# LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Faculty of Argosy University, Atlanta

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

by

Damaris E. Shealy

August 2010

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**LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL**


**Abstract of Dissertation**


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ABSTRACT

Unknown is the extent to which restrictions imposed on Latino students' first language undermines their ability to learn and how these limitations impact their attrition rate. The purpose of this study was to describe Latino students' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. Five Latino students participated in two In-Depth Phenomenological interviews. Verbatim transcribed interviews from this purposeful sample were analyzed to present the essence of their experiences. Findings revealed students struggled with the language[s]; experienced difficulty with the acquisition process; and their native language was marginalized. Nevertheless, participants were optimistic about their future. Several recommendations were made for professionals and for further research examining linguistic complexities experienced by Latino students in school.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*God the creator of all things receives my praise, and when it comes to gratitude, for me, with him is where it begins.*

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The study's participants are acknowledged for their full disclosure and their willingness to share their lived experiences of the phenomenon with honesty. Without them, this study would not have been possible. Their tenacity and optimism is admired.

# DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my three children, Emmanuel, Anika, and Malaika, who I love with all of my heart. They are my greatest accomplishment. Nothing I have done or will do the can compare to the joy of being a mother to the three of you. You have become remarkably caring individuals. I love the way you love and take care of each other, which as you know, is very important to me. You have been my source of inspiration in many ways and I am proud of you individually and collectively.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

*"Phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some-"thing" what is—and without which it could not be what it is." (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10).*

## Introduction

Children cannot grow up to become effective citizens if their education cuts them off from the language of their primary speech community (Houvouras, 2001). Considering the ways in which language is shaped by its environment, which includes not only cognitive functioning, but also social status in which speech acts are sanctioned, a full evaluation of the linguistic constraints imposed on children from diverse linguistic background is timely (Enfield, 2009). If educators are truly committed to establishing resources for citizenship, they should critically examine language policies and practices promoting coercive power relations in school (Cummins, 2000).

Undoubtedly, functional English fluency is prerequisite for gaining access to essential resources in America's mainstream society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). In this pluralistic society, however, language is a permeable instrument used to endorse political and cultural oppression as suggested by several other researchers (Bianco, 2007; Cummins & Davison, 2007; Obondo, 2007; San Miguel, 2003; & Tollefson, 2007). Obondo, for example, has termed such undemocratic situations created by the neo-colonial suppressive language usage policies in America, as comparable to that of African nations where linguistic plurality is not promoted.

Bianco (2007) argues that in the U.S. context, persuasive discourse is transmitted in the media, which particularly links English with social and economic benefits, such as nationalism, patriotic citizenship, prosperity, and advancement, in contrast to the ethnic collectiveness, which is associated with language maintenance. According to Bianco, a false "either-or" dichotomy is acknowledged and consent is contrived among the mainstream population for educational and social polices (e.g.. English-only instruction) giving legitimacy to schooling conditions that educates students without literacy in their native language and inadequate literacy levels in English which relegates them to the lower rungs of the socioeconomic stratum.

Tollefson's (2007) question centers on the pedagogical rationale for the exclusive use of the target language (English) versus a bilingual structure, which allows students the use of their native language in the educational process. Tollefson then moves beyond pedagogy to critically examine how language policies and practices are used by ethnolinguistic groups to maintain control of economic hierarchies and systems of privilege. Moreover, ideological orientation in tandem with historical relationships determines the adaption of alternative policies proven to be more effective in teaching subordinated language groups.

Moreover, this undemocratic situation caused by hegemonic policies in the nation's schools may justify what Phillipson (1992) describes as linguicism, "ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (p. 47). Therefore, linguicism is a manifestation of English Linguistic

Imperialism, an unequal relationship between English and other languages having grave consequences in all aspects of life for members of subordinated groups. Phillipson's theory of linguicism embraces the overarching phenomenon which underpins this study. Phillipson (1992) advances his theoretical lens of linguistic imperialism by bringing into focus the interconnectedness of neo-colonial English-only language restriction with the continuing arrangement of inequality between Anglos and Latinos to constitute English linguistic imperialism. To that end, the centrality of language policies and practices, for the purpose of this study, was addressed in order to understand the ramifications of inaccessibility to a language due to the instructional requirement mandated by another, as experienced by the students. Of equal importance to this discourse, is the analysis of the phenomenon of marginalizing students' home language in the educational setting.

Surprisingly, much of the studies addressing the presumed linguistic dominance of Latino students are positivist, whereby educational institutions serve as the focal point of scrutiny. This phenomenological investigation of linguistic oppression and schooling orientation among Latino high school students proposes an interpretive research approach in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the daily schooling experiences of students who are required to defer the use of their first language to acquire a second one instead (Merriam, 2002). Several questions are considered when examining the intersection between language-minority students' perspectives on language policies and practices. Some questions include the following: Is acquiring English as a second language the most viable linguistic instructional policy option? What other alternatives are available? Who benefits and who is disadvantaged by these policies?

Pennycook and others (Phillipson, 1992; San Miguel, 2003; & Tollefson, 2007) reveal how English-only practice established in American schools is a continuance of oppressive patterns of inequality dating back to colonial times. According to Pennycook (2007), colonial language policies were established to ensure moral and political values were adhered to as well as to ensure the governance of large populations was possible. Moreover, Anglocentric rhetoric formed pervasive images of how English as a superior language could impart enormous benefits on its users. Only the social and economic elite acquired the language, and were able to negotiate their independence from the British Empire.

Pennycook (2007) also notes, while analyzing the relationship between the imposition of English-only language teaching practice and students' education and social empowerment in terms of historical development of linguistic pedagogical practices, it is equally or more imperative to consider the ways in which relationships between imperialistic ideologies of oppression and subordination of particular groups continue long beyond the end of formal colonial period into the present. Thus, English commanding great influence from the British Empire, transcended great contextual influence of English teaching policies and practices. Consequently, the church then utilized these policies and practices through English literature to assume the role of disseminator of traditions, values, and authority over the indigenous people to develop morality and conviction in the secular state.

In this study, San Miguel (2003) and others (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Obondo, 2007; Pennycook, 2007; Phillipson, 2007; & Tollefson, 2007) present a compelling historical sketch, which gives a detailed account of how this prevailing stratified class

structure reinforced in educational institutions perpetuating the underachievement and the eventual failure of Latino students. This history reveals an undeniable travesty of epic proportion. Latinos' presence in the United States has always encompassed cultural and linguistic oppression. Thus, when analyzing the deeper implications of language as an element of culture and a medium used or not used for educational purposes, what emerges is an institutionalized imperialistic educational policy and practice.

Hence, the current, anti-bilingual initiatives coupled with English-only language teaching practices are actually surrogates for socially constructed ideologies of cultural intolerance in the form of "Latinophobia," fueled by an undeniable migration influx from Mexico and other Latin American countries (Crawford, 2000; see also Houvouras, 2001; and Schmid, 2003). Noel (2008) proposes America's institutional language policies have been embedded in the public school system since its inception and therefore have historically devalued the Spanish language, thus, devaluing Latino students in the process.

In America, San Miguel (2003) explained how the derivation of language domination began during the Spanish-Mexican era of 1519-1848 when Spain controlled the region known today as the American Southwest. During this time according to San Miguel, indigenous people became the object of subordination as they were required to assimilate by accepting their socially unequal position in the Spanish culture. San Miguel also noted during 1836-1890, when Anglo rule began, the Europeans also exerted their linguistic authority over the region, as education assumed a more important role in the economic and political contexts of the time. Consequently, during this former colonial period, English was established as the sole language of political, economic, and educational authority.

San Miguel (2003) then goes on to give an account of the foundation and progression of Latinos' educational experiences in the United States for five centuries, from the Spanish-Mexican era to the post-colonial era, constituting the time current hegemonic educational policies and practices were entrenched. San Miguel vividly illustrates how consequential this complex interaction between the elite educational institutions have been used to establish a political and economic structure, which promote political and cultural dominance of one group, albeit stealthily promoting the subordination of other groups.

Understanding how social inequality is mediated by educational policies and practices, it is imperative for educators to gain a broader cultural and historical understanding of Latino students' background, what they bring to school in terms of culture, language, and attitudes (Portes, 2005). Considering the unequal status of English and Spanish, unless a concerted effort is made by policy makers and educators to challenge existing language ideologies with regard to status, students of color, particularly Latinos, (the population sample for this study) will continue to face political and social stratification challenges, which are also manifested in the wider society (Cummins & Davison, 2007).

Bianco (2007) succinctly encapsulates "the official English movement" in the United States by critically examining the origins, aims, ideologies, and politics of the movement. Bianco analyzes the concern, even paranoia, seizing a significant sector of the U.S. population about the permanence and status of English resulting from increasing immigration, mainly from Spanish speaking countries, and the limited acknowledgment of Spanish in some institutional contexts. Bianco submits that English has always subjugated and restricted public life of Latinos here in the U.S. Nonetheless, Bianco notes that without

any coherent origin or apparent threat, the U.S. Congress has been appealed to on many instances to affirm English as the official language of the United States.

## Problem Background

It is unknown to what extent restricting Latino students' use of their heritage language undermines their ability to learn or how this limitation impacts their decision to leave school early. Studies describing students' perspective of linguistic oppression manifested through the experiences of acquiring English as a second language while deferring their first language are scarce in the literature. It is unknown what possible structural meaning students assign to the experience of having linguistics restriction imposed on their first language in the academic context. Further unknown is what societal ramifications are created when students' heritage language usage is restricted. Latino students continue to face myriads of obstacles precluding them from reaching academic parity with their counterparts

Nonetheless, this discourse underscores the importance of biliteracy, which is the ability to read and write in two languages, as an empowering tool. Moreover, biliteracy is positively correlated with the academic achievement of English language learners (ELLs). Limited literacy ability in either language has become a major obstacle impeding academic development and achievement of Latino students whose linguistic ability in their first language is becoming fossilized impacting the acquisition of the second language—English. A significant amount of educational literature (Collier & Thomas, 2007; Cummins et al., 2005; Ernst-Slavit, 2003; Ochoa, 2003; & Valenzuela, 1999) reaffirms the development of a

firm literacy foundation in students' first language provides the ideal conditions for the acquisition of a second and even a third language.

Thus far, Hispanic ELL's cultural knowledge and linguistic abilities are not celebrated as important resource needed to enhance their academic engagement. Instead, Latino students' opportunities for literacy engagement are severely decreased through assimilationist pedagogical practices of an English-only curriculum. These practices disregards their cognitive development through firm language restrictions, which prevent them from using their first language (Cummins et al., 2005 see also García, 2001). Moreover, Valenzuela (1999) proposes the reexamination of schools' role in fostering students' low academic performance, suggesting the organization of schools fractures students' cultural and ethnic identities by deemphasizing Latino students' emergent biliteracy.

As suggested by several researchers, (Giambo and Szecsi, 2006; Lewis, 2005; Ogbu, 1992; & Portes, 2005), current school failure rates, which have characterized Latino students is symptomatic in nature—the end result of institutionally pervasive inequality—evident through the academic achievement gap in our nation schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006; NABE, 2004; & Noguera, 2003). Low-income youths, typically Latinos, leave school unprepared for the labor force or college and eventually find themselves in situations imposing dependency and vulnerability (Ochoa, 2003). According to the US Justice Department (2006), a strong correlation between law-violating behaviors and education or the lack thereof was identified. Dropouts and unemployed students exhibited a greater risk of engaging in the use of drugs, gang activities, drug trafficking, and homicide. Although

18% of juveniles were classified as Hispanic, 95% of Hispanic Juveniles were also classified as white.

In effect, subtractive acculturation attitudes mandate that bilingual Spanish speakers "leave their language…at the schoolhouse door" (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 38). Meanwhile, native-born affluent monolingual Americans invest countless hours and money to acquire a foreign language albeit the percentage with positive results is low (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). The aforementioned discrepancies may appear to be persuasive. However, pedagogical language teaching policies and practices certainly does not justify English-only instructions as the most effective form of instruction for English language acquisition (Tollefson, 2007). While on the other hand, ideological discrepancies directly challenge the way in which language mediates and reinforces established patterns of power relations (Cummins & Davison, 2007).

Political pressure demanding the establishment of English as the official language of our nation continues to increase while the world economy demands multicultural and multilingual skill sets. Educational institutions hinder biliteracy development of bilingual youths through the enforcement of English-only pedagogical practices being enforced in schools. Failing to nurture "English Plus" educational policies and practices, in effect diminishes students' ability to invest in their linguistic identities while isolating and fracturing their link to rest of the world (Ochoa, 2003).

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe Latino students' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. In this study, Latino students have reconstructed a structural invariant meaning, which they have ascribed to the task of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context (Moustakas, 1994). Using in-depth, phenomenological interviews allowed a purposeful sample an opportunity to articulate their description of the phenomenon in question. Descriptive interpretation of a phenomenon will express to the reader "–how participants perceived it, described it, felt about it, judged it, remembered it, made sense of it, and talked about it with others" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Therefore, participants' description of the phenomenon was elicited from their own subjective experiences of acquiring English as a second language, rather than through the researcher's conceptual lens. Adopting this rich descriptive approach of in-depth phenomenological interviewing, have allowed the phenomenon to speak for itself. This descriptive approach provided a method for discovering the meaning other people have ascribed to a phenomenon through their lived experiences (Seidman, 2006). This study attempted to address the scarcity of students' perspective in the literature as well as provide all stakeholders with a deep understanding of the multidimensional complexities of the ways in which languages are mediated in the educational context.

## Theoretical Framework

Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguicism and conceptual framework of English linguistic imperialism bring to the foreground colonial, historical, political, and scholarly

origins of inherited English language pedagogy currently practiced in many schools, which

is fashioned from the broader theory of imperialism as it relates to exploitation. This theory

brings to bear the realities and perpetual structures of inequality—"of gender, nationality,

race, class, income, and language" (p. 46). Thus, English linguistic imperialism is defined by

Phillipson as, "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment

and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and

other languages" (p. 47).  In this context, structural is related to material properties such as,

institutions and financial allocations and cultural is related to immaterial or ideological

properties such as language attitudes, or pedagogical principles. Phillipson then goes on to

explain  how English linguistic imperialism is a form or sub-type of linguicism, which he

defines as "ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and

reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial)

between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (p. 47).

Therefore, as suggested by Phillipson (1992), to understand the interconnectedness

of English linguistic imperialism and inequality in the political and economic spheres

requires reaching further than the initial individual indignation of being classified as

imperialists in order to comprehend the way in which one language can dominate other

languages through professionalism and anglocentricity in tandem with English language

teaching which operates as the mechanism allocating and effectuating unequal resource and

power.  Furthermore, linguicism comprises depiction of the dominant language, to which

attractive characteristics are endorsed, for function of inclusion, and the reverse for

subjugated languages, for rationalizing exclusion.

In order to illustrate the relationship between the economy and politics of English, linguistic imperialism and educational language planning in terms of classroom pedagogy, Phillipson (1992) identifies the emergence of the power structure through linguicism where the students' first language or mother tongue of linguistically diverse children whose background are from immigrant or indigenous groups are not given importance, yielding negative cognitive outcomes. Teachers also perpetuate linguicism by stigmatizing the dialect spoken locally, which is a form of structural power imbalance such as racism, which is manifested both overtly and covertly, linguicism may be perpetuated in a conscious or unconscious manner.

Linguicism, as a theoretical framework inevitably supports Portes (2005) conceptualization of Students Placed At-Risk (SPARs) and Group Based Inequality (GBI), which gives an empirical account of social inequality aided through language. Furthermore, the theoretical lens of linguicism supports a plethora of educational literature (Collier & Thomas, 2007; Cummins et al., 2005; Ernst-Slavit, 2003; Ochoa, 2003; & Valenzuela, 1999) reaffirming the development of a firm literacy foundation in students' first language. Linguicism theory is also useful to support the analysis of students' perception concerning their lived experiences in schools that marginalizes their language. Valenzuela (1999) very poignantly refers to this schooling process as subtractive schooling.

## Research Questions

These guiding research questions fleshed out interpretations richly layered in textural meaning, which aided the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, the overarching question, which guided this study, asked:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language as described by Latino students?

The following is a procedural sub-question that seeks to describe the context and invariant or composite structural meaning of participants' experiences. The sub-question asked the following:

SRQ1: What conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students' understanding of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language?

Data gathered from these research questions were organized and presented according to phenomenological procedures adopted from Moustakas (1994) and Seidman's (2006) in-depth interviewing process of data analysis. The data was then coded to facilitate precise comparison between patterns and themes.

## Assumptions

One of the major assumptions of this study was that participants had ascribed a meaning to acquiring English as a second language within the context of their schooling experiences and as study participants; they were able to articulate how this meaning affected their academic attainment and or their decision to leave school early. Albeit, participants

may have had reservations, as a result of linguistic subjugation, they may have internalized negative feelings about the target language and culture impeding acculturation and the language acquisition process. Another assumption, relative to this discourse was the level of honesty brought to the study by participants. Since they were voluntarily articulating their own experiences of the phenomenon, it was assumed that they were honest with the scope and quality of the answers which they provided during the interviews. To that end, participants were apprised on the voluntary nature of the study as described in the letter to participants (see Appendices H/I).

## Limitations and Delimitations

This study has several limitations, which are stated as follows:

1. This study is limited to a phenomenological structure that seeks to understand the essence of the participants' interpretation of the phenomenon.

2. This study is limited to the subjective interpretations of participants' lived experiences.

3. This study is limited by the method of data collection of in-depth phenomenological interviews.

4. The researcher bracketed or set aside preconceived ideas in order to allow the intrinsic meaning of the phenomenon to form (Merriam, 2002).

5. This study is limited in terms of transferability in that findings from this cannot be generalized to a larger population.

6. The sample size could be considered a limitation.

7. The bias of examining the restriction of one language [Spanish] in this linguistic plural state is considered a limitation.

The following delimitations were identified in this study:

1. The research did not place any gender specification on the study.

2. The study is delimited by the population sample, which was chosen solely by the researcher.

3. The study is delimited to a purposeful selection of participants from one school within a Georgia metropolitan school district, which is a small purposeful selected sample of Latino high school students, not representative of all Latino high school students.

4. In the future, other researchers attempting to replicate this study should take into consideration the delimitation in the sense that, if the population sample changes, the findings may yield different results.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined to facilitate the understanding of specific concepts within the context of this study:

*Bilingual*: Speaking two languages (Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, 2006).

*Code Switching*: This term refers to the practice of parties in conversation to signal alteration in context by using a different grammatical structure or subsystems, or codes (Nilep, 2006).

*Educational Contexts*: Refers to where the phenomenon is situated or the setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Cummins and Davison, 2007).

*English Linguistic Imperialism*: Phillipson (1992) working definition of English linguistic imperialism is "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47).

*English Language Learners* (ELL): A term widely used level to refer to students who are in the process of acquiring English in schools where English is the primarily language of instruction (Ariza et al., 2006).

*Hispanics*: People of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South and Central America, or other Spanish culture or origin without racial consideration (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)

*Ideology*: The encapsulation of the implied and typically unconscious beliefs about language and language behaviors, which primarily establish how human beings presume events (Cummins and Davison, 2007).

*Language-Minority*: Refers to individuals who live in homes where a language other than the national language is spoken (for the purpose of this study, the national language is English), (Ariza et al., 2006).

*Latinos*: A label used to define foreign-born individuals from varying Latin American countries who are richly diverse in color, in class, and in cultural origins (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

*Limited English Proficiency* (LEP): LEP is a label used to classify students whose native language is not English and who are acquiring English as a second language (Ariza et al., 2006).

*Linguicism*: Phillipson (1992) explains that as opposed to other '-isms' such as racism and sexism language is used to justify, bring about, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources  between dominant and subordinate groups.

*Linguistic Discrimination*: Discrimination on native language, usually in the language policy especially in education of a state that has one or several linguistic minorities (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995).

**Significance of the Study**

Latinos account for a significant growing proportion of the United States population, growing much faster than any other racial or ethnic group. Between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population grew by 58% (US Census, 2000). Despite the increased numbers, Latino students' rate of school failure and persistent underachievement has remained consistently

higher than other racial and ethnic groups since the mid 1800s (San Miguel, 2003), with the exception of Native Americans. Given the persistent underachievement of Latino students in U.S. schools, connecting language development and literacy acquisition is a legitimate concern.

Analyzing measurable factors that mediate the sociocultural and sociolinguistic context of schooling for this student group will yield significant contributions to the field of education in understanding racial/ethnic inequalities mediated through schools' linguistic environment (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006 and Xu, 1999). Central to this acculturative discussion are issues of language attitudes, language maintenance, and bilingualism (Berry et al., 2002). A recent study conducted by Cummins et al. (2005), argues how language policies and practices in American schools are failing to meet the needs of linguistically diverse Latino students by discounting the importance of these students' background and prior knowledge, which is the origin for the entire experience that has formed the learner's identity and cognitive functioning. On one hand, they are not allowed to speak their heritage language (which in most cases is the only language they have access to) while on the other hand, they are unable to speak English. In addition, unlike their counterparts, Latinos must learn content information as the language is acquired.

Accordingly, Valenzuela (1999) purports how the routine flow of school life systematically derogates Latino students' cultural identity by denying them the use of their language. While such ethnocentric language policies legitimate the absent of heritage language in the schools, affluent Anglos learning foreign languages is encouraged and promoted as an empowerment skill set. For Latinos, nonetheless, English-only language

practices in school frames bilingualism as a sociocultural deficit and Spanish is seen as an encroaching cohesion-threatening language (Bianco, 2007) instead of a rich sociocultural resource, which should be seen as a valued capital asset (Banks, 2001; Cummins et al., 2005; and Houvouras, 2001).

In light of these facts, several researchers (Bianco, 2007 see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2006) have observed a problem-oriented educational structure, replete with identified difficulties experienced by particular groups. These problems include poor academic achievement, language learning difficulties, and a persistent high dropout rate. Correspondingly, other researchers (Lewis, 2005; Noguera, 2003; Ogbu, 2003; Portes, 2005; and Xu, 1999) suggest the reason why children from specific minority groups experience learning and performance difficulty is solely rooted in the cultural and linguistic differences commonly found in schools.

This study attempts to contribute to the plethora of information regarding language policies and practices within the American educational context by shedding light on the dominant global position occupied by English since colonial times. Phillipson's (1992) theoretical framework of linguistic imperialism manifested through linguicism will serve educational policy makers, educational administrators, educators, teachers, parents, and students with a timely and unique orientation to the consequences of politically motivated policies and practices coupled with flawed assumptions about the ecological nature of this linguistic phenomenon evident in schools and the broader society, which only serves to promulgate social divisiveness and stratification.

For this reason, it is imperative for all stakeholders in the American educational context to understand how consequential the implications of existing neo-colonial politics of English linguistic imperialism contribute to the formation of obstacles to educate and employ linguistically oppressed student who are not reaching required English language proficiency. While researchers and the 2000 US Census posit that Spanish speakers transfer to English at higher rates than past immigrant groups and among Spanish speakers, Spanish monolingualism is associated with poor academic achievement and low socioeconomic status. Thus, the widely held belief that English is declining and therefore requires legal bolster begs for scholarly attention.

**Overview of the Study**

Chapter one provides background scholarship that revived forgotten historical origins of colonial linguistic practices inherited and effectuated by established neo-colonial power ideologies of English-only language usage in schools, which reveals continued parallels between colonial times illustrating how prevailing ethnolinguistic groups preserve their system of privilege.

Chapter two provides an exhaustive review of the literature of educational inequality analyzing Latino students' experiences in schools incorporating five centuries of history by presenting institutionalized ethnolinguistic paradigms deeply embedded in the U. S., evident in an educational structure and political establishment that produces, sustains, and supports inequality. The study's extensive literature bolsters the study's timely relevance by expounding on current educational research and theoretical framework which clearly

articulates thought provoking insight strengthening the argument for alternative policies which are responsive to the interests of subordinated language minority students.

Chapter three details the description of the methodology utilized to conduct this study by describing the specific design employed, research procedures used, and system of analysis utilized to achieve the purpose of the study during implementation. The researcher's position is presented and an identification of participants is presented in a clear definitive way to safeguard their identity and protect participants in the presentation of the research findings as required by the Institutional Review Board.

Chapter four restates of the purpose of the study, research questions and emerging themes, presentation of the research findings, the text of the investigation itself, and a summary. Chapter five provides a phenomenological interpretation of the text achieved by readdressing the research questions, which began in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents the research finding and makes a connection to the findings of the study from those reviewed in Chapter Two. Implications to the field and need for further researcher were presented, concluding with the researcher's recommendations, and conclusions.

**CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

*In the ever-shrinking world of the global village there is no way of escape
from the increasing prevalence of bilingualism so that whatever fears get expressed
must be faced squarely and adjusted in terms of the inevitable change in society to
which we must all adapt (Baetens, 2003, p.25).*

**Introduction**

This literature review begins by addressing implications of language as an element of

culture as described in the preceding chapter. Phillipson's (1992) theoretical framework of

linguicism buttresses the review by first examining linguistic policy and practices evident in

contexts of this society manifesting itself through English linguistic imperialism. Pennycook

(2007), Tollefson (2007), and San Miguel (2003) adds to the review by addressing the

historical contexts of linguistic access and social advantages and disadvantages associated

with social stratifications found in schools, which they suggest have been established since

colonial times. In addition, Portes' (2005) conceptualization of Students Placed At-Risk

(SPARs) and Group Based Inequality (GBI) persuades our social consciousness as we gain a

better understanding of the consequences of social inequality.

Despite a notably sharp increase of Latino student enrollment, resulting from an

undeniable influx of migration from Mexico and other Latin American countries, coupled

with heightened birth rate of Latin American women, (particularly Mexicans), schooling

outcomes among Latinos and their peers is disparate (National Council of La Raza, 2003).

Moreover, new immigrants' destinations have transformed the landscape of many public

school systems, diversifying the demographic composition of America's public schools

(Winders, 2005). This literature review analyzes the intersections of these trends and the implications for educational institutions in terms of students' outcome by amplifying the following:

1. The Demographic Make-up of Latinos in the United States

2. Trends and the Impact of Immigration on Southeastern Regional Landscapes

3. Latinos' Socioeconomic Status Relative to Other Ethnic Groups

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**Theory of Linguicism: Manifested through English Linguistic Imperialism**

This study is supported by Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguicism, which was conceived from Galtung's (1988) version of imperialism theory. Phillipson purports that Galtung's theoretical work offers a thorough integration of the various dimensions of imperialism allowing for linguistic imperialism to be situated as a sub-type of other form of imperialism. Moreover, Galtung's approach highlights the transformation of pre-capitalist societies by colonial and neo-colonial capitalism through political economy, class structure and the dynamics of capital accumulation within a global environment. There are six mutually interlocking types of imperialism as presented in Galtung's theory: economic, political, military, communicative, cultural, and social.

This theory proposes the operation of a division of the world into a dominant centre, which is the powerful western countries and their interests, and the dominated peripheries, which are the underdeveloped countries. Specific to this discourse, is the mention of the

dissemination of centre languages in the periphery and the function of governmental agencies promoting the dominance of periphery languages. Therefore, it is necessary to establish linguistic imperialism as a unique type of imperialism in order to evaluate its role in the sphere of the imperialist configuration as a whole.

As suggested by Phillipson (1992), linguistic imperialism permeates all the forms of imperialism, for two purposes. The first, deals with form (language as the medium of exchanging ideas), the second deals with content. Regarding the first, language is the primary medium of communication (presupposes reciprocal comprehension on the foundation of a shared code), for linking all subjects and disciplines, acting as a precondition for most form of contact other than physical force. Consequently, the centre language becomes the preferred language. During the early phases of imperialism, the elites or settlers consisted of the colonizers in the periphery. In today's neo-colonialist, contexts the elites have become to a great extent indigenous with strong ties to the centre. Mostly educated in centre countries through medium of centre languages and post colonial languages, they paved the way for the centre's cultural and linguistic dissemination of the periphery. On the other hand, linguistic imperialism amalgamates with other forms of imperialism to become a fundamental part of oppression. Phillipson also notes that linguistic imperialism is essential to social imperialism as an interactive transmitter of the norms of a utopian social configuration entrenched in language.

English linguistic imperialism and linguicism are asserted by Phillipson as (1992) not being straightforward invariably functional as they operate in a complex sociopolitical structure which is beleaguered by contradiction. Phillipson also recommends that

linguicism should not be restricted solely to matters of ideology as it is also a structural phenomenon. Here, he offers a working definition denoting the way one language dominates other languages by means of anglocentricity. It is this theoretical lens that underpins this discourse.

Linguicism is Phillipson's central concept, an elaboration of linguistic imperialism, which he theorizes as a different from other '-ism' such as sexism and racism, for it is language instead of gender or race which is the essential criterion in the beliefs and arrangement which perpetuates unequal power and resource distribution. Much like racism, linguicism is manifested on the part of the actor in an unconscious or conscious manner. Moreover, linguicism can operate in tandem with racism, classism, and sexism, although linguicism refers solely to ideologies and arrangements where language is the method for effectuating or maintaining inequality in all spheres of society. This allocation of power, as suggested by Phillipson can be observed in schools where the home language of immigrant and indigenous children from minority backgrounds are marginalized, posing learning difficulties for these students. Phillipson also contends that linguicism is also observed when a teacher stigmatizes the local dialect or language spoken by the aforementioned children. Stemming from an unequal allocation of power, the teacher in question is supported by an imperialistic configuration of exploitation of one culture or collectively by another.

Phillipson (1992) believes linguicism involves representation of the dominant language, to which desirable characteristics are endorsed, for reasons of inclusion, and the opposite for subjugated languages, for intentions of exclusion. Linguicism, according to Phillipson is a set of practices and beliefs which correspond to an effort by those involved in

language matters to give significance to a complex fragment of reality, which itself meshes with political, ideological, and other factors. Although language serves as a communication tool for society, it also acts as a discriminatory tool shielding and perpetuating the existence of a system of privilege. Therefore, the dominant class manages the power of society, which includes political discourse with all benefit and returns. The power class decides trends in law, policies, life styles, media, marketing, economic, educational curricula, and health care. Linguicism acquires a concentrated structure of dominance when ideas or immaterial resources are converted into institutions and organizations or material resources whereby English becomes the sole medium of communication and instruction at the expense of other languages.

Obondo (2007) concurs with Phillipson by explaining multicultural and multilingual African nations. According to Obondo, the phenomenon of linguicism is manifested through the imposition of monolingual English-only language restrictions intersecting with the broader societal power structure. Whereby, these experiences illustrates the operation of linguicism, a complex dissemination of dominance carries out through racist premises, which presupposes that English is the language of choice to provide educational success and social advancement. Linguicism, according to Obondo, operates in such a way that those who are excluded from access are prevented from appreciating and realizing the full potentialities of the indigenous languages.

**Theoretically Framing Inequality: Analyzing Social Segmentation of Schooling**

One way to investigate this achievement gap is through the lens of Porte's (2005) theory of group-based inequalities (GBI), which is predictive of success for Students Placed At-Risks (SPARs). According to Portes, the term at-risk, has become synonymous with cultural background and ethnicity of the nation's diverse students population and used by veteran educators to associated the academic achievement gap and students' underachievement to lack of parental involvement, dysfunctional home-life, poverty, and cultures which do not support academic achievement without fully addressing the obstacles that impedes educational equity. Additionally, SPARs are misrepresented as having inherent disabilities not subject to societal scrutiny or modification. Such play on words, asserts the term is problematic in that it blames the victim for not having the necessary support for attaining academic and economic parity with their peers.

Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2002) suggest segmentation in America's society generates new patterns of immigrants' acculturation into the American culture. Propelled by factors such as ethnicity, color, racism, parental education, and Socioeconomic Status (SES), these factors alter the interaction among ethnic minority groups and the immigrants' experiences in the United States (August & Shanahan, 2006). Portes (2005) concurs that intergenerational poverty determines constraints placed on children upon their conception due to historical established traditions of inequality, which are perpetuated in the educational system and society. Similarly, Ogbu (2003) explains that by contrast, immigrants experiences vary significantly from that of *caste-like* or nonimmigrant groups, since,

immigrant minorities who shares the same ethnicity as caste-like minority groups, entered the United States voluntarily.

Expecting to find better opportunities of education, employment, political participation, and religious freedom, these immigrants who come and stay permanently do so freely. Examples of these voluntary immigrant minorities are immigrants from Africa, India, Japan, Korea, Central and South American, the Caribbean, Mexico, the Middle East, and the Philippines. As White American who emigrated from Europe, they too come in pursuit of the *American Dream.* Conversely, Ogbu (2003) proposes that non-immigrant groups share similar histories of colonization, conquest, or enslavement by white America. Nonimmigrant minorities have different economical, social, cultural, and language barriers. Involuntary minorities are Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians, and Mexican American. Against their will, they have become a permanent part of the United States. Therefore, their reception according to Ogbu is oppressive and exploitative. Expectations for these groups differ significantly in that the expectation of these non-immigrants is not self-improvement or pursuing the American Dream, it is an issue of mere survival.

A two part fundamental concept is offered by Portes (2005), which explains that the origin of the prevailing achievement gaps among SPARs and their counterparts is the theory of Group Based Inequality (GBI). This framework conceptualizes a particular form of inequality affecting groups disadvantaged because of their cultural status, social capital, and heritage. The first form of GBI (GBIa) have endured centuries of oppression and disparagement as cast-like minorities who make-up a large segment of the peripheral

culture. These ethnic low-income groups were and continue to be on the margins of society, impoverished and overrepresented in school failure rates while facing a myriad of risk factors earning them the label of at-risk. Socially, such forms of oppression become an ethical issue when tabulating the cost of crime, neglect, abuse, violence, and prison. Future social conditions and the academic achievement gap are measures of the current social unjust practices. Although these students are as competent as any children are, from birth they are required to negotiate an incompatible historical background of economic and political oppression and its long-term consequences.

The second form of GBI (GBIb) is a classification of inequality social status or SES variations in educational performance coupled with structured economic oppression and its longstanding implications, which expose and hinder perfectly able children from succeeding and squandering our cultural capital. Caste-like cultures have endured centuries of social and economic oppression, which developed incompatibility between the home and the school's environment despite the fact that collectively, these groups believe education is a pivotal process necessary for reaching middle class status (Portes, 2005).

Orfield and Yun (1999) note, children are not only at-risk long before they enter school, their plight, is evidenced by the place they hold as ethnic poor children—on the bottom of the economic stratified structure, and their marginalization in observable on local, state, and national standardized measures as the percentage of underachievement for low-income Latino students has remained consistently low since the early 1970s. By the third grade the national achievement gap in evident for more than 75% of this student group and this academic disparity remains constant throughout middle and high school (García, 2001).

In fact, although the academic achievement gap between K-12 for whites and Latino students has decreased in reading, the long standing gap remains high at 28 points for 13- and 17-year-olds NCES (2003).

The consequences of inequality guarantees that 20 percent of the nation's valuable resources—Hispanic children living in poverty—are becoming the underclass in this society. Low achievers are typically from historically subordinated groups, while high achievers are mostly from the dominant majority in national standardized test outcome distributions. Understanding the fundamental underlined aspects of inequality is necessary in order to understand the causes of segmentation, which continuously places an entire ethnic group at risk for failure. Therefore, perhaps time has come to explain in detail how at-risk factors have become sustainable. Schooling outcome is subject to the political economic structure and is controlled by the dominant group's unwillingness to jeopardize their privilege life style and status for the development of the ethnically oppressed population (Portes, 2005).

**Hispanics/Latinos in the United States: A Historic Demographical Sketch**

The United States Census Bureau (2000) defines Hispanic as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South and Central America, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." Undoubtedly, these varying groups share ancestral ties influenced by Spain, they also share the Spanish language, used as an identifying marker for these groups. Nonetheless, there are remarkable historical, racial, ethnic, migration, and cultural variations amidst and within these groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Lewis, 20003; Portes, 2005; & Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). This section is descriptive of the diversity which is

characteristic of the Hispanic/Latino population in terms of origins, immigration, and acculturation patterns into mainstream America.

While Hispanic typically suggests "Spanish like" or affected by Spanish, the most frequent connotation used (even by governmental agencies) to reference to this group is "Spanish speaking," Latino more refers to the broad orientation of Latin Languages or people, such as Italians, French, and Portuguese (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001). Nonetheless, as noted by Taylor (2002), the Spanish have an elaborate tradition of labeling. During the 1500s, labels were applied to people to determine their status in accordance to where they were born and where their ancestors were born. For instance, holding the highest social status are the peninsulares who were born in Spain followed by Criollos who had pure Spanish linkage through their ancestry but were born in the American colonies. Today, however, after centuries of mixing of the races, Hispanics/Latinos are combined with any of these groups, African, Asian, Indian, and European.

According to U.S. Census Bureau (2000), between 1990 and 2000, other Latin American and Caribbean Spanish-speakers migrated to the United States from Central and South America. Moreover, Mexican migration surpassed that of all other Latin-Americans, accounting for approximately 64% of the total Hispanic population, followed by Puerto Ricans who account for 10% or 3.9 million. Cubans are the third largest group numbering 1.1 million. Of the remaining 2.9 million or 7% are from Central America's El Salvador numbering 1.2 million and South America's Columbia numbers 686,000, the largest group among South American nations.

Latinos account for a sizable heterogeneous group of people, which now account for 14.2 percent or 40.5 million of the U.S. household population according to the U. S. Census Bureau's 2004 American Community Survey (2007). The Census Bureau uses varying approaches for establishing race and ethnicity within this heterogeneous group. Current data indicate that among Hispanics, 58.5% identified with white as race, 35.2 indicated other race, 1.6% noted black or African American, 3.6 said they were of two or more races, and 1.2% indicated Native American and Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. Before, Hernan Cortés, a Spanish explorer, embarked on an expedition into Mexico, there were 25 million indigenous people living in the Western Hemisphere, which included Mexico (Joseph & Henderson, 2003).

Rich in culture, each society had a history of varied ethnicity for many centuries before the Spaniards arrived. Take for instance the Mayans, considered the most highly developed culture of the area. They were recognized as great artists, astronomers, architects, and mathematicians. The Mayans, whose ruins have become tourist attractions. Similarly, the Aztecs were recognized as outstanding urban planners and creators of sophisticated innovative architectural structures. Guarding their knowledge, they developed and maintained elaborate codices, which contained their cosmological, medicinal, astronomical, and historical information. By 1521, with the help of other Indian civilizations, Cortés conquered Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, known at the time as the most modern city in the world. This city was conquered along with territories which spanned the southern sections of South America to most of what we now call the Southwestern United States (Taylor, 2002).

As noted by Banks (2003) a serious shortage of Spanish women was reported in the Spanish colonies, setting the stage for the evolution of a new ethnic group known as mestizos. As a result of this women shortage, Spanish settlers took Indian women as concubines or wives; the offspring from these mixed unions are called mestizos. Thus, the majority of Mexican people are a combination of Spanish and indigenous groups. Moreover, Mexican American biological and cultural heritage includes African strains as well as Spaniards and Indigenous people. African strains in this heritage pool came about because Spanish conquistadores brought approximately 200,000 enslaved Africans (known as Moors) to Mexico. Moors also mixed with Indigenous and Spaniards to become ethnically indistinguishable by 1900. Indigenous influence survived to become the Mexican culture we know today, despite imposition of Spanish customs.

In an attempt to undermine Anglo control of the Mexico's northern territories, Mexico abolished slavery in 1829 and began to enforce customs regulations at the Texas-U.S. border, as well as restricting Anglo immigration into Texas.  Ironically, in1846, given the current immigration concerns—Mexico made serious attempts to impede immigration from the United States into Mexico for fear of losing more land as it did Texas. However, by that time, the Anglos from the North had already established themselves in the region, acquiring the Spanish language and adapting Mexican culture (Banks, 2003).

President Polk offered to purchase California. However, Mexico rejected the offer leading President Polk to justify his aggression as "Manifest Destiny." Subsequently, the United State declared war on Mexico, shortly thereafter the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 1, 1848 one year after the fighting began. Approximately, 100,000

Mexicans living on the Mexican land in question and became expatriates of their own land without actually moving. Subsequently, Mexicans became immigrants on a third of what had been their native land for generations. The Southwestern territory of the U.S. which included the states of New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and California, was annexed from Mexico for only $15 million (Banks, 2003, see also Taylor, 2002).

Mexicans were exploited by their employers; they earned the lowest wages, worked the worst jobs, and their living conditions were inhumane. A saturation of the labor pool forced Mexicans to migrate further north in an attempt to find higher wages. By 1929, approximately 498,900 Mexican immigrants migrated to the United States alarming Anglos in the region. The government's effort to halt immigration from Mexico was challenged by powerful farmers who needed Mexicans' cheap labor. Banks (2003) further explains that when the Great Depression started in 1929, the toll on Mexicans was devastating as many lost their jobs. Without jobs, they needed government assistance but their rights to receive federal assistance were not recognized and state and local governments repatriated Mexican immigrants. Eventually, the U.S. government deported half a million migrant workers and Mexican-American citizens as retaliation for the economic depression, for which they were blamed (Taylor, 2002).

Similarly, in 1845 the United States occupied Puerto Rico. By 1898, it became its possession shortly after receiving autonomy from Spain during the Spanish American War in 1897. Since enactment of the Jones Act in 1917, Puerto Ricans share dual citizenship with mainland U. S. citizens. In 1952, Congress established Puerto Rico as a commonwealth (Free Associated State) of the United States; ambiguous in nature, this status has not

answered the question of statehood or independence (Banks, 2003). Therefore, Puerto

Ricans still live under the ambiguous colonialist rules of a commonwealth territory.

The island of Puerto Rico, like Mexico, became a colony of Spain. After 400 years

of Spanish rule, Puerto Rico's demographic composition changed. As a result, there are

three major racial heritages—Indigenous, African, and Spanish (Taylor, 2002). Yet, Puerto

Ricans prefer to be identified culturally rather than racially. Puerto Ricans' racial attitude are

evident even on mainland U.S. Boriquen, was home of the 40,000 Indigenous Tainos when

Christopher Columbus arrived in 1493. By 1777, the Taino Indigenous population

diminished to near extinction when fewer than 4,000 remained. This near extinction of the

Taino resulted from nearly 400 years of oppressive rule and diseases (to which they had no

immunity), brought to the island by the Spaniard.  Also, many Taino fled the island, and

others died during rebellious skirmishes (Banks, 2003, see also Taylor, 2002).

Another significant Spanish-speaking group in the U.S. is of Cuban origin. Cuba

gained independence from Spain in 1898 at the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish

American war. According to Taylor (2002), during the 1830s many Cubans embarked on the

first politically motivated migration from Cuba to the U.S. in protest of the Spanish colonial

government, settling in New York, New Orleans, Key West, and Tampa. In Ybor City, on

the outskirts of Tampa, Cubans built cigar factories, which employed cigar workers from the

island. As a result, Ybor City became the largest Cuban community in the U.S.

The second migratory wave to the United States, from Cuba followed Fidel Castro's

1959 revolution and the establishment of a communist government. A subsequent exodus of

Cubans followed from the early 1960s through 1980s. According to Banks (2003), Cubans mainly identified as Blacks, Caucasians, Chinese, and Indigenous resulting from a high incidence of interethnic marriages. Although Cubans retain strong cultural ties to their home, they tend to embrace acculturation and assimilation into the mainstream population. English is the first language spoken by many Cuban adults and adolescents who have lived in the U.S. for all or most of their lives.

A summary of emerging scholarship suggests the following of the panethnic one-size-fits-all Hispanic/Latino labels assigned to foreign-born individuals from varying Latin American countries, which are richly diverse in color, in class, and in cultural origins is a misnomer (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). In order to contextualize the devalued experiences of Latinos, as a group subjugated to unequal access of economic resources and political power, it is imperative to consider the historical and contextual debates of culture, ethnicity, and power. Banks, (2003), Portes & Rumbaut (2006) and Taylor (2002), frame Latinos, particularly Mexicans within a long history of inequality and social injustice for centuries that begs for scholarly attention.

**Impact of Immigration on Southeastern Regional Landscapes**

Immigration has become a problematic issue encompassing a variety of legal and political interests while gaining national attention. Galarza's (1964) book in titled *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, profoundly explains the fundamental reason fueling the immigration influx into the United Sates:

Migration is the failure of roots. Displaced men are ecological victims. Between

them and the sustaining earth a wedge has been driven. Eviction by droughts or

dispossession by landlords, the impoverishment of the soil or conquest by arms—

nature and man, separately or together, lay down the choice: move or die. Those who

are able to break away do so, leaving a hostile world behind to face an uncertain one

ahead. (Galarza, 1964, p. 3)

Schmid (2003) explains how the transformations of the traditional rural Protestant

Southern landscapes are now replaced by urban and suburban sceneries of racially and

ethnically diverse people. Former confederate states, typically called *The South* are now the

called *The New South*, due to the dimension of the demographic transformation triggered by

immigration and the urbanization of the region. Schmid explained how The South was once

considered a homogenously different area from the rest of the country in terms of the

historic black-white racial binary. Winders (2005) suggests the increase in Latino migration

to Southern communities has undeniably transformed the region both physically and

metaphorically.

Winders suggest that such transformation have presented an opportunity to conduct a

critical analysis of the region's changing ethnic and racial demographic given the historical

racist practices of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the Civil Rights Movement which have

characterized this region. The current migratory influx and increase in second and third

generation immigrant birth rate, which have transformed this region raises questions about

American nationalist identity. According to Crawford (2000), current immigration trends

have transformed demographic landscapes to create an ideology of exclusion that exhibits itself in a "symbolic clash" between dominant and subordinate cultures.

Other factors driving the anti-immigrant sentiments include "the perceived costs" of newcomers, which has led to an increased cost of public assistance an increase in the unemployment rate, anxieties about cultural change, and the "ascendancy of anti-immigrant organizations" (Schmid, 2003, p. 4). Consequently, anti-immigrant attitudes during this time of heavy immigration is one of great concern, as communities struggling with strained resources complete for job training and career development opportunities. Although there has been a longstanding presence of Latinos and Asians in port-of-entry metropolitan cities such as New York, Florida, Illinois, California, Texas, and New Jersey, these groups have fanned out to new immigrant hot spot such as, the states of North Carolina, Georgia, and Nevada. Schmid (2003), contends that even though, Hispanics have been migrant workers in the Southeastern region for years, they are now establishing themselves in communities of varying sizes and concentrations.

According to the Migration Policy Institute (2007), the increase of children in the Southeast region, with at least one foreign-born parent is astounding. A report from the National Center for Health Statistics, an organization directed by the Centers for Disease Control (2006), issued the first comprehensive report that measured birth and fertility rates among the increasing U.S. Hispanic population. Detailed state-by-state findings from 1990 to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau information, revealed that Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee lead with the highest Hispanic birth rate. Mexican mothers had the highest fertility rate among Hispanic women, followed by Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Georgia and

North Carolina had the highest fertility rate represented by Mexican mothers. The median age of immigrant women is 34, increasing the number of births to the highest it has been.

Georgia has become the state with the fastest growing Hispanic immigrant population in the nation with a growth rate of 16% higher than the national average rate of nine percent, suggesting a 360% increase. States such as Arkansas 171%, North Carolina with 375%, South Carolina with 178%, and Tennessee with 274% are also representing higher than average increase of Hispanic immigrants. Such transformational implication warrants a thorough discussion, especially since mostly language minority students, particularly Latinos, now populate American classrooms (U.S. Census, 2000).

As noted by DeVillar (2005), ethnic diversity will continue to increase and influence as the whites and non-Hispanic group decreases, influencing all aspects of the United States' socio-economic and sociocultural life. In parallel fashion, Peyton et al. (2001) highlights the multidimensional transformation that is changing the appearance of the United States as other changes in the world such as globalization take shape. The face of America is changing through the languages and cultures that immigrants are bringing with them. On the airwaves, Spanish is broadcasted on more than 550 radio stations, the highest paid baseball player is Dominican American, Spanish-name pop singers have topped the American music charts, and Asian Americans filmmakers and actors are now a serious part of the movie industry.

Winders (2005) call for an in-depth examination of practices involving immigrants because of the racial transformation and interaction in these southern communities. When

observing the centrality of race embedded deep within the sociopolitical, socioeconomic life structure across the United States, it will be interesting to see how demographic shift will promote upward mobility for this ethnic group (Cavalcanti & Schleef, 2001). Pointing out that race is not a simple variable, but rather a process of organized coexistence in such a pluralistic society, Winders has managed to localize the dynamic meaning of race within a particular discursive practice and everyday life organized in what he refers to as "heart of Dixie." Demographic, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic transformation of southern communities warrant geographers' response to new questions of race and Latino migration.

Such transformational questions of race, ethnicity, and belonging constitute fundamental aspects of the complex social geography of this southern appendage. Moreover, it is through this cultural formation that geographers have argued the existence of spatial formation, which indicates the mutual conception of racial identities and place pushing. Latino southern migration from a descriptive discussion of new migration patterns to a more analytic discussion of exclusion practices worked against Latinos in southern communities (Winders, 2005, see also Schmid, 2003).

The needfulness of discussing cultural exclusion is a sentiment echoed by Schmid (2003) and Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2002) who examined anti-immigrant attitudes in the South, which they suggest should be opened for discussion. Very little empirical inquiries have been conducted to analyze these attitudes. When comparing the South's anti-immigrant attitude to other regions of the country, there are similarities of negative cultural sentiments and the new foreign born population. This comparison clearly indicates how American attitudes have become hardened toward immigrants. As Latinos attempt to carve

out a better life, nontraditional destinations in Southern cities such as Nashville, Tennessee; Louisville, Kentucky; and Atlanta, Georgia have become viable destination options (Winders, 2005).

Resulting from such increasing diversity, focus on the discussion of inequity has broadened from the contextual register of a black-white binary. A transformation of the South has challenged the dualistic conflict of racial composition by the arrival the Latino immigrant to southern communities (Winders, 2005; & Schmid, 2003). Houvouras (2001), contends this exclusion of Latinos and other people of color from the literature suggest these groups have not experienced inequality, are in fact omitting long histories of oppression. The subordination of Mexicans, which began in 1846 with the annexation of Mexican territories, continues today (Freire, 2009).

To conclude, framing and articulating the debate of immigration requires an informed and constructive discourse into the root causes of this migratory incursion. Migration is in many case is a life or death decisions, a highly stressful act that destabilizes family life in varying ways. As suggested by Winders (2005), while black and white dichotomy was the major racial categorization in the Southern region of the United States, over time, racial definitions gave way to revised immigration policy and the Civil Rights movement. Similarly, new immigration patterns in tandem with power relations that come with them are redefining race relations in this region.

**Latinos' Socioeconomic Status Relative to Other Ethnic Groups**

From its inception, this nation has always been recognized as a nation of immigrants (García, 2001). Economic conditions and demographic transformation of many communities across the nation prompted anxiety about the arrival of immigrants in recent years. New questions about race, ethnicity, and nationalism are emerging in the South, because of such astonishing community transformation (Winders, 2005). According to Schmid, immigrants' transformational influence on Southern regions into urban sprawls and suburban metropolis includes millions of Americans migrating from other parts of the United States. The level of diversity has increase racial and ethnic prejudice, which manifests itself through public policies, resources, and institutional settings. Immigrants, as in past eras, now receive an ambivalent welcome (Schmid, 2003).

Stimulation resulting from a saturated job markets in the West and the East, these migrations encouraged by labor shortages in the agricultural and service sectors in the Midwest and South, immigrants—particularly, Mexicans are now making the South their homestead (Schmid, 2003; & Winders, 2005). According to Portes and Rumbaut (2006), Mexicans once inhabited the land as original settlers. Later as contracted laborers, they moved back and forth across the southwestern U.S. border, which at the time was barely enforced. In fact, Mexicans migration to the North was encouraged by labor recruitment agencies, who offered advanced earnings and other incentives. Therefore, Mexicans were an essential part of the Southwest population. Moreover, they argue that this process of immigration has had a long historical tradition which existed long before Mexicans became immigrants and certainly long before they were designated illegal immigrants.

Portes and Rumbaut (2006) go on to explain how the postindustrial era, has changed the American labor market to a tiered system of professional and technical occupations and a manual labor system. In the upper tier, advanced educational credentials or technical skills are required, and a lower manual labor tier, requiring physical strength and minimal skills. In their study, Portes and Rumbaut, draws upon historical ties between the U.S. and immigrant sending countries. Mexico's proximity helps to define it as the top contributor of U. S.-bound immigrants, providing a ready and available labor market for half of America's labor force. By default, Mexico's geographic proximity to the U.S., has historically served as reinforcement to American economic progress by providing a source of cheap labor. Another factor contributing to the labor migration is the seven-to-one manual labor wage gap between Mexico and the United States. Historically uprooting Latino immigrants has been an established tradition here in the U.S. as observed by DeVillar (2005) who cites politician and landowner John Nance Garner's 1926 Congressional testimony:

> Mr. Chairman, here is the problem in a nutshell…[I]n order to allow landowners now to make a profit on their farms, they want to get the cheapest labor they can find, and if they can get the Mexican labor it enables them to make a profit. That is the way it is along the border, and I imagine that is the way it is anywhere else (DeVillar, 2005, p. 4).

Portes and Rumbaut (2006) suggest that Mexicans are accompanied by a diverse contingency of immigrants, which compose the American labor market due to globalization of Western standards. As a result, India and The People's Republic of China are among the top contributors of U.S.-bound immigration. In 2000, 61% of the foreign-born immigrants

made up the labor force. As noted by these figures, although Dominicans are another Latin American group that exhibited high unemployment rates, an exception to the disparity and inequality is found among refugees from Laos and Cambodia with 60% unemployment. Moreover, Portes and Rumbaut indicate that low-skilled manual laborers representative of Mexico, Haiti, and Honduras surpassed the national unemployment average by more than 60%.

As Taylor (2002) notes, each group has its own distinct history, demographic characteristics, and pattern of adaptation in the American society. Formation of enclaves contributes to transition from their country in addition to sheltering members of the ethnic group from external discrimination and hostility by providing them with transitional resources and social adaptation assistance (Cavalcanti & Schleef, 2006, see also Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2002). Moreover, these enclaves also provide new arrivals with employment opportunities by creating markets geared towards immigrants' economic advancement. In addition, opportunities for economic and entrepreneurial advancement of group members are also available through access to credit, which supports the formation of small business ventures, and the advancement of newly arrived immigrants and the broader immigrant community.

In terms of income, the average Latino's annual income is $36,000 compared to $48,800 of non-Latino white households (U.S. Census, 2007). As indicated in the report, Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians household income is $40,000, significantly lower than Dominican and Honduran's households. Moreover, according to Cavalcanti and Schleef (2001), the median income for Hispanic men was $13,600 relative to $21,300 for

non-Hispanic white males. The transformation of population size and demographic

composition also affects employment opportunities by altering the demands for goods and

services, which also influence the formation of the labor force. The U.S. Department of

Labor (2007), projects immigrants will constitute the largest share of the U.S. population by

2014. Cavalcanti and Schleef indicate that by 2050, Latinos will become at least 25% of the

U.S. population.

Despite the increase in numbers, Cavalcanti and Schleef (2001) noted, Latinos

remain overrepresented in low-skill employment and are less prone to be professionals, to

hold managerial positions, or to be self-employed. Conversely, Rumbaut & Portes (2001)

found an entrepreneurial propensity among immigrants. Unlike the native born, immigrants

are more prone to work for themselves. Self-employment is an important measure of upward

mobility and economic self-reliance. In addition, self-employed individuals earn higher

wages than laborers. DeVillar (2005) posits, Americans resentfully realize the essential

value of cheap immigrant labor by continuing to hire immigrants regardless of their legal

status in order to increase profit margins and advance the economy.

Although Portes and Rumbaut (2006) observed impressive national-origin diversity

in terms of education and occupation, evident as well, was the strong correlation between

educational attainment and occupation. Approximately 24% of Latinos work in service

related positions, 16% work as construction/extraction and maintenance laborers, and about

19% labor in material moving occupations such as transportation and production (US

Census, 2007). As Latinos blend with the greater society, signs of group success are

surfacing in communities with smaller density. However, as suggested by Cavalcanti and

Schleef (2001), the most successful Latino has not reached economic parity with non-Latino whites and other ethnic groups.

According to the poverty report from the United States Census Bureau (2007) figures, 22% of Hispanics live below the poverty level relative to only 9% of non-Hispanic Whites. As indicated in this survey, Latino poverty rates was about 15% for Cubans, Colombians, and Peruvians, and 24% for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominican, and Honduranians. These new figures show an increase from the United Census Bureau (2005) poverty report, which estimates 26.6% of Latino children lived below the poverty line. Similarly, 20% of the 65 and older population lives below the poverty line, compared to about 7% of non-Latino whites. The United States Labor Department estimates by 2014, the number of non-Latino whites will decrease from 70% to 66.5% and Asians will account for the second largest group of the labor market accounting for 5.1%. Labeled as the fastest growing group, Latinos will account for 33.7% of the labor force; Black will share only 12.00% of the labor force, which is a slight increase up from 11.3% still, lower than Hispanics (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007).

In closing, as noted by Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (2002) and others (DeVillar, 2005, see also Schmid, 2003) concerns about immigration and economic prosperity share a strong historical correlation. According to Banks (2003), some Mexicans were displaced without economic recourse due to the Mexican revolution of 1910, Mexicans began to migrate north in search of work in agriculture, mining, and on the railroads. Nonetheless, employers deliberately exploited Mexican laborers; due to the huge influx of Mexican immigrants that saturated the labor pool. Statistics from the US Census confirms

consequential outcome for Latinos' disparate participation and access to labor market relative to whites and other ethnic groups.

**Latinos' Academic History: Incorporating Past Struggles and Present Disparity**

Notwithstanding, the Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974, which prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunity by failing to implement appropriate action to assist students in overcoming language barriers that impede equal participation, an overwhelming number of  Hispanic students are still underperforming or dropping out of school unprepared to become productive members of society. The 2007 Commission on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reports on the accomplishment of the legislation, while acknowledging challenges, still threatening public school improvement efforts. Major structural and implementation deficiencies uncovered by the report were undeniable pervasive academic achievement gaps among students of difference ethnic orientations, particularly between Latinos and their peers.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress as cited in The 2007 Commission on No Child Left Behind Act, reading assessment brings to light the fact that on average 17-year-olds blacks read at the same level as Anglo 13-year-olds. Similarly, math scores revealed only 19% of Latino students scored at or above average on 4th grade math assessments relative to 47% of their white counterparts. Equally alarming is the disparity between English Language Learners and their peers; only 4% of 8th grade ELLs scored at or above proficiency on NAEP reading assessment according to NCES (2003). The depth of the achievement disparities was said to be "unconscionably large" (The Commission on

NCLB, p. 13). Therefore, while NCLB attempts to eliminate persistent academic achievement gaps, evident is the fact that meanwhile, problems which NCLB was developed to resolve remain (The Commission on NCLB, 2007) and far too many children are still being left behind.

**Historical Overview of Latino Students' Schooling Experience**

In this section, Kloosterman (2003), recounts schooling for Hispanics during the 1850s when Anglos began to assert dominance of the land, which is now known as, the American Southwest (i.e., California, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas). At that time, schooling occurred in a formal and an informal manner in missions and civilian settlements. Primarily established for the indigenous population, the intention of this curriculum was to teach indigenous children to accept Spanish social subordination. Subjugated to such conditions, indigenous people were required to suppress their identity by replacing their religious and social beliefs with that of the Spaniard's. As in the case of most suppressed groups, Mexicans resisted by either refusing to attend their assigned missionaries or institutions, running away, and even killing or harassing individuals at the institution or missionary.

Ethnic Mexicans, the Catholic Church, Protestant Groups, and Anglo public officials were separate educational entities. Each group had its specific purpose for establishing these schools. Some attempted to ensure maintenance of the religious teachings, linguistic traditions, secular and American cultural norms. While others attempted to enforce social subordination. The institution of public schools encouraged educators to assume a greater

role in the social order by becoming agents of conformity. School officials did not allow the use of Spanish because they believe the native language was inferior to and incompatible with English speech patterns; even they eliminated Mexican history and culture from the curriculum.

In essence, San Miguel (2003) indicates that schools attempted to eliminate all forms of differences banning the community's own religious, cultural, and linguistic values by presenting a persuasively idealistic characteristic of what an American should be. Nonetheless, conformity soon succumbed to suspicion. San Miguel explains that Mexicans grew distrustful of the imposition of control the Anglos exerted on their language and culture. Mexicans opposed the establishment of English-only school system and instead called for the establishment of bilingual schools. Efforts to ensure Mexican culture and heritage were reflected in the schooling process and the promotion of English was not to the detriment of Spanish, eventually succumbed to the expansion of the American public education.

According to Portes (2005), during the decades that followed, a cultural revolution altered society. At this junction, a multitude of voices demanded attention along a wide gamut of human rights. Interestingly enough, Portes argues that fallacies of intuitivism and positivism served as anchors to an ethnocentric educational system and curriculum functioning in tandem with the established caste-like arrangements of oppression. Porte's study found inequality disparate in education although conceivably, education has shown to either sustain or diminish group-based inequities and promote economic upward mobility.

Accordingly, Bianco (2007) recounts the inception of the Bilingual Education Act, which grew out of the 1960 census revelation of gross unequal educational outcomes of Mexican-American children. As a result of this notable disparity, Democratic Senator Ralph Yarborough from the State of Texas introduced legislation for Federal intervention. This legislation included the use of Spanish to close the academic achievement gap as far back as 1967, among Latino students and their peers. With the assistance of Congressman James Scheuer of New York, the bill became law (BEA, Public Law 90-247) in 1968 as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Although the legislation essentially attempted to offer pedagogical stimulation to reconcile the aforementioned academic achievement disparity, Yarborough felt it necessary to offer justification for his proposed legislation by declaring on the floor of the Senate: "My purpose for doing this is not to keep any specific language alive...and not to stamp out the mother tongue, but just to try to make those children fully literate in English."  Spanish as an instructional medium, usage of Spanish was namely allowed solely for intervention purposes because bilingual teaching intention was not intended to ensure bilingualism.

Portes (2005) further argues, given the role of education, and an emerging global market-economy, "there is still a blatant fact that failure to educate some student groups is an "established cultural practice" (p. 5). Furthermore, certain groups of students will always stay behind because of the design, financing, and systemic organization of the educational system, which tolerates educational practices which sustain inequality. Conceivably, mandates such as NCLB represent a modest attempt at dismantling educational inequality without addressing social inequality of intergenerational poverty.

**Legal Challenges in the Struggle for Educational Equity**

Portes (2005), charges that educational inequality and consequential social outcomes should persuade the American moral community to answer questions about pervasive educational inequity. Portes study examines the ineffectiveness of schools to educate children of diverse cultural backgrounds; the ineffectiveness of compensatory program to narrow the academic achievement gap; the effectiveness of poverty shaping culturally related practices that transcends to schooling inequality. Portes argues that for some, education serves its purpose. While for others, it is regarded as the cause of their failure. The issue is then an ethical problem, argued on several occasions in the highest court of the land.

As noted by Ariza et al. (2006), a San Francisco school district failed to provide English language instruction to nearly 1,800 Chinese LEP students. The school district's inaction prompted the landmark case of Lau v. Nichols (1974). Justice Douglas' decision made it clear that students' English proficiency should not impede them from receiving a meaningful education. According to Ariza et al. (2006), this U.S. Supreme Court's ruling acknowledge that  these students were not receiving a meaningful education solely because they were amidst other students in the same facilities, utilizing the same textbooks, teachers, and curriculum. Not understanding the English impeded them from receiving a meaningful education. In fact, the school district's neglect was a direct violation of the Section 601 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which banned discrimination based "on the grounds of race, color, or national origin," in "any program or activity  receiving federal financial assistance," and the execution of the regulations from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) found that many other school systems were in violation of the law and expected these systems to develop implementation strategies to incorporate English language instruction by stating, "No specific remedy is urged upon us. Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instruction to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others" (Lau v. Nichols, p. 565).

Several weeks after the Lau verdict, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 (EEOA), which mandated states and local school districts to become accountable for implementing appropriate action to assist LEP students overcome the English barrier impeding full participation in the educational process (Ariza et. al, 2006). Despite the legislative pressure from the Supreme Court and Congress, the second half of the 1970s witnessed even more controversy in determining the adequacy of educational programs capable of providing LEP students with equitable education participation.

For instance, Castañeda v. Pickard (1981) was a class action lawsuit brought against the Raymondville Independent School District in the State of Texas, alleging that the district's educational policies discriminated against Mexican-American students by failing to provide them with appropriate instruction to overcome linguistic barriers. Circuit Court of Appeals gave a three-part criterion requirement for a program to be deemed appropriate for LEP to overcome linguistic barriers. These criteria are as follows: (a) Sound educational theory or at least a legitimate experimental strategy, establish the program (b) the school must effectively implement the program adapted by the school system, and (c) the program results must demonstrate the program's effectiveness (Ariza et al., 2006).

During the following year, a District Court class-action suit was brought against the Smith County, Texas, on behalf of school-aged Mexican children whose parents were unable to establish legal entry into the United States (Ariza et al., 2006). Although plaintiffs argued that due to their alien status under the immigration law, these children were not "persons within the jurisdiction" of the State of Texas and thus should not benefit from the right to equal protection under Texas laws. The Court of Appeals rejected this argument declaring that regardless of immigration status, an alien is a "person" in every basic sense of the term. Regardless of their legal status they are recognized as "persons" and are guaranteed due process of law by the Fifth and Fourteen Amendments (idid). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe (1982) that undocumented children and young adults have the same right as U.S. citizens and permanent residents to attend public primary school and secondary schools. Like other children, undocumented students are required under the state laws to attend school until they reach a legally mandated age.

The Court used the three-part criterion, which was developed from the Castañeda case on Keys v. School District No. 1 (1983), to examine English language programs for LEP students under the EEOA in Denver, Colorado. According to Ariza et al. (2006), the court ruled that Denver was unsuccessful in implementing the assessment criteria because local schools were not implementing the selected program effectively. In Gomez v. Illinois State Board of Education (1987), the Court ruled that anyone could prosecute a state educational institution for not adhering to EEOA mandates. Therefore, in both of these cases the Court emphasized the liability of state and local educational institutions to ensure crucial

resources were established and made accessible for non-English speaking students' effective acquisition of the English language.

In 1990, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) filed a class action lawsuit against the State Board of Education in the State of Florida (Ariza et al., 2006). In the LULAC et al. v. Florida Department of Education (1990) case, the United States District Court directed the State of Florida to modify its approach to all aspects of the educational experiences of LEP students. Beginning with teacher preparation requirements as dictated by the 1990 consent decree, the Court held that all teachers in Florida are liable for an LEP student upon enrollment. As a result, Florida is the only state, which requires all general education teachers to complete 300 hours of English language acquisition training and receive an ESOL endorsement in conjunction with a general education certification (Giambo and Szecsi, 2006).

**Latino Students' Disparate Dropout Rate**

The Congressional Research Service (2007) raises concerns about the very high dropout rate among Hispanics students. Despite six-years of implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, Latino students continue to exhibit a higher rate of school failure and tend to drop-out of school more than any other racial or ethnic group in this country (Wu, 2005; see also Swanson, 2000). As a result, national Latino dropout rate, and academic achievement disparity have become central topics of discussion within the K-12 learning contexts, (Portes, 2005, see also Ochoa, 2003). One of the problem facing educators, is that Latino ELLs are entering U.S. schools at many different ages and English

proficiency levels as well as formal education backgrounds (August & Shanahan, 2008, see also Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

According to NCES (2005) the percentage of Hispanic students in the age range of 18-24 who have completed secondary schooling in 2003 was 64%; compared to 92% for whites and 84% for blacks. Accordingly, status dropout rate, which is the percentage of students between the age of 16-24 who are out of school or have not earned a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) credentials, was also disproportionately higher for Hispanic students.

Among low-income Hispanic students, the dropout status was 28% compared to declining rates of 7% for whites and 13% for blacks. Immigrant who did not complete secondary education in their country of origin, are included in the Hispanic students' dropout rate. NCES reports that 50% of Latino immigrants never enrolled in US Schools, and immigrants who do enroll, are twice more likely to drop out than first-generation, and second-generation students born in the United States. Latinos have now surpassed blacks as the nation's largest minority group; accounting for a sizable segment of school district's population throughout the country. The subgroup is projected to have continuous growth at a much faster pace than other racial and ethnic groups. Since 2000, Hispanic children account for the largest ethnic group, age five and under. Such dramatic increase of Hispanics students in the United States public schools, coupled with such soaring dropout rate, has heightened the need for identifying risks factors exacerbating Hispanic students' high dropout rate.

Although scholars have focused on awareness and prevention of the problem of dropping out of school, efforts about student achievement have also intensified in order to enhance schools' ability to make annual yearly progress (AYP) as designated by the NCLBA. However, national graduation rate has remained below 70 percent in decades. On-time graduation rate for African-American and Hispanics were between 50 to 55 percent (Center for American Progress, 2007; NCES, 2007; & National Council of La Raza, 2003). The Center for American Progress indicates that the United States' global competitiveness and the financial viability of its people are at stake, if students continue to leave school early and unprepared for college or the labor force.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2007), white, non-Hispanics will remain the largest group in the labor force, decreasing from 70% in 2004 to 65.5% by 2014. Asians will account for 4.3 to 5.1%, followed by Hispanics at 33.7%. African-American will constitute only 11.3 to 12.0% of the nation's labor force. Despite decades of debate and controversy surrounding this educational dilemma of Hispanic students' continued poor academic performance and high dropout rate, there have been few, if any, adequate solutions presented by scholars to narrow the academic achievement gap or lessen the notable high dropout rate of Latino students. Successfully educating Hispanic students represent a complex challenge for educators who are now under pressure from NCLBA to demonstrate AYP of disfranchised and linguistically marginalized students. Undoubtedly, the challenges facing Latino students are equally complex. The average Hispanic student negotiate problems such as immigration (US Census, 2000; see also Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002), poverty (NCES, 2005), linguistic barriers (Pennycook, 2001; see also, Valenzuela,

1999) social distance (Salazar-Sierra Niestas, 2005), and low teacher expectations (Oaks & Lipton, 1999; see also Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; & Valenzuela, 1999).

The 2007 United States Department of Education report entitled, "Dropout Rates in the United States 2005," claims that dropping out of school presents numerous negative outcomes. This compendium report points out income levels for individuals between the ages of 18 through 65 who did not complete high school was approximately $10,000.00 less than the income for those individuals who completed high school. Moreover, individuals in the aforementioned age bracket who dropped out of school were more likely to be unemployed or not in the labor force (U.S Department of Labor, 2006). According to NCES (2007) 64% of dropouts were employed or actively seeking employment relative to 81% of graduates who hold a high school diploma. The unemployment rate for individuals holding a college degree was 21%. In terms of health, dropouts 24 and older had poorer health. Additionally, dropouts made up an excessively higher percentage of the nation's prison and death row convicts.

The U.S. Justice Department (2003), report indicated that 30% of federal inmates, 40% of state prison inmates, and 50% of inmates on death row are high school drop outs. Nationwide, 41% of inmates in state and federal prisons and jails did not complete high school. Closing the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their counterparts, however, is a difficult and expensive proposition of inclusion for this economical and linguistically disadvantaged group of students. Educational failure is unequivocally linked to law-violating behavior. The cost of dropping out of school to society, however, in terms of

welfare, health, lost of tax revenues, and the judicial and penal system could be a far greater burden (Rothstein, 1999).

Implications of school failure are becoming impossible to disregard. According to the National Center for Juvenile Justice (2006), youths are committing serious criminal offenses such as homicide, sexual assault, robbery, burglary, theft, and drug trafficking. The number of minority offenders in custody in 2003 was larger than non-Hispanic whites, who accounted for 45% of incarcerated females and 38% of incarcerated males. Between 1997—2003, in-custody population increased significantly for females from 51 to 55% and decrease slightly for males from 64 to 62%. Moreover, for every 100,000 Hispanics living in the U.S., 348 were incarcerated. In 2002, Hispanics accounted for 18% of the total U.S. juvenile population of this total, 92% were white-Hispanic, five percent African American, two percent Native American, and one percent Asian.

More compelling, is the projected increase in the proportion of Hispanic juveniles. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of Hispanic juveniles in the U.S. will increase to 58%. Law enforcement agencies provided demographical details, such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity of gang members in their jurisdictions. The U. S Department of Justice reported that some youths join gangs between the ages of 14 and 18. Nationwide, the largest proportion of gang members were minorities. Gang members reported the following factors contributed to gang membership: low academic achievement and aspirations; truancy; negative labeling by teachers; and lack of sense of safety in school.

National Center for Juvenile Justice (2006), suggest delinquent behaviors share a strong correlation with educational failure. The juvenile justice system develop programs geared towards assisting juveniles to enter into the job market resulting from the conclusion supported by strong theoretical and empirical work, which concludes that employment helps to prevent or reduce deviant behavior. Therefore, as suggested by National Center for Juvenile Justice, patterns of educational failure as evidenced by the aforementioned propensity to drop out of school within specific groups may help to explain patterns of delinquent behavior among these groups as well. According to NCES (2007), the reported event dropout rate by race and ethnicity between 2004 and 2005 was higher for Hispanics than for other ethnic or racial group. Consequently, Latinos were more likely to leave school early relative to their peers.

One of the many obstacles confronting Latino students is the complexity of English proficiency (LEP), which is problematic enough to evoke anxiety tendencies among veteran teachers (Mathis, 2005). Given the fact that the majority of Hispanic students are identified as limited English proficient (LEP), Title III and the NCLB holds states and school districts accountable for the annual progress in learning English and attaining English proficiency. As a result of the current immigration trend, all teachers are becoming teachers of English language learners. Thus, mainstream teachers are now finding that they must deliver content material infused with English language instruction (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

**Language Isolation Among Spanish-Speaking Students**

Between 1990 and 2005, the percentage of immigrant language-minority students grew exponentially. In addition to learning English, these students may have some level of proficiency or may be bilingual or monolingual in their native/heritage language. One of the many obstacles confronting immigrant students is the complexity of LEP, as labeled by the federal government given to students who are currently acquiring English as a second language. These children have not acquired English language proficiency and cannot benefit from instructions solely in English (August and Shanahan, 2008).

Nonetheless, Peyton et al. (2001) posit that the LEP label is found to be ambivalent among linguistic professionals who argued that the term implies an innate disability. The term was subsequently elevated to English Language Learners (ELL); however, this term is still controversial due to considerable differences between nonnative and native English speakers, who are themselves learning English. Moreover, these terms "render invisible" the language background of people who speak additional languages (p. 34). The term refers to students who have not yet acquired grade level proficiency in English, as evidenced through difficulty speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to verification of the home language through the use of a survey, school officials can assess the following: (a) the student's home language is other than English, (b) the student first learned a language other than English, and (c) the student speaks another language other than English fluently (Ariza et al., 2006).

Although immigrants continue to migrate to certain states—California, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Texas—such ethnically and linguistically diverse population

has presented challenges impacting many spheres of the American society (Lapkoff & Li, 2007). Disconcertingly, in 1999, one-third of language-minority children and youth between the ages of 5-24 reported having difficulty speaking English according to August and Shanahan (2008). On the other hand, children born in the U.S., and who speak a language other than English in their homes, reported a higher level of English oral proficiency, relative to that of their foreign-born counterparts—especially when the parent spoke English. Foreign-born students' English proficiency was highly dependent on age of arrival to the United States. Thus, 75% of children who arrived 0-3 years reported having greater difficulty than 49% of students who were in the United States for four to nine years.

The decennial census obtained self-reports of ability to speak English "very well," "well," "not well," or "not at all" through a likert scale survey (NCES, 2005). These figures indicate the largest non-English-origin nationalities by year of entry. Whereas, self-reported fluent bilinguals (which represent individuals who spoke both a foreign language at home and spoke English very well). Among the most recent (1990-2000) arrivals, 44% informed of not being able to speak English well or at all, yet that figure has dropped to 25% of immigrants entering before 1980. Similarly, immigrants in "linguistically isolated" households (defined by the Census as a household in which no person fourteen or older speaks English only or very well), were identified disproportionately among recent arrivals.

Immigrant households commonly found to be linguistically isolated among immigrant groups were from Southeast Asia, China, Central America, Mexico, and Dominican Republic according to Portes and Rumbaut (2006). According to August and Shanahan (2008), 53%  or more than half of language-minority students attend racial and

linguistically segregated schools across the nation, challenging educators to meet the students' need and standard requirements. Nationwide, 53% of English language learners attend schools were 30% of their peers are also learning English as a second language, as opposed to only 4% of native monolinguals. The report suggested that these patterns of segregation are prevalent in the aforementioned new immigration destination of the new demographics presenting in the South.

The Pew Hispanic Center (2007), reported that the U.S. Supreme Court's a ruling drew more attention to the degree of racial and ethnic integration in the nation's 93,845 public schools. This ruling consequently rejected school desegregation plans in Seattle and Louisville. Enrollment numbers are representative of the number of Hispanic students in the public school population. Resulting from this impressive demographic shift is the increase of the largest minority group to more than 55%. According a study release by the Pew Hispanic Center, during 2005-06, the number of Latino students increased to 19.8 from 12.7% in 1993-04. Such increase in the number of Hispanic students suggests that in 1993-04, 34% of white students attend nearly all-white schools, meaning that less than 5% of students in these all-white schools were of ethnic or language-minority background. In 2005-06, 21% of white students were attending all-white schools. Thus, from 1993-94 to 2005-06, white students became less isolated from ethnic or language minority students, meanwhile, black and Latino students were more isolated from white students.

Settlement patterns, as explained by Portes and Rumbaut (2006), suggest recent immigrants are concentrated in immigrant enclaves, especially alongside the Mexican border from Texas to California, and in cities such as Miami, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago

where a disproportionate number of immigrants have settled. It is quite paradoxical, then, that immigrant children, as suggested by Portes and Rumbaut are required to acquire English only fluency. The data as reported by Portes and Rumbaut indicate that between 1990 and 2000, 88% of immigrant children five years of age and older speak English, and 215 million people representing the majority of the United States population speak English. Such findings serve as confirmation contrary to public perception that language-minority immigrants are refusing to learn English. The shift to English was reported at a rate far exceeding all other countries in the sample. Therefore, the maintenance of other heritage languages does not pose a threat to the most fundamental aspect of American identity and culture—the English language. In reality, Spanish is the language threatened.

According to Leos (2006), advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, in communities across the United States, Latino students are becoming linguistically insulated. Leos notes that in communities where Spanish-dominant speakers outnumber native English speakers, there is a potential for Latino students to become insulated by the sociocultural linguistic barriers that also help to define them. In essence, most Latino parents can only speak Spanish to their children, and Spanish is the only language Latino children are exposed to on a daily basis in the community until they enter school. Leos submits that in these enclaves, English may appear superfluous due to access of the Spanish language. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) suggest such perceived high level of language loyalty among Spanish speakers, particularly Mexican Americans correlates with the immigration influx from Latin American countries and the formation of enclaves.

Atiles and Allexsaht-Snider (2002) observed how teachers, who work with Latino ELLs, misinform parents about native language usage in the home. Some teachers, still adhering to flawed research findings of past anti-bilingual research, continue to persuade parents to avoid speaking Spanish at home to prevent the delaying the acquisition of English. Implications of denying an individual the use of his or her home language is an undermining act which teaches one to deny oneself, as well as causing damage to the parent/child relationship and communication as well as language fossilization.

Houvouras (2001) assert, for these non-English speaking students, school represents a cultural discontinuity, for language supplies individuals with a point of reference to life and people can only think about the world surrounded by the words that are accessible to them through their language. Jones and Yandian (2002) express concern about cultural discontinuity among young children, warning against potential developmental problems related to the loss of students' first language. Jones and Yandian suggest that there is a commanding emotional connection between children and the language of their homes.

It appears that once Latino children reach the appropriate age for School; their parents lessen the amount of Spanish spoken in the home for fear of impeding English acquisition. Schmid (2003) asserts that hegemonic linguistic attitudes have transcended to Latino parents who, fearing further cultural alienation, are encouraging assimilation by favoring monolingualism instead of passing on their linguistic heritage. Schmid also explains how language minority groups, such as Hispanics, are constantly downgraded for presumably and deliberately choosing not to learn English, as if learning English is synonymous with losing Spanish. On the other hand, Spanish usage in these enclaves serves

as the glue that unites Latinos while delineating borders, and providing a path of entry into the bilingual job markets (Peyton et al., 2001).

Demands in the increasingly global economy and culturally diverse markets require bilingual and cross-culturally aware professionals. Sectors identified by Peyton et al. (2001) as having the highest need for bilingual workers are government, business, media and communication, the performing arts, healthcare, and education. Awareness of this demand may become the first step in improving America's government policies on heritage language preservation as well as improve poor proficiency of languages through schooling.

**Bilingualism in American Educational Context**

A conceptual approach to studying Latino students' relative underachievement is language maintenance and bilingualism (p. 305). According to Berry et al., (2002) the two most significant subjects involving language in plural societies are language maintenance, which includes the issues of language attitudes, language allegiance and linguistic strength, and bilingualism, which involves psychological effects, reception of bilingualism in school, the place of work, and in other public institutions. Moreover, support for language maintenance is often a foundation of a nation's multicultural guiding principles. Gardner's 1985 study presents two language-learning motives: "instrumental" and "integrative" (p. 307). According to Gardner, when interest in a language is based on occupational requirements the learning motive is said to be instrumental. On the other hand, when the motive involves interest in another group or desire to enter in that groups' cultural life, the motive is referred to as integrative. Both motives are essential in second language

acquisition, often linking the acculturation process by defining the learners' attitude. The second concept of language maintenance and bilingualism has been controversial topics of discussion since the early 1920s.

According to Portes and Rumbaut (2006), immigrants' push toward rapid linguistic assimilation, anti-bilingualism, or English-only movement began during the close of the 19th century with political variants encouraged by one of our most influential presidents. President Roosevelt saw the continuing use of foreign languages as "un-American" an act that posed a direct threat to America's values. Ohio's Governor Cox banned all German language instruction from the state's elementary schools citing that the language posed "a distinct menace to Americanism" (Rothstein, 1999, p. 2). Accompanying this variation was educational experiments aimed at proving that bilingualism was intellectually limiting. Starting from the early 1920s with the introduction of psychometric evaluations, such as Binet's translated IQ test coupled with negative literature about bilingualism, suggestions that low academic achievement was the end result of "linguistic interference" or "linguistic confusion" took center stage on the academic circle (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 211).

A study conducted by Goodenough (as cited in Portes and Rumbaut, 2006) blamed the home environment for students' academic underachievement, suggesting that retardation was the result of speaking a language other than English in the home. Another study conducted by Goddard concluded that 29 of the 30 recent Jewish immigrants (who were still on Ellis Island), were "feeble-minded" (p. 211). Smith researched Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Korean, and Portuguese living in Hawaii and concluded that attempts to use two languages simultaneously produced retardation in speech among the sample of

preschoolers represented. Kirkpatrick argued that heredity dictated intelligence; therefore, teachers needed not to concern themselves with school reform efforts. Likewise, Brigham explained that race, instead of language, was the reason for the intellectual inferiority of immigrants.

One of the most compelling study empirically reputing decades of flawed research claiming how bilingualism caused retardation is the 1967 study of Peal and Lambert. A groundbreaking undertaking uncovered bias in Goodenough earlier research. In those previously conducted studies, researches did not control for high-status English monolingual students to poorer foreign-born immigrant students, which was often the practice of researchers. Moreover, some children's extent of bilingualism was determined by their last name, and none of the studies control for social class. Thus, Peal and Lambert conducted a study, which controlled for bilingual ability and the socioeconomic status challenging previous research that implied bilingualism was a detriment to students' speech and cognitive ability. In this study, data concluded that bilingual students outperformed monolingual students.

Peal and Lambert's study categorized French/ English Canadians, ten-year-old bilinguals in two categories: (a) Actual or "balanced" French-English bilinguals, who exhibited control of both languages, able to communicate effectively in both languages, and (b) French "pseudo-bilinguals," whose ability to communicate in one language is superior to their ability to communicate in the second language. Consequently, findings reveal that within the parameters of demographic and social class, balanced bilingual students performed considerably better than monolinguals of lower social status on numerous verbal

and nonverbal IQ tests, diametrically challenging four decades of previous research. Peal and Lambert hypothesized the advantages of bilingualism suggesting bilinguals have two symbols for all objects. Therefore from a young age, bilinguals "become emancipated from linguistic symbols—from the concreteness, arbitrariness, and 'tyranny" of words—developing analytic abilities to focus on the essential and to think in terms of more abstract concepts and relations, independent of the actual word" (p. 212).

A balanced bilingual, being able to rotate between languages, uses two different perspectives of the language to experience both cultures. Conversely, monolinguals must adhere to a less flexible language pattern, which is a disadvantage due to the inherence of a more inflexible though process. Nonetheless, limited amount of research exists on semi-bilinguals compared to the considerable body of literature available on true-bilinguals. Emphasis should be made, however, on how these and successive positive assessments in the text are constructed on a sizable body of evidence pertaining to the performance of true-bilingual students. In contrast, studies accessing the performance of semi-bilinguals are limited as noted by Portes and Rumbaut (2006).

Bialystok, Luk, and Kwan (2005) conducted a study to examine transferability of literacy skills across languages providing practical information regarding the discussion of early literacy skills of three bilingual groups (Hebrew, Chinese, and Spanish) and a fourth monolingual group. All bilingual children in these groups used two languages daily and were learning to read in both languages. Decoding abilities were examined among the four groups as well. Moreover, selection of these groups served to isolate the role of bilingualism on children's emergent reading process and to analyze the depth of reading relationship of

language in the writing system. Bialystok and colleagues established two hypotheses. The first tested the prerequisites to literacy, which develops in a different way in monolinguals and bilinguals, to be the advantage in reading measures. Once controlled for, yielded greater advantage with similar writing systems. The second determined how the transferability of language skills of bilinguals is highly dependent on the extent to which the skills develop in the first language.

The subjects in the Bialystok et al. (2005) study were all first graders receiving instructions in English and interacting with their peers in English. Apart from the monolinguals used as the control group, all other students were also receiving reading instructions in another language as well as interacting with their family members in this language. Literacy advantages were evident even after progress in skills pertinent to literacy was controlled for in the Hebrew and Spanish bilingual groups relative to the other groups. Bialystok and colleagues' study found a strong correlation in nonword decoding skills was evident between the two advanced groups. Bilingual children benefited from their bilingualism, especially when taking into consideration their limited English proficiency at the beginning of their literacy instruction. Although oral vocabulary awareness and working memory contributed to children's early progress in reading for bilingual children, outcomes on certain tasks were not significantly different from the outcome of monolingual students.

Bialystok et al. (2005) conclude that bilingual gain in phonological awareness reveals an affirmative consequence of bilingualism, a character distinction which permits some children to become bilingual or speaking two phonologically associated languages. The interactive nature of bilingualism in reading and writing skills was also evident as

groups obtained the highest phoneme counting scores also obtained the highest decoding scores. Thus, the other differences among groups may not be equal for different measures suggesting a positive consequence of bilingualism as in the high scores on phonological awareness and at other times indicating unfavorable outcome as in the vocabulary scores or no relationship in working memory.

Furthermore, variations among groups are indication bilingualism is not a straightforward grouping variable with a homogenous consequence on performance. Conclusively, the balance between vocabulary shortfall and potential metalinguistic benefit for the Chinese bilinguals demonstrates small literacy skill gain. Yet, the prospect of reading transfer skills insight, for the bilinguals whose two languages were alphabetically similar resulted in an unmistakable and significant advantage in development. The main findings of this study suggest that bilingualism contributes to children's emergent literacy acquisition in two ways. The first is the general reading awareness bilingual children apply to the representational system of print, which gives children an understanding of how decoding translates into meaningful words. The second advantage of bilingualism is the transferability of reading skills across languages (Bialystok et al., 2005).

**Linguistic Diversity in Society and Schooling Context**

According to Lapkoff and Li, out of the 380 languages spoken, Spanish is the most common language spoken nationwide represented by 28 million speakers (67%) among those five-year-olds and older, followed by Chinese (2 million), French (1.6 million), German (1.4 million), and Tagalog (1.2 million). For example, United States Census (2007),

estimate that in the State of Georgia, one of out every 10 residents ages five and older

speaks a language other than English at home with Spanish being the language most

represented. From this total, 72% speak Spanish as their first or home language. Spanish is

the most spoken language in American public schools, followed by 21% Asian languages,

and European languages spoken by 10% (NCES, 2005; Peyton et. al., 2001; and U.S.

Census Bureau, 2000).

Although the largest group of language-minority students speaks Spanish, the

predominant language spoken in many states is not Spanish. For instance, Yup'ik

predominates in Alaska, Ilocano in Hawaii, French in Maine, Hmong in Minnesota,

Blackfoot in Montana, Native American dialect in North Dakota, Lakota in South Dakota,

and Serbo-Croatian in Vermont. Moreover, the opposite domestic position, on the ability to

speak two languages is not extraordinary but commonplace for most of the world's

population experience. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) estimate that "more than six billion

people speak an estimated six thousand languages in the world of some two hundred

autonomous states" (p. 208). Therefore, there are about thirty times more languages spoken

as there are states, and the prevalence of several languages (i.e., Chinese, Hindi, Russian,

Spanish, and English) together with global communication and transportation technologies,

international trade, and immigration have contributed to the proliferation of bilingualism.

Discourse of language, culture, and equity has emerged and become amplified

resulting from such an astounding influx of immigrant students in American schools. A

recent study by Lapkoff and Li (2007), indicates that 67% of Hispanic children and

approximately 63% of Asian/Pacific Islander children spoke a language other than English

at home, relative to only 5% of their White and Black peers. Among the bilingual children a considerable amount were U.S. born or naturalized U.S. citizens who were considered as poor (81%); nearly poor (57 %); living in the West (40%); and living in the South (29%). In another study, NCES (2005) found that the majority (63%) of all ELLs, ages 5–24 were born in the United States or its outlying areas. The need for educational services is continuously increasing along with the number of ELL entering schools, for there are many children enrolling in school who are barely able to speak English or are speaking English less than "very well." These children have little or no English language literacy skills support at home.

This section focuses on linguistic transition, its patterns and consequences, transcending its role as instrument of communication, as suggested by Portes and Rumbaut (2006). Whereas many European countries embrace linguistic variability, acquisition of standardized or none accented English and speaking only English by abandoning ones native language is prerequisite to success and endorsement for becoming an American. Undoubtedly, language (in this case, language acquisition, and language shift) is an undeniable factor in the acculturation of immigrant students in America's public school system. Undoubtedly, English fluency segues into full integration or participation in America's culture, polity, and economic structure.

Resulting from the persistent underachievement of so many Hispanic ELLs in U. S. public schools, particular attention is given to the intersection of language attitudes, literacy development and academic achievement, which ultimately inhibit full integration of Latinos into American life (Berry et al., 2002; Cavalcanti & Schleef, 2001; & Portes & Rumbaut,

2006). Berry et al., posits that language is usually at the forefront of the dual question of cultural conservation and membership in the mainstream society. On the other hand, Berry et al. (2002), argues against complete assimilation in a culturally plural society because of related negative implication of developing a "cultural vacuum" among immigrant groups (p. 299). Particularly the second generation may choose to give up its ethnic or linguistic heritage while not being acculturated in the dominant culture and despite the fact that the dominant culture does not embrace the group. This sentiment was echoed by Obondo (2007), who argues for a more inclusive multilingual language policy, when considering the language as media of instruction. Similar to the situation here in the U.S., the teaching of indigenous languages in colonized states was discouraged for a more assimilation policy excluding the use of indigenous African languages. Obondo explained that although neo-colonial language policies severely limit economic access to economic and political structures, parents continue to favor the dominant languages in an effort to ensure that their children can compete for employment and improve their economic status.

**Challenging Opposition Rhetoric on Inequality and Disparity**

Other researchers such as Sosa (2002) blame Hispanic students' underachievement on four self-imposed cultural, ancestral, and environmental obstacles such as "poverty and family, the issue of the unknown, the issue of low expectations, and the issue of unawareness" (p. 90). Sosa raises issues under poverty and family categories, which are believed to have created disadvantages for Latinos. Sosa suggests the following are issues, which he believes are the cause of group disparity:

1. Latinos lack employment ethics.

2. Absence of family tradition of higher education role models who are able to guide them.

3.  Lack of parental involvement in school.

4. Lack of information about the cost of college.

5. Latinos fear Anglo influence.

6. Latinos exhibit a high rate of pregnancy.

Clearly, Sosa neglected to include a few key points in the category of poverty and family, well articulated by other researchers (Ogbu, 2003; Portes, 2005; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; & Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For instance, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) explains that increasingly segregated Hispanic neighborhoods are a direct result of the scarcity of affordable housing. Latinos are found in highly volatile, crime ridden areas, which is of grave consequence limiting experiences and opportunities. Thus, limited is the interaction of minority Latinos with middle-class white Americans. Such concentrated segregation, linguistically isolate children by diminishing exposure to English, to networks with access to employment, and to the quality of the education they will receive. Moreover, concentrated poverty areas are characterized by chronic underemployment a strong propensity toward drug trafficking, a prevalence of neighborhood gang violence, teenage pregnancies, school failure, and higher dropout rate.

When examining the correlation between poverty and segregation, Orfield and Yun (1999) suggest that such segregation helps to explain why the poorest and most disfranchised groups—Latino minority students—exhibit the highest dropout rates of any other ethnic or racial groups in this country, only 25% of all Latinos (National Council of La Raza, 2001) students finish high school with the necessary course work and rigor to access higher education institutions. Portes (2005) contends that many immigrant students are not performing well in school because they are subject to "downward assimilation" and manifest patterns depicted as "resistance" or "learned helplessness," which often personify students subject to GBI and SPARs. Although it is unclear if the majority of SPARs are actually demonstrating characteristics of learned helplessness or resistance at a higher rate than marginal immigrant groups, the lack of motivation is a byproduct of historical intercultural mistreatment.

Contrary to Sosa's (2002) claims of self-imposed cultural, familial, and environmental obstacles, Portes (2005) attributes the absence of academic achievement among this minority group to intercultural socialization and institutionalized practice related to a history of inter-group relations and control. Portes illustrates a compelling picture in contrasting immigrant students and involuntary minority students SPARs or GBI who have historically struggled against oppression. Moreover, disparity among intercultural groups is not unique to the United States. In South Africa, and Andean countries the disparity of majority ethnic groups relative to the dominant minority group is both economically and educationally evident.

In some ways, Portes (2005) agrees with Sosa (2002) about the barriers impeding the equitable participation of students subject to GBI and SPARs. Nonetheless, victims should not bear the blame and the solution should not be placed solely on their backs, as is the argument of Sosa. Pursuit of equity, as argued by Portes, should become a collective effort to improve Latino students' human capital produced by education. Increasing the number of knowledgeable well-educated individuals entering the economic structure reduces the number of people in poverty and will yield the kind of societal change needed to address the ethical issue of GBI and SPARs.

To conclude, it is vital to note, Latinos' aggregate participation is the topic of discussion. Considered the principal barrier confronting recent immigrants regardless of educational status—from the well educated to the caste-like minority—language plays a vital role enabling immigrants to fully acculturate in the host community, to become educated, become gainfully employed, gain access to medical care, obtain driving privileges, and most importantly apply for citizenship (August & Shanahan, 2006; see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Nevertheless, for immigrants, acquiring English is attached to losing their first language or risk marginalization. According to Portes and Rumbaut, language shift to English monolingualism in the United States, occurred more frequently, than thirty-two other nations.

Debates about economical implication of immigration has raged on favorably and unfavorably, revealing a complex interpretation. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2002) suggest immigrants are considered a burden during times of economic uncertainty and high unemployment rates. Nonetheless, Taylor (2002) asserts how recent structural shifts in the

economy affect all American families. Minority immigrant families severely accentuate the systemic differential access to the nation's economic structural opportunities and resources due to economic instability.

**Summary**

The erroneous clustering and use of the panethnic label of Latino or Hispanic to refer to a heterogeneous people, who differ in migration origins and settlement patterns, despite the linguistic marker of the Spanish language, which characterizes them, is problematic in many ways (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). As revealed in the literature, Latino/Hispanic group also differs in their socio-economic and educational levels as well as in the degree of heritage language proficiency. Designated as a minority group when referring to the hierarchy of status, especially since they account for a sizable percentage of the United States population, Latinos are persistently disadvantaged educationally (Portes, 2005).

Although America's poor proficiency in foreign languages is well documented, (Peyton et al., 2001) and have become of critical importance to nation's security, educators and policy makers continue to ignore the global implications of monolingualism. For most immigrants groups, and native speakers of other languages, use of the heritage language shifts to English monolingualism by the third generation (Portes, 2006). Confirming that concerns about the attrition of the English language as a national symbol of unity is unfounded by studies, which that indicate the opposite. Among all immigrant groups, Spanish-speakers are most often stigmatized as resisting English (Crawford, 2000). In fact, Kloosterman (2003) posit that differences between teachers and students' social class,

cultural and linguistic differences of Latino students are interpreted as cultural inherent deficits.

Understanding of the importance of sociocultural, sociohistorical, political, economic, and linguistic issues associated with the quality and characteristics of the educational programs, made accessible to Latino students, reveals the root of the great disparity among Latinos and their non-Latino peers (San Miguel, 2003). Persistent underachievement of this group is traced from the 1500s to the present to illustrate how education has always been used as a political instrument of power for the establishment and advancement of the dominant group at the expense of involuntary immigrant groups subject to GBI (Portes, 2005).

Chapter three provides the methodology for this qualitative study's approach, which enhances the researcher's ability to examine the phenomena of linguistic imperialism, which is manifested through the requirement of acquiring English as a second language in a natural setting. Therefore, chapter three includes the research question, research design, setting and selection of participants, instrumentation, validity, reliability, assumptions, procedures, data analysis, and a chapter summary.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

> One of the factors that make the human species unique is its
> ability for reflection. Humans not only experience the world but
> also feel compelled to imbue life experience with meaning.
> Meaning, however, is not inherent in people's experience; rather,
> people's socially construct' experience as they see it and as they
> interpret it[…] the social construction of meaning not only gives
> people a sense of direction and purpose but also provides an
> integrative framework that individuals use to make sense of life
> experiences (McNamee and Faulkner, 200, p. 64).

## Introduction

This chapter presents the design, population and sampling procedures,

Instrumentation, and analysis employed for carrying out the study. The methodological

assumptions are also included. The reader will understand how participants perceived these

experiences, how they felt about it, judged it, remembered it, made sense of it, and talked

about it with others (Patton, 2002). Participants' description of the phenomenon was elicited

from their own subjective experiences of acquiring English as a second language, rather than

through the researcher's conceptual lens. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide

a detailed process of how to uncover the essences of participants' experiences of acquiring

English as a second language, which was the purpose of the study.

## Research Questions

The guiding research question fleshes out interpretations that are critical, and richly

layered in textural meaning. Thus, the overarching question, which guided this dissertation,

asked:

RQ: What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second language as described by Latino students?

The following is a procedural sub-question sought to describe the context and invariant or composite structural experiences of participants. This question asked:

SRQ1: What conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students' understanding of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language?

## Research Design

For this qualitative study, phenomenology was the most appropriate method of inquiry, as it provided Latino students with a voice to describe their lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. In addition, this framework addressed the scarcity of Latino students' perspective in the literature. Moreover, the researcher adopted this rich descriptive approach of in-depth phenomenological interviewing, which allowed the phenomenon to be examined through study-specific questions that were open-ended to allow for participants insider perspective. This descriptive approach provides a method for discovering the meaning other people have ascribed to a phenomenon through their lived experiences (Seidman, 2006).

Phenomenology encompasses a range of research approaches and the philosophical movement led by the philosophical influence of German, mathematician, Edmund Husserl (1859 -1938), whose work provided a starting point for phenomenological design as the introduction of a radical new approach to philosophy (Husserl, 1931, see also Husserl,

1970). Husserl's (1936/1970) work has transcended to various fields of sociology such as, social and health sciences and later adapted by the field of education (Tesch, 1988, & Giorgi).

The goal of phenomenology is to provide a thorough description and essential meaning of a phenomenon through rigorous and judicious study (Husserl, 1931; Moustakas, 1994; & van Kaam, 1966). Thus, phenomenological research attempts to go beneath how people represent their experiences to the construct that underlie perception, that is, to the essential depiction of ideas through the engagement of interviews or extended dialogue as the basis of data collection to understand how people convey meaning from experiences (van Manen, 1990).

Understanding lived experiences denotes phenomenology as a philosophical argument as well as a method, which procedurally includes studying a small number of participants through extensive and expanded interviews in order to develop patterns and associations of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, phenomenological approach establishes a set of assumptions that speaks to the knowledge gained from people articulating their meaning of the phenomenon. Phenomenology requires that the investigator intentionally sets aside or brackets, as best as possible, all prevailing understanding of the phenomenon and revisits the experiences, because there could be possibilities for deriving new meaning or, at the least opportunities for verification and enhancement of former meaning (Moustakas, 1994).

**Setting**

The research was conducted in the state of Georgia's school district, which is located in the Atlanta metropolitan area. This school district currently educates more than 100,000 students of diverse ethnic, racial, sociolinguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Griffith High School (pseudonym) was selected as the site for the study.  As a teacher in the district, the researcher requested access to the campus for the purpose of informal observations, rapport building, and sample selection. Prior to conducting the study, the participants were unknown to the researcher.

Griffith High School is located in one of the most racially/ethnically diverse cities of this metro area. The socioeconomic and sociolinguistic demographics of this school are characteristic of the linguistic transformation experienced by this area in recent years due to a high Hispanic birth rate, immigration, and urbanization (Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 2007). Currently, Griffith total enrollment is 2,130 students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. The demographic composition is as follows. Economically disadvantaged students account for 60% of the population, 44 (2.1 %) are receiving ESOL services, 102 (4.8%) are in remedial education, and 265 (12.4%) are enrolled in special education. At Griffith, 13% of the overall student population is Latinos, 64% are black, 18% are white, 2% are Asian, and the remaining 3% is multiracial. The white population decreased from the previous year by 5%. Griffith is not a failing school because it has made AYP for the past two consecutive years. This school is not currently under corrective action, and it continues to incorporate Latino students from various Latin American countries (Georgia Department of Education, 2007).

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Griffith is an interesting research site due to the demographic changes, which have shaped the student enrollment, reflective in the larger population trends. Despite efforts by the district to reverse segregation, African-American and Latino students have increasingly become more segregated from their white counterparts. Although the number of Latino students is steadily shown more increase, black and Latino students are becoming more isolated from white students and are concentrated in minority-majority school districts. Such demographic shift is a cause for concern because of the increase of risks factors it has created such as, low parental involvement, less experienced and credentialed teachers, lack of resources, higher teacher turnover rate, all of which only exacerbate educational inequality (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).

## Selection of Participants

The researcher was unable to meet with potential participants in order to formally introduce the study as planned due to a strict district instructional time policy restricting teachers and students from utilizing instructional time to conduct research. Such activities are considered to be conflicts of interest. The researcher prepared 26 packets, the total number of ESOL 11th and 12th grade Latino students who were currently receiving ESOL language support. The ESOL administrator assisted the researcher by hand delivering the packets to all the potential participants. All potential participants were given a two day turn-around time as a deadline to return the packet with signed consent and assent forms to the ESOL Administrator's office.

Only students with completed and signed permission packets were allowed to participate in the study. This procedure ensures commitment on the part of the participants, and screened out participants who may have jeopardized the advancement of the study. Gathered consent and permission information was placed in safekeeping for future accountability purposes. Of equal importance to the researcher was the information regarding risk factors acknowledgement statement, which indicates the foreseeable risks for participating in the study as minimal. Furthermore, as participants they always had the right to withdraw from the study as defined pursuant to O.C.G.A. Title 20 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, (FERPA) and the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 45) and the Belmont Report. This statement was verbalized to participants as stated in their signed assent form upon beginning each interview.

**Instrumentation**

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument (Patton, 2002). Relatively modest standardized instrumentation, such as interview protocol aided the researcher while conducting this qualitative study. The researcher was primarily the key "measurement device," whose aim was to provide a description of local characteristics; focus was placed on individuals' perspective and interpretation of the experiences of their world; thus relatively little predesigned instrumentation was required (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The researcher acknowledged the need to adopt a stance of neutrality and transparency (Patton, 2002) in order to provide a pathway to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. To that end, the researcher utilized a predesigned instrument to aid the data

collection process. The in-depth interview protocols provided structure to the interviews and avoided superfluous information that could have overloaded the researcher and compromised the analysis efficiency.

Moreover, commonality was prerequisite when developing this study as a way of enhancing the data quality and analysis; therefore, the use of an interview protocol, was adapted because it was comparable to what is used in other phenomenological studies. In addition, to minimize bias, and produce dependable and meaningful findings, this tool assisted the researcher to ask impartial questions, take unselective notes, and make reliable observations in order to prevent skewing of the data. Utilizing various methods of data sources such as in-depth interview transcripts, epoche journal, and field notes can compare different participants, settings, and methods to substantiate recurring themes in order to triangulate the findings.

The researcher received input from a panel of experts, which consisted of a dissertation committee member and fellow doctoral colleagues to develop interview questions. Dissertation committee members reviewed the interview protocols to ensure that questions were open-ended and elicited the intended information. In addition, a doctoral colleague participated in a mock interview with the investigator to ensure questions were not leading and provided the required level of reliability. Finally, to further the reliability of the study, the researcher conducted the interviews in the same setting and all participants were provided with the same research information and received the same instructions prior to beginning each interview. The open-ended design of the interview protocols questions provided uniformity, whereby all participants were asked the same series of questions during

the interview. Table 1 provides an example of open-ended questions written and used to

include in the interview for which the questions were used.

| *Table 1* | Example of Open-Ended Interview Questions |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Interview # | Interview Question |
| 1 | What can you tell me about your proficiency (ability to speak, read, and write), in English? |
| 2 | Reflecting on your experiences of acquiring English as a second language, can you share your understanding of these experiences? |

Prior to each interview, the researcher established rapport with participants. The

nature of the questions provided participants with ample time to explain and expand upon

their perceptions, and attitudes relative to the experiences of acquiring English as a second

language in the academic context. For the initial interview, questions were asked just as they

were written. However, the prearranged open-ended questions of the second interview were

influenced by participants' response in the first interview as expected in a flexible dialogue.

Such discussion afforded participants the freedom to openly share their perspectives about

the phenomenon. The protocol developed for each in-depth interview, assisted as a guide for

the discussion. Thus, each protocol (see Appendices L/M and N/O) maximized the

researcher's focus on the overarching research question and the sub-question guiding this

study.

The researcher's internal reliability and validity checks were aided by the research methodologist and an education doctoral colleague. His understanding of the process was beneficial as he had also conducted a qualitative study. He examined and responded to the questions, and helped to refined them to ensure they were open-ended and would elicit the intended information. Modifications to the interview questions were made after receiving specific critique and recommendations, which were aimed at bolstering reliability and validity, as well as content validity, prior to the start of each interview.

## Validity

The concern about one's values and preconceptions affects what is observed in the field, what is heard, and was recorded, was a genuine and demanding concern to the researcher. Nonetheless, the researcher handled these concerns in the following manner:

1. Acknowledged preconceived ideas about the process of English language acquisition.

2. Articulated biases: (a) The researcher worked as an ESOL/IEL teacher with newcomers during the course of the study (b) The researcher was an elementary ESOL/IEL teacher working with Latino students, (c) The researcher did not know any of the participants prior to beginning the study, (d) The researcher worked in the same county where the study was conducted, (e) The researcher believes Latino students are leaving school earl as a resolve of subtractive language policies and practices, and (e) The researcher is of Hispanic origin and is bilingual and proficient in both languages.

**Epoche Journal**. The researcher journalized daily while conducting the study in order to bracket preconceptions, and account for any occurrences during field procedures to mitigate any influence on the data, which is a physical representation of epoche. This journal included a description of events and feelings associated with the phenomenon in order to explore any researcher's biases and assumptions. This medium was also considered a place to differentiate between what participants said during the interviews and what was interpreted by the researcher. Finally, this process also established an "audit trail" to verify the thoroughness of the researcher's field work, minimizing bias while maximizing accuracy in order to develop an impartial valid report of the findings.

**Peer Debriefing**. Another technique utilized to enhance trustworthiness of this study is peer debriefing as noted in Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Merriam (2002), in an effort to further protect against researcher bias. There were two peer debriefers who assisted the researcher. These individuals' involvement proved to be of benefit because they acted as devil's advocate by asking about the emerging data probingly to consider alternative explanation and ensure the investigator was describing these experiences as the participants said they lived through it.

**Rich, Thick Description.** The researcher utilized a rich, thick description, which is considered a major strategy to ensure external validity. This description hopefully transferred readers to the setting and gave the discussion at hand an element of credible shared experiences. By providing ample perspectives about the resulting themes, experiences become believable. This richly layered description will allow readers to determine the congruency and transferability of the findings (Merriam, 2002).

## Reliability

The researcher preserved the reliability of the collected data in this phenomenological study noted in Yin (2003) and Gibbs (2002) as outlined:

1. Ensured transcripts are error free.

2. Ensured drifts do not exist when defining codes by constantly comparing data.

3. Ensured intercoder agreement by allowing a detailed examination of the findings.

## Assumptions

Certain assumptions were made by the investigator conducting this phenomenological study examining Latino students' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in their educational context. These assumptions became the underpinnings for the study as well as, collecting and analyzing the data. One of the major assumptions of this study was that participants had ascribed meaning to the experiences of acquiring English as a second language within the educate context. As study participants, they were able to articulate how this meaning affected their academic attainment and/or their decision to leave school early.

Moreover, it was assumed participants were honest with the scope and quality of the answers, which they spoke during their interviews. Albeit, participants may have had reservations with the process, believing their responses would have identified them publicly. Assurance of anonymity was given to each participant prior to beginning the first interview of the series as stated in assent and parental consent forms (see Appendices F/G & H/I).

Another assumption relative to this discourse is that participants, because they were

voluntarily articulating their own experiences of the phenomenon, answered the questions

honesty without fear of reprisal. Consequently, participants were apprised on the voluntary

nature of the study as described in assent and parental consent forms (see Appendices F/G &

H/I). Finally, it was assumed that standardization of interviews in terms of setting and focus,

which was established by the researcher, provided consistency and aided the researcher with

the interpretation of the collected data.

**Procedures**

A phenomenological approach was used to develop a rich, thick, description of

Latino student's lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the

academic context. The researcher conducted a series of interview with five (N = 5)

participants, for a total of (N = 10), in-depth phenomenological interviews. In addition, the

researcher journalized through the course of the study. To begin the study, Griffith's

principal was contacted in writing through the aid of a letter, sent via U.S. postal services

(see Appendix C) requesting the use of the school as the site for conducting the study. This

request was accompanied by approval to conduct a study from the school district's Office of

Accountability and Research (see Appendix B).

Upon receipt of approval from the school's principal, the ESOL administrator was

contacted via email (see Appendix E) to request her assistance in identifying potential

participants to be interviewed. The researcher prepared 26 invitation packets for Latino

students who were receiving ESOL services in the 11th and 12th grades. Each packets

included an In-take Form that required an outline of the students' demographic information (see Appendices J/K), students assent form (see Appendices H/I), and parental consent form (see Appendices F/G). Only seven packets with signed consent and assent forms were returned. The study moved forward with the seven participants. As the study began, one participant decided to withdraw from the study due to the conflict it presented with his after school employment. Another participant did not attend the scheduled interviews on two separate occasions. Thus, the study moved forward with the five remaining participants.

All parental and student information was translated in Spanish, to include the interview protocols, in an effort to adhere to the local, state, and federal requirements of the Title I of the Improving America's School Act (IASA 1994, sec. 1118). This legislation requires parental involvement through maintaining continuous partnership between home and school, which necessitates providing translation of school documents in parents' native languages. As a translator/interpreter for a local school in the school district, the researcher translated all necessary letters, permission forms, and student assent form, which were later edited by the school district's International Welcome Center interpreters/translators services.

Both forms provided student participants and their parents with in-depth information about the purpose of the study such as: (a) purpose of collecting the data, (b) How information was to be used once gathered, (c) what was asked of the interviewees, (d) How responses and confidentiality would be handled, (e) what risks were involved, and (f) what were the potential benefits for persons who were involved in the study.

In order to protect students' information, the researcher used a lock box filling system as storage for participants' information and kept it at home during the course of the study to ensure strict confidentiality of participants' information. It was important to the researcher that participants knew their confidentiality was protected and respected. Participants were granted partial anonymity. The researcher is the only person who knows the students' true identity because all participants' names were disguised by a pseudonym for the written report and any future presentation.

Each interview was digitally recorded using an Olympus WS-500 SLV SGB Handheld Digital Voice Recorder, for a total of two voice recordings per participant and retained as valuable artifacts for data analysis. This device proved to be ideal for study because it provided a cataloging system, whereby the researcher assigned participants' individual interview to a file. Audio recordings were stored on the digital recorder and synched to the researcher's laptop after each interview was completed. This electronic device could only be accessed by the researcher's username and password, which was strictly confidential. Recordings were promised to be deleted from the device once the interviews were transcribed, the data analysis was completed, and the dissertation committee reviewed the data analysis.

These interview sessions elicited life history information according to the guidelines adopted from Seidman (2006). Each of the two interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes for a combined total of approximately 60 minutes. Interview protocols were instrumental as they allowed participants to explain their perceptions of the phenomenon. These instruments allowed participants to reconstruct and articulate a narrative of their past family, schooling,

and work related experiences that placed them in the context of the phenomenon as it related

to their lives. For the second and final interview (see Appendices N & O), participants were

given an opportunity to provide concrete details of their lived experiences of acquiring

English as a second language in their academic context, as well as to reflect on the meaning

of the experiences. Finally, when entered in acquiescence with participants, the researcher

appealed to the benefits that will accrue to both participants and the researcher without the

need for alternative enhancement for participation through incentives. The researcher

appealed to participants' contributions to knowledge made through their articulation of the

phenomenon being studied.

## Data Analysis

This study attempted to answer the following main research question and sub-

research question:

RQ: What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second language as

described by Latino students?

SRQ1: What conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students' understanding of

their experiences of acquiring English as a second language?

For this study, the researcher have conducted two in-depth phenomenological

interviews with $(N = 5)$ for a total of $(N = 10)$ interviews whereby, Latino students'

experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context was recorded

and analyzed phenomenologically. Phenomenological reduction, which allowed for the

discovery of emergent themes derived from interviews, allowed for descriptive statements of

the phenomenon to emerge, followed by the reduction of invariant themes or the essential

structure of the phenomenon. Data was analyzed in accordance with the phenomenological

analysis procedures as established by Moustakas (1994). Specific terminology can be found

in parentheses throughout this section.

The researcher viewed collected data as "raw field notes and verbatim transcripts

constituting the undigested complexity of reality" (Patton, 2002, p. 463). Therefore, this

approach sought to discover some of the underlying structure or essence of Latino students'

experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. To

accomplish this task the researcher chose the traditional manner whereby, the analysis was

conducted without the use of a software program. Although software programs offer

different tools and arrangements for coding, the principles of the analytical process remains

the same whether doing it manually or with the assistance of a computer program.

The researcher began the analysis process with the development of a coding scheme

categorizing and labeling the primary patterns emerging from the data. The process began

with the investigator reading through all of the interviews and commenting in the margins

about how to organize the data into topics or files. Generating the categories was like

constructing an index to a book or the labels for a filing system. Phenomenologically

speaking, this essentially means conducting phenomenological reduction, which is a three

part process.

First, the researcher located statements within the participants' transcripts to gain insight into the students' experiences as articulated during the first interview in the two-interview series (horizonalization). The first reading of the data was aimed at developing the coding categories or classification system. The second reading began the formal systemic coding process (delimited horizons). Several more readings were necessary before the entire data was indexed and coded (invariant qualities and themes). The investigator colored the text to represent the six categories representing the experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context as shown in Table 2. This coloring technique proved to be particularly helpful to the researcher because of the ease of tracking the source of a quote in the transcripts to create themes. At this point, phenomenologically speaking, participants' experiences came alive as the researcher delved into the process to develop a descriptive summary by drawing on the words of the participants (individual textural descriptions).

The following phase of the data analysis is the interpretive analysis (composite textural description). During this ontological phase, the researcher constructed an interpretive summary of each participant's experiences across the two interviews (composite structural descriptions). The researcher then presented three themes, which described the essence of the experiences across all participants. Combining physical descriptions allowed for a complete account of the experiences. From these descriptions, the researcher was then able to summarize participants' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language.

**Summary**

This qualitative study presented a phenomenological inquiry through in-depth interviews to research the overarching question regarding the lived experiences of Latino students' acquisition of English as a second language in the academic context. Through the use of open-ended questions, the researcher was permitted to ask descriptive and structural questions, which elicited a body of information regarding the second language acquisition process of Latino high school students. Data mainly emerged during two semi-structured interviews. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the research were explained as important mechanisms when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data in order to offer feasible outcomes. Chapter Four provides readers with an introduction, restatement of the purpose of the study, research questions, research questions and emerging themes, students' individual textural descriptions, thematic composite textural descriptions, composite structural descriptions of themes and subthemes, research findings, and concludes with summary.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

*"Individuals' consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people" (Seidman, 2006, p. 1).*

### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, through a rich descriptive approach. This descriptive approach allowed for the development of specific discovery questions, whereby the researcher was the instrument through which the data was collected (Seidman, 2006). Several techniques were employed by the researcher to augment the trustworthiness of the study's findings. Data analysis strategies were adopted from the guidelines of other qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002, and Seidman, 2006).

### Restatement of Purpose of the Study

Thus, the purpose of this study was to describe Latino students' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. In this study, five (N = 5) Latino students reconstructed the structural invariant meaning they have ascribed to the task of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. This study attempted to address the scarcity of students' perspective in the literature as well as provided all stakeholders with a deep understanding of the multidimensional complexities of the ways in which languages are mediated in the educational context.

Moreover, this chapter focused on the original data obtained via two open-ended interviews. It is organized to answer the following research questions:

RQ: What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second language as described by Latino students?

SRQ1: What conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students' understanding of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language?

"A phenomenological investigation has this twofold character: a preoccupation with both the concreteness (the ontic) or textual description as well as the essential nature (the ontological) or the structural interpretation of a lived experiences" Van Manen (1990, p. 35). This chapter first addressed the ontic level; whereby, participants used their own words to form a natural or raw textual description of the experiences, phenomenologically speaking, "the what" of the appearing phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 78-79). The second section of this chapter focused on the second step of phenomenology, meaning-making and interpretative examination or "the how" of the experiences, the goal of which is to provide a practical composite description of the essences of the students' experiences (structural descriptions, phenomenologically speaking) through the illustration of themes. Such analysis is prepared in order to answer the sub-research question.

**Main Research Question**

The following main research question guided this study: What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second language as described by Latino students? The questions used in the interview protocols (see Appendices H & I) were designed to address this main research question. Narrations of participants' individual and composite textural descriptions of the experiences addressed the emergent themes. Once students offered their

narrative, it was imperative to translate them truthfully. Therefore, as to avoid the road to falsehood, Kramer (2003) who translated Buber (1970, p. 40-44) warns against this danger:

> As a translator, I have no right to use the text confronting me as an object with which I may take liberties. It is not there for me to manipulate. I am not to use it as a point of departure, or as anything else. It is the voice of a person that needs me. I am there to help him speak. If I would rather speak in my own voice, I am free to do that—on other occasions. To foist my thoughts, my images, my style on those whom I confess translate is dishonest […] Tone is crucial and often colors meaning […] To meddle with a text one translates and to father one's inventions on another man is a sin against the spirit.

Therefore, the researcher quoted participants extensively and appropriately following the principles of phenomenology. Moreover, the researcher internalized the position of data collection instrument to an argumentative device used to extrapolate the lived reality of the students under study. The buoyancy of the students account was narrowed by the linear constraint imposed by the text, which in a sense boxed them in. Although the text was necessary to convey the students' experiences, ultimately, this fixed state became immortalized, and restricted that which was effectively on-going, moving, transforming, and fluid. Participants were given access to both languages. Two participants chose to be interviewed in Spanish. Therefore, their narratives were translated from Spanish back to English. Each participant's transcribed authentic voice was presented in its originality, without editing. This process provided readers with a bilingual representation of these participants' narratives.

**Research Questions and Emerging Themes**

The main data, which was collected and analyzed, began with Question eight. Questions eight, nine, and ten of the first interview began to flesh out the main occurrences that served as testimony of participants' experiences as Latino students who were acquiring English as a second language. Therefore, the researcher began by sketching out what participants shared about their linguistic proficiency in both languages, which they understood as the ability to speak, read, and write proficiently in two languages. Question 11 asked participants if they were ever instructed to speak English while speaking Spanish, and to explain the circumstances.

This question also served as segue to the second interview, which primary function was to deal with meaning. The second interview protocol, included questions organized in the following manner: The first, second, third, and fourth questions asked participants to describe their experience of being told to speak English and what meaning or understanding they ascribed to the command. Question five asked students to share their meaning and understanding of the experiences of acquiring English as a second language. Question six asked students to describe their language usage at home, in school, and with peers. Question seven is a reflective question that asked participants to explain their understanding of the experiences of acquiring English as a second language. The interview concluded with question eight, the last question, which asked participants to share their future outlook as Latino language learners. Six categories were created from the in-depth interview protocol questions. They are stated as follows:

1. Students' linguistic proficiency in both languages, (the ability to listen, speak, read, and write a language).
2. Describing the request to speak English (circumstances, meaning, feeling, & context).
3. Meaning of Acquiring English as a second language.
4. Language usage.
5. Understanding of the experiences of acquiring English as a second language.
6. Future as Latino Students.

Illustrated in Table 2 is an organized dissemination of the interview protocol questions and their association to categories generated from those in-depth interview protocols questions, which were correlated to the categories, whereby allowing the phenomena to speak for itself from its naturalistic setting and answer the main research questions. Examples of participants' exact comments were exacted and presented in Table 2 to provide readers with the original source of the themes, which provide the essence of the experiences. Three main themes emerged across (N = 5) participants' in-depth phenomenological interviews for a total of (N = 10) interviews. Themes are stated as follows: (a) Difficulty with the Language[s], (b) Linguistic Oppression: Linguicism, and (c) Optimistic Future.

Participants' words were combined with researcher's comments to interpret the experiences and make connection between their common experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context (composite structural description). The chapter concludes with a description of the essence or themes, which emerged from participants' experiences. This conclusion serves as the answer to the sub-research question.

*Table 2*

| In-Depth Interviews Questions, Categories and Themes | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Related Questions** | **Category** | **Source of Themes** |
| Questions 1 - 7 | Students' Educational background | (presented in Table 4) |
| Questions 8, 9, & 10 | Students' linguistic proficiency in both languages, (the ability to listen, speak, read, and write a language). | Struggle |
| | | Frustration |
| | | Difficulty |
| | | It is hard |
| | | It is kinda hard |
| Question 11 (interview I) | Describing the request to speak English (circumstances, meaning, feeling, & context) | We are not in Mexico |
| | | We are in America, we speak English |
| | | Talk English… this is America |
| Questions 1 - 4 (interview II) | | Speak English because we are in America |
| | | When speaking Spanish, they say English… English |
| | | Leave my language because I came to this county |
| | | Taking your pride away |
| | | They don't like Spanish a white girl… she saying…English |
| Question 5 | Meaning of Acquiring English as a second language | Struggle with English |
| | | Been difficult |
| Question 6 | Language usage | With parents it is Spanish and brothers English. |
| | | Usually speak Spanglish |
| | | Speak Spanish most of the time |
| | | English in the morning |
| | | Use English from 8:00 - 2:00 pm. |
| Question 7 | Understanding of the experiences of acquiring English as a second language | I didn't struggle |
| | | Teacher don't allow Spanish for your own good |
| | | It has been a difficult experiences |
| | | A bit difficult |
| | | Sometimes it is hard |
| Question 8 | Future as Latino Students | Yeah, will be graduating |
| | | Describe it bright |
| | | It is better |
| | | Going to be successful |
| | | Have more opportunities to get a better job |

The interviews were scheduled within a three weeks period of time in order to comply with the school district's requirements, which stated that data is to be collected before May 1st. Therefore, the actual interviews were conducted as illustrated in Table 3.

*Table 3*

| Project Calendar | M | T | W | Th | F | M | T | W | Th | F | M | T | W | Th | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apr-10 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| Mercedes (Lost to follow-up ) | | | | | | | | | | – | | | – | | |
| Pablo (Withdrawn) | | | | – | – | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carla | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Linda | | | | X | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Rain | | | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Miguel | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X |
| Pedro | | | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | |

The duration of the study was three weeks and included two separate interviews with (N=5) students for a total of (N=10) individual interviews. The process of reconstruction proved to be difficult for some participants whose account of some experiences was filled with pains and sadness. Their voices served as preface to their account, which offers authentic evidence of the phenomenon.  Before beginning the interviews, the researcher established rapport with interviewee in order to facilitate a more open and honest discussion. To build rapport, the investigator allowed time to introduce and explained the study to participants. The role and responsibility of the investigator and of the participants was also explained. In an effort to acknowledge the interviewees, the researcher allowed them to introduce themselves and select a pseudonym to protect their identities. Participants were first asked basic background questions such as, where are you from, and what grade are you in? These questions allowed participants and the interviewer an opportunity to become

acclimated to the process of interviewing. Data gathered from that portion of the interviews provided the investigator with the necessary information to introduce and acquaint each participant to the reader as described in the overview of participants as follows:

**Overview of Participants**

*Linda*

An eleventh grade student anticipating her Georgia High School Graduation tests results when her interview was conducted. Her family migrated here when she was a young girl. She began attending school in the community since the second grade. Linda stated that her academic course work was average and that she looked forward to graduating and perhaps receiving a grant to attend college, because like many immigrant students, Linda's legal status does not permit receiving federal funds, such as pell grant, to attend a higher education institution.

*Carla*

An eleventh grade student, well composed and guarded, has attended school in the community since kindergarten. She was very aware of herself and the environment around her. Although determined to succeed, she spoke about her academic struggle. At the time of her interview, Carla was committed to learning English. Unlike her brother, who she claimed dropped out of school because of the difficulty with the English language; Carla says that she is committed to graduating and becoming the first in her family to receive a high school diploma. Carla's family migrated here with her from Mexico when she was a toddler.

*Rain*

Rain migrated to the community only two years ago. She stated that her family was very transient, when they lived in Mexico. As a result, she transferred school several occasions. Rain also noted that English was challenging, but due to her ability to read Spanish, she had done well with the English language acquisition thus far. When she was interviewed, she only had to take one ESOL class. After only two years, in this country, she had already acquired enough English to be placed in regular classes. Rain also looked forward to becoming bilingual and graduating. She was weighing her options of returning to Mexico to continue her education there or remain here and securing employment. Another option would be to stay here and seek employment.

*Pedro*

Is an American student who attended kindergarten in the community. His parents withdrew him and they returned to Mexico. There is where he was formally educated in Spanish. He stated that he already received the equivalent of a high school diploma in Mexico and that he is here living with his aunt to learn English. Although he had been here only a year now, he was taking regular general education classes such as physics. Pedro was guarded and very reserved.

*Miguel*

A senior, was preparing to graduate when I interviewed him, also lives with relatives in the community. After learning English, he plans to return to El Salvador because bilingual employees there earn a good living. He was enrolled in school in the community only two

years prior to this interview. After this time, he was ready to graduate from high school, and looked forward to entering the job market as a bilingual employee.

**Summary of Participants**

Question one through seven asked participants about their educational background. The open-ended nature of these questions allowed participants to provided details from childhood to present. The information was then used to develop a background summary of participants (see Table 4).

*Table 4*

| Background Summary of Participants | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students | Age | Grade | Educational Background |
| Linda | 17 | 11th | Attended American schools since the second grade. |
| Carla | 17 | 11th | Attended American schools since Kindergarten. |
| Rain | 18 | 11th | Began attending school at the research site since 2008. |
| Pedro | 19 | 11th | Attended Kindergarten in Georgia. Returned from Mexico with a high school diploma. |
| Miguel | 19 | 12th | Attended school in El Salvador. Migrated here and attended school since 2008. |

## Students Individual Textural Descriptions

In order to determine the relevant information depicting the experiences of acquiring English as a second language, participants' verbatim-transcribed interviews were analyzed and displayed in a coherent manner utilizing the aforementioned categories presented in Table 2. Thus, an individual textural description presenting participants' voice to the audience for the first time begins the ontic level of data analysis, followed by a composite textural description of each stated category concurrently.

### Miguel's Individual Textur1al Description of Language Proficiency

Although Miguel did not explicitly discuss his proficiency, it was very interesting to hear how he compartmentalized his language usage among the different ethnic groups.

Miguel: Yeah cause, I have like three years in here… Cause, I speak English with white people, black people… And Spanish with Latinos… Is kinda hard when you are writing or reading… Because sometimes my accent it does not help… cause sometimes they don't understand me… I have to say it again.

### Carla's Individual Textural Description of Acquisition of English

The experiences of acquiring English as a second language for Carla were laden with mixed emotions. The data revealed three factors that influenced her perception of this phenomenon: (1) the increased opportunities that this added skill would provide her; (2) realizing the difficulty of the process can impede her full integration in this society; and (3) the increased personal worth and benefits of bilingualism.  Here is what she had to say:

Carla:  Learn… learning… English, I think it is something good, because… I mean, you are here and the United States…. And, basically back in Mexico there wasn't a lot of opportunities for people as these days in here in the United States… that is why people… A

lot of young people come here to learn… to try to learn, but then at the same time they struggle with English… That usually they can't take it and they just… Go on and do something else… Basically, go get a job or try to do something else… But… I think English is really important… because… You know you got two languages and that makes you… "valer más" (to be worth more) and I think that is something good for somebody to speak two languages. Hmmmm….

## Rain's Individual Textural Description of Being Told to Speak English

Participants were asked to share their experiences of being told to speak English

instead of Spanish in order to understand how they as language learners described these

experiences and what implication they presented them. Rain understood the request to be a

fair one. According to her, the teacher was within her rights to request that students refrained

from speaking their home language because of the multilingual construct of the classroom.

Moreover, with Spanish as the most dominant language spoken within this particular ESOL

classroom, the other language learners were at a linguistic disadvantage.  Nonetheless, she

claimed to have experienced negative feelings as a result of the request.

Rain:  Ahmm. Algunos…. Este…. Que… Que algunos niños no saben hablar español… Y si yo me pusiera en su lugar, yo también me sentiría mal en no entender el español. Eso es pues si, me sentí mal por los que no hablan español. I mean…. That… That some children don't know how to speak Spanish… And if I were to put myself in their place, I also would feel bad if I did not understanding Spanish. But yes, I felt upset for those who speak Spanish.

## Pedro's Individual Textural Description of Daily Language Usage

Participants were asked to share their language usage within a typical day to

understand when they spoke their languages and with whom. Students articulated making

the switch between the two languages [English and Spanish] on a daily basis depending

upon the individuals they were communicating with and for what purpose. Interestingly,

only one student spoke English with non-Latino students. Spanish seemed to be spoken only with Spanish speaking friends and family members in the home.

Pedro's response was intriguing. It is not clear why he felt the way he did about communicating with his teachers. His response signaled a conflicting relationship. On the day of the interview, he was serving in-school suspension (ISS) for yelling at his physics teacher. According to Pedro, the teacher constantly said she was unable to understand him. One day, he claimed that he raised his voice so she could understand him. He preferred to be interviewed in Spanish. His responses were presented in both languages. Pedro spoke about his language usage.

> Pedro: en la mañana… pues me levanto y le digo a mi mama ya me voy… A mis amigos les saludos como están… A mis maestros, con ellos no tengo mucha plática./Spanish…In English… In the morning… Well, I awake and I tell my Mom that I am leaving… I greet my friends by asking how are you all doing…with my teachers, with them I don't have too much conversation.

**Linda's Individual Textural Description of Future**

Overwhelmingly, all of the participants were very optimistic about their future as Latino students, despite their struggles with English language acquisition and their undocumented status. However, these students faced with socioeconomic and political challenges, which make their access to higher education very difficult.

When Linda was asked about her future as a Latina student, she immediately began to talk about undocumented students' inability to attend college without a social security card.  However, she was still hopeful there might be a possibility she could obtain a grant in order to continue pursuing her education endeavors.

Linda: Well… You know like a lot of people can't go to college because of their social security… But I mean some… I think if they… I mean try to… they might… They might…. Could get a grant or something…

## Composite Textural Description of Linguistic Proficiency

Participants have been introduced to the readers. The ontic portion of analysis continues with the presentation of a composite textural description of the phenomenon. This section presents their in-depth interviews categorically and combines the other participants' verbatim descriptions to construct a composite sketch of the experiences for all participants. Therefore, the data analysis begins with participants' proficiency, which is characterized by these students solely as the ability to speak the languages. Students did not include reading and writing as part of linguistic proficiency. The range of abilities also encompasses different competences in terms of proficiency and varieties of both English and Spanish. Linda's response was very interesting because she talked about what is referred to in the field of linguistics as code switching, which is a well studied linguistic phenomenon. Code switching involves the alternating between two linguistic codes in a single conversation.

Linda: I have been in school there since the second grade, all my life. Ahmm…Well… if I don't know a word, I said in Spanish and if I don't know in Spanish, I say in English. Like I… mixed them up. I get frustrated, cause like sometimes when they tell you to spell this… Well in my house, my mom is help me fill papers out…I am like how do you spell it? She is like well… I don't know you are in school. I don't even know, I get frustrated. In English? Well I know how to write it…And I know how to speak it…Sometimes, I be confused the words when they are like long words… And I don't know what they mean… But I think I am OK… Yeah… I am on grade level.

Carla also expressed having difficulty with the vocabulary. She also blamed her academic difficulty on her lack of English proficiency.

Carla: Well, ever since I came to Mexico… The first school I went to… Where I actually learned English. Ahmm…Well, I do struggle most of the time cause… Cause in Spanish is words that I can't get right. And then in English it is the same…Because of all the vowels and everything… Yeah I had to struggle between both language. We usually speak more Spanish… But, since my little brothers and sisters don't talk basically no Spanish, so we talk English to them. And then I have to translate for my mom… and it's crazy… Yeah… Well, I have really like have struggle in that. Cause like big words and then some words you don't know the meaning of it. And it is just like…Its really hard for me. To like get through my other subjects… Because of English and not knowing it good.

Rain sees her bilingualism pleasantly. She enjoys being able to speak Spanish with her friends and English at school with classmates. Rain asked to be interviewed in Spanish. Her responses were translated from Spanish to English. She also describes proficiency solely as having the ability to speak two languages.

Rain: En el… en octubre de 2008 llegue aquí… Y ya no he cambiado de escuelas hasta ahorita. October of 2008 I came here and I haven't changed school since then. Ahmm… Pues es… Es agradable porque algunas veces hablo español y otras veces hables inglés. Ahmm… Well it has been pleasant, sometimes I speak Spanish and other times I speak English.

Pedro's response was very brief. Nonetheless, it was assumed he was also referring to the ability to speak the language due to his subsequent responses.

Pedro: Pues cuando estaba chico estudie el kinder aquí…. Después me fui pa México… estudie la primaria, después pase a la secundaria… termine la secundaria, la preparatoria… termine la preparatoria y me vine para aquí… y estoy aquí apenas dos años en esta escuela. Well, when I was young, I studied in kindergarten here… then I when to Mexico… I studied primary, then I passed to secondary… I finished de secondary, and the preparatory… I finished the preparatory and I came back here… I have been here Only two years in this school.Los dos hablo en inglés y en español. Both, I speak in English and Spanish. Ahmm… Los hablo con mis hermanas… Y hablo en inglés con mi mamá… y en la escuela con mis amigos con mis maestros, hablo los dos. I speak in English with my Mom… and in school with

my friends, with my teachers, I speak both. En español si puedo, en inglés se me hace un poco más difícil. In Spanish I can, in English it is a bit more difficult.

## Composite Textural Description of Acquiring English

The experiences of acquiring English as a second language is articulated in varying degrees ranging from positive and easy to difficult, yet necessary with an optimistic tone. The common experiences across the five participants are presented. Although Linda struggled to express herself, she explained the following:

Linda: It took me like a year to learn English… Cause… Well, it wasn't that hard… cause I was little… and it was easy cause my mom, didn't like… she talked to me in Spanish all the time… but like my cousins… We lived with cousins most of the time… And they speak English… So I got it easy growing up.

For the Pedro, and Rain, this experience has proven to be a difficult one.

Rain: OH…. OK…. Es un poco difícil porque… para el español es… no se es más fácil y… ahorita estar aprendiendo el inglés así como que…. algunas palabras se escuchan igual pero no es lo mismo y así sucesivamente./OH… OK… It has been a bit difficult because… for the Spanish… no that is more easy and… right now to be learning the English, it is like… some words are heard the same but it is not the same and like that successively.

Pedro: Hmmmm…. Pues… Se me ha hecho difícil…Y pues yo se que lo voy a dominar muy pronto. Mmm...…Well… It has been difficult… And well, I know that I am going to dominate it very soon.

Miguel just seemed to be very optimistic. His intrinsic motivation to learn the language was evident. His acculturative motivation into the society was captured in this excerpt. Here is what he had to say:

Miguel: Well… Ahmm…Yeah… If… If you speak two languages, I think is better for you… Being bilingual… I think is… is OK… I mean you have the opportunity to learn English… OK… Cause that gonna help you in your future.

When asked to provide more details of the experience of learning English as a second language, participants' responses varied. However, the verbatim excerpts represent a compelling tale of struggle and great difficulty. Linda expressed difficulty with writing the language. However, she stated that she had not had any difficulty with the listening, speaking, reading, and writing language domains.

> Linda: I didn't struggle a lot speaking English… Oh… learning it… I didn't struggle. I probably did with the writing and stuff, but… Like speaking it, no. Well I think I am on like…. I don't know… Like on level… I think… Well, not exactly on level like… Well, Literature right now… it is like English I had a B. I mean I be passing them with B's…. I don't think that I am low.

Carla was candid about the struggles she has had through her experiences. She expressed deep gratitude for the assistance provided to her through the ESOL program. She believed her ESOL teachers have had her best interest at hand by restricting the use of her home language in the classroom. According to Carla, receiving ESOL services from Kindergarten has greatly assisted her in acquiring English as a second language. When Carla stated that she had been receiving ESOL language support for 12 years, this information prompted concerns about the length of time required to become proficient in English.

> Carla: I mean… Since, Kindergarten to now, I have been ESOL… Basically, through all my school, years and I mean… It help… it had help me a lot… I mean teachers support you… They are usually there for you more… They are kind of strict on you, and not speaking Spanish but they do like, "Por el bien tuyo." (for your own good)… And, I think ESOL is like a big part of… of a Latino person because they usually give more help and… more "asistenta" (assistance). Translation assistance in their classes… Like on projects, school work… anything… There is a teacher that could help you out…English is hard but if you are in ESOL class, I think it makes it easier.

Rain complained about the phonological and spelling pattern of the English language. Comparing the two languages, she felt English has a more complex spelling structure, than Spanish. She attributed the difficulty she has experienced solely to the language structure.

> Rain: Ahmm… este… pues aprender el inglés…este como que…. Ha sido una experiencia muy difícil para mi y…. este…. Pues a veces es difícil otras veces es fácil… Y así sucesivamente… no hay… las palabras son más difícil leer… es más en el español…. Este… algunas veces… Ahmm así como están las palabras así se pronuncian… en cambio aquí en inglés… Ahmm, tienes que estar viendo las pala… letras y unas y otras… así como lo pronuncias suenan como se pronuncian…. No se escribir.  Ahmm… I mean… Well learning the English… I mean like that… It has been a difficult experience for me and… I mean… Well sometimes it is difficult and other times it is easy… And like that successively … There is no…. The words are more difficult to read… It is more than Spanish… I mean… sometimes… Ahmm Like the words are like this, they are pronounced... on the contrary here in English… Ahmm, you have to look at the words… letters and some and others… Like it is pronounced it is not how it is written. En mis clases, pues en mis clases me van bien como los maestros saben que soy alumna de ESOL, este… algunas veces dejan que los otros Latinos me ayuden… Y OH… algunas veces… este, la… los maestros luego… este si no le entrego el trabajo… Este nos hablan a los alumnos pero que ellos me ayudan, me explican más sobre ese tema. /In my classes, well in my classes I am doing very good since the teachers know that I am in ESOL, I mean… sometimes they allow the other Latino students to help me…And OH… Sometimes… I mean, the… the teachers later… I mean if I don't turn-in my assignment… they scowl the students, but that they help me, they explain more about the topic.

Yet, Pedro seemed very confident that he was well on his way to "dominating" English, as he puts it.

> Pedro: Estoy enfocándome en hablar el inglés, escribirlo y escucharlo…Y pues por ahora me es un poco difícil dominarlo. I am focusing in speaking English, write it, and listen to it… And well, for now it is a bit difficult to dominate it.

Miguel expressed his optimism. Nonetheless, he admitted that he does not like to read, which he understood may be impeding his acquisition of English.

> Miguel: My experience… I am learning my second language… I think is possible… Kinda easy and hard. Sometimes it seems… Sometimes hard… Cause I don't like to read. That's why… Sometimes in class they say, we have to read this book. And I think … That's worst part...Cause I don't like read. That's why. I don't know…

## Composite Textural Description of Being Told to speak English

Overall, participants shared genuine evidence of linguistic marginalization, with far reaching implications unfolding in their educational context.  Students articulated being told to speak English instead of Spanish. According to Linda,

> Linda: Sometimes, people that don't speak Spanish, they think that we are talking about them… They are like… We are not in Mexico or we are not… You don't…We are not in this other country; we are in America we speak English… That's what they be saying… It was by the gym and this girl passed by and she said we are not in Mexico, we are in America… and I am like… OK… So I got kinda mad… I mean why she gona get in our conversation. Well… I kinda…. I didn't feel offended, but I mean I ignore that person… But… Well, sometimes I don't feel good about being in ESOL not being able to do all my work in English… Because like some people look at you like slow. My boyfriend did… He didn't know that I was in ESOL and he said that's for slow people. I told him like as soon as he said.. I was like Oh…OK…Then I told him and he was like… OH… Never mind. Ahmm… I don't think they should be judging…ahmm…how…. like your language, your background….cause a lot of people be judging, about… like your… Well, just because of your color doesn't mean that you are Mexican…. You could be from another country. And I think…Ahmm…. well… I don't really pay attention to them either.

> Pedro's experience was similar. He shared the following:

> Pedro Pues, Ahmmm…. Algunos estudiantes me dicen que hable inglés porque estamos en America. Well, Ahmmm… Some students tell me to speak English because we are in America. Creo que no es justa… porque apenas voy llegando y no lo puedo dominar tan fácil. I believe that it is not just… because I am just arriving

and I can't dominate it as easily. Pues mal porque no es mi culpa… que no lo puedo hablar bien aun…. Well bad because it is not my fault that I can't speak it well as yet. Pues mal porque no es mi culpa… que no lo puedo hablar bien aun….Well, bad because it isn't my fault that I cannot speak it yet.

Although Miguel's experience was similar, he tended to believe the request could have been made because the other person did not understand Spanish. This is what he explained:

> Miguel: Yep… some people, when you are speaking Spanish, they say English… English but I don't know if they do like ah… sarcastic or something… I think they… because they don't understand it… What you are saying, that is why they say speak English cause they don't understand you. Yeah… it was in class… one time with my friend… and one girl, she was white… She saying… ENGLISH… because I don't understand the words you are saying… And I say… I am not talking to you… I am talking to my friend… She speak Spanish… Yes… But she say English… But I don't know if maybe she was just joking around or I don't know? I feel like… Ahmmm…. Hmmm… I don't know… I don't know… I don't like when people say speak English and only English… I mean… You have the right to speak English or speak Spanish…I mean is your language… If you want to speak English do it… if you want to speak Spanish that is OK. That wasn't a good request.

Carla's experience evoked disturbing thoughts and feelings expressed in her excerpt. As she reflected on the experience, tears came to her eyes. Her indignation was quite clear, as she fought back her tears to recount the experience.

> Carla: There was a time when I was helping a student out and I was talking to her in Spanish and the teacher had asked me to talk in English… Because this was America…And I kinda got defended bout it... But I ain't really say nothing cause… I mean cause I ain't wana go through that process. I got really sad…. I like… got mad at the same time… I didn't really want to do nothing about it cause… I was just so mad, it just so… angry about it you know… cause you know, cause I mean…. There was somebody beside me that didn't know… did not understand nothing… And they were asking me for help… and I felt mad and at the same time… Like really angry cause, I couldn't help her. Like people like… that don't speak your language, they like… They think you are talking about them when really you are not. You know

you just having a conversation. And they just on you… And, but I don't really care, you know I just ignore them. Basically… To leave my language because I came to this country… and then usually… Is not basically supposed to be like that cause I mean, people that are ask to leave their language… they are like Wow!… Like they are taking our pride away… And… some of that is really affecting students. Because… they don't really understand and like all these teachers… I mean there is some teachers that understand and are willing to help you… And but then at the same time there is teachers that are just not going to deal with you because you don't understand and they don't want to struggle with you… And…. I mean I had to struggle before, and but I made it through when. Like I made it throughout my ways… Yeah

### Composite Textural Description of Daily Language Usage

Although all participants commented on the need and the importance of learning English, many of them spoke Spanish throughout the day because of the necessity to function within their speech community (e.g., the home, in church, with relatives, and friends). Consequently, the use of English seemed to be superfluous due to the predominance of Spanish in students' speech community. Although they were told to speak English by others in their educational context, many students' parents and family members only speak Spanish.  Hence, the natural inclination to revert back to the first language L1 was explained by Linda. On the other hand, these students were also required to switch between both languages depending on who they were communicating with even in their own homes since now younger siblings have already made the language shift to speaking only English. Linda explained.

> Linda: Well… in school English, but with my friends, sometimes is Spanish. And in my house is it the same… My parents it is Spanish and my brothers English.

Carla's response was very interesting as well. She explained the need to speak

Spanglish, which is suggested as a combination of both languages.

> Carla: I usually speak Spanglish most the time….I mean, I have spoken to English teachers Spanglish because I got so use to it… Because, there is like I said, there is some words that I don't know English and there is some words that I don't know in Spanish… And it is just that if I speak in Spanglish, it expresses me more and like for me to speak both my languages… is like, something that expresses me more.

> Rains said she speaks Spanish for most of the day.

> Rain: Pues… lo que más uso es el español y algunas veces, cuando estoy en mi segunda clase es donde más ocupo el inglés… Y Ahha… con el… en mi segunda y en mi tercera clase es donde… ocupo el inglés… y ya el resto del día hablo español….(hahaha). Well… what I most use is Spanish and sometimes, when I am in my second class is where I mostly occupy the English in my second and my third class is where… I occupy the English… and then the rest of the day I speak Spanish.

> Although Miguel said he spoke English in school with his peers, he believed he

spoke both languages equally.

> Miguel: I use English from like, 8:00 am. to 2:00 pm. I have a lot of friends Latinos, and who speaking Spanish… I think I use both of them English and Spanish…

### Composite Textural Description of the Future

Collectively, participants were positive about the future. None of the participants

expressed a sense of hopelessness about graduation or being able to function in the broader

society. In fact, they felt they had a competitive edge because of their bilingualism. They

considered their bilingualism a highly marketable skill, useful in the future for further

education or employment, here in the United States or in their countries. From the total

group of participants, the future is vividly expressed in the following illustrations. Carla

described her future as a bright one because she is the first in her family who has gone as far

as the 11th grade. She felt her progress was noteworthy and will continue to strive towards

graduation.

> Carla: Well… I describe it bright because I mean… From my family, there is nobody
> that has been going through what I am going through almost graduating… My
> brother had a problem and he dropped-out because of the language… He couldn't
> speak it right… and the spelling… I see that for me it is more bright…

> Rain also described her future optimistically, explaining how she could return to

Mexico as a bilingual or stay here and continue her studies. Rain further explained how her

choices and opportunities increased because of her ability to speak two languages.

> Rain: Pues… Mi futuro como estudiante Latina es… Es más mejor que lo…. Que lo
> que pensé porque ahorita ya tengo una buena oportunidad para regresar a México
> como bilingüe…. O quedarme aquí y estudiar más…. Entonces, y más aparte, la
> escuela allí en México, No…casi aquí en México no les importa si van a la escuela o
> no los alumnos. En cambio aquí, es…. En cambio aquí es… se cada vez que faltas
> les hablan a tus papas. Well… My future as a Latina students is… Is better than…
> What I had thought because right now I have a good opportunity to return to Mexico
> as a bilingual… Or stay here and study more… Then, on the other hand, the schools
> there in Mexico, Don't… almost here in Mexico, they almost don't care if they
> students attend classes or not. To the contrary, is… On the other hand here is…
> every time that you miss class they call your parents

> Pedro believes his future will be a good one, especially after he learns to speak

English. He explained that because he reads and writes English well, it would be a matter of

time before he increased his oral proficiency.

> Pedro: Pienso que voy a tener éxito… /I believe that I am going to be successful.
> Pienso dominar el inglés… Tener un trabajo… y ya no estar… Ya no estar pidiendo
> a mis amigos que me traduzcan… hacerlo por mí mismo. Ya yo sé como leerlo muy

bien y lo escribo muy bien… Me falta para poder hablarlo.  I am thinking of dominating the English language… And have a job… and not be… Not have to be asking my friends to translate… do it by myself. I already know how to read it very good and I also write it good…I missing being able to speak it.

Miguel spoke about the advantages of bilingualism in his country. He said being bilingual increased his opportunities to secure a competitive position.

Miguel: As a Latino student… With both of them… I think am… Cause I gonna speak English and Spanish… cause I am going to be a bilingual… Maybe I can have a job that they need a person who speak… hmmm. More than one language and you can get more money… if you speak two languages maybe you can get more money… I think that is going to be good for me. Hmmm… Maybe if I speak English and Spanish and I go to my country El Salvador… Maybe I can have hmmm…. good job… Like Hmm…. Like hmm… I forgot what I gonna say… Yeah, I mean if I go to El Salvador speaking two languages, I have more opportunities get a better job.

## Composite Structural Description: Themes and Subthemes

The group's collective experiences of the phenomenon were analyzed, whereby the themes and categories began to emerge to give interpretation of these experiences as described by the researcher. Accordingly, participants' verbatim account of their experiences was captured, and framed to situate the experience, address the questions, and present the themes or essence of the phenomenon. This interpretation penetrated deeper into participants' experiences, which was previously presented by their narratives as witness of the occurrences in their lives. These narratives served as testimony of their voices, which provide authenticable evidence or insight into these experiences. Participants provided heartfelt stories about their lived experiences in school and with family members; with their heritage and identities, through their struggles, and their expectation for the future.

Careful attention was given to participants' voices to identify themes and categories included in their experiences. From these narratives, clear evidence of a problematic linguistic school life and home live emerged. In a sense, participants' experiences were marred by difficulties and struggles, and their rights were not respected. Although difficulty with the language[s] was identified as a theme, linguistic oppression or linguicism appeared to be another theme, which unearthed subthemes of discrimination, marginalization, and segregation; in essence linguicism. Despite the hardship of marginalization and linguistic oppression in the form of linguicism, participants expressed optimism for their future. This uncanny resolution represents the final theme that emerged from the data.

**Difficulty with the language[s]**

Acquiring English as a second language proved to be a difficult experience for all the participants, particularly those who have lived and attended school in the United States from early childhood. "Since, Kindergarten to now, I have been ESOL… Basically, through all my school years and I mean… It help… it had help me a lot" (Carla, p.107). Carla has spent 12 years learning English and is still very challenged by the language. She does not have literacy skills in Spanish, her home language. "Well, I do struggle most of the time cause… Both of the languages… Cause in Spanish is words that I can't get right. And then in English it is the same…Because of all the vowels and everything… Yeah I had to struggle between both language" (Carla, p. 105).Similarly, Linda was enrolled in the second grade, after emigrating here from Mexico, she stated, "I have been in school there since the second grade, all my life" (Linda, p. 104).  How is it possible that these students have been in school without acquiring English as a second language or learning Spanish skills and

acquiring grade level English language proficiency? For these students, their Spanish language has become fossilize, while their English language skills have not increased to grade level proficiency, over the duration of their educational career. In fact, their English oracy was deficient. They spoke a variation of English.

Linda further stated that she did not feel good about being in the ESOL program because of the stigma attached to being an English language learner, "… some people look at you like slow. My boyfriend did… He didn't know that I was in ESOL and he said that's for slow people" (Linda, p. 109). Typically, students tend to exit the ESOL program during the elementary grades, before entering middle school, if they begins at such an early age. Lack of literacy in the home or first language L1 made a significant difference since participants did not have L1skills to transfer to English according to (Bialystok et al., 2005) referred to here as the second language (L2) transfer skills. These participants were significantly less proficient in either language. Although they possessed some form of oracy in their home language, they were unable to read and write the first language L1.  At issue here is the fact that phonemic awareness in the L1was emergent before starting school, upon entering school literacy was reserved solely for the second language L2, severing all ties with the L1 in the academic context. The official curriculum does not support the L1.

As a result, of an imposed unequal status of Spanish to English, the acquisition process has become difficult and frustrating for these students. Linda shares her experience of this frustration, "Well in my house, hmm… In my home… hmm… My mom is like help me fill these papers out…I am like how do you spell it? She is like well… I don't know you are in school?  I don't even know; I get frustrated" (Linda, p.104). Considering the unequal

status of English and Spanish, unless a concerted effort is made by policy makers and

educators to challenge existing language ideologies, Latino students will continue to face

political and social stratification challenges, which are also manifested in the wider society

(Cummins & Davison, 2007).

They code switched, alternating from language to another, "If I don't know a word, I

said in Spanish and if I don't know in Spanish, I say in English" (Linda, p. 111) explained

Linda. At times participants even spoke a combination of the two languages, "I usually

speak…. Ahmm… Spanglish" (Carla, p. 111) noted Carla. In essence, these students have

minimal knowledge of either language of their speech communities. Nonetheless, linguists

are not certain about the reasons why some bilingual individuals code switch. This form of

speech alteration has created varying perspectives in the field of linguistic (Nilep, 2006).

Nilep suggests that scholar in the varying related fields do not share a common definition of

the term. Perhaps, due in part by its ubiquity or as a result of it, this terms has created

concerns for psycholinguists, sociolinguists, anthropologists, etc. Since this phenomenon is

investigated from so many perspectives, this study does attempt to clarify or conclude on the

matter. Carla spoke about the difficulty she has experienced, "I do struggle most of the time

cause… Both of the languages… Cause in Spanish is words that I can't get right. And then

in English it is the same…Because of all the vowels and everything" (Carla, p.  105). She

also explained that her brother have dropped out of school due to the difficulty he has

experienced with the language, "My brother had a problem and he dropped-out because of

the language… He couldn't speak it right… and the spelling" (Carla, p. 112).

For some participants, communication in their homes was strained due to the language shift to English Carla stated, "Since my little brothers and sisters don't talk basically no Spanish, so we talk English to them. And then I have to translate for my mom… and it's crazy" (Carla, p. 105). Similarly, Linda stated, "And in my house is it the same. My parents it is Spanish and my brothers, English" (Carla, p. 111). Although Carla's siblings are second generation, they have already experienced the linguistic shift of third generation towards English monolingualism noted by (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

Consequently, students' language difficulties were further exacerbated, by inadequate socialization with regards to language function in the educational context. When attending school these students were unable to establish adequate communication with other students and their teachers. We can observe Carla's and Pedro's account of difficulties in the educational context. Carla states, "Some of that is really affecting students. Because… they don't really understand and like all these teachers… I mean there is some teachers that understand and are willing to help you… And but then at the same time there is teachers that are just not going to deal with you because you don't understand and they don't want to struggle with you… And…. I mean I had to struggle before" (Carla, p. 111).

Pedro explained that he has minimal communication with his teachers. "A mis maestro, con ellos no tengo mucha plática. with my teachers, with them I don't have too much conversation" (Pedro, p. 103). Information such as this is a cause for alarm. How can students participate effectively in school, if they are not communicating with their teachers? Admittedly, the full story is not known but does warrant further investigation and analysis. Yet it does questions the linguistic context of schooling and the communication gap between

the student and his teacher. In order to answer the aforementioned questions many more information is required; however, at issue here is the acquisition of a language.

Perhaps, a possible explanation of Pedro's situation can be drawn from Krashen's (1981) monitor model, which speaks to the acquisition of a second language. Krashen's monitor model presents second language acquisition as a metaphor, which states that second language acquisition is liken to that of a filter in the facilitation of learning, in the same way it can hinder learning. Thus, second language acquisition occurs when the learner learns in a safe, secure, and caring environment that is also challenging. The affective filter is lowered increasing the learning potential. However, when the learner's environment is threatening, the learner feels anxious, or is not challenged, the affective filter becomes elevated impeding the acquisition or the learning process.

**Linguistic Oppression: Linguicism**

Language socialization processes are controlled by cultural constraint deeply ingrained in the child's cultural and social environment and these parameters will vary greatly from culture to culture (Chomsky, 2000). Hence, school will serve as these participants' social environment. Hamers and Blanc (2000) noted that when students cannot establish adequate communication with fellow students and adults, they experience various communication difficulties which are exhibited by silence, misinterpretation, or inhibition of enculturation, which consequently limits the cognitive construct of knowing (Vygotsky, 1987). After all, the literature revealed that students who have experienced cultural

discontinuity in school are more likely to experience school failure than students whose language and culture are supported and valued (Xu, 1999).

All participants experienced some form of linguistic degradation, and reprimands from teachers as well as other classmates. Their comments included: "The teacher had asked me to talk in English" (Carla, p. 110). "We are in America we speak English" (Linda, p. 109). "Some students tell me to speak English because we are in America" (Pedro, p. 109). "But yes, I felt upset for those who speak Spanish" (Rain, p. 102). "some people, when you are speaking Spanish, they say English… English but I don't know if they do like ah… sarcastic or something" (Miguel, p. 110). In this politically correct society, one form of prejudice still allowed or accepted is linguistic prejudice. For these Latino participants, the academic context was replete with linguistic discrimination manifested through linguicism. Teachers and fellow students routinely scowled them, when they were speaking Spanish and mandated them to speak English. Carla shares her painful recollection of this occurrence, "There was a time when I was helping a student out and I was talking to her in Spanish and the teacher had asked me to talk in English… Because this was America" (Carla, p. 110).

The mandate to speak English was usually made in a classroom and it was made by students as well as by teachers, who insisted Latino student should speak English, instead of Spanish. It is unclear as to why the teacher needed to reiterate to the students that they were in America, as if they did not know where they were. Moreover, it is surprising to hear how educators would engage in such undemocratic, demoralizing practices. Perhaps, Chomsky's (2000) study can be of benefit, in his study, he explains humans' ability to acquire and speak more than one language. Nonetheless, data has indicated that these students are considered

pseudo-bilinguals or "unbalanced" bilinguals, because they were not fully proficient in all four language domains, which should have signaled a call to assist these students to acquire full competence in both languages (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006), and increase their capital (Cummins et al., 2005).

According to the participants, many times when students requested they speak English, the request interrupted private conversations, "… it was in class… one time with my friend… and one girl, she was white… She saying… ENGLISH… because I don't understand the words you are saying… And I say… I am not talking to you… I am talking to my friend" (Miguel, p. 110). Therefore, pervading these students' experiences of acquiring English as a second language included conflicting feelings of linguistic marginalization and linguistic oppression. Common feelings after the incident were anger, resentment, sadness, and alienation, "… I was just so mad, it just so… angry about it you know" (Carla, p. 110). Coping with oppressive sentiments, which questioned their desire and need to learn English was the most difficult for these students who indicated they were trying diligently to learn the language. Carla said that learning English was "something good" (Carla, p. 102).

Most of the participants attempted to downplay the disillusionment of being told to speak English saying they ignored the request, Linda said, "I don't really pay attention to them either" (Linda, p. 109). Clearly, they were embarrassed and offended to be singled out because they were not speaking English. Carla said, "Like they are taking our pride away" (Carla, p. 110). Linda felt as though she was being judged "I don't think they should be judging… like your language, your background….cause a lot of people be judging, just

because of your color doesn't mean that you are Mexican…. You could be from another country" (Linda, p. 109). Carla explained that the inclination to speak Spanish with other Latinos was natural, "You know you just having a conversation. And they just on you" (Carla, 110).

This type of discrimination is liable for the exclusion of the L1 by sanctioning its use in the social settings. Private prejudice surfaced moving people to take action by demanding the use of English and English only. Teachers and students who made this demand were in fact acting on their prejudice ideas and engaged in active discrimination against the students' language, whereby enforcing inequality of a race, ethnicity and social class (Portes, 2005). This form of discrimination associates language with ethnicity, racial and social groups of people, which further promulgates language segregation privileging one language over another (Phillipson, 1992). Judgments are made about others based on the way they use their language and based on the way people speak and write. Perceptions are made about intelligence, competence, motives, and even morality (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999).

The privileged language then becomes the leverage of influence in the educational context. Such privileges encompass other forms of discrimination and oppression because at times teachers show adequate understanding in terms of minority students' need. Readers can observe how teachers marginalize these students and disregarded their civil right. Perhaps, teachers overlooked how their behaviors and reactions could affect student's self-concepts and identity, or how their behaviors have reflected linguistic chauvinism, which is an inappropriate trait for educators to possess because as teachers they should value and promote social and linguistic diversity and teach critically. In this instance, teachers' played

upon the cultural rules dominating the classroom to promote an insidious message of assimilation by the cultural dominance of hegemony of the English language (Ariza et. al, 2006).

When participants spoke Spanish in school, they were reprimanded because Spanish is associated with marginal people known as Mexicans or immigrants. Carla explained that, "I was helping a student…the teacher had asked me to talk in English…because this was America" (Carla, p. 110). Therefore, if they are attempting to become a part of the mainstream culture, living and functioning in the society, they would need to shed themselves of their stigmatized language (Ariza et. al, 2006). Teachers in subtle ways promulgated linguicism by attaching prestige to English over Spanish and any other language and by discouraging students from speaking their L1 at school. When teachers and students told participants to choose one language over the other, their mandate sheds light on the motivation of the request, for it is the request in itself that indicates the manifestation of linguistic dominance and prejudice (Phillipson, 1992).

Discrimination is a critical term used to analyze the problems associated with the fragmentation of a pluralistic society (Feire, 2009, and Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). This form of structural discrimination is difficult to identify because discriminatory practices are the norm in system such as the English only requests, which privileges the dominant culture against subordinate groups. When teachers tell students to speak English, they are in fact promoting assimilation in a pluralistic multilingual population (Obondo, 2007). Hence, the theme of linguistic oppression manifesting itself through linguicism emerged. Participants' stories provide support for this theme as they have presented evidence of linguicism read

previously in their narratives. Language contributes to the compensation of privilege because away from race, gender, and social class, the usage of a language over another triggers subordination and drawback for people who do not speak the superior language (Phillipson, 1992). What these student are experiencing in the educational context is the culmination of thought and ideas of prejudice that have become active discrimination outright, which is referred to by Zuidema (2005) as prejudice in practice, so their condemning judgments are transformed to an active mode incorporating others with similar thinking.

**Optimistic Future**

Overall, participants spoke optimistically of their future. Regardless of the difficulties, which they have experienced in terms of the acquisition process and linguicism, participants looked forward to becoming bilinguals. When asked to describe the future, Carla said, "Well… I describe it bright because I mean… From my family, there is nobody that has been going through what I am going through almost graduating" (Carla, p. 112). Despite the many challenges they faced while learning English, these students were committed to learning and succeeding, "Pienso que voy a tener éxito. I believe that I am going to be successful" (Pedro, p. 113).  Participants look towards the future with great anticipation and hope, "As a Latino student… With both of them… I think am… Cause I gonna speak English and Spanish… cause I am going to be a bilingual… Maybe I can have a job that they need a person who speak…More than one language" (Miguel, p. 113-114). In fact, two participants were scheduled to graduate at the end of the school year. Rain commented on her opportunities here and those back in her country, she said, "I have a good

opportunity to return to Mexico as a bilingual… Or stay here and study more" (Rain, p. 113). Miguel felt similarly, "Maybe if I speak English and Spanish and I go to my country El Salvador… Maybe I can have a good job… Yeah, I mean if I go to El Salvador speaking two languages" (Miguel, p. 113-114).

Contrary to the popular belief that Latino students are in fact resisting the acquisition of English, these participants were committed and resilient in their pursuit to English proficiency. Pedro said, "I am thinking of dominating the English language" (Pedro, p. 113). Pedro's main objective was to learn English, in order to become independent and self-sufficient, "… And have a job… and not be… Not have to be asking my friends to translate" (Pedro, p. 113). In fact, Pedro was born here and was taken to Mexico by his family after completing Kindergarten. While in Mexico he earned the equivalent of a high school education. He returned here to learn English, substantiating how important acquiring English is for these students. These students' resolve can be attributed to the will of immigrants who emigrate here in pursuit of a better life (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Participants' self-confidence was evident when they describe their future as a bilingual person. Their resilient positive driving force was guiding them in the path of hopefulness and promise to a brighter future. Miguel stated, "I am going to be a bilingual… Maybe I can have a job that they need a person who speak hmmm. More than one language and you can get more money" (Miguel, 104).

**Summary**

This data analysis focused on what participants' expressed as they recounted their stories, describing their lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context, and the manner in which these past experiences have influenced their present lives and hopes for the future. Therefore, this body of work denotes the ontic or textural description as well as the ontological interpretation of individuals who lived the experiences, through their composite structural description followed by a thematic description of the lived experiences of the participants collectively. Participants have spoken, given of themselves for others to understand their experiences, their lives as it applies to the acquisition of English as a second language.

The study focused on students' experiences in the academic context; however, participants experiences proved to be much more complex and compelling. The reader will realize how these experiences are embedded in sociocultural, environmental, and interperpersonal contexts. Language acquisition and students' individual experiential narrative were undividable concluding that their stories were based upon living out their experiences, which came out of their cultural heritage, and identity. Their stories illustrated how their lived experiences were based on their cultural status and linguistic problems, which allowed for identification of themes and categories. Their stories, as data, allowed for a deep analysis of the dimension of the phenomenon of acquiring of English as a second language in the academic context. Chapter Five provides readers an introduction, research questions, main research question, sub-research question, findings of the research study, implications, recommendations, and conclusions.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*"Every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness" (Vygotsky, 1987, p.236).*

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe Latino students' lived experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. This purpose statement is a revised statement aimed to satisfy the school district's accountability and research committee's concerns regarding English-only pedagogical policy and practices in schools. Another concern presented to the researcher questioned the term "restrictive language policy and practices" of schools, as there are no written restrictive language policies in schools, the purpose statement was rewritten to focus solely on students' experiences as ELLs.

Nonetheless, the aforementioned purpose statement allowed Latino students to reconstruct the meaning they have ascribed to the task of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. The purpose of this chapter is to readdress the research questions, in terms of their relations to the findings of the research, which also support the literature review in Chapter Two. The implications for the teachers and students will be discussed in order to provide guidance and to offer recommendations, followed by concluding remarks.

This study has been related to the phenomenon of English language acquisition as perceived through the account of Latino high school students' lived experiences as language learners.  Their narratives were presented as witness of their experiences in becoming

proficient in English while continuing to speak Spanish their first language. These narratives expanded and transcended into the stories of others individuals as they expressed how their family members, teachers, and friends became part of their own narratives. Therefore, their voices have become an open polyphony of the researched phenomenon condensed in themes and categories.

## Research Questions

Before obtaining permission to conduct the study, the purpose statement needed to change. However, after changing the purpose statement the research questions needed revision to focus the study on this modified purpose. The main research question's aimed to understand participants' experiences through their own accounts, presenting their own words, while the sub-question asked what meaning was derived from their experiences. The original research question asked: What are the lived-experiences of English-only language restriction as described by Latino students?  Followed by two sub-questions: What statements describe the experiences of English-only language restriction? What are the contexts of and thoughts about the experiences of English-only language restriction? Only two research questions were needed for the study.  Elimination of the third question remedied redundancy as the contextual nature did not need to be examined separately. The first question accounted for the context. Thus, two new questions were formulated. The overarching research question asked:

RQ: What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second

language as described by Latino students?

Followed by a conceptual sub-question, which asked?

SRQ1: What conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students'

understanding of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language?

Data gathered from these research questions were organized and presented according

to phenomenological procedures adopted from Seidman's (2006) in-depth interviewing

process in conjunction with an adaptation Moustakas (1994). The data was coded to

facilitate precise comparison between patterns and themes.

## Main Research Question

What are the lived-experiences of acquiring English as a second language as

described by Latino students?  The aim of this question was twofold. The first aim was to

provide an interpretive account from the students' daily experiences in a holistic manner.

The second aim was to have students explain the role their two languages [English and

Spanish] play in the process of acculturation, what complexities related to usage and control

of Spanish in their English-only educational setting. Participants spoke, and out of their

spoken words came a compelling tale of linguistic difficulty coupled with linguistic

discrimination and oppression described herein as linguicism (Phillipson, 1992).

According to participants, linguistic oppression manifested itself through the demand

to speak English, and the reason given for the demand by the individuals making the

demand. Given the premise of this inductive investigation, there is a preponderance of

evidence to support the findings of linguicism. Teachers and fellow students disparaged

Spanish when they told Latino students who were speaking Spanish to speak English or

reminding students they were in America, "speak English…you are in America" (Linda, p.

116, & Pedro, p. 116). Such strong induction, speaks to the difficulties students are having

with the acquisition process due in part to members of the target language. Ariza et al.

(2006) discusses socio-psychological factors influencing the language acquisition process.

According to these researchers, attitude has a definite impact on the success of second

language learning since this process involves the integration of cultural skills, and norms of

the new culture.

Therefore, attitudes toward the target language and culture, and its members can

either impede or contribute to the acquisition process. Moreover, second language

acquisition is highly dependent on the adaptation to the target culture. Nonetheless, adaption

to the target culture is also highly dependent on social distance, which is determined by

social and political status of the second language group. Thus, if second language learners

perceived themselves or are perceived to be inferior to the target language or cultural group,

or if conflict exists with members of the target language and culture, the social distance will

be greater. For this reason, it is important that teachers and students from the target language

respect second language learners. Teachers and students should refrain from judging ELLs

because of their cultural membership. Furthermore, second language learners should be

respected for speaking either one of their languages because it is their human right (Ariza et

al., 2006).

The demand also carried two main elements of linguicism. The first element evident

here is the representation of dominant language as obligatory and exclusive: "speak

English…you are in America" (Linda, p. 109 and Pedro, p. 109), which implies that all other languages should remain on the margins, excluded from public social contexts. The second element of linguicism included in the demand was purpose. The purpose of telling students to speak English was condescending and oppressive. Lastly, the request was made by individuals from the dominant group. The dominant language, English, was mentioned when the request was made for the purpose of exclusion of the subordinated language by members of the dominant group (Phillipson, 1992).

As a result of this explicit and unambiguous manifestation of the demand to speak English, one can infer from the unsubtle nature of the demand, that it was a confrontational stance of linguicism. Given the contextual nature of schools, it is difficult to perceive such oppressive attitude in practice there. Yet, such practices, fleshes out and give life to anglocentricity explaining the consequential realities for the dominated language and the individuals who speak it. Just as racism, linguicism is affirmed and its tenacity flexes its reach to inflict damage in the form of linguistic oppression. The straightforwardness of the command to speak English was done deliberately to enforce dominance. Participants internalized the request as intended, one participant stated, "Like they are taking our pride away" (Carla, p. 110). Participants were negatively affected by linguicism and they expressed it, through their expressions readers will be able to understand the meaning of linguistic domination, which was manifested through linguicism (Phillipson, 1992).

The antithesis of the heart of multiculturalism is the neo-colonial policies and practices presented in the literature review of this discussion, which cited the role of English as proxy promulgating intergroup conflict (Phillipson, 1992, see also Portes, 2005). The

belief that one language is better or more effective than another is an attitude usually found in communities where individuals are dominated by a single language. This belief, however, is inappropriate in a multicultural and multilingual society such the United States. Language restrictions levied in this instance has proven to be a detriment for these Latino language learners in many ways. Several students have internalized negative feelings about their teachers and fellow students and they blamed themselves for the difficulty they face with the acquisition process. Evident is the difficulty of the process of language acquisition for these particular students. Evident also is the dominant role that English plays in their environment (Cook, 2001; Crawford, 2000; Cummins, et al., 2005; Cummins & Davison, 2007; San Miguel, 2003; Portes, 2006; and Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

Linguicism manifest itself in the invisibility and subtleness of the cynical call for nationalism (Houvouras, 2001). Language was used to promote dominance and inflict wounds of subordination. While Latino students were constantly pressured to speak English, in an effort to protect and promote the fundamental symbol of the American identity, countless hours and thousands of dollars are spend by middle class America to acquire Spanish. The fact that several of these Spanish speaking students were American was not even considered. As Americans they too should be valued and asserted with all they bring to the classroom, including their language. Being an American should not detract from the human ability to speak other languages (Winders, 2005, see also Schmid, 2003). Moreover, language in this academic context has simply become another tool used to label students and support the dominance of and the inferior linguistic and ethnicity status held by this student group. As a tool, language masks the existence of the structure of privileges and contributes

to the hidden and renewed privileges (Phillipson, 1992). Anglocentricity is evident through the command to speak English, which insidiously placed Latino students and their language in an inferior position.

## Sub-Research Question

What significant conceptual meaning surfaced from Latino students' understanding of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language? Three main themes surfaced from participants verbatim narratives. Participants' statements revealed that the experience was difficult; their language was suppressed unfairly; and they were resilient despite the hardship of linguicism experienced. The difficulty and struggle came from a place in the participants' experience of confusion with the languages for some, while others students stated they needed more time to acquire the language, (they were the newcomers). Yet another participant stated his displeasure of reading was the cause of the difficulty he had experienced. Questionable however, was the fact that two participants spent 12 and 9 years respectively receiving ESOL language support (Cook, 2001).

Linguistic oppression to participants meant that their language had no value to others outside of their linguistic community. Their language, being other than English, served as an identity marker singling them out and making them the target of discrimination in the form of linguistic marginalization or linguicism. The devalued meaning applied to Spanish, proved consequential for students who endured pervasive efforts to uphold English as a superior and threatened language [in this case, English] and as well restrict the function of an encroaching language [in this case, Spanish], (Houvouras, 2001, see also, Weisman,

2001). English-only pedagogical practices and demand to speak English made to students then, fundamentally, contextually, and theoretically determines the situated meaning of linguicism (Phillipson, 1992, & Tollefson, 2007). All of these participants understood clearly that their home language did not have a role in their educational or language acquisition process as evident in their educational context. Through this study, it was evident there continues to be a strong rejection of other languages, particularly Spanish in this case.

Latino students' experiences illustrate the operation of linguicism in that students were marginalized because of the use of their language in the educational context. Schools were established as social institutions to ensure educational success and social advancement. Moreover, these students felt oppressed and relegated to inferiority (Carla, p. 110). Hence, linguicism operates in such a way that individuals who are marginalized and excluded from access to the power structures are convinced that they too will gain access (Carla, p. 102; Miguel, p. 113; Pedro, p. 113; and Rain, p. 113) when they have acquired the dominant language (Obondo, 2007). Therefore, some students even go on to develop negative perceptions about their own language and if they use it, this usage is limited to the home. Accordingly, Latinos exhibit a high rate of linguistic shift to English (Carla, p. 105, & Linda, p. 111). As evident in the data analysis, several participants mediated the languages between their parents and their younger siblings, a phenomenon that speaks to the rapidity of English acquisition or language shift by very young Hispanic immigrant children (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

Students were optimistic despite a myriad of issues. Their struggle to learn/acquire a second language, and linguistic oppression they experienced, were not sufficient deterrent

for them to abandon their educational endeavors. Although, one of the participants mentioned that her brother dropped out of school as a result of language acquisition difficulties, none of the participants expressed dropping out as a resolution (Carla, p. 112). All participants in this study were truly committed to continuing their education and succeeding as bilingual individuals. Acquiring English was a priority for all students as they realized English is regarded as the dominant language and they too wanted to become productive members of that linguistic community. In fact, the pull towards English monolingualism speaks to the rapid atrophy of Spanish literacy to English from one generation to another, which confirms assimilation forces in the U.S. are active and dominant (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

## Findings of the Research Study

Findings of this study are in direct alignment with Phillipson (1992) theoretical framework, as well as other prominent researchers in the literature review such as Portes and Rumbaut (2006 and others (Houvouras, 2001 and Valenzuela, 1999). Particularly, Cummins (2005) subtractive acculturation attitudes demanding bilingual Spanish speaker "leave their language…at the schoolhouse door," was articulated by the participants' during their interviews.  Moreover, findings of this study indicate that language ideologies directly challenge the ways in which languages mediate and reinforces establish patterns of power relations in schools (Cummins & Davison, 2007). Findings also indicates that Latino students in this study were subjected to a linguistically discriminatory environment

depriving them of the use of their language coupled with racial and ethnic discrimination as explained by the students themselves.

The conceptual meaning Latino students' constructed of their experiences of acquiring English as a second language is presented as having to struggle with the language[s], and having difficulty with the acquisition process. Despite having their language suppressed by teachers and fellow students, they remained resilient and optimistic about their future. Readers should have noted how complex these experiences have been for these participants who struggled to acquire a second language amidst a discriminatory school culture.

Valenzuela (1999) analyzed how the routine flow of school life systematically derogates Latino students' cultural identity by denying them the use of their language. Latinos account for a sizable diverse group of people, which now account for 14.2 percent or 40.5 million of the U.S. household population according to the U. S. Census Bureau's 2004 American Community Survey (2007). Of this number, 34 million speak Spanish at home. These statistics have catapulted Spanish to be second most spoken language in the nation. Nonetheless, the expansion in use and economic opportunities associated with the language contrast clearly with the execution of education policies and language ideologies encouraging monolingualism as experienced by these participants. When Spanish was spoken in schools, it was treated as a threat to national identity (Carla, p. 110; Linda, p. 109; & Pedro, 109). Students were reminded repeatedly that they were in fact in The United States or America and as such they should only speak English. One participant, Rain (p. 102), understood the mandate as fair, due to the multilingual make-up of the classroom.

On the other hand, it is assumed Latinos have a certain linguistic loyalty, which is aimed at preserving Spanish for future generations as an integral part of their heritage and symbol of identity, that loyalty was not evident among these participants. In fact, all participants expressed the necessity of learning English for economic and social productivity. In several of the participants' home, a language shift towards English was already evident. Participants explained how they had to translate for younger siblings who were born in the U.S. because these children only spoke English, while their parents only spoke Spanish. These findings corroborate Portes and Rumbaut's (2006) study of immigrants in America, which concluded the existence of immigrants' push toward rapid linguistic assimilation, monolingualism, or English-only. Supportive evidence also exists to bolster this claim (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

By contrast, many American born middle-class students are acquiring foreign language in universities and other higher learning institutions. Ironically, the effort of non-Spanish speaking American students who spend countless hours and thousands of dollars to acquire a dubious command of a foreign language is applauded, while pressuring its fluent native speakers to refrain from speaking it. Questionable then, is the efforts of so many domestic elite who dare to sanction presumed immigrants for an endeavor, which increases cognition (Bialystok et al., 2005) and capital (Portes, 2005). Thus, bilingualism is recognized by academics as resource of expanding intellectual advantage because knowledge of more than one language provides communication across cultures.

Maintaining Spanish as part of their linguistic repertoire, in order to maximize their communicative skills as well as potential capital, was considered by all of the participants;

nonetheless, participants' efforts were met with negative attitudes towards Spanish. Discriminatory practices associated with language were found to be casual, and routine. These practices were combined with other forms of individual, structural, and institutional discrimination. Of the discriminatory practices observed, the most notable was linguistic marginalization, manifesting itself through linguistic distance in the classroom (Ariza et al., 2006). As consequences of such discrimination, participants have undergone communicative problems, which are exhibited through students' English language acquisition. Undoubtedly, these difficulties have influenced some participants' development in schools and the community at large. Forced isolation and silence have limited their socialization progress as well as, low language skills unable to support their academic development (Pennycook, 2007, see also Bianco, 2007).

The rejection felt or experienced by some participants confirmed historical perspective on linguistic attitudes presented earlier in this study. Pennycook (2007) suggests that English-only language teaching practice resembles schools policies and practices dating back to colonial times. Language restrictions imposed on participants was imposed solely to reinforce a false either-or dichotomy legitimizing unequal schooling and social conditions for Latino students Bianco (2007).  These students experienced an *us versus them* relationship in school. Teachers and fellow students attempted to eliminate Latino students' identity by depriving them of the use of their language subjecting them to assimilationist ideology (Valenzuela, 1999).

The framework advanced herein assumes language acquisition is a process that should be attained in a nurturing supportive environment, anything other than the

aforementioned is highly consequential (Ariza et al., 2006). The underlined message students' received was that their language was not welcomed, which was interpreted as they themselves were not welcomed because their language speaks to who they are. Prejudicial statement such as speak English underscores the unjust artificial construct of nationalism. Such anti-immigrant sentiments confirmed what Winders (2005) and Schmid (2003) argued were consequences to regional demographic transformation in tandem with discrimination.

Taken into account, was the fact that the issue of linguistic oppression as experienced by participants did not include pedagogical considerations as assumed previously. Teachers and students who made the demand to speak English, did not consider or include pedagogical rational as a reason for making such a request, which has been utilized by individuals attempting to occlude linguicism by citing time on task. This argument suggests acquisition of a language requires a maximum amount of time speaking the target language in order to maximize acquisition. Nonetheless, as evident in this study, at issue here are hegemonic policies playing out in schools and broader societal contexts (Tollefson, 2007). Participants' experiences in acquiring English as a second language substantiated Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguicism, which is manifested through linguistic oppression and marginalization, which has become the main focal point of the data analysis because it speaks to the struggles presented by the participants' experiences in various social contexts.

## Implications

Understanding the tension, challenges, doubts, hopes, fears, and deferred dreams that have become the existence for linguistically diverse youths in our nation's schools is to understand the implications of these findings. This study was not designed to alter the core structure that relegates minorities to the margins of society by maintaining power through linguicism or any other form of oppression. Nevertheless, Latino students' experiences in this study lend themselves to a fuller understanding of the realities of acquiring English as a second language in a typical American public school through the lens of the participants' experiences recounted by them (Cook, 2001).

Although the study was narrow in scope due to the small sample, implicit is the fact that the experiences of being a Latino student while acquiring English as a second language conveyed more than a linguistic message to these students and their families and communities; rather, the meaning based upon experiences conveyed discrimination manifested through linguicism. Placing these participants in the context of school and the process of acquiring another language revealed the ways in which people capitalize on symbols such as language to dominate others individuals. In this case, certainly, functional English fluency is prerequisite not only to attain academic success, but also to gain access to essential resources in the mainstream society. Language, however, is being used in this particular academic context as a culturally oppressive device (Bianco, 2007; Cummins & Davison, 2007; Obondo, 2007; San Miguel, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; & Tollefson, 2007).

Although language learning is important, it is just one aspect of students'

acculturation process as evident in this study. However, language learning guarantees access

and true integration into this society. Therefore, how can Spanish students gain better

access? How can educators provide Latino students with a more inclusive language learning

setting, truly fostering language learning for one language while subjugating another? These

questions are purely speculative in nature, given the oppressive linguistic practices evident

in the study. As promising as a multilingual approach to education appears to be from the

theoretical and empirical perspectives, this approach is a complex undertaking given the

sociocultural and sociopolitical times. This educational approach would require a

redefinition of the role of English and Spanish as languages of teaching and learning across

the continuum (Obondo, 2007).

Hence, this approach would have to be long term and comprehensive with coherent

stipulations, which bolters and revalorize Spanish as a language for social promotion so it

too can be regarded as an instrument of value required for all levels of education and

participation in the broader society as is the case in other linguistic plural societies. The

thought of expanding Spanish into these domains begins with critical awareness of how

power is arranged and how language and power intersect (Phillipson, 1992). Given the

multicultural and multilingual face of America's schools, success for all in school requires a

sociocultural approach coupled with multilingual analyses of individuals and societal

expansion. A paradigm shift is required to reshape the minds and skills of teachers who will

deliver a new educational linguistic ideology, which is equity-driven. As educators, a critical

component of language teaching and learning is placing importance on the social situation that for example, advances English and undermines Spanish.

Connecting linguistic practices to power relationships in what Cummins (2000) has called transformative pedagogy, must position language teaching and other educational practices such as linguicism at the forefront of the debate. A model multicultural classroom initiating Cummins transformative pedagogy will focus on students' conscious awareness and scrutiny of language practices taking shape in their homes and communities and scrutinize the hegemony and linguicism English-only settings. Educators in such settings would adopt strategies to enhance students' participation, which would involve renewed language-friendly environments (Valenzuela, 1999).

Implicit is the need for a more conscientious society that respects the rights of other to speak which ever language they wish (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995), begins in the classroom since linguicism manifests itself so openly there. Yet preventing linguicism will require public participation since linguicism is such a subtle oppression not easily apparent. In fact, linguicism is difficult to challenge because the general public may be skeptical about its existence or even promote it in the name of national solidarity against foreign forces manifested as encroaching languages. Therefore, the most appropriate setting for challenging linguicism is English-only educational contexts, considered an influential source promoting negative language attitudes (Zuidema, 2005).

## Recommendations

Careful refection went into the findings before offering these suggestions. The researcher offers three recommendations. First, given the study's small sample and scarcity of interpretive research, it would be beneficial to replicate or conduct further studies of this phenomenon on a larger scale in urban and rural settings in order to see if Latino students' perspective would yield the same results. Moreover, the continuance of studies focused on examining language practices, embedded in America's public school system which routinely devalue the Spanish language; therefore, simultaneously devalue Latino students is necessary. Incorporating teachers' perspective regarding their language attitude and the rationale for making the speak English demand will also provide useful and insightful information to address any perceived bias towards this subordinated group's language.

The second recommendation is made to adapt a more linguistically inclusive and responsive pedagogy, which critically examines linguistic implications imposed on subordinated Latino students in their educational contexts. Highly challenging in nature, this recommendation calls for social action in spite of the current sociocultural and sociopolitical times we live in. Undoubtedly, this recommendation requires a paradigm shift redefining the ways in which languages are sanctioned in this society. Learning English should not be synonymous with losing Spanish. Teacher should promote bilingualism or multiculturalism in the educational context. Moreover, teacher and students who made the demand to speak English should reflect on the role their own language serves in their life. Language serves to supply people with a point of reference to life and individuals are only able to perceive the

world around them through the words accessible through their language (Jones & Yandian, 2002).

The third and final recommendation is made to pursue further studies examining the effectiveness of the ESOL program. More information is needed to understand the appropriate length of time necessary to acquire English as second language. It was unclear why two participants were receiving language support after 12 years and nine years in the school district. Information yielded from such an investigation will provide significant information for ESOL program administrators.

## Conclusions

This study set out to understand the lived experiences of Latino students who were acquiring English as a second language. Responding to this questions of how to incorporate participants' introspective stories, through an in-depth interview process, provided a profound understanding of how participants perceived these experiences. They opened themselves for scrutiny and judgment. Their stories provided the researcher and the academic world with compelling information about the ways in which discrimination manifest itself in school through linguicism as revealed in the findings of the study.

Through this small sample, we observed how students experienced linguicism at the hands of their teachers and fellow students who told them to speak English. Understanding teachers' and fellow students' motivation to engaged in such prejudicial practices should also be further examined. Regardless of the challenges experienced by these students, they expressed great optimism for their future. The main research question and sub-question were

answered to assist stakeholders with an enhanced understanding of the experiences of

acquiring English as a second language in the educational context as experienced by Latino

students. Therefore, in answering the research questions, it was observed that these

experiences of acquiring English as a second language revealed discriminatory practices,

solidifying what other critical scholars and linguists have noted as linguicism (Phillipson,

1992).

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**IRB Approval Letter**

**ARGOSY UNIVERSITY.**

# IRB MEMORANDUM

*Argosy University Atlanta*

**To:** Damaris Shealy

**From:** Murray Bradfield, Jr., Ph.D.

**Date:** March 25, 2010

**RE:** Human Subjects Protocol – *Linguicism: Making meaning of language restriction policy in a Georgia public school*

The Institutional Review Board has **certified** your research protocol. The certification of your protocol is in effect for one full calendar year from the date of approval, March 25, 2010. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon submission of a renewal form, which must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to the expiration date of the current approval, March 25, 2011. Approval is also contingent upon your agreement to abide by the American Psychological Association ethical guidelines that govern human participation in research. In addition, you are expected to comply with the protocol as presented, and keep appropriate records as to your use and maintenance of collected data.

Good luck with conducting your proposed research.

**APPENDIX B**

**School District's Approval Letter**

**COBB COUNTY**
SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1088
Marietta, GA 30061
Telephone: (770) 426-3300
www.cobbk12.org

March 22, 2010

Ms. Damaris E. Shealy
4040 Brookfield Way
Austell, GA 30106

Dear Ms. Shealy:

Your research project has been approved.  Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete.  Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

South Cobb High School

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Office of Accountability and Research prior to implementation.  At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office.  Results cannot reference the Cobb County School District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received.  If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at 770-426-3407.

Sincerely,

Dr. Judith A. Jones
Chief Accountability and Research Officer

**APPENDIX C**

**Letter to the Principal**

March 8, 2010

Dear Mr. Ashley Hosey,

Allow me to introduce myself; I am Damaris E. Shealy, a doctorial candidate in the School of Curriculum and Instruction at Argosy University Atlanta's Campus. As a doctoral candidate, part of my graduation requirement is to conduct a study. In order to complete this requirement I have decided to study the Latino students' population due to their disparate dropout rate and low academic performance that characterizes this student group. In order to gain a better understanding of the risk factors exacerbating the high dropout rate among this group of students, I believe it is necessary to allow them to provide us as educators with a descriptive account of their lived experiences in the educational context, which characterizes them.

Please accept this letter as my formal request to utilize your school as the site for my dissertation implementation as I invite a small sample of your Hispanic student population to serve as participants.

The following is a brief synthesis of the study, which aims to outline the background, purpose, and procedures involved in this investigative process:

Title: LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to describe Latino student's lived experiences of learning English as a second language in the academic context.

Procedures: The study will be conducted for a total of three weeks. Each participating student will take part in two separate interview sessions lasting 30 minutes each for a total of 60 minutes. All interviews will be conducted after school. Interviews will be audio recorded using a digital recorder. The proceedings of these interviews are strictly and completely confidential. No one participating in this study will be identified personally. All of the responses will be utilized in a collective manner to illustrate recurring themes in a statistical program designed for this type of study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Students' participation in this study is voluntarily; therefore, if for any reason a student does not wish to continue participating even after consenting, he/she may withdraw at any time. However, if the student agrees to participate, she/he is required to do so in a respectful and productive manner. Please note that students will not be compensated monetarily.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: All student information will be kept confidentially; only the researcher will have access to students' information. Students are not required to answer questions they do not wish to answer. In case of stress or anxiety,

your child may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question. The school's counselors will be available to counsel with any student if need a need was to arise. A benefit is the contributing to new interpretive research on the acquisition of English in the academic context.

Confidentiality: Records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the records. Students' name will not be attached to their interview responses after data analysis is completed. Students will not be identified in any report of this study once published. At the end of the research recorded information will be transcribed and later destroyed.

Contacts and other Information: Damaris Shealy, damaris.shealy@cobbk12.org will conduct this study. The faculty advisor is Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. You may ask questions now; however, should you have later concerns, please contact Dr. Marion Anders, Dean of School of Education at 770-407-1032.

In addition, I understand that all students are protected under the law, which I acknowledge and adhere to. I, the Research Applicant, agree that all student or staff records shall be kept in a secure location preventing access by unauthorized individuals. I agree that any personally identifiable student or staff information and educational records as defined pursuant to O.C.G.A. Title 20 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, (FERPA) as well as any other confidential information of the School District that I may come in contact with, will be, and will be deemed to have been, received in confidence and will be used only for purposes of the approved research. Without the written permission of the parent/guardian or the staff member, I agree not to disclose to any third parties any student/staff information including the identity of the student/staff member.

Thank for your consideration, I remain

Respectfully yours,

Damaris E. Shealy, Ed.S.

Doctoral Candidate

Argosy University

**APPENDIX D**

**Letter from the Principal**

# South Cobb High School

## Cobb County School District
*"A community with a passion for learning"*

Mr. A.B.Hosey
*Principal*

March 17, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Demaris Shealy, has my permission to do her doctoral research at South Cobb High School. If you have any questions please contact me at (770)819-2611 or by email, Ashley.Hosey@cobbk12.org.

Respectfully,

Ashley B. Hosey
Principal

1920 Clay Road, SW         Telephone: 770-819-2611  Fax: 770-819-2613         Austell, Georgia 30106

**APPENDIX E**

**Letter to the Teacher**

Dear Ms. Katherine Conner,

I have been granted permission from the district's Office of Research and Accountability, and your principal Mr. Ashley Hosey to conduct my study there at South Cobb High School.

I have been directed to contact you in order to arrange a date and time to introduce the study to the 11th and 12th grade ESOL students. During this presentation, I will formally invite these students to participate in my study.

The following is a brief synthesis of the study, which aims to outline the background, purpose, and procedures involved in this investigative process:

Title: LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to describe Latino student's lived experiences of learning English as a second language in the academic context.

Procedures: The study will be conducted for a total of three weeks. Each participating student will take part in two separate interview sessions lasting 30 minutes each for a total of 60 minutes. All interviews will be conducted after school. Interviews will be audio recorded using a digital recorder. The proceedings of these interviews are strictly and completely confidential. No one participating in this study will be identified personally. All of the responses will be utilized in a collective manner to illustrate recurring themes in a statistical program designed for this type of study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Students' participation in this study is voluntarily; therefore, if for any reason a student does not wish to continue participating even after consenting, he/she may withdraw at any time. However, if the student agrees to participate, she/he is required to do so in a respectful and productive manner. Please note that students will not be compensated monetarily.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: All student information will be kept confidentially; only the researcher will have access to students' information. Students are not required to answer questions they do not wish to answer. In case of stress or anxiety, your child may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question. The school's counselors will be available to counsel with any student if need a need was to arise. A

benefit is the contributing to new interpretive research on the acquisition of English in the academic context.

Confidentiality: Records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the records. Students' name will not be attached to their interview responses after data analysis is completed. Students will not be identified in any report of this study once published. At the end of the research recorded information will be transcribed and later destroyed.

Contacts and other Information: Damaris Shealy, damaris.shealy@cobbk12.org will conduct this study. The faculty advisor is Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. You may ask questions now; however, should you have later concerns, please contact Dr. Marion Anders, Dean of School of Education at 770-407-1032.

In addition, I understand that all students are protected under the law, which I acknowledge and adhere to. I, the Research Applicant, agree that all student or staff records shall be kept in a secure location preventing access by unauthorized individuals. I agree that any personally identifiable student or staff information and educational records as defined pursuant to O.C.G.A. Title 20 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, (FERPA) as well as any other confidential information of the School District that I may come in contact with, will be, and will be deemed to have been, received in confidence and will be used only for purpose of the approved research. Without the written permission of the parent/guardian or the staff member, I agree not to disclose to any third parties any student/staff information including the identity of the student/staff member.

Thank for your assistance, I remain

Respectfully yours,

Damaris E. Shealy, Ed.S.

Doctoral Candidate

Argosy University, Atlanta

**APPENDIX F**

**Parental Consent Form**

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL to be conducted at my child's school between the dates of April 12 to April 30, 2010. Your child was chosen to participate because the focus of the study is on Latino students' interpretation their experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context. The nature of this study is descriptive, meaning that the researcher will describe Latino students' interpretation of their experiences of English as a second language in school.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to describe how Latino student's experiences of acquiring English as a second language in the academic context.

Procedures: The study will be conduction for a total of three weeks. Your child will take part in two separate interview sessions lasting 30 minutes each for a total of 60 minutes after school. Interviews will be audiotape using a digital recorder and destroyed at the end of the data analysis phase of the study or approximately two months.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in the study is voluntary. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: All student information will be kept confidentially; only the researcher will have access to students' information. Students are not required to answer questions they do not wish to answer. In case of stress or anxiety, your child may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question. The school's counselors will be available to counsel with any student if need a need was to arise. A benefit is the contributing to new interpretive research on the acquisition of English in the academic context.

Confidentiality: Records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the records. Your child's name will not be attached to your interview responses after data analysis is completed. Your child will not be identified in any report of this study once published. At the end of the research taped information will be destroyed.

Contacts and other Information: Damaris Shealy, damaris.shealy@cobbk12.org will conduct this study. The faculty advisor is Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. You may ask questions now; however, should you have later concerns, please contact Dr. Marion Anders, Dean of School of Education at 770-407-1032. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

☐      I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to my child's participation in the study. My signature indicates my full understanding of the study and what is being asked of my child in the study.


Parent's Printed Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Student's Name: _____

Name of Investigator: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

**APPENDIX G**

**Parental Consent Form (Spanish)**

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (Spanish)

FORMULARIO DE PERMISO

Su hijo/a está invitado a participar en  estudio titulado Linguicismo? Haciendo Sentido de la Adquisición de Inglés Como Segundo Lenguaje en una Escuela Pública de Georgia que se llevará acabo en la escuela de su hijo durante el día 12 de abril hasta el 30 de abril del 2010. Su hijo fue elegido para participar porque este estudio fue diseñado para describir la interpretación del estudiante Latino sobre la restricción de inglés-solamente en las escuelas. El diseño de este estudio es descriptivo, significando que la investigadora dará una descripción del entendimiento que los estudiantes han dado sobe su experiencia de este fenómeno.

Antecedentes del Estudio: El propósito del estudio es para relatar la experiencia  de la adquisición de inglés como segundo idioma en la escuela.

Procedimientos: El estudio durará tres semanas. Su hijo/a tomará parte en dos entrevistas que durarán 30 minutos cada una por un total de 60 minutos, después del día escolar. Las entrevistas serán grabadas con un grabador digital y destruidas al finalizar el proceso de análisis de datos que durará aproximadamente dos meses.

Participación es Discrecional: La participación en el estudio es voluntaria. Su hijo puede salir del estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad.

Riesgos y Beneficios por su Participación en el Estudio: Toda información estudiantil será protegida; solamente la investigadora tendrá acceso a esta información. Los estudiantes no están obligados a contestar preguntas que no desean contestar. En caso de ansiedad o estrés, el estudiante no tiene que contestar la pregunta y puede salir del estudio cuando quiera. Los consejeros escolares estarán disponibles si un estudiante necesita consejerilla. Un  beneficio es la contribución a una nueva investigación de como se interpreta la experiencia de adquirir inglés como segundo idioma en el contexto académico.

Confidencialidad: Los archivos permanecerán en una caja con candado. La investigadora será la única persona que tendrá acceso los archivos. El nombre de su hijo/a no estará escrito en las hojas de respuestas de la  entrevista después de la conclusión del análisis de los datos. Su hijo no será identificado en reportes de este estudio cuando se publique. Al finalizar la investigación, la entrevista grabada será destruida.

Información de Contacto: Damaris Shealy será la investigadora para el estudio. El consejero de la facultad es Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. Usted puede hacer preguntas ahora. Al igual, si tiene preguntas durante el curso de la investigación, por

favor comunicase con Dr. Marion Anders, Directora de la Escuela de Educación al (770) 407-1032. Usted recibirá una copia de este formulario para mantener en su archivo.

Declaración de Consentimiento:

☐ Yo he leído la información previa. He hecho preguntas y recibido respuestas. Yo doy permiso para que mi hijo/a participe en el estudio. Mi firma indica que tengo completo entendimiento del estudio y se lo que se le pide a mi hijo/a a medio de su participación.


Nombre de Padre _____

Firma de Padre  _____

Nombre del Estudiante _____

Nombre de la Investigadora _____

Firma de la Investigadora _____

**APPENDIX H**

**Student Assent Form**

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study entitled LINGUICISM? MAKING MEANING OF ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL to be conducted at your school between the dates of April 12, 2010 and April 30, 2010. You were chosen to participate because the focus of the study is on Latino students' interpretation of the experiences of acquiring English as a second in school. The nature of this study is descriptive, meaning that the researcher will describe Latino students' interpretation of their experiences of language usage in school.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to describe how Latino students experiences the acquisition of English as a second language in school.

Procedures: The study will be conduction for a total of three weeks. Your child will take part in two separate interview sessions lasting 30 minutes each for a total of 60 minutes after school. Interviews will be audiotape using a digital recorder and destroyed at the end of the data analysis phase of the study or approximately two months.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: All student information will be kept confidentially; only the researcher will have access to students' information. Students are not required to answer questions they do not wish to answer. In case of stress or anxiety, your child may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question. The school's counselors will be available to counsel with any student if need a need was to arise. A benefit is the contributing to new interpretive research on the experiences of acquiring English as a second language in school.

Confidentiality: Records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the records. Your name will not be attached to your interview responses after data analysis is completed. You will not be identified in any report of this study once published. At the end of the research taped information will be destroyed.

Contacts and other Information: Damaris Shealy, damaris.shealy@cobbk12.org will conduct this study. The faculty advisor is Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. You may ask questions now; however, should you have later concerns, please contact Dr. Marion Anders, Dean of School of Education at 770-407-1032. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

☐      I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study. Your signature indicates that you fully understand of the study and what is being asked of you in the study.

Student's Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Name of Investigator: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

**APPENDIX I**

**Student Assent Form (Spanish)**

STUDENT ASSENT FORM (Spanish)

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DEL ESTUDIANTE

Estás invitado a participar en  estudio titulado Linguicismo? Haciendo Sentido de la Adquisición de Inglés Como Segundo Idioma en una Escuela Pública de Georgia que se llevará acabo en tú escuela durante el día 12 de abril hasta el 30 de abril del 2010. Fuiste elegido para participar porque este estudio fue diseñado para describir la interpretación del estudiante Latino sobre la experiencia de adquirir inglés como segundo idioma en las escuelas. El diseño de este estudio es descriptivo, significando que la investigadora dará una descripción del entendimiento que los estudiantes han dado sobre su experiencia de este fenómeno.

Antecedentes del Estudio: El propósito del estudio es para relatar la experiencia  de la adquisición de inglés como segundo idioma en la escuela.

Procedimientos: El estudio durará tres semanas. Su hijo/a tomará parte en dos entrevistas que durarán 30 minutos cada una por un total de 60 minutos, después del día escolar. Las entrevistas serán grabadas con un grabador digital y destruidas al finalizar el proceso de análisis de datos que durará aproximadamente dos meses.

Participación es Discrecional: La participación en el estudio es voluntaria. Su hijo puede salir del estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad.

Riesgos y Beneficios por su Participación en el Estudio: Toda información estudiantil será protegida; solamente la investigadora tendrá acceso a esta información. Los estudiantes no están requeridos a contestar preguntas que no desean contestar. En caso de ansiedad o estrés, el estudiante no tiene que contestar la pregunta y puede salir del estudio cuando quiera. Los consejeros escolares estarán disponibles si un estudiante necesita consejerilla. Un  beneficio es la contribución a una nueva investigación interpretativa de la experiencia de adquirir inglés como segundo idioma en el contexto académico.

Confidencialidad: Los archivos permanecerán en una caja con candado. La investigadora será la única persona que tendrá acceso los archivos. El nombre de su hijo/a no estará escrito en las hojas de respuestas de la  entrevista después que la conclusión de los análisis de los datos es completado. Su hijo no será identificado en reportes de este estudio cuando se publique. Al finalizar la investigación, la entrevista grabada será destruida.

Información de Contacto: Damaris Shealy damaris.shealy@cobbk12.org será la investigadora para el estudio. El consejero de la facultad es Dr. Murray Bradfield, mbradfield@argosy.edu. Usted puede hacer preguntas ahora. Al igual, si tiene preguntas durante el curso de la investigación, por favor comunicase con Dr. Marion Anders, Directora

de la Escuela de Educación al (770) 407-1032. Usted recibirá una copia de este formulario para mantener en su archivo.

Declaración de Consentimiento:

☐ Yo he leído la información previa. He hecho preguntas y recibido respuestas. Yo doy permiso para mi participación en el estudio. Su firma indica que entiende completamente el estudio y lo que se le pide para este estudio.

Nombre del Estudiante _____

Firma del Estudiante _____

Nombre de la Investigadora _____

Firma de la Investigadora _____

**APPENDIX J**

**Potential Participant Demographics Intake Form**

Potential Participant Demographic Intake Form

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Grade Level: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Home Language: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Are you bilingual, (Spanish/English): _____ Monolingual: _____

Have you ever been asked not to speak Spanish by anyone at school?

Yes: _____ No: _____

**APPENDIX K**

**Potential Participant Demographic Intake Form (Spanish)**

Potential Participant Demographic Intake Form (Spanish)

FORMA DEMOGRÁFICA DE LOS PARTICIPANTES

Primer Nombre: _____ Apellido: _____

Edad: _____ Género: _____

Domicilio: _____

Número Telefónico: _____

Grado Escolar: _____

Nombre de Padres: _____

Idioma hablado en el Hogar: _____

Etnicidad: _____

Es bilingüe, (Spanish/English): _____ Es  monolingüe: _____

¿Alguna vez mientras estabas en la escuela, te ha pedido alguien que no hables español?

Sí: _____ No: _____

**Appendix L**

**In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol/Interview One**

In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol for Latino Students

Interview One – Focused Life History

Assign a pseudonym to the participant: _____

1.  Where are you from? _____

2.  What grade are you in? _____

3.  Please describe your educational background? _____

4.  Are you a bilingual speaker, and if so, how do you describe your bilingualism?
_____

5. What language(s) do you speak at home? _____

6.  What language(s) do you speak at school? _____

7.  Where can you speak both languages? Please express your comments about your language usage:

At home: _____

At work: _____

Additional Comments: _____

8.  What can you tell me about your proficiency (ability to speak, read, and write), in English?
_____

9.  What can you tell me about your proficiency (ability to speak, read, and write) in Spanish?
_____

10.  Describe your experiences of using your languages in school?

_____

11.  Describe any instances when you were speaking Spanish and were asked by someone to speak English, please explain the circumstances?

_____

**APPENDIX M**

**In-Depth Phenomenological Interview (One/Spanish)**

In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol for Latino Students

Interview One – Focused Life History (Spanish)

PROCESO DE ENTREVISTA ESTUDIANTIL

ENTREVISTA DETALLADA FENOMENOLOGICA

Primera Entrevista – Historia de tu vida

Asignar un seudónimo al participante: _____

1. ¿De dónde eres? _____

2. ¿En qué grado estás? _____

3. ¿Por favor describe tú historia educacional? _____

4. ¿Eres bilingüe, y si lo eres, cómo describes tú habilidad bilingüe? _____

5. ¿Qué idioma hablas en el hogar? _____

6. ¿Qué idioma hablas en la escuela? _____

7. ¿Dónde puedes hablar tus dos idiomas? Por favor expresa tú comentario sobre el uso de tus idiomas: _____

En el hogar: _____

En el colegio o en tú trabajo: _____

8. ¿Qué me puedes decir acerca de tú habilidad lingüística (habilidad de hablar, leer, y escribir) en inglés? _____

9. ¿Qué me puedes decir acerca de tú habilidad lingüística (habilidad de hablar, leer, y escribir) en español? _____

10. ¿Describe tú experiencia usando tus lenguajes en la escuela?

_____

11. ¿Describe cualquier instante cuando tú estabas hablando español y alguien te pidió que hablaras inglés, por favor explica la circunstancia?

_____

**APPENDIX N**

**In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol/Interview Two**

In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol for Latino Students

Interview Two - Details of Experiences and Building Meaning

1.  In our previous conversation, you described your experience of being asked to speak English instead of Spanish? What is your understanding of the request?

_____

2.  Describe how you felt about this request?

_____

3.  What do you think about the request?

_____

4.   Can you describe in details (when, where, why) the actual experience?

_____

5.  Reflecting on your experiences of acquiring English as a second language, can you share your understanding of this aspect of the experience?

_____

6.  Describe your language usage within a typical day from morning until night? Please include: (a) at home, (b) in school, (c) with peers, (d) teachers/administrators?

_____

7. Given what you have stated about your life as a Latino student in or initial interview, I would like for you to provide some details of your experiences of learning English as a second language that you described earlier?

_____

8. Given what you have shared about your experiences with your language usage so far, how would you describe your future as a Latino student?

_____

**APPENDIX O**

**In-Depth Phenomenological Interview (Two/Spanish)**

In-Depth Phenomenological Interview Protocol for Latino Students

Interview Two - Details of Experiences and Building Meaning (Spanish)

PROCESO DE ENTREVISTA ESTUDIANTIL ENTREVISTA DETALLADA
FENOMENOLOGICA

Segunda Entrevista – Detalle de la Experiencia Aumentando Sentido

1. ¿En la entrevista previa, tú hablaste de tú experiencia de sugerencia de hablar
inglés envés de español? ¿Cuál es tú entendimiento de la sugerencia?

_____

2. ¿Describe cómo tú te sentiste sobre esta petición? _____

3. ¿Qué piensas de la petición? _____

4. ¿Puedes describir en detalle el (cuando, donde, y porque) de al experiencia?

_____

5. ¿Reflejando en la experiencia de la adquisición de inglés como segundo lenguaje
en el contexto académico, puedes tú hablar sobre el significado o tú entendimiento
de este proceso?

_____

6. ¿Describe cómo usas tú lenguaje durante un día típico desde la mañana hasta la
noche? Haz el favor de incluir: (a) en el hogar, (b) en la escuela, (c) con los amigos,
(d) maestros/administradores escolares:

_____

7. ¿Dado lo que has dicho sobre tú vida como un estudiante latino en la primera
entrevista, me gustaría que me expliques tú entendimiento sobre tu experiencia de la
adquisición de inglés como segundo lenguaje en el contexto académico que ha
explicado
anteriormente?_____

8. Dado lo que has compartido sobre la experiencia de adquirir inglés como segundo
lenguaje hasta ahora, ¿Cómo describes tú futuro como un estudiante Latino?

_____