fragmented body of knowledge and new insights into literacy outcomes.

Also related to the study of academic language is the discontinuity evident in the transition between secondary and postsecondary education. All of the participants in the study had attended California public high schools, were instructed exclusively if not predominantly in English, and had placed below college-level English. Although the participants reported having benefitted from English 52, most did not anticipate this requirement. In 2010, only 14.9% of the Brooke's student population placed into college-level English. Given the large number of students requiring precollegiate coursework and the large Latino population that attends California community colleges, secondary and postsecondary institutions must become instructionally aligned in their literacy demands. Further research focused on developing a unified k–16 literacy perspective may help improve dialogue and collaboration between institutions and lead to increased academic attainment.

Conclusion to Study

The purpose of this study was to understand and acknowledge the success of second-generation Latino language minority community college students who are

working towards transfer. It traced their journey through a path of individual, group, and institutional factors that can often lead to closed doors and missed opportunities. In contrast to their peers, many of the participants had begun their education with early literacy skills that planted a seed of growth and drew recognition and cultivation from others. They found support and stability in their homes, opportunities to learn at school, and continuity in values across settings. A strong sense of individualism emerged from their experiences, and with it, a cloak of confidence that propelled them toward academic advancement. Under these conditions, linguistic diversity did not deter the participants from achieving their goals. Postsecondary education was not a result of short-term planning, but rather a long-anticipated destination.

The study's findings confirm the work of prominent scholars and draw attention to the complexity of language and its impact on educational outcomes. The participants adopted institutionally sanctioned individualism as their explanation for advancement. Although their individual circumstances blurred their critical awareness of language, their English fluency and educational stability led to a strong learner identity. Immersed in a sociocultural network that cultivated and embraced this identity, they found themselves able to bridge their cultural and linguistic worlds.

Implications for practice emphasize the value of trusting relationships and the practical applications of education. Educators are reminded to consider the ideological barriers that prevent students from requesting assistance. Those involved in programming are asked to contemplate the benefits of real-life experiences that tie career opportunities to learning. Recommendations for future research involve looking beyond group

homogeneity, developing a uniform definition of academic language, and undertaking further examination of the critical transition between secondary and postsecondary education. This study concludes with an appeal to educators who work with language minority students to embrace a transformational role and to challenge their students to critically evaluate the ideological perspectives that shape language policy in this country. Equity will be achieved when all minorities have equal access to education and the rewards that it brings.

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APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Name _____Date _____ Age _____

In what course are you currently enrolled? Please circle one.

English 100   **English 101**   **English 102**   **English 103**

1. Were you born in the U.S.?   **YES**   **NO**

2. Were your parents born in another country?   **YES**   **NO**

    If yes, where? _____

3. Did your parents or caregivers speak Spanish to you when you were growing up?

                                                        YES   **NO**

    If you answered no to the first three questions you do not need to complete the remainder of

    this survey. Thank you for your time.

4. What languages do you speak? _____

    What language did you speak first? _____

    What is your dominant language? _____

    What language do you use at home? _____

    What language do you use at school? _____

	Above Average				Below Average
How well do you speak English?	5	4	3	2	1
How well do you speak your other language?	5	4	3	2	1
How well do you read in English?	5	4	3	2	1
How well do you read in your other language?	5	4	3	2	1
How well do you write in English?	5	4	3	2	1
How well do you write in your other language?	5	4	3	2	1

5. Did you attend high school in the Los Angeles Unified School District?   **YES**   **NO**

    If not, what school district did you attend? _____

6. Did you graduate from high school? **YES** **NO**

   If no, do you have a GED? **YES** **NO**

7. Were you ever enrolled in a bilingual program/ did you receive instruction in your primary

   language? **YES** **NO**

8. How much of your K-12 instruction was in English? Please circle one.

   < 1 year   1 - 3 years   4 – 7 years   8- 11 years   > 12years

9. Were you required to take Developmental English or ESL coursework prior to placing into

   English 100? **YES** **NO**

   What course did you place into? _____

10. Are you planning to transfer? **YES** **NO**

    If yes, where? _____

11. Have you passed the required transfer Math course? **YES** **NO**

    Are you enrolled in the required transfer Math course? **YES** **NO**

    When do you plan to take this course? _____

12. When do you plan to transfer?

    Please enter the number of semesters needed or your expected year of transfer.

    _____ Semesters   _____ Year

13. Would you be interested in participating in a study about college literacy and school

    achievement? **YES** **NO**

    If yes, please provide your contact information.

    Name _____

    Home # (   ) _____ Cell # (   ) _____

    Email _____

    What is the best way to contact you?   Home Phone   Cell Phone   Email

    Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Question 1: How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English and what bearing does this have on their academic trajectories?

1. Describe how you learned to speak English?
2. Have teachers and staff encouraged you to use and develop your language skills in Spanish? Why do you think this is so?
3. How comfortable/confident do you feel about your ability to:
   - understand what you read in textbooks and explain it in your own words?
   - express yourself in writing?
   - express your thoughts and opinions in class?
   - How long has it taken you to feel comfortable with reading and writing in English?
4. Do you think that your education has differed from your White monolingual peers who enter school speaking English? How so? (Valdes, 2001)
5. How did you get to the community college?
   - What did you intend to do after high school?
6. Did you feel prepared for college level English?
   - What or who helped, and how?
   - Do you feel that all students are equally prepared to succeed in college?
7. Compare the expectations of your high school English class with the demands/expectations of your community college English 100 class?
8. How do you study or prepare for your classes now?
   - What study habits have been most useful to you in improving your reading and writing skills?
   - Where or how did you learn these strategies?
9. Has being a non-native English speaker been a problem for you? Has it changed the kinds of opportunities you've had? (Valdes, 2001)
10. Has speaking Spanish ever been an advantage to you at the community college/work/high school?
11. What grade did you receive in English 52, 100?
    - What were your grades like in high school?
12. Some students place directly into English 100, others have to take courses before getting into English 100. Why do you think you placed into English 52?

13. What advice would you give to students who do not place into English 100 and would like to attend a four-year university?

Research Question 2: How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority community college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology?

14. Describe the student population at the community college you attend?
15. Do you feel part of the community college campus?
16. What does it mean to be a non-native speaker of English on your campus?
    - How does that feel?
    - How is this different than being a White, monolingual English speaker?
17. Explain how you feel about participating in academic discussions or asking and answering questions in your community college classes?
18. What does it mean to you to be successful and where did these ideas come from?
19. What motivated you to get through English 52/English 100 prerequisite courses?
20. Why was/is it important for you to pass English 100? How will/did you accomplish this?
21. How do you think community college instructors feel about teaching students who have difficulties with reading and writing?
    - Do they expect them to succeed?
22. Do you trust that schools are doing everything they can to support students like yourself (non-native English speakers), achieve the same school success as their monolingual peers?
23. What is the one thing you would like for English 100 instructors to know about teaching students like yourself, who are non-native English speakers, and placed below English 100?

Research Question 3: What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress towards transfer? How are relationships forged and who are the agents involved?

24. As a non-native speaker of English, what kind of help have you needed at the community college setting that is different from your monolingual peers?
25. How familiar are you with how the community college works and what you need to do to transfer?
    - How have you come by this information?
26. Have you encountered school policies or practices that make it difficult for you to meet your transfer requirements?
27. Has being a non-native speaker of English ever made you reluctant to ask for help?

- What do you do when you need help?
- Who do you go to?

28. What types of services have you used at the community college and why?
    - What services or programs did you use in high school?
29. Do you have role models or mentors (school/home)?
    - What have they taught you?
    - Describe them?
30. Has speaking Spanish been an advantage to you?
31. Who has helped you get through your English 100 prerequisite courses? Describe how they've helped.
32. What advice would you give to community college staff interested in helping students like yourself?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL CORRELATION GRID

Research Question	Theoretical Framework	Interview Items
RQ:1 How do second-generation Latino language minority students describe the process and context of learning English and what bearing does this have on their academic trajectories?	Language Theory Language Ideology, Politics, & Policy: Crawford, 1994, 2004 Wiley & Lukes (1996) Cummins (2006) Valdes (1999, 2004) Gandara & Contreras (2009) Gandara & Rumberger (2009) Language Development: Universal Grammar: (Chomsky, Crawford, 2004) Second Language Acquisition: Krashen (1995) Language & Literacy: Cummins (1986 & 2006)	Items # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, *17, * 24, * 27, *28 *30 & *31
RQ: 2 How does being a non-native English speaker shape the identity of second-generation Latino language minority college students? How do these students conform to Ogbu's typology?	Cultural-Ecological Theory Ogbu's Minority Typology, Status Frame of Reference, Folk Theory of Success, & Collective Identity (1987 & 1992) Minority Academic Orientation and Attitudes Toward School: Mickelson (1990) & Matute-Bianchi (1986)	Items: *4, *6, *9, *10 *12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, & 23
RQ: 3 What social networks support second-generation Latino language minority community college students' progress towards transfer? How are relationships forged and who are the agents involved?	Social Capital Social Capital Framework: McDonough & Nunez (2007) Application of Social Capital Framework in Education: Dika & Singh (2002) Social Capital & Immigrant/Minority Students: Kao (2002) Institutional Support: Stanton- Salazar (1997, 2010)	Items: *1, *2, *4, *5, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, & 32

*Questions overlap between frameworks.